

# Rouhani says Iran should assume worst-case coronavirus scenario

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Sat, 2020-04-25 13:52

DUBAI: Iran should draw up economic plans based on a worst-case scenario of nearly a year of disruptions due to the coronavirus, President Hassan Rouhani said on Saturday, as the death toll from the disease rose by 76 to 5,650. "Our first request is that we should plan production long-term based on a pessimistic view that we might face this virus ... for months," Rouhani said in a meeting with heads of Iranian private companies carried live on state TV. "Maybe (we will face this) till the end of the year, we do not know," Rouhani added, referring to the Iranian calendar year which ends in March 2021. Earlier, a Health Ministry spokesman said the total number of people diagnosed with the virus had reached 89,328, of whom 3,096 were in a critical condition.

Deputy Health Minister Iraj Harirchi said the country's daily death toll had fallen by about 70% from its peak, while the number of coronavirus patients in hospital had fallen by about half.

Iran is one of the Middle Eastern countries worst affected by the COVID-19 respiratory disease and has one of the world's highest death tolls.



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Iran space program front for nuclear ambitions: PompeoRouhani urges Iran military to remain vigilant against 'provocations'

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## [Turkey repatriates over 3,000 of its nationals before Ramadan](#)

Author:

Sat, 2020-04-25 15:44

The Turkish government repatriated more than 3,000 nationals from cities around the world, state news agency repatriation reported on Friday.

Returning nationals were placed in quarantine upon arrival, shortly after going through routine health checks coordinated by the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority.

Turkish nationals returned from 59 countries that include, Russia, Germany and Saudi Arabia.

All the returning citizens will be placed in quarantine for a period of 14 days.

Turkey has repatriated nearly 25,000 citizens in total ahead of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.



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## [Egyptians criticized for ignoring social distancing measures during mass Ramadan celebration](#)

Sat, 2020-04-25 13:51

DUBAI: Organizers of a march in Alexandria were arrested on Friday after a video of people carrying a Kaaba model in the streets – on the first night of Ramadan – went viral amid the coronavirus outbreak, local daily [Egypt Today](#) reported.

A group of people reportedly in Alexandria touring the streets with a scale model of Kaaba, singing: “there’s no corona” [#egypt pic.twitter.com/AQw0PU4WLP](#)

– Deena Hassan (@deenahsn) [April 24, 2020](#)

People were celebrating the start of holy Islamic month of Ramadan before the night-time curfew hours. Crowd in the circulated video triggered social media users who used the #Alexandria hashtag on twitter to express their anger.

A twitter user said: "Although I don't understand the purpose of this march, how is the Kaaba model linked to the celebration? people are partying and underestimating the seriousness of the coronavirus."

لا حول ولا قوة الا بالله مع اني مفهمتش المغزا من جروجهم للشارع ليه وايه  
علاقه الكعبه بالموضوع طالما هناك زفه وطبول ورقص واستهزاء بالوباء  
والحزر..عموما فوضنا امرنا لله واليه المشتكي

- alarby62 (@CGFmqbLiNRxP2oC) [April 24, 2020](#)

Another twitter user said: "Unfortunately, this is the current situation in Muharram Bey, people carrying a model for the honorable Kaaba and somebody told them to circulate it before hanging it as a Ramadan lantern."

دي للأسف حاليا وفي محرم بك نموذج للكعبة الشريفة وفي حد قالهم يطوفوا  
بيها قبل ما يعلقوا كفا نوس رمضان ... لله الأمر من قبل ومن بعد ولا حول  
ولا قوة إلا بالله العلي العظيم

- youssef soliman (@youssef\_soliman) [April 24, 2020](#)

The night-time curfew hours in Egypt during the month of Ramadan were set to start from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m., Egyptian Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouli announced.

A twitter user also said: "I woke up just like you all and saw people performing Umra in Alexandria."

انا صحيت زيي زيكم بالطيط لقيت الناس بتعمل عمره في [#اسكندريه](#)  
[pic.twitter.com/eteG52YpQ8](https://pic.twitter.com/eteG52YpQ8)

- حسام الشريف (@Fouly44) [April 24, 2020](#)

Earlier in March, people in Alexandria took to the streets to protest against the coronavirus pandemic that hit the country in February, neglecting the fact that the virus spreads faster in crowds.

