

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

17th Oct 2022

Lockdown Exit

Coronavirus: Singapore's Covid resilience means XBB 'not a concern' even as cases spike during huge events like F1 race

City state reported 11,732 new cases on Tuesday, at a time the new XBB variant has caused some worry in Asia over its ability to 'evade vaccines.' Singapore officials say there's no cause for concern yet, citing the country's 'resilience built up through vaccination and previous waves of infection'

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/health-environment/article/3195721/coronavirus-singapores-covid-resilience-means-xbb-not>

World Faces New Threats From Fast-Mutating Omicron Variants

The subvariants known as BQ.1.1, BQ.1, BQ.1.3, BA.2.3.20 and XBB are among the fastest-spreading of the main omicron lineages. Based on UK data, the BQ variants, as well as BA.2.75.2 and BF.7 are the most concerning due to their growth advantage and immune evasiveness, the country's health security agency said on Oct. 7. BF.7 has also been gaining ground in the US, where it accounted for 4.6% of Covid cases in the week ending Oct. 8, from 3.3% the week before, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Atlanta-based agency noted BA4.6 was the most prevalent after BA.5, accounting for 13.6% of cases in the first week of October, from 12.7% the week before. In Bangladesh and Singapore, the XBB strain has been linked to a small surge in cases.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-10-13/xbb-bf-7-ba-5-1-7-new-covid-variants-renew-threats-to-the-world?fromMostRead=true>

After COVID lockdown, eyes on Shanghai chief at party congress

Once seen as a sure bet for elevation to China's elite Politburo Standing Committee or even as the country's next premier, Li Qiang's glide path to the upcoming Communist Party Congress was buffeted by Shanghai's grinding two-month COVID-19 lockdown. As the top official in China's commercial hub and its most populous city, Li's position as Shanghai party chief has traditionally been a stepping stone towards a top-two role in China's power structure - including for Xi Jinping himself.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/after-covid-lockdown-eyes-shanghai-chief-party-congress-2022-10-11/>

Almost two-thirds of long Covid patients are women, study finds

Women account for almost two-thirds of long Covid cases, according to a new study of the illness in multiple countries. Extreme tiredness, loss of smell, shortness of breath, and muscle aches are some of the most widely-reported symptoms of long Covid, which affects about six percent of Covid-19 patients.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/long-covid-women-study-b2200325.html>

Shanghai Lockdown Fears Back as China Covid Cases Rise Before Party Congress

China is stepping up efforts to contain Covid-19 outbreaks ahead of the Party Congress, with national cases climbing to the highest in almost two months and concerns about widening lockdowns rippling across the financial hub of Shanghai. The country reported 1,878 cases for Sunday, the highest since Aug. 20, as the week-long National Day holiday saw cases flare among returning travelers. Shanghai posted 34 new local infections, the most in almost three months, with two infections found outside of its quarantine system.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-10-10/lockdown-worries-return-to-shanghai-as-china-covid-tally-climb>

China urges 'patience' as COVID cases rebound ahead of key congress

China called for "patience" with its tough COVID policies and warned against any "war-weariness" as local cases soared to their highest since August, days ahead of a pivotal Communist Party congress. Many countries are learning to co-exist with COVID-19, but China has repeatedly quashed any speculation of a let-up in its policies, which can range from locking down a local community to an entire city, even though fatalities remain low by global standards and symptoms, if any, are mostly mild.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-urges-patience-covid-cases-rebound-ahead-key-congress-2022-10-10/>

China's Tolerance for Xi's Unyielding Covid Fight Is Cracking

Since the initial outbreak emerged in the central city of Wuhan, many people in China have been more or less supportive of mass testing, citywide lockdowns and strict hotel quarantine that has restricted overseas travel. But signs are emerging that patience is wearing thin. While there aren't reliable surveys on Chinese attitudes toward Covid-19 and social media is heavily censored, more criticisms of Xi's policy have broken through of late. On the official Weibo account of Li Wenliang, a whistle-blowing doctor in Wuhan who was lionized by China's government after his death, a greater number of complaints have emerged about lockdowns and constant PCR tests in recent weeks.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-10-09/china-s-tolerance-for-xi-s-unyielding-covid-fight-is-cracking>

