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# Heart of Asia

Your Gateway to Afghanistan & the Region

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**Surrender of Districts to Taliban Not Pre-planned: CHCNR**

Following the recent collapse of some districts in Afghanistan in recent weeks, Abdullah Abdullah, chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, said that the surrender of districts is unplanned. "The successive liberation of the districts by the security forces is not part of a regular plan. It is not right that they handed over districts based on a plan," Abdullah told a meeting of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation on Tuesday. According to him, several factors cause the security forces to leave the districts and areas. Abdullah added, "Despite the fact that the consecutive fall of the districts has caused concern among the people, many support the security forces. We know the situation is... **P3**



**Terrorism Threat Still Serious; Require Continued NATO Cooperation: MoFA**

The Foreign Ministry welcomed the joint statement issued by the NATO Summit in Brussels and said that the Government of Afghanistan appreciated the support and cooperation of NATO in the fight against terrorism and the establishment and capacity building of security and defense forces and institutions over the last two decades. A statement issued by the Foreign Ministry on Tuesday said that terrorism remains a serious threat to the security of Afghanistan and NATO member states, and that combating it requires continued and strategic cooperation. "In the new chapter of relations with NATO, the Government of Afghanistan emphasizes on the importance of its cooperation in maintaining and strengthening the achievements of the last two decades, including the protection of the Afghan security and defense forces, the rights of women, children and minorities," the statement said. "It emphasizes on the freedom of expression... **P3**

## NATO Leaders Agreed to Continue Support to Afghans: Biden



US President Joe Biden at a press conference after the NATO leaders' summit in Brussels on Monday "there was a strong consensus in the room, among the leaders, in that meeting, on Afghanistan," reiterating that the alliance will continue its support to Afghans after the withdrawal of international troops from the country.

"Our troops are coming home, but we agreed that our diplomatic, economic, and humanitarian commitment to the Afghan people and our support for the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces will endure," Biden said. "And I welcomed our Allies and partners to recognize that counterterrorism — that

counterterrorism efforts must continue to ensure that Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for attacks on our countries," he said.

On Monday, the NATO leaders at the Brussels summit agreed to maintain funding for the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul after the Resolute Support mission

in Afghanistan ends.

Addressing a press conference after the summit, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said the RS mission is ending but NATO will continue supporting Afghanistan in four ways: funding Afghan forces, out-of-country training for Afghan forces, a continued civilian presence, and maintaining "critical infrastructure" such as the Kabul airport.

"NATO and allies are now working on how to ensure the continued operation of an international airport in Kabul. There were meetings also on the sidelines of the summit today. Turkey of course plays a key role in those efforts. We are working on exactly how to do it but there is a strong commitment from NATO and from NATO allies to ensure that we can operate an international airport," he said.

NATO leaders in a statement issued from the Brussels summit affirmed their commitment to continue to stand with Afghanistan, its people, and its institutions in promoting security and upholding the hard-won gains of the last 20 years.

"Recalling our previous commitments, NATO will... **P3**

**Czech Republic Ready to Invest in Afghan Mining Sector**

The deputy prime minister of the Czech Republic says his country is willing to invest in Afghanistan's mining sector. The deputy premier said this at the Afghan-Czech Business and Investment Forum, initiated by the embassy of Afghanistan in Prague. The forum kicked off on Monday with the introduction of a three-day programme by ministers of both countries. In his address, the Czech deputy PM welcomed the Afghan minister of commerce, industries and transport and the delegation led by him. He talked about boosting... **P3**



## Millions of Afghans at Risk of Displacement Due to Drought: IRC

Severe drought in Afghanistan could trigger the displacement of thousands of families, according to the latest International Rescue Committee (IRC) assessment across five provinces in the West, South and East of Afghanistan.

This comes during an alarming increase in violence in recent weeks, with attacks on civilians including women and aid workers causing fresh instability throughout much of the country. With 80% of Afghans relying upon rain-fed agriculture and cattle-grazing for their incomes, livelihoods are set to be decimated as a drastic decrease in rainfall has caused food and water scarcity across the country. At the same time, an increase in fighting has also broken out in several of the worst drought affected areas, particularly in Helmand province,

ahead of the withdrawal of foreign troops in the country. The coincidence of devastating drought and a steady increase in violence threatens a devastating economic downturn and greater instability. Nasir Rizae, IRC Afghanistan Deputy Director, said, "This drought and potential displacement is yet another fresh trauma for Afghanistan, which is reeling from the shockwaves of COVID-19. The effects will be especially intense and far reaching: nearly half of the population is already experiencing food insecurity and people are struggling to make ends meet. There is a very real risk that millions of people will be pushed into an emergency, as we saw in 2018 where more than a quarter of a million Afghans were displaced as a result of drought.



