

# France braces for monthlong lockdown as virus deaths mount

October 29 2020

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In this image made from video provided by TFI, France's President Emmanuel Macron makes a delivers a national address from Paris, Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2020. France announced a full nationwide lockdown for the second time this year and German officials imposed a partial four-week lockdown Wednesday, as governments across Europe sought to stop a fast-rising tide of coronavirus cases. (TFI via AP)

French doctors expressed relief but business owners were in despair as

France prepared Thursday to shut down again for a month to try to put the brakes on a fast-moving fall coronavirus outbreak.

Shoppers at a Paris farmers' market said Thursday they were ready to restrict their freedoms given the rising number of virus-related deaths and COVID-19 patients filling French hospitals.

The new lockdown is gentler than what France saw in the spring, but still a shock to restaurants and other non-essential businesses that have been ordered to close their doors in one of the world's biggest economies.

French schools will stay open this time, to reduce learning gaps and allow parents to keep working. Farmer' markets, parks and factories can also continue operating, officials said.

French lawmakers are voting Thursday on the new restrictions announced by President Emmanuel Macron, which are set to come into effect at midnight. The lower house of parliament is dominated by Macron's centrist party, so approval is virtually guaranteed. The [prime minister](#) will lay out details of the virus-fighting plan Thursday evening.

Dr. Eric Caumes, head of the infectious and tropical disease department at Paris' Pitie-Salpetriere Hospital, said Thursday on BFM television that the new restrictions are "an admission of failure" of the government's prevention efforts. He urged tougher restrictions.



A man wearing a mask walks in the street in the center of Lyon, central France, Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2020. France is bracing for a potential new lockdown as the president prepares a televised address Wednesday aimed at stopping a fast-rising tide of virus patients filling French hospitals and a growing daily death toll. French markets opened lower on expectations that President Emmanuel Macron will announce some kind of lockdown Wednesday. (AP Photo/Laurent Cipriani)



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The head of France's main business lobby MEDEF, Geoffroy Roux de Bézieux, said on Europe-1 radio Thursday that "shutting businesses that are not responsible for contamination is a mistake" that could drive many into bankruptcy. He claimed it was a gift to internet retailer Amazon, "the big winner from confinement."

COVID patients now fill 60% of French intensive care units, and France is reporting tens of thousands of new cases daily. Authorities reported 244 virus-related deaths in a single day Wednesday, for a total of 35,785 since the pandemic began, the third-highest toll in Europe after Britain and Italy.

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