

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 21st Mar 2022

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### Lockdown Exit

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#### **Shanghai's Disney resort shut amid record daily local COVID infections**

China's financial hub of Shanghai reported on Monday a record daily surge in local COVID-19 infections as authorities scrambled to test residents and rein in the Omicron variant, while closing its Disney (DIS.N) resort until further notice. Until recent weeks relatively unscathed by coronavirus, Shanghai reported 24 new domestically transmitted COVID cases with confirmed symptoms for Sunday and 734 local asymptomatic infections, official data showed on Monday. It is the fourth consecutive day that Shanghai's local asymptomatic infections have increased.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/shanghais-disney-resort-shut-amid-record-daily-local-covid-infections-2022-03-21/>

#### **Covid: Rise in UK infections driven by BA.2 Omicron variant**

Covid cases have continued to rise in the UK, with an estimated one in every 20 people infected, figures from the Office for National Statistics suggest. All age groups are affected, including the 75s and over, who are due a spring booster jab to top up protection. Hospital cases are also rising, but vaccines are still helping to stop many severe cases, say experts. An easily spread sub-variant of Omicron, called BA.2, is now causing most cases. Recent easing of restrictions and waning immunity from the vaccines could be factors behind the rise too.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/health-60792087>

#### **Toronto to hold 24 pop-up COVID-19 vaccine clinics in new spring campaign**

The City of Toronto will be holding 24 pop-up COVID-19 vaccination clinics around the city through its new 'Vax and Spring' campaign. In a press release issued Sunday, the city said the campaign is part of the city's "continued equity-focused, hyper-local mobile strategy to make COVID-19 vaccines as accessible and convenient as possible" to help "bring COVID-19 vaccine clinics to many locations across Toronto." The city said 24 pop-up vaccine clinics will be held in 22 locations over seven days, beginning on March 20.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/8696193/toronto-vax-and-spring-covid-19-vaccine-campaign/>

#### **Covid restrictions easing across Europe despite surge in cases**

In Germany most pandemic controls will be lifted on Sunday after a heated parliamentary debate on Friday which led to both houses of parliament voting in favour. That was despite cases in Germany reaching a new daily record of almost 300,000 on Friday - a seven-day incidence rate of 1,706 cases per 100,000 residents - and a majority of the population expressing concern that the relaxations were coming too soon. Germany has been recording daily deaths of over 200 for several weeks.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/20/covid-restrictions-easing-across-europe-despite-surge-in-cases>

#### **Ukraine's World-Class Drug-Molecule Industry Imperiled by Russia Invasion**

Article reports that Russian attacks are endangering Ukraine's world-leading medicinal chemistry industry, which supplies scientists across the globe with molecular building blocks needed for early drug development. Ukraine's dominance in medicinal chemistry is little known beyond drug developers, who fine-tune a drug's molecular design to give it the best chance of hitting the desired biological target in the body. Kyiv-based Enamine Ltd. has become a go-to supplier for drug-discovery scientists at academic laboratories and the largest pharmaceutical companies. "It's a bit like Amazon for chemistry," said Ed Griffen, a U.K.-based medicinal chemist working with closely

held Enamine on a low-cost Covid-19 antiviral pill.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/ukraines-world-class-drug-molecule-industry-imperiled-by-russia-invasion-11647784800>

### **COVID-19: Spring booster jabs to be offered to millions of vulnerable people in England**

Millions of vulnerable people in England will be offered a fourth COVID vaccine in a bid to top up protection against the coronavirus. Spring booster jabs will be available to care home residents, people who are 75 and over, and the immunosuppressed aged 12 and over. A total of around five million people are expected to be given the jab, with around 600,000 invited to book their dose this week, the NHS says.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-spring-booster-jabs-to-be-offered-to-millions-of-vulnerable-people-in-england-12570906>

### **Public health measures are key to curbing Covid in UK, say scientists**

Stopping the spread of Covid-19 through public health measures remains vital to curbing the pandemic, one of Britain's most senior scientific figures has warned. On the eve of the second anniversary of the lockdown that began the UK's Covid response, Jeremy Farrar, director of the Wellcome Trust, called for investment in next-generation vaccines and better access to vaccinations for poorer countries. Farrar joined several of the UK's most eminent scientists in praising the extraordinary response to the pandemic by the clinicians, researchers and business leaders. But with Covid infections and hospital admissions rising across the UK, measures such as masks, social distancing and ventilation are key.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/20/public-health-measures-are-key-to-curbing-covid-in-uk-say-scientists>

