

# Independent

dailyindkhi@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

Karachi

Ph: 0300-3898091 Vol: 05. No. 213 Muharam-ul-Haram 03, 1444 AH Saturday July 22, 2023 Pages 04 Price Rs. 12.00

## PM urges OIC to put end to 'abominable practice' of desecration of holy books

Condemns Quran's desecration in Sweden; vows to campaign for decisions' reversal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday called upon the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the civilized world to come forward and take steps to put an end to the abominable practice of desecration of the holy books. "The attitudes that incite religious hatred, promote violence and encourage terrorism and militancy, need to be checked," he said in a tweet.

The prime minister said no civilized society would allow the desecration of holy personages, symbols and divine books in the name of freedom of expression. "The grant of permission to desecrate the Holy Quran, Torah & Bible is part of a sinister, vile and despicable agenda whose sole aim could be to threaten world peace," he said. The prime minister said: "We should not let a

handful of Satanic characters undermine our shared values of peace, and tolerance, pluralism." Meanwhile Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday strongly condemned the desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden and vowed to launch a campaign to seek a reversal of the decision of allowing the sacrilege of holy books. The prime minister, in a statement, said that from the platform of the

Organisations of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the government would help create a common strategy to get rid of evil. He said, "The OIC has to play a historic role in representing the sentiments of the Muslim Ummah and to do away with this evil." The prime minister said that he would campaign to reverse the decision to allow the desecration of the Torah, the Bible, and the Holy Quran.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs the 2nd meeting of Apex Committee of SIFC.



LARKANA: Chairman PPP and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari giving away house ownership right document to flood victims under the Sindh People's Housing Scheme during a visit to a house built for them at village of Vikia Sangi.

## Bilawal vows to provide ownership rights to flood-stricken people

LARKANA (INP): Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Friday vowed to provide ownership rights to the flood-stricken people. Addressing an event, Bhutto-Zardari expressed his resolve to build two million homes in Sindh during a speech. He continued, "From today, good days have started for the flood-stricken people". He admitted the masses were facing severe economic hardships. Bhutto-Zardari continued, "That is why we are bringing revolutionary projects for the public".

He pledged to adopt the ideology of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto to every nook and cranny of the Sindh districts. Bhutto-Zardari as-

serted: "By winning the general elections, we will expand the projects". The foreign minister took a swipe at the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief, saying, "The PTI's doctrine is to make the rich even richer." On Wednesday, Bhutto-Zardari commended the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). Expressing his thoughts in line with the MoFA's attempts for change management reforms, Bhutto-Zardari said, "In order to combat any obstacle, we have to be prepared."

Bhutto-Zardari asserted: "The MoFA played a noteworthy role in establishing the COP27 loss and damage fund".

## Military trials of civilians should not begin without informing SC: CJP

Right of appeal at an independent forum against the decision of a military court was a guarantee of fundamental rights, the chief justice observed; SC adjourns May 9 accused trial cases for indefinite time

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Friday adjourned hearing of petitions challenging the trial of accused involved in the May 9 riots in army courts for an indefinite time. A six-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Sayyed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi and Justice Ayesha Malik

heard the cases. During the course of proceedings, CJP Bandial questioned that how the May 9 incidents had affected the discipline of army, and whether "creating a hindrance in the work of an army officer and breaking of discipline" were mentioned in the law. The AGP replied that it was mentioned in the act. Justice Yahaya Afridi asked whether the accused, civilians or army personnel who come under the pur-

view of the Army Act, would not be entitled to basic human rights. The CJP remarked that the independence of judiciary was the base of justice in the country. The prosecution would decide the case under the Army Act and also hear the appeal, he added. The right of appeal at an independent forum against the decision of a military court was a guarantee of fundamental rights, the chief justice observed.

