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## Egypt finds first case of coronavirus



Egyptian Quarantine Authority employees prepare to scan body temperature of a woman at Cairo International Airport. (AFP)

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Updated 16 February 2020

- People who came in contact with the patient were quarantined in their homes for

February 16, 2020  
01:21

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## 14 days as a precautionary measure

CAIRO: Egypt has identified its first case of coronavirus, according to the Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The virus was discovered in a foreigner whose identity and nationality have not been officially disclosed. However, a source suggested that the individual was from China.

Meanwhile, France also reported the first fatality from the new coronavirus outside Asia on Saturday, as the death toll from the outbreak jumped past 1,500 in China. More than 66,000 people have now been infected in China from a virus that emerged in central Hubei province in December before spreading across the country and some two dozen countries.

Egypt, however, took all preventive measures in cooperation with WHO, said Media Adviser to Minister of Health Khaled Mugahed and added that the WHO was informed immediately of the case, as the patient was taken to hospital where he is in isolation and is having constant checkups. Mugahed said the patient had not shown any signs of deterioration and was “completely stable.”

He said the ministry had adopted strict preventive measures for those who came in contact with the patient by conducting the necessary tests, which came back negative.

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People who came in contact with the patient were quarantined in their homes for 14 days as a precautionary measure.

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### **When viruses** **turn political**

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Those in isolation are being checked every eight hours and given instructions regarding their health. Among the preventive measures was the disinfection of the building in which the residents were living.

Mugahed said that the foreign patient tested positive for coronavirus even though he failed to show symptoms.

A source from the MOHP told Arab News that the foreign carrier of the virus is Chinese and was monitored during the past few days using periodic follow-up cards that are given to passengers at airports coming from abroad.

The source said the carrier of the virus was transferred to Al-Nujaila Hospital by ambulance. The carrier then went through further medical examinations.

A team from WHO is monitoring the patient's condition. Official sources at the Ministry of Aviation confirmed that all precautionary measures have been taken at Cairo Airport.

John Gabor, a WHO representative in Egypt, praised the speed and transparency of the Egyptian government in dealing with the situation as well as its keenness to inform the organization of the patient as soon as it was suspected.

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## HIGHLIGHT

**More than 66,000 people have now been infected in China from a virus that emerged in central Hubei province in December before spreading across the country and some two dozen countries.**

Gabor stressed that Egypt was one of the first countries to develop a good preventive plan to address the emerging coronavirus and deal with infected cases once they are discovered.

Egypt's Health Minister Hala Zayed held a meeting with the ministry's leaders to follow up the implementation of the ministry's plan to deal with the coronavirus.

Zayed added that results will be known after the 14-day incubation period of the virus.

WHO confirmed that a coronavirus carrier cannot be infected as long as the person does not show symptoms of the disease because it is possible that his immunity will overcome the virus before infection.

Zayed said the problem is not that a person is infected with the coronavirus and does not know it,

but in the inability to manage the crisis in a way that prevents the spread of infection.

The minister said Egypt was fully prepared to deal with the epidemic and prevent its spread, and that there are other countries that are, up until now, not as well equipped.

The death toll from the virus has neared 1,400 cases, almost exclusively in China where it was first identified. It has infected more than 64,000 people globally.



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# If Lebanon needs financial aid, France will be there: Finance Minister Le Maire (/node/1632576).



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REUTERS

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February 24, 2020  
18:24

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- **Le Maire said France is looking at options to support Lebanon recover from its financial crisis**
- **IMF discussed all possible options in recent meetings with Lebanese officials**

RIYADH: France is ready to support Lebanon financially — bilaterally or multilaterally — its finance minister said on Sunday, warning against mixing economic recovery in the small Mediterranean state with US-led efforts to counter Iran in the region.

“France always stands ready to help Lebanon. It has always been the case in the past and it will be the case in the future...” Bruno Le Maire told Reuters at the end of a meeting of finance officials from the Group of 20 (G20) major economies.

“If there is any help required from Lebanon, France will be there.”

Le Maire said in Abu Dhabi on Monday that France is looking at options to support Lebanon recover from its financial crisis, including through an International Monetary Fund program if Beirut seeks one.

He also told reporters he discussed the situation in Lebanon with the United Arab Emirates leadership.

Lebanon’s long-brewing economic crisis spiralled last year as the country’s capital inflows slowed and protests erupted against the ruling elite.

As the crisis deepens, hitting ordinary Lebanese hard, there is no sign of foreign aid. Western and Gulf Arab states that helped in the past have made clear that any support hinges on Beirut implementing long-delayed reforms to address root causes such as state corruption and bad governance.

Saudi Arabia’s finance minister said on Sunday the Kingdom was in contact with allies and international bodies to coordinate any support for Lebanon on the basis of economic reforms proposed by Beirut.

US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told Reuters in an interview that Washington was keeping a close eye on the situation. “It’s something we’re monitoring – both the political



and economic issues there,” he said. “Our interest is in the people of Lebanon. We want there to be safe environment where they can succeed economically and live as they want to.”

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) team has discussed all possible options in recent meetings with Lebanese officials, who are seeking technical advice for tackling the crisis as Beirut mulls a plan for dealing with fast-approaching debt payments.

Le Maire said decisions by Lebanon’s government were urgently needed to improve the situation on the ground. “We want to move in the official fora and we think that the IMF might have a role to play at one stage, but it’s up to the Lebanese government to decide,” he said. “But if there is any need for help, either bilateral or multilateral, we stand ready to help.”

Since protests erupted in October, Lebanon’s currency has slumped by roughly 60% on a parallel market, dollars have become scarce, prices have been hiked and thousands of jobs have been shed.

Lebanese Prime Minister Hassan Diab’s government took office last month with the backing of Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed Shiite group, and its allies, as Washington presses its policy of “maximum pressure” against Iran with wide-ranging sanctions.

“We know that there are ties between the two issues but we don’t want to mix the issue of economic recovery in Lebanon, which is today the clear emergency, and the question of Iran,” Le Maire added.



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