

Iran starts limited COVID vaccinations with Russian shots

February 9 2021



Parsa Namaki son of Health Minister Saeed Namaki receives a Russian Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine in a staged event at Imam Khomeini Hospital in Tehran, Iran, Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021. Iran on Tuesday launched a coronavirus inoculation campaign among healthcare professionals with recently delivered Russian Sputnik V vaccines as the country struggles to stem the worst outbreak of the pandemic in the Middle East with its death toll nearing 59,000. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)

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At a ceremony marking the start of the campaign, Parsa Namaki, son of Health Minister Saeed Namaki, received his first dose. The minister said the vaccination would be simultaneously carried out in more than 600 medical centers across the country.

In the coming weeks, Iran plans to extend the vaccination to elderly people and those suffering from chronic diseases, the minister added. "We have to vaccinate vulnerable groups."

COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, has so far claimed the lives of more than 300 healthcare professionals in Iran.

Last Thursday, Iran received its first batch of foreign-made coronavirus vaccines from Russia. Iran has so far reported some 1.48 million confirmed cases of the virus. Iranian media have reported that a total of 2 million Russian vaccines will arrive in Iran in February and March.

Though the daily death toll has remained under 100 for weeks, authorities warn about a possible surge in March as many ignore distancing measures in public places.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has banned imports of the American and Britain vaccines, a reflection of mistrust toward the West. In December, Iran began testing an Iranian-made vaccine in humans and said it expects to distribute it in spring. The country has also begun working on a joint vaccine with Cuba, too.

Iran is also planning to import some 17 million doses of vaccine from

COVAX and millions from other countries.



Parsa Namaki son of Health Minister Saeed Namaki receives a Russian Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine in a staged event at Imam Khomeini Hospital in Tehran, Iran, Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021. Iran on Tuesday launched a coronavirus inoculation campaign among healthcare professionals with recently delivered Russian Sputnik V vaccines as the country struggles to stem the worst outbreak of the pandemic in the Middle East with its death toll nearing 59,000. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)



Parsa Namaki, center, son of Health Minister Saeed Namaki, left, is injected with the Russian Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine in a ceremony at Imam Khomeini hospital in Tehran, Iran, Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021. Iran on Tuesday launched a coronavirus inoculation campaign among healthcare professionals with recently delivered Russian Sputnik V vaccines as the country struggles to stem the worst outbreak of the pandemic in the Middle East with its death toll nearing 59,000. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)



A medic prepares a shot of the Russian Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine in a staged event at Imam Khomeini Hospital in Tehran, Iran, Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021. Iran on Tuesday launched a coronavirus inoculation campaign among healthcare professionals with recently delivered Russian Sputnik V vaccines as the country struggles to stem the worst outbreak of the pandemic in the Middle East with its death toll nearing 59,000. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)



Parsa Namaki, center, son of Health Minister Saeed Namaki, receives a Russian Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine as Minister Namaki applauds, in a staged event at Imam Khomeini Hospital in Tehran, Iran, Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021. Iran on Tuesday launched a coronavirus inoculation campaign among healthcare professionals with recently delivered Russian Sputnik V vaccines as the country struggles to stem the worst outbreak of the pandemic in the Middle East with its death toll nearing 59,000. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)



Health Minister Saeed Namaki, left, tries to the kiss hand of Dr. Fattah Ghazi as a sign of respect, after he received a Russian Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine in a staged event at Imam Khomeini Hospital in Tehran, Iran, Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021. Iran on Tuesday launched a coronavirus inoculation campaign among healthcare professionals with recently delivered Russian Sputnik V vaccines as the country struggles to stem the worst outbreak of the pandemic in the Middle East with its death toll nearing 59,000. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)



Dr. Fattah Ghazi from the Imam Khomeini hospital receives a Russian Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine in a staged event at Imam Khomeini Hospital in Tehran, Iran, Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021. Iran on Tuesday launched a coronavirus inoculation campaign among healthcare professionals with recently delivered Russian Sputnik V vaccines as the country struggles to stem the worst outbreak of the pandemic in the Middle East with its death toll nearing 59,000. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)



Sara Goudarzi, a nurse from the Imam Khomeini Hospital flashes a victory sign as she receives a Russian Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine in a staged event at Imam Khomeini Hospital in Tehran, Iran, Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021. Iran on Tuesday launched a coronavirus inoculation campaign among healthcare professionals with recently delivered Russian Sputnik V vaccines as the country struggles to stem the worst outbreak of the pandemic in the Middle East with its death toll nearing 59,000. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)



A group of medics from the Imam Khomeini Hospita, who volunteered to for receive the Russian Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine, sit prior to being injected at a staged event, in Tehran, Iran, Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2021. Iran on Tuesday launched a coronavirus inoculation campaign among healthcare professionals with recently delivered Russian Sputnik V vaccines as the country struggles to stem the worst outbreak of the pandemic in the Middle East with its death toll nearing 59,000. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)

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