

Pakistan confirms first two cases of coronavirus

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Pakistan has detected its first two cases of novel coronavirus, a public health advisor to Prime Minister Imran Khan tweeted Wednesday, days after Islamabad closed its land border with Iran, where 19 people have died from the virus.

"I can confirm first two cases of corona virus in Pakistan. Both cases are

being taken care of according to clinical standard protocols & both of them are stable. No need to panic, things are under control", tweeted [health](#) advisor Zafar Mirza.

A statement issued by the southern Sindh province's health department stated that the first positive case was reported in Karachi in a 22-year-old male with a "history of travel to Iran where he has acquired the virus."

The officials didn't confirm where the second case was reported. However, local media said it was in Islamabad.

With porous borders, creaking hospitals and large illiterate populations, Pakistan faces a potentially devastating health crisis from the new coronavirus.

The virus has spread to more than 30 countries, killing over 2,700 and infecting 80,000, mostly in China. But new outbreaks in Europe, the Middle East and in Asia have fanned fears of the contagion taking hold in poor nations which lack the healthcare infrastructure to cope.

There are growing fears in Pakistan over how the country would deal with the outbreak. Islamabad has a history of failing to contain [infectious diseases](#) such as polio, tuberculosis and hepatitis.

Meanwhile Pakistan's neighbour Iran has emerged as a major hotspot, with a total of 139 cases and 19 deaths.

And Afghanistan, which also shares a border with Pakistan, reported its first case of [coronavirus](#) on Monday.

While Pakistan has closed land borders with Iran, it has maintained air travel to and from China—increasingly a source of trade and commerce

for the country.

"There is a limited concept of prevention unfortunately. I fear it's not well prepared at all for any health emergency," Pakistani public health expert Arshad Altaf told AFP.

Pakistan this week moved quickly to quarantine at least 270 people near the Iranian border after a group of pilgrims returned and briefly mixed with other residents.

Ziaullah Langove, home minister in southwestern Balochistan province, said there were nearly 10,000 Pakistanis still in Iran, mostly students and pilgrims that Iranian officials were planning to send back in small groups.

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