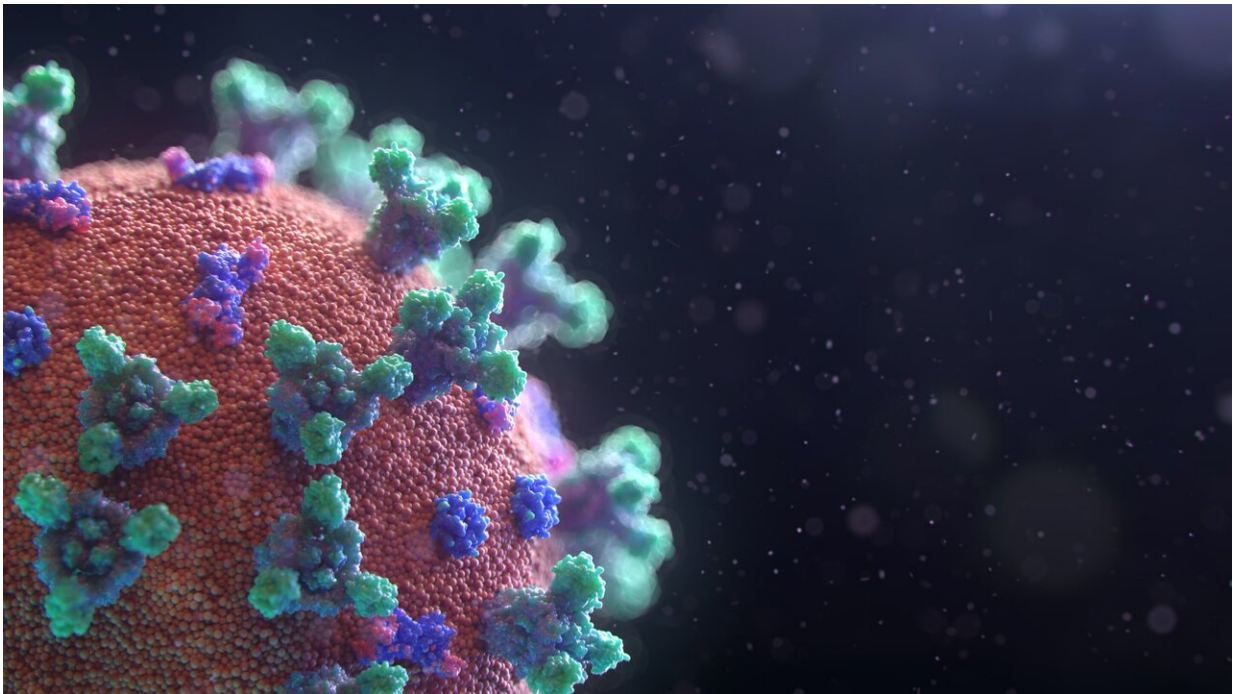


Poland shuts cinemas, many shops to fight virus spread

November 4 2020



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Poland on Wednesday announced another round of anti-virus restrictions, including the closure of cinemas and most shops in shopping centres, as well as a total switch to remote learning.

The move came as the EU country of 38 million people saw a new 24-hour record of 24,692 new coronavirus cases on Wednesday.

"It looks like November will be one of the hardest months... of this pandemic. We're facing an extremely challenging time. The pandemic is getting worse, so our response has to be firm," Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said.

"If our current plan doesn't work out then in a week, in 10 days, we'll be left with our final phase—nationwide quarantine. That will be very painful," he added at the virtual press conference.

Starting Saturday, most shops in shopping centres will be closed, with some exceptions such as grocery stores, pharmacies and hair salons.

Stricter guidelines will now also apply to smaller shops regarding the number of clients allowed in at one time.

The government is also closing cinemas, theatres, galleries and other cultural institutions and making hotels available for business travellers only.

Morawiecki also announced that schoolchildren in grades one to three will switch over to remote learning starting Monday. This has already been the case for older primary school students, as well as those attending secondary school and university.

Teachers will receive vouchers to pay for video equipment to allow distance learning.

Churches will not be closed but will have to ensure space of 15 square metres per person.

Morawiecki reminded Poles to work from home if at all possible, and to keep their trips outside to a minimum.

"Let's stay at home, limit mobility and social contacts," he said.

He also called on those who have been protesting a near-total ban on abortion to voice their anger online instead of on the streets.

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