

Iran says coronavirus death toll rises to 2,378

March 27 2020

Iran on Friday announced 144 new deaths from the novel coronavirus, bringing the official number of fatalities to 2,378 in one of the world's worst-hit countries.

"In the past 24 hours, we've had 2,926 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 infections across the country," health ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said in a televised news conference.

"This brings the overall confirmed cases to at least 32,332," he added, noting that 11,133 of those hospitalised so far have recovered.

Jahanpour said nearly 2,900 of those infected are in a "severe" condition.

He said that the rising number of confirmed cases was due to Iranians increasingly "self-declaring" [symptoms](#) and undergoing testing.

The ministry has repeatedly called on citizens to visit a website and report potential symptoms.

The data, together with their [phone number](#) and ID, is used to identify potential cases.

Iran has imposed strict new containment measures, after weeks of public appeals largely failed to deter hundreds of thousands taking to the roads to visit family for the Persian New Year holidays.

State television on Friday showed police checkpoints at Tehran's

entrances and exits preventing residents leaving and non-residents entering.

It said motorists were identified by their car plates and IDs and that several vehicles were impounded and drivers fined for violating the measures.

"Since a small number of the people do not heed warnings, we are now forced to talk to them" through forceful measures, First Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri was quoted as saying by state news agency IRNA.

The Islamic republic has already closed schools, universities and key Shiite pilgrimage sites, cancelled the main weekly Friday prayers and temporarily shut parliament.

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