

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

8th Feb 2022

Lockdown Exit

Critics of AstraZeneca Vaccine “Probably Killed Hundreds of Thousands,” Oxford Scientist Says

An Oxford scientist who worked on the AstraZeneca vaccine says he thinks scientists and politicians “probably killed hundreds of thousands of people” by damaging the reputation of the jab. Speaking to the BBC, Professor Sir John Bell said: “They have damaged the reputation of the vaccine in a way that echoes around the rest of the world.” “I think bad behaviour from scientists and from politicians has probably killed hundreds of thousands of people – and that they cannot be proud of.”

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-02-07/astrazeneca-azn-vaccine-critics-over-blood-clots-likely-caused-harm-scientist>

Thailand to seek travel bubbles with China, Malaysia

Thailand will have talks on bilateral travel bubble arrangements with China and Malaysia later this month, an official said on Monday, as part of efforts to bolster a steady recovery in its crucial tourism sector. Thailand received a record of nearly 40 million foreign visitors in 2019 - more than a quarter of those from China - but total arrivals slumped to about 0.5% of that last year, due to weaker external demand and tight quarantine and entry requirements.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/thailand-seek-travel-bubbles-with-china-malaysia-2022-02-07/>

Pfizer's COVID cash pile opens opportunities for deals

Investors on Tuesday hope to learn Pfizer Inc's plans for what could be a once-in-a-generation cash infusion from COVID-19 treatments and vaccines in 2022, with some looking for the drugmaker to spend on deals. Pfizer's 2021 sales are expected to top \$80 billion - its highest ever annual figure, according to Chief Executive Albert Bourla. Analysts expect revenue to top \$100 billion in 2022 as production of Pfizer's oral antiviral treatment Paxlovid picks up. The 173-year-old U.S. drugmaker expects 2021 sales of \$36 billion and another \$29 billion in 2022 just for its COVID-19 vaccine developed with Germany's BioNTech SE .

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/pfizers-covid-cash-pile-opens-opportunities-deals-2022-02-07/>

Indonesia to tighten COVID curbs as infections climb

Indonesia will tighten social restrictions in Jakarta and Bali, as well as in two other cities on Java island, in a bid to contain a spike in coronavirus infections, according to a senior cabinet minister. The measures announced on Monday include caps on attendance in some indoor venues and came as the transport ministry clarified that overseas tourists would still be able to enter the country through the capital, Jakarta.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/7/indonesia-bans-arrivals-at-jakarta-airport-as-covid-surges>

Can Sinovac protect Indonesia from the Omicron wave?

About 79 percent of those vaccinated in Indonesia have received the Sinovac shot. While all vaccines have been shown to be less effective against Omicron ... Indonesia's deadly second wave in a report published by Al Jazeera a month before the peak ...

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/can-sinovac-protect-indonesia-from-the-omicron-wave/ar-AATxMND>

Australia to open borders to vaccinated travelers on Feb. 21

Australia will open its borders to all vaccinated tourists and business travelers from Feb. 21 in a further relaxation of pandemic restrictions announced Monday. Australia imposed some of the world's toughest travel restrictions on its citizens and permanent residents in March 2020 to prevent them from bringing COVID-19 home. When the border restrictions were relaxed in November in response to an increasing vaccination rate among the Australian population, international students and skilled migrants were prioritized over tourists in being welcomed back to Australia.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-travel-business-scott-morrison-46d5f0548f947ae289d9c709a5ba4d9d>

Omicron forces S. Korea to end GPS monitoring, some checkups

South Korea will no longer use GPS monitoring to enforce quarantines and will also end daily checkup calls to low-risk coronavirus patients as a fast-developing omicron surge overwhelms health and government workers. The speed of transmissions has made it impossible to maintain a tight and proactive medical response, Jeong Eun-kyeong, the country's top infectious disease expert, said Monday. The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency reported 38,691 new cases of the virus, a nine-fold increase from the levels seen in mid-January, when omicron became the country's dominant strain. Jeong said the country may see daily jumps of 130,000 or 170,000 by late February.

