

## Headlines:

- **Pope, in Morocco, Hopes to Boost King's Moderate Islam Vision**
- **Trump's Golan Move Unites Gulf States and Iran in Condemnation**
- **US Envoy Stirs Controversy with Tweet criticising Imran Khan, Draws Ire from Pakistan**

## Details:

### **Pope, in Morocco, Hopes to Boost King's Moderate Islam Vision**

Pope Francis makes a lightning trip to Morocco this weekend to promote inter-religious dialogue and support efforts by the North African country's King Mohammed VI to spread a moderate form of Islam. Francis, who will spend only about 27 hours in the country, is making his first visit there and the first by a pope since 1985. Morocco, which is nearly 100 percent Muslim, has marketed itself as an oasis of religious tolerance in a region torn by militancy - and has offered training to Muslim preachers from Africa and Europe on what it describes as moderate Islam. Shortly after he arrives on Saturday, Francis and the king will visit an institute the monarch founded in 2015 for the training of imams and male and female preachers of Islam. The Vatican said it will be the first time a pope visits such a school. The king founded the school, which is named after him, and it is attended by students from Africa and Europe. "The king is very committed to containing fundamentalist tendencies and this is a very significant place, not only for Morocco, but for all of the Magreb," Vatican spokesman Alessandro Gisotti told reporters at a briefing on the trip on Thursday. Two student imams - one from Europe and one from Africa - will tell the pope and the king of their experiences. In a video message to Moroccans, Francis said he was making the trip as a "a pilgrim of peace and of fraternity, in a world which has great need of both". He said Christians and Muslims had to respect each other's diversity and help each other. Roman Catholics - most of them expatriate Europeans, mainly French, and sub-Saharan African migrants - make up less one percent of the population of about 35 million. With only about 23,000 Catholics in the country, nearly half of them will attend a papal Mass at a stadium on Sunday. "Even if some people practice their faith, there are may be some frustrations," said Bonkoulou Loubaki Daria Thiphaine, a social worker from Congo Brazzaville who has been living in Morocco for 14 years. "Yes, they go to churches but they ask themselves what is really the proof that Morocco accepts us as Christians? I think that with the pope's visit, everyone will understand that even if Morocco is a Muslim country, Christians are welcome here", she said. "Foreign Christians" such as Thiphaine and Moroccan Jews, who are recognised by the constitution, are allowed to worship openly. But the authorities do not recognise Moroccan converts to Christianity and many of those worship secretly in homes. The Vatican considers the trip a spiritual continuation of Francis' historic visit to the United Arab Emirates last month, when he became the first pope to set foot on the Arabian Peninsula. [Source: Reuters].

**Since the declaration of the crusades by Pope Urban II in 1095, the Catholic Church has been waging war on Islam using different styles and means. In 1095 Pope Urban declared that Christians in Europe to war against Muslims in order to reclaim the Holy Land, with a cry of "Deus volt!" or "God wills it!" Today, with the aid of compliant Muslim rulers the Catholic Church has changed tact and is engaged in malicious efforts to change the face of Islam through dialogue and tolerance.**

### **Trump's Golan Move Unites Gulf States and Iran in Condemnation**

US President Donald Trump's decision to recognise Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights has united Washington's Gulf Arab allies and regional foe Iran in condemnation. Trump broke with decades of US policy on Monday, recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the strategic territory it seized from Syria in 1967 and later annexed in a move never recognized by the international community. On Tuesday, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait all criticised Washington's decision, describing the territory as occupied Arab land. Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, two close allies of the US, said the move was an impediment to peace and security in the region. For once, the Gulf States were in agreement with arch-foe Iran, which described Trump's decision as a throwback to a bygone era of colonial land grabs. "In a point of time when colonialism ruled, some colonialist powers did such things and bestowed parts of one country to another, but this is unprecedented in the present century," said Iran's President Hassan Rouhani, according to the

official government website. "Nobody could have believed that a man would come in America and unilaterally and against all international laws and regulations give away a land belonging to one country to an aggressor," the Iranian leader added. Trump, with visiting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu looking over his shoulder during a visit to Washington, signed a proclamation on Monday officially granting US recognition of the Golan Heights as Israeli territory. Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria in a 1967 war and annexed it in 1981, in a move the UN Security Council said was unlawful. The US is the first country to recognise Israel's sovereignty over the Golan, which the rest of the international community regards as Israeli-occupied. Trump's recognition "will have significant negative effects on the peace process in the Middle East and the security and stability of the region", said a statement on Saudi state news agency SPA. [Source: France24].

