

Shanghai recorded a steep climb in Covid-19 cases Tuesday as spreading anxiety in the Chinese city of about 25 million prompted panic-buying at supermarkets.

China reported 6,886 domestic Covid cases nationwide on Tuesday, with more than 4,400 of them detected in Shanghai, now the centre of the country's worst Covid-19 outbreak since the early days of the pandemic.

Images showed some supermarket shelves in the city emptied of all goods.

"After being unable to grab any groceries this morning, I went back to sleep, and all I dreamt about was buying food at the supermarket," one user wrote on China's Twitter-like Weibo platform.

"I'd never have thought that society today would be worried over buying groceries."

In a bid to keep Shanghai's economy running, authorities have avoided the hard lockdowns regularly deployed in other Chinese cities, instead opting for rolling, localised restrictions.

The area locked down on Monday is the sprawling eastern district known as Pudong, which includes the main international airport and glittering financial centre.

The city's airports, railway stations and international shipping ports remain operational, while key manufacturers are allowed to resume production after a brief halt, state media reported.

China has largely kept virus outbreaks under control over the past two years through strict zero-tolerance measures including mass lockdowns of cities and provinces for even small numbers of cases.

But Omicron has proven harder to stamp out.

At a press briefing on Monday, health expert Wu Fan said it was "necessary to take more resolute measures" to eliminate community transmission.



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