

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

31st Aug 2022

Lockdown Exit

China's Covid Zero Tested as Broadest Outbreak Hits All Provinces

China is battling Covid-19 in every province despite its use of the world's strictest measures to keep the virus out. All 31 mainland provinces recorded at least one local Covid case over the past ten days, reflecting the broadest exposure to the virus since at least February 2021, when national health authorities began disclosing detailed records on where asymptomatic infections were occurring daily.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-30/china-s-covid-zero-tested-as-broadest-outbreak-hits-all-provinces>

Goldman Sachs to lift COVID protocols - memo

Goldman Sachs Group Inc will lift pandemic-era protocols at its offices effective Sept. 6, according to an internal memo reviewed by Reuters. The Wall Street investment bank had already called its employees back to the office full time in June last year, although it relaxed those requirements during periods when coronavirus cases surged, sources familiar with the matter said. The new guidelines will allow employees to enter the company's Americas offices regardless of vaccination status, except in New York City and Lima.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/finance/goldman-sachs-lift-all-covid-protocols-memo-2022-08-30/>

U.S. plans to move COVID vaccines, treatments to private markets in 2023

The U.S. government expects its supply of COVID-19 vaccines and antiviral treatments to run out over the next year and is preparing for them to be sold via the commercial market, the Department of Health and Human Services said on Tuesday. President Joe Biden's administration expects to run out of federal funding for buying and distributing COVID-19 vaccines by January, although it has already bought over 170 million doses for a booster campaign later this year, according to a blog post written by Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response Dawn O'Connell.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/us-plans-move-covid-vaccines-treatments-private-markets-2023-2022-08-30/>

As Americans ditch Covid measures, pandemic worsens for the vulnerable

In the last few months, Dr Jeannina Smith has seen organ transplant recipients who have been very careful throughout the pandemic venture out for one activity, contract Covid-19 and lose their transplant. 'Most have thrown their hands up': has the US forgotten about Covid? "I have been at the bedside of a transplant recipient" who "was very ill and in the hospital, and she got Covid the second time in a healthcare setting", said Smith, medical director of the infectious disease program at University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics. "She was sobbing because she said, 'It's so hard for me to see that people care so little about my life that wearing a mask is too much for them.'"

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/30/covid-pandemic-immunocompromised-old>

Coronavirus vaccine: 90% student third-jab rate needed for Hong Kong secondary schools to resume full-day, in-person classes

Article reports that Hong Kong secondary schools will only be allowed to conduct full-day classes on campus if 90 per cent of their students have been triple-vaccinated against Covid-19, with education authorities tightening the existing two-jab requirement. The same threshold also applies to secondary and primary school students from October if they hope to take part in extracurricular and

mask-off activities such as music and sports, according to a letter from the Education Bureau to the sector on Tuesday. "We encourage staff and students to get vaccinated as far as possible to protect themselves and others, if they are suitable for vaccination," it wrote. "[We] also demand that schools actively reach out to those who have yet to get vaccinated to understand their concerns and difficulties, and encourage them to get the jabs."

<https://www.thestar.com.my/aseanplus/aseanplus-news/2022/08/30/coronavirus-vaccine-90-student-third-jab-rate-needed-for-hong-kong-secondary-schools-to-resume-full-day-in-person-classes>

U.S. first lady Jill Biden tests negative for COVID-19

Article reports that U.S. first lady Jill Biden has tested negative for COVID-19 and will return to Washington from Delaware on Aug. 30, a spokeswoman said on Monday. Jill Biden, 71, had tested positive in a rebound case of COVID-19 after first testing positive on Aug. 16. She had ended her first isolation after a course of Paxlovid, an antiviral medication, which has proven to be highly effective at preventing serious disease and death among those at highest risk from COVID-19.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-first-lady-jill-biden-tests-negative-covid-19-2022-08-30/>

