



AS IT IS

China's Wuhan Orders Mass Testing as COVID-19 Variant Spreads

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Officials in the Chinese city of Wuhan have ordered mass testing for the coronavirus after cases of the Delta **variant** were discovered.

The city also suspended airplane flights and train service and canceled professional basketball games to slow the spread.

The first cases of the new coronavirus, which causes the disease COVID-19, were discovered in Wuhan in late 2019.

China has largely controlled COVID-19 by ordering **lockdowns** and mass testing in areas hit by the virus. The measures mostly kept **outbreaks** from spreading.

But the Delta variant is currently spreading in countries around the world. It has now been confirmed in more than 35 cities across 17 Chinese **provinces** and areas. While the total number of cases in China remains in the hundreds, the spread is far more widespread than anything China has dealt with before.

Virus-related restrictions have been ordered in other areas as well. The cities of Nanjing and Yangzhou in eastern Jiangsu province also canceled flights. In Beijing, officials halted long-distance trains from 23 stations. And the Chinese Basketball Association suspended its games because of the pandemic.

Wuhan is a city of 11 million people in central China. Officials there confirmed three cases of the Delta variant on Monday. They were the city's first non-imported cases reported in more than a year.

Those cases were among 90 new ones confirmed nationwide on Sunday, the country's National Health Commission said Tuesday. Of those, 61 cases were locally spread and 29 were among people who had recently arrived from other countries.

Most of the local cases are in Jiangsu province, where an outbreak started at the airport in Nanjing. The Nanjing outbreak has been linked to the Delta variant and is thought to be the **source** of cases in other places. Five other provinces and the cities of Beijing and Shanghai have all reported fewer than 10 new local cases.

A Nanjing official said Monday that even after the first cases were reported there, some stores did not carry out anti-virus measures and some people did not follow face covering guidance. Jiangsu officials said the main cause of the Nanjing outbreak was "**laxity** of the mind."

The first infections in Nanjing were found on July 20. Since then, the number of local cases in China reached 414 as of Monday, Reuters news agency reported.

I'm Bryan Lynn.

The Associated Press and Reuters reported on this story. Bryan Lynn adapted the reports for VOA Learning English. Mario Ritter, Jr. was the editor.

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Words in This Story

variant – *n.* something that is different in some way from others of the same kind

lockdown – *n.* an emergency in which people are not permitted to freely move about an area because of danger

outbreak – *n.* a sudden occurrence of disease breaking out

province – *n.* any one of the large parts that some countries are divided into

source – *n.* the place where something starts

laxity – *n.* behavior that shows little care, attention or control