<https://apnews.com/3bce9e476cbfc8b69c8c09f4e5cbaca5>

These COVID vaccines will get you into Australia when the international border reopens

With the countdown now on in Australia until the international border reopens to everyone for the first time since 2020, no doubt some people are starting to make travel plans. The only rule that's different this time around is you need to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Vaccines used in other countries can be quite different to the ones in Australia, and only certain jabs are recognised by the government for entry into the country. Here's which ones will get you past passport control.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-02-07/covid-vaccines-international-travel-order-reopening/100811310>

After two years of closed borders, Australia welcomes the world back

Australia said on Monday it will reopen its borders to vaccinated travellers this month, ending two years of misery for the tourism sector, reviving migration and injecting billions of dollars into the world No. 13 economy. The move effectively calls time on the last main component of Australia's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which it has attributed to relatively low death and infection rates. The other core strategy, stop-start lockdowns, was shelved for good in December. The country had taken steps in recent months to relax border controls, like allowing in skilled migrants and quarantine-free travel arrangements - "travel bubbles" - with select countries like New Zealand.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australia-fully-reopen-borders-vaccinated-travellers-feb-21-2022-02-07/>

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<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-travel-business-scott-morrison-46d5f0548f947ae289d9c709a5ba4d9d>

Exit Strategies

Ireland's St. Patrick's Day parade returns after three-year COVID absence

Ireland will celebrate St. Patrick's Day with a parade through the streets of Dublin for the first time in

three years next month - and organisers hope the green-festooned festivities will energise a tourism sector hammered by a tough lockdown regime. The March 17 public holiday, celebrated in towns and villages across the country, was one of the first big events to be cancelled in 2020, shortly before the economy was shutdown for the first time to slow the spread of the coronavirus. The government dropped almost all COVID-19 curbs last month, backed by one of Europe's highest uptake of booster vaccines. The remaining restrictions such as mask-wearing are set to end later this month. "Our national day sends the message out loud and clear - Ireland is open again for tourism and we cannot wait to roll out the "green carpet" and welcome visitors from near and far," Tourism Minister Catherine Martin said in a statement.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/irelands-st-patricks-day-parade-returns-after-three-year-covid-absence/ar-AA-TyHkX>

Philippines shifts election battle to social media as COVID-19 curbs campaigning

Campaigning for the Philippines' general election gets underway officially on Tuesday, with COVID-19 curtailing the traditional fanfare and big rallies and turning the focus to social media as the key battleground for the May 9 contest. As with the 2016 polls that catapulted Rodrigo Duterte to the presidency, social media will be crucial in the three-month election buildup, while platforms will be under pressure to combat the rampant misinformation that has intensified in the Philippines in recent years, driving hate campaigns and deepening social divisions.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/philippines-shifts-election-battle-social-media-covid-19-curbs-campaigning-2022-02-07/>

India approves Russia's one-shot Sputnik Light Covid vaccine

India's government has approved Russia's single-shot Sputnik Light vaccine, making it the ninth Covid-19 jab available in the country. In a statement shared on Twitter, India's federal health minister Mansukh Mandaviya said: "DCGI [Drugs Controller General of India] has granted emergency use permission to Single-dose Sputnik Light Covid-19 vaccine in India." "This is the 9th #Covid19 vaccine in the country. This will further strengthen the nation's collective fight against the pandemic," he added.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/india/sputnik-light-india-russia-covid-vaccine-b2009151.html>

Can Sinovac protect Indonesia from the Omicron wave?

