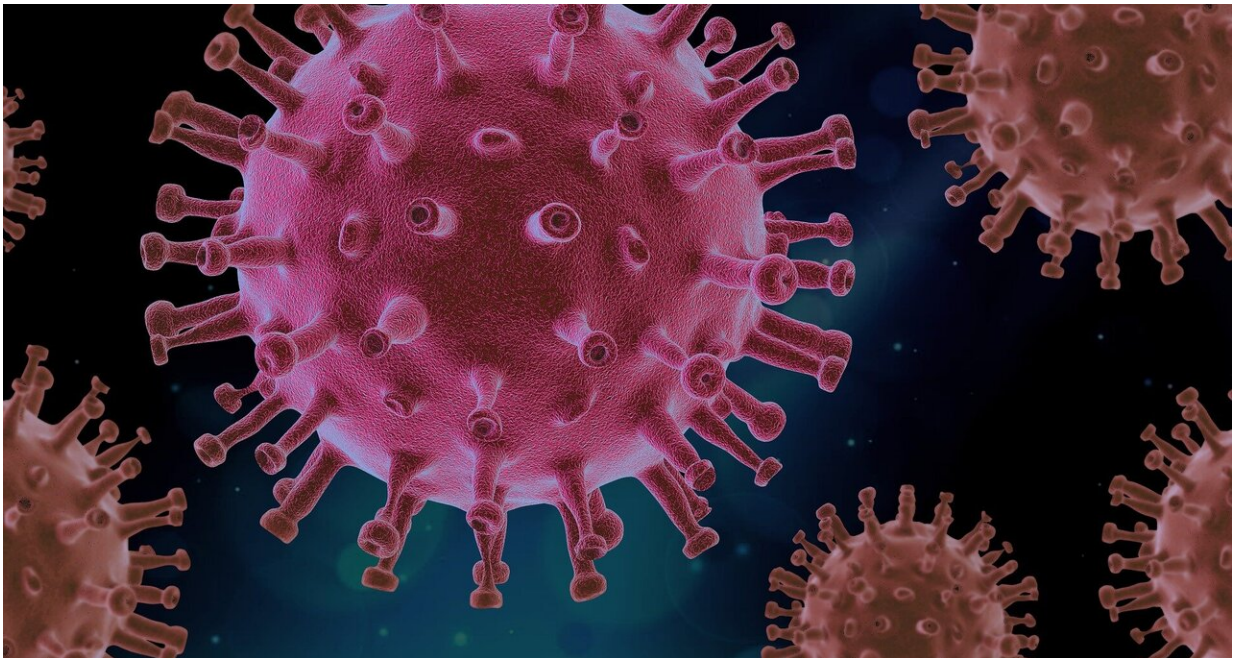


Brunei clamps down after first local virus cases in 15 months

August 8 2021



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Brunei imposed strict curbs to halt the spread of COVID-19, after finding its first locally transmitted cases in the country in over a year.

Seven community infections were found, the [health ministry](#) said Saturday, leading the government to close all places of worship and postpone [social events](#) for two weeks.

Mass events were also limited to groups of 30 people over this period as school classes were moved online and restaurants barred from serving dine-in.

The tiny Islamic sultanate has largely remained coronavirus free, logging only three deaths since the pandemic began.

More than half of its 347 infections so far were imported, with tight border controls and quarantine measures keeping the virus's spread in check.

Five of the oil-rich nation first local infections since May last year were linked to a government-run virus monitoring centre.

"This cluster is believed to likely have been exposed to one of the imported cases in Brunei," the ministry said in a statement.

The source of infection for the other two could not be identified, the ministry added.

An imported case was also announced Saturday: a man who arrived from the Middle East via Malaysia on July 30 before experiencing symptoms on Tuesday.

Brunei has been spared the serious coronavirus outbreaks that currently overwhelm [health systems](#) in much of Southeast Asia today.

It shares its only land border with Malaysia, which has so far recorded nearly 1.25 million infections and more than 10,000 deaths.

The country has also been steadily ramping up its vaccination process, with nearly 32 percent of its 450,000 people getting at least one jab.

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