## SIFC approves projects for attracting investments from friendly countries

PM Shehbaz chairs second apex committee meeting of SIFC; COAS, CMs, federal and provincial ministers and high-level government officials

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Apex Committee of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) on Friday approved the projects for attracting investments from friendly countries in agricultural, livestock, minerals, mining, information technology, and energy sectors. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, chairing the second meeting of the Apex Committee, directed to extend impeccable facilitation to the investors, interested in undertaking and actualising the

projects. The meeting, which was attended by Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir, chief ministers, federal and provincial Ministers and high-level government officials, reviewed various projects presented by ministries under the umbrella of SIFC. The Apex Committee expressed satisfaction on functioning of the SIFC and its strategy to outreach the potential investors through conduct of seminars and project inaugurations.

## CM grieves over loss of lives in GB van accident

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has expressed his grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives in a van accident in Gilgit Baltistan here on Friday. He sympathized with the bereaved family members of the people, who lost their lives in the incident.

## SC dismisses curative review reference against Justice Faez Isa

ISLAMABAD (INP) - The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed the curative reference against SC puisne judge Justice Qazi Faez Isa. Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial dismissed the pleas after they were withdrawn.

The apex court announced the detailed verdict on the review petition filed by Justice Isa. Court dismissed the plea with 6-4.

## Petroleum dealers defer strike for two days

KARACHI: The Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) on Friday deferred fuel strike across country for two days. The move comes as State Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik arrived in Karachi to convince the PPDA to call off the strike. The association would hold another round of negotiations with the government after two days, the PPDA said.

## US supports fundamental democratic principles in Pakistan: State Dept

WASHINGTON (INP): State Department spokesperson Mathew Miller while briefing the media on Thursday said that US supports fundamental democratic principles in Pakistan.

Replying to a question regarding upcoming election in Pakistan, Mathew Miller said that US support the peaceful upholding of fundamental democratic principles such as free media, free speech and freedom of assembly. "We champion the

rule of law, not just in Pakistan but around the world. These principles are the foundations for democratic elections," he added. We respect the rule of law, not just in Pakistan but around the world, he said.

In respond to a question regarding a number of terrorist attacks in Pakistan which media intelligence reports said were planned in Afghanistan, he said "We will continue to urge the Taliban to fulfil their promises."

## Nasir Hussain Shah chairs introductory meeting PFC ensures fair distribution of funds in the province

KARACHI: The first meeting of the Provincial Finance Commission (PFC) was held under the chairmanship of Sindh Local Government Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah at the Finance Department, Sindh Secretariat Karachi.

The meeting was attended by Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Mayor Sukkur Arsalan Sheikh, Additional Chief Secretary Local Government Syed Najam Ahmad Shah, and Chairman of various District Councils. Meeting discussed the fair distribution of finance in the province and other related issues. On this occasion, Co-Chairman PFC Syed Nasir Shah ex-

plained the aims and objectives of forming the commission and highlighted its usefulness and necessity. He added that this is the first meeting of the commission, but the next meeting will be held under the chairmanship of Chairman Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah. The agenda of the board was discussed in the meeting and all the members of the boards introduced themselves in detail. Minister said that since the selection of all the members of the boards has been done by Chairman Bilawal Bhutto purely on merit, each member has experience and expertise in his field.

## PM enquires about health of President

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday telephoned President Dr Arif Alvi and enquired about his health. The prime minister wished an early recovery to President Alvi, who had received an injury on his right leg during jogging a few days ago. Shehbaz Sharif prayed to Allah Almighty to grant the best of health to President Alvi. The president thanked the prime minister for his kind wishes.

## Three killed, over 20 injured in M9 motorway accident

JAMSHORO (INP): Three passengers died and over 20 got injured in an accident on M9 Motorway on Friday. According to police, a passenger bus en route to Hyderabad from Karachi met an accident with a truck on the motorway. As a result, three passengers died on the spot while over 20 were injured. The injured and bodies were moved to nearby hospital by the rescue sources.

Earlier in Feb 2023, at least 14 members of a wedding party, including women and children, were killed and 64 people were injured after a bus fell into a ravine and overturned near Kallar Kahar.

## Mayor Karachi calls for ample arrangements for monsoon rains

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Friday directed elected representatives of the local government that during the monsoon rains, arrangements should be made for sanitation, drainage and disinfectant spray in all districts of Karachi. He said this while presiding over a meeting with the chairman and elected representatives of Malir, Gadap and Lyari towns in his office here.

