

Israel records highest single-day virus tally

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Israel has recorded its highest number of coronavirus infections over a 24-hour period, with nearly 1,500 new cases confirmed in the most recent daily count, the health ministry said Friday.

Israel had won early praise for its virus containment efforts, but cases have surged since a broad re-opening began in May.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu admitted in a late Thursday news conference that the decision to allow businesses, including bars and event spaces, to re-open may have been made "too soon".

"I take responsibility for it," he told reporters.

From midnight (2100 GMT) on Wednesday to midnight on Thursday, the health ministry registered 1,504 new coronavirus infections—the highest single-day tally since Israel confirmed its first case on February 21.

The country of roughly nine million has now registered more than 36,000 cases, including 351 deaths.

Various restrictions have been re-imposed, including the closure of venues, clubs, bars, gyms and public pools.

Limits on the number of people allowed in restaurants and places of worship have also been reinstated.

Certain towns and city neighbourhoods across the country considered virus hotspots have been placed under more robust lockdowns.

Israel's director of public health services, Siegal Sadetzki, resigned this week, blasting her superiors for ignoring her advice and steering Israel's virus response off course.

"Despite repeated warnings in different forums, we are watching with frustration as our window of opportunity (to contain the virus) is running out," Sadetzki said in a Facebook post announcing her resignation.

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