

# UN votes to launch talks on new treaty

AFP, United Nations  
A UN General Assembly committee on Thursday voted to launch negotiations on a new treaty banning nuclear weapons despite fierce opposition from the world's nuclear powers.

Opponents argued that nuclear disarmament should be addressed within negotiations on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, commonly known as the Non-Proliferation Treaty or NPT, is an international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.

Beatrice Fihn, executive director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, described the vote as a "historic moment" in the decades-long drive for a nuclear-free world. "This treaty won't eliminate nuclear weapons overnight. But it will establish a powerful, new international legal standard, stigmatizing nuclear weapons and compelling nations to take urgent action on disarmament."

**NUCLEAR WEAPONS BAN**  
Four UNSC members voted against resolution  
China, India, Pakistan abstained

A resolution presented by Austria, Ireland, Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa and Brazil was adopted by a vote of 123 to 38, with 16 abstentions, following weeks of lobbying by the nuclear powers for 'no' votes. The non-binding resolution provides for negotiations to begin in March next year on the new treaty, citing deep concern over the "catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons." Four of the five UN Security Council nuclear powers -- Britain, France, Russia and the United States -- voted against the resolution while China abstained, as did India and Pakistan. Japan, which has long campaigned against the use of nuclear weapons, voted against it, as did South Korea, which is fac-



A protester throws stones at police during clashes in Rawalpindi yesterday. Pakistani police clashed with opposition party supporters in the garrison city of Rawalpindi, arresting dozens ahead of a planned protest by cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan aimed at unseating the government.

## Myanmar govt detects first case of Zika

AFP, Naypyidaw  
Myanmar's government said yesterday that a pregnant foreign woman has been diagnosed with the country's first case of Zika, a mosquito-borne virus linked to birth defects. The World Health Organization warned earlier this month that Zika was likely to spread throughout Asia after being detected in 70 countries, including at least 19 in the Asia Pacific region. While the virus has been present in Southeast Asia for years, there has been an uptick in the number of recorded cases in recent months. "Authorities confirmed the infection in the 32-year-old foreign woman yesterday following a laboratory test," the state-run Global New Light of Myanmar reported yesterday. Soe Lwin Nyein, the director of Myanmar's public health department, told reporters she was the country's "first Zika victim".

## IS builds presence in Pak

Militant group LeJ confirms it worked with jihadists to attack Quetta police academy that killed 63 people

REUTERS, Quetta  
A faction of the Pakistani militant group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) cooperated with Islamic State this week in an attack on a police college that killed 63 people, the group's spokesman told Reuters on Wednesday.

The confirmation of a link between the two groups will stoke fears that Islamic State, based in Syria and Iraq, is building a presence in Pakistan. Islamic State claimed responsibility for Monday's attack in the city of Quetta and released photographs of the purported gunmen who killed cadets during a raid that lasted nearly five hours.

Pakistani authorities, who in September said they had crushed Islamic State's efforts to enter Pakistan, pinned the blame on Al-Alami, a faction of LeJ. Al-Alami spokesman Ali bin Sufyan told Reuters by instant message: "We have no direct link with Daesh (Islamic State), but we have done this attack together."

He declined to give specifics, saying only: "We will provide help to anyone who asks against Pakistani security forces, and we will also accept

help for this." Provincial government spokesman Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar said the death toll from the attack had risen to 63, and that Islamic State's claim of responsibility was "part of Indian design to malign Pakistan that this terrorist group has emerged in our soil". Pakistan has previously accused India of fomenting unrest in the province of Baluchistan, of which Quetta is the capital. A spokesman for India's Foreign Ministry said: "We reject this baseless allegation completely."

Concern has been growing in Pakistan that Islamic State will seek to exacerbate long-standing sectarian tensions that have flared up in recent years. The Sunni Muslim LeJ has carried out some of the worst sectarian attacks in Pakistan's history, including several major bombings in Quetta, and has often targeted the Shia Hazara minority. Analysts have long speculated that Islamic State would strike up a partnership with LeJ, even though the Pakistani group is affiliated with Islamic State's rival, al Qaeda.

