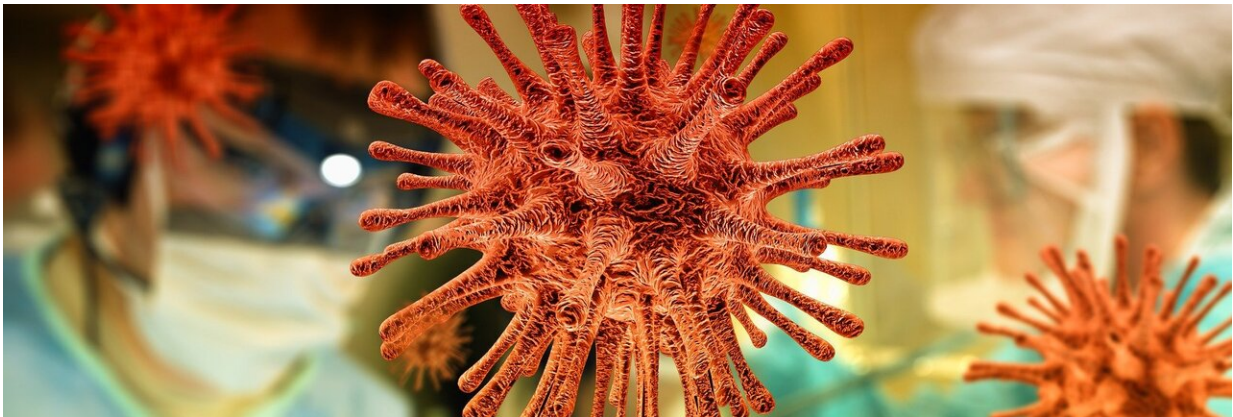


Iran reports over 100 new virus deaths for third day running

June 21 2020



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Iranian health authorities reported over 100 new deaths from the novel coronavirus Sunday for the third day running, stressing that the outbreak had not yet peaked in the hard-hit country.

Iran reported its first [coronavirus](#) cases on February 19 and has since struggled to contain the outbreak, the deadliest in the Middle East.

The Islamic republic recorded its lowest single-day [death](#) toll in early May, before seeing a new rise in cases in recent weeks.

Health ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said the 116 deaths

reported Sunday had brought the country's overall COVID-19 toll to 9,623.

Health Minister Said Namaki however denied that the country was facing a second wave of the respiratory illness and said "the peak of the disease has not passed".

"Even in provinces where we think the first coronavirus wave is behind us, we have not yet fully experienced the first wave," he was quoted as saying by semi-official news agency ISNA.

Iranian authorities have not imposed a mandatory lockdown on the population but closed schools, cancelled public events and banned movement between the country's 31 provinces in March, before gradually easing restrictions starting in April.

According to Lari, four provinces—Khuzestan, Hormozgan, Kermanshah and East Azerbaijan—were currently "red", the highest level on the country's colour-coded risk scale.

She added that 2,368 new infections had been confirmed, bringing to 204,952 the total number of cases in the country.

There has been scepticism at home and abroad about Iran's official figures, with concerns the real toll could be much higher.

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