

Beijing, Shanghai ease COVID restrictions as outbreaks fade

May 29 2022



A worker wearing a face mask prepares to clean a fashion boutique inside a reopened shopping mall after being closed due to COVID-19 restriction in Beijing, Sunday, May 29, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong

Shoppers returned to the malls of Beijing on Sunday as the Chinese

capital relaxed pandemic restrictions after declaring a small but persistent COVID-19 outbreak effectively under control.

A partial reopening of stores and offices in Beijing was welcomed by a weary populace and struggling shopkeepers eager for life to return to normal. Coupled with a gradual easing of restrictions in Shanghai, it signaled that the worst is over in the twin outbreaks in China's most prominent cities.

The lockdowns and other restrictions under China's "zero-COVID" strategy have increasingly frustrated residents as they see other countries ease up and re-open their borders. Some have resisted and staged protests at apartment complexes and university dormitories, in an authoritarian country where people think twice about speaking out publicly because of possible repercussions.

Restaurants remain closed in Beijing, except for takeout and delivery, and many people in Shanghai still can only go out with special passes and for a limited time period, even as the number of new cases has plummeted. Officials tend to err on the side of caution under a system that readily punishes them for lax enforcement if outbreaks flare up or come back.



Residents wearing face masks walk through the reopening shopping mall decorated with colorful flowers after being closed due to COVID-19 restrictions in Beijing, Sunday, May 29, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong



Residents wearing face masks bring their children to a reopened mall after it has been closed due to COVID-19 restrictions in Beijing, Sunday, May 29, 2022.
Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong



A worker resurfaces the ice at a skating rink inside the reopened shopping mall after it was closed due to COVID-19 restrictions in Beijing, Sunday, May 29, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong



Workers wearing face masks clean a fashion boutique inside a reopening shopping mall after being closed due to COVID-19 restriction in Beijing, Sunday, May 29, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong



Residents wearing face masks visit a reopened mall after it was closed due to COVID-19 restrictions in Beijing, Sunday, May 29, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong



Residents wearing face masks walk through the reopened retail shops inside a mall after it was closed due to COVID-19 restrictions in Beijing, Sunday, May 29, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong



Residents wearing face masks visit reopened retail shops inside a mall that was closed due to COVID-19 restrictions in Beijing, Sunday, May 29, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong



Residents wearing face masks tour past reopened retail shops inside a mall that was closed due to COVID-19 restrictions in Beijing, Sunday, May 29, 2022.
Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong



Residents wearing face masks wait outside a shopping mall after authorities allowed malls outside the COVID-19 locked down and controlled zones to open in Beijing, Sunday, May 29, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong



A resident rides a motorised platform to a mass COVID test site, Sunday, May 29, 2022, in Beijing. Credit: AP Photo/Ng Han Guan



A resident covers her head as it starts to rain at a mass COVID test site, Sunday, May 29, 2022, in Beijing. Credit: AP Photo/Ng Han Guan

China recorded 293 new cases on Saturday, of which 78 were among people who had arrived from overseas. Shanghai had the most non-imported cases, with 122, and Beijing had 21. That's in a population of more than 20 million people in both cities.

Beijing allowed [public parks](#), gyms and cinemas to reopen on Sunday, all at 50% of their capacity. A portion of the Great Wall in a rural part of Beijing, about 60 kilometers (40 miles) from downtown, reopens to visitors on Monday.

Xu Hejian, a city spokesperson, said Saturday that sporadic cases are

still being found in some districts, but they are within a controllable range. "This round of [outbreak](#) has been put under effective control," he said.

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