Alongside food insecurity we also expect to see cases of malnutrition rise significantly, especially among infants and young children."

"The international... **P3**

### Dubai...

at a disadvantage. Emirates Chairman Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum said the recovery from the pandemic would be patchy, cautioning that no one could predict when the industry's worst crisis would end. The annual loss marks the 36-year-old airline's first since the 1987-88 fiscal year, while the 6.6 million passengers it carried last year were its lowest in twenty years. Emirates said it had filled just 44.3% of all seats in the past year, down from an average of 78.4% in the previous fiscal year. Capacity was cut by 82.6% compared to the previous years as operations centered around the airline's 146 Boeing 777s, of which 19 have been stripped of seats to carry more cargo as the pandemic drastically weakened passenger demand. Most of Emirates' 113 Airbus A380s are grounded. Four additional A380s have been removed from operation and are unlikely to return before their scheduled retirement, it said. Emirates Group, the airline's holding company that includes other aviation and travel assets, saw revenue fall 65.8% to \$9.7 billion and made a loss of \$6 billion, its first ever. The Group's workforce shrank by 30.8% to 75,145 including 20,000 jobs at the airline, the annual report said.

By Wang Yu, Chinese Ambassador to Afghanistan

## Together in Fight against COVID-19, China and Afghanistan Work for a Global Community of Health

On May 21, Chinese President Xi Jinping attended upon invitation and addressed the Global Health Summit via video link. In his speech entitled Working Together to Build a Global Community of Health for All, Xi shared the Chinese experience in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ideas and propositions have been proven effective in China and much needed in countries still fighting the pandemic. The address has thus been widely welcomed and echoed. President Xi Jinping pointed to repeated resurgence and frequent mutations of the coronavirus and the protracted havoc caused by the most serious pandemic in a century. He made five points on what all countries need to do to clinch an early victory against COVID-19 and restore economic growth.

First, countries must put people and their lives first. The battle with COVID-19 is one for the people and by the people. What has happened proves that to completely defeat the virus, all countries must put people's lives and health front and center. No effort must be spared to attend every case, save every patient, and truly respect the value and dignity of every human life.

Second, countries must follow science-based policies and ensure a coordinated and systemic response. Faced with this new infectious disease, we should advocate the spirit of science, adopt a science-based approach, and follow the law of science. The fight against COVID-19 is an all-out war that calls for a systemic response to coordinate pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions, balance targeted routine COVID-19 protocols and emergency measures, and ensure both epidemic control and socio-economic development.

Third, countries must stick together and promote solidarity and cooperation. The pandemic is yet another reminder that we humanity rise and fall together with a shared future. Confronted by a pandemic

like COVID-19, we must champion the vision of building a global community of health for all, tide over this trying time through solidarity and cooperation, and firmly reject any attempt to politicize, label or stigmatize the virus.

Fourth, countries must uphold fairness and equity as they strive to close the immunization gap. A year ago, President Xi proposed that vaccines should be made a global public good. Today, the problem of uneven vaccination has become more acute. It is imperative for all countries to reject vaccine nationalism and find solutions to issues concerning the production capacity and distribution of vaccines, in order to make vaccines more available, accessible and affordable in developing countries, especially those in urgent need. The World Health Organization (WHO) should speed up efforts under the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) facility.

Fifth, countries must address both the symptoms and root causes as the governance system is improved. The pandemic is an extensive test of the global health governance system. It is important that we strengthen and leverage the role of the UN and the WHO and improve the global disease prevention and control system to better prevent and respond to future pandemics. It is important that we uphold the spirit of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, fully heed the views of developing countries, and better reflect their legitimate concerns.

In this unprecedented battle against the pandemic, China has, while receiving support and help from many countries, mounted a massive global humanitarian operation. China has provided 2 billion US dollars in assistance for the COVID-19 response and economic and social recovery in developing countries hit by the pandemic. We have sent medical supplies to more than 150 countries and 13 international



organizations, providing more than 280 billion masks, 3.4 billion protective suits and 4 billion testing kits to the world.

