
JAPAN POISED FOR STATE OF EMERGENCY AS COVID-19 CASES SOAR

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Junko Ogura and James Griffiths

Japan may enter a state of emergency this week as the country grapples with soaring coronavirus cases, a number of which have been linked to a new, potentially more infectious variant.

Speaking at a New Year press conference Monday, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said an emergency declaration was being considered, and would apply to Tokyo and the three neighboring prefectures of Chiba, Saitama and Kanagawa. The governors of all four regions have all urged Suga to do so already, as cases rise.

"If necessary, we won't hesitate to dispatch the medical staff from Self Defense Force," Suga added, saying the government will support medical facilities to ensure they are not overwhelmed.

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