### West, Russia to hold

summit on Ukraine

AFP, Paris

The leaders of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine on Wednesday agreed to hold an October summit on ending the conflict in Ukraine, as they welcomed reports that a truce in the east had been generally respected since September 1", the French presidency said. Foreign ministers from the four countries will meet in Berlin on Saturday to come up with "concrete propos-

### S Sudan journalist quits over death threats

als" ahead of the summit.

AFP, Nairobi

Respected South Sudan journalist Nhial Bol, who set up the country's first independent newspaper printing press, has quit journalism after threats. Bol, editor of The Citizen newspaper and television station, shut by security forces in early August, was among the most fervent supporters of South Sudan's independence in 2011, and subsequently a fearless critic of the current

### Big China payouts for firefighters' families

20-month old civil war.

AFP, Beijing

China will give unusually large payouts to the families of firefighters killed in giant explosions in Tianjin last month, local media reported, after the disaster raised questions over whether the young men's training was inadequate. Each family will receive 2.3 million yuan (\$360,000) in compensation, a payment that includes extra money for "martyrdom", the Beijing News reported late

### Obama, Modi may meet in NY this month

PTI, Washington

Wednesday.

US President Barack Obama along with vice president Joe Biden and several of his cabinet ministers are all set for a highlevel engagement with the Indian leadership in a series of meetings later this month. This would be the highest level of engagement between the two countries after

Obama's trip to New Delhi in January to attend the Republic Day parade as the chief guest of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

### Qatar cabinet backs changes to labour law

AFP, Doha

Football World Cup 2022 host Qatar has agreed changes to its controversial "kafala" sponsorship system for foreign workers, which critics have likened to modern-day slavery. At its weekly meeting, the cabinet backed draft legislation and took "measures to issue a law regulating the entry, exit and residency of expatriates," the official QNA news agency reported.



## Cast vote for 'real change' Violence kills 30

Suu Kyi launches polls bid with a rally in ruling party stronghold

AGENCIES

Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi yesterday urged voters to opt for "real change" in the first general election since the end of military rule as she launched her bid for historic November elections.

City

Thousands of supporters gave Suu Kyi a rapturous welcome in towns in the sparsely populated state of Kayah on the Thai border.

Bawlakhe, where Suu Kyi made a speech and was staying the night, is where Soe Thein, the powerful minister of the president's office and architect of President Thein Sein's economic reforms, is running for a seat.

"We want to form the government for real change," said Suu Kyi earlier in the day in the town of Demoso, as red-clad supporters cheered in front of a stage decked with the flags of her party, the National League for Democracy.

"The coming election is our chance to change the system and go for democracy. People should not miss the chance," she added, declaring the NLD's ambition to win all contested seats.

The NLD is expected to be victorious in the Nov 8 vote, which marks a major shift in Myanmar's political landscape, giving a platform to democratic activists shut out of public life during nearly half a century of strict military rule that ended in 2011.

The election is poised to be the country's freest and fairest

since 1990, when the NLD won in a rout, only for the ruling junta to refuse to recognise the result. Campaigning officially started on Tuesday.

The election will choose representatives in the bicameral parliament and regional chambers for five-year terms.

The upper and lower houses will each nominate a presidential candidate, who must secure the support of a majority of members. The military will nomi-

> nate a third. Parliament will then vote for one of the three candidates to become president and form the

> government. The constitution bars Suu Kyi from becoming president, regardless of the outcome, because she has British children. It also gives the army a

veto over constitutional change. In Bawlakhe, the Nobel laureate reiterated the NLD's commitment to the peace process, speaking in a state dominated by the Karenni ethnic

group, one of the several who have spent decades in armed conflict with the central government. "It's very important to chose a government which will be

truly keen on the peace process. It is very important for ethnic people to be aware of this when you vote in the election," said Suu Kyi.