In continued support for global solidarity against COVID-19, China announced the following: it will provide an additional 3 billion US dollars in international aid over the next three years to support COVID-19 response and economic and social recovery in other developing countries; it supports its vaccine companies in transferring technologies to other developing countries and carrying out joint production with them; it has announced support for waiving intellectual property rights on COVID-19 vaccines and also supports the World Trade Organization and other international institutions in making an early decision on this matter; it proposes to set up an international forum on vaccine cooperation for vaccine-developing and producing countries, companies and other stakeholders to explore ways of promoting fair and equitable distribution of vaccines around the world.

China and Afghanistan are neighbors with a traditional friendship. Their solidarity against COVID-19 has set an example of cooperation for the international community.

Afghanistan has recently been seeing increased cases due to new variants. At this difficult time, the Chinese people will, as always, stand side by side with the Afghan people and help each other in fighting the pandemic. On April 27, the Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and China met online and reached important common understanding with specific results on pandemic response. All parties remain committed to deepening cooperation and overcoming difficulties together. To meet the urgent needs of Afghanistan, China promised to provide 700,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine, to be delivered as soon as possible.

Guided by the spirit of President Xi's important address, China will strengthen cooperation with Afghanistan in pandemic response by providing assistance within its capacity so that Afghanistan will win the fight against COVID-19 at an early date and achieve healthy and stable development. The Chinese people stand ready to work together with the people of Afghanistan and other countries to build a global community of health, end the pandemic at an early date and create a bright future together!

By: CGTN Insight

## Long-Term Planning Key to China's Continuous Growth

Speaking a few days ahead of the Earth Day summit on climate change in April, American Secretary of State Antony Blinken acknowledged that the U.S. had fallen behind China in developing the technology needed to curb climate change. He drew attention to the fact that China holds nearly a third of the world's renewable energy patents and is the world's largest producer and exporter of solar panels, wind turbines, batteries, and electric vehicles. China's global dominance in renewable energy is no accident. It is the result of the type of long-range planning that has become a well-known characteristic of the nation's governance system. The government's own national renewable targets, stretched over 15 years, were first set out in a document titled, Medium and Long-Term Development Plan for Renewable Energy, in 2005. An accompanying landmark Renewable Energy Law passed the same year created the conditions for green energy growth

and tackling problems of water and air pollution. The result? "China is for now winning the global race to invent and manufacture the technologies that will allow a new low-carbon world," according to a Foreign Policy article. The bedrock of China's economic planning has been its Five-Year Plans that began in 1953 and were patterned initially after the centralized Soviet system. Indeed, the CPC, two years after it founded the People's Republic, dispatched a team to Moscow that included then Premier Zhou Enlai for consultations ahead of drafting the first plan. In the early years, the economic and production targets did not always go to plan, and officials made mistakes as they were new to the system. For instance, during the Great Leap Forward, an economic campaign in the late 1950s to transform China from an agrarian to an industrial economy, many targets were unmet because they were too ambitious. As a result, the campaign ended in

disaster. The country learned from that experience, devising attainable goals and consulting widely in subsequent years. It was not until the 1970s – and the unleashing of the groundbreaking "reform and opening-up" policies – that the world really sat up and took notice. Since then, the CPC's quinquennial strategic visionary planning has been widely credited with facilitating continuous economic expansion in China and underpinning its transformation from a backwater into the world's second largest economy. The drafting of the outline of these modern Five Year Plans usually takes three years, according to Xinhua news agency. Input is sought from diverse sources, including government ministries, state enterprises, provincial administrations, scholars and think tanks, grass-root level CPC delegates, non-CPC political parties and the private sector. The heavy centralization of the past has been modified in favor of

widespread buy-in for the national development goals. Hence, they have a greater chance of succeeding. In 2014, Professors Anna L. Ahlers and Gunter Schubert argued in their paper Effective Policy Implementation in China's Local State that "the triangle of central policy design, institutional constraints, and strategic agency of local implementers explains cases of effective policy implementation that can be observed throughout China." This long-term approach is also backed by sectoral development plans. The upshot is that China's economy grew from over \$76 billion (493 billion yuan) in 1981 to almost \$16 trillion (100 trillion yuan) in 2020. The country's per capita GDP was comparable to that of India's in 1978 at about \$200. Today, it is five times larger than that of its neighbor at \$10,000. China's success in moving from a Soviet-style command economy to a more market-driven one has also cultivated influential global companies like Huawei, TikTok, Tencent, Alibaba and BYD. The country's leaders often stress that the market should be allowed to play a decisive role in allocating

