

NEWSIN brief

ISIS's Pak chief killed while planting bomb

PTI, Peshawar
Islamic State's Pakistan chief Hafiz Muhammad Saeed was killed when a roadside bomb he was planting went off in the country's restive northwest tribal region, according to a media report. Saeed along with two of his accomplices were killed on Thursday's incident in Toor Dara area of Tirah Valley in the Khyber tribal region, Express Tribune reported. However, there was no confirmation from the Islamic State militant group.



Pak anti-graft court summons Zardari

PTI, Islamabad
An anti-corruption court in Pakistan yesterday summoned former president Asif Ali Zardari in an old graft case against him in which he was accused of acquiring assets illegally when his wife Benazir Bhutto was the prime minister. According to allegations, Zardari had purchased a number of properties and deposited the money from kickbacks in different Swiss banks.

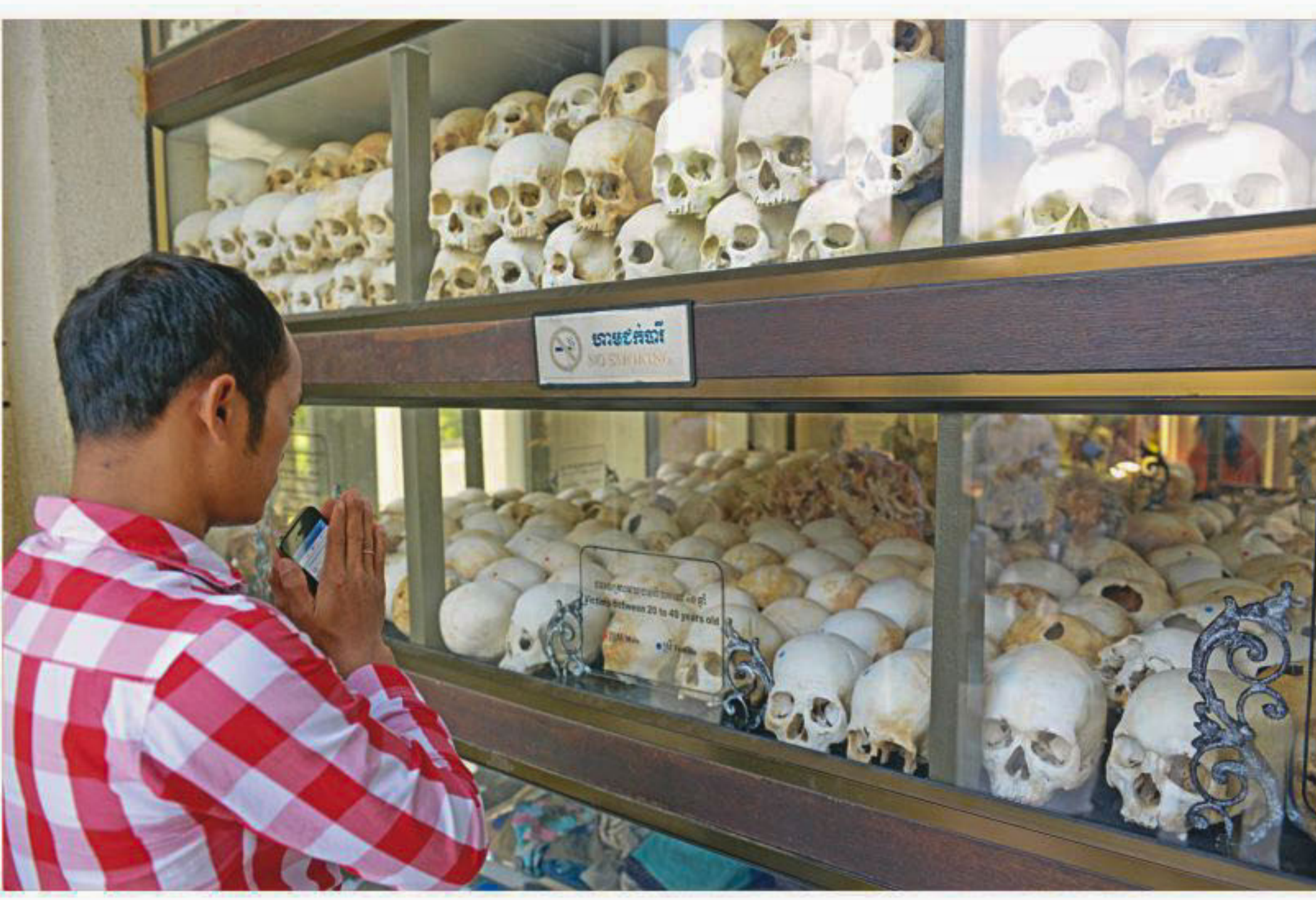
Tibetan man self-immolates in China

AFP, Beijing
A Tibetan man, believed to be in his 40s, has burned himself to death in China, a rights group and media said, the second such protest reported against Beijing's policies in the region in two weeks. He is the latest of more than 130 Tibetans to set themselves on fire in China since 2009, in protests which are usually fatal, according to tallies by rights groups.



Assange agrees to questioning in London

REUTERS, Stockholm
Julian Assange has agreed to be questioned at Ecuador's London embassy over allegations of sexual assault, his Swedish lawyer said on Thursday. Swedish prosecutors said in March 2015 they wanted to question Mr. Assange in London. The WikiLeaks founder has been holed up inside the embassy since June 2012 to avoid extradition to Sweden over allegations he assaulted two women in 2010. He denies the allegations.



From Left, A man prays in front of skulls at Choeng Ek killing fields memorial; and a women look at a tree at the memorial in Phnom Penh, yesterday. Tearful survivors on April 17, 2015 marked 40 years to the day since the black-clad Khmer Rouge marched into Phnom Penh, ending a civil war but heralding a terror that killed a quarter of Cambodians and turned the capital into a ghost town. Cambodians remain divided over how to move forward, with those clamouring for justice countered by others urging reconciliation in a nation where both perpetrators and victims of the regime are still alive.



