

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 29th Mar 2022

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### Lockdown Exit

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#### **Shanghai Lockdown Experiment Begins as Officials Race to Clear Covid-19**

Half of Shanghai went into lockdown on Monday, as authorities escalated measures to contain a spiraling Covid-19 outbreak in China's financial capital. After announcing the snap two-stage lockdown of the city on Sunday, Shanghai reported 3,500 new Covid-19 cases, another record, with the number of infections doubling every few days. On Monday, barricades were seen splitting up the city, while many metro services and bus lines were suspended. Companies including Tesla Inc. suspended manufacturing for four days.

[https://www.wsj.com/articles/shanghai-lockdown-experiment-begins-as-officials-race-to-clear-covid-19-11648482912?mod=hp\\_featst\\_pos3](https://www.wsj.com/articles/shanghai-lockdown-experiment-begins-as-officials-race-to-clear-covid-19-11648482912?mod=hp_featst_pos3)

#### **Shanghai reports record asymptomatic COVID cases as lockdowns begin**

China's financial hub of Shanghai launched a two-stage lockdown of its 26 million residents on Monday, closing bridges and tunnels and restricting highway traffic in a scramble to contain surging COVID-19 cases. The snap lockdown, announced by the local government late on Sunday, will split China's most populous city roughly along the Huangpu River for nine days to allow for "staggered" testing by healthcare workers in white hazmat suits. It is the biggest COVID-related disruption to hit Shanghai, and sent prices of commodities including oil and copper lower on fears that any further curbs could hurt demand in China, the world's second-largest economy

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/shanghai-reports-record-asymptomatic-covid-cases-lockdowns-begin-2022-03-28/>

#### **Shanghai locks down as COVID surges in China's financial hub**

China's financial hub of Shanghai launched a two-stage lockdown of its 26 million residents on Monday, closing bridges and tunnels and restricting highway traffic in a scramble to contain surging COVID-19 cases. The snap lockdown, announced by the local government late on Sunday, will split China's most populous city roughly along the Huangpu River for nine days to allow for "staggered" testing by healthcare workers in white hazmat suits. It is the biggest COVID-related disruption to hit Shanghai, and sent prices of commodities including oil and copper lower on fears that any further curbs could hurt demand in China, the world's second-largest economy

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/shanghai-reports-record-asymptomatic-covid-cases-lockdowns-begin-2022-03-28/>

#### **Ghana opens borders and eases majority of Covid-19 restrictions**

Ghana is the latest African country to ease its Covid-19 rules. In his 28th Covid-19 address, President President Akufo-Addo announced an update on the measures taken to limit the spread of the virus. Citing a "review premised on the background of rapidly declining infections, the relative success of the vaccination campaign ... and the increased capacity in the public and private health sectors", the leader presented measures set to take effect on Monday, March 28. 2 years after President Akufo-Addo closed all borders, he announced the opening of sea and land borders vowing the economy would soon rebound.

<https://www.africanews.com/2022/03/28/ghana-opens-borders-and-eases-majority-of-covid-19-restrictions/>

#### **COVID-19: 600,000 people to be invited for spring booster jabs next week**

More than 600,000 people in England will be invited for a COVID-19 booster jab next week. Since the

beginning of the spring booster programme last week, NHS England said more than 470,000 people have already come forward for a jab. Around 5.5 million people in England aged over 75 or immunosuppressed will be eligible for a spring booster over the coming weeks and months.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-600-000-people-to-be-invited-for-spring-booster-jabs-next-week-12575984>

### **G20 chair Indonesia seeks standardised health requirements for travel**

Group of 20 major economies (G20) chair Indonesia has started talks with members on standardising health protocols for travel, its health minister said, stressing the importance of harmonising rules and technology as global travel resumes. An aide to Indonesia's health minister, Setiaji, said countries were getting ready to roll out a global website to scan and verify travellers' vaccination status. All G20 members support the rollout, but China will not participate yet "due to technical reasons," he said without giving further details.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/g20-chair-indonesia-seeks-standardised-health-travel-requirements-2022-03-28/>

## **Exit Strategies**

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### **MIT Reinstates SAT, ACT Mandates Many Colleges Dropped During Covid**

