

# India cautiously starts to open up as virus cases decline

June 7 2021, by New Delhi

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A man sanitizes the premises of a shopping mall before reopening after being closed since April as part of measures to curb the spread of coronavirus in New Delhi, India, Sunday, June 6, 2021. Businesses in two of India's largest cities are reopening as part of a phased easing of lockdown measures in several states now that the number of new coronavirus infections in the country is on a steady decline. Credit: AP Photo/Ishant Chauhan

Businesses in two of India's largest cities were reopening Monday as part of a phased easing of lockdown measures in several states now that the number of new coronavirus infections in the country is on a steady decline.

India's capital allowed businesses and shops to reopen with limited hours and the Delhi Metro, which serves New Delhi and adjoining areas, also resumed operations at 50% capacity. Last week, authorities in the capital allowed some manufacturing and construction activity to resume.

"Now the corona situation is under control. The economy must be brought back on track," New Delhi's chief minister, Arvind Kejriwal, told reporters on Sunday.

The strict lockdown measures had been in place since April at the start of a devastating surge in infections that lasted well into May and overwhelmed [health care facilities](#) in many parts of the country.

Some health experts fear the restrictions are being eased too soon and there are concerns that the virus is still spreading unchecked through India's villages where testing and [medical care](#) are limited.

Kejriwal warned that any new surge in infections could be more severe and said the administration will build new oxygen-production facilities and expand the capacity of intensive-care units.



Passengers walk outside the New Delhi railway station in New Delhi, India, Monday, June 7, 2021. Businesses in two of India's largest cities are reopening as part of a phased easing of lockdown measures in several states now that the number of new coronavirus infections in the country is on a steady decline. Credit: AP Photo/Ishant Chauhan





Passengers come out of the New Delhi railway station in New Delhi, India, Monday, June 7, 2021. Businesses in two of India's largest cities are reopening as part of a phased easing of lockdown measures in several states now that the number of new coronavirus infections in the country is on a steady decline. Credit: AP Photo/Ishant Chauhan



Cab drivers await passengers outside the New Delhi railway station in New Delhi, India, Monday, June 7, 2021. Businesses in two of India's largest cities are reopening as part of a phased easing of lockdown measures in several states now that the number of new coronavirus infections in the country is on a steady decline. Credit: AP Photo/Ishant Chauhan





In this June 5, 2021, file photo, a farmer waits for customers at a wholesale market on the outskirts of Prayagraj, in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, India. On Monday, June 7, 2021, businesses in two of India's largest cities, New Delhi and Mumbai, are reopening as part of a phased easing of lockdown measures in several states now that the number of new coronavirus infections in the country is on a steady decline. Credit: AP Photo/Rajesh Kumar Singh, File



Passengers walk outside the New Delhi railway station in New Delhi, India, Monday, June 7, 2021. Businesses in two of India's largest cities are reopening as part of a phased easing of lockdown measures in several states now that the number of new coronavirus infections in the country is on a steady decline. Credit: AP Photo/Ishant Chauhan

In the coastal state of Maharashtra, home to the financial hub of Mumbai, and one of the worse hit states, malls, movie theaters, restaurants and offices reopened in districts where the positivity rate has fallen below 5%. The state's huge rail network will, however, remain closed for the public.

Other Indian cities also started to gradually lift the lockdown rules.

After registering a peak of more than 400,000 new cases a day in May, new infections and deaths have declined and the government hopes the reopening could resuscitate an economy that grew at only a 1.6% annual rate in the January-March quarter

On Monday, new infections fell to their lowest point in two months.

The 100,636 cases added in the past 24 hours pushed India's total to nearly 29 million, second only behind the United States. The Health Ministry said 2,427 more people died in the past 24 hours, driving the overall toll to 349,186. Both figures are believed to be vast undercounts.

Meanwhile, pressure is mounting on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government to speed up vaccinations. India has administered just over 222 million jabs so far and less than 5% of the country has been fully vaccinated.

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