### **EU health body recommends free COVID tests, vaccines for Ukrainian refugees**

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) said on Friday that countries should provide free COVID-19 testing for refugees from Ukraine to avoid outbreaks as more than three million people flee their war-stricken homeland. Infectious diseases and conflict often go hand-in-hand, and the risk of infections spreading could be further exacerbated as COVID vaccination rates in Ukraine have been low overall at 35% versus the EU average of 71.7%. Those fleeing the country should be offered a full course of COVID-19 vaccines, and booster doses, if they do not have proof of prior inoculation, with an emphasis on those at greater risk of severe COVID-19, the ECDC said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-health-body-recommends-free-covid-tests-vaccines-ukrainian-refugees-2022-03-18/>

### **Ecuador ends COVID limits on gatherings after hitting vaccination goal**

Ecuador's president on Friday announced an end to coronavirus limits on public and private gatherings, but the South American country will continue to require foreign visitors to show proof of vaccinations or a negative COVID-19 test. President Guillermo Lasso said the government made the decision to end two years of pandemic containment measures because Ecuador has reached its goal of fully vaccinating 85% of the population above five years old. Both new infections and COVID-related deaths have steadily fallen in recent weeks, according to government data.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/ecuador-ends-covid-limits-gatherings-after-hitting-vaccination-goal-2022-03-18/>

### **Hong Kong plans to review COVID restrictions on Monday as cases ease**

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said on Sunday she plans to review COVID-19 restrictions on Monday, just days after acknowledging that many people in the global financial hub were "losing patience" with the city's coronavirus policies. The Chinese-ruled city has some of the most stringent COVID-19 rules in the world, with a ban on flights from nine countries including Australia and Britain, and hotel quarantine of up to two weeks for incoming travellers. The city has also imposed a ban on gatherings of more than two people, while most public venues are closed, including beaches and

playgrounds, face masks are compulsory and there is no face-to-face learning for students.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/hong-kong-leader-says-plans-review-covid-restrictions-monday-2022-03-20/>

### **Parents up in arms against an Ontario school board's move to keep masks on**

As students in Canada's most populous province return to mask-free classes after two years on Monday, one Ontario school board is facing backlash for defying the province's decision to drop masks, potentially setting the stage for a clash on a contentious pandemic issue. The mask mandate and other pandemic measures have become a lightning rod in Canada for an anti-government movement, sparking a three-week protest in capital Ottawa last month.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/parents-up-arms-against-an-ontario-school-boards-move-keep-masks-2022-03-20/>

### **WHO says global rise in COVID cases is 'tip of the iceberg'**

Figures showing a global rise in COVID-19 cases could herald a much bigger problem as some countries also report a drop in testing rates, the WHO said on Tuesday, warning nations to remain vigilant against the virus. After more than a month of decline, COVID cases started to increase around the world last week, the WHO said, with lockdowns in Asia and China's Jilin province battling to contain an outbreak. A combination of factors was causing the increases, including the highly transmissible Omicron variant and its BA.2 sublineage, and the lifting of public health and social measures, the WHO said.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/who-says-global-rise-covid-cases-is-tip-iceberg-2022-03-16/>

## **Exit Strategies**

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### **Hong Kong leader says COVID flight ban on 9 countries no longer necessary**

Hong Kong plans to relax some anti-COVID-19 measures next month, lifting a ban on flights from nine countries, reducing quarantine time for arrivals from abroad and reopening schools. The moves, announced on Monday by Chief Executive Carrie Lam, could quieten some criticism from residents who have become increasingly frustrated with the city's stringent measures, some of which have been in place for over two years. The flight ban would be lifted from April 1, while hotel quarantine for arrivals could be cut to seven days from 14 if residents tested negative, Lam told a news briefing. She had previously said measures would be in place until April 20.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/hong-kong-leader-says-covid-flight-ban-9-countries-no-longer-necessary-2022-03-21/>

### **Hong Kong's COVID sports ban hits residents, young athletes**

Competitive swimmer Jody Lee's goal is to compete at the Paris Olympics in 2024, but with only two years left to qualify, Hong Kong's months-long shutdown of swimming pools is making achieving his dream tougher. Pools and all other sports facilities, including tennis courts, golf courses and gyms, have been shut since January – and for more than 13 months total since the start of the pandemic in 2020. Lee, 15, has been trying to keep fit by training in the ocean, braving red tides and currents, but the city closed beaches on Thursday, making it even harder to swim. "I have no idea where my swimming level is ... Things will get especially hard for me in terms of trying to qualify for the Olympics."

