

China locks down 65 million, discourages holiday travel

September 5 2022



People wearing face masks wait in line to get their routine COVID-19 throat swabs at a coronavirus testing site in Beijing, Monday, Sept. 5, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong

China has locked down 65 million of its citizens under tough COVID-19

restrictions and is discouraging domestic travel during upcoming national holidays.

Across the country, 33 cities including seven provincial capitals are under full or partial lockdown covering more than 65 million people, according to a tally published late Sunday by the Chinese business magazine Caixin.

It said that outbreaks have been reported in 103 cities, the highest since the early days of the pandemic in early 2020.

Despite a relatively low number of infections, authorities have adhered to a "zero-COVID" policy requiring lockdowns, quarantines and the confining of people suspected of being in close contact with any confirmed case.

China recorded 1,552 new cases in the latest 24-hour period across a nation of 1.4 billion people, the National Health Commission reported Monday.

Most of the 21 million people in the southwestern city of Chengdu are confined to their apartments or residential complexes, while in the eastern port city of Tianjin, classes have been moved online after 14 new cases were reported, all but two showing no symptoms.

Chengdu lifted the lockdown for about 1 million people in Qionglai city and Xinjin district, two areas in its southwest. Three more rounds of mass testing are being held through Wednesday. and schools remain closed with all classes online.



A woman gets her routine COVID-19 throat swab at a coronavirus testing site in Beijing, Monday, Sept. 5, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong



Residents line up to register to get their routine COVID-19 throat swabs at a coronavirus testing site in Beijing, Monday, Sept. 5, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong



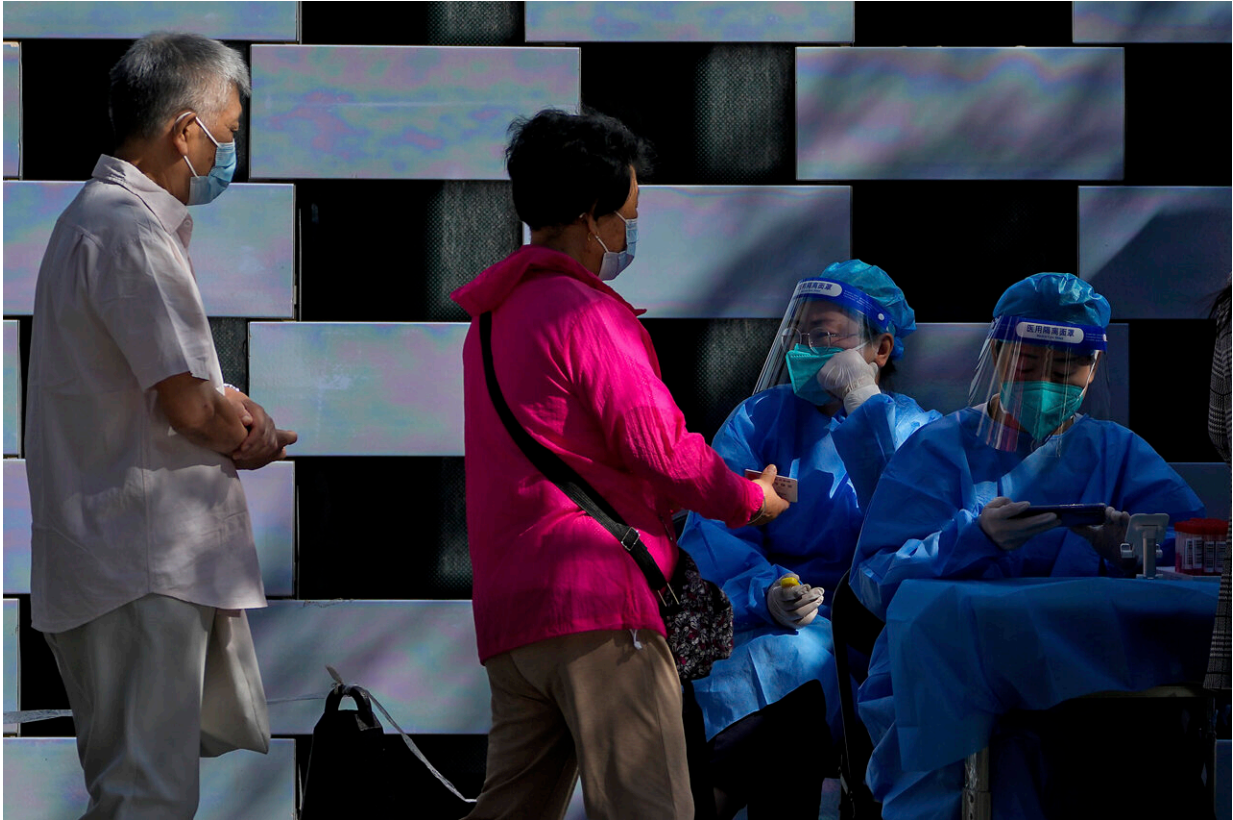
A woman pulls up her mask to get her routine COVID-19 throat swab at a coronavirus testing site in Beijing, Monday, Sept. 5, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong



A woman pulls up her mask to get her routine COVID-19 throat swab at a coronavirus testing site in Beijing, Monday, Sept. 5, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong



A man pulls his mask to get his routine COVID-19 throat swab at a coronavirus testing site in Beijing, Monday, Sept. 5, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong



A volunteer in protective gears looks as residents line up to register to get their routine COVID-19 throat swabs at a coronavirus testing site in Beijing, Monday, Sept. 5, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong

Sept. 10-12 is China's mid-autumn festival, the country's second-most important holiday after the Lunar New Year. The anti-virus measures have taken a major toll on the economy, travel and society in general, but China's ruling Communist Party says they are necessary to prevent a wider spread of the virus, first detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019.

The fear of being caught in a lockdown or sent to a quarantine facility for even being in proximity with a person who tested positive has severely constrained people's work, socializing and travel habits.

Since the outbreak began, China has placed tens of millions of people under lockdowns that have been strictly enforced, sometimes preventing residents from obtaining food, health care and basic necessities.

A more than five-week closure of Shanghai, China's largest city and key financial hub, in the spring upended the local economy, prompted protests and led to an exodus of foreign residents.

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