

Factbox: Chinese cities battle COVID as Winter Olympics loom

January 10 2022

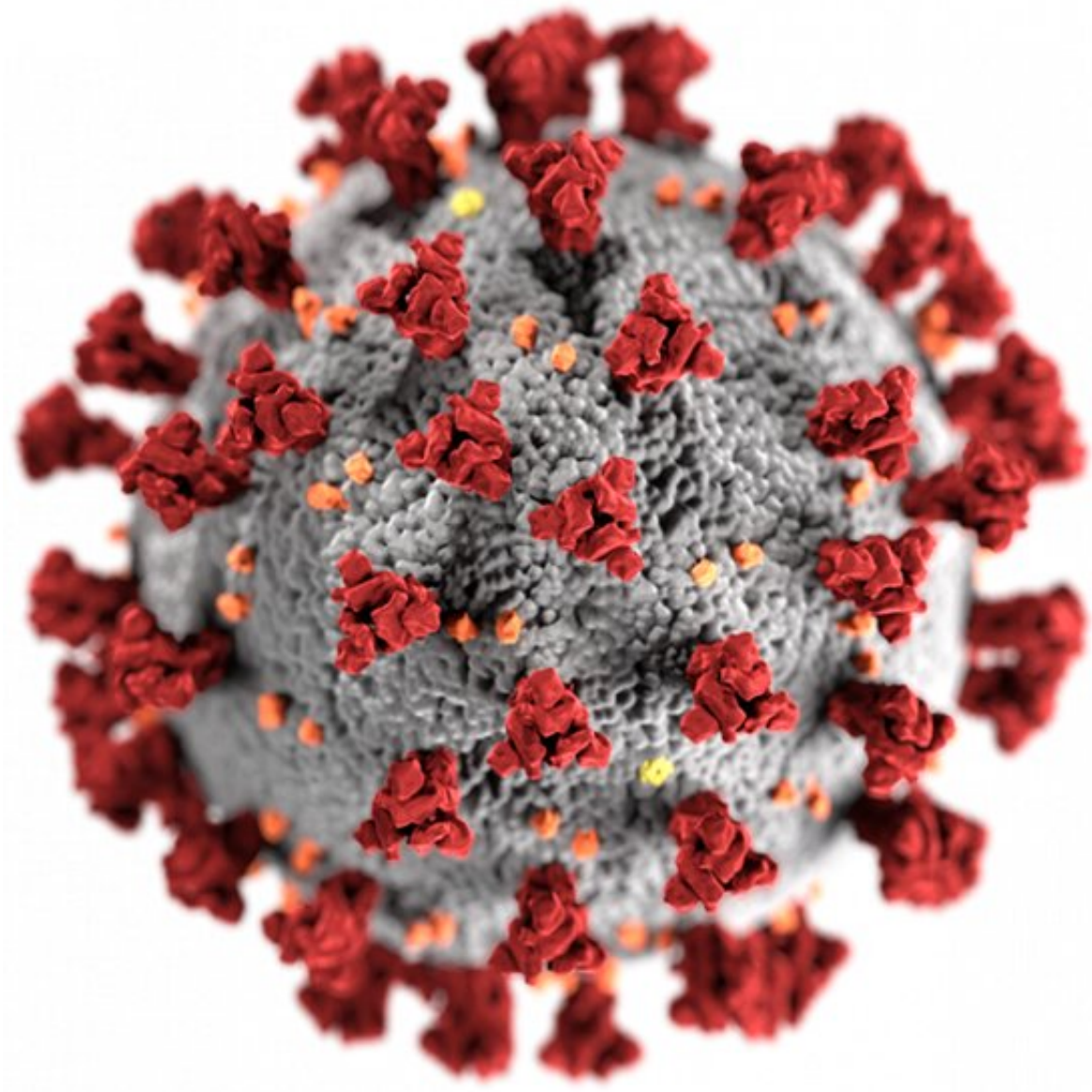


Image of the ultrastructural morphology exhibited by the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV). Credit: CDC

China is battling coronavirus outbreaks in several cities, testing the country's strict "zero-COVID" strategy just weeks before Beijing hosts the Winter Olympics.

Here's a rundown of the measures in place in key areas of the world's most populous nation.

Xi'an

The historic [city](#) of 13 million people is in its third week of lockdown as it races to stamp out a 2,000-case outbreak, one of the largest within China for months.

Residents may not leave their homes or drive cars around the city under new rules which built on existing business shutdowns and a ban on travel out of a city famed for its Terracotta Warriors.

Local authorities have come under fire for their handling of a lockdown that has included supply issues and medical tragedies.

A top health official made a public apology last week over the miscarriage of an eight-month pregnant woman, after a viral video of her being refused entry to a hospital without a COVID test prompted outrage on [social media](#).

Officials also admitted they were struggling to ensure households had enough food—although that problem appears to have eased in recent days.

Tianjin

Fears are growing about a cluster of infections in the northern port city of Tianjin, where at least two cases involve the fast-spreading Omicron variant of the virus.

Authorities on Sunday ordered people not to leave the city "unless essential" and barred all departures without official permission—a move that has been a precursor to lockdowns in other cities.

Schools and university campuses have been closed, and officials are testing all 14 million residents.

While small, the Tianjin outbreak is noteworthy because of the city's proximity to Beijing just 150 kilometres (90 miles) away.

Trains from Tianjin to the capital have been cancelled and road checkpoints have been set up to stop any vehicles entering Beijing from the port city.

Henan

Several cities in the central province of Henan—which lies near Xi'an—have stepped up virus controls in response to a spate of over 250 local cases since the end of December.

Provincial capital Zhengzhou has imposed a partial lockdown and ordered its nearly 13 million residents to get tested.

Last week, one million people in Yuzhou city were put under stay-at-home orders.

On Monday, the city of Anyang—which is testing its five million residents for COVID—said it had found 18 cases, including Omicron variant positives that were linked to the Tianjin cluster.

From Tuesday, officials said, the city will essentially seal itself off from the surrounding area with highway checkpoints and long distance train and bus sales halted. Classes will also move online.

Beijing

The capital last week sealed off its Winter Olympics "closed loop", which will cocoon thousands of athletes and Games staff for weeks without direct physical access to the outside world.

Anyone entering the bubble must be fully vaccinated or face a 21-day quarantine when they arrive in the city, and everyone inside will be tested daily and must wear face masks at all times.

Rules outside the loop are far less strict, but the city has barred entry to people travelling from places that have recorded COVID cases in the last two weeks and requires all arrivals to show a negative test from the past 48 hours.

Shenzhen

After logging a handful of cases in recent days, the southern tech hub just across the border from Hong Kong has locked down some housing compounds, launched a mass testing initiative and shuttered some long-distance bus stations.

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Citation: Factbox: Chinese cities battle COVID as Winter Olympics loom (2022, January 10) retrieved 8 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-01-factbox-chinese-cities-covid-winter.html>

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