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology is reinstating its standardized testing requirements, citing that most students are now able to access the exams safely. Vaccine availability and an increase in students taking tests at school have alleviated challenges that had made it especially difficult for high-schoolers to sit for the SAT and ACT during the pandemic, MIT said Monday in a statement. Many colleges across the U.S. have made the requirements optional amid ongoing Covid disruptions and concerns that the tests unfairly favor wealthier students. The math component of the exams are especially important in evaluating whether a prospective student will do well at MIT, the college said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-28/mit-reinstates-test-mandates-many-colleges-dropped-during-covid>

### **FDA expected to authorize second coronavirus booster for 50 and older**

The Food and Drug Administration is poised to authorize a second coronavirus vaccine booster for anyone 50 and older, a bid to provide an extra layer of protection amid concerns Europe's rise in infections from an omicron subvariant could hit the United States, according to several government officials. The authorizations for second Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna boosters could be announced as soon as Tuesday

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/03/26/coronavirus-vaccine-fourth-shot/>

### **Laos eyes giving 4th coronavirus vaccine doses**

The Lao Ministry of Health plans to offer fourth doses of coronavirus vaccines to health care workers and people at risk of serious illness starting in April to shield them and other vulnerable groups from the highly transmissible Omicron variant. Booster shots will be used to ramp up levels of antibodies against the virus, which will reduce the risk of severe illness, local newspaper Vientiane Times reported

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2022/03/29/news/world/laos-eyes-giving-4thcoronavirus-vaccine-doses/1837956>

### **The 'zero-Covid' approach got bad press, but it worked - and it could work again**

Many people thought No-Covid was impossible, but the handful of places that embraced it proved them wrong. Now that some of those places are themselves shifting to a reduction or mitigation strategy, countries that opted for mitigation from the beginning are enjoying a "we told you so" moment. But No-Covid's early champions had to shift in part because other countries let the virus rip. Even if their strategy didn't remain the optimal one, it bought them time to prepare others. It's important that we remember that when the next pandemic sidles along.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/mar/28/no-covid-approach-bad-press-but-worked>

### **Bulgaria to remove COVID-19 restrictions**

The Bulgarian government will remove all restrictive measures against COVID-19 from 1 April, including the mandatory wearing of protective masks in closed public spaces and restrictions on public events. Bulgarian authorities say the decision to drop all measures was taken after the issue was discussed in detail over the past month.

[https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short\\_news/bulgaria-to-remove-covid-19-restrictions/](https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short_news/bulgaria-to-remove-covid-19-restrictions/)

### **COVID-19: China's coronavirus zero policy is actually two policies - it just depends where you are**

China's "dynamic COVID zero" policy is actually two policies, depending on where you are. To start with, and while cases were lower than they are today, officials relied on shutting down localised areas and testing residents, to stop outbreaks as they started - styled as the "precision" approach. But that has been abandoned in many places, as the Omicron wave has worsened.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-chinas-coronavirus-zero-policy-is-actually-two-policies-it-just-depends-where-you-are-12576605>

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **U.S. Covid Response Showing Cracks as Congress Delays Funds**

Personic Health Care has been providing free Covid testing for uninsured families in Philadelphia and northern Virginia throughout the pandemic, thanks in part to federal support. But earlier this month when the White House said that the U.S. doesn't have the funds to cover those costs, it put Personic, a mid-sized patient-monitoring and telehealth company, in a precarious spot. The company wants to continue offering the free tests, but that's not sustainable through another surge of infections, said Azmat Husain, its founder and chief medical officer.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/finance/other/us-covid-response-showing-cracks-as-congress-delays-funds/ar-AAVANBV>

### **Musk says he has 'supposedly' tested positive for COVID again**

Tesla Inc Chief Executive Officer Elon Musk said on Monday that he had "supposedly" tested positive for COVID-19, with no major symptoms. "I supposedly have it again (sigh), but almost no symptoms," Musk said in a tweet. He questioned the accuracy of COVID-19 tests in November 2020 after claiming that results showed he tested positive twice and then negative twice all on the same day. Musk then said he "most likely" had a moderate case of COVID-19, as he continued to question the accuracy of the tests. He did not mention whether the results were from polymerase chain reaction tests, which are more accurate than rapid tests.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/musk-says-he-has-supposedly-tested-positive-covid-again-2022-03-28/>