**Trump's recognition of Golan could not have been possible without the clandestine support of Islamic countries. Trump's plan (buttressed by regional leaders) for the Blessed Land - Palestine is clear: legitimize the current reality on the ground and then ask the Muslim world to accept a deleted Palestinian state and that it is part of the Islamic land for the entire Muslim Ummah.**

### **US Envoy Stirs Controversy with Tweet criticising Imran Khan, Draws Ire from Pakistan**

US Ambassador to Afghanistan John R. Bass has stirred controversy after taking to Twitter late Wednesday to 'school' Prime Minister Imran Khan on diplomacy while accusing him of 'ball-tampering' in the Afghan peace process. "Some aspects of cricket apply well in diplomacy, some do not. Imran Khan, important to resist temptation to ball-tamper with the Afghanistan peace process and its internal affairs," he tweeted. The remarks drew a sharp response from Pakistan, with many wondering how a diplomatic representative could insult the prime minister of a neighbouring country by accusing him of being a cheat. Mosharraf Zaidi, columnist and activist, termed the Tweet an embarrassment for the US. He said the Foreign Office should respond — in a strong, swift and unflinching manner — to the diatribe. He added that mid-level bureaucrats publicly speaking like this about the prime minister (of Pakistan) is a red line. Imaan Zainab, lawyer, blogger and rights activist, also advised the US envoy to introspect. "The US talking about the 'internal affairs' of another country is laughable. Does the ambassador need to be reminded of US meddling in Chile, Vietnam, Nicaragua, Iran, Iraq... The list is long and Twitter characters are limited. Perhaps Bass ought to pick up a history book." Government representatives too added their voices to the growing condemnation. Finance Minister Asad Umar criticised the US envoy and raised questions over the envoy's diplomatic skills. "Your tweet shows you understand neither cricket nor diplomacy," he said. "With the Afghan peace process at such a critical juncture, [I] hope the US will be able to find better diplomatic skills to deal with the delicate issues at hand." The latest diplomatic falling out over the Afghan peace process stemmed from a news report stating that Prime Minister Imran Khan had "suggested" the setting up of an interim setup in Afghanistan. The premier had allegedly told journalists on Monday that forming an interim Afghan government would smooth peace talks between the United States and Taliban officials since the militant group refuses to speak to the current government, but the Foreign Office later said the remarks had been misreported. Afghanistan had recalled its own ambassador in Islamabad, and summoned Pakistan's deputy ambassador in Kabul to discuss what it described as "irresponsible" remarks by Prime Minister Khan. The Afghan government deemed Khan's statements as "an obvious example of Pakistan's interventional policy and disrespect to the national sovereignty and determination of the people of Afghanistan," an Afghan foreign affairs ministry spokesperson had said. In a tweet, US Special Envoy for Afghan Peace and Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad — who has been leading peace talks with the Taliban — had also appeared to criticise the prime minister's reported comments. He said, "While Pakistan has made constructive contributions on the Afghan Peace Process, PM Khan's comments did not." [Source: Dawn]

**After Musharraf's capitulation to America's war on global terror in 2001, America has acted as if Pakistan is an extension of its sovereignty— the American Raj. Subsequently, both Bass and Khalilzad behave like modern day viceroys stationed in Pakistan to prosecute the rule of Pax Americana. What is disappointing are the simpleton statements issued by so-called defenders of Pakistan. No one has called for the expulsion of US diplomatic staff, and end to military cooperation with the US, the ejection of US multinational companies and cutting of all ties. The Pakistani ruling elite behave more like disgruntled slaves of America than independent thinkers!**