As a third wave of the pandemic begins to take hold across Indonesia, there are questions over its use of China's Sinovac, after a series of studies suggesting the most commonly used COVID-19 vaccine in the Southeast Asian nation is no match for the Omicron variant of coronavirus. On Friday, the country recorded 32,211 new confirmed cases of COVID-19, the highest official number since the Delta wave began to fade in mid-August. The positivity rate for individuals tested reached 10.29 percent on the same day, pushing Indonesia well beyond the 5 percent threshold the WHO uses to identify countries that have lost control of the virus.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/7/can-sinovac-protect-indonesia-from-the-omicron-wave>

Nigeria receives 2 million doses of J&J COVID vaccine from EU countries

Nigeria has received 2 million doses of Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine from Finland, Greece and Slovenia, with more EU donations set to arrive in the coming weeks, government officials said on Monday. The delivery is part of a donation pledge by the European Union to African countries via the COVAX initiative launched by the World Health Organization in 2020 to distribute vaccines to some of the world's poorest people.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/nigeria-receives-2-million-doses-jj-covid-vaccine-eu-countries-2022-02-07/>

With superheroes and puppets, Philippines boosts child vaccination drive

Ironman, Captain America, puppeteers and performers on stilts entertained children at a vaccination

centre in the Philippines on Monday, part of a drive to boost its COVID-19 inoculation campaign among its youngest citizens. Artists made swords and models from balloons as "superheroes" posed for pictures with children age 5 to 11 after they received their shots in the capital Manila. The Philippines has vaccinated about half of its 110-million population, but many areas outside urban centres are still lagging far behind, complicating efforts to suppress fresh outbreaks of the novel coronavirus.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/with-superheroes-puppets-philippines-boosts-child-vaccination-drive-2022-02-07/>

Governor ending New Jersey's school mask mandate

New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy will end a statewide mask mandate to protect against COVID-19 in schools and child care centers, his office said Monday. The requirement goes into effect March 7 and comes as New Jersey's caseload drops after an spike around the holidays fueled by the omicron variant. The governor is expected to announce the development at a news conference Monday when he is set to also answer questions. It's not clear, for example, if individual school districts could continue to require a mandate.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-education-new-jersey-ce67cfe4373407645fbfb5223051dcd>

Germany eyes easing COVID rules; pharmacies to offer shots

The German government is working on plans to relax coronavirus restrictions after the peak in new cases has passed, likely by the end of February. Unlike some of its European neighbors, Germany still has many pandemic restrictions in place that exclude unvaccinated people from restaurants, public venues and some stores. "Perspectives for opening are being developed," government spokeswoman Christiane Hoffmann told reporters Monday in Berlin. She said the measures would be discussed at a meeting of federal and state officials on Feb. 16, but would only take effect when authorities can be sure that Germany's health system won't be overwhelmed.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-business-health-europe-germany-375ad66193aaafcec756093348ff33cd>

Omicron forces S. Korea to end GPS monitoring, some checkups

South Korea will no longer use GPS monitoring to enforce quarantines and will also end daily checkup calls to low-risk coronavirus patients as a fast-developing omicron surge overwhelms health and government workers. The speed of transmissions has made it impossible to maintain a tight and proactive medical response, Jeong Eun-kyeong, the country's top infectious disease expert, said Monday. The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency reported 38,691 new cases of the virus, a nine-fold increase from the levels seen in mid-January, when omicron became the country's dominant strain.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-technology-health-business-pandemics-3bce9e476cbfc8b69c8c09f4e5cbaca5>

Hong Kong residents raid supermarket shelves as COVID surge disrupts supplies

Hong Kong residents crowded supermarkets and neighbourhood fresh food markets on Monday to stock up on vegetables, noodles and other necessities after a record number of COVID-19 infections in the city and transport disruptions at the border with mainland China. The city of 7.5 million people reported a record 614 coronavirus cases on Monday, in the biggest test yet for the Chinese territory's zero-COVID strategy.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/hong-kong-residents-raid-supermarket-shelves-covid-surge-disrupts-supplies-2022-02-07/>

Partisan Exits

Governor ending New Jersey's school mask mandate

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<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-education-new-jersey-ce67cdfc4373407645fbfb5223051dcd>

Ottawa declares state of emergency over COVID-19 protests

The mayor of Canada's capital declared a state of emergency Sunday and a former U.S. ambassador to Canada said groups in the U.S. must stop interfering in the domestic affairs of America's neighbor as protesters opposed to COVID-19 restrictions continued to paralyze Ottawa's downtown. Mayor Jim Watson said the declaration highlights the need for support from other jurisdictions and levels of government. It gives the city some additional powers around procurement and how it delivers services, which could help purchase equipment required by frontline workers and first responders. Thousands of protesters descended in Ottawa again on the weekend, joining a hundred who remained since last weekend. Residents of Ottawa are furious at the nonstop blaring of horns, traffic disruption and harassment and fear no end is in sight after the police chief called it a "siege" that he could not manage.