resources, and China can never go back to a dominant centrally planned economy that often stifles innovation, discourages entrepreneurship and is much less efficient in distributing resources. Five Year Plans combine the visible hand of the government and the invisible hand of the market, which can be dysfunctional and has its own shortcomings. Under the current blueprint, China aims to "basically realize socialist modernization" within 15 years – by 2035 and to finally become a "great modern socialist country" by 2050. The CPC's ultimate goal is to achieve a "beautiful China" characterized by the rule of law, innovative companies, a clean environment, an expanding middle class, adequate public transportation and reduced disparities between urban and rural communities. It may seem an uphill battle, but if the past is any guide, it'd be unwise to bet against the CPC achieving its goals. Xu Qinduo is China Radio International's former chief correspondent in Washington and a senior fellow of the Pangao Institution.

## 28 Telecom Antennas Destroyed in Past 3 Months: ATRA

The increasing insecurity in the country and the day-to-day destruction of telecommunication antennas in various provinces have raised concerns over the safety of telecom investments and the limitation of internet services in Afghanistan.

According to figures provided by Afghanistan Telecom Regulatory Authority (ATRA), 301 telecommunication antennas worth \$1 million were destroyed in the country last year, and in the first three months of the current solar year 28 telecommunication antennas in insecure parts of the country have been destroyed and 23 other antennas were partly damaged. Officials at ATRA, while confirming problems in the telecommunication sector, said they have plans to repair

the damaged antennas very soon. "The ATRA authority, in its tenth project, intends to install 400 telecommunication antennas in some remote and insecure areas in the country; these antennas would be handed over to the telecommunication companies," said a spokesman for ATRA, Saeed Shinwari.

Officials in telecommunication companies told TOLONews that the destruction of antennas and their slow repair will impact Afghan telecommunication companies with heavy losses and will limit telecommunication services in some parts of the country. A number of MPs said that in the first three months of the current fiscal year (1400), the destruction of 51 telecommunication antennas has

caused heavy losses in the telecom sector.

"It is not only the company that is affected but also the entire society due to the economic damage, which is very important," said MP Atta Mohammad Dehqanpoor.

"If those officials who are working at the Ministry of Communications do not take serious measures in this regard, it will create a worse situation and more antennas will be destroyed," said MP Farida Ahmadi. Earlier, telecommunication companies issued a joint statement calling on the Afghan government to immediately address the issue.

The statement criticized the Afghanistan Telecom Regulatory Authority, saying its weak management has doubled the telecom companies' challenges.



With \$3 billion in investment, telecommunication is one of the most important sectors in the country. But the lack of security and the extortion of telecom companies by local strongmen have limited telecom and internet services in many provinces across the country.

### NATO Leaders...

continue to provide training and financial support to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, including through the Afghan National Army Trust Fund," the statement said.

It added that NATO will retain a Senior Civilian Representative's Office in Kabul to continue diplomatic engagement and enhance its partnership with Afghanistan.

"Recognizing its importance to an enduring diplomatic and international presence, as well as to Afghanistan's connectivity with the world, NATO will provide transitional funding to ensure continued functioning of Hamid Karzai International Airport," said the statement. "We will also step up dialogue on Afghanistan with relevant international and regional partners," the statement said. "We continue to support the ongoing Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process, and call on all stakeholders to help Afghanistan foster a lasting inclusive political settlement that puts an end to violence; safeguards the human rights of Afghans, particularly women, children, and minorities; upholds the rule of law; and ensures that Afghanistan never again serves as a safe haven for terrorists."

### Terrorism...

and the rule of law and the joint fight against terrorism."

The one-day summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member states was held in Brussels on Monday and ended with the issuance of a joint statement on various issues, including Afghanistan.

The Joint Statement of the NATO Summit concludes its mission and the beginning of a new chapter in relations with Afghanistan, reaffirming its commitment to continue to support the people and government of Afghanistan in maintaining the achievements of the next two decades in Afghanistan. Emphasis has been placed on standing by

Afghanistan's defense and security forces, as well as continuing NATO's civilian presence in Afghanistan.

NATO has stressed that if a political agreement is reached, it must be ensured that Afghanistan does not once again become a safe haven for terrorist groups.

Meanwhile, the UK Ministry of Defense has chartered aircraft to move military personnel between Kabul and Birmingham International Airport. Lasting 8 days, the use of charter aircraft will cost £1.1 million. The first charter will last from the June 18- June 21 and cost £740,000.

