

# COVID-19 resurgence in Asia: A regional health alert

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The world has long forgotten the days of lockdown and difficulties faced during the initial wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The international community has, thereafter, faced numerous other threats to its global health security. Small increases and flare-ups in COVID-19 cases have been reported. Still, for the most part, COVID cases have become synonymous with the “flu” season internationally and have not been a major cause for concern. Multiple new COVID-19 strains, namely: BA.2.87.1, XEC, JN.1, LP.8.1, NB.1.8.1, and LF.7, have been isolated within the last year [1].

**Asian outbreak:**

Towards the end of April and early May 2025, a significant increase and resurgence of the JN.1 variant has been noted in Asia. China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, and most recently India have noted a significant rise in cases. It is said that the JN.1 variant is a sublineage of Omicron. This current wave spreading through ASIA is specifically attributed to the LF.7 and NB.1.8 sublineage of the JN.1 variant [2].

**Hong Kong:**

Hong Kong has recorded its highest number of COVID-19-related cases in the past year. On the 3rd of May 2025, Hong Kong recorded its yearly peak with 31 severe cases of COVID-19. The Hong Kong health authorities are closely monitoring the situation, but have noted a rise in the viral load within the sewer systems of the city, thereby indicating that active viral shedding is occurring in large volumes [3].

**Thailand:**

Thailand recorded a spike of 33 030 cases by the 17th of May 2025, with over 50 000 new cases being reported in the week spanning between the 18th of May and the 24th of May 2025, of the 50 000 cases the majority were treated as outpatients 50 133, whereas 2784 thereof required additional care and were hospitalized. Since January 2025, Thailand has recorded a total of 186,308 cases and a total of 44 deaths. The majority of the cases in Thailand are in early to mid-thirties in age [4].

**Singapore:**

Singapore has similarly faced an increase in cases, with the Ministry of Health of Singapore reporting a nearly 30% jump in cases by the 3rd of May 2025—an increase of 14200 cases in 7 days. The ministry has noted that the

severity of the infections is relatively low and believes the rise in cases could be due to waning immunity [5].

### India and China

China has reported a rise in cases, with hospitalized positive cases rising from 3.3 percent to 6.3 %. India has also noted an increase in cases, but not to the level of Thailand [6].

### Asian response:

The Asian health authorities have all taken a similar stance on the outbreak, via increasing surveillance and more intense tracking of cases, the implementation of safety protocols, and the advocacy of sanitizing, hygiene practices, and the use of masks. The increased communication between the relevant health authorities and the sharing of data and trends will be crucial in arresting and controlling the current outbreak and preventing further flares.

### Expert opinion:

The current outbreak is a good reminder to the international community that COVID-19 has not simply disappeared and that such rises in infections both directly and indirectly pose a threat to National health as well as National security. The lessons and “healthy” hygienic practices implemented at the height of the pandemic should not be discarded and so quickly forgotten, as such simple acts as sanitizing one’s hands and wearing a mask in areas of a high likelihood of transmission can aid in preventing and slowing down such outbreaks.

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Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

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