

Slovenia returns to partial lockdown as virus cases rise

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Slovenia's government on Thursday announced it is reimposing the kind of partial shutdown of public life which the country saw earlier this year, as it struggles with rising numbers of coronavirus infections.

"The measures in force will resemble those implemented during the spring epidemic," Prime Minister Janez Jansa told a televised news conference, referring to the two-month period during the first wave of the pandemic earlier this year.

Starting Saturday and for at least one week, all shopping centres and malls, restaurants, hotels and other non-essential shops will be closed and [public transport](#) will be reduced to a third of normal service.

Company bosses will also be encouraged to organise home working for employees wherever possible.

The move comes after the number of new [coronavirus](#) cases in the country of roughly two million more than doubled over the last week, bringing the total number of positive cases to almost 18,000, with 207 deaths.

In common with several other countries in the region, Slovenia escaped the worst of the first wave of the pandemic but is now battling to contain the second.

Earlier this week the [government](#) imposed a curfew between 9:00 pm and 6:00 am, while most school pupils and students started receiving classes online.

In a week's time the government will decide whether to extend, soften or tighten the measures, Jansa said.

In contrast to measures taken in the spring, Slovenians can currently travel between municipalities but not between the country's larger regional units.

However, Jansa warned that tighter restrictions may be necessary in the

following days.

Also on Thursday the last of the country's regions entered the "red" category under Slovenia's coronavirus traffic light system, meaning masks must now be worn in all public places across the country.

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