Russia fumes as US to train Ukraine army

AFP, Kiev
Hundreds of US paratroopers have arrived in Ukraine to train its forces fighting pro-Russian rebels, the US army said yesterday, a move Moscow warned could "destabilise" the war-torn ex-Soviet country.
"Soldiers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade have been arriving over the last week," Donald Wrenn, a US army spokesman, told AFP.
"We will have about 300 soldiers from the brigade on the ground providing the training that will last over the next six months."
The move raised heckles in Moscow, which accuses the United States of backing the protests that brought down Ukraine's Kremlin-backed president Viktor Yanukovich last year.
"The participation of instructors and experts from third countries on Ukrainian territory... of course, does not help to resolve the conflict," President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Pevkov said.
"On the contrary, it can seriously destabilise the situation," he said, quoted by Russian news agencies.
Following Yanukovich's ouster and Moscow's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea peninsula, a pro-Russia uprising in east Ukraine

sparked a conflict that has killed more than 6,000 people and injured nearly 15,500 over the past year, according to the United Nations.
It has led to the worst relations between Russia and the West since the end of the Cold War.
The West accuses Russia of providing the separatists who have taken control of parts of eastern Ukraine with troops and arms, a charge that Moscow denies.
European OSCE observers say heavy arms fire is rumbling on in the east despite a February ceasefire agreement.
The US troops will train the National Guard of Ukraine, a reservist force that was reformed in 2014 to bring volunteers and militia under government control.
Ukraine had asked the United States to send the training mission, dubbed Operation Fearless Guardian, according to an article published by the US army on April 11 said.
A ground convoy drove all the way from the brigade's base in northern Italy to the Ukrainian military zone in Yavoriv near the Polish border, with vehicles and equipment.
The US and Ukrainian armies stressed the equipment was for use by the US brigade in the training and is not to be issued to Ukrainian forces.

