

Headlines:

- **German Minister Sparks Outrage after Refusing to Wear Hijab during Saudi Arabia visit**
- **Our Security Relationship far Wider with India than Pakistan: US Envoy**
- **Chinese Muslim Website Blocked after Xi Jinping Letter**

Details:

German Minister Sparks Outrage after Refusing to Wear Hijab during Saudi Arabia visit

Ursula von der Leyen and her entourage did not wear the hijab head coverings or the full length Abaya garment during her visit, despite adamantly claiming that she “respected” the country’s customs and traditions. Shortly after her meeting with the Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman al Saud, Saudis took to twitter to express their disdain for her actions. One translated tweet said: “The German Defence Minister: not wearing the hijab in Saudi was deliberate. This is an insult to Saudi Arabia!” A similar angry reaction on twitter occurred after First Lady Michelle Obama did not wear a hijab last year. The hashtags #MichelleObamalmodest and MichelleObamaNotVeiled trended for a while on twitter. Der Leyen wore a dark blue suit while donning the traditional ghutra head covering. Michael Ohnmacht, a German Embassy official, quickly tried to change the focus on the debate. He said: “The talks between Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed and the German minister focused on ways and means to beef up Saudi German cooperation in different areas, including high-level exchanges, personally education and training, defence, mutual visits and security affairs.” Her “disrespect” towards the Arabian Gulf state comes days after Angela Merkel, Germany’s Chancellor, called for a ban on the burqa in Germany. Angela Merkel, Hillary Clinton, Condoleeza Rice and former First Lady Laura Bush all refused to wear the hijab. The Queen and the Duchess of Cornwall decided to adhere to Saudi Arabia's custom, although the Duchess kept hers on for a short while. [Source: Daily Express]

The real shock is not about the German Foreign Minister failing to wear hijab; rather it is about the inability of the Saudi rulers to enforce hijab. However, more significant is the failure of the public to account the Saudi rulers for their flagrant disregard of Islam, which encompasses much more than the enforcement of hijab.

Our Security Relationship far Wider with India than Pakistan: US Envoy

US Ambassador to India Richard Verma said on Wednesday America’s security relationship with India was far broader than Pakistan. Verma made the comment while addressing a news conference in eastern Kolkata city. The US envoy said the security relationship with Pakistan was more complex. “Our security relationship with Pakistan is one that’s complex. It’s focused on counter insurgency and counters terrorism. But our security relationship with India is far different, far broader,” said Verma. When asked about the future of India-US ties under the new dispensation with President-elect Donald Trump set to take over from US President Barack Obama in January, Verma said it was a non-partisan issue. “US-India relationship is on an upward trajectory like this, going up and I believe it will continue. I say that for a few reasons, one the gains that we have seen in a relationship in many years, republican administrations, democratic administrations. I would argue that US-India relationship is a non-partisan issue at this point in our political system,” added Verma. Verma also said the military logistics memorandum agreement signed between US and India was mundane in nature and was only limited to logistics. Relations between the India and Pakistan have been strained for several months after attacks on India’s military base, while cross-frontier shelling

has intensified leading to deaths of civilians and soldiers stationed along the disputed frontier. The latest round of problem between the two countries began with civil unrest in Indian-occupied Kashmir and Pakistan's protest against New Delhi's crackdown on the Kashmiri activists. The south Asian neighbours have been at odds over Kashmir ever since their independence nearly 70 years ago, fighting two of their three wars over the Himalayan region that they each rule in part but claim in full. [Source: Pakistan Today]

Verma's candid admission comes hot on the heels of Trump's remarks about revising "One Policy China" and indicates that the US views India as an important country to counter the rise of China than Pakistan. Despite such clear statements from US officials, Pakistan's leadership remains enamored with the US, and is unable to break free from America's hegemony. A new generation of Islamic leadership is required to upend America's dominance of Pakistan's affairs via the restoration of Khilafah Rashidah upon the method of the Prophethood.

Chinese Muslim Website Blocked after Xi Jinping Letter

One of China's most popular online communities for Muslims has been shut down after posting a petition asking Chinese President Xi Jinping to stop his "brutal suppression" of activists. The students who wrote the petition told AFP news agency on Wednesday they demanded in the open letter the immediate release of the activists still held by the state. "You are not responsible for all of the crimes of the totalitarian system, but as the totalitarian system's head and its commander-in-chief of repression, you must take responsibility for the blood and tears which now flow," the letter said to the president, who came to power in 2012. "In the next spring of China's new Jasmine Revolution, who will drive your tanks to crush us, the new generation of students after 1989?" Yi Sulaiman Gu, a Muslim student studying in the United States at the University of Georgia, said the Zhongmu Wang website - or 2muslim.com - shut the day after he posted the letter to a forum that had previously hosted sensitive discussions on issues such as China's persecution of Muslim dissidents. "We believed it would be safe for Zhongmu to post it there," Gu said. But the letter gained attention when screenshots of it were reposted to China's Twitter-like Weibo website by Xi Wuyi, a professor of Marxism at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, who said it proved the site supported separatists in China's restive Xinjiang province. Violence in Xinjiang - the homeland of China's 10-million strong ethnic Uighur minority - has killed hundreds, with Beijing attributing it to "Islamic extremism" and foreign influence. "The Chinese government is very unfriendly to the Muslims inside China, especially the Muslims in Xinjiang," said Anthony Chang, a co-author of the letter completing who his bachelor's degree at the University of Queensland in Australia. Since 2003, 2muslim.com functioned as an "online network of Muslims sharing Islam", according to archived descriptions. But as of Wednesday the site was inaccessible, showing only a message stating it was "under maintenance". Two of its affiliated social media accounts were also unavailable, displaying messages that declared one account "abnormal" and the other "in violation of required guidelines". China officially has more than 23 million Muslims, though some independent estimates say there may be as many as 50 million - which would put China among the world's top 10 Muslim nations. While China's constitution enshrines freedom of religious belief, authorities keep strict limits on it, recognising only five belief systems and seeking to control their messages. [Source: Al Jazeera]

The Chinese authorities frightened of Islam will do anything to suppress the Islamic faith. Despite the freedom of religion enshrined in the constitution, Islam is permanently excluded from public life. The Chinese authorities take pride in the promotion of the state's version of religious beliefs and prohibit the public display of Islam.