

Sri Lanka capital to go into lockdown after virus surge

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Sri Lanka's capital will go back into lockdown from Friday following a surge in coronavirus cases, authorities said Thursday.

The South Asian island nation of 21 million people has reported more than 9,200 COVID-19 infections, with over half detected in the past

three weeks after more than a thousand garment factory workers tested positive.

Around 5.5 million people living in the capital Colombo and two neighbouring districts would be only allowed to move around for essential services, [health officials](#) said.

The [lockdown](#) for three days could be extended depending on the pace of infections, they added.

"The curfew comes into effect from midnight, but we are trying to discourage any non-essential travel across provincial borders from today," police spokesman Ajith Rohana told AFP.

Soldiers carried out random temperature checks on pedestrians and motorists in Colombo on Thursday.

Sri Lanka imposed a three-month lockdown until the end of June, with authorities lifting the restrictions after declaring that there was no community transmission of the virus.

The new measures followed a 12-hour visit to Colombo by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who laid a wreath and prayed at St Anthony's Roman Catholic church, the site of a deadly attack during last year's Easter Sunday suicide bombings.

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