Targeting Bawlakhe, where Soe Thein is running for a seat in the upper house, reflects the NLD's strategy of aiming to unseat high-profile government officials.

TURKEY CHAOS

# in Kurdish town

**BBC ONLINE** 

At least 30 people have died in clashes in the Turkish city of Cizre since a military operation began there last week, Turkey's interior ministry said yesterday.

The ministry said most of the dead were Kurdish militants but the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) said 20 civilians were killed in the violence.

Locals say Cizre has been "under siege" since the military imposed a curfew.

Police yesterday stopped a delegation of HDP leaders who were trying to reach the south-eastern city on foot.

The group includes the party's leader Selahattin Demirtas and 30 members of parliament, who say they want to draw attention to what is happening in the mainly Kurdish area.

They were intercepted by police near Idil, 28km from

On Wednesday, Demirtas warned the country was heading towards civil war.

Turkish prosecutors are currently investigating the HDP leader for insulting the president. They want to have the MP stripped of his parliamentary immunity.

Turkey is to hold new elections in November after inconclusive polls in June.

More than 40,000 people have died since the PKK launched an armed campaign in 1984, calling for an independent Kurdish state within Turkey.

### Lebanon okays plan to end trash crisis AFP, Beirut

The organisers of Lebanon's "You Stink" mass protests over piles of festering trash in the streets yesterday criticised the government's long-awaited plan to deal with the crisis.

After a six-hour session, the cabinet announced late Wednesday measures including handing waste management duties to municipalities and temporarily reopening the country's largest landfill site.

But activists said the plan was too vague and did not

meet their demands. "Our first reaction to the plan is a negative one, especially in terms of the reopening of the Naameh landfill, even if it is temporary," said Lucien Bourjeily from the "You Stink" campaign.

how waste management duties would be transferred to municipalities -- a key demand of his protest movement. "What happened is what the government always resorts to when it wants to

He said it was unclear

calm down the street: partial solutions, 10 percent of which will be implemented," Bourjeily told AFP. Thousands of demonstrators have taken to the streets of Beirut in recent weeks to demand an end to long-

that have affected even basic public services. The waste management crisis began in July when the Naameh landfill closed, causing trash to pile up on roadsides and in parking

standing political divisions

lots and riverbeds. It sparked broad-based protests in Beirut, where hundreds gathered again on Wednesday despite a sandstorm to demand a longterm solution to the trash

fiasco. Under the plan, the Naameh landfill is to be reopened for seven days to dump waste already in the streets, in a step that risks opposition from residents

of nearby villages. Over the next 18 months, two landfills in the northern region of Akkar and the eastern border area of Masnaa would take in waste as a medium-term

measure.

## India, Pakistan agree new ways to end shelling

PTI, New Delhi

India and Pakistan yesterday decided to devise new strategies along the International Border (IB) in Jammu & Kashmir to put an end to incidents of ceasefire violations as they began their three-day DG-level border dialogue here.

In what can be seen as an encouraging development in bilateral talks between the two neighbours, the BSF-Pakistan Rangers meeting has been extended for a day to "discuss and finalise" these new protocols and strategies.

"The most significant takeaway of the talks has been that the two sides agreed that maintenance of peace and tranquility on this border is the most important issue and this needs to be implemented on the ground," a top government source said.

According to the set agenda, the talks were to be wrapped up yesterday as Friday the Rangers are scheduled to meet home

minister Rajnath Singh at his South Block office and later meet staff and officials in the Pakistan high commission.

On their last day in Delhi on September 12, a joint record of discussions was to be signed between the two sides after which the visitors were to leave for Islamabad.

Border Security Force (BSF) chief DK Pathak, during a public function of central investigative agency NIA in the evening here, said that the Indian side was "happy" after the deliberations on the first day.

Sources said the Indian side suggested that rather than debating and contesting about the past incidents, the two sides should work on a "future" strategy to make this border peaceful and safe for the troops and civilians alike.

