

SKorea hits third straight record high in COVID cases

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South Korea reported 1,378 new coronavirus cases Saturday, a record high for the third day in a row as the country prepared to impose its highest-level curbs in the greater capital area next week.

The country had previously been held up as a model of how to combat the pandemic, with the public largely following social distancing and

other rules, but it was slow to start its vaccine roll-out due to supply shortages.

More than 1,000 of the new cases were in the capital Seoul and its surrounding areas, home to around half the South Korean population.

Clusters have recently surfaced in areas including schools, offices and [shopping malls](#), with people in their 20s and 30s—most of whom are not yet eligible for vaccinations—driving up the numbers.

Only about 11 percent of the country's 52 million population is fully vaccinated, according to [health authorities](#).

On Friday, the country's prime minister Kim Boo-kyum said the record spike in new cases left authorities no choice but to implement the highest-level curbs.

Under the new restrictions, set to come into force on Monday and last for two weeks, gatherings of more than two people will be banned after 6 pm and schools will be closed.

Bars and clubs will be shut, while cafes and restaurants are allowed limited seating and dine-in services are prohibited after 10 pm.

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