The second charter will last from the June 22- June 27 and cost £375,000. The contract award notice for

both the first and second charter states that the firm 'Air Charter Service' has won the tenders. On their website, the firm explains that they have experience in arranging cargo aircraft charters to hostile environments.

"We have considerable expertise in arranging cargo aircraft charters to destinations that are difficult to reach, whether that be either an isolated location or a hostile environment. ACS also has extensive experience in mass evacuations requiring multiple aircraft to move survivors out of affected areas rapidly. We can deliver essential items such as humanitarian aid, industrial materials, consumer goods and much more," it stated.

### Surrender...

bad, but it is the responsibility of all of us to bear the burden and get through the current situation," he said.

In recent weeks, however, the Taliban have repeatedly claimed to have taken control of some districts; a claim that has always been denied by the Ministry of Defense.

The Ministry of Defense has repeatedly stated that in order to prevent civilian casualties, the security forces have made a tactical retreat, and after a few days, they have regained control of the lost areas. However, referring to the peace talks, Abdullah said that the Afghan government and the international community agreed that there was no military solution to the current crisis in Afghanistan; but the Taliban have not been satisfied so far.

According to him, with the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, the last reason for the continuation of the war has disappeared and the continuation of this war is no longer legitimate and the only solution is the continuation of peace talks.

### Czech...

bilateral trade relations and enhancing continued engagement. He added Afghanistan had a strategic geographical location between Central Asia and South Asia. The Czech Republic was keen to explore ways of investment in a mineral-rich Afghanistan and

expand trade and economic ties with it, he said. Nisar Ahmad Ghoriani, the minister of commerce, praised the contribution Czech troops within the framework of NATO to the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan over the past 20 years.

He called on the participants to stand for a few moments in

honour of the 13 Czech soldiers killed during their mission in Afghanistan.

Initiated by the Afghan Embassy and organised by the Czech-Afghan Chamber of Commerce, the forum will last three days. The Afghan delegation will meet a number of other Czech officials and sign agreements with them.

### Millions...

community must do more to acknowledge that Afghanistan represents the modern face of humanitarian crisis. Conflict, insecurity and climate change are already impacting entire populations and the need for bold and urgent action to be taken by world leaders to

safeguard the health and safety of people could not be clearer," said Rizae.

According to IRC analysis, people in Herat, Badghis, Pakitya, Helmand and Khost provinces will be worst affected, with 83% of those assessed reported seeing community members leaving to find better

access to food and water in the last three months. Those surveyed reported a lack of food (34%), loss of livelihoods (29%), water sources drying up (13%) and conflict (13%) as the major reasons for leaving. Many were also impacted by the 2018 drought that left a quarter of a million people displaced.

### Japan's...

expect Suga, who leads the party, to dissolve the house during the current parliamentary session, a view corroborated by several senior administration officials.

"We need to stay on our guard and make sure the remaining bills are enacted," Suga said in a meeting between the government and the ruling coalition. Jun Azumi, the CDPJ's head

of parliamentary affairs told reporters the opposition "won't be constrained or threatened" and stands "ready to fight" in the general election, which must take place before Oct. 21 when the current four-year terms of lower house members end.

The ruling coalition currently holds 306 of 465 seats in the more powerful of parliament's two chambers. A Kyodo News poll conducted last month

showed support for the LDP at 41.9%, the CDPJ at 8.6% and Komeito at 4.5%, while 32.1% of respondents said they do not back any party.

The other opposition parties that submitted the no-confidence motion were the Japanese Communist Party, the Democratic Party for the People and the Social Democratic Party. The Japan Innovation Party voted against it.

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# Putin Responds to Biden's 'Killer,' 'Autocrat' Comments

Russian President Vladimir Putin reacted to recent descriptions of him by US President Joseph Biden in an exclusive interview with US TV channel NBC aired Monday ahead of a summit between the two leaders in Geneva.

Putin commented on a range of issues during the interview, including Russian-US relations, the Navalny case, the Ryanair flight landing in Belarus, the situation in Ukraine and China's treatment of its Uyghur minority

At the beginning of the interview, Putin was asked about the remarks by Biden, who previously called him "an autocrat" and responded positively to a question

asking if he believed Putin to be "a killer." Putin said he had experienced a lot of attacks during his presidency and that such things neither baffle him nor prevent him from moving in the right direction "to secure the interests of the Russian state." "It's macho behavior that is part of US political culture, where it's considered normal. By the way, not here. It is not considered normal here. If this rhetoric is followed by a suggestion to meet and discuss bilateral issues and matters of international policies, I see it as a desire to engage in joint work. If this desire is serious, we're prepared to support it," he said.



