

Iran reports 141 new virus deaths, raising total to 2,898

March 31 2020

Iran said Tuesday 141 more people have died from the novel coronavirus, raising the official toll in one of the world's worst-affected countries to 2,898.

Health ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said 3,111 new infections have been confirmed over the past 24 hours, bringing the total to 44,606.

He said 3,703 of those hospitalised are in a [critical condition](#) and 14,656 have recovered.

Iran has been scrambling to contain the COVID-19 outbreak since it reported its first cases on February 19.

After weeks of refraining from imposing a lockdown or quarantine measures, Tehran decided last Wednesday to ban all intercity travel until at least April 8.

There is no official [lockdown](#) within Iran's cities, although the government has repeatedly urged Iranians to stay at home to contain the spread of the virus.

President Hassan Rouhani renewed those warnings on Tuesday as the climax of the two-week Persian New Year holiday nears.

He said authorities would close parks across the country on Wednesday,

in a move that effectively blocks the family picnics that traditionally mark the 13th day of holiday.

Rouhani called on people to "leave this tradition for some other time" and said violators would be fined.

The authorities have also stopped the print editions of all Iranian media until at least April 8, calling on them to publish online instead, state news agency IRNA reported.

"Publishing newspapers and other print media requires the activities of groups ranging from reporters to the printing and distribution industry and this could potentially increase the disease's spread," said a statement from Iran's anti-[coronavirus](#) committee.

The outbreak has not spared Iranian lawmakers or other officials.

A parliament spokesman told the Tasnim news agency Tuesday that at least 23 of the legislature's 290 members have tested positive for the novel coronavirus.

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