Iran says virus deaths rise by 87 to 5,118

April 19 2020

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Iran on Sunday announced 87 new deaths from the novel coronavirus in the past 24 hours, raising the official toll to 5,118, as it takes steps to reopen the economy.

It is the sixth consecutive day that Iran has announced a [death toll](#) under 100, though Sunday's toll was 14 higher than the day before.

Health ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said 1,343 new infections had been confirmed, taking the total to 82,211.

Of those admitted to hospital, 57,023 have recovered and been discharged, while 3,456 remain in [critical condition](#).

The Islamic republic has struggled to contain what is the Middle East's deadliest COVID-19 outbreak since reporting its first cases on February 19.

Some officials and health experts in Iran and abroad have said the country's casualty figures may be higher than those declared.

On Saturday, Iran allowed some "low-risk" businesses in the capital Tehran to reopen, after approving similar measures in other provinces last week.

"Medium-risk" businesses could reopen Monday, President Hassan Rouhani said on Sunday after a meeting of the national coronavirus taskforce.

He did not elaborate on the types of businesses considered "medium risk" or whether the measure covered the whole country, but said those businesses would have to close by 6 pm.

In a bid to halt the spread of the coronavirus, Iran had ordered the closure of non-essential businesses and imposed inter-city travel bans, but refrained from imposing an official lockdown.

The reopening of the economy has drawn criticism from health experts and even some government officials.

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