Pfizer exec denies CEO negotiated EU COVID vaccine contract via text message

A Pfizer executive with a lead role in negotiating a COVID-19 vaccine bulk supply agreement with the European Commission "categorically" ruled out that the U.S. drugmaker's chief executive agreed the contract via mobile phone text messages. "As to whether a contract negotiation such as this contract which you referred to, 1.8 billion doses, was negotiated through an SMS, I can categorically tell you that would not be the case," Janine Small, president of international developed markets at Pfizer, told the European Parliament's special committee on COVID-19 on Monday.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/pfizer-exec-says-ceo-did-not-negotiate-eu-covid-vaccine-contract-via-text-2022-10-10/>

China's Covid-19 Lockdowns Deal Another Blow to Consumer Spending

A renewed wave of pandemic-related lockdowns in major Chinese cities is hampering hopes for a recovery in consumer spending, showing how difficult it is for Beijing to rekindle growth without loosening Covid-19 restrictions. Official data released in recent days showed consumer spending falling sharply during the seven-day National Day holiday when compared with a year earlier, while a private survey of services activity fell into contraction in September. Travelers in China made 422 million trips during the National Day holiday between Oct. 1 and 7, down 18% from a year earlier and 39% lower than prepandemic levels in 2019, China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism said Friday.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/chinas-covid-lockdowns-deal-another-blow-to-consumer-spending-11665386341>

Exit Strategies

S'pore's XBB Covid-19 wave to peak in mid-Nov with 15000 average daily cases, mask rules not ruled out

The current wave of Covid-19 infections is being driven by the XBB sub-variant, and is expected to peak at an average of 15,000 daily cases by about mid-November. Projections based on previous waves of infection show that Singapore has adequate healthcare capacity to cope with the rise in coronavirus cases, the Ministry of Health (MOH) said on Saturday. But the authorities do not rule out bringing back stricter mask rules or vaccination-differentiated safe management measures (VDS) if needed, such as requiring those dining at restaurants to be fully vaccinated. Such measures were fully lifted on Oct 10.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/spores-covid-19-xbb-infections-to-peak-in-mid-nov-cannot-rule-out-bringing-back-mask-mandate>

Anger at China's zero-Covid policy is rising, but Beijing refuses to change course

A young woman stands on her balcony, crying out in desperation after her building was ordered into lockdown. Fighting back tears, she shouts abuse at the hazmat-suited workers below in a video that has recently gone viral on social media platform Weibo and which appears to encapsulate the Chinese public's growing frustration with their government's uncompromising zero-Covid policy. The woman has been under quarantine for half a year since returning from university in the summer, she shouts at the workers. They stare back, seemingly unmoved. While most Asian economies – even those with previously hardline zero-Covid stances – are abandoning pandemic-era restrictions, authorities in China remain zealous in theirs, repeatedly insisting this week in state-run media articles that the battle against the virus remains “winnable.”

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/13/china/china-zero-covid-lockdown-party-congress-intl-hnk/index.html>

As China doubles down on 'zero-COVID', some have had enough

A few months ago, a box was left outside the door of 34-year-old Yu Ting Xu's* apartment in Beijing. Inside, there was an electronic monitoring wristband and a demand that she wear the wristband at all times as part of the fight against COVID-19 in her residential area. While telling her story over a video call, Yu shuffles about in the background. When she returns to her screen, she is holding up the wristband, which looks like a smartwatch but has a plain white plastic surface instead of a display.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/13/in-zero-covid-china-people-have-had-enough>

Biden Administration Renews Covid-19's Emergency Status

The Biden administration extended the Covid-19 pandemic's status as a public health emergency for another 90 days, preserving measures such as expanded Medicaid and higher payments to hospitals. The decision follows comments President Biden made in September describing the pandemic as over. Some Republican lawmakers said afterward that the administration should wind down its pandemic response and the emergency designation. The extension of the public-health emergency on Thursday was expected by officials and lawmakers from both parties. The administration has told states it would give them 60 days notice before letting the public-health emergency expire. Some state leaders have said recently that they hadn't gotten any such heads-up.

