

Headlines:

- **Anti-Muslim Incidents Rose 57% Last Year, according to a New Report**
- **Donald Trump Considering Sending More US Troops to Afghanistan in Major Strategy Shift**
- **Attacks on India's Minority Muslims by Hindu Vigilantes Mount**

Details:

Anti-Muslim Incidents Rose 57% Last Year, according to a New Report

The number of anti-Muslim incidents and crimes in the U.S. surged last year to some of the highest levels seen in recent times, according to a new report from a prominent Muslim civil rights organization. The report by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) documented a 57% increase in anti-Muslim incidents last year compared with 2015. The victims included mosques set on fire, women whose hijabs were pulled off while walking down the street, Muslim groups that received threatening letters and Muslims who were denied jobs or promotions because of their faith or were "inappropriately targeted" for questioning by the FBI or other government agencies, the report said. To produce the report, released Tuesday, CAIR investigated thousands of calls and emails made to dozens of its offices around the U.S. and reviewed data from national and local media reports. The process included interviews with witnesses and police. Not all the incidents were reported to police or documented as crimes by law enforcement. CAIR said its report is a "mere snapshot of the experiences of the American Muslim community." Officials suggested the report offered a more accurate picture than police data because anti-Muslim crimes are "vastly underreported to both law enforcement and community institutions." "It is time for the Trump administration to seriously address the growing anti-minority sentiment in our nation," said Corey Saylor, who co-wrote the report and is the director of CAIR's Department to Monitor and Combat Islamophobia. Saylor said the rise was "prompted at least in part" by President Trump during last year's campaign, including his promise to ban Muslim travel into the U.S. and his declaration that "Islam hates us." Saylor also cited the president's "toxic campaign rhetoric, the appointment of Islamophobes to policymaking posts and the introduction of Islamophobic policies such as the 'Muslim ban.'" [Source: LA Times]

Rise in violence against Muslims is expected; however, Trump is not the only culprit. The American media owned by wealthy capitalists routinely denigrate Islam and Muslims. The far right interpret this as an open license to vilify Islam and behave violently towards Muslims.

Donald Trump Considering Sending More US Troops to Afghanistan

In a major strategy shift, the US could send an additional 3,000 troops to Afghanistan – or perhaps more – as part of a major shift away from the policy of President Donald Trump's predecessor Barack Obama. Senior Trump administration and military officials are reportedly recommending the expansion of the US's military strength in the country to aid Afghan security forces and push back against a resurgent Taliban. The White House would have to approve the proposals, likely before the next NATO meeting on 25 May in Brussels. There are 13,000 NATO troops currently in the country, 8,400 of which are from the US. More than 2,000 of them are involved in missions against terrorist groups Isis and al-Qaeda, but the majority are part of a mission that trains, advises and assists Afghan security forces in their fight against the Taliban insurgency. The recommendations come after General John Nicholson, commander of the American-led international military force in Afghanistan, told Congress in February that he needed a few thousand more troops to effectively train and

advise Afghan soldiers, warning that the US and its NATO allies were facing a military deadlock, 15 years after first sending troops to the country. Afghan forces have had heavy casualties over the past year as they have tried to prevent the Taliban from capturing provincial capitals. President Donald Trump has yet to announce his decision on his Afghan strategy. During the campaign, he repeatedly said that he would put "America first", expressing scepticism about allowing the US to get caught up in foreign conflicts, while also vowing to defeat Islamist extremists. The US military presence in Afghanistan began in 2001, in response to the 11 September terror attacks. The amount of US troops remained low in the country compared to other large operations in Iraq that started in 2003. After a 30,000-troop reinforcement in 2009 under Mr Obama, the number reached a peak of 100,000 in 2010. The Obama administration set in place timelines for reducing the number of US troops as Afghan forces became more in charge of their own security. The question is whether US and Afghan forces, even if bolstered by a new strategy involving more troops and authorities to target the Taliban, can bring enough pressure to push the war toward a settlement. Critics against an escalation have argued that even the Obama-era surge did not bring any Taliban concessions. [Source: The Independent]

After it is apparent that the US is not winning the war in Afghanistan, it shifted its principal motive to maintain the legitimacy of the Afghan government, and use the country as a forward operating base to project power in Eurasia.

Attacks on India's Minority Muslims by Hindu Vigilantes Mount

One April afternoon, a group of men clad in saffron scarves barged into a house in Meerut, 40 miles northeast of here, and dragged out a young Muslim man and a Hindu woman. Their offense: They were an interfaith couple in love. The men, part of a self-appointed enforcement group called the Hindu Youth Brigade, beat the man, videotaped the incident and then handed him over to police for charges of obscenity. The traumatized woman, who wept and covered her face with her scarf, was let off with a warning. "We are not against love, but this guy changed his name (to a Hindu one) to mislead the girl. Let police investigate," said Nagendar Pratap Singh Tomar, chief of the brigade. The April 12 Meerut incident is the latest example of Hindu vigilantes attacking Muslims in this overwhelmingly Hindu country, especially with the gains made by the ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in March elections. Several similar attacks have occurred since March, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi chose an anti-Muslim firebrand, Yogi Adityanath, to be chief minister of India's largest state, Uttar Pradesh, the heartland of the nation's Hindu population. Also in April, two dairy farmers returning from a cattle fair in a northern state were attacked by vigilantes, leaving one dead and the other seriously wounded. Cows are considered sacred by Hindus, who make up 80% of India's population of 1.3 billion. "We had purchased the cows legally for dairy farming, but our vehicle was intercepted by these men and they beat us up so badly that my neighbor died," Azmat Khan, 27, from a remote village in Haryana, said from his bed. India's main opposition party, the Indian National Congress, said Muslims feel a deep sense of dread since Modi, a fierce Hindu nationalist, took office in 2014. "For the last 30 months, a climate of fear and insecurity is created by repeated, deliberate, divisive and provocative statements," said Abhishek Manu Singhvi, a member of parliament and spokesman for the Congress party. "They are seeking to impose a single uniform ethic ... whether it is in relation to food, dress, culture or thinking." Modi's party strongly disagrees. "There has been an attempt by rival parties and sections of the media to stoke a persecution complex among minorities based on rare, isolated events," said BJP spokesperson Narasimha Rao. "Propaganda by vested interests has miserably failed because it is unreal, fabricated and fictional." [Source: US Today]

The world's largest democracy savagely kills Muslims for eating cows. This is the status of a country that prides itself as a beacon of democracy and tolerance for Asia, and yet it encourages the senseless killing of Muslims for eating meat. Is India fit to lead Asia?