

Headlines:

- **The Role of the West in the Plight of Indian Muslims**
- **After Agreement with IMF, Pakistan Gets \$2.3 Billion Loan from China**
- **Ukraine War Highlights Stakes of Chinese Attack on Taiwan**

Details:

**The Role of the West in the Plight of Indian Muslims**

The national spokesperson of India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Nupur Sharma recently came under fire for her derogatory comments against the Prophet Muhammad on national television. Amidst growing international pressure, the BJP distanced itself from her remarks, describing it as the views of the fringe. In the wake of the international debate sparked by this event, far-right Dutch politician and lawmaker Geert Wilders, known for his anti-immigrant and anti-Islam stance, expressed his support for Sharma calling it brave and heroic. Wilders views were quickly circulated on social media platforms and mainstream media alike. Many prominent Indian news channels went on to give a platform to Wilders on their prime time debates where he was given space to openly express his anti-Muslim views. There is a visible convergence of narratives across Europe, the US and Asia into a language anchored around the Muslim faith with anti-Islam sentiment increasingly becoming the organisational principle for far-right politics and a vehicle for its global expansion. The establishment of the Muslim figure as the opponent of democratic values, an infiltrator and a polluter of cultures can be traced back to a vocabulary that was produced in the post-9/11 era against the backdrop of the global "War on Terror". Increasingly, the logic of securing borders from Muslim "invaders" is also being exported to South Asia, with the key difference being that Muslims who have lived for centuries on these lands are being declared as outsiders. There is a common perception of Islamophobia as a problem specific to Western countries with Muslim immigrant populations, but this obscures the increasingly hostile conditions of the countries of the Global South. Hindutva, the central ideology of the ruling party of India, cannot be exhausted through its religious character. Hindutva, or Hindu Nationalism, is a deeply territorial and racial idea of citizenship. To use the words of the founder of this ideology, "To be a Hindu means a person who sees this land, from the Indus River to the sea, as his country but also as his Holy Land," according to which Muslims and Christians are forever seen as outsiders with no real claim to citizenship. The role of prominent leaders of the west, in normalising the image of Modi, cannot be overstated, who didn't just remain silent as Modi ascended to power but also actively endorsed this shift in Indian politics admiring Modi as a hero of progress. He is the same man who had been banned from many Western countries, including the United States, because of his role in the Gujarat pogrom, which was all conveniently forgotten as he became the Prime Minister. Modi has received immense admiration not just from someone like Trump who called him "a great man and a great leader" committed to protecting "innocent civilians from the threat of radical Islamic terrorism" at the Howdy Modi rally held in Houston, but also from a leader like Barack Obama who has openly shown his admiration for Modi's work ethic. Today again it is the language of the imperialists that has facilitated the demarcating of Muslims as a foreign barbaric community and in legitimising their subordination. [Source: TRT World]

**It is true to some degree that Modi's onslaught against Indian Muslims would have not been possible without tacit support from the West. Nevertheless, it is Modi's close relationship with the rulers of the Muslim world that encourages him to propagate his bigotry against Indian Muslims and also to enslave them to the ideology of Hindutva.**

**After Agreement with IMF, Pakistan Gets \$2.3 Billion Loan from China**

The cash-strapped Pakistan's economy received a major boost on Thursday when China's consortium of banks approved a loan of \$2.3 billion (Dh 8.44 billion) for the country. A day earlier too, the market sentiment took a U-turn when it received the positive news of an imminent deal with the IMF. Both the deals have reversed the rupee downward slide and on Thursday, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan, the value of Pak Rupee was appreciated by Rs4 against the US dollar and reached Rs206.50 from the previous day's closing rate of Rs210.50. On average, the price of the

