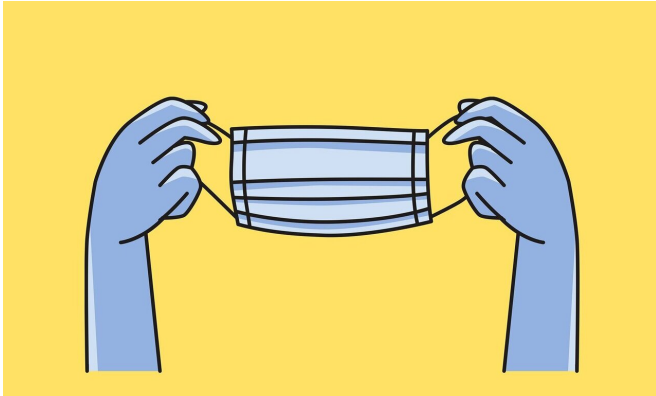


Turkey finds 15 people carrying new U.K. coronavirus variant

2 January 2021



The official death toll is 21,093, according to ministry statistics, but critics have accused the government of deliberately downplaying the extent of the country's outbreak.

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Turkey's health minister says the country has identified 15 people who carry a highly contagious coronavirus variant that was discovered in the United Kingdom.

In a statement Friday, Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said the strain was found in travelers arriving from the U.K. He said they were in quarantine, along with people they had been in contact with. He said the strain was not identified in passengers from elsewhere.

Turkey suspended flights with the U.K. along with other countries in late December upon discovery of the new strain's spread and quarantined at least 4,603 passengers. Turkey also began to require a negative PCR test result for all international arrivals last week.

Turkey has among the worst infection rates in the world but official statistics show the 7-day average of daily infections has dropped to around 15,000 from above 30,000 since evening curfews and weekend lockdowns were instituted in early December.

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