COVID-19 cases more than double in China's growing outbreak

March 15 2022

Residents line up for COVID-19 test in Yantai city in eastern China's Shandong province Monday, March 14, 2022. China's new COVID-19 cases Tuesday more than doubled from the previous day as the country faces by far its biggest outbreak since the early days of the pandemic. Credit: Chinatopix via AP

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previous day as the country faces by far its biggest outbreak since the early days of the pandemic.

The National Health Commission said 3,507 new locally spread cases had been identified in the latest 24-hour period, up from 1,337 a day earlier.

A fast-spreading variant known as "stealth omicron" is testing China's zero-tolerance strategy, which had kept the virus at bay since the deadly initial outbreak in the city of Wuhan in early 2020. China has recorded more than 10,000 cases in the first two weeks of March, far exceeding previous flare-ups.

No new deaths have been reported in the multiple outbreaks across China, and the case count remains low compared to many other places in the world. The U.K. recorded more than 444,000 cases in the past week. Hong Kong, a semi-autonomous city that tracks its outbreak separately from the mainland, reported 26,908 new cases on Monday alone.

Nearly three-fourths of China's new infections were in Jilin, a province in the northeast that reported 2,601 cases. Smaller outbreaks have hit more than a dozen provinces and major cities including Beijing and Shanghai.

Jilin has barred residents from leaving the province and from traveling between cities within it. The 9 million residents of Changchun, the provincial capital and an auto manufacturing hub, have been locked down since Friday as authorities conduct repeated rounds of mass testing both there and in the city of Jilin.

A medical worker takes swab sample from a resident for COVID-19 test in Hangzhou in eastern China's Zhejiang province Tuesday, March 15, 2022. China's new COVID-19 cases Tuesday more than doubled from the previous day as it faces by far its biggest outbreak since the early days of the pandemic. Credit: Chinatopix via AP

Residents line up for COVID-19 test in Hangzhou in eastern China's Zhejiang province Tuesday, March 15, 2022. China's new COVID-19 cases Tuesday more than doubled from the previous day as it faces by far its biggest outbreak since the early days of the pandemic. Credit: Chinatopix via AP

A man walks across an empty road during the fourth day of a city wide lock down in Changchun in northeastern China's Jilin province Monday, March 14, 2022. China banned most people from leaving the coronavirus-hit northeastern province and mobilized military reservists Monday as the fast-spreading "stealth omicron" variant fuels the country's biggest outbreak since the start of the pandemic two years ago. (Chinatopix Via AP)

More than 1,000 medical workers have been flown in from other provinces along with pandemic response supplies, and the province has mobilized 7,000 military reservists to help with the response.

Elsewhere in China, Shandong province had the most new cases with 106. Guangdong province in the southeast, where the metropolis and major tech center of Shenzhen has been locked down since Sunday,

reported 48 new cases. Shanghai had nine, and Beijing, six.

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