

# AT OIC MEET, INDIA FLAYS TERROR FUNDING

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The speech by the Indian Minister was overshadowed by the current tension between India and Pakistan.

As Ms. Swaraj delivered her address that touched upon the rich relations between India and various Islamic countries, a chair meant for Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi remained empty as he had cancelled the trip to Abu Dhabi.

In a strong statement, the Pakistan Foreign Minister protested the OIC's decision to grant a "guest of honour" status to India. Mr. Qureshi's letter argued India had no "legal or moral grounds" to be present at the meeting.

## Emphasises ties

Ms. Swaraj named countries like Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh for the support extended for building ties with OIC.

The Minister also named Afghanistan, Indonesia, Brunei, Egypt, Iran, Tunisia and the African and Central Asian members of the OIC for maintaining historic and multi-layered ties with India.

Laying out the Indian attitude to solve the terrorism problem, Ms. Swaraj said, "I would like to say that this menace could not be fought only through military, intelligence or diplomatic means."

Ms. Swaraj said the fight against terrorism and extremism does not amount to a clash of cultures and instead described it as a fight between ideas. She presented India's pluralism and diversity as a source of strength and said Indian Muslims are a "microcosm" of India's larger diverse culture.

"They speak Tamil and Telugu, Malayalam and Marathi, Bangla and Bhojpuri or any of the numerous languages of India. They have diverse culinary tastes, myriad choices of traditional attire, and they maintain strong cultural and linguistic heritage of the regions they loved and have lived for generations," Ms. Swaraj said, elaborating on India's vast Muslim community.

**END**

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