https://www.wsj.com/articles/biden-administration-renews-covid-19s-emergency-status-11665697704?mod=politics_lead_pos6

Novavax says COVID booster dose shows benefit against Omicron variants

Novavax Inc said on Wednesday data from studies in adults and adolescents showed that the booster dose of its COVID vaccine produced robust antibodies against several Omicron variants, including BA.1, BA.2 and BA.5. The data was from two studies - a late-stage study evaluating the booster in adults and adolescents who had received Novavax primary vaccination and another study testing it in those aged 18 to 49 who had received primary series of Novavax vaccine or other authorized or approved vaccines.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/novavax-says-covid-booster-dose-shows-benefit-against-omicron-variants-2022-10-12/>

Europe likely entering another COVID wave, says WHO and ECDC

Another wave of COVID-19 infections may have begun in Europe as cases begin to tick up across the region, the World Health Organization and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) said on Wednesday. "Although we are not where we were one year ago, it is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic is still not over," WHO's Europe director, Hans Kluge, and ECDC's director,

Andrea Ammon, said in a joint statement.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/europe-likely-entering-another-covid-wave-says-who-e-cdc-2022-10-12/>

Singapore to Ease More Covid Curbs, Step Up Vaccination Program

Singapore will step up its vaccination program as it further eases its Covid-related curbs, lifting restrictions on non-vaccinated individuals in restaurants and other venues. The Ministry of Health said it will fully lift its vaccine-differentiated safe management measures, effective Oct. 10. That means the restrictions will no longer be applied in eateries, nightlife establishments and at large events with more than 500 attendees. Singapore's steady removal of its Covid curbs has helped solidify its role as a major Asian financial center, capitalizing on Hong Kong's relative slowness to reopen. In a sign of the relative appeal of the two cities, Singapore's population rose 3.4% in June from a year earlier, while Hong Kong's shrank 1.6%.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-10-07/singapore-to-ease-more-covid-curbs-step-up-vaccination-program>

BioNTech plants research and production flag in Australia

The company's latest move? A strategic partnership in the Land Down Under. Friday, the German biotech unveiled a deal with the Australian state of Victoria to prop up a new mRNA research and innovation center to bolster investigation of new meds "from discovery to delivery." BioNTech will also throw in one of its "BioNTainer" mobile manufacturing facilities in Victoria's capital of Melbourne for end-to-end clinical production of mRNA products and candidates, the company said in a release. Housed in shipping containers, BioNTainer modular factories are kitted out to produce vaccines from start to finish. Beyond Australia, the company recently advanced plans to kick off a BioNTainer-focused mRNA vaccine manufacturing initiative in Africa.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/africa-australia-and-beyond-biontechs-global-mrna-ambitions-take-shape>

Partisan Exits

As China doubles down on 'zero-COVID', some have had enough

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<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/13/in-zero-covid-china-people-have-had-enough>

Not 'lying flat': China to persist with tough COVID policies

China will persist with its COVID-19 policies to guard against new coronavirus strains and the risks they bring, the official newspaper of the Communist Party warned in a commentary for the third straight day, crushing hopes of any near-term easing. "Lying flat is not advisable, and to win (the COVID battle) while lying flat is not possible," People's Daily wrote on Wednesday, referring to a phrase in China that denotes doing nothing.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-cant-win-covid-battle-by-lying-flat-peoples-daily-2022-10-12/>

Construction Contracts Unworkable; Defense Costs Blow-Out

Infrastructure construction contracts signed before the pandemic have become widely unworkable because of the surging cost of labor and materials, supply-chain blockages and difficulties in securing manpower, according to builder Webuild. The firm is wrestling with a 2019 agreement with the Australian government to construct the country's largest hydroelectric power station for A\$5.1 billion. The Snowy 2.0 project has come to highlight the challenges of completing large-scale

projects on terms that were struck before Covid-19, and before Russia invaded Ukraine.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2022-10-10/australia-news-today-construction-contracts-unworkable-defense-costs-blow-out>

