

Malaysia to ease virus curbs as outbreak slows

May 1 2020

Malaysia will allow most businesses to re-open from next week, the prime minister said Friday, easing a lockdown to fight the spread of the coronavirus as the country's outbreak slows.

The Southeast Asian nation in mid-March ordered the closure of all but essential businesses as well as schools and asked people to stay home, as cases surged.

But the number of new infections has slowed markedly in recent weeks, with fewer than 100 reported most days. In total, the country has recorded about 6,000 cases and 100 deaths so far.

Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said that from Monday "almost all [economic sectors](#) and business activities will be allowed to operate subject to conditions".

These include ensuring that employees can properly practise social distancing, he said in a televised address.

He said that during the lockdown, the country had lost about 63 billion ringgit (\$14 billion) as economic activity ground to a standstill.

But schools will stay shut as well as businesses that could involve people being in [close proximity](#)—and thus increase the risk of infection—such as cinemas.

Mosques in the Muslim-majority country will also stay closed and people will not be allowed to travel back to their hometowns for the Eid holiday, which falls at the end of May after the holy month of Ramadan.

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