

Headlines:

- **Turkey Seeking to Expand Influence Among Europe's Muslims**
- **Macron Calls for Inter-Religious Dialogue at End of Egypt Visit**
- **Pakistan's Central Bank Raises Interest Rates to Appease IMF**

Details:

Turkey Seeking to Expand Influence Among Europe's Muslims

Ankara plans to widen its influence among Muslims in western European countries following steps by the European governments of Germany and Austria, to weaken Turkey's grip, wrote Thomas Siebert in his column for the Arab Weekly. A secretariat in Ankara has been tasked with organising Europe-wide meetings of Muslims every two years following a 3-day conference in, Germany held under the auspices of Turkey's state religious authorities and attendance Muslim Brotherhood representatives, Siebert said. The meeting in Cologne, organised by Turkey's Directorate for Religious Affairs (Diyanet), and its German affiliate, known as Ditib, saw attendance from the European Council for Fatwa and Research, an organisation in Dublin with close links to the Muslim Brotherhood, with local officials saying they had no knowledge of the gathering, according to local newspaper Kolner Stadt-Anzeiger. Diyanet is an important tool of soft power for Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan who often casts himself in the role of a protector of Muslims everywhere, Seibert wrote, noting that the religious body sends hundreds of Turkish imams to Germany and other European countries while constructing of dozens of mosques beyond Turkey's borders. The directorate's affiliate Ditib runs about 900 mosques in the country, which is home to nearly 5 million Muslims. European countries are wary of Erdogan's efforts to use the millions of people of Turkish origin in Europe for its political ends, Seibert wrote, noting that Ankara accuses Europe of turning a blind eye on an increase in Islamophobia on the continent. "Turkey has been sending imams to mosques in Germany, Austria and other European countries for decades but that role has come under scrutiny in recent years," the Arab Weekly article said, pointing to news reports in Germany accused Ditib of spying on Erdogan critics in Turkish mosques in Germany, a charge denied by the association. Germany's Interior Minister Horst Seehofer last November called for an "Islam for Germany, an Islam of Germans" asking Muslim congregations in his country to phase out financial support from abroad, in what was seen as a reference to Turkey. Meanwhile Austria's government last year closed a total of seven Turkish-run mosques and initiated investigations against 40 imams over allegations that they were accepting money from Turkey. The conference in Cologne was a sign that Turkey was trying to gain a supervising role over Muslim groups in Europe, according to Volker Beck, a former German lawmaker who teaches at the Centre for Religious Studies at Ruhr University in Bochum, Germany. Turkey's top religious body is looking to "tie Muslims in all of Europe to Turkey" with the help of the coordination body supported by the Cologne meeting, Beck said on Twitter. "Erdoğan sees these debates as a European attempt to curb his influence, and responds not only by strengthening his patronage of Turkish Muslims, but also other Muslim diasporas," Seibert quoted Aykan Erdemir, a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, as saying.. [Source: Ahval]

The only way for Erdogan to have greater influence over Europe and protect Muslims in European countries is to re-establish the Khilafah state (Caliphate) on the way of the Prophethood. Indeed, since the time of Haroon Rashid to Abdul Majeed, the Khilafah state was able to do both.

Macron Calls for Inter-Religious Dialogue at End of Egypt Visit

French President Emmanuel Macron met on Tuesday with Egypt's top clerics and called for inter-religious dialogue at the end of a three-day visit aimed at boosting ties while raising human rights concerns. Macron and Pope Tawadros II stressed the need for "dialogue between religions" as he met with Pope Tawadros II at St Mark's Cathedral, seat of Egypt's ancient Coptic Orthodox Church. "I decided that a new conference will be held in Paris to see how to act more effectively," he said, without giving details. A diplomatic source said the French capital would host a forum on religious minorities in the Middle East, but without giving a date. Macron visited the church adjacent to the cathedral that was the site of a December 2016 jihadist attack which killed 29 people. He also met in Cairo with Ahmed al-Tayeb, the grand imam of Al-Azhar, the most prestigious seat of Sunni Islamic learning in Egypt. Their talks centred on "the training of imams (prayer leaders) in France and the fight against the misguided vision of religion", the French presidency said. On Monday, the human rights situation in Egypt was at the centre of talks between Macron and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. Their different visions were on show at a joint news conference where Macron said respect of freedoms was inseparable from stability while Sisi said security was the priority for Egypt's 100-million population. [Source: News24].

Egypt does not need dialogue on religion, it needs emancipation from Western slavery through the establishment of Khilafah Rashida. Under the Khilafah, Egypt was the bulwark against the expansion of the crusades and eventually uprooted the crusades and expelled them from Muslim lands. Today, under Sisi, Egypt is eager to give crusaders like Macron greater authority over Egyptian affairs.

Pakistan's Central Bank Raises Interest Rates to Appease IMF

Pakistan's central bank raised its key policy rate by 25 basis points to 10.25 percent on Thursday in the face of high fiscal and current account deficits and continuing inflation pressure, Governor Tariq Bajwa said. The move comes as Pakistan, which has opened talks with the International Monetary Fund about a possible bailout, faces a struggle to avoid a balance of payments crisis that has left it with growing debts and foreign exchange reserves sufficient only to cover two months of imports. "Despite narrowing the current account deficit, it remains high, the fiscal deficit is elevated, core inflation is persistently high," he told a news conference in Islamabad. "This situation calls for principled consolidation efforts." While headline consumer price inflation has eased in recent months, due mainly to a fall in food and petroleum prices, core inflation reached 8.4 percent in December. Average headline consumer price inflation averaged 6 percent in the first half of the 2019 fiscal year to June. He said the projected rate of inflation remained unchanged at 6.5-7.5 percent, weighing on overall economic performance. [Source: Reuters]

Despite announcing the budget, the mini budget and debasing the rupee, the government is now raising interest rates. Raising interest rates makes borrowing expensive, dissuades economic activity and increases unemployment. Throughout these policy measures, Imran Khan's government has maintained the façade of independence but the reality is that IMF is dictating Pakistan's economic policy. This has been the case since the early 1980s, and the IMF has eroded Pakistan's economic sovereignty. Yet IK wants Pakistanis to believe that he will turn things around.