

Qatar coronavirus cases jump by 238 in one day

March 11 2020



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The number of confirmed novel coronavirus cases in Qatar jumped by 238 to 262 on Wednesday, the health ministry said, warning that they were likely a result of community transmission.

Qatar, which now has the most cases in the Gulf, has not reported any fatalities but has closed universities and schools, cancelled many public events including the MotoGP and banned travellers from 14 countries entering the country.

"The Ministry of Public Health announced today that it recorded 238 new confirmed cases of coronavirus 2019," the ministry said in a statement.

Qatari authorities have sought to play down the prospect of a nationwide outbreak, suggesting the latest cases were confined to a residence linked to three expat labourers diagnosed over the weekend.

"The 238 individuals had all been under quarantine in the same residential compound where the three people who had been diagnosed with the virus on Sunday had been staying," said an official who declined to be named.

"(They) have had limited exposure to the wider community."

Authorities expect the number of cases to rise among the group as testing continues, he added.

Many of the initial cases diagnosed in Qatar were from a group of citizens and their foreign staff repatriated to the Gulf country from Iran.

Iran on Wednesday reported 63 new deaths from the novel coronavirus, the highest single-day toll in the three weeks since the Islamic republic announced the first deaths from the outbreak.

The outbreak of the coronavirus in Iran is one of the deadliest outside China, where the disease originated.

Iran is yet to officially impose quarantines but authorities have repeatedly called on people to refrain from travelling.

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