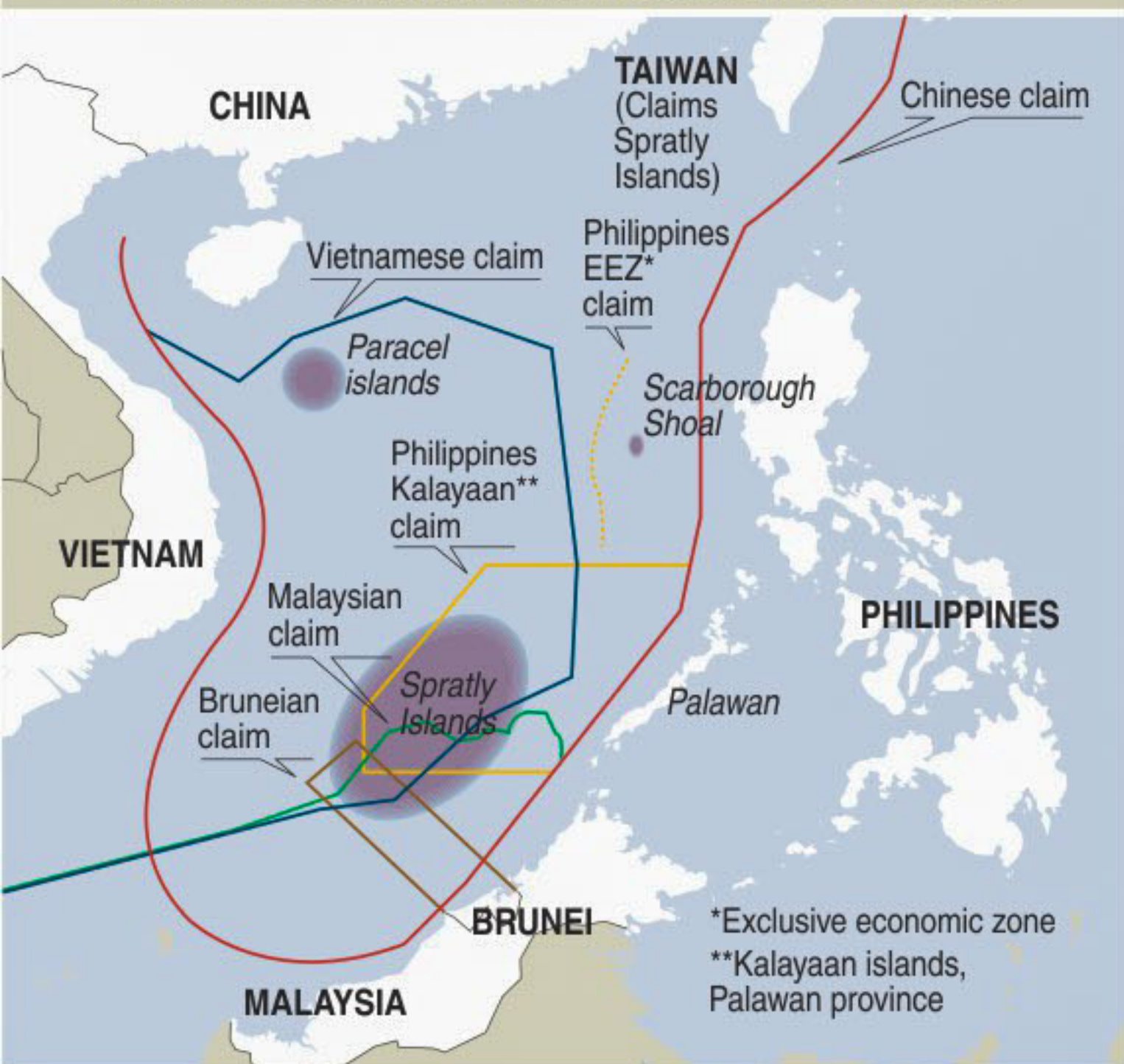


DISPUTED CLAIMS IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA



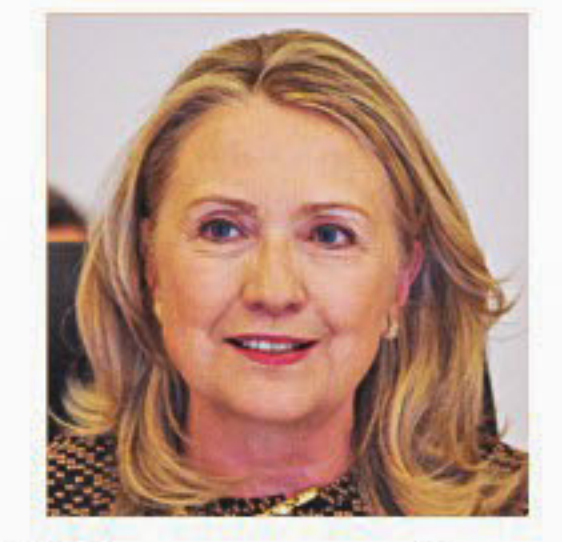
Lakhvi walks free from Pak jail
India furious, says release an insult to Mumbai blast victims

