

Lesotho to lift lockdown as virus remains undetected

May 5 2020

The tiny kingdom of Lesotho on Tuesday announced that a coronavirus lockdown would be tentatively lifted, in the only country in Africa yet to report a single case of COVID-19.

Lesotho went into lockdown on March 29 to protect itself from a potential spread of the virus from South Africa, which entirely surrounds the kingdom and has continent's highest number of confirmed cases.

That lockdown was extended to May 6 last month.

Prime Minister Thomas Thabane said "all non-essential services and enterprises" would be allowed to "temporarily open shop" from Wednesday.

Details on the timeline will be issued later, he said.

"The government is closely monitoring the situation," Thabane said, adding that [face masks](#) would become mandatory in public places.

Borders remained closed for the time being, and Thabane condemned reports of illegal crossings from South Africa.

Lesotho's army on Monday said it had intercepted 18 Lesotho nationals who had crossed back into the country with the help of patrol staff and [health officials](#).

South Africa started gradually easing its own confinement measures last week, allowing certain businesses to partially resume operations.

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