Pakistan agreed to this point and after some more positive talks it was mutually decided that the session should be extended by a day, they said.



Indian women shout slogans and hold placards during a protest near the Saudi Arabian embassy in New Delhi, yesterday. India's government yesterday urged Saudi Arabia to cooperate in a police investigation into allegations that one of its diplomats held two Nepalese maids captive at his home and repeatedly raped them.

## US 'interference' toppled me

Says ex-Guatemalan leader Perez

REUTERS, Guatemala City

Former Guatemalan President Otto Perez accused the United States on Wednesday of helping to topple him by interfering in the Central American country and endorsing a United Nations-backed anti-corruption commission.

"Right now, we see the CICIG as an interference by the

United States, which pressured most for this," Perez told CNN's Spanish-language television channel in an interview at the military prison where he is being held.

Asked if he believed the United States had helped oust him by pushing the corruption probe, he said: "Yes, definitely." In the interview, Perez denied involve-

ment in the scam that has implicated several high-ranking officials from his government.

A Guatemalan judge ordered Perez on Tuesday to remain in jail while awaiting trial over a graft scandal that stoked a political crisis ahead of a presidential election, charging him with criminal association, taking bribes and customs fraud.

REUTERS, Beijing

It is the near future, and China prepares to strike back after being attacked, loosing off ballistic missiles to take out an aircraft carrier and destroying an airfield as a fighter jet takes off.

The enemy is not named in the animation, released late last month by Chinese internet giant Tencent, but the ship looks a lot like a US Nimitz-class carrier, while the destroyed fighter is clearly a Lockheed Martin Corp F-22.

It may be fantasy, but the clip viewed more than 60 million times so far - reflects a mood of rising nationalism and confidence among

the Chinese public and military. An assertive China under President Xi Jinping now believes its military has the technology to at the very least make the United States think twice before undertaking any military adventures in

what China sees as its backyard.

getting the upper hand in the event of a showdown with China?" retired Major-General Luo Yuan, now a widely followed military commentator, wrote in June. "China is preparing every day to win a modern war."

Xi visits the United States at end of this month. Analysts see three potential arenas for such a showdown - the South China Sea, where China has a series of overlapping territorial disputes with its neighbors, the East

China Sea, where remote islets are a

"Can the United States be certain of source of friction between Beijing and US ally Japan, and any conflict over self-ruled Taiwan.

> China's ostentatious display of some of its latest military hardware at a parade in Beijing last week to mark the end of World War Two underlined its growing might.

An unpublished Taiwan Defense

brother in this region."

Ministry report, seen by Reuters, warned that China's upgraded H-6 bomber, when equipped with antiship missiles, would enable China to project power even deep into the Indian Ocean. The same aircraft type appears in the

Tencent animation, firing off missiles that end up taking out the carrier.

"The message China is giving these days is 'we're here and you'd better get used to it'," said one senior Beijingbased Asian diplomat. "The aim is to push the Americans as far away as possible. There can only be one big

## China challenges US in its backyard Free Nasheed or face sanctions

Amal Clooney warns Maldives

AFP, Kurumba

Human rights lawyer Amal Clooney yesterday warned she will press for sanctions against the Maldives unless it frees former president Mohamed Nasheed, who has been controversially jailed for 13 years.

London-based Clooney, who is defending the former leader, wrapped up a four-day visit to the upmarket honeymoon destination vowing that she will not give up until he was released.

"The next stage will be to pursue targeted sanctions, travel bans and any other action and recourse that we have against the government (of the Maldives) until this matter is resolved," she told reporters at the Kurumba resort near the capital Male.

"It is disappointing that it has come to this."

The charge against Nasheed relates to the ordering of the arrest of an allegedly corrupt judge when he was still president in 2012. The UN had said his rushed trial earlier this year was seriously flawed. His 13-year jail sentence was commuted to house arrest in July, but last month police took him back to prison in a surprise move that drew fresh