

Greece wildfires: Evia island residents forced to evacuate



Wildfires are continuing to rip through the Greek island of Evia, forcing residents to flee to safety. The fire is the largest in the island's history.

More than 2,000 people have already been evacuated, with only residents carried out to safety. The fire is the largest in the island's history.

Greece is experiencing its most severe fire season in 30 years as which temperatures have spiked to 45C (113F).

A number of wildfires have struck the country in recent days. One blaze in the northern suburb of Athens is said to have subsided.

However, such as this are becoming more likely and more severe because of human-induced climate change. The subsequent hot, dry weather is likely to fuel wildfires.

On Evia, a large island in the north and east of Athens, two fire fronts have destroyed thousands of homes of land, along with a number of houses and businesses.

Firefighters have been struggling to keep fires from spreading to villages on the island.

With no sign of the fire subsiding, residents and officials are urging to move fast.

Gianis Koutsou, mayor of the municipality of Beate in the northern part of Evia, told local news. "It's already too late, the area has been destroyed."

He appealed for more help from water-borne planes and helicopters.

But Civil Protection Chief Nicos Hatzidakis said the planes faced a number of difficulties including poor visibility caused by the fire.

A number of countries have responded to Greece's call for help including France, Germany and the UK.

Later on Sunday, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis expressed his "heartfelt gratitude" to countries that had sent assistance.

"We thank you for standing by Greece during these trying times," he wrote on Twitter.

Elsewhere in Greece, fires in the Peloponnese region are said to be stable and fire in the north-east Athens suburb have subsided.

"The situation in Attica (which encompasses Athens) is better but we are afraid of the danger of fires," Mr Hatzidakis said.

The military are patrolling the area and concerns that the fire could spread.

Today is also battling a se-

UAE relaxes COVID-19 rules, allows more people at weddings, hotels, malls



Health officials in the United Arab Emirates have announced that COVID-19 safety rules will be relaxed to increase the capacity of people allowed at weddings, hotels and shopping malls across the country.

The National Emergency Crisis and Disaster Management Authority (NCEMA) announced

on Sunday that hotels will now be allowed to run at full capacity, while shopping centres, restaurants and cafes can now operate at an 80 percent capacity, with the social permit increased to 10 persons per table.

Face masks remain mandatory. However, recreational facilities, offices and museums will be allowed an 80 percent operating capacity, while the operating capacity for events is set to 60 percent, provided that social distancing, face masks and regular sanitisation protocols are well observed.

The operating capacity of wedding and event halls have increased to 80 percent, provided that the number of attendees per event does not exceed 500 and all protective measures are implemented.

Public transportation can now operate at 75 percent capacity. The step aligns with the UAE's strategy to strike a balance between maintaining public health and resuming activities in vital sectors, and support efforts to drive sustainable recovery and trust in the UAE, NCEMA said in a statement.

NCEMA reiterated its previously ruling that anyone attending live events and exhibitions must have had both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. A PCR test taken in the 48 hours prior to the event is also required.

It also stipulated that attendance will be "prohibited" that their second dose is no more than three months old for senior citizens and those with chronic diseases.

NCEMA also urged establishments to use the green pass protocol for certain categories of events and activities to help contain the spread of the virus.

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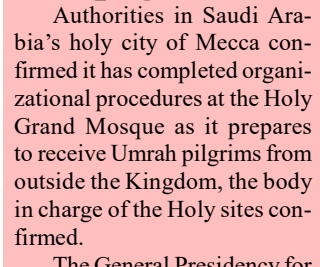
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Mecca completes organizational procedures ahead of receiving foreign pilgrims



Authorities in Saudi Arabia, holy city of Mecca confirmed it has completed organizational procedures at the Holy Grand Mosque as it prepares to receive pilgrims from outside the Kingdom, the body in charge of the holy site confirmed.

The General Presidency for the Affairs of Two Holy Mosques said it has prepared special routes for organizing the entry, exit, and communication (and) and safe (returning back and forth between Safa and Marwa) of the holy site.

The General Presidency has prepared early through organizing all Grand Mosque hallways, circumambulation area, squares and their radiance before the arrival of pilgrims.

The General Presidency for the Affairs of the Grand Mosque of Mecca said it has completed organizational procedures at the Holy Grand Mosque as it prepares to receive pilgrims from outside the Kingdom, the body in charge of the holy site confirmed.

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