

Indonesian new virus cases set record as omicron spreads

February 15 2022, by Niniek Karmini



A worker sprays disinfectant inside a teacher's room during a pause in lessons after a case of COVID-19 was found at a school Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, Friday, Feb. 11, 2022. Indonesia is bracing for a third wave of COVID-19 infections as the highly transmissible omicron variant drives a surge in new cases. Credit: AP Photo/Binsar Bakkara

Indonesia reported a record number of new COVID-19 cases on Tuesday driven by the highly transmissible omicron variant.

The country confirmed 57,049 new infections, more than the previous record of about 56,700 set last July, when the [delta variant](#) overwhelmed hospitals on the main island of Java.

The national COVID-19 task force also reported 134 deaths on Tuesday. More than 100 people have died each day since Friday, mostly in the capital, Jakarta.

Indonesia had largely recovered from last year's surge, which was among the worst in Southeast Asia, and new daily infections had fallen to about 200 by December. But cases have been sharply rising again with [omicron](#)'s arrival.

During last year's surge, hospitals erected plastic tents as makeshift intensive care units and patients waited for days before they were able to be admitted. Oxygen tanks were rolled out on the sidewalk for those lucky enough to receive them, while others were told they would need to find their own.

Health Minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin said on Monday that cases and deaths will increase further, but the [health care system](#) is unlikely to be overwhelmed again since the omicron variant generally causes less-[severe symptoms](#) than delta.



A worker sprays disinfectant inside an empty classroom during a pause after a case of COVID-19 was found at a school Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, Friday, Feb. 11, 2022. Indonesia is bracing for a third wave of COVID-19 infections as the highly transmissible omicron variant drives a surge in new cases. Credit: AP Photo/Binsar Bakkara

Indonesia's confirmed daily [death](#) toll at the peak of last year's delta surge reached 2,069, and "I don't think the peak of deaths in the current omicron outbreak will exceed 500," Sadikin said.

He said the government has dedicated more beds to COVID-19 patients, ramped up tracing and testing, and increased vaccinations in all regions because omicron is now spreading outside of Java.

Bed occupancy rates at 140 coronavirus referral hospitals in Jakarta rose from 5% in early January to 60% on Tuesday. More than 50% of the hospital beds allocated to COVID-19 patients in Jakarta, Yogyakarta and Bali were occupied as of Monday, according to health ministry data.

Overall, Indonesia has reported more than 4.9 million infections and 145,455 deaths from COVID-19. The actual numbers are widely believed to be higher.

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