

Headlines:

- **America: Muslims Reel Over a Prayer App that Sold User Data to US Military**
- **Turkey, Qatar Ink New Cooperation Deals**
- **Pakistanis Join Final Trials for Chinese-Made Vaccine**

Details:

America: Muslims Reel Over a Prayer App that Sold User Data to US Military

Five times a day, tens of millions of phones buzz with notifications from an app called Muslim Pro, reminding users it's time to pray. While Muslims in Los Angeles woke Thursday to a dawn notification that read, "Fajr at 5:17 AM," users in Sri Lanka were minutes away from getting a ping telling them it was time for Isha, or the night prayer. The app's Qibla compass quickly orients devices toward the Kaaba in Mecca, Saudi Arabia — which Muslims face when praying. When prayers are done, the in-app Quran lets users pick up reading exactly where they left off. A counter tallies the days of fasting during the holy month of Ramadan. Listings guide users to halal food in their area. These features make it easier to practice the many daily rituals prescribed in Islam, turning Muslim Pro into the most popular Muslim app in the world, according to the app's maker, Singapore-based BitsMedia. But revelations about the app's data collection and sales practices have left some users wondering if the convenience is worth the risk. BitsMedia sells user location data to a broker called X Mode, which in turn sells that information to contractors. X Mode's client list has included U.S. military contractors, the tech publication Motherboard first reported last week. Mass calls to delete Muslim Pro and a separate Muslim matrimony app called Muslim Mingle have since echoed across social media, resonating among communities that have long been the target of government surveillance. Majlis Ash-Shura, a leadership council that represents 90 New York state mosques, sent a notification urging people to delete Muslim Pro, citing "safety and data privacy." The Council on American-Islamic Relations, the nation's largest Muslim civil liberties and advocacy group, sent letters to three U.S. House committee chairs asking them to investigate the U.S. military's purchase of location and movement data of users of Muslim-oriented apps. CAIR called for legislation prohibiting government agencies from purchasing user data that would otherwise require a warrant. In a statement, Muslim Pro denied that it sold user data directly to the U.S. military but confirmed that it had worked with X Mode. Muslim Pro said it always anonymized the user data it sold, and said that the company planned to terminate its relationship with X Mode and all other data brokers. Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) said an investigation into the data broker industry showed that as of September, X Mode was "selling data collected from phones in the United States to U.S. military customers, via defense contractors." "Every single American has the right to practice their religion without being spied on," Wyden tweeted. "I will continue to watchdog this announcement and ensure Americans' constitutional rights are protected." [Source: LA Time]

Muslims across the world are being subjected to oppressive tactics of control and humiliation. And now a harmless application is the cause of mistrust and accusations. Only under the Khilafah Rashidah (rightly guided Caliphate) will Muslims find peace in the knowledge that their data will not be used against them.

Turkey, Qatar Ink New Cooperation Deals

Turkey and Qatar have signed 10 new deals at a joint meeting held at the presidential complex in Ankara. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Qatar's Emir Tamim Hamad Al Thani co-chaired the closed-door meeting. The 10 percent sale of shares of Turkey's stock exchange Borsa Istanbul topped the list of agreements made during the day. Turkey Wealth Fund is the majority shareholder of Borsa Istanbul with a shareholding of 90.6 percent. After the sale, the fund will continue holding 80.6 percent of the Borsa Istanbul shares. Qatar Investment Authority is the sovereign wealth fund of the Gulf state. Another agreement was inked to transfer shares of Istanbul's Istinye Park, a luxury shopping mall. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed for joint

