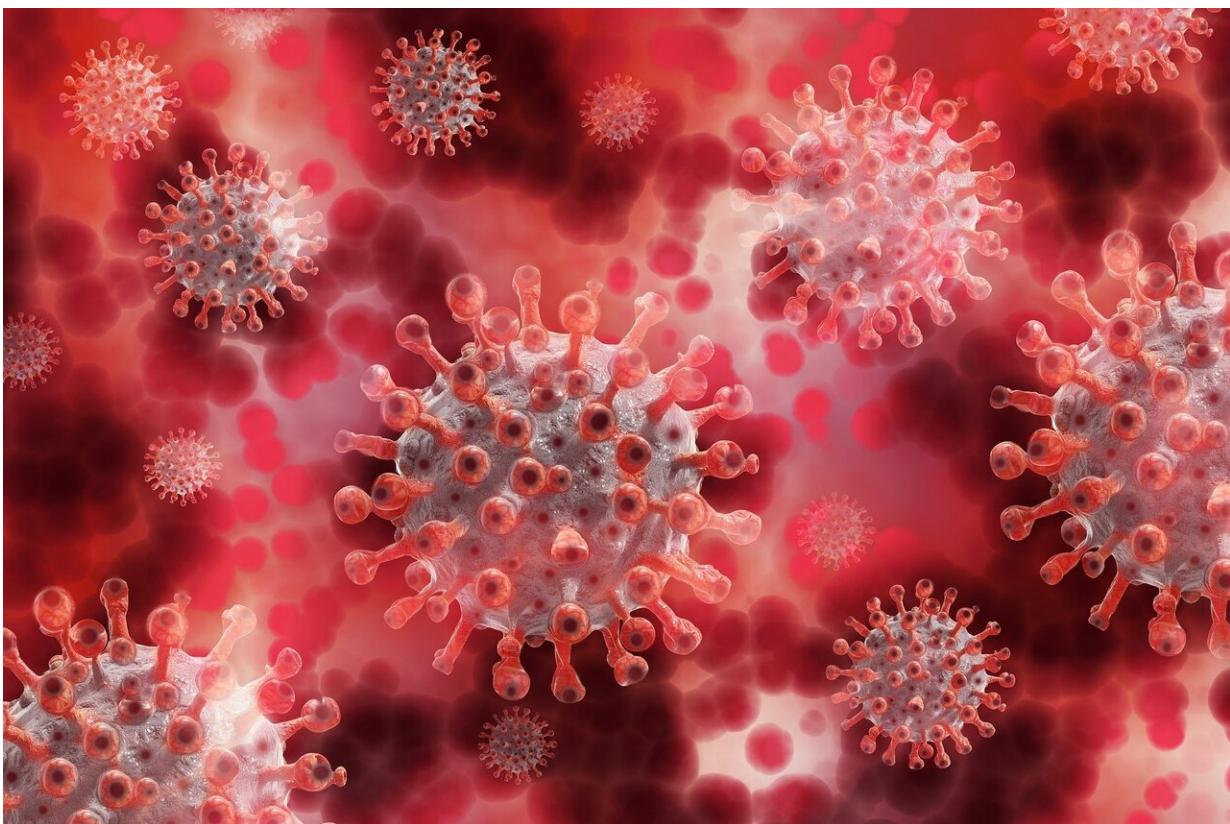


Iran's daily COVID deaths top 600 in new high

August 15 2021



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Iran on Sunday reported over 600 daily COVID deaths for the first time, ahead of tightened curbs to contain the spread of the virus.

The country also registered 36,736 new infections in 24 hours, taking the total since the pandemic started to 4,425,821, the [health ministry](#) said.

The latest 620 deaths raised the total number of fatalities to 97,828, it added.

Health authorities acknowledge the official figures underestimate the country's real toll.

The Islamic republic is struggling to contain what officials have called a "fifth wave" of the virus driven by the highly infectious Delta variant.

Numbers have broken daily records several times this month.

Authorities have mandated government offices, banks and non-essential businesses to close countrywide from Monday until the end of next Saturday.

A ban on [car travel](#) between provinces started on Sunday and is due to run until August 27.

Iran has avoided imposing a full lockdown on its 83-million-strong population, instead resorting to piecemeal measures such as temporary travel bans and business closures.

Authorities have tried to speed up the country's inoculation campaign amid criticism that it began too late and as Iran's exhausted health system struggles to cope with rising COVID cases.

Choked by US sanctions that have made it difficult to transfer money abroad, Iran says it has struggled to import vaccines.

More than 15 million people have received a first [vaccine](#) dose, but only

around 4 million have had the required second jab, the health ministry said Sunday.

As well as China's Sinopharm, Iran is administering Russia's Sputnik V, India's Bharat Biotech and the AstraZeneca vaccines, according to the [health](#) ministry.

Authorities have also approved the emergency use of two locally made vaccines, but the only mass-produced one, COVIran Barekat, is in short supply.

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