China holiday tourist trips fall 18% on year on broad COVID curbs

China recorded 422 million tourist trips over the week-long National Day holiday beginning on Oct. 1, down 18.2% from last year's holiday season, government data showed, as the sector remains hit by stringent COVID-19 curbs. The number of trips was 60.7% of the pre-COVID 2019 level, state broadcaster CCTV reported late on Friday, citing figures from China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Domestic tourism revenues, at 287.2 billion yuan (\$40.37 billion), were down 26.2% on the year and just 44.2% of their pre-pandemic 2019 level, the data showed.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/china-holiday-tourist-trips-fall-18-year-broad-covid-curbs-2022-10-08/>

Scientific Viewpoint

Between rolling natural disasters and COVID, Australia's economy is experiencing a shift from shock to persistent problem

Major flooding in suburban areas of Melbourne in the last couple of days have only reinforced the sense that we are now in a world of more or less rolling natural disasters. The times when a massive bushfire or flood event were a shock to the system seem to have well and truly passed. Disaster relief agencies — and even the Australian Defence Forces — are dealing instead with persistent crisis. Last month, the Guardian reported that, in its brief to the incoming government, the Department of Defence had warned it was under intense pressure due to the need to respond to "near persistent" natural disasters, and noted "the impacts of climate change" when requesting more cost-effective ways to manage the continual call-outs.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-10-15/natural-disasters-covid-australia-budget-economy-shock-problem/101538108>

More information sought on Omicron XBB cases among passengers arriving in Hong Kong from Thailand

Thailand's Disease Control Department is seeking more information, through International Health Regulations (IHR), about three passengers who arrived in Hong Kong from Thailand infected with a new Omicron sub-variant, known as XBB, according to Dr. Tares Krassanairawiwong, acting director-general of Thailand's Disease Control Department. He said that 29 XBB cases have been found in Hong Kong, including 24 cases which were detected upon arrival at Hong Kong's main airport and five who were found two days after their arrival. Most were passengers arriving from Singapore, but three were from Thailand. Dr. Tares said that the department would like to know whether the passengers are residents of Thailand or transit passengers, among other details.

<https://www.thaipbsworld.com/more-information-sought-on-omicron-xbb-cases-among-passengers-arriving-in-hong-kong-from-thailand/>

Scientists identify gene that may generate a higher immune response to Covid vaccine

Scientists have identified an immunity gene variant in people with strong responses to Covid-19 vaccines who were less likely to get breakthrough infections, a finding that could improve future shot design. Individuals carrying the specific gene version generated more antibodies against the coronavirus after receiving vaccines from AstraZeneca Plc or the alliance of Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE, according to the study published Thursday in the Nature Medicine journal. The same people were less likely than those with different versions of the same gene to get infected with Covid months later, the research found. .

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-10-13/gene-variant-tied-to-better-covid-shot-response-found-in-study?srnd=premium-uk>

Long COVID at 12 months persists at 18 months, study shows

Most patients with COVID-19 who have lingering symptoms at 12 months are likely to still have symptoms at 18 months, new data suggest. The findings are drawn from a large study of 33,281 people in Scotland who tested positive for the coronavirus. Most of the results are in line with those from earlier, smaller studies. Among a subset of 197 survivors of symptomatic SARS-CoV-2 infections who completed surveys at 12 months and 18 months, most reported lingering symptoms at both time points, researchers reported in Nature Communications.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/long-covid-12-months-persists-18-months-study-shows-2022-10-13/>

FDA authorizes COVID omicron boosters for kids 5 and up

Moderna's vaccine was authorized for use at least two months after completion of primary or booster vaccination in children down to six years of age, according to a statement Wednesday from the US Food and Drug Administration. The Pfizer shot can be given at least two months after primary or booster vaccination in children as young as five. While updated booster shots have already been authorized for use in children and adults from the age of 12 and up, uptake of the shots has been slow. Primary vaccinations of children have also gone slowly as parents have seen the risk of infection as low. "Since children have gone back to school in person and people are resuming pre-pandemic behaviors and activities, there is the potential for increased risk of exposure to the virus that causes Covid-19," said Peter Marks, director of the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/finance/other/fda-authorizes-covid-omicron-boosters-for-kids-5-and-up/ar-AA12SSiS>

