

Peninsula On-line - Global credit crisis easing, Forum hears

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DOHA: Experts debating the world financial crisis at a global forum here yesterday said it was difficult for anyone, whether economist or non-economist, to fathom its depth or predict how long it was going to last.

The turbulence is deep and multi-faceted with the worsening credit crunch being just a part of it, speakers at the Doha Forum said.

The credit crisis may, perhaps, begin fading by the close of 2009 but problems like the weakening of banks, trade-related woes, growing unemployment and the health and social consequences would remain.

The Forum which is an annual affair here, kicked off on Sunday at the Doha Sheraton and ends today. Economists, social scientists, ministers and government officials from across the world are taking part. The event focuses on the Middle East's economic future.

China already has an army of 13 million unemployed, an expert pointed out. By the end of last month, some 5.5 million people were out of job in the in the US, while in Latin America, 11 million people who were in fragile jobs are unemployed now. "This is adding to lack of capacity for exports. And lack of income may lead to unwanted social problems," warned Jorge Matolitchi, former economy minister and director of economic development, Hungary.

He was speaking at the post-lunch session. Other panelists were Qatar's Finance Minister, H E Yousuf Hussein Kamal, former Peruvian President, Alejandro Toledo, and Lord David Howell, Deputy Leader of the House of Lords, UK. The discussion was moderated by Professor Mohamed Najdawi, from the College of Business and Economics, Qatar University.

Reducing poverty is profitable for businesses and good for social and political stability worldwide.

Howell said the credit crunch which was merely a part of the unfolding crisis might begin easing by the year end but problems such as growing joblessness, banking getting weaker and the health and social consequences would linger on. the peninsula