

Vietnam reports 1st ever virus death after renewed outbreak

July 31 2020, by Hau Dinh



People wait in line for COVID-19 test in Hanoi, Vietnam, Friday, July 31, 2020. Vietnam reported on Friday the country's first ever death of a person with the coronavirus as it struggles with a renewed outbreak after 99 days without any cases. (AP Photo/Hau Dinh)

Vietnam on Friday reported its first-ever death of a person with the

coronavirus as it struggles with a renewed outbreak after 99 days with no local cases.

The Health Ministry said a 70-year-old man died after contracting the disease while being treated for a kidney illness at a hospital in Da Nang. More than 100 new cases have been confirmed in the past week, more than half of them patients at the hospital.

Da Nang is Vietnam's most popular beach destination, and thousands of visitors were in the city for summer vacation. Across the country, authorities are rushing to test people who have returned home from the coastal city.

Dr. Luong Ngoc Khue, head of the country's Administration of Medical Examination and Treatment, said there are at least six other elderly patients with COVID-19 currently in critical condition. All have other underlying illnesses, he said.

Vietnam had been seen as a global success story in combating the coronavirus with zero deaths and no confirmed cases of local transmission for 99 days. But a week ago an outbreak began at Da Nang Hospital. It has grown to 104 confirmed cases in six parts of the country, including three of the largest cities, forcing authorities to reimpose virus restrictions.



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People wait in line to be tested for COVID-19 in Hanoi, Vietnam, Friday, July 31, 2020. Vietnam reported on Friday the country's first ever death of a person with the coronavirus as it struggles with a renewed outbreak after 99 days without any cases. (AP Photo/Hau Dinh)



An aerial photo shows quiet streets during social distancing in Hoi An, Vietnam, Friday, July 31, 2020. The old town, Vietnam's top tourist attraction, starts two weeks of social distancing on Friday morning in an attempt to contain the spread of the coronavirus. (AP Photo/Hieu Dinh)



People wait in line to be tested for COVID-19 in Hanoi, Vietnam on Friday, July 31, 2020. Vietnamese state media on Friday reported the country's first-ever death of a person with the coronavirus as it struggles with a renewed outbreak after 99 days without any cases.(AP Photo/Hau Dinh)



An aerial photo shows quiet streets during social distancing in Hoi An, Vietnam, Friday, July 31, 2020. The old town, Vietnam's top tourist attraction, starts two weeks of social distancing on Friday morning in an attempt to contain the spread of the coronavirus. (AP Photo/Hieu Dinh)



This aerial photo shows quiet streets during social distancing in Hoi An, Vietnam, Friday, July 31, 2020. The old town, Vietnam's top tourist attraction, starts two weeks of social distancing on Friday morning in an attempt to contain the spread of the coronavirus. (AP Photo/Hieu Dinh)

Experts worry the actual number of cases could be far higher. Before the latest outbreak it had a total of only 416 cases.

In Hanoi, where two people have tested positive after returning from Da Nang, over 100 clinics have been set up with test kits to detect the virus. Hanoi is expected to test about 21,000 people who declared that they had recently returned from Da Nang.

"I want to be tested so I can stop worrying if I have the virus or not. It is for me and for the community," said Pham Thuy Hoa, a banking official who recently went to Da Nang for a family vacation. "Since coming

back, my family and I have quarantined ourselves at home. I did not go to work or see others. We must be responsible for the entire community."

Ho Chi Minh City plans to test 18,000 Da Nang returnees.

Da Nang was put under lockdown on Tuesday and testing and business restrictions increased in other areas. The city on Friday began setting up a makeshift hospital in a sports auditorium and doctors have been mobilized from other cities to help.

Hoi An, an ancient town and top tourist destination known for its charming old houses 20 kilometers (12 miles) south of Da Nang, stopped allowing visitors on Thursday because of the outbreak. Its pedestrian streets, adorned with lanterns, were empty and nonessential services and gatherings were banned.

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Citation: Vietnam reports 1st ever virus death after renewed outbreak (2020, July 31) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-07-vietnam-1st-virus-death-renewed.html>

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