Thailand targets \$11 bln tourism revenue in H2 as COVID controls ease

Thailand aims to generate 400 billion baht (\$11 billion) in tourism revenue in the second half of the year, the government said on Tuesday, as the tropical holiday destination welcomes back more visitors after pandemic-induced border controls. The Southeast Asian nation has seen a rebound in tourism numbers in the first eight months of 2022, registering more than 4 million tourists, government spokeswoman Rachada Dhnadirek said. It is aiming for 10 million tourists this year.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/thailand-targets-11-bln-tourism-revenue-q2-covid-controls-ease-2022-08-30/>

Why Some Americans Are Still Isolating From Covid-19

Covid-19 cases and hospitalizations are in decline. People are traveling, socializing and returning to workplaces in greater numbers. But a group of people are still keeping mostly to themselves and taking other measures to minimize infection risks. Compromised immune systems and the risks of long Covid are among reasons they say they are maintaining caution. Two-and-a-half years into the pandemic, their relative isolation speaks to divides that remain over how to live with the virus. With imperfect insight into the risks of infection as the virus mutates and immunity shifts, people are setting their own boundaries for safe behavior. While about one-quarter of 1,243 people surveyed by the Kaiser Family Foundation recently said they had resumed all activities they were pursuing before the pandemic, 17% said they were doing very few of those things.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/why-some-americans-are-still-isolating-from-covid-19-11661713438>

Exit Strategies

Goldman and Morgan Stanley Ease Covid Rules, Clearing Path to Desks

Two of Wall Street's most prominent investment banks are removing some of the final hurdles to fully returning to offices following the Covid-19 pandemic. Goldman Sachs Group Inc., which led Wall Street's return to Manhattan towers by pushing employees to resume regular commutes last year, and Morgan Stanley both told staff that they will ease some of their remaining Covid-19 mitigation efforts after the Labor Day weekend. Goldman will let employees outside New York enter offices regardless of vaccination status, with no requirement to participate in regular testing or wear face coverings, according to a memo sent to staff.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-30/goldman-morgan-stanley-ease-covid-rules-clearing-path-to-desks>

COVAX to send Mexico 10 mln COVID shots by Sept. 30, says official

The United Nations-backed COVAX vaccine program will send 10 million doses of Pfizer /BioNTech

COVID-19 shots for children to Mexico by the end of September, a senior Mexican official announced Tuesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/covax-send-mexico-10-mln-covid-shots-by-sept-30-says-official-2022-08-30/>

Japan weighs September rollout for omicron-targeting COVID-19 shots

The Japanese government is considering a September start for new COVID-19 vaccines targeting the omicron variant, earlier than the initially planned mid-October rollout, sources said Tuesday. With the country now facing its seventh wave of COVID-19 infections, the government is hoping to introduce more effective vaccines. The improved vaccines developed by U.S. drugmakers Pfizer Inc. and Moderna Inc. are currently being evaluated by Japanese authorities.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/08/30/national/science-health/omicron-vaccine-rollout/>

U.S. Supreme Court's Sotomayor keeps New York City COVID vaccine mandate

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor on Monday declined to block New York City from enforcing its mandate that all municipal workers be vaccinated against COVID-19, rebuffing a police detective who challenged the public health policy. The liberal justice denied Detective Anthony Marciano's request for a stay of the vaccination requirement while an appeal over his claims continue in a lower court. A federal judge threw out Marciano's case in March.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-supreme-courts-sotomayor-keeps-new-york-city-covid-vaccine-mandate-2022-08-29/>

COVAX to send Mexico 10 mln COVID shots by Sept. 30, says official

The COVAX vaccine program will send 10 million doses of PfizerBioNTech COVID-19 shots for children to Mexico by the end of September, a senior Mexican official announced Tuesday. The confirmed dates for the shots' delivery comes a week after President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said he would complain to the United Nations about the delayed shipment of vaccines the government had requested.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/covax-send-mexico-10-mln-covid-shots-by-sept-30-says-official-2022-08-30/>

