

Iran unveils second homegrown virus vaccine project

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The Razi Cov Pars is Iran's second homegrown coronavirus vaccine project

Iran unveiled its second homegrown coronavirus vaccine project Monday, the day before the launch of a vaccination campaign to combat the Middle East's deadliest COVID-19 outbreak.

"We will start human tests in the coming days, or in a week at the latest," Massoud Soleimani, a member of Iran's national vaccine committee, told journalists in Karaj near Tehran.

The vaccine, dubbed Razi Cov Pars, was developed at the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute, which is linked to the agriculture ministry, Soleimani said.

At the start of Phase 1 of the clinical trials, "13 volunteers between the ages of 18 and 55" will receive a jab, he added.

The unveiling comes the day before the launch Tuesday of a campaign to vaccinate Iran's 80-million-plus population, starting with the Sputnik V jab, according to Health Minister Saeed Namaki.

The first doses of the Russian vaccine arrived on Thursday in Tehran, with two other shipments expected by February 18 and 28, according to Iranian authorities.

The Islamic republic has bought two million doses of Sputnik V, health ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour told AFP on Saturday.

Namaki said last week that Iran would also receive 4.2 million doses of the vaccine developed by Anglo-Swedish firm AstraZeneca and Oxford University, purchased via the international vaccine mechanism Covax.

The coronavirus has killed more than 58,500 people and infected 1.4 million in Iran, according to the [health ministry](#).

The Islamic republic started [clinical trials](#) of its first locally developed [vaccine](#) in late December.

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