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/hong-kongs-covid-sports-ban-hits-residents-young-athletes-2022-03-21/>

### **Life During Hong Kong's Worst Covid-19 Outbreak: Full Hospitals, Quiet Streets**

Hong Kong has faced a record surge in Covid-19 cases and the world's highest death rate, prompting authorities to impose strict restrictions. WSJ's Diana Chan reports on how everyday life has changed in the city, from panic buying to an exodus of residents

<https://www.wsj.com/video/series/on-the-news/life-during-hong-kongs-worst-covid-19-outbreak-full-hospitals-quiet-straets/0F140C7F-E0F8-4D51-BF98-EACF10F2D90C>

### **The Pandemic Is Two Years Old. Baseball's Vaccination Problem is Just Beginning.**

Major League Baseball players have been more reluctant to take the Covid-19 vaccine than their counterparts in any of the other American professional sports. Now that decision could have a significant impact on how the upcoming season unfolds. Because of Canadian border restrictions, unvaccinated players won't be allowed to enter the country to play against the Toronto Blue Jays. They won't be paid or receive service time for any games missed because of their vaccination status under the industry's new labor contract, which the owners and players' union agreed to last week. The rule will, for the first time, provide a clear glimpse into how many players have declined to take the shots, which have been found to be safe and effective by experts around the world. While the NFL, NBA, NHL and WNBA have all reported that nearly all of their players have been vaccinated, baseball is a different story.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/mlb-vaccination-rate-11647546833>

### **Mainland China Reports First Coronavirus Deaths in More Than a Year as Omicron Spreads**

China reported its first deaths from Covid-19 in the mainland in more than a year as the country battles a surge of Omicron infections across the country. Two patients died of Covid-19 in the northeastern province of Jilin, which has been hard hit by the Omicron wave, China's National Health Commission said Saturday. The deaths, both of which occurred the previous day, are the nation's first recorded fatalities since Jan. 26, 2021. Earlier in the week, Chinese health authorities barred Jilin's 24 million residents from leaving the province, which borders Russia and North Korea, the first time such restrictions have been imposed on an entire province since Hubei province, home to the city of Wuhan, was locked down at the start of the pandemic.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/mainland-china-reports-first-coronavirus-deaths-in-more-than-a-year-as-omicron-spreads-11647697704>

### **Austria reintroduces face masks as coronavirus cases surge**

People in Austria will be required to wear FFP2 face masks indoors again as COVID-19 cases are rising once more, the country's Health Minister Johannes Rauch said. "I don't like doing that," Rauch said during a press conference Friday evening, adding that the new rule will apply from Wednesday and that isolation rules will be revised too. He said details about the reviewed restrictions will come "over the weekend." Rauch conceded that easing restriction measures had come too early. Austria is the first country in the EU to reintroduce tougher constraints during the current wave. The number of COVID-19 cases has been increasing in the country during the past two weeks.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/austria-reintroduce-face-mask-coronavirus-case-surge/>

### **Where the US stands on Covid-19 vaccines for children under 5**

A month after the US Food and Drug Administration delayed key steps toward authorizing Covid-19 vaccines for children under 5, many parents are more eager for the shots than ever. Dr. Daniel Leonard, a pediatric hospitalist who is working on the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine trial for these kids, said people are driving in from several states away to take part. "We're here in south central Nebraska, and while many may not think that this would be the epicenter of scientific progress, the influx that I've had with people from Colorado, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa -- some driving eight or nine hours each way overnight to participate in the study," he said. "They are dedicated."

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/19/health/covid-19-youngest-children-vaccine/index.html>

### **Hong Kong will review COVID-19 restrictions as cases decline**

Hong Kong's leader says the government will consider lifting strict social distancing measures as new COVID-19 infections in the city continue trending downward

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/hong-kong-review-covid-19-restrictions-cases-decline-83560030>

### **Chinese officials urge elderly to get COVID vaccine, cite lesson of Hong Kong**

Older people in China should get vaccinated against COVID-19, senior Chinese health officials said on Friday, adding that deaths among the elderly in the latest wave to hit Hong Kong serve as a lesson for the mainland. "The outbreak in Hong Kong is a particularly profound lesson for us, an example that if the vaccination rate for the elderly is low, the rate of severe cases and deaths will be high," Wang Hesheng, deputy director of the National Health Commission, told a news briefing. "We must not regret when it is too late," he said.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/covid-vaccination-rate-people-aged-over-80-china-relatively-low-official-2022-03-18/>