<https://apnews.com/e9295f9f379ffdb114b6c063f5c77a98>

Canada trucker protest: Ottawa declares emergency

The mayor of Canada's capital, Ottawa, has declared a state of emergency in response to more than a week of truckers' protests against Covid restrictions. Jim Watson said the city was "losing this battle" and "completely out of control". He added the protests posed a threat to residents' safety. There have also been reports of racial attacks. Ottawa's centre has been paralysed, with vehicles and tents blocking roads. The "Freedom Convoy" was sparked by the introduction last month of a new rule that all truckers must be vaccinated to cross the US-Canada border, but the protests have morphed into broader challenges to Covid health restrictions.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-60281088>

Australian parliament's Covid rules could block anti-vaccine protesters' entry

In Australia, anti-vaccine protesters' hopes of presenting a list of "grievances" to federal politicians may be scuppered by federal parliament's Covid safety rules, with the prime minister not planning to meet a delegation supported by former Liberal MP Craig Kelly. Kelly, the United Australia party leader, confirmed his party was providing free food to the protesters and considering bankrolling a \$10,000 sound system for future rallies. Coalition MPs Gerard Rennick and George Christensen said they planned to join the anti-mandate protesters this week, while One Nation's Malcolm Roberts gave a speech on parliament's front lawn on Monday.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/07/australian-parliaments-covid-rules-could-block-anti-vaccine-protesters-entry>

Canada police seen getting tough as trucker protests continue

As the protest against the Canadian government's health measures and vaccine mandates entered an eleventh day on Monday, police have threatened to clamp down after facing criticism for lack of action that has crippled the national capital. The "Freedom Convoy" consisting largely of truckers began as a movement against a Canadian vaccine requirement for cross-border drivers. But it has since evolved into a rallying point against Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's strict measures to fight the pandemic.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/canada-police-seen-getting-tough-trucker-protests-continue-2022-02-07/>

Turkey's ritual corpse washers say faith overcame COVID fears

Elal, 36, said a sense of spiritual duty helped her continue carrying out the common end-of-life ritual despite exhaustion and fear, especially when she herself fell ill with COVID-19 last year. According to the ritual, ghashals pray while washing the body, before placing it in a white shroud ahead of burial. Corpses arrive from hospitals or homes to a washing cabin, called a "ghassilhane", where men wash male bodies and women wash female bodies.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkeys-ritual-corpse-washers-say-faith-overcame-covid-fears-2022-02-07/>

Scientific Viewpoint

Covid-19 Pill Competing With Pfizer's Looks for Quick Approval in Japan

Drugmaker Shionogi & Co. said it plans to seek approval this month to sell its Covid-19 treatment pill in Japan after the company found that in human trials the pill had strong virus-fighting ability compared with Pfizer Inc.'s Paxlovid. Shionogi acknowledged that studies of its drug are much smaller than Pfizer's and have yet to prove effectiveness in preventing serious Covid-19 cases. Pfizer said its final-stage trial, which included more than 2,000 patients, showed Paxlovid cut the risk of hospitalization or death by 89% if patients took the pill within three days of diagnosis. Still, Shionogi said it believed its trials to date, covering about 400 mostly Japanese patients, would offer sufficient evidence to seek approval in Japan, where the Pfizer drug is expected to be approved shortly, but is likely to be in limited supply. Shionogi said its trial found the pill, code-named S-217622, neutralized the virus quickly and didn't cause serious or lasting side effects. "I think this is excellent data," said Shionogi's chief executive, Isao Teshirogi.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-pill-competing-with-pfizers-looks-for-quick-approval-in-japan-11644232232>

