

Egypt suspends flights from Thursday over coronavirus

March 16 2020



Egypt, where tourism is a key source of revenue, is suspending all flights from Thursday as it tries to stem the spread of the coronavirus

Egypt said on Monday all flights would be suspended until the end of the month to stem the spread of the coronavirus, in a move expected to hit

the key tourism industry.

"Flights will be suspended from Thursday until March 31," Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly told a televised news conference.

He said the move was necessary to lessen [social interaction](#) especially among "tourists coming in or out of Egypt".

Losses from a [flight](#) shutdown are expected to reach more than 2.25 billion Egyptian pounds (\$130 million), the [prime minister](#) said.

The tourism industry is key to Egypt's economy, with revenues growing to \$12.6 billion between 2018 and 2019, compared to \$10 billion the previous year, according to the [central bank](#).

Tourism had taken a beating after the 2011 revolution and the 2015 downing of a Russian airliner by the Islamic State group hit visitor arrivals.

But it has shown signs of recovery in recent years.

Though still far off the 14.7 million recorded in 2010, Egypt welcomed 11.3 million arrivals in 2018, compared with just 5.3 million in 2016.

Egypt has not been spared from the spread of the novel coronavirus.

There are 126 confirmed cases, including of foreigners, and the country has recorded two deaths—a German tourist and an Egyptian woman, according to authorities.

Twenty-six patients who were infected have recovered and released from hospital.

Authorities have taken a number of measures to stem the spread of the coronavirus, including closing schools and universities

On Monday, the prime minister also urged Egyptians to "stay put" in their homes and avoid "panic shopping" saying the state has ample reserves of food items and other basic products.

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