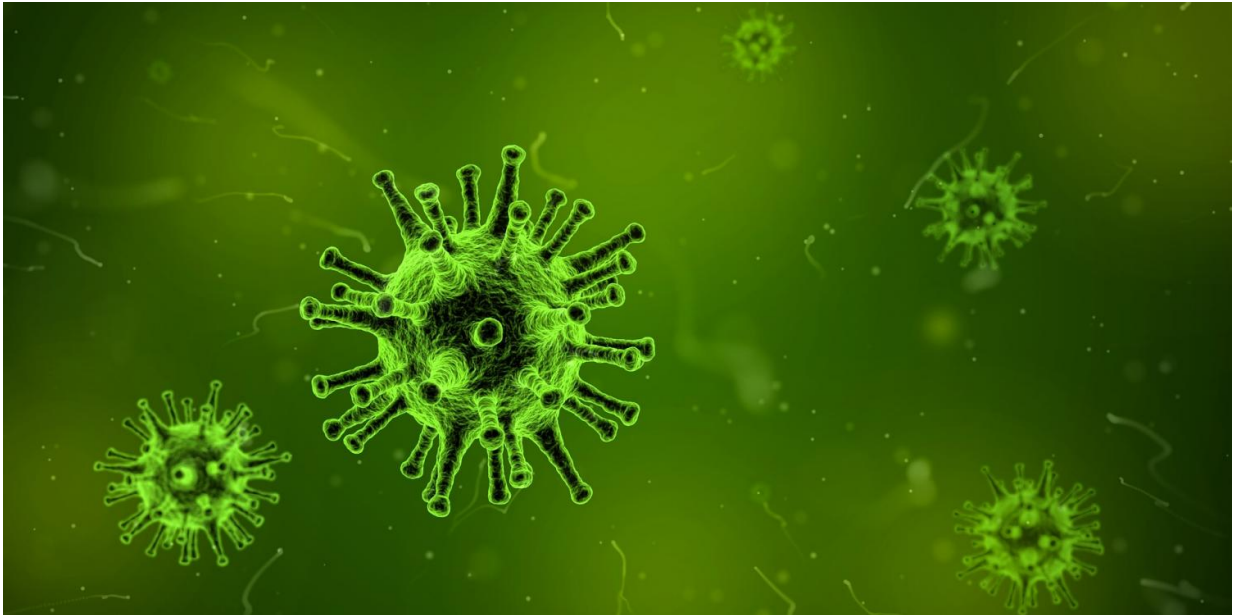


# Iran says virus cases surpass 150,000

May 31 2020

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Iran said its caseload of novel coronavirus infections passed the grim milestone of 150,000 on Sunday, as the country struggles to contain a recent upward trend.

The government has largely lifted the restrictions it imposed in order to halt a COVID-19 outbreak that first emerged in mid-February.

But the [health ministry](#) has warned of a potential [virus](#) resurgence with new cluster outbreaks in a number of provinces.

Ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said 2,516 new cases were confirmed across the country in the past 24 hours, bringing the total to 151,466.

Infections have been on a rising trajectory in the Islamic republic since hitting a near two-month low on May 2.

Yet according to President Hassan Rouhani, Iran was in "an acceptable situation" which is "not even fragile" anymore.

Rouhani said COVID-19's reproduction number used to be more than two in Iran but that it was now "less than one".

Such a rate suggests a virus is petering out, according to scientists.

Health Minister Saeed Namaki also said that the situation was "completely stable" in all but four of Iran's 31 provinces.

But he warned that in some provinces health "protocols were not being observed and we have witnessed a resurgence of the disease".

He named the provinces as Khuzestan, Hormozgan and Sistan and Baluchistan.

So far the government has reimposed a lockdown only in Khuzestan [province](#) on Iran's southwestern border with Iraq.

It remains "red", the highest level on Iran's colour-coded risk scale.

Jahanpour said the virus had claimed another 63 lives in the past day, raising the overall toll to 7,797.

Experts both at home and abroad have voiced scepticism about Iran's

official figures, saying the real toll could be much higher.

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