Covid vaccine: Women having IVF urged to get jabbed as data shows it won't harm fertility

Leading fertility specialists are urging women having IVF to get vaccinated citing overwhelming evidence that the vaccine is safe for those trying to conceive. IVF doctors told i "mixed messages" and a lack of public messaging at the start of the vaccine rollout had caused concern and anxiety for some patients hoping to get pregnant. The British Fertility Society (BFS) and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) say women having IVF should get vaccinated, with research showing that vaccines do not affect fertility or ovarian reserve.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/covid-vaccine-women-ivf-doctors-jabs-dont-harm-fertility-1438708>

Covid-19 Pill Competing With Pfizer's Looks for Quick Approval in Japan

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<https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-pill-competing-with-pfizers-looks-for-quick-approval-in-japan-11644232232>

University of Oxford to evaluate repurposed antiviral drugs for Covid-19

The University of Oxford in the UK has announced the launch of a research partnership to analyse the repurposing of existing anti-viral drugs for the treatment of Covid-19. Funded by the Medical Research Council and led by Queen's University Belfast, this \$2.16m (£1.6m) project will have

specialists from Queen's, the University of Liverpool and the University of Oxford. As part of the project, the team will quickly detect the new combination of drugs that could effectively treat Covid-19 by using a data-guided approach. Antiviral therapies are specifically utilised for treating viral infections by destroying or preventing the virus growth. In the initial stage, this project will analyse 138 drugs with recognised antiviral activity against the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

<https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/news/oxford-repurposed-antiviral-covid/>

Approval of COVID vaccine made in South Africa could take 3 years, WHO says

The mRNA-based COVID-19 vaccine produced at the World Health Organization-backed vaccine hub in South Africa could take up to three years to get approval if companies do not share their technology and data, a WHO official said on Friday. The WHO-backed tech transfer hub in South Africa was set up in June to give poorer nations the know-how to produce COVID-19 vaccines, after market leaders of the mRNA COVID vaccine, Pfizer, BioNTech and Moderna, declined a WHO request to share their technology and expertise. Martin Friede, coordinator of the WHO Initiative for Vaccine Research, said if companies with approved COVID vaccines or late stage clinical data shared their technology and data with the consortium, the vaccine produced in South Africa could be approved in 12 to 18 months.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2022/02/07/who-says-covid-vaccine-made-in-south-africa-could-take-3-years.html>

South African regulator approves Sinopharm COVID vaccine

South Africa's health regulator said on Monday it had approved a COVID-19 vaccine from China's Sinopharm, although a senior health official said the government was not planning to procure doses for now. South Africa, the country worst-hit by the pandemic in Africa in terms of reported COVID-19 infections and deaths, has used the Pfizer-BioNTech and Johnson & Johnson shots in its vaccination campaign.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/safricas-health-regulator-registers-sinopharm-covid-vaccine-2022-02-07/>

Easing curbs in 'COVID-zero regions' could cause 2 mln deaths in a year - China study

Restoring normal population mobility to "COVID-zero regions" like China will cause some 2 million deaths in a year and the key to controlling the virus is developing vaccines that are better at preventing infection, Chinese researchers said. China's "zero-COVID" restrictions have come under growing scrutiny in recent weeks as it hosts the Winter Olympics in Beijing while using sweeping restrictions to try to prevent the spread of the more infectious Omicron variant.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/easing-curbs-covid-zero-regions-could-cause-2-mln-deaths-year-china-study-2022-02-07/>

Japan to consider early approval for Shionogi COVID pill

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said on Monday the government would consider granting conditional early approval for the oral COVID-19 treatment being developed by Shionogi & Co Ltd, as the firm prepares to start a late-stage global trial. Shionogi Chief Executive Isao Teshirogi told reporters that the company could file in Japan for early approval of the drug as soon as next week, and that it could deliver enough doses for 1 million people by the end of March.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/japan-considers-allowing-shionogis-covid-oral-tablets-tuesday-2022-02-06/>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Five new COVID-19 deaths in South Australia as new cases fall to lowest since start of 2022