AFP, Islamabad
Pakistani authorities have freed the alleged mastermind of the 2008 Mumbai attacks on bail, officials said yesterday, in a move that swiftly drew furious condemnation from India.
Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, accused over the terror siege that left 166 dead, was released late on Thursday, according to an official at Adiyala Prison in Rawalpindi, close to Islamabad.
India slammed the release as an "insult" to the victims of the three-day onslaught on its financial capital, which was blamed on the banned Pakistani militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).
LeT's charitable wing, Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), confirmed Lakhvi's release.
"Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi has been released from jail. He is free now and in a secure place," a senior JuD official told AFP.
"We can't say exactly where he is at the moment for security reasons."
The release comes following nearly four months of wrangling over Lakhvi's detention after a judge granted him bail in December, sparking an angry response from New Delhi.
Pakistan's government slapped Lakhvi with a series of detention orders but judges repeatedly cancelled them.
On Thursday the Lahore High Court ordered his release, conditional on a two



million rupee (\$20,000) bond.
India has long seethed at Pakistan's failure either to hand over or prosecute those accused of planning and organising the Mumbai attacks.
A spokesman for India's home ministry, who asked not to be named, condemned Lakhvi's release.
"This is a very disappointing announcement. An insult to the victims of the 26/11 Mumbai attack. The global community should take serious note of Pakistan's double-speak on terrorism," the spokesman said.
Pakistan foreign ministry spokeswoman Tasneem Aslam hit back, blaming India for delaying the case.
"Inordinate delay in extending cooperation by India complicated the case and weakened the prosecution," she said, add-

ing that the ministry is still "confident" that justice will be served.
Lakhvi and six other suspects have been charged in Pakistan, but their cases have made virtually no progress in more than five years.
Delhi has long accused Islamabad of prevaricating over the trials, while Pakistan has alleged that India failed to give it crucial evidence.
Lakhvi's initial bail order in December prompted an angry response from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who said it came as "a shock to all those who believe in humanity".
Pakistani analyst Hasan Askari said he was at a loss to understand why the case had not been resolved and predicted a major spat with India.
The horror of the Mumbai carnage played out on live television around the world as commandos battled the heavily armed gunmen, who arrived by sea on the evening of November 26, 2008.
It took the authorities three days to regain full control of the city and New Delhi has long said there is evidence that "official agencies" in Pakistan were involved in plotting the attack.
Islamabad denies the charge but JuD, seen as a front for the militant LeT and listed as a banned terror outfit by the United Nations, operates openly in the country.



US PRESIDENTIAL POLLS
Hillary likely to announce bid this weekend

REUTERS, Washington
Hillary Clinton is expected to announce her campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016 as early as this weekend, facing no substantial competition but needing to get her organization in place for the long battle to come.
A variety of sources in the Hillary orbit said they were anticipating an imminent announcement but would not confirm a report in the New York Daily News that the announcement was expected tomorrow.
The Guardian newspaper reported that Hillary would make her announcement on Twitter at noon eastern time tomorrow while headed to the early voting state of Iowa, followed up by email and video announcements.
In her previous presidential run in 2008, Hillary lost to the current president, Barack Obama.
Her campaign is expected to concentrate on making the 67-year-old former first lady relatable to ordinary Americans. She spent four years jetting to foreign capitals as Obama's first-term secretary of state but has had limited day-to-day contact with everyday Americans.
Hillary, the wife of former President Bill Clinton, is the overwhelming favorite for the Democratic nomination.
A Quinnipiac University poll released this week had the surprising result that she was even or only slightly ahead of some Republican contenders like libertarian Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky. Most polls in recent months have shown her with a substantial lead over the Republican 2016 field.

