

# New tests to decide Shanghai reopening as Beijing stocks up

April 28 2022, by Huizhong Wu

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In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, a villager carrying baggage is disinfected as she returns home after being quarantined due to local COVID cases found in Lianqin Village of Beicai Town in Pudong New Area, Shanghai on Tuesday, April 26, 2022. Shanghai city authorities said Wednesday they will start rounds of COVID-19 testing over the next few days to determine which neighborhoods can safely be allowed a limited amount of freedom of movement, as residents in Beijing watch carefully on word for whether the capital city will lock down. Credit: Jin Liwang/Xinhua via AP

Shanghai authorities said new COVID-19 testing over the next few days will determine which neighborhoods can safely start reopening, as residents in Beijing watched carefully for word for whether the capital will lock down.

On Wednesday, China reported 14,222 new cases of coronavirus infection, the vast majority in people not showing symptoms.

Shanghai residents will begin another round of testing over the next few days and areas that have achieved "societal zero COVID" could see some measure of limited freedom, the vice head of the city health committee, Zhao Dandan, said.

China's zero-COVID strategy is being tested by the country's largest outbreak of the pandemic, which began in the central city of Wuhan in late December 2019. The phrase refers to new infections being detected only in people already under surveillance, such as those in a centralized quarantine facility or known close contacts of existing patients, and the virus is no longer being spread in the community.

Shanghai's lockdown began a month ago, [taking a toll on residents](#) confined to their homes. While a small, lucky portion of people have been [allowed to leave their homes](#) in the past week, the vast majority of people remain confined.

The flow of industrial goods has also been disrupted by the suspension of access to Shanghai, home of the world's busiest port, and other industrial cities including Changchun and Jilin in northeast China.





In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, a villager carrying baggage returns home after being quarantined due to local COVID cases found in Lianqin Village of Beicai Town in Pudong New Area, Shanghai on Tuesday, April 26, 2022. Shanghai city authorities said Wednesday they will start rounds of COVID-19 testing over the next few days to determine which neighborhoods can safely be allowed a limited amount of freedom of movement, as residents in Beijing watch carefully on word for whether the capital city will lock down. Credit: Jin Liwang/Xinhua via AP

Officials reported 48 deaths on Wednesday, bringing the total to at least 238 in the city.

Meanwhile, the capital Beijing is in the middle of mass testing millions of residents after discovering a cluster of cases last week. The city

reported 34 new cases Wednesday, three of them in people showing no symptoms.

In the last couple of days, nervous [Beijing residents had started stockpiling](#) food and supplies, following Shanghai's troubles where residents struggled to get a continuous and reliable supply of food while under lockdown.

Beijing [city officials](#) were quick to promise that they were ensuring grocery stores would be well-stocked. They said they were monitoring the Xinfadi wholesale market, where the city gets the vast majority of its supplies.

Demand has soared, with [city](#) residents sharing online lists of what to stock. Farms on the outskirts of Beijing told the official Beijing Daily News that April and May are typically when demand peaks. Compared to the same period last year, the number of orders rose 20%, owing to the demand generated by the epidemic, according to one major farm the paper interviewed.



A hostess wearing a face mask waits for customers at the entrance of a restaurant in Beijing, Wednesday, April 27, 2022. China's capital city Beijing is in the middle of mass testing millions of residents after cases were discovered over the weekend. The city reported over 30 new cases Wednesday, several of which were asymptomatic. Credit: AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein

Another farm said it was even more. "Starting from yesterday, the number of orders we've received have clearly increased, roughly double the amount at this time last year," supply chain manager Zhang Xinming told Beijing Daily News.

So far, officials have locked down only specific areas of Beijing where virus cases were found. On Wednesday, the Tongzhou district suspended classes for all its schools from kindergarten through [high school](#).

Given that China for now remains committed to its "zero-COVID" approach, "I do think we will continue to see the use of these lockdowns across the country," said Karen Grepin, a public health expert at the University of Hong Kong. "If anything, the omicron variant has made it more challenging to control the virus and thus more stringent measures are needed if the goal is to continue to strive for local elimination."

The "zero-COVID" strategy has worked well [against previous versions of the virus](#), keeping China mostly virus-free for two years as the pandemic spread around the world. [Questions are being raised](#) about its effectiveness now, with vaccines protecting most people from serious illness and the immense challenge of trying to contain the more transmissible [omicron variant](#).

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