He said that mud and garbage should be cleaned from the National Highway and availability of sanitary workers and better working relationship with the town administration should be ensured. Machinery required for municipal services should be transferred without delay and staff posted in different areas to monitor roads, streets and other places and respond immediately in case of any complaint, he added.

## Korea to establish IT Centre in Karachi: CG Yi Sungho

KARACHI (APP): Consul General of the Republic of Korea Yi Sungho, on Friday, informed that the Korean Government was setting up an IT Centre in Karachi to provide young IT startups an opportunity to start working with Korea.

The Korean envoy, during a visit to the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), said that the Korean government was keen to support Pakistan in developing its IT sector and an IT center has already been completed in Islamabad. He urged Pakistan to come up with strong policies to train and educate young people in the IT sector and must also invest

more money in education and training to find some geniuses who could bring revolution not only in IT but also in other sectors of the economy.

Korean Envoy pinpointing the low volume of bilateral trade between Pakistan and Korea observed "Trade between the two countries kept growing until 2019, but it suffered setbacks after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic which was followed by some economic difficulties in Pakistan". Efforts were being made to enhance existing trade volume, he added while expressing optimism that trade between Korea and Pakistan will rebound again in the future.

## Minorities minister reviews dev. projects

Independent Report KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Minority Affairs Giyan Chand Esrani chaired a meeting here Friday to review the ongoing development projects of his department.

The meeting about the progress of schemes at Mirpurkhas, Tharparkar and Umakot. While the concerned sub-engineers provided detailed information about the projects.



The Minister directed the officials to direct their duty with honesty so that the problems of the masses can be solved in time.

## DG Rangers urges scholars to promote religious harmony during Muharram

KARACHI (APP): Director General Pakistan Rangers Sindh Major General Azhar Waqas on Friday urged the scholars of all schools of thought, appealing to promote religious harmony and tolerance during the month of Muharram.

During the meeting, the DG Rangers apprised the scholars about security measures put in place for the holy month, reiterating the commitment to ensure foolproof security arrangements with other law enforcement agencies to maintain law and order, said a Rangers spokesman. It was also agreed during the meeting that in light of orders given by the provincial government, full compliance with the prevailing laws and code of conduct will be ensured as much as possible, besides taking action against the violators. The delegation of scholars appreciated the security measures taken by the law enforcement agencies and assured their full cooperation in that regard.



KARACHI: The first meeting of the Provincial Finance Commission (PFC) held under the chairmanship of Sindh Local Government Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah at the Finance Department, Sindh Secretariat Karachi.



## KP CM inaugurates Phase-I of Rashakai Special Economic Zone

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Azam Khan inaugurated Phase-I of the Rashakai Special Economic Zone, marking a significant milestone in China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) here on Friday.

The Rashakai Special Economic Zone, strategically located at the nexus of economic growth, stands as a testament to the strong partnership between Pakistan and China. CPEC has become a symbol of friendship between the countries and a model for cooperation between developing countries.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister appreciated the exceptional efforts and unwavering commitment of China Road

and Bridge Corporation (CRBC) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development & Management Company (KPEZDMC) for successfully completing Phase-I of the project six months before the completion date.

The chief minister thanked the government of China, the companies involved and public sector entities for their unflinching support to the project and all those who contributed to the completion Phase-I Rashakai SEZ.

Encompassing 247 acres of modern facilities designed to attract domestic and foreign investors, Phase I of the Rashakai SEZ promises to spur economic growth and job creation, further strengthening Paki-

stan-China cooperation and bilateral relations under the umbrella of CPEC. Presently, Phase-I houses 18 zone enterprises, with 07 under construction; mobilizing an estimated investment of Rs. 85 billion.

As the Rashakai SEZ takes its place on the path to becoming a catalyst for regional prosperity, creating employment opportunities for the local population, and attracting foreign direct investment, plans are already underway for the subsequent phase.

