

Headlines:

- **Germany Economic Collapse: Nearly 10 Years of Growth Wiped Out in Nightmare for Merkel**
- **Beirut Blast: Protesters Demand Political Change as Emmanuel Macron Tours City**
- **PM Imran Unveils 'New Political Map' of Pakistan**

Details:

Germany Economic Collapse: Nearly 10 Years of Growth Wiped Out in Nightmare for Merkel

In the second quarter of this year, the German economy shrunk by a massive 10.1 percent compared to the first three months of 2020 as the crushing impacts from the coronavirus crisis become increasingly evident. Germany's statistics office said the GDP index adjusted for inflation, seasonally and calendar effects plummeted to 94.26 in the April to June period. The office said: "Most recently, the chain index was lower at 93.19 in the fourth quarter of 2010, so that's roughly 10 years ago." The huge crash in the April to June period was triggered by a massive collapse in exports and measures introduced in a desperate attempt to contain the coronavirus pandemic. This will set alarm bells ringing in Germany as even in the worst three months of the financial crisis in 2009, the country's economy shrank by less than five percent. But prospects for the third quarter are slightly more encouraging, with early forecast appearing to show the economy could be beginning a recovery. The Ifo index increase in July for a third successive month and showed an upswing for the first time since 2019. There are also increasing fears in Germany that a second wave of coronavirus infections could blow another huge hole in the European Union's largest economy. This could trigger several businesses to go bankrupt, while exports are also at huge risk as the pandemic continues to ravage trade powerhouses such as the US, to which German companies regularly sell many goods. The number of people unemployed in July was 600,000 than a year earlier, but jobs are no longer being lost as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Unemployment increases have been put down to the time of year when jobs are normally cut and seasonally adjusted, the number of people out of work was down by 18,000. In May, 6.7 million employees received short-time work benefits, according to early estimates. Applications from companies have also been falling significantly over the past few weeks: in July, short-time working was only reported for 200,000 new employees. Daniel Terzenbach, board member of the Federal Employment Agency (BA), said: "The labour market is still under pressure due to the corona pandemic, but the massive use of short-time work has prevented greater increases in unemployment." But the Ifo Institute has warned of big differences when trying to weigh up and balance this detail. Ninety percent of people working in hotels and 68 percent of employees in the automotive industry worked short-time in July, but this plummeted to just 10 percent in construction and the financial sector. The current coronavirus pandemic has also delayed apprenticeships by about two months until at least the autumn. This month, there were 190,000 applicants still searching for an apprenticeship, with this figure slightly higher in a number of vacant training positions. [Source: Daily Express]

Besides Covid-19, western economies are under pressure from years of aggressive Capitalism, which has severely undermined confidence in the economy

and eroded the ability of Capitalism to fix structural defects. Germany along with other Western countries is likely to experience economic turmoil for years to come, and this is likely to spawn riots across the European continent.

Beirut Blast: Protesters Demand Political Change as Emmanuel Macron Tours City

Angry crowds in Beirut urged Emmanuel Macron to help bring political change to Lebanon as the French president toured the city's devastated port and surrounding neighbourhoods. As the Lebanese army took control of the site on the first day of a two-week state of emergency, there were growing calls inside and outside the country for an independent investigation into the disaster that killed at least 157 people, left thousands homeless and caused up to \$15bn (£11bn) worth of damage to the capital.