### A look at the world

#### Japan's Parliament Rejects PM Cabinet No-Confidence Vote

Japan's ruling coalition voted down a no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's Cabinet in the House of Representatives on Tuesday, deflecting criticism over the government's COVID-19 response and plans to push ahead with the Tokyo Olympics.

Four opposition parties submitted the motion after the Liberal Democratic Party and its junior coalition partner Komeito rejected their demand to extend the current parliamentary session beyond its scheduled end on Wednesday.



The Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan and three other opposition parties said a three-month extension is necessary to continue the debate on ways to contain the coronavirus pandemic and whether the Tokyo Olympics, set to begin July 23, and Paralympics can be held safely. CDPJ leader Yukio Edano accused Suga of "stopping the highest institution of the state from functioning for an extended period during the worst crisis since the end of the war."

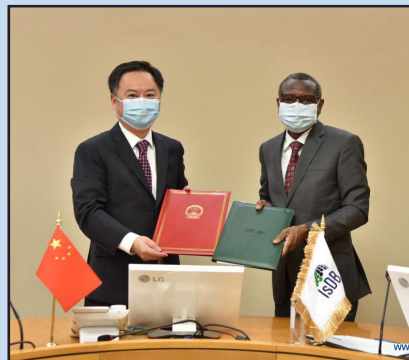
"On that point alone, he is unfit to be a leader during an emergency," Edano said before the vote was held in a lower house plenary session in the afternoon.

The no-confidence motion was the first since June 2019 when one was filed against Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Cabinet, in which Suga served as chief Cabinet secretary.

On Sunday, Suga did not rule out dissolving the lower house for a general election in response to a no-confidence motion, while maintaining that bringing the pandemic under control is his top priority.

But LDP Secretary General Toshihiro Nikai said Tuesday he does not... **P3**

#### China Offers Help to IsDB Members to Build Public Health Laboratories



The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed an agreement with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) on Monday, offering assistance to the bank members to build anti-epidemic public health laboratories.

Chen Weiqing, Chinese ambassador to Saudi Arabia and the representative of China to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and Mansur Muhtar, vice president of the IsDB, signed on behalf of both sides in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

"Unity and cooperation are the most powerful weapons to fight against the epidemic. China and the Islamic countries have helped each other in the face of the coronavirus. I believe the COVID-19 will eventually be defeated with the concerted efforts of China, the Islamic countries and the international community," Chen said. Mansur Muhtar expressed his thanks to China for providing assistance to the least developed member countries of the IsDB in fighting against the epidemic.

"I regard this cooperation as a starting point, and wish to further strengthen exchanges and cooperation with China in various fields under the framework of South-South cooperation," Mansur Muhtar said.

Nowadays covid-19 is a huge pandemic for humanity. However, Brazil registered 827 more deaths from COVID-19 in the past 24 hours, bringing the nationwide tally to 488,228, the health ministry said Monday. A total of 39,846 new infections were detected, raising the nationwide caseload to 17,452,612, the ministry said. Brazil has the world's second highest COVID-19 death toll, after the United States, and the third largest caseload, following the United States and India. **P2**

#### Dubai Steps in Again as Pandemic Drives Emirates to \$5.5 Billion Loss

Emirates got an additional \$1.1 billion in state support from Dubai after a collapse in long-haul travel due to the coronavirus triggered its first full-year loss in over three decades.

Governments around the world have pumped billions of dollars into airlines to keep them afloat during the pandemic and Emirates, which is state-owned, has received \$3.1 billion in equity injections from



the Dubai government, including \$2 billion disclosed last year.

The carrier reported a \$5.5 billion full year loss on Tuesday compared to a \$288 million profit a year ago, as revenue plunged 66% to \$8.4 billion amid the industry's worst ever crisis. Emirates said the government, its sole shareholder, would continue to support the airline that transformed Dubai into a major international travel hub over the past three decades.

Fellow Gulf carrier Qatar Airways, which is due to report its annual results, has also received \$3 billion from its state-owner.

Emirates and Qatar Airways have no domestic market to cushion against border restrictions and closures introduced to stop the spread of COVID-19. While vaccination programmes have put some economies on the road to recovery their slow rollout globally has put international airlines... **P2**



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