LeJ has claimed responsibility for a slew of attacks in Pakistan's commercial capital Karachi, though officials doubt that all the claims are true.



## Pak opposition defies govt ban on protest

Political deadlock looms as police fire tear gas at Imran Khan's supporters

REUTERS, Islamabad  
Pakistani police yesterday fired tear gas at stone-throwing supporters of opposition leader Imran Khan who defied a ban on public gatherings, adding to political deadlock ahead of his plans to shut down the capital next week.

There was no immediate report of injuries but TV stations carried footage of police charging with batons, as plumes of tear gas billowed in the air. Police surrounded the home of former cricket hero Khan, who called for nationwide protests after dozens of activists from his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party were arrested a day earlier.

The protests have added to the chaos ahead of Khan's plans to lock down the capital on Wednesday in what he described as a final push to force Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to resign over corruption allegations.

Khan had vowed to join yesterday's planned rally but had not left his home, with a heavy police presence outside, by the afternoon and was

scheduled to hold a press briefing. The rising tensions come at an awkward time for Sharif, with relations between his ruling PML-N party and the powerful military strained over a newspaper leak about a security meeting that angered army officials. Authorities on Thursday swooped on an indoor youth rally by Khan's party in Islamabad, beating activists with batons and detaining 38 people. Police said the rally contravened a city order issued hours earlier to ban all public gatherings in the capital ahead of next week's protests. "Police manhandled our women and our boys. Because of that, Imran Khan has called for nationwide protests," a spokeswoman from PTI's media team said.

Khan, who led a weeks-long occupation that paralysed the government quarter of Islamabad in 2014 after rejecting Sharif's decisive election win, has vowed to contest orders banning public gatherings in court but has hinted his supporters would march on the capital next week regardless.

## NEWS IN brief

**Teacher shot dead in restive Thai south**  
AFP, Bangkok

A teacher was killed in a drive-by shooting yesterday in Thailand's far south, police said, the latest attack on civilians in the insurgency-plagued region. Suspected militants opened fire on two civil servants who teach state-funded education programmes for adults in Pattani province, a local police officer said. "One victim died instantly at the attack site," he said.

**Indian PM to visit Japan on Nov 11**  
IANS, New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will pay a two-day official visit to Japan from November 11 for his third annual summit meeting with his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe, with economic and defence cooperation likely to figure high on the agenda. The annual summit will be an occasion for the two leaders to have in-depth exchanges on bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest.

**Global migrant deaths up 20 percent: IOM**  
AFP, Geneva

Migrant deaths worldwide this year have surged above 5,200 -- a 20 percent increase on 2015 -- driven by record fatalities in the Mediterranean, the International Organization for Migration said yesterday. In total, 5,238 people have perished since January 1, or 951 more than at the same point in 2015, the Geneva-based IOM said in a statement.

**China warns India on Dalai Lama border visit**  
REUTERS, Beijing

China yesterday rebuked India for inviting exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama to visit a contested stretch of land on the India-China border, warning it would harm relations between the neighbours. China claims more than 90,000 sq km of territory disputed by India in the eastern sector of the Himalayas. Much of that forms the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, which China calls South Tibet.

**Azerbaijan kills two suspected 'terrorists'**  
AFP, Baku

Azerbaijani security services have killed two men suspected of plotting "terrorist attacks" in the secular ex-Soviet country with a mainly Muslim population, authorities said yesterday. The two Azerbaijani nationals were shot dead during a special operation on Wednesday night, the oil-rich Caucasus nation's State Security Service said in a statement, adding that another suspected "terrorist" had been arrested.



A woman walks past a burning structure at the "Jungle" migrant camp in Calais, northern France, early yesterday. Dozens of youngsters woke under the watchful eyes of French riot police after a chilly night outdoors near the camp, as Paris and London squabbled over their fate and that of hundreds more bent on getting to Britain.

## 'Indian border fire kills three civilians'

AGENCIES  
Pakistan yesterday accused India of killing three civilians and wounding several others in cross-border fire, as tensions soar in disputed Kashmir.

