

Shanghai seeks 'societal zero Covid'

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ASIA AND OCEANIA

TAIPEI: [Shanghai](#) city authorities said on Wednesday they would start rounds of Covid-19 testing over the next few days to determine which neighborhoods can be safely allowed a limited amount of freedom of movement, as residents in [Beijing](#) watch carefully on word for whether [China](#)'s capital would lock down.

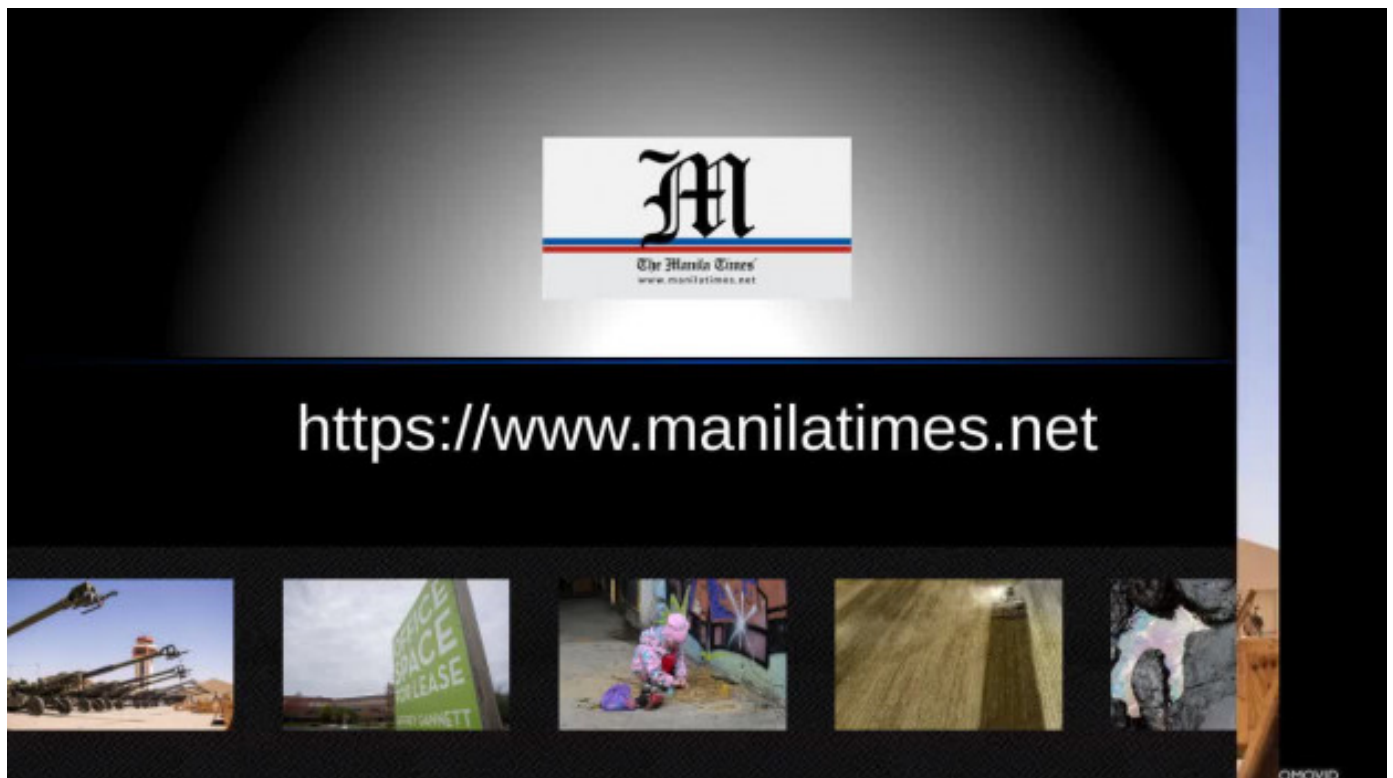
China reported 14,222 new cases on Wednesday, the vast majority of which were asymptomatic. The country is battling its largest outbreak since the [coronavirus](#) pandemic was first reported in the city of Wuhan in December 2019.

Zhao Dandan, Shanghai's vice head of its health committee, said the city would begin another round of testing for residents over the next few days to determine which districts were at lower risk. Areas declared to have achieved "societal zero Covid" could see some limited freedom.

The phrase, used by Chinese health authorities, refers to when new positive cases are only discovered in people

already under surveillance, such as in centralized quarantine or those considered close contacts. At this point, they are considered to have broken off chains of transmission at the community level.

Shanghai's total lockdown has been in place for nearly a month, taking a toll on residents who have been confined to their homes. While a small number of people have been allowed to leave their homes in the past week, the vast majority remain confined.



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

Meanwhile, Beijing is in the middle of mass testing millions of residents after cases were discovered over the weekend. The city reported 34 new cases on Wednesday, three of

which were asymptomatic.

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 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 supply from, at a press conference on Tuesday night.

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 were typically when demand peaked. Compared to the same period last year, the number of orders rose 20 percent, owing to the demand generated by the epidemic, according to one major farm the paper interviewed.

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.

It is unclear whether the entire city would be forced to lock

down. For now, officials have locked down only specific areas where positive cases were found. On Wednesday, Beijing's [Tongzhou district](#) suspended classes for all its schools, from kindergarten through high school.

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