

[1] Iran:41 194 new cases, 655 deaths

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Source: Reuters [abridged, edited]

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/irans-daily-covid-19-deaths-hit-record-high-655-2021-08-16/>

Iran on Monday [16 Aug 2021] reported a record 655 COVID-19 deaths over the past 24 hours as the government started imposing tougher restrictions to combat a surge in coronavirus infections led by the highly contagious delta variant, state TV reported.

The health ministry said the total number of cases had reached 4 467 015 with 41 194 new cases in the past 24 hours, while total fatalities had increased to 98 483, state TV reported.

All non-essential businesses and public offices across the Middle East's worst-hit country will be closed until 21 Aug [2021], state TV said. Authorities have also imposed a travel ban between all Iranian cities from Sunday [22 Aug 2021] until 27 Aug [2021] except for essential vehicles.

Health authorities have warned that daily deaths might reach 800 in coming weeks if Iranians fail to respect health protocols.

The sharp surge in cases and deaths has forced the clerical establishment to allow imports of vaccines made by US and British companies, which Iran's top authority, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, had forbidden in January [2021]. A health ministry official, Kianoush Jahanpour, said there was no ban on importing any approved COVID-19 vaccines into Iran "including AstraZeneca, Moderna, and Pfizer, other than those produced in the US and the UK," Iranian media reported on Sunday [15 Aug 2021].

[Byline: Parisa Hafezi]