

Headlines:

- **European Rights Body Asks Austria to Withdraw Controversial Islam Map**
- **Pakistan's Trade Deficit Increases**
- **Anger Brewing on Indian Archipelago Over Anti-Muslim Legislation**

Details:

European Rights Body Asks Austria to Withdraw Controversial Islam Map

Government website pinpoints more than 620 mosques and Islamic associations, with location, address, and names of officials, drawing criticism from Council of Europe which has called the map "extremely discriminatory." Calls are growing for Chancellor Sebastian Kurz to withdraw the controversial "Islam map" that pinpoints more than 620 mosques and Islamic associations across the country, with Council of Europe calling it "extremely discriminatory." Publication of the map is hostile to Muslims and potentially counterproductive, the top European human rights body said in a statement on Monday. Countering extremism and ideologies that spread dangerous narratives under the guise of freedom of religion is an important national security task but the map serves "existing resentments" and many Muslims feel it as "extremely discriminatory," the statement noted. "They feel stigmatised and threatened in their security by the publication of addresses and other details." Last week, Austria's Integration Ministry launched a website providing details of the country's 620 mosques and Islamic associations, with the location, address and names of officials. Minister Susanne Raab defended the publication, saying the objective was to fight the political ideologies and not religion. But local Muslim organisations have accused the government of stigmatising the country's roughly 800,000 Muslim population as a potential danger to the society and threatened to file a lawsuit against Chancellor Kurz. Kurz has vowed to criminalise "political Islam" through a legislation. The controversial anti-terror law has however dropped the term "political Islam" with "religiously motivated extremism." [Source: TRT]

Europe's hatred towards Islam and Muslims knows no bounds. European governments routinely trounce on freedom of religion when it comes to Islam. With rising nationalism across Europe vilification of Islam and Muslims will grow.

Pakistan's Trade Deficit Increases

Pakistan's trade deficit has expectedly widened sharply during May, the ministry of commerce data showed on Wednesday. The gap between what the country sells to the world and what it buys from it 'ballooned' last month by 134pc to \$3.4bn from \$1.5bn a year ago. That the nation's import bill for the month shot up by a hefty 77.8pc to \$5.1bn during the month is attributable to last year's lower import base when the import bill dropped to \$2.9bn on the back of the drastically reduced domestic demand because of the Covid-19 pandemic and consequent economic shutdown to halt the spread of infections. The more than 25pc drop in the monthly exports also contributed significantly to the widening trade gap. The trade deficit has been increasing since December primarily because of faster growth in imports than in exports. Overall, the gap has expanded by 29.5pc to \$27.3bn in the 11-month period between July and April from \$21.1bn in the same period last fiscal year. Imports rose by 22pc to \$49.9bn and exports by 14pc to \$22.6bn. But the question is: should we be worried about the rising gap between what we import and what we export? There's not much to worry about the rising import bill. This was expected. Two factors have played a major role in the

increased import bill this fiscal from last year. First, the import of food, including wheat and sugar, and cotton have pushed imports more than was estimated at the beginning of the financial year. Next year, these imports are expected to moderate on better domestic crop yields. Two, the revival of economic activities and a surge in the demand for Pakistani exports has driven up imports of raw materials as well as machinery for technology replacement and capacity expansion. Moreover, the country's current account remains in surplus in spite of the widened trade deficit as the surging remittances have largely offset the impact of increased imports. The external sector is unlikely to face any serious financing challenge in the next one to two years if the remittances continue to grow at the same pace. But the long-term balance of payments stability requires the government to boost exports through product and market diversification. Additionally, it must tweak its policies and learn to respect contracts it makes with investors to give confidence to investors for attracting longer-term, non-debt creating foreign direct investment flows to sustainably grow the economy. [Source: Dawn]

In the absence of a major industrialization policy, Pakistan will continue to experience trade deficits and will be beholden to the IMF for the foreseeable future.

Anger Brewing on Indian Archipelago Over Anti-Muslim Legislation

In a rare show of discontent on the Lakshadweep islands, off the coast of the southern Indian state of Kerala, locals are complaining about a string of policies initiated by a new administrator appointed five months ago. They warn that the changes, seen by some as blatantly anti-Muslim, threaten the peace and "COVID-free status" of the Muslim-majority archipelago. Lakshadweep is a union territory run by an administrator appointed by the central government. Only 10 of its 36 islands, which are spread across a 32-square-kilometer area in the Arabian Sea, are inhabited. Muslims account for 93 percent of the islands' 70,000-strong population. Kerala, the closest Indian state, is 240 kilometers away. Since India's independence in 1947 the administration of the archipelago was always overseen by a bureaucrat, until December last year when the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, appointed former politician Praful Khoda Patel as its administrator. Patel was Modi's home minister in the western Indian state of Gujarat before Modi became prime minister in 2014. In the five months since taking up his position, Patel has announced a series of decisions that have sparked controversy, such as a proposed ban on the slaughter of cows and the consumption of beef; draft legislation that would disqualify people with more than two children from contesting local elections; and the introduction in January of the Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Act (PASA), a draconian law under which individuals can be detained, without any public disclosure, for up to a year. Another contentious proposal from his office is the Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation 2021, a draft law that gives the administrator the power to remove or relocate islanders from their properties if required by planning or development activities. Locals are outraged by what they see as the "majoritarian mindset" behind the policies, and Patel is facing opposition from islanders and politicians in Lakshadweep and neighboring Kerala. "There is a lot of anger among locals over decisions taken by the administrator," Dr. Ayshabi Kalpeni, chief medical officer at the Life Care Hospital in Malappuram, Kerala, told Arab News. [Source: Arab News]

Since the ascendancy of Mod's regime no Muslim state in India has been spared Islamophobic policies. Today even remote islands with majority Muslim populations are subject to extreme Hindu policies, which is making life unbearable for Muslims. The only salvation for Muslims India is to work for the re-establishment of the Khilafah (Caliphate), which will protect the rights of both Hindus and Muslims.