### **End of free Covid testing could put vulnerable at risk, say UK experts**

Come the end of March, the lights will dim on the UK's Covid epidemic. Despite infection levels rising, cases will plummet, as free lateral flow and PCR tests are stopped for the majority of people in England, with other countries in the UK also set to reduce free testing in the coming weeks and months. But while the government has argued it is time to manage Covid as we do other infectious diseases such as flu, scientists have warned ending community testing could put vulnerable people at risk and undermine efforts to understand the virus.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/28/end-of-free-covid-testing-could-put-vulnerable-at-risk-say-uk-experts>

### **For red and blue America, a glaring divide in COVID-19 death rates persists 2 years later**

Political polarization in the U.S. was evident and intensifying long before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, two years ago. Polling shows that the emergence of the novel coronavirus in 2020 exacerbated the rift, pushing Americans further apart on key pandemic response efforts. Surveys

from Pew Research Center, last year, found that in the early months of the pandemic, about 6 in 10 Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents believed the virus was a major threat to the health of the U.S. population, compared to only a third of Republicans and GOP-leaning independents. That 26-point gap would ultimately grow to approximately 40 points by the fall, researchers found.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/red-blue-america-glaring-divide-covid-19-death/story?id=83649085>

## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **Botswana Approves Corbevax Covid Vaccine, Plans Local Output**

Corbevax, a Covid-19 vaccine developed in Texas, has been approved for use in Botswana, according to U.S. biotech billionaire Patrick Soon-Shiong. Doses of the vaccine currently in production have been reserved for the country, he said at a ceremony on Monday in the southern African nation's capital, Gaborone. It will ultimately be made at a local factory called Pula Corbevax, Botswanan President Mokgweetsi Masisi said. Soon-Shiong is helping launch production and the facility may later make another inoculation produced by his ImmunityBio Inc. "It has now been given to 10 million young Indians safely," Soon-Shiong said. "We have now brought it to Botswana."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-28/botswana-approves-corbevax-covid-vaccine-plans-local-output>

### **Fourth vaccine reduces COVID-19 deaths by 78% - study**

The fourth coronavirus vaccine resulted in a 78% decrease in COVID-19 related deaths in adults aged 60-100, according to a new study by Clalit Health Services. The study, conducted by Clalit, Sapir College and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, examined the effect the second booster shot had on mortality rates of the population eligible to receive it in Israel. The research was led by Dr. Ronen Arbel, a health outcomes researcher at Clalit Health Services and Sapir College. The paper is currently awaiting peer review.

<https://www.jpost.com/health-and-wellness/coronavirus/article-702441>

### **AstraZeneca's COVID-19 preventative drug secures EU approval**

AstraZeneca's Evusheld has been approved in the EU for the prevention of COVID-19 in adults and teens 12 years and older weighing at least 40 kg.

<https://www.biopharma-reporter.com/Article/2022/03/28/AstraZeneca-s-COVID-19-preventative-drug-gets-EU-approval>

### **COVID-19 booster essential, even among individuals previously infected**

A long-term, cohort study led by researchers at the Azrieli Faculty of Medicine of Bar-Ilan University and Ziv Medical Center in Safed has produced further insight regarding the interplay between COVID-19 infection and vaccination in providing protection over time. Seven to nine months after the second dose of the vaccine, antibody levels throughout the cohort dropped and were comparable in all groups including among young people and those infected before vaccination. The booster, however, led to antibody levels ten times higher than after the second dose in all groups within the cohort. The study, recently published in the journal Clinical Infectious Diseases, further showed that all individuals, including those with hybrid immunity (infected and vaccinated) require subsequent boosters beyond the two initial COVID-19 vaccine doses.

<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/news/324752>

### **Studies link Covid-19 infection with increased risk of new diabetes diagnosis**

Over a year after recovering from a Covid-19 infection, Jennifer Hobbs is adjusting to her new normal: brain fog, joint pain, elevated liver enzymes and, now, type 2 diabetes. Hobbs had prediabetes before she got Covid-19, but her blood sugar levels were under control, and she didn't need any treatment. Recently, that changed. "I take my blood sugar [level] every morning, and even with two different types of medication, it's all over the place," said Hobbs, 36. The new diabetes diagnosis has both Hobbs and her primary care provider wondering if the coronavirus has played a

role. Two years into the pandemic, scientists and physicians are shifting their attention to the long-term consequences of a Covid-19 infection, termed "long Covid." Recent studies add diabetes to the list of possible long Covid outcomes.