The incident occurred in Nakyal sector, near the frontier dividing Indian-held Kashmir from Pakistan's Punjab province, Pakistani officials said. "At least three people including a woman and a girl were killed and five others injured when Indian troops opened fire across the border near Nakyal sector on the Line of Control, the de facto border between India and Pakistan," district administration official Adnan Khursheed told AFP.

Zeeshan Nisar, an administration official in Nakyal confirmed the incident, adding that a seven-year-old girl was among the dead. A doctor at the hospital in Nakyal sector put the number of injured slightly higher at seven. "Three of the injured are in critical condition while four injured are stable," Muhammad Nasrullah told AFP.

Meanwhile, India's Border Security Force (BSF) said it has been able to kill 15 Pakistan Rangers since October 21 when a fresh flash point erupted after a sniper attack on a BSF jawan.

Speaking to The Hindu, Deputy Inspector General, BSF, Dharmendra Pareek, said, "There are inputs of at least 15 Pakistan Rangers being killed in retaliatory firing on the International Border. We have been witnessing heavy firing and shelling since October 21 in large parts of the IB."

## Indian tycoon to gift cars, flats to workers

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A generous diamond tycoon in India is once again giving away hundreds of cars and flats to his employees as a bonus for meeting company targets.

Savijbhai Dholakia, who runs a diamond export firm in the city of Surat, announced his company will give 1,260 cars, 400 flats and pieces of jewellery to his employees ahead of the Hindu festival of Diwali which falls on the weekend. "Our aim is that each employee must have his own home and car in the next five years. So we have decided to gift cars, homes and jewellery to employees," Dholakia, owner of the Hare Krishna Exports, told AFP.

He said the rewards were in recognition of the outstanding performance

and dedication shown by employees in the last five years.

The company will be spending an estimated rupees 500 million (\$7 million) under the loyalty program to reward an unknown number of staff from a total workforce of 5,500.

Most employees receive presents of some kind from their bosses during Diwali, the festival of lights, but they are usually boxes of Indian sweets.

But Dholakia has been making headlines by giving expensive gifts to his employees since 2012, when three employees received cars for their performance. The generous boss gave 491 cars and 207 flats to his employees under a similar programme in 2014.

The company will exclude previous year's beneficiaries from the new scheme.



## Lanka to sell 80pc of port to Chinese firm

REUTERS, Colombo

Sri Lanka will sell to a Chinese company 80 percent of a \$1.5-billion port in its south, where China has also been offered an investment zone, in a bid to cut the country's debt burden, Finance Minister Ravi Karunanayake said.

The move follows an offer made by PM Ranil Wickremesinghe during a visit to China in April, to swap equity in Sri Lankan infrastructure projects against \$8 billion in debt the Indian Ocean island owes to China.

The Hambantota port was built with the help of Chinese loans and contractors in 2010 under former leader Mahinda Rajapaksa, as part of efforts to boost development of infrastructure.

## Rohingya women say soldiers raped them

REUTERS, Yangon

Rohingya Muslims say Myanmar soldiers raped or sexually assaulted dozens of women in a remote village in the northwest of the country during the biggest upsurge in violence against the persecuted minority in four years.

Eight Rohingya women, all from U Shey Kya village in Rakhine State, described in detail how soldiers last week raided their homes, looted property and raped them at gunpoint. Reuters interviewed three of the women in person and five by telephone, and spoke to human rights groups and community leaders. Not all the claims could be independently verified, including the total number of women assaulted.

Soldiers have poured into the

Maungdaw area since Oct 9, after an insurgent group of Rohingyas that the government believes has links to Islamists overseas launched coordinated attacks on several border guard posts.

A forty-year-old woman from U Shey Kya told Reuters that four soldiers raped her and assaulted her 15-year-old daughter, while stealing jewelry and cash from the family. "They took me inside the house. They tore my clothes and they took my head scarf off," the mother of seven told Reuters in an interview outside her home, a cramped bamboo hut. "Two men held me, one holding each arm, and another one held me by my hair from the back and they raped me." Zaw Htay, the spokesman for Myanmar President Htin Kyaw, denied the allegations.

MYANMAR'S CRACKDOWN ON MILITANTS