Swine flu claims 21 lives in West Nepal

PTI, Kathmandu
At least 3 persons including a 2-year old child succumbed to swine flu in Nepal yesterday, taking the toll of the deadly disease to 21, over the past three weeks in the country's mid-western region.
Those who succumbed to the disease include two elderly people and a two year old child, said the officials.
They died while undergoing treatment at the local health post.
There was no information about the exact situation in the first two weeks of the spread of the disease and the local health personnel had reported that the district was gripped by an unknown disease.
Due to the lack of adequate health facilities and lack of medical personnel, the patients could not receive treatment on time.
Some 2,000 people, who have fallen ill, were admitted to the local health posts for treatment.

China jails journo for 'leaking state secrets'

REUTERS, Beijing
A Chinese court has sentenced a journalist accused of leaking an internal Communist Party document to a foreign website to seven years in prison, her lawyer said on Friday, a ruling that reflects the sensitivity surrounding the party's inner workings.
Gao Yu, 71, who was tried behind closed doors in Beijing last November, was convicted on a charge of providing state secrets to foreign contacts, her lawyer, Mo Shaoping, said.
Rights activists have condemned Gao's detention and trial, saying it indicates a widening crackdown on dissent. The United States called on China to release Gao at the United Nations Human Rights Council session in Geneva last month.
Mo said Gao had indicated as she was leaving the courtroom that she would appeal against the decision.
Gao was detained on accusations she had leaked a party document, which warned senior members against "seven mistaken ideologies", including the "universal values" of human rights, according to Gao's other lawyer, Shang Baojun.
The maximum sentence for leaking state secrets is life imprisonment. However, prosecutors recommended a sentence of 5-10 years based on the level of sensitivity of the secrets Gao was accused of leaking, Shang said.
Gao is one of 44 journalists who were behind bars in China as of December 1, 2014, making it the top jailer of journalists, said the Committee to Protect Journalists, a New York-based media advocacy group.

Indian flag torched in Kashmir

AFP, Srinagar
Demonstrators set fire to an Indian flag and hurled rocks at riot police in Kashmir's largest city yesterday as protests over the arrest of a top separatist leader turned violent.
Hundreds took to the streets of Srinagar, capital of Indian-administered Kashmir, to vent their anger at Masarat Alam Bhat's detention after he fronted a rally earlier in the week where followers waved Pakistani flags.
The violence erupted soon after worshippers emerged from Friday prayer services in the city's mosques, chanting pro-Pakistan slogans and "we want freedom", according to an AFP reporter on the scene.
The police tried to disperse the crowds by firing tear gas and then wielding their batons.
At least 16 people were injured during the clashes.



A handout picture released by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) yesterday and taken the day before shows displaced people from the nearby Yarmuk Palestinian refugee camp queuing to receive aid from UNRWA in Yalda, south of Damascus.

Syria gas attack moves UN envoys to tears

REUTERS, United Nations
Members of the United Nations Security Council got teary eyed on Thursday when Syrian doctors showed a video of failed attempts to resuscitate three children after a chlorine gas attack in March, prompting renewed calls for accountability.
The children, aged 1, 2 and 3, their parents and grandmother were killed in the March 16 attack on Sarmin village in northwest Idlib province, said Dr Mohamed Tennari, director of the field hospital where the family was taken.
Government and opposition forces in Syria have denied using chlorine 'barrel bombs', which the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) says are dropped from helicopters. The Syrian air force is the only party in the conflict known to have helicopters.
Tennari, Dr Zaher Sahloul, President of the Syrian American Medical Society, and Qusai Zakarya, a survivor of a sarin gas attack in Ghouta near Damascus in August 2013, briefed the informal closed meeting organised by the United States.
US ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power said it was an "extremely unusual and very emotional meeting." She added: "If there was a dry eye in the room I didn't see it." Several others attending said many people cried.
The Security Council failed last year to refer the civil war in Syria, now in its fifth year, to the International Criminal Court for possible prosecution of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Syrian ally Russia, backed by China, vetoed the move.
The attack on Sarmin came 10 days after the 15-member council condemned the use of chlorine as a weapon in Syria and threatened to take action if it was used again.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT Every Paris woman faces evil on train