A video of the protest had also been circulated over social media and caused anger and panic among social media users.

Wrong on so many levels

– Ari (@shithousingfcs) [March 24, 2020](#)

The total number of coronavirus patients in Egypt has reached 4,092, while the number of fatalities has risen to 294. Egypt has also recorded a total of 1,75 recoveries.



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## [Rouhani urges Iran military to remain vigilant against 'provocations'](#)

Fri, 2020-04-24 19:58

TEHRAN: Iran's president Hassan Rouhani called on the country's armed forces on Friday to maintain vigilance against "provocative actions by foreigners in the region," state TV reported, as a war of words with the US escalated.

The comment came after the head of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards said on Thursday Tehran would destroy US warships if its security is threatened in the Arabian Gulf.

On Wednesday, US President Donald Trump warned Tehran over "harassment" of US vessels. Trump said he had instructed the US Navy to fire on any Iranian ships that harass it at sea, though said later he was not changing the military's rules of engagement.

"We must carefully follow strategies ensuring the sustainable stability of the region while maintaining vigilance and authoritative presence in the area," state TV quoted Rouhani as telling Defence Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami by telephone.

In a phone call to Revolutionary Guards commander Major General Hossein Salami, Rouhani "referred to provocative actions by foreigners in the region and the need to maintain vigilance against these moves", state television reported.

Earlier this month, the US military said 11 Revolutionary Guards naval vessels came close to US Navy and Coast Guard ships in the Gulf, calling the moves "dangerous and provocative".

Tehran blamed its longtime adversary for the incident. On Thursday, Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned the Swiss ambassador in Tehran, who represents US interests in the country, over the recent tensions between Tehran and Washington.

Antagonism between Iran and the United States has sharpened since 2018, when Trump withdrew from Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with six world powers and reimposed crippling sanctions.

Animosities spiked in early January when top Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani was killed in a US drone strike in Baghdad. Iran retaliated on Jan. 9 by firing missiles at bases in Iraq where US troops were stationed.

Stoking tension over Tehran's nuclear and missile programmes, Iran's Guards said on Wednesday they had successfully launched the country's first military satellite into orbit. The announcement drew protests from Washington, London and Paris.



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Britain: Iran's ballistic missile launch "of significant concern"

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## [Lebanon extends coronavirus lockdown as PM rebukes central bank governor](#)

Author:

Reuters

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Fri, 2020-04-24 13:12

BEIRUT: Lebanon will extend a coronavirus lockdown by two weeks until May 10 but Prime Minister Hassan Diab said on Friday the economy would be reopened in gradual phases over the coming weeks.

Already hit by a financial crisis that led to a sovereign debt default and a fall in the value of its currency, Lebanon has ordered most businesses to

close, shut Beirut airport and imposed an overnight curfew to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Meanwhile, Lebanese Prime Minister Hassan Diab rebuked central bank governor Riad Salameh on Friday, questioning his performance after a steep fall in the pound currency and calling on him to clearly explain to Lebanese where policy was headed.

Diab said the crisis-hit country had suffered \$7 billion in additional losses since the start of the year and that liquidity in the banking system was running out, with \$5.5 billion in Lebanese deposits exiting in the past three months.

Diab said it was urgent that an economic reform plan, a draft of which emerged earlier this month, be quickly passed to avert further crisis. New infections have largely tapered off in recent weeks. Lebanon has recorded 696 coronavirus cases and 22 deaths so far, with the ministry of health reporting eight new cases on Friday.

“It is time for us to start reopening our country. We all want our normal lives back. People and companies are struggling,” Diab said, though warning that caution was still needed to avoid a second wave that could “destroy the country”.

Diab said the government had done a risk assessment on what sectors could be slowly relaunched in the coming weeks, without specifying which ones would come first.

Earlier on Friday Lebanon’s higher defence council laid out a five-stage timetable for reopening the economy, with the first beginning on April 27 and the last on June 8.





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Lebanon's Berri urges government to halt dramatic collapse of currency