These forthcoming endeavors will focus on expanding infrastructure, streamlining business processes, and attracting key industries, unlocking the SEZ's full potential, as part of the ongoing decade of CPEC.



Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistani & HRD Mr. Sajid Husain Turi is inaugurating the residential flats for project of worker welfare Board at Peshawar.

## IGP appreciates role of scholars in promoting peace, inter-faith harmony, unity among Muslims

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police Punjab (IGP) Dr. Usman Anwar, while appreciating the role of Ulama in promoting peace, inter-faith harmony, and unity among Muslims said that the Ulama who propagate peace are champions of character as well as speech.

He said this while meeting the delegation of Ulama, and Scholars led by

Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khabir Azad, the Chairman of the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee at the Central Police Office here on Friday. In a delegation led by Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khabir Azad eminent scholars from all the schools of thought visited the Central Police Office and met IGP Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar.

During the meeting, IGP Punjab said that the

miscreants who are spreading hatred and anarchy on social media will be dealt with iron hands.

He said that police focal persons have been appointed for coordination among stakeholders during Ashura Muharram. Control rooms have been established for the monitoring of security of Muharram programs in all regions and districts including CPO office.



HYDERABAD: Impounded vehicles are ruining outside Hatri Bypass Police Station, showing the negligence of concerned authorities, in Hyderabad.

## May-9 cases: LHC withdraws stay order issued to Imran

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday withdrew a stay order issued to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan against coercive measures in May-9 cases, wherein he was not nominated.

The single bench comprising Justice Aalia Neehum heard the petition filed by the PTI chairman for consolidation of all cases of May-9 riots against him.

A junior counsel informed the court that senior counsel Sardar Latif Khosa was busy before the Apex court and requested to adjourn the proceedings. He also requested the court not to withdraw the stay order issued on the last hearing.

However, the court adjourned further proceedings for an indefinite time but did not extend the stay order.

## JUI-S chief advocates for peaceful observance of Muharram

AKORA, KHATTAK (APP): Chairman of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (S) Maulana Hamidul Haq Haqqani, on Friday urged the scholars and leaders nationwide to maintain a peaceful atmosphere throughout Muharram-ul-Haram.

Addressing a gathering at Jamia Darul Uloom Haqqania, he emphasized the essence of Islam as a religion of peace and harmony, advocating for moderation and tolerance.

He drew inspiration from the historical martyrdom of Imam Hussain (RA), highlighting its profound message of standing against injustice. The events of Karbala, Maulana Haqqani stressed, offer invaluable lessons of patience and resilience. With these principles in mind, he passionately appealed to all religious scholars and leaders to ensure that congregations and processions during Muharram remain free from discussions.

## GB Tourism – Enjoy nature but not on others cost

GILGIT-BALTISTAN (APP): Gilgit Baltistan, known for its stunning landscapes, snow-covered peaks and rich cultural heritage has always been an enchanting attraction for tourists with the region receiving staggering 10,000 tourists daily.

This influx of visitors brings economic prosperity to local people by flourishing their hotels, guesthouses, and resorts business and generating employment opportunities for local people especially youth running trekking, rental equipment, handicrafts, driving, and local delicacies businesses.

Although the breathtaking landscapes and adventurous opportunities leave indelible imprints on the minds of tourists, yet there are challenges like environmental degradation and careless driving, resulting in the loss of precious lives.

Popular tourist spots like Naltar, Fairy Meadows, Rama Astore, and Hunza once to be pristine, are now grappling with litter and pollution. Plastic waste, in particular, has become a major environmental hazard, threatening the health of wildlife and ecosystems.

Unregulated camping and trekking activities have also led to habitat disturbance that may have far-reaching consequences on biodiversity.

"Growing tourism is a blessing for our hotel business. We receive marvelous responses every year. It grows our business and generates employment opportunities for local people," said Qaiser Abbas a hotel owner from Naltar Bala, Gilgit.

"However, it exerts extra pressure on local habitats and the environment which direly needs to align business operations with sustainable practices for environmental protection."

