

CASH-STRAPPED PAKISTAN SET TO GET ADDITIONAL \$13 BILLION IN FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM CHINA, SAUDI ARABIA

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Cash-strapped Pakistan has secured about \$13 billion in additional financial support from its traditional allies China and Saudi Arabia, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar has said, as the government tries to steady the country's weak economy.

Mr. Dar said that under the new financial support, Pakistan would be getting about \$9 billion from China and \$4 billion from Saudi Arabia on top of assurances for about \$20 billion in investments, the *Dawn* newspaper reported.

He said that during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to Beijing, the Chinese leadership promised to roll over \$4 billion in sovereign loans, refinance \$3.3 billion commercial bank loans and increase currency swap by about \$1.45 billion — from 30 billion yuan to 40 billion yuan. The total worked out to \$8.75 billion.

"They promised the security of financial support," Mr. Dar, who recently took over as the new Finance Minister of Pakistan from his predecessor Miftah Ismail, said and quoted Chinese President Xi Jinping as telling Mr. Sharif, "Don't worry, we will not let you down".

The Minister said he had also suggested a part of the outstanding dues of Chinese power producers to be converted into overall debt stock and had already cleared about Rs 160 billion in recent months.

Saudi's help

Responding to another question, Mr. Dar said Saudi Arabia had also "given a positive response" to Pakistan's request for increasing its financing by another \$3 billion to \$6 billion and doubling its deferred oil facility of \$1.2 billion.

The two heads worked out at \$4.2 billion and the Finance Minister said there was no delay except a month or so of processing time, the report said.

PM Sharif's recent visit to Beijing helped secure \$8.75 billion in aid, with President Xi promising not to let Pakistan down

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