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/28/health/diabetes-covid-studies/index.html>

### **Medicago's tobacco ties jeopardize growth of its COVID shot**

Canadian vaccine maker Medicago's COVID-19 vaccine, approved last month in Canada, is facing limited growth in the near-term after the World Health Organization said it would not review the vaccine because the company is partly owned by U.S.-Swiss tobacco company Philip Morris, health experts say. The WHO said at a briefing this month and in a follow-up statement to Reuters that it has not accepted an application for the vaccine because of its 2005 public health treaty requiring no involvement with any company that produces or promotes tobacco-based products.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/medicagos-tobacco-ties-jeopardize-growth-its-covid-shot-2022-03-27/>

### **Second COVID vaccine booster significantly lowers death rate, Israeli study shows**

Senior citizens who received a second booster of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccination had a 78% lower mortality rate from the disease than those who got one only, a study from Israel showed on Sunday. The country's largest healthcare provider, Clalit Health Services, said the 40-day study included more than half a million people aged 60 to 100. Some 58% of participants had received a second booster - or two shots in addition to the basic two-shot regimen. The remainder had received only one booster.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/israeli-study-2nd-vaccine-booster-significantly-lowers-covid-death-rate-2022-03-27/>

### **UK study to test Pfizer's COVID pill in hospitalised patients**

Pfizer's oral COVID-19 therapy will be evaluated as a potential treatment for patients hospitalised with the illness in a major British trial, scientists said on Monday, as cases rise in some parts of the world. The world's largest randomised study of potential medicines for COVID-19, dubbed the RECOVERY trial, will assess Paxlovid across hospitals in Britain, which has already approved the drug for early-stage treatment. "Paxlovid is a promising oral antiviral drug but we don't know if it can improve survival of patients with severe COVID-19," said Peter Horby, a professor at the University of Oxford and joint chief investigator of the RECOVERY trial.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-study-test-pfizers-covid-pill-hospitalised-patients-2022-03-28/>

### **Scientists: COVID-19 may cause greater damage to the heart**

The pain in his chest was sudden, heavy. Juan Sosa was at home doing pushups in the bedroom where he had isolated himself for almost two weeks after testing positive for COVID-19. His mild symptoms were long gone, and it was the final day of his quarantine. A retired carpenter, Sosa had been vaccinated and considered himself a pretty healthy 58-year-old. He thought he had gas and wasn't too worried. But the pain was severe so he drove himself to a walk-in clinic. Doctors quickly determined Sosa was having a heart attack. An ambulance rushed him to HCA Florida Brandon Hospital. The last thing he remembers that day is a nurse cutting open his T-shirt. Veteran cardiologist Hoshedar Tamboli was seeing patients at his Brandon office when he got the call about a patient in cardiac arrest.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-science-health-florida-heart-attack-33e384272435e881e0105ad1dee63a89>

### **COVID-19 vaccines not tied to adverse pregnancy outcomes**

Two studies published yesterday in JAMA, one from Sweden and Norway and one from Ontario, find no link between COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy and adverse outcomes. No link to preterm birth, stillbirth, NICU admission. In the first study, a team led by researchers from the Norwegian Institute of Public Health in Oslo and the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm studied 157,521 singleton

pregnancies ending after 22 weeks' gestation among vaccinated and unvaccinated pregnant women listed in national birth registries. The study period began Jan 1, 2021, ending on Jan 12, 2022, in Sweden, and 3 days later in Norway. Of the 157,521 births, 103,409 took place in Sweden, and 54,112 occurred in Norway. Average maternal age was 31 years, and 18% were vaccinated against COVID-19 during pregnancy (12.9% with Pfizer/BioNTech, 4.8% with Moderna, and 0.3% with AstraZeneca/Oxford). Among the vaccinated women, 4.4% received only one vaccine dose, while 13.7% had two

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2022/03/covid-19-vaccines-not-tied-adverse-pregnancy-outcomes>