BACK OFF
from South China Sea
Obama tells China; Pentagon chief vows to deploy 'best' US weaponry to Asia

AGENCIES
US President Barack Obama said Washington is concerned China is using its "sheer size and muscle" to push around smaller nations in the South China Sea, drawing a swift rebuke from Beijing which accused the United States of being the bully.
China's rapid reclamation around seven reefs in the Spratly archipelago of the South China Sea has alarmed other claimants, such as the Philippines and Vietnam, and drawn growing criticism from US government officials and the military.
While the new islands will not overturn US military superiority in the region, workers are building ports and fuel storage depots and possibly two airstrips that experts have said would allow Beijing to project power deep into the maritime heart of Southeast Asia.
"Where we get concerned with China is where it is not necessarily abiding by international norms and rules and is using its sheer size and muscle to force countries into subordinate positions," Obama told a town-hall event in Jamaica on Thursday ahead of a Caribbean summit in Panama.
"We think this can be solved diplomatically, but just because the Philippines or Vietnam are not as large as China doesn't mean that they can just be elbowed aside," he said.
Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said the United States had no right to accuse anyone of pushing anyone else around.
"I think everyone can see very clearly who it is in the world who is using the greatest size and muscle," she told a daily news briefing in Beijing yesterday.
China claims most of the potentially energy rich South China Sea, through which \$5 trillion in ship-borne trade passes every year. The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also have overlapping claims.
China, which has asked Washington not to take sides in the row, says it is willing to discuss the issue with individual countries directly involved in the dispute.
Meanwhile, US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter yesterday promised that the US would deploy state of the art weaponry in Asia, including the latest stealth bombers and cyber warfare units, to counter threats posed by the likes of North Korea.
"Our newest and best things are being deployed to this part of the world," Carter said in Seoul -- the second leg of a visit to the two key US military allies in the region, Japan and South Korea.
The Pentagon chief said his talks with South Korean Defence Minister Han Min-Koo had included a "candid assessment" of the threat posed to the Korean peninsula -- "and the US homeland" -- by North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programme.



US Secretary of State John Kerry (4th-R) and Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez (5th-L), talk, flanked by their respective advisers, in Panama City, Panama on the sidelines of the Summit of the Americas, on Thursday. It was the first time that the chief diplomats from the two nations met since 1958, one year before Fidel Castro's revolutionary guerrillas came to power.

NEWS IN brief

Syria talks in Moscow yield no results

AFP, Moscow
Talks in Moscow between the Syrian government and members of the domestic opposition tolerated by President Bashar al-Assad broke up yesterday with no progress made towards ending the war. Activists among the fractious opposition groups said they had made steps towards agreeing a common position among themselves but failed to make any headway in discussions with representatives of the

Myanmar election talks end without resolution

AFP, Naypyidaw
A second round of talks between the key players in Myanmar's election in November, including Aung San Suu Kyi, finished without resolution, a minister said yesterday. They agreed to hold further discussions, Information Minister Ye Htut told reporters, with-

Controversial pastor to run for US president

THE HINDU ONLINE
Controversial pastor Terry Jones, who angered millions by announced his plans to hold an "International Burn a Quran Day" on the ninth anniversary of the 9/11 terror attack, has announced his run for US presidency. Although he told reporters that he was "pretty devastated by the condition of America," he admitted that winning would require "some type

India to defend rights of citizens of all faiths

Modi tells in France as he kicks off first European tour
AGENCIES
At a time when India is witnessing increased activities of right-wing groups, Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday said his government will defend the rights of citizens of all faiths.
Modi, during his address at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, also asked the global community to dwell deep on culture and religion to overcome the rising tide of extremism as well as violence.
"We will defend and protect the rights and liberty of every citizen. We will ensure that every citizen, of every faith, culture and creed has an equal place in our society; belief in our future; and the confidence to pursue it," he said.
Noting that culture remains a source of conflict in many parts of the world, Modi said it must connect and not divide and that it should be a bridge to greater respect and understanding between people.
The Modi government is under attack from opposition parties as well as some minority community groups for not being able to curb the activities like 'Ghar Wapsi' (conversions) by RSS-backed groups.
The Indian prime minister kicked off talks in Paris yesterday with the French president with all eyes on a potential multi-billion-euro fighter jet deal hailed as the "contract of the century."
Once persona non grata in the European Union, Narendra Modi was welcomed with open arms by President Francois Hollande as he aims to woo investors to his fast-growing economy on the first leg of his maiden tour to the continent.
Ahead of the visit, fevered speculation has centred on whether Modi and Hollande will achieve a breakthrough in long-blocked talks over 126 French Rafale fighter jets.



