

Iran reports 8 new coronavirus deaths, raising toll to 34

28 February 2020



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Iran on Friday reported eight new deaths from coronavirus, raising its toll to 34, as the number of infections jumped again in the Islamic republic, one of the worst-hit countries.

Health ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said 143 cases had been detected over the past 24 hours, increasing the total of confirmed infections to 388.

Among the new cases, 64 were in Tehran while the number of provinces hit by the outbreak rose to 24, Jahanpour said.

"We are currently in a phase in which infections are increasing," he said, predicting that the situation "will continue for some days, even weeks".

It is the highest number of new cases for a single day since Iran announced its first confirmed infections on February 19 in the Shiite shrine city of Qom.

Jahanpour said 73 people with the infection had left hospital over the past few days.

Health Minister Saeed Namaki announced Friday that all schools would be closed from Saturday to Tuesday.

"We have a very difficult week ahead of us," he told state television.

State TV said Friday that parliament would be closed until further notice, due to the epidemic.

Iran has the highest death toll from the virus outside China, where COVID-19 first emerged.

One of Iran's seven vice presidents, Massoumeh Ebtekar, and deputy health minister Iraj Harirchi are among several senior officials who have been infected.

On Wednesday, Iranian authorities announced domestic travel restrictions for people with confirmed or suspected infections.

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