### **Japan offers aid and COVID vaccines to Cambodia**

Japan on Sunday pledged to offer Cambodia about \$428 million in aid and 1.3 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX global vaccine-sharing programme. The pledges were part of several agreements signed by Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and his Cambodian counterpart Hun Sen during Kishida's visit to Phnom Penh. Japan will provide a support loan of 45 billion yen (\$378 million) and grant aid through contribution to international organisations of 6 billion yen (\$50 million). Kishida also expressed support for Cambodia's democratic process "such as holding elections in a way that reflects diverse voices from Cambodian people through projects such as the promotion of dialogue", a joint statement said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-offers-aid-covid-vaccines-cambodia-2022-03-20/>

### **Shanghai pushes ahead with mass COVID tests as new cases spike**

The Chinese commercial hub of Shanghai is pushing ahead with a mass testing initiative as it tries to curb a new spike in COVID-19 infections, but some districts were easing lockdown rules in an effort to minimise disruptions. The city, home to about 25 million people, saw symptomatic local community infections hit 57 on March 17, with another 203 domestically transmitted asymptomatic cases, up from eight and 150 respectively a day earlier.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/chinas-new-daily-local-covid-cases-rebound-2022-03-18/>

### **Hong Kong plans to review COVID restrictions on Monday as cases ease**

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said on Sunday she plans to review COVID-19 restrictions on Monday, just days after acknowledging that many people in the global financial hub were "losing patience" with the city's coronavirus policies. The Chinese-ruled city has some of the most stringent COVID-19 rules in the world, with a ban on flights from nine countries including Australia and Britain, and hotel quarantine of up to two weeks for incoming travellers. The city has also imposed a ban on gatherings of more than two people, while most public venues are closed, including beaches and playgrounds, face masks are compulsory and there is no face-to-face learning for students.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/hong-kong-leader-says-plans-review-covid-restrictions-monday-2022-03-20/>

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **Marjorie Taylor Greene condemns Covid boosters with false polio claim**

US Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene inadvertently proved herself wrong on the House floor while complaining about Covid-19 vaccine boosters. Ms Greene took to the floor to attack the coronavirus vaccines, in particular the idea that boosters may be necessary for Americans to stay safe from the virus and its variants. "Now I don't know about you guys, but many of us were vaccinated as kids against polio, we had our MMR, and I have never seen the CDC coming out and saying 'oh you've got to get your second polio shot, you've got to get your third, you've got to get your fourth,'" she said.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/mtg-covid-boosters-polio-fact-check-b2039159.html>

### **JPM, Credit Suisse expect China COVID spike to have minimal impact on GDP**

The recent surge in COVID-19 cases across China is likely to have a minimal impact on the country's GDP this year, two brokerages said in their reports, while adding it could hurt demand for some commodities. China reported 2,388 new local cases with confirmed symptoms on March 17, almost double the count a day earlier, as it battles its worst coronavirus outbreak since the virus first emerged in Wuhan in 2020. Credit Suisse said in a report late Thursday it expected a loss of 0.03 to 0.05 percentage point to GDP growth per week of the lockdown, on the current size of the lockdown.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/jpm-credit-suisse-expect-china-covid-spike-have-minimal-impact-gdp-2022-03-18/>

## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **Oxford Covid jab gears up for final act: saving the rest of the world**

Exactly two years ago Prof Sir Andrew Pollard was starting to panic. "We were just waking up to the reality of Covid-19 and that we would need vaccines for our very survival," the director of the Oxford Vaccine Group told the Guardian last week. He joined forces with a colleague, Prof Dame Sarah Gilbert, and together they launched one of the greatest medical missions in modern history. Their seemingly impossible task – to design, develop and deliver a vaccine from scratch to slow the advance of a lethal pandemic – was completed in less than 12 months, to the relief of millions. Today though, the coronavirus landscape – and the status of their jab, ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 – looks very different. In the UK, half the population have had their vaccine, restrictions have ended, and while cases and hospitalisations are rising in the UK, a dramatic uptick in deaths is not expected.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/mar/20/oxford-covid-jab-vaccine-astrazeneca>

### **Moderna files for emergency use of second Covid-19 booster shot**

Moderna late on Thursday sought emergency use authorization from US health regulators for a second Covid-19 booster shot, as a surge in cases in some parts of the world fueled fears of another wave of the pandemic. The US biotechnology company said its request covered all adults over the age of 18 so that the appropriate use of an additional booster dose of its vaccine, including for those at higher risk of Covid-19 due to age or co-morbidities, could be determined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and healthcare providers.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/18/moderna-emergency-use-second-covid-booster-shot>