Scientists Find Gene Variant Tied to Better Covid Shot Response

Scientists have identified an immunity gene variant in people with strong responses to Covid-19 vaccines who were less likely to get breakthrough infections, a finding that could improve future shot design. Individuals carrying the specific gene version generated more antibodies against the coronavirus after receiving vaccines from AstraZeneca Plc or the alliance of Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE, according to the study published Thursday in the Nature Medicine journal. The same people were less likely than those with different versions of the same gene to get infected with Covid months later, the research found.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-10-13/gene-variant-tied-to-better-covid-shot-response-found-in-study>

Pfizer, BioNTech find updated COVID booster protects against Omicron in trial

Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech said their COVID-19 vaccine booster, adapted for the BA.4 and the BA.5 subvariants of Omicron, generated a strong immune response and was well-tolerated in testing on humans. With the results, which the companies described as consistent with preclinical data, the partners are following up with human trial data that had previously been missing from their successful filings for regulatory approval.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/pfizer-says-updated-booster-protects-against-omicron-subvariants-2022-10-13/>

Covid-19 Boosters Targeting Omicron Authorized by FDA for Kids as Young as 5

U.S. health regulators on Wednesday expanded eligibility for the new Covid-19 booster shots to children as young as 5 years old, broadening access to help bolster protection against Omicron strains of the coronavirus. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration authorized the updated booster from Pfizer Inc. and its partner BioNTech SE for children ages 5 through 11, and Moderna Inc.'s updated booster for children 6 through 17. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Rochelle Walensky subsequently recommended use of the updated boosters in these age groups. "This is a critical step in our fight against Covid-19. An updated vaccine can help bolster protection for our children this winter," Dr. Walensky said in a tweet. The FDA in late August cleared the

updated Pfizer booster shot for people 12 and older, and Moderna's for those 18 and older.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-boosters-targeting-omicron-authorized-for-kids-as-young-as-5-11665582983>

FDA Authorizes Covid Omicron Boosters for Kids 5 and Up

Major flooding in suburban areas of Melbourne in the last couple of days have only reinforced the sense that we are now in a world of more or less rolling natural disasters. The times when a massive bushfire or flood event were a shock to the system seem to have well and truly passed. Disaster relief agencies — and even the Australian Defence Forces — are dealing instead with persistent crisis. Last month, the Guardian reported that, in its brief to the incoming government, the Department of Defence had warned it was under intense pressure due to the need to respond to "near persistent" natural disasters, and noted "the impacts of climate change" when requesting more cost-effective ways to manage the continual call-outs.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-10-12/pfizer-moderna-omicron-boosters-get-fda-nod-for-kids-5-and-up>

What are BA.2.75 and BQ 1.1? The two emerging COVID-19 subvariants raising concern among infectious disease experts

Two new subvariants of the Omicron strain of COVID-19 identified in recent months could fuel increased cases and hospitalizations in Canada through the fall and winter, infectious disease experts say. Experts say the variants, labelled BQ.1.1 and BA.2.75, are spreading rapidly in multiple countries. BQ.1.1 is a subvariant of BA.5 and has also been identified in the U.K., where cases have ballooned in recent weeks, while BA.2.75, which the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control labelled as a variant "of interest" in September, is spreading quickly in India and Singapore.

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/what-are-ba-2-75-and-bq-1-1-the-two-emerging-covid-19-subvariants-raising-concern-among-infectious-disease-experts-1.6100637>

AstraZeneca Nasal Spray Vaccine for Covid Fizzles in Small, Early Trial

AstraZeneca Plc's ambitions for developing an easier formulation of its Covid-19 vaccine -- one that might help curb contagion as well -- suffered a setback Monday as the nasal spray failed in an early test. The spray vaccine didn't elicit a strong immune response in the nasal mucosa tissue or in the rest of the body of volunteers, according to researchers at the University of Oxford. Astra shares fell less than 1% in London.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-10-10/astrazeneca-azn-nasal-spray-vaccine-for-covid-fizzles-in-small-early-trial>

