Iran imposes travel restrictions as virus deaths hit record

November 1 2020

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Iran on Sunday said it will restrict travel to the cities hit hardest by the novel coronavirus, state TV said, amid a record high of daily COVID-19 deaths.

The measure takes effect at Monday midday and will last until Friday, the broadcaster reported, citing an order by the interior ministry.

The restrictions prevent residents from leaving and non-residents from entering based on vehicle plate numbers, but do not apply to public transportation, it added.

It applies to the capitals of 25 provinces considered "red"—the highest level on Iran's colour-coded risk scale—and includes the capital Tehran with more than 8 million residents.

Violators will be fined, the order added.

Limited restrictive measures were imposed on Saturday in those cities, forcing the closure of some public spaces and businesses.

Iran has been hit the worst by COVID-19 in the Middle East, and has recorded several daily fatality and infection highs in recent days.

Daily deaths reached a record 434 on Sunday, health ministry spokeswoman Sima Sadat Lari said, adding that 7,719 more people tested positive for the virus in the past 24 hours.

In total, 35,298 people have died from coronavirus, according to official figures.

The rising toll has prompted several health experts and officials to call for a full lockdown in the capital.

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