U.S. to suspend free COVID-19 test orders next week

Starting next week, Americans will no longer be able to order free at-home COVID-19 tests from a website set up by the U.S. government due to limited supply arising from a lack of congressional funding. The COVIDTests.gov website, set up during the Omicron variant record surge in cases, helped U.S. households secure COVID-19 tests at no cost. President Joe Biden in January pledged to procure 1 billion free tests for Americans, including 500 million available through the website. However, ordering through the program will be suspended on Sept. 2.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-govt-suspend-free-covid-19-test-orders-next-week-2022-08-29/>

Goldman Sachs Ditches Covid-19 Protocols, Cites 'Significantly Less Risk of Severe Illness'

Goldman Sachs is getting rid of its Covid-19 protocols. The bank said employees can enter most of its offices regardless of vaccination status, and aren't required to test for Covid-19 regularly or wear masks, according to a memo sent to Goldman employees Tuesday and viewed by The Wall Street Journal. The new rules are set to take place Sept. 6, the day after Labor Day. "With many tools including vaccination, improved treatments and testing now available, there is significantly less risk of severe illness," Goldman said in the memo. The company cited the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which recently relaxed many pandemic precautions.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/goldman-sachs-ditches-covid-19-protocols-cites-significantly-less-risk-of-severe-illness-11661897776>

Biden Administration to Pause Free At-Home Covid-19 Tests for Americans

The federal government plans to hit pause this week on a program that sends free at-home rapid

Covid-19 tests to U.S. households. "Ordering through this program will be suspended on Friday, September 2 because Congress hasn't provided additional funding to replenish the nation's stockpile of tests," said a post on COVIDTests.gov, the federal website where tests can be ordered. White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters that the administration wants to be prepared for a potential rise in infections in the future.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-government-to-pause-free-at-home-covid-19-tests-11661791266>

Can You Trust That Covid Test Result? What Five Tests in 24 Hours Taught Me

Testing discrepancies appear to be increasingly common with Omicron and its subvariants, so some common sense comes in handy. If you're living with people with Covid-19 and feel symptoms develop, you're likely developing Covid-19. So even if your tests say otherwise, stay home. For rapid antigen tests, serial testing is the name of the game. Test every day or every other day for up to a week if you can. Once you get a positive you can be confident in it, even if it's a faint line.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/when-to-trust-your-covid-test-results-and-when-to-question-them-11661701237>

Partisan Exits

Low vaccine booster rates are now a key factor in COVID-19 deaths - and racial disparities in booster rates persist

Article reports that more than 450 people are dying of COVID-19 in the U.S. each day as of late August 2022. When COVID-19 vaccines first became available, public officials, community organizations and policymakers mobilized to get shots into arms. These efforts included significant investments in making vaccines accessible to Black, Hispanic, American Indian and Alaska Native populations. These groups experienced exceptionally high COVID-19 death rates early in the pandemic and had low initial vaccine rates. The efforts worked. As of August 2022, vaccination rates for the primary series - or required initial doses of COVID-19 vaccines - for Black and Hispanic people exceeded those of white Americans.

<https://theconversation.com/low-vaccine-booster-rates-are-now-a-key-factor-in-covid-19-deaths-and-racial-disparities-in-booster-rates-persist-187272>

'American rebellion': the lockdown protests that paved the way for the Capitol riots

It started in Michigan. On 15 April 2020, thousands of vehicles convoyed to Lansing and clogged the streets surrounding the state capitol for a protest that had been advertised as "Operation Gridlock". Drivers leaned on their horns, men with guns got out and walked. Signs warned of revolt. Someone waved an upside-down American flag. Already - nine months before 6 January, seven months before the election, six weeks before a national uprising for police accountability and racial justice - there were a lot of them, and they were angry.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/28/luke-mogelson-the-storm-is-here-capitol-attack-michigan-book>

Supreme Court Justice Rejects NYPD Detective on Vaccine Mandate

US Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor rejected a bid by a New York police detective to block the city's requirement that employees be vaccinated against Covid-19. Sotomayor made no comment, denying the emergency request from Anthony Marciano without asking the city to file a brief in response. Sotomayor is the justice assigned to handle emergency matters from New York. New York in February fired more than 1,400 municipal workers for not getting vaccinated. Thousands of other employees have filed for religious or medical accommodations. Marciano said in court papers that the city denied his bid for a religious exemption and that he expects officials to reject his appeal as well.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-29/supreme-court-justice-rejects-nypd-detective-on-vaccine-mandate>