More bodies are expected to be retrieved in ongoing search and rescue operations in and around the port, where a stash of 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate is thought to have ignited shortly after 6pm on Tuesday, sparking the largest explosion in Beirut's history. Macron toured the wrecked Gemmayze neighbourhood near the port and was surrounded by hundreds of people calling for revolution and the downfall of the governing regime. "I guarantee you this – aid will not go to corrupt hands," Macron told the protesters. "I will talk to all political forces to ask them for a new pact. I am here today to propose a new political pact to them." Footage showed members of the crowd urging Macron to "help us" and "do something". "I see the emotion on your face, the sadness, the pain. This is why I'm here," he told one group. Few Lebanese leaders have ventured out to see the site or tour affected neighbourhoods since the blast and a convoy carrying the former prime minister Saad Hariri was attacked on Tuesday as he drove through downtown Beirut. Lebanese officials have started blaming each other for leaving the highly explosive substance sitting so close to residential neighbourhoods for six years. The ammonium nitrate was taken from a ship that docked in Beirut in 2013 and was apparently abandoned by its Russian owner and mostly Ukrainian crew. Badri Daher, the director general of Lebanese customs, said on Wednesday that his office had sent six letters to the country's judiciary urging them to deal with the chemicals either by exporting the load, reselling it or giving it to the army. An unspecified number of port officials have been ordered to be placed under house arrest pending the investigation, which is scheduled to take four more days. It will report to the national cabinet, which will refer its findings to the judiciary. Amnesty International was among the organisations calling for an independent investigation into the circumstances leading up to the explosion. Residents of the capital are seething at a disaster that appears to have been foreseeable and frequently warned about. Macron said his visit was "an opportunity to have a frank and challenging dialogue with the Lebanese political powers and institutions". He said France would work to coordinate international aid, but warned that "if reforms are not made, Lebanon will continue to sink". In a frank press conference at the end of the day, the French leader joined calls for an "open and transparent" international inquiry. He said he had noted the expressions of rage and disgust he had heard. "I can't initiate a revolution, it is up to the Lebanese people," he said. "I will support the people but I will not interfere in Lebanese politics." France was helping to organise an international conference to spur and coordinate funding to provide the Lebanese with food, medicine and housing, he added. [Source: The Guardian]

Macron is only concerned about French interests and not the Lebanese people. In fact, Lebanon is an area of great power conflict, where America holds the upper hand and old Europe along with the Jewish state vie for influence under American patronage. The current political system and the endemic corruption is a consequence of this great power configuration. Unless, western powers are permanently expelled

like what happened under the leadership of the Mamaluks in 13th century, Lebanon will continue to plunge from crisis to crisis.

PM Imran Unveils 'New Political Map' of Pakistan

Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday unveiled a "new political map" of Pakistan which also included occupied Kashmir. The premier's announcement came a day ahead of the first anniversary of India's controversial unilateral decision to revoke the area's semi-autonomy. Addressing the nation alongside Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, the premier said that it would now be the "official map" after being approved by the federal cabinet, which had met earlier today, and would be the one used in schools and colleges. The map clearly identifies occupied Kashmir as a "disputed territory" and states that the final status will be decided in line with the relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. The map rejects the illegal steps taken by India on August 5 last year, he said, adding that the federal cabinet and the country's political leadership had supported it. The premier maintained that the Kashmir issue could only be solved by following the UNSC resolutions which give the Kashmiri people the right to self-determination. "Their right to self-determination, given to them by the world community, has still not been given. And we clearly want to say to the world that it is the only solution," he said, adding that the government will keep making efforts in this regard. "We will do political struggle, we don't believe in military solutions. We will remind the UN again and again that you had made a promise [to the people of Kashmir] which you did not fulfill." Presenting the changes made in the map, the foreign minister said that administrative maps have been introduced before, but this was the first time that a map reflected the aspirations of the people. He added that the map clearly showed occupied Kashmir as a disputed territory and the only solution to the issue would be through the UNSC resolutions and as per the aspirations of the people. The foreign minister added that it had also been made clear that Siachen is a part of Pakistan. "[Through the map] we are challenging their illegal occupation and claiming our right to the area," he said. He maintained that Pakistan had also rejected India's claims about Sir Creek in the map. "We have said that our border is towards the eastern bank; India had claimed that it goes towards the west," he said, adding that by doing so, India was trying to capture several acres of the country's "exclusive economic zone". Further, erstwhile Fata has been shown as part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, he said. Qureshi said that the entire nation was united on the country's new political map. The federal cabinet, the Kashmiri leadership and Pakistan's political leadership has endorsed the government's move, he said. "This gives a clear message to the people of Kashmir, that the government of Pakistan was with them in the past and will stand with them in the future." [Source: Dawn].

There is nothing new in Khan's map. Worse, it does not end the suffering of the Kashmiri people. There is only one way to impose maps and that is to take territory by force from India through Khilafah (Caliphate) upon the method of the Prophethood. Khan and Bajwa are extremely reluctant to do this and have opted for American intervention in the dispute. It is quite obvious that the US will take India's side, as it views India more important than Pakistan for safeguarding US interests.