

# CHINA

## 48 new cases reported in resort city

Outbreak involving variant not seen on mainland before triggers lockdown

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Sanya, a coastal city on the southern tip of Hainan island and a popular tourist destination, reported 48 new confirmed locally transmitted cases of COVID-19 from midnight to midday on Thursday, increasing the total number of confirmed cases to 72 in the current outbreak that was first detected on Monday, according to the city's epidemic prevention and control authority.

Among the newly confirmed cases in the city, one was initially an asymptomatic carrier whose status has changed. The other new cases were found in centralized isolation locations, high-risk areas, screenings of residential communities and key personnel under closed-loop management.

The virus was sequenced and found to be the Omicron BA.5.1.3 variant, the first time this particular variant has been detected on the Chinese mainland, local officials said at a news conference in Sanya on Thursday afternoon.

They said that based on comprehensive analysis, experts believe the origin of the virus was contaminated imports of seafood at the Yazhou fishing port. It was most likely transmitted through transactions between Hainan traders and those overseas.

Local officials said Sanya has set up a special work team to conduct investigations, especially among fishermen and seafood traders, as one of the confirmed cases is a seafood vendor.

Sanya has imposed lockdown measures starting on Thursday in most parts of the city, in a move to curb fresh COVID-19

clusters. People are required to provide negative nucleic acid test results from within 24 hours before entering or leaving offices, public places and residential communities. Public transportation, including buses, trams, cruise ships and ferries have been suspended, according to the city government.

From Monday to Wednesday, Danzhou on the western coast of Hainan island reported four infections, Lingshui on the eastern coast reported one while another was found in northwestern Lingao county, said the Hainan Provincial Health Commission.

Work tracing close contacts, isolation and control and medical treatment of the confirmed cases is proceeding in an orderly manner across the island province. Epidemic control measures have also been strengthened to curb the spread of the virus, said local officials.

They said a number of major scenic spots in and around Sanya have issued notices suspending business operations starting from Thursday to ensure the safety of the general public and tourists. Full airfare and hotel reservation refunds will be arranged for tourists who cancel their visits due to the current situation.

Also on Thursday, Hainan provincial authorities issued a letter to local fishermen, calling for their cooperation with governments at all levels and epidemic prevention and control departments so that they can do their job in epidemic prevention and control.

It said fishermen need to report before setting out to sea and check temperatures and take nucleic acid tests before returning to ports in Hainan.



### Wild ride

A herder struggles to stay on the back of a yak as it bucks up and down during a rodeo competition in Hongyuan, Sichuan province, on Wednesday. The county introduced tourism projects centered on locally bred Mewa yak in recent years to attract tourists and boost the incomes of local villagers.  
YIN GANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Ecosystem monitoring satellite launched

By ZHAO LEI  
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China deployed a terrestrial ecosystem observation satellite on Thursday morning to facilitate the country's environmental protection efforts.

According to the China National Space Administration, the satellite, which is named after Goumang, the god of forestry, spring and the orient in ancient Chinese mythology, was carried by a Long March 4B rocket that blasted off at 11:08 am from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in North China's Shanxi province.

Soon after the launch, the satellite entered its planned position in a sun-synchronous orbit 506 kilometers above Earth.

Designed and built by the China Academy of Space Technology, Goumang has four mission payloads — a laser radar, a multi-angle multi-spectral camera, a hyperspectral detector and a polarization imager. The satellite can detect and measure

vegetation biomass, atmospheric aerosol and chlorophyll fluorescence, and can also obtain the remote-sensing information of global forest carbon sinks.

The spacecraft is mainly tasked with detecting and measuring carbon elements in ecosystems.

Its service is expected to improve the efficiency and accuracy of carbon sink measurement, and boost the country's carbon peaking and neutrality efforts, the space administration said.

It will also be used to monitor and survey terrestrial ecology and resources, track and evaluate major environmental protection projects, monitor the atmospheric environment as well as obtain data about the effect of aerosols on climate change.

Moreover, the satellite will provide support to other fields such as agricultural forecasting and disaster relief, according to the administration.

This was the second satellite launched by China this year for



A terrestrial ecosystem carbon monitoring satellite is sent into orbit from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center on Thursday.  
ZHENG BIN / XINHUA

environmental protection purposes.

In mid-April, the Atmospheric Environmental Surveyor satellite was launched from the Taiyuan center and is being used to observe air pollution, greenhouse gases and other environmental elements. It is expected to provide data for research on climate and ecological changes, and will help to forecast agricultural yields and hazards, its designers said.

Also launched on the same rocket on Thursday were two small satellites, namely the Jiaotong 4, which will be used to collect information about ship movements and flight statuses around the globe, and the Minhang Youth, which is designated to act as an educational platform for young students to partake in space science research.

The launch marked the 430th mission for the Long March rocket family.

China has carried out 25 space launch missions so far this year, and it plans to conduct more than 60 launches in 2022.