investment in the Made in Istanbul Golden Horn Project. The transfer and purchase of shares of the Middle East Antalya Port Operators from Turkey's Global Ports to Qatar's Terminals W.L.L. was also agreed upon. An MoU was signed for joint promotion activities between Turkey's Commerce Ministry and Qatar's Free Zone Administration. Another deal was reached on the establishment of a joint trade commission between the two countries. Several MoUs were also signed for water administration, improved economic and monetary cooperation, and family and social services. A statement of intent was signed for an exchange program for diplomats of both countries. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and his Qatari counterpart Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani also signed the joint statement of the 6th iteration of the meeting. The meeting was also attended by Turkish National Defence Minister Hulusi Akar, Treasury and Finance Minister Lutfi Elvan, Trade Minister Ruhsar Pekcan, Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Adil Karaismailoglu, Agriculture and Forestry Minister Bekir Pakdemirli, Family, Labour and Social Services Minister Zehra Zumrut Selcuk, Communications Director Fahrettin Altun, Presidential Spokesman Ibrahim Kalin, Turkey Wealth Fund CEO Zafer Sonmez and many businesspeople. In the past, the two countries made a total of 52 agreements and five joint declarations. With the latest meeting, the total number of agreements has risen to 62. In previous meetings, the committee reached consensus in many significant issues in the fields of economy, industry, safety, investment, energy, culture, intellectual property, education and youth. The trade volume between the two countries increased by 6 percent in 2020 to reach \$1.6 billion. Qatar's investments in Turkey reached \$22 billion, according to data provided by Turkey's Doha Embassy. A total of 533 Turkish companies operate in Qatar, completing construction projects to the tune of \$18.5 billion. A total of 179 companies from Qatar operate in Turkey. [Source: TRT]

Erdogan's self-made lira crisis means that Turkey has to look abroad for much needed foreign exchange injection. Qatar is one of the few countries that is prepared to snap up bargains in return for Turkish security and trade. Rather than unifying, the two countries have entered a marriage of convenience to stand against the GCC countries.

Pakistanis Join Final Trials for Chinese-Made Vaccine

Thousands of volunteers are flocking to research hospitals across the country to join final-stage clinical trials of a Chinese-made vaccine for the novel coronavirus. It is the first time Pakistan has participated in such a trial, which comes amid a string of positive vaccine announcements by western pharmaceutical companies this month. The vaccine is being developed by CanSinoBio and the Beijing Institute of Biotechnology China. "I have volunteered myself for a noble cause that will help humanity," said a volunteer at Islamabad's Shifa hospital, where hundreds of participants are being paid about \$50 for their trouble. Others should "step forward and take part in this noble cause which will save lives", he added. For years, China has focused much of its attention in Pakistan on mammoth development projects, bankrolling the construction of roads, power plants and a strategic port. Beijing has now tapped one of its closest allies to participate in the vaccine trials. "We hope to have some findings ready about the accuracy and efficacy of the vaccine in two to three months," Ejaz Ahmad Khan, the principal researcher overseeing the trial in Pakistan, told AFP. Officials said Pakistan has already inoculated about 7,000 of the 10,000 participants expected to receive a jab. The trials come with intensive care wards across the country nearing capacity as a second, deadlier wave of coronavirus spreads and officials struggle to counter public indifference to the pandemic. The country has confirmed more than 382,000 cases including over 7,800 deaths since the virus arrived in late February. Less than a year after coronavirus that has claimed 1.4 million lives began spreading across the globe, a number of highly promising Covid-19 vaccines are on the cusp of release. Four drug makers have recently announced that their vaccines are effective for most people. Due to lingering suspicions over vaccines, Pakistan is one of just two countries where polio continues to spread, sparking fears that a new drive to inoculate the population against coronavirus will fail. The Chinese vaccine is also undergoing phase 3 trials — or large-scale testing on humans — in several other nations, including China, Russia, Chile, Argentina and Saudi Arabia. [Source: Dawn]

Once again Pakistan is assisting China and this time in the development of a Covid-19 vaccine. For far too long foreign powers have used Pakistan as a testing ground for weapons, draconian IMF policies, mega projects and now vaccines. The reality is that Pakistan does not need foreign assistance and is more than capable enough to stand on its own feet only if the ruling elite saw Pakistan's future in the Khilafah Rashidah (rightly guided Caliphate).