Continued Lockdown

'It felt like my insides were crying': China COVID curbs hit youth mental health

Zhang Meng had a breakdown last December. The 20-year-old found herself sobbing on the stairs of her dorm, driven to despair by repeated COVID lockdowns of her university campus in Beijing. The lockdowns had meant she was mostly confined to her room and unable to meet up with friends. There were also strict curbs on when she could visit the canteen or take a shower. Describing herself as someone who craves in-person social interaction, Zhang said the restrictions had "removed the safety net that was holding me up and I felt like my whole being was falling down".

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/it-felt-like-my-insides-were-crying-china-covid-curbs-hit-youth-mental-health-2022-08-29/>

Scientific Viewpoint

MHRA Grants Novavax COVID-19 Vaccine Expanded Conditional Marketing Authorization

Novavax's COVID-19 vaccine, Nuvaxovid, can now be given to adolescents aged 12 to 17 in the UK. Novavax announced on Aug. 26, 2022 that the company's COVID-19 vaccine, Nuvaxovid, was granted expanded conditional marketing authorization by the UK's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency. This authorization allows for the use of the vaccine in adolescents aged 12 to 17. According to a company press release, the authorization is based on data from the Phase III PREVENT-19 trial of 2,247 adolescents aged 12 through 17 years across 73 sites in the United States. The trial reached its primary effectiveness endpoint and demonstrated 80% clinical effectiveness. "As we start to prepare for a potential fall surge, we are pleased to offer the first protein-based COVID-19 vaccine to adolescents aged 12 through 17 in the UK," said Stanley C. Erck, president and CEO, Novavax, in the release.

<https://www.pharmtech.com/view/mhra-grants-novavax-covid-19-vaccine-expanded-conditional-marketing-authorization>

AIVITA Biomedical announces publication of trial results of its COVID-19 vaccine

Safety and efficacy results from phase 1 and 2 clinical trials looking at a Covid-19 vaccine made at point-of-care by third party personnel have been published. AIVITA Biomedical Inc., a biotech specializing in cell applications, made the announcement today (August 29). The results were published in the article in the journal Human Vaccines & Immunotherapeutics.

<https://www.labiotech.eu/trends-news/aivita-biomedical-announces-results-clinical-trials-covid-19-vaccine/>

Japan OKs third Pfizer shot for children and AstraZeneca COVID treatment

The health ministry on Tuesday approved a third dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for children between the ages of 5 and 11, after an expert panel gave the plan the green light the day before. It is hoped the move will help prevent children in that age group from getting infected with the coronavirus and developing severe symptoms, as the nation continues to see high levels of cases driven by the highly infectious BA.5 omicron subvariant. The booster shot will be available to such children five months or more after they have received their second dose. The health ministry said the panel has judged that the booster shot is safe enough for children in the age group. Side effects reported in clinical trials include fatigue and soreness around the site of the shot, as well as fever, but most people have recovered having had only minor or moderate reactions, the ministry said.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/08/30/national/science-health/astrazeneca-evusheld-approval/>

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<https://www.biopharminternational.com/view/mhra-grants-novavax-covid-19-vaccine-expanded-conditional-marketing-authorization>

Risk factors among pregnant and postpartum women with COVID-19

In a recent study published in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, researchers investigated the clinical risk factors associated with adverse outcomes among coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)-infected women during pregnancy and postpartum.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220830/Risk-factors-among-pregnant-and-postpartum-women-with-COVID-19.aspx>

AstraZeneca gains first approval for Evusheld as COVID-19 treatment

AstraZeneca's long-acting antibody combination Evusheld has been approved in Japan for both prevention (pre-exposure prophylaxis) and treatment of symptomatic disease caused by SARS-CoV-2 infection: marking the first global marketing approval of Evusheld as a treatment for COVID-19.

