

China virus deaths hit 213, nearly 2,000 new cases

By AFP



A medical worker rests next to a patient at a hospital in Wuhan. (AP pic)

BEIJING: The nationwide death toll in China's coronavirus outbreak has risen to 213, with nearly 2,000 new cases confirmed, the National Health Commission said on Friday (January 31, 2020).

In its daily update, the commission said 43 new deaths had occurred as a result of the virus, all but one of them in hardest-hit Hubei province where the virus first emerged.

The latest numbers indicate that the daily death count and the overall spread of the virus within China were continuing to grow steadily despite unprecedented quarantine measures imposed on Hubei a week ago and other preventative steps nationwide.

On Thursday, Chinese health officials had reported a nationwide total of 38 new deaths, all but one of them in Hubei.

The National Health Commission said there were 1,982 new confirmed cases, bringing the total to just under 10,000.

Another 102,000 people were under medical observation with possible symptoms of the respiratory ailment.

The World Health Organization (WHO) had initially downplayed the threat posed by the disease, but revised its risk assessment after crisis talks on Thursday (January 30, 2020).

“We must all act together now to limit further spread ... we can only stop it together,” WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a briefing in Geneva, Switzerland.

Tedros nevertheless said travel and trade restrictions with China were unnecessary to stem the spread of the virus, which has now been confirmed in more than 15 other countries across the globe.

Many countries have already urged their citizens not to visit China while some have banned entry for travellers from the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where the virus first surfaced. **—AFP, January 31, 2020**