### **FDA halts use of GlaxoSmithKline and Vir's COVID-19 drug Xevudy in 8 northeast states**

With new strains of the coronavirus showing their elusiveness and pushing more antibody treatments toward irrelevance, is there danger of an over-reliance on COVID-19 oral antivirals, especially Pfizer's Paxlovid? Friday, the U.S. paused the distribution of GlaxoSmithKline and Vir Biotechnology's antibody drug Xevudy in the northeast, where the omicron subvariant BA.2 now accounts for more than half of new infections. The states included in the directive are Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont. In addition, Xevudy's use will be halted in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Lab testing shows that a 500-mg dose of Xevudy is not "fully active" against the BA.2 variant, the FDA said.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/fda-pauses-use-glaxosmithkline-and-virs-covid-19-antibody-treatment-xevudy-8-northeast>

### **Patients with Covid and flu double the risk of dying, say scientists**

Covid-19 patients who have been hospitalised should also be routinely tested for flu, researchers have said. The call was made after the publication of a paper in the medical journal the Lancet that revealed having both conditions more than doubles the risk of a patient dying. Scientists also discovered that individuals who had contracted both Sars-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, and influenza viruses were more than four times more likely to require ventilation support and 2.4 times more likely to die than if they just had Covid-19. "We found that the combination of Covid-19 and flu viruses is particularly dangerous," said Professor Kenneth Baillie of Edinburgh University. "We expect that Covid-19 will circulate with flu, increasing the chance of co-infections. That is why we should change our testing strategy for Covid-19 patients in hospital and test for flu much more widely."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/27/patients-with-covid-and-flu-double-the-risk-of-dying-say-scientists>

### **Moderna weighs private market debut for COVID shot as federal funding flounders**

As Congress gridlocks on funding for new COVID-19 therapies and vaccines, mRNA bigwig Moderna is setting its sights on the endemic market for its wildly successful shot, Spikevax, the biotech's CEO has said. "[W]hat is not clear today is, will the U.S. become a private market, which is the case for all other medicines we have access to," Stéphane Bancel speculated in an interview with Yahoo Finance during Moderna's 3rd annual Vaccines Day on Thursday. The U.S. government says funding for COVID vaccines and therapeutics is waning, which could spell trouble for Moderna's megablockbuster shot sales. In fact, Moderna's \$21 billion in advanced purchase agreements for this year includes no contribution from the U.S., Bancel pointed out. Still, the feds could step in yet to purchase shots for the public, the CEO suggested.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/moderna-weighs-covid-shots-endemic-debut-federal-funding-pandemic-drugs-and-vaccines>

### **Officials limit an antibody therapy, saying it's ineffective against BA.2 variant of Omicron**

U.S. health officials on Friday stopped the further deployment of the Covid-19 treatment sotrovimab to places where the BA.2 coronavirus variant is now causing the majority of infections, given laboratory studies showing the treatment likely doesn't work against the variant. States in New

England, as well as New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, will no longer receive shipments of the monoclonal antibody therapy made by Vir Biotechnology and GSK, officials said. This is not the first time that the evolution of the SARS-CoV-2 virus has undercut the power of certain antibody therapies, which have generally been designed to target the virus' spike protein. When the Omicron family of viruses took off late last year, the government halted shipments of antibody therapies made by Lilly and Regeneron when it became clear that they would no longer work against the strains that were circulating.

<https://www.statnews.com/2022/03/25/fda-limits-therapy-ineffective-against-ba2-variant-omicron/>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **China reports 1,293 new COVID cases for March 28 vs 1,275 a day earlier**

China reported 1,293 confirmed coronavirus cases for March 28, the national health authority said on Tuesday, compared with 1,275 a day earlier. Of the new cases, 1,228 were locally transmitted, the National Health Commission said, versus 1,219 a day earlier. The number of new asymptomatic cases, which China does not classify as confirmed cases, stood at 5,758 compared with 5,134 a day earlier. There were no new deaths, leaving the death toll at 4,638.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-reports-1293-new-covid-cases-march-28-vs-1275-day-earlier-2022-03-29/>

### **Nearly 15,600 new COVID-19 cases**

A full 15,596 new coronavirus cases were diagnosed Sunday, Israel's Health Ministry reported Monday morning. The new cases represent 22.08% of those whose test results were received that day. There are now 65,799 active COVID-19 cases in Israel. Though the percentage of positive cases remains quite high, the infection coefficient, which indicates whether the pandemic is expanding or contracting, continues its decline, dropping to 1.28 from its high last week of 1.43.