<https://www.biopharma-reporter.com/Article/2022/08/30/astrazeneca-gains-first-approval-for-evusheld-as-covid-19-treatment>

The growing evidence that Covid-19 is leaving people sicker

A Financial Times analysis of data from the UK's NHS, one of the world's richest health data sets, showed significant rises in deaths from heart disease since the start of the pandemic in all but the very oldest age groups. In the 40-64 age group, heart attack deaths increased 15 per cent in 2021 compared with 2019. In February, meanwhile, an analysis of more than 150,000 records from the national healthcare databases at the US Department of Veterans Affairs suggested that even some people who had not been seriously ill with Covid had an increased risk of cardiovascular problems for at least a year afterwards. Researchers found that rates of many conditions, such as heart failure and stroke, were substantially higher in people who had recovered from Covid than in similar people who had not been infected. A separate analysis of VA data, published in March, suggested that in the "post-acute phase" of the disease, people with Covid "exhibit increased risk and burden of diabetes".

<https://www.ft.com/content/26e0731f-15c4-4f5a-b2dc-fd8591a02aec>

Japan panel approves AstraZeneca's Evusheld COVID treatment

Japan's health ministry said on Monday that its panel of experts had agreed to approve manufacturing and sales of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 preventive treatment Evusheld. Evusheld is designed to protect against COVID infection for at least six months, and has been deployed in many countries for people with compromised immune systems who see little or no benefit from vaccines. The panel also gave its consent to using Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for booster shots for children aged five to 11, the ministry said.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/japan-panel-approves-astrazenecas-evusheld-covid-treatment-2022-08-29/>

Swiss drugs regulator approves first bivalent Covid-19 booster

Swiss drugs regulator Swissmedic said on Monday that it has approved the first bivalent Covid-19 booster vaccine in the country. Moderna's Spikevax vaccine, which contains mRNA against two coronavirus variants, is authorized for anyone 18 years or older, said Swissmedic.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/swiss-drugs-regulator-approves-first-bivalent-covid-19-booster-2022-08-29/>

Moderna patent fight about feathers, not goose

Moderna's claim that the Covid-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and partner BioNTech used its intellectual property sounds explosive. The sums at stake are potentially huge, as the drug giant estimates sales of the vaccine will be \$32 billion this year. It's in nobody's interest to kill this golden goose though. The most likely result will simply be lots of legal hissing, and at worst for Pfizer, a few plucked feathers.

<https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/moderna-patent-fight-about-feathers-not-goose-2022-08-29/>

China's CanSinoBIO H1 revenue drops on weaker COVID shot demand

China's CanSino Biologics (6185.HK) reported a 69.5% drop in revenue for the first six months versus a year ago, joining global and domestic COVID-19 vaccine makers affected by waning demand for their shots. The decline from 2.06 billion yuan (\$299.8 million) to 629.8 million yuan was mainly driven by weaker COVID vaccine demand as growth in global uptake slowed and price changes of CanSinoBIO's products, the firm said in a company filing published on Sunday.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/chinas-cansinobio-h1-revenue-drops-weaker-covid-shot-demand-2022-08-29/>

How Quickly Can You Get Infected With Omicron After An Exposure?

Early in the pandemic, an exposure to COVID meant waiting anxiously for many days to see if you were infected. Now, the window is getting smaller and smaller, according to a new review published in the journal JAMA Network Open. Researchers analyzed 141 studies to determine how COVID's incubation period — the time from when you get infected to when you start showing symptoms — has changed since March 2020. The study, which was conducted by scientists in Beijing, found that with every new variant, COVID's incubation time has decreased significantly. Omicron, which is the current dominant variant in the United States, has the shortest time between infection and symptoms. "The incubation periods of COVID-19 caused by the Alpha, Beta, Delta and Omicron variants were 5.00, 4.50, 4.41, and 3.42 days, respectively," the study stated.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/incubation-sickness-covid-pandemic_l_6307d21de4b0f9a2a79b65d0?ncid=engmodushpmg00000004

Coronavirus Resurgence

Coronavirus: UAE reports 512 Covid-19 cases, 536 recoveries, no deaths

The UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention on Tuesday reported 512 cases of the Covid-19 coronavirus, along with 536 recoveries and no deaths. Total active cases stand at 18,818. The new cases were detected through 346,725 additional tests. The total number of cases in UAE as on August 30 are 1,014,899, while total recoveries stand at 993,740. The death toll now stands at 2,341.