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK
Parisians are calling on the government to combat sexual harassment on public transport after a poll shows that 100 per cent of the women said they experienced at least one incident.
Shocking results show that each of the 600 women surveyed said that they were subjected to sexually-motivated abuse by strangers on trains and the Metro at some point in their lives, according to news website The Local.
Half of all the women polled – who are from the Seine-Saint-Denis and Essonne suburbs of Paris – said that the distressing events happened before they even reached the age of 18.
However, due to the "invisible" effects of unwanted attention, crude comments and intimidating behaviour, women are less likely to report them as they would with physical attacks.
As behaviour such as wolf-whistling and threatening body language are hard to prove, it can then also be extremely difficult to prosecute offenders without evidence and help of witnesses.
A report with the detailed findings of the poll was sent to France's health minister Marisol Touraine by the High Council for Equality between Women and Men (HCEfh) to spur the government into action.
Touraine said the government will respond to the "high quality" report within a few weeks.
Campaigners are seeking training for women in self-defence and what to do in the event that they get harassed, especially in enclosed spaces such as moving public transport.

Tension flares as China builds runway in South China Sea

AFP, Beijing
China is rapidly building an airstrip on an artificial island in disputed South China Sea waters, recent satellite pictures show, potentially ramping up tensions with several Southeast Asian neighbours.
Fiery Cross in the Spratly Islands was little more than a reef when China began land reclamation works to turn it into an island in late 2014.
Now satellite images taken last week by DigitalGlobe and shown on the website of the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) show the runway -- estimated at 3.1 kilometres in total -- more than one-third complete, it says.
When in operation, it says, it will be able to "accommodate almost any type of aircraft that China would want to land".
"Before this construction China lacked the refuelling and resupply capabilities to reach the southern part of the South China Sea," it added.
"While they have not yet been built, Fiery Cross should be big enough to



accommodate hangar facilities for Chinese aircraft."
Pictures taken less than four weeks earlier showed two sections of 468 metres and 200 metres were under construction, CSIS said, demonstrating the speed of the works.
On Wednesday, defence journal IHS Jane's reported that pictures taken by Airbus Defence and Space on March 23 showed a section more than 500 metres long and 50 metres wide.
China claims nearly all of the South China Sea, on the basis of lines on

Chinese maps published in the 1940s and locking it into disputes with several Southeast Asian neighbours.
Its island-building in the Spratlys, also claimed in whole or part by the Philippines and Vietnam among others, has been seen as part of an attempt to assert its territorial claims by establishing physical facts in the water.
Fiery Cross is known as Yongshu to Beijing, Kagitian to Manila, and Da Chu Thap to Hanoi.
Images published this month on the website of the CSIS also showed a flotilla of Chinese vessels dredging sand onto a feature known as Mischief Reef.
That reef is about 100 kilometres from the southwestern Philippine island of Palawan, and roughly 1,000 kilometres from the nearest major Chinese landmass.
Vietnam, the Philippines and Malaysia have asserted their own claims in the area by stationing troops in the Spratlys and building airstrips there from the 1970s onwards.



US develops 'locust drones'

BBC ONLINE
The US Navy is developing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), or drones, that can be launched from a cannon and "swarm" in a co-ordinated attack.
The drones will be able to fly autonomously and "overwhelm an adversary", the US Office of Naval Research said of its Low-cost UAV Swarming Technology (Locust) programme. The US Navy plans to demonstrate the launch of 30 Locust drones in 2016.
As the drones and the launcher are relatively compact, the Locust system can be deployed from ships, aircraft or land vehicles, the ONR said.
US use of military drones has attracted criticism from human rights groups, who say that despite their highly targeted nature, innocent non-combatants are often killed in the process.