dollar is expected to go down by Rs8-Rs10 once the country receives the tranche from the IMF as well as China's banks. Miftah Ismail on Wednesday in a tweet had announced the news of the deal with the Chinese banks saying the RMB 15 billion (\$2.3 billion) loan facility is expected within a couple of days. Pakistan urgently needed a deal with the IMF to restore the stalled \$6 billion (Dh 22.03 billion) assistance package but was also required to enter dialogues with other monetary forums and friendly countries for financial support. They wanted Pakistan to remain committed to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan programme and get the much-need 'good health certificate' from the agency. Last month, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) too indicated providing \$2.5 billion (Dh 9.18 billion) in additional loans to Pakistan, but made it clear that the government would have to secure a good economic health certificate from the IMF. The ADB statement was issued after a meeting between Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Dr Aisha Ghous Pasha and the Country Director of the ADB, Yong Ye. In return for the IMF deal, the Pakistan government accepted some tough conditions and increased the prices of the petroleum products which unleashed a spell of inflation and price hike across the country. The Shehbaz Sharif-government blames the previous government of Imran Khan for this bitter pill it has to swallow now. Among the tough measures, the government has agreed to impose 1pc poverty tax on firms earning PKR 150 million (Dh 26,215), 2pc on those earning PKR 200 million (Dh 34,954) 3pc on over PKR 250 million (Dh 4.36 million) and 4pc on PKR 300 million (Dh 5.243 million) and above. In the original budget, the government had set a 2pc poverty tax only on those earning PKR 300 million and above. The government also agreed to do away with the subsidies on electricity bills granted by the Imran Khan's government days before their departure. [Source: Gulf News].

**There are no friendly countries that will lend to Pakistan on reasonable terms. The so called friends of Pakistan will only lend on condition that IMF terms are implemented. This is because they know full well that IMF's chief concern is to ensure money borrowed by Pakistan is returned back to creditors with interest, and not to build an economy that can stand on its own feet.**

### **Ukraine War Highlights Stakes of Chinese Attack on Taiwan**

An authoritarian nuclear superpower invading a smaller but determined U.S.-armed neighbor is not the stuff of theoretical war games any more. "Ukraine led threat perceptions to rise all over Asia," said James Crabtree, executive director for the Singapore office of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, which organizes the Shangri-La event. "Defense establishments suddenly thought geopolitical calamities previously thought highly unlikely were suddenly possible, with Taiwan merely being the most obvious potential flashpoint in a region riven with potential tensions." Those "threat perceptions" after Russian President Vladimir Putin's onslaught against Ukraine have split into two broad categories for China. Beijing has to make both military calculations about taking on a country backed by Washington and also weigh up the global economic impact — on supply chains and its own exports — should China be hit by American, European and Japanese sanctions as Russia has been. The lesson from Ukraine for Chinese President Xi Jinping — on both counts — is that the risks are extremely high. China has considerable military superiority over Taiwan — just like Russia over Ukraine — but an amphibious assault on an island 100 miles away is no walkover. Backed by the U.S., Taiwan would be able to strike at vessels making the crossing and any landing against well dug-in troops could be hazardous for the untested People's Liberation Army. Xi will not want to suffer the huge casualties that Russia is taking in Ukraine. Conversely, in the other camp, many Taiwanese strategists have been shocked by how rapid Russia's military buildup was, and how devastating the consequences can be. For now, Taiwan's overall mood is one of careful examination. The island's top spymaster said last month that Beijing would be "more cautious" about its war plans, given Russia's poor performance in Ukraine. "Similarly Taiwan will learn how to advance ourselves," said Chen Ming-tong, chief of the National Security Bureau. There's no doubting that events in Eastern Europe are at the forefront of planning in Taipei. Joseph Wu, Taiwan's foreign minister, said that the government "are taking the war in Ukraine into very serious internal discussions." "One of the tactics that has been successful so far is the asymmetric capability. And that is something that we are learning from and we want to discuss further with the United States," Wu told NPR. [Source: Politico]

**The biggest hurdle China faces in the liberation of Taiwan is self-belief. At present China lacks the political will to take on the US and annex Taiwan to the mother land, and it matters very little whether China has superior technology or armed forces in comparison to the US.**