<https://www.khaleejtimes.com/coronavirus/coronavirus-uae-reports-512-covid-19-cases-536-recoveries-no-deaths>

Flu season could be 'worse than previous two years' amid fears of Covid-19 surge

Flu season may be worse than the previous two years, health officials have warned - amid fears there could be a "surge" in Covid-19 cases. Health leaders need to prepare an "agile response" to the impending flu season, global health officials have said. It has been suggested the flu season may be worse than the previous two years, when people were still largely adopting preventative measures to avoid Covid-19 and social distancing and mask wearing may have kept many flu cases at bay. The European arm of the World Health Organisation (WHO) said it is too early to predict whether the UK could face a bad flu season but said health systems need to be ready.

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/health/flu-season-could-worse-previous-24887258>

COVID-19 tracker: Tokyo reports 14,219 new cases, down by about 7,500 from week before

Tokyo reported 14,219 new COVID-19 cases on Tuesday, down by about 7,500 the week before, the metropolitan government said. Of the reported patients, 1,537 were age 65 and older while 3,106 people were 19 years old and younger. The government said 26 people died from the disease. Japan's daily coronavirus tally totaled 95,916 cases on Monday, falling below 100,000 for the first time in six weeks. While numbers for Mondays are typically lower than for other days due to reduced testing on the weekend, the last time the nationwide tally was below six digits was on July 19.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/08/30/national/covid-tracker-20220830/>

New Lockdown

China's big cities, from Dalian to Shenzhen, ramp up COVID curbs

Several of China's biggest cities imposed tougher COVID-19 curbs on Tuesday, further crimping the activities of tens of millions, and sparking fresh concerns for the health of a barely growing economy. Metropolises from the southern tech hub of Shenzhen to southwestern Chengdu and the northeastern port of Dalian ordered measures such as lockdowns in big districts and business closures aimed at stamping out fresh outbreaks

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/populous-chinese-cities-including-shenzhen-ramp-up-covid-curbs-2022-08-30/>

Chinese Province Bordering Beijing Expands Covid Lockdown

China is enforcing lockdown restrictions in areas around Beijing more intensively, and will mass test the nearby port city of Tianjin, stepping up its quest to wipe out Covid-19 ahead of a key meeting of the Communist Party's top leaders. The moves come even as China's latest wave shows signs of easing, with 1,556 new infections nationwide reported for Sunday, down from more than 3,000 less than two weeks ago. Despite the high cost to the Chinese economy, the country remains focused on eliminating transmission of a virus that most of the world has now accepted as endemic. Shijiazhuang, the capital of Hebei province bordering Beijing, confined residents of four major downtown districts to their homes for three days from Sunday afternoon, saying a mass testing exercise will be undertaken.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-28/chinese-province-bordering-beijing-expands-covid-lockdown?srnd=premium>

China Moves Aggressively on Covid as Political Summit Looms

China is enforcing lockdown restrictions in areas around Beijing more intensively, and will mass test the nearby port city of Tianjin, stepping up its quest to wipe out Covid-19 ahead of a key meeting of the Communist Party's top leaders. The moves come even as China's latest wave shows signs of easing, with 1,556 new infections nationwide reported for Sunday, down from more than 3,000 less than two weeks ago. Despite the high cost to the Chinese economy, the country remains focused on eliminating transmission of a virus that most of the world has now accepted as endemic. Shijiazhuang, the capital of Hebei province bordering Beijing, confined residents of four major downtown districts to their homes for three days from Sunday afternoon, saying a mass testing exercise will be undertaken

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