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China poised to become world’s largest economy by 2035

A report, titled ‘Decisive Battle: The Progress of China’s Comprehensively Deepening Reform and High-Standard Opening Up in the New Era and Prospects for 2029 and 2035’ was released at an international seminar held at Renmin University of China where experts and scholars from home and abroad gathered to envision the country’s trajectory towards 2029 and 2035.

According to the report, “By 2035, China is poised to become the world’s largest economy, with its scientific research and manufacturing capabilities reaching world-class levels across most industries.” It outlined seven key transformations expected in China by 2029 and 2035, with most striking changes taking place in fields of economy, life standard, environment, and national security.

It said economically, by 2029, strategic emerging industries will constitute over 20% of China’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with more than 40% of fortune 500 companies coming from China.

“I am sure that this new era of Chinese reforms, which a comprehensive and deepening and will be based on modernization, will create the core for the new world economic mode,” Sergey Glaziev, Vice President of the VEO of Russia, Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences, told CEN.

“The global economic landscape will certainly shift,” noted Mohammed Saqib, Secretary General, India China Economic and Cultural Council (ICEC), India. He highlighted that this presents both opportunities and challenges for other nations. “It will need a careful cultivation of economic relationships and strategic partnerships,” he added.

“What is the point of engaging in development if it does not lead to massive increases in the standards of living of the ordinary people?” Radhika Desai, Professor at the Department of Political Studies, and Director of Geopolitical Economy Research Group, University of Manitoba (GERG), Canada, raised a question. In terms of quality of life, by 2029, it is projected that China’s Human Development Index will rise to the “very high” category, with average life expectancy surpassing 80 years. By 2035, the per capita monthly income is expected to exceed RMB 10,000.

Environmentally, by 2029, China aims to achieve peak carbon emissions earlier than expected, with an annual reduction of over 400 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions thereafter. By 2035, China will form a green, low-carbon, and circular industrial system, becoming one of the countries with the lowest energy consumption per unit of GDP and carbon emission intensity.

In terms of national security, by 2029, China will be recognized as the country with the highest degree of comprehensive security, achieving milestones such as a manned lunar landing and producing over 100 large aircraft annually. By 2035, China will increase its annual large aircraft production to 500, build ten new overseas support bases, and conduct 200-300 space launches per year.

Social Media Sparks Digital Violence in Pakistan: A Call for Peace Education

Dr. Muhammad Shahzad Ashfaq

The beginning of social media platforms has undoubtedly revolutionized the way we communicate, connect, and share information. In countries like Pakistan, where traditional media outlets may be restricted or controlled, social media serves as a powerful tool for the dissemination of news, opinions, and ideas. However, along with its benefits, social media has also become a breeding ground for digital violence, especially in a country like Pakistan, where political, religious and social tension often run high.

The anonymity and reach of social media platforms make them a convenient medium for spreading hate speech, fake news, and incendiary rhetoric. In Pakistan, where several social media platforms are widely used, such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, these tools have been misused to promote divisive ideologies, fuel communal tensions, and incite violence. The spread of misinformation, inflammatory content and extremist views on social media has led to real-world consequences including mob violence, targeted attacks and even loss of life.

The escalating digital violence in Pakistan, there is an urgent need for peace education to promote tolerance, empathy, and respect for diversity. Peace education aims to address the root causes of conflict and violence by fostering critical thinking, dialogue, and understanding

among individuals and communities. By incorporating peace education into school curricula, community programs and online campaigns encounter the spread of hatred to promote a culture of peace both online and offline.

One approach to promoting peace education in Pakistan is through media literacy programs that teach individuals how to critically evaluate, analyze, and verify information they encounter online. By educating people on how to distinguish between credible and false sources, how to question their own biases and assumptions, and how to engage in respectful dialogue with others, we can empower individuals to become responsible digital citizens who contribute to a more peaceful online environment.

Furthermore, promoting interfaith dialogue and cultural exchange through social media can help bridge divides and build connections between diverse communities in Pakistan. Sharing stories of resilience, compassion, and solidarity, we can counter the narratives of hate and division that often dominate social media discourse. Platforms that promote positive messaging, empathy building, and conflict resolution can serve as powerful tools for promoting peace and understanding in a digital age.

Pakistan’s population is predominantly Muslim, with substantial minorities of Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, and others. While the nation has the potential for vibrant interfaith interactions due to its multicultural fabric, historical tensions among communities have often led to clashes and misunderstandings. Reported incidents of sectarian violence and discrimination indicate a need for

proactive measures to promote peace and understanding. Therefore, fostering interfaith dialogue is essential not only for social cohesion but also for maintaining the country’s political stability and economic development.