VIOLENCE IN AFGHANISTAN
Attack on Nato, blasts kill 15

AFP, Jalalabad
A Taliban suicide car bomb targeted a NATO convoy in eastern Afghanistan yesterday, killing at least three civilians as security forces brace for a full-blown insurgent offensive in the spring fighting season.
Separately, 12 civilians onboard a minivan were killed when a roadside bomb struck their vehicle in the militant-infested southeastern province of Ghazni.
The civilian fatalities come as Taliban insurgents step up attacks on government and foreign targets after Washington announced a delay in US troop withdrawals from Afghanistan last month.
"In the morning today a foreign forces convoy came under a suicide attack near the airport in Jalalabad city," provincial police spokesman Hazrat Hussain Mashriqwal told AFP.
He added that three civilians were killed and four others were wounded in the powerful explosion in Jalalabad, which is home to an important US military base.
Resolute Support, the new name for the Nato mission in Afghanistan, did not officially comment on the incident but in a brief Twitter posting denounced it as "yet another senseless attack by the Taliban".

Subhas Bose's relatives were under surveillance

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi
Indian Intelligence Bureau kept relatives of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, one of the legends of India's freedom struggle, under close surveillance for two decades, mostly during Jawaharlal Nehru's tenure as the first prime minister.
The Intelligence Bureau files, declassified recently, revealed Bose's close relatives, including two of his nephews, Sisir Kumar Bose and Amiya Nath Bose, were spied upon for 20 years between 1948 and 1968.
Reacting to being snooped on, Prof Sugata Bose, Subhas' grand nephew and also a lawmaker, said: "Yes, it is a poor reflection on the quality of India's democracy in the first two decades that there was such invasion of privacy of freedom fighters. It is not just a family matter."
"The most disgraceful aspect of this surveillance is that private letters between my father and his aunt (Netaji's wife) were being opened and read and copied. It's a matter of great disrespect to the freedom struggle and freedom fighters."
Anuj Dhar, the author of the book 'India's Biggest Cover-up', had stumbled upon the files at National Archives while researching on Bose.
Bose quit Congress before independence over differences with Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi and launched an organised military resistance against the British after raising the Indian National Army in South East Asia.
His death, reportedly in a plane crash in Taiwan in August 1945, remains a mystery to this day.

Aid flows in amid raging violence

UN calls for pause in fighting; India concludes evacuation
AGENCIES
The Red Cross and UN flew medical aid into Yemen's capital yesterday after southern city Aden was battered by the heaviest night yet of Saudi-led air strikes targeting Shiite rebels.
The United Nations also called for a daily "humanitarian pause" of a few hours, saying aid was desperately needed in the conflict-ravaged country.
The International Committee of the Red Cross said it dispatched an aircraft to Sanaa, its first aid shipment since the international campaign against Shiite rebels began last month.
"This is the first ICRC plane to have landed in Sanaa. It is loaded with 16 tonnes of medical aid," said Marie Claire Feghali, Red Cross spokeswoman in Yemen.
Residents and officials in Aden said the city was pounded after Huthi Shia rebels and renegade soldiers loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh reached the city's northern entrance.
"The raids began at around 10:00 pm (1900 GMT) on Thursday and were the most violent since the start of 'Operation Decisive Storm,'" a resident told AFP.
Residents also said coalition aircraft targeted other positions, including a city centre stadium and rebel-manned checkpoints.
More than two weeks of heavy bombardment by the Saudi-led alliance against opponents of exiled Yemeni President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi and fighting between rival militias prompted the UN call for a freeze in the violence.
The World Health Organization said nearly 650 people have been killed and more than 2,000 injured in the fighting, but the actual number of fatalities is likely to be far higher since many people are not reaching hospitals and being buried immediately, Van Der Klaauw said.
India has ended its massive evacuation efforts in Yemen, pulling out 5,600 people, including 4,640 Indians and 960 nationals from 41 countries, the government said.



A local resident pours a bucket of seawater over a melon-headed whale beached on the shore of Hokota city, northeast of Tokyo, yesterday. More than 200 melon-headed whales, a member of the dolphin family usually found in the deep ocean, beached in Japan, sparking frantic efforts by locals and coastguards to save them.

Meet-the-Specialist session for Cancer Patients
RafflesHospital
Friday 17 April 2015
Session 1 (9:30am - 12:30pm) @ United Link Ltd | Session 2 (3:00pm - 5:00pm) @ Pan Pacific Singapore
Dr Ooi Wei Seong
Specialist in Medical Oncology & Consultant
Dr Ooi Wei Seong, Specialist in Medical Oncology & Consultant from Raffles Hospital Singapore will visit Dhaka and provide valuable suggestions for general oncology, lung, head & neck, breast, kidney, testicular, prostate, bladder, as well as thyroid cancer patient.
To register, please call 01730 72 72 72 before 15 April 2015 or email enquiries_bangladesh@raffleshospital.com