

Egypt announces two-week, night-time curfew to slow coronavirus

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Tue, 2020-03-24 11:30

DUBAI: Egypt has announced a two-week, 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew for its over 100 million people to slow the spread of the new coronavirus.

Prime Minister Moustafa Madbouly told a news conference on Tuesday that the 11-hour curfew would go into effect Wednesday across the country and last for two weeks. He says all kinds of transportation will be halted during the curfew.

Egypt, the Arab World most populous country, has 366 confirmed cases and 21 fatalities, including two senior military officers.

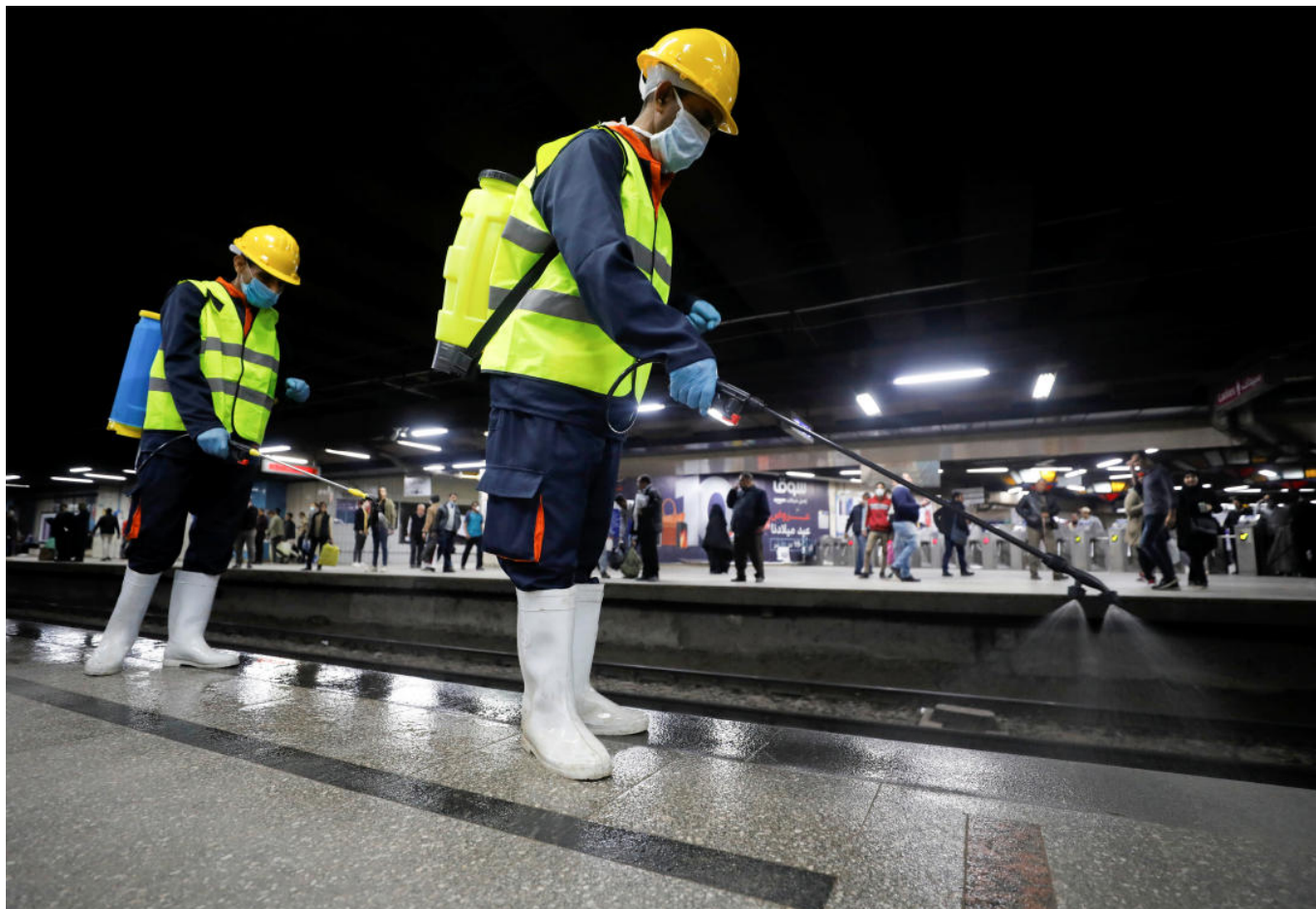
There are over 31,000 confirmed cases of the virus across the Mideast, the vast majority in the hard-hit nation of Iran. While most recover from the virus and the COVID-19 illness that it causes, bottoming crude oil prices have put additional strain on even the wealthiest countries of the region. That in turn could affect their ability to spend on needed supplies as the virus challenges medical systems worldwide.

Already, countries have reacted by either urging or ordering hundreds of millions of people to stay home.

In Egypt, tourist cancelations have reached 80 percent, while retail and hospitality sectors have also been hard-hit in countries like the United Arab Emirates where tourism is a pillar of the economy, according to the IMF.

The arrival of the global pandemic in Syria with one positive case, as well as in the Gaza Strip, has raised concerns the virus could run rampant in some of the most vulnerable areas in the Middle East. War-torn Libya and Yemen, which have yet to report any cases, are also a source of concern.

The worst outbreak in the Mideast is unfolding in Iran, where authorities reported another 122 deaths on Tuesday, bringing the total number of fatalities to more than 1,900 amid more than 24,800 confirmed cases. The dead included the mother-in-law of the son of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the state-run IRNA news agency said Monday.