### **HK's Immunized Who Died of Covid Mainly Got Sinovac: Ming Pao**

Almost 87% of Hong Kongers who died from Covid after getting at least one dose of vaccine received Sinovac Biotech Ltd.'s shot, Ming Pao reported, though most deaths occurred among those who weren't immunized. The newspaper said it analyzed data from the Hospital Authority involving 5,167 of the city's Covid fatalities, without disclosing its sources or additional information. It found that 71% of those who died were unvaccinated. Of the 1,486 who died after receiving at least one dose, 1,292 -- or 87% -- had gotten Sinovac, Ming Pao reported. Most deaths in Hong Kong have occurred among under-vaccinated senior citizens, particularly those living in elderly care homes.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-20/hk-s-immunized-who-died-of-covid-mainly-got-sinovac-ming-pao>

### **Moderna seeks FDA authorization for second COVID booster for all adults**

Moderna Inc on late Thursday sought emergency use authorization from U.S. health regulators for a second COVID-19 booster shot, as a surge in cases in some parts of the world fuels fears of another wave of the pandemic. The U.S. biotechnology company said its request covered all adults over the age of 18 so that the appropriate use of an additional booster dose of its vaccine, including for those at higher risk of COVID-19 due to age or comorbidities, could be determined by the U.S. Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and health care providers. Moderna's request is significantly broader than Pfizer Inc and its German partner BioNTech SE's application that was filed earlier this week with U.S. regulators for a second booster shot for people aged 65 and older

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/moderna-seeks-fda-authorization-second-covid-booster-all-adults-nyt-2022-03-18/>

### **CDC reports fewer COVID-19 pediatric deaths after data correction**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 966,575 deaths from COVID-19 on Friday after it corrected the data earlier this week, which reduced the death tallies in all age-groups, including children. The health agency, in a statement to Reuters, said it made adjustments to its COVID Data Tracker's mortality data on March 14 because its algorithm was accidentally counting deaths that were not COVID-19-related. The adjustment resulted in removal of 72,277 deaths previously reported across 26 states, including 416 pediatric deaths, CDC said. The reduction cut the CDC's estimate of deaths in children by 24% to 1,341 as of March 18.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/cdc-reports-fewer-covid-19-pediatric-deaths-after-data-correction-2022-03-18/>

### **Neurological problems no higher after vaccination; depression, anxiety risk tied to COVID severity**

The following is a summary of some recent studies on COVID-19. They include research that warrants further study to corroborate the findings and that has yet to be certified by peer review. Neurological risks not higher after COVID-19 vaccines COVID-19 vaccination did not increase risks for rare neurological conditions among more than 8 million people who had received at least one dose of a vaccine from AstraZeneca, Pfizer /BioNTech, Moderna or Johnson & Johnson, according to researchers. Their study also included 735,870 unvaccinated individuals who had tested positive for the coronavirus, as well as older data on an additional 14.3 million people from the general population for a baseline estimate of rates of the neurological conditions before the pandemic

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/neurological-problems-no-higher-after-vaccination-depression-anxiety-risk-tied-2022-03-18/>

### **Canadian Pfizer partner sues to head off patent lawsuit over COVID-19 vaccine**

The biotech company that makes mRNA-delivery technology for Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine sued Arbutus Biopharma Corp in Manhattan federal court on Friday, seeking to head off claims that the vaccine infringes Arbutus' patents. Canada-based Acuitas Therapeutics Inc said Arbutus and partner Genevant Sciences have threatened to sue for potentially billions of dollars in "unjustified royalties" over the vaccine Pfizer developed with Germany's BioNTech SE . Acuitas asked the court to find that the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine does not infringe Arbutus patents and that several Arbutus patents are invalid.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/canadian-pfizer-partner-sues-head-off-patent-lawsuit-over-covid-19-vaccine-2022-03-18/>

