



Weekly Update on COVID-19 in China

Week 48 of 2021

News Review

- **Omicron variant isolated by HKU team in Asia first**
 - Researchers at the Department of Microbiology at The University of Hong Kong (HKU) have succeeded in the isolation of SARS-CoV-2 Omicron variant from clinical specimens.
 - This is the first known research team in Asia that has succeeded in isolating the Omicron variant, HKU said in an online statement Tuesday.
 - The isolated variant will enable the development and production of vaccines against Omicron, which has been designated as a "variant of concern" by the World Health Organization (WHO).
 - The HKU team succeeded in isolating the variant late Monday local time, four days after the first two Omicron cases were confirmed in Hong Kong on Nov 25, and five days after the variant was first reported to the WHO from South Africa on Nov 24.
 - Cases of the Omicron variant have since been reported from around the world, as governments impose urgent travel bans and heightened surveillance.
 - "We recognize the serious threats of the variant and jumped into action immediately," said Chair of Infectious Diseases Professor Kwok-yung Yuen, who led the research effort. "Isolating the variant is the first step in the urgent study of the variant."
 - The research team is now working on expanding the virus for use in assessing its transmissibility, immune evasion capability, and pathogenicity in animal models. The team is also exploring opportunities for urgent development and production of inactivated whole virus vaccines.
- **Over 206m Chinese aged 60 and older complete COVID-19 vaccination**
 - Over 215 million Chinese people aged 60 and above have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccines. Out of that number, 206 million have completed their vaccination against the virus, a health official said Tuesday.
 - Voluntary vaccination among the elderly has been progressing steadily across the country, said Cui Gang, an official with the National Health Commission (NHC), at



a press conference.

- According to the data released by the National Bureau of Statistics last May, the population of Chinese people on the mainland aged 60 and above reached 264.02 million.
- Another NHC official Zheng Zhongwei pointed out that the COVID-19 vaccination rates among people aged above 70 and 80 remained low in some regions. Zheng said more work should be done to expedite vaccination for those in these age groups.
- **China will do more frequent tests to strengthen COVID containment**
 - China will increase the frequency of COVID-19 testing by targeting incoming travelers from high-risk regions and stepping up management of port workers and imported cargoes, as part of measures to strengthen virus containment amid the emergence of a new coronavirus variant, health officials said on Tuesday.
 - Cui Gang, an official from the National Health Commission's disease prevention and control bureau, said that recent domestic outbreaks were all triggered by imported cases spreading via port cities into China.
 - He said defense against imported infections should be further strengthened, especially at port cities, including closely following the pandemic situation overseas and stepping up local monitoring and precaution systems.
 - "For people and goods coming from foreign countries and regions, it is required to roll out more frequent tests, limit incoming passenger traffic and implement the circuit-breaker policy for international flights," he said.
 - Cui added that authorities should expand screening in key areas and groups based on local circumstances.
 - In addition, port workers and other personnel who tend to come into direct contact with incoming travelers or imported goods should be managed in a closed-loop.
 - Port cities seeing a large number of cold-chain imports should establish a warehouse designated for sanitizing and testing imported products, he added.
 - Mi Feng, spokesman of the commission, said the number of daily new infections worldwide is nearing a recent high. "The spread of the Omicron strain has further piled pressure on China's efforts to stave off imported infections," he said.



Statistical Data

Foll data released by National Health Commission today (till Tuesday 24:00hrs, Mainland only):

- Existing number of confirmed cases under treatment 868
- Total number of confirmed cases 98,824
- Total number of recovered cases 93,320
- Total number of mortality 4,636

Extraordinary Quarantine Measures

- Crew joining a vessel at foreign ports and arriving in China within 14 days from departure, or joining a vessel from last port before arriving China, must bear a valid nucleic acid test(negative) report issued by a competent testing institution as designated/recognized by local Chinese embassy or consulate within 3 days before boarding.
- Some special quarantine measures were introduced in some ports, for vessels arriving from foreign port and having crew change within 14 days before arrival, those measures include compulsory 14-day quarantine before berthing or crew nucleic acid tests upon berthing, etc. Please refer to attached portwise summary.
- In view of recent surge of COVID-19 in India and some high risk countries/regions, some China ports adopt stricter quarantine measures and require PCR tests for crew on the vessels calling Indian ports within 21 days prior to arrival China.
- Please contact us for up-to-date information in regard of latest quarantine requirements prior vessel's arrival for specific port call, as the same may vary day to day.

Port Operations

- Most ports maintain normal working status, though arrived vessels are subject to stricter and more complex quarantine procedure taking remarkable longer period of time prior to being allowed commencement of cargo work, such quarantine procedures vary quite frequently matching up the prevailing epidemic situation.
- Bunkering ops at Nantong port and Xiamen anchorage are no longer allowed.
- Stores/spareparts delivery at Rizhao was suspended as announced by local authorities, arising from sporadic outbreak in the city recently



- PCR tests for crew on board are available on request at some ports
- Boarding a ship by shore staff including agents, port authorities, stevedores, etc. becomes more restrictive in many ports, non-contact means for routine port operation are prioritized options
- To prevent from cross infection, crew shore leave temporarily suspended in all China ports, social security distance to be kept between ship's crew and port workers. In some ports, crew are obliged to stay in their living area, not allowed to go on deck unless necessary
- Personal protective measures must be in place, for both attending shore staff and crew, e.g. protective gowns, mouth mask, goggles, especially during pilots and stevedores working on board
- Daily disinfection and taking of crew body temperature must be done and reported to port authorities during whole port stay
- Surveyors' attendance and superintendents' visit were limited to those of Chinese nationals only, boarding formalities becomes very complicated and surveyors/superintendents are obliged to provide vaccination certificate and a valid nucleic acid test report issued within 2 days before attendance, 14-day medical isolation may be required after attendance in some ports. However, such attendance and visit are prohibited in some ports or terminals, Local source needs to be consulted before hand for detailed information and restriction in specific ports.

Crew Change

- Foreign crew change are not resumed yet, though emergent repatriation and crew medical first-aid can be arranged in some ports.
- As for Chinese crew change, application will be evaluated by various authorities(customs, MSA, local municipal health commission, etc.) case by case before being approved. All outgoing crew are to have nucleic acid test and 14-day isolation/medical observation in designated hotels.
- In view of different policy in different ports, please consult Oceanfavor Shanghai office for detailed information of a specific port and updated regulations.



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Oceanfavor has accomplished several owner's matter in various ports

All Ocean Favor offices stay on alert in front line and keep a sharp eye on the development of Covid-19 at key China ports.



Please contact us on below, in case you have inquires or need help from our end for specific issues, we are available on 24/7/365 basis.

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