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Second Egyptian military official dies of coronavirus
Egypt to allocate 20bn Egyptian pounds to support bourse amid virus fears

[Lebanese cabinet to resume talks on capital control bill amid opposition](#)

Author:

Tue, 2020-03-24 14:17

DUBAI: A cabinet session is due Tuesday in Lebanon to continue negotiations on the proposed capital control law, which aims to organize relationships between banks and clients, amid fierce opposition, Lebanon's The Daily Star reported.

Lebanese Prime Minister Hassan Diab is set to chair the session at 1 p.m. local time at the Grand Serail, as the country faces harsh economic and social conditions.

“Some ministers made observations about the capital control draft law, while others have not been informed of the full text of the law. It was agreed that ministers will send their written remarks to the finance minister over the weekend ahead of the Cabinet meeting Tuesday,” a source told local media. Another meeting will be held at the Baabda Palace on Thursday on the same matter.

Several political groups have criticized the bill, saying it harms interests of depositors.

“There will be losers and there will be losses, but we must make our efforts to reduce losses,” Diab has earlier said.



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Lebanon to stop paying back all debt in foreign currencies

[As UAE malls fall silent amid](#)

coronavirus controls, the supermarkets will remain open

Tue, 2020-03-24 13:56

DUBAI: As the UAE's iconic malls close on Wednesday amid coronavirus concerns, their boulevard like walk ways will fall silent, shoppers told to remain in their homes.

It is not a complete close down, the UAE's supermarkets will remain open, allowing people to buy the supplies they need.

Brands like Lulu Group, Union Coop, Al-Maya Supermarkets, Choithrams, Abu Dhabi Cooperative Society and Spar group, Spinneys and Carrefour, will operate according to their usual schedules, including 24-hour shops. Supermarkets are providing hand sanitizers at entrances, asking staff to wear masks and using floor markings to encourage social distancing.

UAE authorities said on Sunday that all shopping malls will close down after 48 hours for a period of two weeks. Meanwhile, all restaurants, cafes and cafeterias in Dubai were closed on Sunday for two weeks.

Earlier, private and public beaches, parks, pools and gyms were also closed for the same period of time.

The decisions come as part of the country's regulations to curb the spread of coronavirus.



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UAE exempts hotels from management fees due to coronavirus regulations
UAE tells COVID-19 frontliners, patients to report cases or face jail and fines

[Jordan steps up efforts to provide for basic needs of 10m living under virus curfew](#)

Author:

Tue, 2020-03-24 01:26

AMMAN: The Jordanian government on Monday announced a series of programs to help ease conditions for 10 million people living under a round-the-clock coronavirus curfew.

Minister of media affairs, Amjad Adaileh, said pharmacies had been allowed to make free home deliveries of medicines, along with bread and water, and bakeries had been given the green light to restart work from Tuesday morning. Through the initiatives, more of which will be introduced over the coming days, officials are hoping to prevent a repeat of the panic buying witnessed in supermarkets before the curfew was imposed on Saturday.

Jordan currently has 127 confirmed cases of the COVID-19 disease.

Around 70,000 students have begun distance learning using a curriculum broadcast on Jordan's sports satellite station as well as online.

Government officials expected the curfew to remain in place for some time and appealed for Jordanians to adjust their lifestyles appropriately.

Samar Muhareb, director of the Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD) legal aid organization, told Arab News that the government's plan of supplying basic humanitarian needs was necessary due to the large number of people affected.

"But from our experience in dealing with the Syrian crisis, after you deal with basic needs you need to address other needs or else you will be faced with social unrest.

"All of sudden you will find problems of people with aching teeth, or smoking addicts that have run out of cigarettes, and this might turn normally peaceful people into beasts if these issues are not dealt with."

Muhareb pointed out that the Jordanian government needed to be transparent with the public over dealing with the outbreak.

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days, officials are hoping to prevent a repeat of the panic buying witnessed in supermarkets before the curfew was imposed on Saturday.

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"In an emergency you begin with providing emergency protection and support and after protection you need to work on the need to identify the needs and begin a distribution plan that can help address the public's need to cope with the long-term emergency," she added.

It was only a matter of time before "the government must open up the banks and get money into people's hands," Muhareb said.

Linda Al-Kalash, executive director of Tamkeen for legal aid and human rights, told Arab News: "I hope the government doesn't plan to provide cash or other support only for Jordanian citizens.

"There are 3 million people who are non-Jordanians including foreign laborers, refugees, and Palestinians without citizenship that live in the country and are equally affected by this epidemic."



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Former Lebanese minister May Chidiac tests positive for coronavirus
Algeria imposes curfew in capital

[Former Lebanese minister May Chidiac tests positive for coronavirus](#)

Tue, 2020-03-24 01:05

BEIRUT: Former Lebanese minister May Chidiac said she has tested positive for the coronavirus and is undergoing treatment after returning from France last week.

“After I returned from the French capital, Paris, last week, I had some symptoms similar to the symptoms of the coronavirus infection, so I immediately moved into home quarantine,” her media office said in a statement on Facebook.

The statement also said that Chidiac underwent medical examinations at Hotel Dieu Hospital last Saturday to confirm the cause of the symptoms.

“The results appeared on Monday and they were positive, so they confirmed that I had coronavirus. Then I went to the hospital immediately for treatment. I note that my condition is not critical, and I will soon join the list of people recovering from the coronavirus,” the statement added.

Chidiac, also a former journalist and political presenter, survived an assassination attempt on Sept. 25, 2005. She was appointed minister of state for administrative development in former prime minister Saad Hariri’s final cabinet in 2019.



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