### **China Says Vaccine Makers Upgraded Shots to Fight Omicron**

Chinese officials said vaccine makers have upgraded their Covid-19 vaccines against the omicron variant and other strains but new shots will be validated for safety and efficacy before they can be rolled out. Widely-used inactivated shots in the country have been tweaked to fight up to three variants, including omicron and the preceding predominant delta strain, according to Zheng Zhongwei, an official who oversees Covid vaccine development at the National Health Commission. Another protein subunit shot targeting four variants is seeking approval for human testing overseas, he said. "We share the urgent wish of everybody to use omicron target vaccines," Zheng said at a briefing in Beijing Saturday. "As we expedite development of omicron vaccine, we consistently make safety and efficacy our No. 1 priority."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-19/china-says-vaccine-makers-upgraded-shots-to-fight-omicron>

## Coronavirus Resurgence

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### **Hong Kong Covid crisis: why is the death rate so high?**

Hong Kong is in the grip of its worst Covid outbreak. The surge in infections during the fifth wave has outpaced other cities around the world. Analysis of government data by Hong Kong Free Press showed there were almost 900 confirmed infections per 100,000 Hong Kong citizens in early March, when cases peaked. The all-time high for the pandemic was previously held by New York City, with 500 cases per 100,000 residents, in January.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/18/hong-kong-covid-crisis-why-is-the-death-rate-so-high>

### **China reports first coronavirus deaths in over a year amid omicron surge**

China's national health authorities reported two Coronavirus deaths on Saturday, the first recorded rise in the death toll since January last year, as the country battles an omicron-driven surge. The deaths, both in north-eastern Jilin province, bring the country's coronavirus death toll to 4,638. China reported 2,157 new community transmissions on Saturday, with the majority in Jilin. The province has instituted a travel ban, with people needing permission from police to travel across borders.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/19/china-reports-first-coronavirus-deaths-in-over-a-year-amid-omicron-surge>

### **Shanghai's New Covid Cases Hit Record on Mass Mandated Tests**

China's financial hub Shanghai reported record high new Covid infections as it implemented mass mandated testing to reduce transmissions of the virus. The new cases as of Saturday include 17 confirmed local infections and 492 that are asymptomatic, Wu Jinglei, director of the Shanghai Health Commission, said at a press conference on Sunday. Wu called for increased effort to scale up testing, which has been effective in identifying cases and helping block further transmission. China has allowed the use of rapid antigen tests kits to ease the demand from people to be diagnosed.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-20/shanghai-s-new-covid-cases-hit-record-on-mass-mandated-tests>

### **China reports first COVID deaths in more than a year**

Mainland China reported its first COVID-19 deaths in more than a year on Saturday, according to a post on the National Health Commission's website that said two people died in the northeastern region of Jilin. China reported only two COVID deaths for all of 2021, the last of those on Jan. 25. The country is maintaining a "dynamic clearance" approach which aims to cut transmission as soon as possible, using stringent measures such as short and targeted shutdowns and quick testing schemes where cases are found

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/china-reports-first-covid-deaths-over-year-2022-03-19/>

## New Lockdown

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### **With 37 million in lockdown and Covid plans under fire, Chinese ask: what comes next?**

When nearby neighbourhoods went into lockdown, Liu Li started stocking up. The 42-year-old Chinese magazine worker bought vegetables, fruit, medicine and other supplies, adding to stores of basics she had maintained since the pandemic began. Last Sunday a resident in the community where Liu lives with her mother, in Changchun city, Jilin, tested positive. Everyone was ordered inside. The fresh lockdown has, so far, been OK. "I live a normal life," she says. "I work when there are tasks for me. If there aren't any, I talk to my mother, watch TV, or play with my cat." Liu is luckier than some - she works from home and was well prepared. But there is also a risk. Her mother is a cancer patient and unvaccinated. They are now among the 37 million people under lockdown in China, as authorities battle the country's biggest outbreak of the pandemic.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/19/with-37-million-in-lockdown-and-covid-plans-under-fire-chinese-ask-what-comes-next>

### **Millions in China's northeast placed under COVID-19 lockdown**

The city of Jilin will lock down some 4.5 million people for three days starting Monday to help curb the spread of China's biggest coronavirus outbreak.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/20/millions-in-chinas-northeast-placed-under-covid-19-lockdown>

### **China's factories opt for isolation bubbles to beat COVID curbs and keep running**

To keep factory lines open in the face of COVID curbs Chinese firms are asking workers to eat, sleep and work in bubbles isolated from the wider world, sterilising premises as often as three times a day and testing for COVID daily. Dubbed "closed-loop management", this approach has been part of China's efforts over the past two years to keep local transmission extremely low by global standards. It was used for example at the Winter Olympics in Beijing to seal event personnel off from the public.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/chinas-factories-opt-isolation-bubbles-beat-covid-curbs-keep-running-2022-03-17/>