<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/news/324762>

### **Scottish Covid-19 patient numbers increase again to another record high**

Article reports that the number of coronavirus patients in Scotland's hospitals has reached another record high – for the sixth time in the past eight days. Scottish Government figures showed that on Sunday there were 2,360 people with recently confirmed Covid-19 in hospital, the highest number since the start of the pandemic. The latest peak in hospital numbers comes after a slight fall in the total.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/government-scottish-scottish-government-ons-b990931.html>

### **Covid-19: 'Huge stress' on health system as number in hospital tops 1600**

Article reports that the Minister for Health has said the extra transmissibility of the BA.2 variant means “quite extreme measures” would be needed to contain it. Stephen Donnelly is understood to have told an online meeting of Fianna Fáil members on Monday night that there are likely several hundred thousand cases of Covid every week, with daily numbers several times higher than those being tracked by PCR and antigen tests. Sources indicated that Mr Donnelly told the meeting said that the current transmissibility of the variant meant that extremely restrictive measures would be needed, and said that he is told by the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) that extra restrictions of this level are not currently advised.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/covid-19-huge-stress-on-health-system-as-number-in-hospital-tops-1-600-1.4838091>

### **China reports 1275 new COVID cases for March 27 vs 1254 a day earlier**

China reported 1,275 confirmed coronavirus cases for March 27, the national health authority said on Monday, compared with 1,254 a day earlier. Of the new cases, 1,219 were locally transmitted, the National Health Commission said, versus 1,217 a day earlier. The number of new asymptomatic cases, which China does not classify as confirmed cases, stood at 5,134 compared with 4,448 a day

earlier. There were no new deaths, leaving the death toll at 4,638.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-reports-1275-new-covid-cases-march-27-vs-1254-day-earlier-2022-03-28/>

### **South Korea's omicron surge has likely peaked, officials say**

Article reports that South Korea's daily average of new COVID-19 cases declined last week for the first time in more than two months, but the number of critically ill patients and deaths will likely continue to rise amid the omicron-driven outbreak, officials said Monday. South Korea reported an average of about 350,000 new cases last week, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency said Monday. It was the first drop in the weekly average in 11 weeks, KDCA Commissioner Jeong Eun-kyeong said. The current outbreak has likely peaked and is expected to trend downward, Jeong said citing expert studies. But new cases in South Korea will likely drop slowly because of relaxed social distancing rules, an expansion of in-person school classes and rising infections due to the coronavirus mutant widely known as "stealth omicron," she said.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-south-korea-fafc781bfbb30618c2ee992c9481d3ca>

### **Hong Kong reports 7685 new COVID cases**

Hong Kong reported 7,685 new COVID-19 cases on Monday, down slightly from the previous day, as infections in the global financial hub gradually stabilise and the government eases some coronavirus restrictions.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/hong-kong-reports-more-than-7685-new-covid-cases-2022-03-28/>

## **New Lockdown**

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### **China's Shanghai launches two-phase lockdown as COVID surges**

China's financial hub of Shanghai launched a two-stage lockdown of its 26 million people on Monday, closing bridges and tunnels, and restricting highway traffic in a scramble to contain surging COVID-19 cases.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-china-shanghai/chinas-shanghai-launches-two-phase-lockdown-as-covid-surges-idUSKCN2LP00D>

### **Shanghai locks down as COVID surges in China's financial hub**

China's financial hub of Shanghai launched a two-stage lockdown of its 26 million residents on Monday, closing bridges and tunnels and restricting highway traffic in a scramble to contain surging COVID-19 cases. The snap lockdown, announced by the local government late on Sunday, will split China's most populous city roughly along the Huangpu River for nine days to allow for "staggered" testing by healthcare workers in white hazmat suits. It is the biggest COVID-related disruption to hit Shanghai, and sent prices of commodities including oil and copper lower on fears that any further curbs could hurt demand in China, the world's second-largest economy

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/shanghai-reports-record-asymptomatic-covid-cases-lockdowns-begin-2022-03-28/>