

# Philippines lifts lockdown in capital as virus surges

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The Philippines will lift a stay-at-home order in the capital Manila this week as it trials "granular lockdowns", an official said Monday, in a bid to rein in coronavirus cases and revive the economy.

More than 13 million people in the national capital region—the country's

economic heartland—have been in lockdown since August 6 amid record infections fuelled by the hyper-contagious Delta variant.

The move to ease restrictions from Wednesday comes after nationwide daily cases exceeded 20,000 for the past three days—double the number at the start of the latest lockdown—straining hospitals as they grapple with a nurses shortage.

"Localised lockdowns will be piloted in Metro Manila," said presidential spokesman Harry Roque, explaining that a household, building or street could be targeted.

"It will be literally a complete lockdown if you are subject to granular [lockdown](#)—even the food will be delivered to you."

There were no further details about how the more targeted measures would be enforced.

The lighter restrictions in the national capital region, which accounts for about a third of the country's economy, will enable many hard-hit businesses to reopen and spur local tourism.

Based on previous guidelines, restaurants will be allowed to accept diners and beauty salons permitted to operate—albeit at reduced capacity.

Limited numbers of faithful will be allowed to attend in-person church services.

President Rodrigo Duterte said recently the country could not afford more lockdowns, after previous measures shattered the [economy](#) and left millions out of work.

But with only about 19 percent of the targeted population fully

vaccinated and hospitals filling up fast, authorities have had few options to slow the spread of the virus.

The country's infection caseload has passed two million, with over 34,000 deaths.

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