Swiss drugs regulator approves one of Pfizer's COVID-19 booster shots

Swiss drugs regulator Swissmedic said on Monday it had temporarily approved Pfizer's COVID-19 booster shot targeting the original and BA.1 Omicron coronavirus variants. Swissmedic added that the data currently available to it was not yet sufficient to make a decision on Pfizer's bivalent booster vaccine targeting the BA.4 and BA.5 Omicron variants.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/swiss-drugs-regulator-approves-one-pfizers-covid-19-booster-shots-2022-10-10/>

From BQ.1.1 to XBB and beyond: How the splintering of Omicron variants could shape Covid's next phase

The United States is in a (relative) Covid-19 lull, with cases and hospitalizations falling as the wave driven by the BA.5 lineage of the Omicron variant recedes. But as if we needed a portent of an anticipated fall and winter wave, Covid is on the rise in some European countries. What's different, at least for now, is that there's not one variant pushing the wave. Rather, scientists are tracking a bevy of new forms of Omicron, which are jockeying with each other as they compete to become the next dominant strain. Scientists are monitoring more than 300 sublineages of Omicron, World Health Organization officials said this week. To get a sense of what's happening right now with the

evolution of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, STAT spoke with Tom Peacock, a virologist at Imperial College London.

<https://www.statnews.com/2022/10/06/bq11-omicron-variants-splintering-covid-next-phase/>

Coronavirus Resurgence

'Short and sharp': COVID-19 wave of XBB infections in Singapore likely to peak in mid-November

"This is likely to be a short and sharp wave," said Mr Ong, saying that Singapore is likely to see about 15,000 daily cases on average. "By around mid-November, we should see the wave subsiding." He added that on certain days when more cases tend to be reported, such as on Tuesdays, the caseload could reach 20,000 or 25,000. The Ministry of Health (MOH) said that using the BA.5 wave as an indication, hospitalised cases peaked at 800 in July, and hospitals in Singapore, while stretched, were able to cope. The proportion of cases with the XBB strain, an Omicron subvariant, has been on the rise in Singapore over the past month. While highly transmissible, it has not caused more severe disease than previous variants thus far.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/covid-19-xbb-wave-peak-mid-november-3009141>

New Omicron Covid-19 Subvariants on the Rise in U.S., CDC Says

Two of the Omicron subvariants, both related to the BA.5 version that drove the most recent U.S. surge, are called BQ.1 and BQ.1.1. They were estimated to represent a combined 11.4% of U.S. Covid-19 cases by mid-October, according to estimates the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released Friday. BA.5 remains the dominant version of the virus circulating in the U.S. at about 68% of recent cases, according to CDC estimates. But the subvariant landscape has become busier as the virus that causes Covid-19 continues to mutate. Another version virus experts are watching because of its potential to spread easily, called BA.2.72.2, represented an estimated 1.4% of cases in the latest CDC report.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/new-omicron-covid-19-subvariants-on-the-rise-in-u-s-cdc-says-11665761579>

Beijing reports 16 symptomatic, 8 asymptomatic COVID cases for Oct 13

China's capital Beijing reported 16 symptomatic new locally transmitted COVID-19 infections and eight asymptomatic cases for Oct. 13, local government authorities said on Friday. This compared with 12 symptomatic and six asymptomatic cases the day before. Three cases on Thursday were found outside quarantined areas.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/beijing-reports-16-symptomatic-8-asymptomatic-covid-cases-oct-13-2022-10-14/>

China Covid Cases Rebound as Party Gears Up for Key Congress

The nation recorded 1,645 new Covid infections on Saturday, the highest total since Sept. 2. While Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang had the biggest clusters, both Beijing and Shanghai found new cases outside of quarantine, suggesting the virus might be still spreading. While the eight new cases reported in the capital on Saturday is relatively few, any rebound in infections would pose a headache for leaders. Some 3,000 delegates are gathering in the city to attend the twice-a-decade congress starting Oct. 16 that's expected to hand Xi a norm-breaking third term in power. A preparatory meeting of roughly 370 members and alternate members of the Central Committee is scheduled to begin today.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-10-09/china-covid-cases-rebound-as-party-gears-up-for-key-congress>