### Eco-friendly innovations



A visitor tries a sink that uses recycled and self-purified water during the 15th National University Student Social Practice and Science Contest on Energy Saving and Emission Reduction in Tianjin on Thursday. More than 200 projects from 117 colleges are featured in the competition. TONG YU / CHINA NEWS SERVICE

## Ningxia medical aid team heads for Benin

By HU DONGMEI in Yinchuan and WANG XIAOYU

For most Chinese, Benin in West Africa is nothing more than a faraway country. But the nation of 12 million people strikes a special chord with medical workers from the Ningxia Hui autonomous region in Northwest China.

Since 1978, Ningxia has been sending medical aid teams to Benin based on a protocol signed between the Chinese and Beninese governments. As of recently, 25 groups comprising 594 healthcare workers had been sent there to use their wide range of expertise to perform anything from acupuncture to brain surgery to treat pain and save lives. On Wednesday, the 26th medical

aid team left Ningxia's capital Yinchuan for Benin, consisting of 22 members who will spend a year and a half working in the West African nation.

They are from the First People's Hospital of Yinchuan and the Ningxia Hospital of Integrated Traditional Chinese and Western Medicine, both located in Yinchuan, as well as the People's Hospital of Guyuan and the First People's Hospital of Shizuishan in two other cities.

"It is my third time going to Benin to provide medical assistance," said Li Furong, a 53-year-old ophthalmologist and the team's leader.

Li said that when she first joined the foreign aid program 20 years ago, she and her fellow medical workers had to cope with harsh conditions and outdated infrastructure. As she

embarked on her latest journey, she said she felt highly confident in successfully completing the mission.

According to the World Food Programme, Benin is one of the least-developed countries and is vulnerable to natural disasters with a third of its population living in poverty and 23 percent having inadequate food consumption.

Li Haixia, a pharmacist from the city of Shizuishan and a second-timer to Benin, said that despite the tough environment, local people have shown deep respect and care for Chinese medical workers.

"In some Beninese families, three generations of babies have been delivered by Chinese doctors, so their friendship with Chinese people is very deep," she said.

So far, 33 Chinese medical workers have been awarded the medal of honor by Benin's government.

For Shi Baoyin, a traditional Chinese medicine practitioner from the city of Guyuan, heading to Benin was a tough decision to make.

"As a father, I want to set an example for my daughters," he said, adding that he planned to introduce new TCM tools to Benin and help local hospitals set up TCM clinics.

Tian Fengnian, Party chief of the health commission of Ningxia, said that the team will also be tasked to advance the establishment of a pairing assistance mechanism between hospitals in Ningxia and Benin.

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## Tourist first-aid center powered by 5G and smart technology opens in Altay

By ZHENG CAIXIONG in Guangzhou and MAO WEIHUA in Urumqi

A new tourist first-aid center has officially been put into service after an unveiling ceremony on Saturday in Altay, Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region.

The 5G-powered tourism first-aid demonstration site, which was built by Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University and the university's School of Tourism Management, is housed in Hemu township clinic in the Kanas Scenic Area.

Nazira, director of the clinic, said, "When the remote interactive scheduling screen is installed, we can immediately connect with the emergency center of Sun Yat-sen

Memorial Hospital, located thousands of kilometers away, to get real-time emergency treatment guidance if needed."

It is the first 5G-powered tourism first-aid site in the country and important innovation for Sun Yat-sen University in terms of being able to provide medical services in tourism areas in Xinjiang, said Gao Song, an academician at the Chinese Academy of Sciences and president of Sun Yat-sen University.

The tourism first-aid demonstration site will be used to help promote the standardization of first aid in China's tourist destinations and scenic spots, he said at the unveiling ceremony.

Gao said Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hospital and the School of Tourism

“When the remote interactive scheduling screen is installed, we can immediately connect with the emergency center of Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hospital ... to get real-time emergency treatment guidance if needed.”

Nazira, director of a new tourist first-aid center in Altay, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region

Management would work together to develop a remote tourism emergency rescue system based on advanced 5G and smart technology to improve tourism management and serve Xinjiang's economic and social development.

The demonstration site uses 5G

for a remote video link with Guangzhou-based Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hospital.

Song Erwei, an academician at the Chinese Academy of Sciences and president of Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hospital, said patients could immediately obtain medical treat-

ment from doctors in major hospitals via video link after they have been put in an ambulance.

"This fixes the defects of the information disconnection between ambulance transportation and hospital treatment," he said.

Song led senior medical expert teams from his hospital in providing first-aid training courses in Altay prefecture from July 19 to 22. The attendees included local doctors, nurses, tourist guides, hotel staff and staff from homestay businesses.

He promised his hospital would continue to provide training and free remote first-aid clinic services for Kanas scenic spot, promote the construction and improvement of 5G tourism first-aid centers and improve local medical

diagnosis and treatment.

Kanas Scenic Area is one of China's most popular tourist attractions. It received as many as 30,000 daily visits in July. However, located in a remote area, the scenic spot has limited medical services, making it difficult for people to receive timely assistance in an emergency.

Zhang Yan, Party chief of Altay prefecture, said the demonstration site would help solve the problem of the shortage of medical resources and professional medical workers in the scenic spots in Altay, and help ensure the high-quality development of the prefecture's tourism industry.

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