Social media allows for the dissemination of information about different religious practices, beliefs, and cultural traditions. Educational campaigns leveraging infographics, videos, and articles can dispel myths and reduce stigma associated with various faiths. For instance, initiatives that highlight shared values, texts, and ethics among religions have the potential to trigger empathy and mutual respect among diverse groups. While the potential of social media to foster interfaith dialogue in Pakistan is considerable, challenges persist.

Misinformation, hate speech, and sectarian propaganda can virally proliferate on social media platforms, necessitating robust mechanisms for monitoring and regulation. It is crucial for civil society, social media companies, government, and religious leaders to come together to create a responsible and conducive online environment.

Social media has the power to either fuel digital violence or promote peace and harmony in a country like Pakistan. By recognizing the dangers of online hate speech, misinformation, and extremism, and by investing in peace education initiatives that promote critical thinking, dialogue, and empathy, we can work towards creating a more inclusive, tolerant, and peaceful society. Online forums, discussion groups, and hashtag campaigns can serve as virtual roundtables that engage diverse voices.

The inclusion of interfaith activists and scholars in these conversations can enrich the dialogue, providing critical insights into the importance of coexistence and acceptance.

Many public figures in Pakistan, including artists, writers, and politicians, have significant followings on social media. When these individuals leverage their platforms to advocate for interfaith dialogue and cultural understanding, they can mobilize support from wider audiences. Their testimonials, encouraging fans to bridge divides, can prove powerful in reshaping public perception and diminishing prejudices.

Pakistan, recognized for its rich tapestry of cultures, languages, and religions, faces significant challenges in terms of sectarian conflict and social divides. However, social media has emerged as a transformative tool, offering unprecedented opportunities for fostering interfaith dialogue and cultural exchange. Through platforms that enable connection, awareness, and engagement, communities can work together to dismantle divisions due to misunderstandings and prejudices. While challenges exist, the commitment to promoting a culture of dialogue and respect can lead to a more unified, inclusive, and peaceful society. Recognizing and harnessing the power of social media is paramount for bridging divides, fostering mutual respect, and nurturing a harmonious coexistence among Pakistan’s rich array of cultural and religious communities.

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Cartoon by Amjad Rasmī. (Courtesy of Ashfaq Al-Awzat)

August 5 Marks a Somber Day in the History of IIOJK - III

Minority groups in India, especially Muslims and Christians, have reported instances of discrimination, harassment, and violence. Incidents such as mob lynching, often associated with cow vigilantism, where individuals accused of consuming beef or transporting cattle have been targeted by vigilante groups, have instilled fear and insecurity among minority communities. Such incidents undermine their right to practice their religion freely without fear of persecution.

The enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in 2019 triggered widespread protests and criticism both domestically and internationally. The CAA offers a path to Indian citizenship for undocumented migrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan who are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, or Christians, but excludes Muslims. This legislation has been criticized for discriminating against Muslims and contradicting India’s secular constitutional principles.

Concerns have also been raised about laws and policies perceived as discriminatory, such as anti-conversion laws in several states, which are often used against religious minorities and accused of infringing on individuals’ freedom to choose and practice their religion. Furthermore, despite legal protections aimed at promoting equality and social



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

justice, Dalits and Adivasis continue to confront systemic discrimination and marginalization.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, there has been a rise in Hindu nationalist rhetoric and policies promoting a vision of India as a Hindu-majority nation, which has further exacerbated concerns about minority rights and religious freedoms. These developments have sparked concerns among minority communities regarding their status, rights, and position within Indian society. Such ideologies and policies have contributed to an atmosphere of intolerance and exclusion, which undermines the secular foundations of India’s democratic framework. Under the Modi administration, India’s human rights record has faced criticism from international human rights organizations, foreign governments, and United Nations bodies. There have been widespread calls globally for upholding secularism, pluralism, and the rights of minorities, expressing concerns over the potential erosion of democratic values and constitutional protections for all citizens.

One of the most troubling trends observed during the Modi administration has been the increase in incidents of mob lynching targeting minorities, particularly Muslims and Dalits. These incidents frequently arise from allegations related to cow slaughter or consumption of beef, often fueled by cow protec-

tion laws and vigilante groups. In 2015, the lynching of Mohammad Akhlaq in Dadri, Uttar Pradesh, based on rumors of storing beef in his home, provoked widespread outrage and underscored the risks of communal violence driven by religious tensions.

