

# Troops thwart attack on Pak parliament: Malik

Taliban confirm Mehsud injured in drone strike

ANI, INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Islamabad

Pakistan Interior Minister Rehman Malik has said that the security forces have thwarted extremists' plans of attacking the country's parliament.

Malik said the police have recovered a suicide jacket from a remote cave in the Margalla Hills, which was to be used for the attack.

He claimed that a terror suspect has also been arrested by the security forces from the same cave.

Malik, however, parried questions regarding reports of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) top commander Hakimullah Mehsud being killed in a US drone strike on Thursday.

The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) Friday confirmed that its chief, Hakimullah Mehsud, was injured in a US attack which struck at a militants' hideout in South Waziristan on Thursday.

A private TV channel quoted local officials and the TTP as saying Mehsud was in the house in Shaktoi village and that a meeting of foreign militants was underway when the US drone struck.

Mehsud, who received head injuries, is being treated at undisclosed location and his condition was described as being out of danger, Online news agency quoted sources as saying.

A vehicle belonging to Mehsud was destroyed in the attack, the sources added.

## 'Blazing ring' eclipse races across Asia

AFP, Thiruvananthapuram

A solar eclipse that reduced the sun to a blazing ring surrounding a sombre disk plunged millions of people in Africa and Asia into an eerie semi-darkness yesterday.

The spectacle, visible in a roughly 300-km (185-mile) band running 12,900km (8,062 miles) across the globe, set a record for the longest annular eclipse that will remain unbeaten for more than a thousand years.

An annular eclipse occurs when the Moon passes directly in front of the Sun but does not completely obscure it, thus leaving a ring -- an annulus -- of sunlight flaring around the lunar disk.

The Moon's shadow first struck the south-western tip of Chad and western Central African Republic at 0514 GMT and then reached Uganda, Kenya, and Somalia before racing across India, Bangladesh, Myanmar and China.

Local media in the affected areas issued warnings about the dangers of looking directly at the sun, but fascinated onlookers thronged streets to witness the celestial phenomenon.



PHOTO: AFP

A Chinese couple watches the solar eclipse over Zhengzhou, central China's Henan province yesterday.

## Suu Kyi meets minister

AP, Yangon

Detained Myanmar pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi yesterday held her first meeting this year with the cabinet official responsible for contact with her, as her party makes preparations for possible participation in elections.

Officials said Suu Kyi was taken from her home to meet for about 20 minutes with Relations Minister Aung Kyi. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to release information, did not know the contents of their talk.

## Pakistan should talk to Taliban, says Imran

AFP, London/ Peshawar

Cricketer turned politician Imran Khan called Thursday for the army to withdraw from Pakistan's tribal areas and for talks with the Taliban, warning that the country faced "catastrophe" otherwise.

Khan said the US-Pakistan military offensive in the areas bordering Afghanistan was turning locals massively against the United States and boosting support for the militants.

US drone strikes on militants were sparking "anger and hatred" in the area, said Khan,

who leads the marginal Tehrik-e-Insaf (Movement for Justice).

"The solution is to hold a dialogue with the militants," he told an audience at the Chatham House foreign policy thinktank in London. "The solution is to win them onto our side, not to bomb them with airstrikes."

Otherwise, he warned: "If we continue with this military operation we are facing a catastrophe."

The militants operating in the tribal areas did not share the beliefs of the Afghan Taliban, who wanted to create an Islamist state, he said.



PHOTO: AFP

A ferry makes its way through the ice in Stockholm Archipelago yesterday. During the winter, ferries continue sailing in the Baltic Sea, partly frozen between Sweden and Finland.

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