

Iran enforces 10-day lockdown amid fourth wave of pandemic

April 11 2021, by Amir Vahdat



People walk through closed Tehran's Grand Bazaar, Iran, Saturday, April 10, 2021. Iran on Saturday imposed partial lockdown on businesses in major shopping centers as well as intercity travels through personal cars in major cities including capital Tehran as it struggles with the worst outbreak of the coronavirus in the Mideast region. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)

Iran on Saturday began a 10-day lockdown amid a fourth wave of coronavirus infections, state TV reported, a worrisome trend after more than a year of the country battling the Middle East's worst outbreak.

Iran's coronavirus task force, charged with determining virus restrictions, ordered most shops closed and offices restricted to one-third capacity in cities declared as "red-zones."

The capital Tehran and 250 other cities and towns across the country have been declared red zones. They have the highest virus positivity rates and the most severe restrictions in place. Over 85% of the country now has either a red or orange infection status, authorities said.

The severe surge in infections follows a two-week public holiday for Nowruz, the Persian New Year. Millions traveled to the Caspian coast and other popular vacation spots, packed markets to shop for new clothes and toys and congregated in homes for parties in defiance of government health guidelines.

The new lockdown also affects all parks, restaurants, bakeries, beauty salons, malls and bookstores.

There appeared to be no respite in sight to the virus's spread as Iran's [vaccine rollout](#) lagged. Only some 200,000 doses have been administered in the country of 84 million, according to the World Health Organization.



Arman, 2, plays in front of closed shops of Tehran's Grand Bazaar, Iran, Saturday, April 10, 2021. Iran on Saturday imposed partial lockdown on businesses in major shopping centers as well as intercity travels through personal cars in major cities including capital Tehran as it struggles with the worst outbreak of the coronavirus in the Mideast region. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)

COVAX, an international collaboration to deliver the vaccine equitably across the world, delivered its first shipment to Iran on Monday from the Netherlands containing 700,000 Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine doses.

The Health Ministry said there were more than 19,600 new infections on Saturday, including 193 deaths. The confirmed death toll since the beginning of the outbreak stood at more than 64,200.

Hadi Minaie, a shop owner at Tehran's Grand Bazaar, said mismanagement was the reason for the new surge and the government should have prevented people's movements during Nowruz—not at a time when people need to earn a living.

"Nobody can say the lockdown should not have been imposed. But better management would have been enforcing it during Nowruz holiday when everywhere was already closed not now that everyone wants to work and earn a living," he said.



A man walks through closed Tehran's Grand Bazaar, Iran, Saturday, April 10, 2021. Iran on Saturday imposed partial lockdown on businesses in major shopping centers as well as intercity travels through personal cars in major cities including capital Tehran as it struggles with the worst outbreak of the coronavirus in the Mideast region. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)

"Lockdowns are only effective to some extent but for how long should the people be paying the price," said Alireza Ghadirian, a carpet seller at the bazaar. He said the government needed to do more to provide vaccines.

Authorities have done little to enforce lockdown restrictions and originally resisted a nationwide lockdown to salvage an economy already devastated by tough U.S. sanctions. A year into the pandemic, public fatigue and intransigence has deepened.

Saeed Valizadeh, a motorcyclist who earns his living transporting passengers and light packages from the bazaar, said if the government paid a stipend to low-income citizens, then they could afford to stay at home.

"Those who are wealthy have no problem staying home but we can't," he said.

President Hassan Rouhani said several factors played a role in the rising number of cases but the prime culprit was the U.K. variant of the virus that entered Iran from Iraq.



A man walks through closed Tehran's Grand Bazaar, Iran, Saturday, April 10, 2021. Iran on Saturday imposed partial lockdown on businesses in major shopping centers as well as intercity travels through personal cars in major cities including capital Tehran as it struggles with the worst outbreak of the coronavirus in the Mideast region. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)



People walk through closed Tehran's Grand Bazaar, Iran, Saturday, April 10, 2021. Iran on Saturday imposed partial lockdown on businesses in major shopping centers as well as intercity travels through personal cars in major cities including capital Tehran as it struggles with the worst outbreak of the coronavirus in the Mideast region. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)



A cleric walks past a closed shop of Tehran's Grand Bazaar, Iran, Saturday, April 10, 2021. Iran on Saturday imposed partial lockdown on businesses in major shopping centers as well as intercity travels through personal cars in major cities including capital Tehran as it struggles with the worst outbreak of the coronavirus in the Mideast region. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)



A man sits in front of closed shops of Tehran's Grand Bazaar, Iran, Saturday, April 10, 2021. Iran on Saturday imposed partial lockdown on businesses in major shopping centers as well as intercity travels through personal cars in major cities including capital Tehran as it struggles with the worst outbreak of the coronavirus in the Mideast region. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)



People walk through closed Tehran's Grand Bazaar, Iran, Saturday, April 10, 2021. Iran on Saturday imposed partial lockdown on businesses in major shopping centers as well as intercity travels through personal cars in major cities including capital Tehran as it struggles with the worst outbreak of the coronavirus in the Mideast region. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)

Earlier this year, the country kicked off its [coronavirus](#) inoculation campaign, administering a limited number of Russian Sputnik V vaccine doses to [medical workers](#).

Meanwhile, in neighboring Iraq, authorities introduced new measures to bolster vaccinations among citizens including restrictions on air travel.

The health ministry said it requested airlines to not sell tickets to

travelers unless they show proof they were vaccinated. Workers at hospitals, restaurants, malls and shops would require a vaccination card as well.

The measures have been introduced amid a low demand in vaccinations among Iraqis, many of whom remain suspicious of the government's inoculation plans.

© 2021 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: Iran enforces 10-day lockdown amid fourth wave of pandemic (2021, April 11)
retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-04-iran-day-lockdown-fourth-pandemic.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.