

[UAE confirms 941 new coronavirus cases](#)

Author:

Thu, 2020-05-21 08:21

DUBAI: UAE health authorities have confirmed 941 new coronavirus cases, the highest overnight figures so far, as the Emirates continued its expanded testing among residents and citizens.

The country's caseload is now at 26,004 after the new cases were detected from the additional 43,732 tests that have been undertaken, state news agency WAM reported.

The coronavirus-related death toll also rose by six overnight, taking the total number of deaths to 233, Dr. Amna Al-Dahak Al-Shamsi, the government spokesperson, said in the report.

UAE authorities earlier modified the timings of the National Disinfection Program to 8 p.m. until 6 a.m., from 10 p.m. until 6 a.m. previously, and also limited mall operating hours as part of the country's intensified effort to prevent the spread of the highly contagious virus.

"We take into consideration the readiness of various sectors to receive the public and ensure their safety, especially retail outlets and shopping malls," Dr. Saif Juma Al-Dhaheri, spokesman of the National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management Authority, said.

"We must ensure a balance between business continuity and public safety needs."

"It is incumbent on everyone to abide by the COVID-19 countermeasures during Eid, as any violations will have an adverse effect on the entire society," Dr. Dhaheri said, and added that violators would be subject to penalty and disciplinary action.



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UAE company develops rapid COVID-19 testing technology
UAE reports 873 new coronavirus infections

[Iranian asylum seeker arrested in Turkey for hanging UK Union Flag towel out to dry](#)

Wed, 2020-05-20 20:33

ANKARA: An Iranian asylum seeker on Wednesday triggered a nationwide row in Turkey after being arrested for hanging out a wet British Union Flag towel on his balcony.

Mohammad Reza, who fled Iran to temporarily live in the Central Anatolian province of Kayseri, is facing possible legal proceedings after angry

neighbors complained to authorities that his actions were a provocative act.

In a statement, Kayseri governor's office said a criminal investigation had been launched into the incident.

Local residents in the city cheered as 32-year-old Reza was arrested but he pleaded his innocence saying he was only drying the wet towel and had no other intentions.

It is not the first incident of its kind to take place in the conservative and hardline nationalist Turkish city. In 2008, during the shooting of a documentary based on different civilizations that once thrived in Anatolia, protests erupted when Byzantine flags were flown, resulting in the film's director having to seek police assistance.

The city, a textile manufacturing hub in the country, employs numerous migrant workers, mostly refugees, in its industrial sectors.

In a follow-up statement, the Kayseri governorship said Reza had not given a second thought to the implications of hanging out the towel displaying the UK's national flag.

"For people who know the history of Turkey, perhaps not just the incident, but the language used by the government officials is not that surprising", said Ugur Derin, a Turkish researcher from Netherlands' Leiden University.

"Turkey has had a negative discourse on non-Turks and non-Muslims, and in that sense, it is telling that the Iranian asylum seeker who hung the British-flag towel is referred to as a 'foreigner' in the official statements.

"The idea that foreigners are not reliable is prevalent in Turkey, and an ever-present discourse pointing to the conspiracies of external powers is perhaps a by-product of this mindset," he told Arab News.

Derin noted that it was also significant that the incident had taken place in Kayseri, a city that had a substantial Armenian and Greek population at the beginning of the 20th century.

"Turkey's denial of its violent past, notably the Armenian Genocide, undoubtedly plays a role both in the incident, and the language used by the officials," he added.



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Yeni Safak: Pakistan congratulates Turkey on Youth and Sports DayUS Congress members call for release of political prisoners in Turkey

[Pompeo says Palestinians should keep security cooperation](#)

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Wed, 2020-05-20 17:06

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Wednesday voiced regret at Palestinian threats to end security coordination if Israel annexes occupied territory in line with President Donald Trump's Middle East plan.

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas, playing one of his only cards, said Tuesday evening that his government was absolved of all agreements with Israel and the United States – including three-way security cooperation. “We hope that the security arrangements will continue to be in place, that the work that’s done on the ground there to keep people in Israel and Palestinians safe will continue,” Pompeo told reporters. “I regret that he’s decided to abrogate these agreements,” Pompeo said. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been emboldened by a plan unveiled by Trump in January that would give the US blessing for Israel to annex swathes of the West Bank, despite wide concerns in the rest of the world – including neighboring Jordan, a US ally that has made peace with the Jewish state. Under a coalition agreement between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his rival-turned-partner Benny Gantz, the two can bring annexation to the cabinet for discussion from July 1. Pompeo, who met Netanyahu in Jerusalem last week, said the Palestinians would benefit from the Trump plan, which promises them an independent but condensed and demilitarized state as well as international investment. “The Palestinians have continued to refuse to just simply sit down and enter into negotiation based on President Trump’s Vision for Peace,” Pompeo said. Joe Biden, Trump’s presumptive Democratic challenger in November elections, on Tuesday declared his opposition to annexation, saying it would undermine hopes for peace. The Trump administration has staunchly backed Netanyahu, who is popular with the president’s evangelical Christian base.



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Palestinian president declares end to all agreements with Israel and US

[US, France agree on urgent need for de-escalation in Libya](#)

Wed, 2020-05-20 20:08

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump and French counterpart Emmanuel Macron discussed their concern about “worsening foreign interference” in Libya and “agreed on the need for urgent de-escalation,” the White House said. The two leaders also discussed progress on reopening the United States and France, as well as global economies locked down during the coronavirus outbreak, it said. Trump said he looked forward to convening Group of Seven leaders soon.

Developing...



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UAE calls for Libya cease-fire, return to political process
Erdogan demotes military architect of Turkey's Libya policy

[US sanctions Iran's interior minister over human rights abuses](#)

Wed, 2020-05-20 17:28

WASHINGTON: The United States on Wednesday imposed sanctions on Iran's interior minister, accusing him of having a role in serious human rights abuse, including giving orders that led to violence against peaceful protesters, the US Treasury Department said.

The Treasury said in a statement that Iranian Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli gave orders authorizing the Law Enforcement Forces (LEF) to use lethal force in response to protests in November, leading to the killing of protesters, including at least 23 minors.

The Treasury's action on Wednesday also blacklisted seven senior officials of the LEF and a provincial commander of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

The LEF Cooperative Foundation – which the Treasury said is controlled by the LEF and which is active in Iran's energy, construction, services, technology and banking industries – was also blacklisted, as were its director and members of the board of trustees. The organization's name in Iran is Bonyad Taavon NAJA.

Wednesday's action freezes any US-held assets of those blacklisted and generally bars Americans from dealing with them.

"The United States will continue to hold accountable Iranian officials and institutions that oppress and abuse their own people," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in the statement.

Tensions between Washington and Tehran have spiked since US President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew in 2018 from the Iran nuclear deal struck by his predecessor, Barack Obama, and began reimposing sanctions that had been eased under the accord.



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A quarter of Iranian oil rigs idle as US sanctions bite into production