

Saudis cancel flights as Gulf nations move to contain virus

March 14 2020



Firefighters disinfect a street against the new coronavirus, in western Tehran, Iran, Friday, March 13, 2020. The new coronavirus outbreak has reached Iran's top officials, with its senior vice president, Cabinet ministers, members of parliament, Revolutionary Guard members and Health Ministry officials among those infected. The vast majority of people recover from the new coronavirus. According to the World Health Organization, most people recover in about two to six weeks, depending on the severity of the illness. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)

Saudi Arabia said Saturday that it would halt all international flights to the kingdom for two weeks in the latest effort to contain the spread of the new coronavirus.

Gulf nations have been scrambling to contain the pandemic, which has spread to more than 100 countries and infected more than 130,000 people. Of special concern is nearby Iran, where one of the worst outbreaks has infected more than 11,000 and killed more than 500.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially [older adults](#) and people with existing [health problems](#), it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The vast majority of people recover from the [new virus](#) in a matter of weeks, but the outbreak has caused more than 5,000 deaths worldwide.

The state-run Saudi Press Agency, quoting an unnamed Interior Ministry official, said flights would be cancelled starting Sunday.

In the United Arab Emirates, [health officials](#) ordered the elderly to stay home because of the coronavirus outbreak and authorities said some federal employees could begin working from home for two weeks starting Sunday.

Abu Dhabi's The National newspaper reported that nightclubs and tourist restaurants in the emirate will be shut down until the end of March. The Department of Culture and Tourism also suspended all planned events, including concerts, in Abu Dhabi. The decision does not extend to Dubai.

A number of major sporting events, conferences and other gatherings have been cancelled across the globe. The virus is highly contagious, and

even those showing no symptoms can spread it, making large public gatherings particularly risky.



Firefighters prepare their fogging machines to disinfect a street against the new coronavirus as people watch, in western Tehran, Iran, Friday, March 13, 2020. The new coronavirus outbreak has reached Iran's top officials, with its senior vice president, Cabinet ministers, members of parliament, Revolutionary Guard members and Health Ministry officials among those infected. The vast majority of people recover from the new coronavirus. According to the World Health Organization, most people recover in about two to six weeks, depending on the severity of the illness. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)



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Firefighters prepare their fogging machines to disinfect a street against the new coronavirus as some people watch and pedestrians walk, in western Tehran, Iran, Friday, March 13, 2020. The new coronavirus outbreak has reached Iran's top officials, with its senior vice president, Cabinet ministers, members of parliament, Revolutionary Guard members and Health Ministry officials among those infected. The vast majority of people recover from the new coronavirus. According to the World Health Organization, most people recover in about two to six weeks, depending on the severity of the illness. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)

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