Five people with COVID-19 have died in South Australia, taking the total number of deaths in the state since the start of the pandemic to 133. The victims are a man in his 70s, a woman and two men in their 80s, and a man in his 90s. "Our thoughts are with the family and friends of those people

who have sadly passed," Premier Steven Marshall said. There were 1,147 positive cases of coronavirus in the past 24 hours to midnight, the lowest total this year. There are currently 14,635 active cases in the state, the lowest number since January 1.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-02-07/five-new-covid-19-deaths-in-sa-as-cases-fall/100809600>

Beijing Olympics organiser says 24 new COVID cases amongst games-related personnel on Feb 6

The Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics Organising Committee said on Monday that 24 new COVID-19 cases were detected among games-related personnel on Feb. 6. Eleven of the cases were found among new airport arrivals, according to a notice on the Beijing 2022 official website. Thirteen others were among those already in the "closed loop" bubble that separates all event personnel from the public, five of whom were classified as either an athlete or team official, the notice said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/beijing-olympics-organiser-says-24-new-covid-cases-amongst-games-related-2022-02-07/>

Hong Kong residents raid supermarket shelves as COVID surge disrupts supplies

Hong Kong residents crowded supermarkets and neighbourhood fresh food markets on Monday to stock up on vegetables, noodles and other necessities after a record number of COVID-19 infections in the city and transport disruptions at the border with mainland China. The city of 7.5 million people reported a record 614 coronavirus cases on Monday, in the biggest test yet for the Chinese territory's zero-COVID strategy

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/hong-kong-residents-raid-supermarket-shelves-covid-surge-disrupts-supplies-2022-02-07/>

Indonesia to tighten COVID-19 curbs as infections climb

Indonesia will tighten social restrictions in Jakarta and Bali, as well as in two other cities on Java island, in a bid to contain a spike in coronavirus infections, a senior cabinet minister said on Monday. Separately, the transport ministry clarified that overseas tourists would still be able to enter the country through the capital Jakarta, after the ministry indicated otherwise in a statement issued on Sunday. It earlier said foreign tourists and Indonesians returning from holidays abroad would be temporarily banned from flying into Jakarta, as a further precaution against COVID-19.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/indonesia-bans-foreign-tourist-arrivals-jakarta-airport-covid-19-spikes-2022-02-07/>

Britain reports COVID cases and deaths fell in last week

Britain reported 54,095 COVID-19 cases and 75 deaths in its daily official data on Sunday, with the seven-day figure for both falling compared with the week before. In the last week, infection numbers were down 5%, while deaths fell by 7% on the seven days before.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/britain-reports-covid-cases-deaths-fell-last-week-2022-02-06/>

Hong Kong's zero-COVID strategy under pressure as cases soar

Hong Kong reported a record 614 new COVID-19 cases on Monday, health authorities said, in the biggest test yet for the city's zero-COVID strategy as it grapples to contain a growing outbreak. The global financial hub, which is following mainland China's strategy of suppressing all coronavirus outbreaks as soon as possible, has seen cases soar since January with over 2,000 infections compared with just two in December. In addition to the confirmed infections, there were more than 600 other preliminary positive cases on Monday, authorities said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/hong-kongs-zero-covid-strategy-under-pressure-cases-soar-2022-02-07/>

New Lockdown

China locks down city on Vietnam border as COVID-19 cases rise

Authorities in China's southwestern city of Baise ordered residents to stay at home from Monday,

February 7, and avoid unnecessary travel as they enforced curbs that are among the toughest in the nation's tool-box to fight rising local infections of COVID-19. The outbreak in Baise, which has a population of about 3.6 million and borders Vietnam, is tiny by global standards, but the curbs, including a ban on non-essential trips in and out, follow a national guideline to quickly contain any flare-ups. The effort takes on extra urgency during the staging of the Winter Olympics, which began on Friday and run until February 20, as well as a busy travel season for the Lunar New Year holiday.

<https://www.rappler.com/world/asia-pacific/china-baise-city-lockdown-covid-19-cases-february-2022/>