NEWS

UAE reports 13 new coronavirus cases, seven more recoveries

21 Mar, 2020: The UAE announced on Saturday the detection of 13 new coronavirus cases and the recovery of seven more individuals.
The announcement was made by the Ministry of Health and Prevention during a virtual press briefing held in line with the ongoing precautionary measures taken to avoid gatherings and ensure people's well-being and safety.

During the briefing, Dr. Farida Al Hosani, the official spokesperson for the UAE health sector, highlighted the latest COVID-19 developments in the country and the measures taken by Emirati authorities to combat the spread of the pandemic.

Al Hosani, who is also the Director of the Department of Communicable Diseases at the Abu Dhabi Centre for Public Health, said that the new cases were discovered at an early stage due to effective monitoring methods. All of the newly diagnosed individuals are from various nationalities, Al Hosani noted. She explained that the individuals were identified as having been in contact with previously diagnosed persons and were quarantined and tested accordingly. Others, she added, were individuals who came into the country from travels abroad.

The spokesperson said that following the discovery of the new cases, the total number of COVID-19 cases in the UAE had reached 153.

The new cases include three people each from Britain and Pakistan, four from Bangladesh, and one each from Portugal, Poland, and the US, she said, stressing that they are all in a stable condition and receiving all necessary healthcare services.

The new recoveries are from various nationalities as well, including two each from India and the UAE, and one each from Italy, Britain, and the Philippines, bringing to 38 the total tally of those who have already recovered from the disease in the country, she explained.

Al Hosani added that two deaths from COVID-19 were confirmed in the country on Friday.

"The first was a 78-year old Arab national who had arrived in the country from Europe. The cause of death was a heart attack, coinciding with complications from coronavirus. The other individual, a 58-year-old Asian national and resident of the UAE, had prior chronic illnesses – heart disease and kidney failure – which further complicated their inability to fight the disease," she explained, stressing that both individuals had received all necessary medical care in the country's medical facilities.

The briefing highlighted the UAE's efforts and immediate response measures to ensure the health and safety of the general public.

Also discussed during the briefing were measures by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to suspend the entry of GCC nationals until a pre-check mechanism involving COVID-19 is approved. Also discussed were dedicated channels of communication and helplines made available to respond to the queries of those holding valid residence visas and now outside the country.

She highlighted international statistics on the pandemic that show that the mortality rate is 3.6 percent, adding that this rate increases among elderly persons and individuals who are immuno-compromised or suffer from chronic illness.

"The Ministry urges the general public to cooperate with health authorities and adhere to precautionary measures announced – particularly social distancing – to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 and ensure the overall health and safety of the UAE community."

The spokesperson said that she had seen videos of residents visiting entertainment places such as malls, beaches, and restaurants - and urged the public to avoid these places, practice social distancing, or altogether stay at home - leaving only in case of emergency.

Al Hosani added that a negative COVID-19 test does not mean that individuals can socialise without precautions, but rather must adhere to the 14-day quarantine period to ensure their safety and the safety of others.