

Qatar reimposes restrictions amid surge in COVID-19 infections



Qatar on Thursday reported 407 new cases of COVID-19. (Photo: Showkat Shafi / Al Jazeera)

Doha, February 5 (RHC)-- Qatar has reimposed a series of coronavirus-related restrictions on education, leisure and business activities, including closing indoor swimming pools and theme parks and restricting restaurant capacities.

The measures came into effect on Thursday, a day after they were first announced as the country battles a surge in new COVID-19 infections. Qatar reported 407 new cases of COVID-19 on Thursday. Daily case numbers have been steadily rising since a one-day December low of 117.

“These increases appear to be early signs of a potential second wave in Qatar,” the ministry of health said in a statement, referring to both rising infection numbers and increased numbers of hospital admissions.

Outdoor gatherings in venues such as parks should be limited to 15 people, while indoor gatherings should be no more than five people. The country’s markets should operate at 50 percent capacity, weddings not held at home are banned – with guests for weddings at home limited to relatives only – and nurseries should operate at 30 percent capacity, the ministry said on Twitter.

Boat rentals have been banned and the capacity of personal boats has been limited to 15 people. Other Gulf states have also tightened restrictions in recent days to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

Kuwait said on Wednesday it will suspend entry for non-citizens for two weeks from February 7 after a rise in coronavirus cases. Neighbouring Saudi Arabia this week suspended entry to the kingdom from 20 countries, with the exception of Saudi citizens, diplomats, and medical practitioners and their families.

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