## Dr. Javed says: Efforts being made to ensure best medical facilities to masses

MULTAN (APP): Punjab Caretaker Health Minister Dr Javed Akram said on Friday that the provincial government ensuring all possible efforts to provide the best medical facilities to masses across the province.

After participating in the 13th syndicate meeting of Nishtar Medical University, the caretaker minister said that as per directives of the Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi, all possible measures were being taken for bringing improvement in the performance of the health department and service delivery.

He said that the officers concerned have been directed to set up a model pharmacy in Nishtar Hospital, adding a screening of school kids would be made at educational institutes.

He said that a health screening certificate would be made compulsory for participating in the examination of the 9th class. He said that special focus was being paid on research work in medical institutes of the province. Earlier, the committee gave approval to different initiatives including the construction of the statue of Nishtar Medical University.



HYDERABAD: Security officials are standing high alert to avoid untoward incident during the Shiite Muslims mourning procession in connection of 2nd Muharram-ul-Haram, at Qadam Gha Mola Ali (R.A) in Hyderabad.

"Tourism industry makes us earn bread for our children. But it should not be at the cost of environmental degradation," he said. "We can encourage responsible tourism by educating our guests and local people to use eco-friendly amenities, reduce plastic waste and protect habitat to ensure the region's ecological balance."

Therefore, conservation efforts need to be intensified to protect the beauty of GB by striking a balance between tourism and environmental protection to ensure long-term sustainability and leave behind an asset for future generations.

"Improper waste generation especially plastic waste due to rising tourists' influx poses serious threats to the region's ecosystem and wildlife," said Abul Rehman Bukhari an environmental activist.

"Moreover, unregulated trekking and camping activities also cause habitat degradation in some areas."

He suggested awareness campaigns, workshops, and seminars to educate tourists about the harmful impact on the environment by their irresponsible behavior towards nature.

## International News

### Putin tells Poland any aggression against Belarus is attack on Russia

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin on Friday accused NATO member Poland of having territorial ambitions in the former Soviet Union, and said any aggression against Russia's neighbour and close ally Belarus would be considered an attack on Russia.

Moscow would react to any aggression against Belarus, which forms a loose "Union State" with Russia, "with all the means at our disposal", Putin told a meeting of his Security Council in televised remarks.

Warsaw's Security Committee decided on Wednesday to move mili-

tary units to eastern Poland after members of the Russian Wagner mercenary force arrived in Belarus, the state-run news agency PAP quoted its secretary as saying on Friday.

On Wednesday, Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin was shown in a video welcoming his fighters to Belarus, telling them they would take no further part for now in the war in Ukraine but ordering them to gather strength for Wagner's operations in Africa while they trained the Belarusian army.

Prigozhin says Wagner, which led the conquest of the Ukrainian city of Bakhmut, is Russia's

most effective fighting force. But his frequent clashes with the Moscow defence establishment led him to stage an armed mutiny four weeks ago.

The insurrection ended with an agreement that Wagner fighters - many recruited from prison - could move to Belarus if they wished.

On Thursday, Minsk said Wagner mercenaries had started to train Belarusian special forces at a military range just a few miles from the Polish border.

Russia has in recent weeks begun stationing tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus for the first time.



UXBRIDGE: Prime Minister Rishi Sunak visits Uxbridge to congratulate Conservative Party candidate, Steve Tuckwell, after he won the Uxbridge and South Ruislip by-election in Uxbridge, Britain.

### Russia hits grain terminals in southern Ukraine - governor

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: Russian missiles hit grain terminals at an agricultural enterprise in the Odesa region in a fourth successive night of air strikes on southern Ukraine, the regional governor said on Friday.

But Russia's attacks appeared less intense than on the three previous nights, when missiles and drones struck southern cities and ports after Moscow quit a U.N.-brokered deal allowing safe shipments of Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea.

Odesa's regional gov-

ernor, Oleh Kiper, said two people had been hurt in the attack on an agricultural enterprise but did not say where in the region the enterprise was located.

"Unfortunately, the grain terminals of an agricultural enterprise in Odesa region were hit. The enemy destroyed 100 tons of peas and 20 tons of barley," he said on the Telegram messaging app.