Several states in India have introduced anti-conversion laws ostensibly to prevent coerced religious conversions but which have been used to target religious minorities, particularly Christians. These laws have resulted in harassment, arrests, and violence against Christian communities, who encounter discrimination and intimidation for practicing and spreading their faith.

Despite legal protections, Dalits and Adivasis continue to confront systemic discrimination, social marginalization, and violence. Incidents of caste-based violence, including sexual assault and homicide, underscore deep-rooted social inequalities and the difficulties in achieving justice and equality for marginalized communities. Ineffective enforcement of laws and policies aimed at safeguarding Dalit and Adivasi rights exacerbates their susceptibility to exploitation and abuse.

Under the Modi administration, there has been a crackdown on dissenting voices, civil society organizations, and human rights advocates critical of governmental policies. Activists, journalists, and academics have encountered harassment, arbitrary detentions, and charges under stringent laws such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), often utilized to suppress freedom of expression and quell political opposition.

To be continued

HIV/AIDS in Pakistan: A Growing Crisis

Kiran Shaheen

One of the most difficult medical issues of our day is the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Studies in the fields of epidemiology, serology, immunology, and virology have all clearly shown that the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is the primary cause of this recently identified deadly illness. The last obvious event in the series of events that starts when the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) enters the host is Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Sexual contact is the most prevalent way that HIV is spread, and in many parts of the world, this method is now accepted as the cause of the epidemic.

HIV cases were first discovered in Pakistan through blood transfusions and high-risk populations like drug users. The quick spread of the virus inside families especially between husbands and spouses and their offspring emphasized the possibility of heterosexual transmission spreading widely. The socio-cultural background of Pakistan has a big impact on HIV transmission. Certain groups are vulnerable due to factors including migration, urbanisation, and conventional gender roles. Those who inject drugs (IDUs), work in commercial sex (especially Hijras), and have more than one sexual partner are more vulnerable.

National AIDS Programme’s efficacy in reducing HIV/AIDS cases and increasing public awareness of prevention. A number of issues still need to be addressed, such as improved coordination between the public and private sectors and health and community organisations, as well as the provision of more funding and other infrastructure to support AIDS initiatives. The construction of several screening and monitoring centres as well as public awareness campaigns about HIV/AIDS through media outlets like television and the popular press, however, allow one to assess the advantages of the existing policy.

In Pakistan, giving blood without conducting the necessary screening is a frequent practice. A study on blood transfusion procedures in Pakistan found that while circumstances in private hospitals are depressing, just five to ten percent of blood transfusions in government hospitals are appropriately

examined. There isn’t any legislation in place right now that addresses safe blood transfusion. In affluent nations, there is a well-functioning blood banking system complete with all necessary amenities. Nevertheless, Pakistan’s inadequate infrastructure and, when it exists, subpar resources for blood transfusion screening make it challenging to establish comparable facilities. A further issue with blood donations by HIV-positive donors is the “Mafia-like” professional blood system that exists, and the fact that many blood donors are drug addicts.

HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment plans use a variety of techniques. Programs for harm reduction are important, and enhancing results requires assessing how well various harm reduction strategies work. The foundation of HIV treatment is antiretroviral medication (ART), and talking about ART’s accessibility and availability in Pakistan helps highlight the problems and advancements that the field is now facing. Furthermore, investigating the possibility of alternative preventive measures, such as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), emphasises critical tactics in stopping the spread of HIV.

Pakistan’s battle against HIV/AIDS is reaching a turning point. The virus is becoming more and more common, especially in high-risk groups, thus immediate and extensive intervention is required. Pakistan can effectively reduce the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and enhance the health and well-being of its population by addressing the underlying social, cultural, and behavioural causes as well as by investing in prevention, treatment, and care services.

Extending harm reduction programs for injectable drug users (IDUs) with a significant emphasis on rehabilitation and financial support is one of the main recommendations for treating HIV/AIDS. Important actions to take include encouraging voluntary blood donation and tightening blood safety regulations. To foster an atmosphere that is supportive of those affected by HIV/AIDS, it is imperative to address stigma and discrimination related to the disease. Long-term success also depends on funding research to comprehend the epidemic better and create efficient treatments. Pakistan can achieve notable advancements in the fight against HIV/AIDS by implementing a multi-sectoral strategy and giving impacted populations’ demands top priority.

Kiran Shaheen, a biotechnology student in 5th semester, Capital University of Science and Technology, Islamabad