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05 January 2023

**COVID-19(23)01**

**TO: LABOUR AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
ALL MEMBERS & ASSOCIATE MEMBERS  
BIWEEKLY MEMBERS MEETING PARTICIPANTS  
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION GROUP PARTICIPANTS**

**COVID-19 UPDATE AS OF 5 JANUARY 2023**

**Action Required: Globally, as of 4 January 2023, there have been 655,689,115 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 6,671,624 deaths, reported to WHO. As of 22 December 2022, a total of 13,073,712,554 vaccine doses have been administered.**

**SITUATION IN NUMBERS BY WHO REGION**

	Cases	Deaths
Global	655,689,115	6,671,624
Americas	186,226,373	2,890,955
Europe	270,009,126	2,158,171
South-East Asia	60,738,713	803,247
Eastern Mediterranean	23,223,876	349,102
Africa	9,447,530	175,242
Western Pacific	106,042,733	294,894

	TOP 6 COUNTRIES	MOST CASES YESTERDAY	HIGH FATALITIES YESTERDAY
1	USA	Germany	France
2	Europe	Russia	Russia
3	South-East Asia	Chile	Estonia
4	Eastern Mediterranean	France	Germany
5	Western Pacific	Austria	Denmark
6	Africa	Israel	Croatia

**Covid Update UK: Covid 'Kraken' variant is ripping through the UK**

The new Covid variant is called the XBB.1.5. It is an offshoot from the Omicron XBB. Already in over 70 countries, including the US and UK, the Covid variant has "concerning" mutations. Some of the mutations mean that it's more likely to be able to evade immunity, from previous infections and from immunisation. It is "more likely" to be able to evade immunity granted by vaccinations.

However, while the variant is "one to watch", especially as it gains traction in the UK, there is little to suggest that it could lead to more severe illness. Nicknamed the "Kraken" variant, data from the Wellcome Sanger Institute show that this strain represents half of all the recorded cases in Wirral last week.

The variant has also been recorded in:

- Telford and Wrekin, Shropshire
- Tower Hamlets, London
- Cornwall
- Stoke-on-Trent.

Scientists are reportedly concerned about Kraken's mutations, such as F486P and S486P. These mutations are thought to improve its transmissibility, which could mean it has the potential to become the most dominant strain in the UK. The latest government data on Covid demonstrates that the number of Covid infections, hospitalisations, and deaths was creeping up before the Christmas break. The latest figures from the government are yet to be released, which will reveal the UK's current Covid status.

### **Covid Update Japan:**

Due to the vast amount of Covid-19 cases, the Japanese government decided to conduct PCR tests at airports for travellers who stayed in China during the last seven days (from 30 December onwards).

For seafarers, if the test results are "Positive"

- they must stay in a designated accommodation for 7 days of isolation.
- they must take a test on the fifth day.
- If the test is negative, they can be released on the sixth day.

During this period of isolation, if the ship leaves Japan, they must return to China or their home countries without permission to entry into Japan.

The Japanese government needs all passengers who come directly from China (HKG and Macau are excluded) to possess a COVID-19 certificate (Negative certificate) within 72 hours before departure (effective from 00:00 on 8 January in JST).

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