

Palestinians seek closure of West Bank crossings to curb virus

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Mon, 2020-07-06 13:55

RAMALLAH: The Palestinian prime minister called on Israel Monday to close all West Bank crossings, saying a lack of Palestinian control over the access points was responsible for surging coronavirus cases.

The call from prime minister Mohammed Shtayyeh came as both the occupied West Bank and Israel continued to see a rising virus caseload, sparking fears of a second pandemic wave that could prove difficult to contain.

"The infection rates reached unprecedented levels in Palestine due to many things, including that we do not control our crossings (and) our borders," Shtayyeh said ahead of a weekly cabinet meeting.

"We are calling on Israel to close all the crossings and for Palestinians working in Israel to stay at their places of work and not return to the Palestinian territories," he said.

There have been more than 4,200 confirmed coronavirus cases in the West Bank, including 16 deaths.

Israel has meanwhile recorded more than 30,000 cases, including nearly 18,000 recoveries and more than 330 deaths.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Monday that it was clear the pandemic was "spreading."

"If we do not act now, we will have hundreds, and perhaps over 1,000, severe cases in the coming weeks, which will paralyze our systems," he said.

His government later announced plans for renewed restrictions, including the closure of event venues, clubs, bars, gyms and public pools – all of which had re-opened in recent weeks.

Fresh curbs on the number of people allowed in restaurants and places of worship were also set to come into force.



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Israel, Palestinians face new restrictions amid virus surge
Palestinians rally as global opposition to Israeli annexation grows

[Qatar coronavirus cases pass 100,000 mark](#)

Author:

Mon, 2020-07-06 17:27

DOHA: Qatar passed the milestone of 100,000 coronavirus cases on Monday, the health ministry said, as the country presses ahead with plans to re-open its economy.

The gas-rich emirate has one of the world's highest per capita infection rates with 100,345 people, 3.65 percent of its 2.75 million population, having tested positive for COVID-19.

Almost 94,000 of those infected have recovered and 133 people have died, one of the lowest reported death rates globally.

Wealthy Qatar has a higher testing rate than many other countries, having screened 386,111 people – 14 percent of the population.

“Measures taken to tackle COVID-19 in Qatar have succeeded in flattening the curve and limiting the spread of the virus,” the ministry of public health said in a statement, adding there were a total of 546 new cases and five deaths in the last 24 hours.

“We are seeing a rise in the number of deaths in recent weeks and this is due to the people who were infected at the height of the virus several weeks ago.”

Qatar has continued to reopen segments of its economy in recent weeks subject to strict social distancing measures as the average daily number of new cases has continued to fall.

In the past seven days there were an average of 748 new cases per day compared to 958 the week before.

Sun-lovers and jet-ski enthusiasts braved scorching summer temperatures on July 1 to be among the first to take advantage of reopened beaches, closed since March.

Beachgoers were required to wear masks, have temperatures taken and show mandatory phone-based contact tracing apps, as were customers of cafes and restaurants which resumed limited dine-in services last Wednesday.

Masks remain compulsory in public for those not exercising and private gatherings are limited to five people.



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Stuck in Qatar: Canadians told they could be fired for leaving COVID-19 hot zone
Qatar Airways will not take new aircraft in 2020 or 2021, CEO says

[Chlorine gas leak at plant sickens 70 in southeast Iran](#)

Author:

Associated Press

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Sat, 2020-07-04 18:02

TEHRAN, Iran: A chlorine gas leak at a petrochemical center in southeast Iran sickened 70 workers, state-run IRNA news agency reported Saturday.

Most of the workers at the Karun petrochemical center in the city of Mahshahr in southeast Khuzestan province were released after undergoing medical treatment.

Meanwhile, in the city of Ahvaz, also in Khuzestan, a fire at the Zergan power plant was ignited when a transformer exploded, IRNA reported Saturday. The blaze was contained by firefighters after two hours of battling the blaze.

Mohammad Hafezi, the power plant's health and safety manager, told IRNA the cause of the fire was under investigation.

The two incidents in Iran's oil-rich Khuzestan come after a fire and explosion at a centrifuge production plant above Iran's underground Natanz nuclear enrichment facility early Thursday.

Officials said the cause of the fire at Natanz is known to officials, but won't be immediately released for "security reasons."

On Tuesday, an explosion from a gas leak in a medical clinic in northern Tehran killed 19 people.



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Fire flares at Iranian power plant, latest in series of incidentsIran threatens retaliation after what it calls possible cyberattack on nuclear site

[UAE adopts new government structure, full announcement to come on Sunday](#)

Author:

Reuters

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Sat, 2020-07-04 17:55

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates has adopted a new government structure, involving the merger of ministries and agencies, the country's vice president and ruler of Dubai said on Saturday, adding that the full announcement would be made on Sunday at noon (0800 GMT).

The decision aims "to produce a government that is more flexible and fast and keeping pace with change," Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum said on

Twitter.

In May, he said the country would review the structure and size of its government as part of its strategy for dealing with the effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

الإخوة والأخوات .. أعلننا في 13 مايو 2020 عن نيتنا مراجعة هيكل حكومة الإمارات.. ووعدنا بإجراء تغييرات .. ودمج وزارات وهيئات .. للخروج بحكومة أكثر مرونة وسرعة ومواكبة للمتغيرات .. اعتمدت قبل قليل الهيكل الجديد .. ونعلنه غداً في الثانية عشر ظهراً بإذن الله..

– HH Sheikh Mohammed (@HHShtMohd) [July 4, 2020](#)



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Jordan slaps wristbands on arrivals to monitor virus quarantine

Author:

AFP

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1593880047487620700

Sat, 2020-07-04 15:58

AMMAN: Jordan began putting electronic bracelets Saturday on travelers who have recently arrived in the country to ensure that they observe home-quarantine against the spread of coronavirus, an official said.

People arriving in Jordan must isolate for 14 days at hotels designated by the authorities on the shores of the Dead Sea, west of the capital Amman. After that period, they must self-isolate for an additional 14 days at home, according to Nizar Obeidat, spokesman for Jordan's virus task force.

He told state-run Al-Mamlaka television that "the use of the electronic bracelet began on Saturday for those self-isolating at home" in order to ensure quarantine rules are respected.

Jordan imposed tough measures, including curfews and the deployment of drones, to curb the spread of COVID-19, before easing policies in early June. The kingdom has so far registered 1,147 coronavirus infections, including only 10 deaths.

But health authorities have almost daily been reporting new cases among Jordanians and foreigners entering the country.

They have also maintained measures such as social distancing and the compulsory use of face masks in most public places, with those breaking the rules fined.

Several countries around the world have turned to electronic tracking devices including bracelets and smart watches connected to special apps to contain the spread of coronavirus.

In March, Hong Kong began ordering all arrivals from overseas to wear electronic bracelets to monitor observance of quarantine.

South Korea, China, Taiwan and Singapore have also employed a range of tech solutions to tackle coronavirus.



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