

S. Korean MERS cases rise to 122

June 11 2015

South Korea reported 14 new cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) on Thursday, including the first pregnant woman infected by the potentially deadly virus.

The new diagnoses brought to 122 the total number of confirmed cases, while the number of fatalities remained at nine with no new deaths in the last 24 hours, the health ministry said.

Of the 14 new cases, eight were infected at Samsung Medical Centre in Seoul, a major hospital where 55 people are confirmed to have contracted the virus, representing the largest cluster in the current outbreak.

A 39-year-old woman in her final trimester of pregnancy was among those confirmed Thursday to have acquired the virus at the hospital.

"Of the 122 [confirmed cases](#), this is the first case involving a [pregnant woman](#)", the ministry said, adding the patient was "in stable condition".

Another victim contracted the virus at a hospital in Hwaseong City, 40 kilometers (25 miles) south of Seoul, and five others are still under investigation to discover how they were infected.

The first infected patient was diagnosed on May 20 after a trip to Saudi Arabia.

The 68-year-old man spread the virus, visiting four medical facilities and

infecting other patients and [health care workers](#).

Since then, nearly 3,500 people who were exposed to infected people have been placed under quarantine of varying strictness.

Meanwhile a woman was rushed to a Hong Kong hospital Wednesday on suspicion she had contracted MERS, after returning from a trip to South Korea. Health officials in the southern Chinese city have previously quarantined 19 people as a precaution against MERS.

The South Korean government has come under fire for mishandling the outbreak, which has developed into the largest outside Saudi Arabia.

Amid growing public alarm, President Park Geun-Hye has postponed a planned trip to the United States, which will be rescheduled later.

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