

Australian city of Brisbane in lockdown after Covid-19 variant case

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Authorities believe the woman, aged in her 20s, was infectious from January 2. She tested positive after showing symptoms on Wednesday.

People line up to enter a grocery store before an impending lockdown due to an outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Brisbane, Australia, January 8, 2021. (AAP Image/Darren England via Reuters)

Brisbane: Australia's third-largest city, Brisbane, will lock down for three days from Friday after a cleaner at a quarantine hotel was diagnosed with the highly contagious British variant of COVID-19. Masks will also become compulsory for the first time in Brisbane and some surrounding municipalities, the Queensland state government said.

"We know that that strain is 70% more infectious and we know the extreme difficulty that the UK has had in controlling their outbreak due to that strain," Queensland Chief Health Officer Jeannette Young said.

"So we need to act really, really fast. We need to find every single case now," Young added.

While several cases of the variant have been found in travellers in hotel quarantine, the cleaner is the first person to be infected with it in Australia.

Authorities believe the woman, aged in her 20s, was infectious from January 2. She tested positive after showing symptoms on Wednesday.

Her diagnosis ends almost four months of no locally acquired infections in Queensland.

- AP