Kiper said Russia had attacked with Kalibr cruise missiles that were fired from the Black Sea at low altitude to bypass air defence systems.

He said two missiles hit the grain storage facilities, causing a fire. Another missile struck the same enterprise as the blaze was being extinguished, damaging agricultural and rescue equipment. Photographs from the scene showed a fire burning among crumpled metal buildings that appeared to be storehouses, and a badly damaged fire-fighting vehicle. Moscow says it has been carrying out "retaliatory strikes" this week after quitting the Black Sea grain export deal and accusing Ukraine of being behind blasts on Monday.

### Erdogan says Putin talks could lead to restoring Black Sea grain deal - media

**Monitoring Desk**  
ANKARA: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said his planned talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin could lead to restoration of the Black Sea grain initiative, and called on Western countries to consider Russia's demands, Turkish broadcasters reported on Friday.

"The termination of the Black Sea grain deal will have a series of consequences, ranging from the increase in global food prices to scarcity in certain regions and, potentially, leading to new waves of migration," Erdogan told reporters on a flight returning from a trip to Gulf coun-

tries and northern Cyprus.

"Believe that by thoroughly discussing the matter with President Putin, we can ensure the continuation of this humanitarian effort," Erdogan added.

Russia this week quit a deal - brokered by the United Nations and Turkey - that allowed the safe Black Sea export of Ukraine grain for the past year, and revoked guarantees of safe navigation. Since then, no ships have sailed from Ukrainian ports.

Moscow says it will return to the deal only if its demands are met for easier access for its own food and fertiliser exports to world markets.



Hun Manet, son of Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen, attends the final Cambodian People's Party (CPP) election campaign for the upcoming general election in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

### US plans second summit with Pacific island leaders in September

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: U.S. President Joe Biden will host a second summit with leaders of Pacific island nations in September, Joseph Yun, the U.S. official responsible for negotiations with three key Pacific island states said on Thursday. U.S. officials have said the summit is expected to take place around the time of the U.N. General Assembly meetings in New York in September.

Biden's national security adviser, Jake

Sullivan, said in May Biden would arrange another summit of Pacific island leaders this year after the disappointment caused by his cancellation of a visit to Papua New Guinea due to the domestic debt ceiling crisis. Biden hosted a first summit with the leaders last year.

"He has committed (to) holding a second summit in September this year," Yun told an event hosted by the Heritage Foundation think tank.

### British Prime Minister Sunak narrowly avoids wipeout in local polls

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's governing Conservatives lost two strategically important parliamentary seats on Friday but unexpectedly retained former leader Boris Johnson's old constituency in a setback for the opposition Labour Party.

The Conservatives' narrow victory in Uxbridge and South Ruislip gave Sunak some breathing space to try to narrow Labour's large lead in the polls by tackling inflation and a cost-

of-living crisis before a national vote expected next year. Sunak said the win showed that upcoming election was not a "done deal".

In a cafe in the constituency, he told reporters: "The message I take away is that we have to double down, stick to our plan and deliver for people."

But the scale of the challenge was highlighted by the loss of the once safe Conservative parliamentary seat of Selby and Ainsty in northern England.



Members of the Assam Pradesh Mahila Congress (Assam PMC) shout slogans as they take part in a demonstration against ongoing ethnic violence in India's north-eastern state of Manipur, in Guwahati.

### Turkiye urges Sweden to act over terrorism for NATO membership support

**Monitoring Desk**  
ISTANBUL: Turkey will act to ratify Sweden's NATO membership bid in conjunction with cooperation from Stockholm in the fight against terrorism, President Tayyip Erdogan was quoted on Friday as saying. Sweden and Finland applied for NATO membership last year in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, abandoning policies of military non-alignment that had lasted through the Cold War. Their applications must be approved by all members of the alliance.

Having held up ratification of Sweden's NATO bid for more than a year, Erdogan unexpectedly agreed after the alliance's summit in Lithuania this month to forward it to Turkey's parliament when the legislature reconvenes in October. "Turkish parliament's working schedule will determine the process of Sweden's NATO membership (ratification)."

