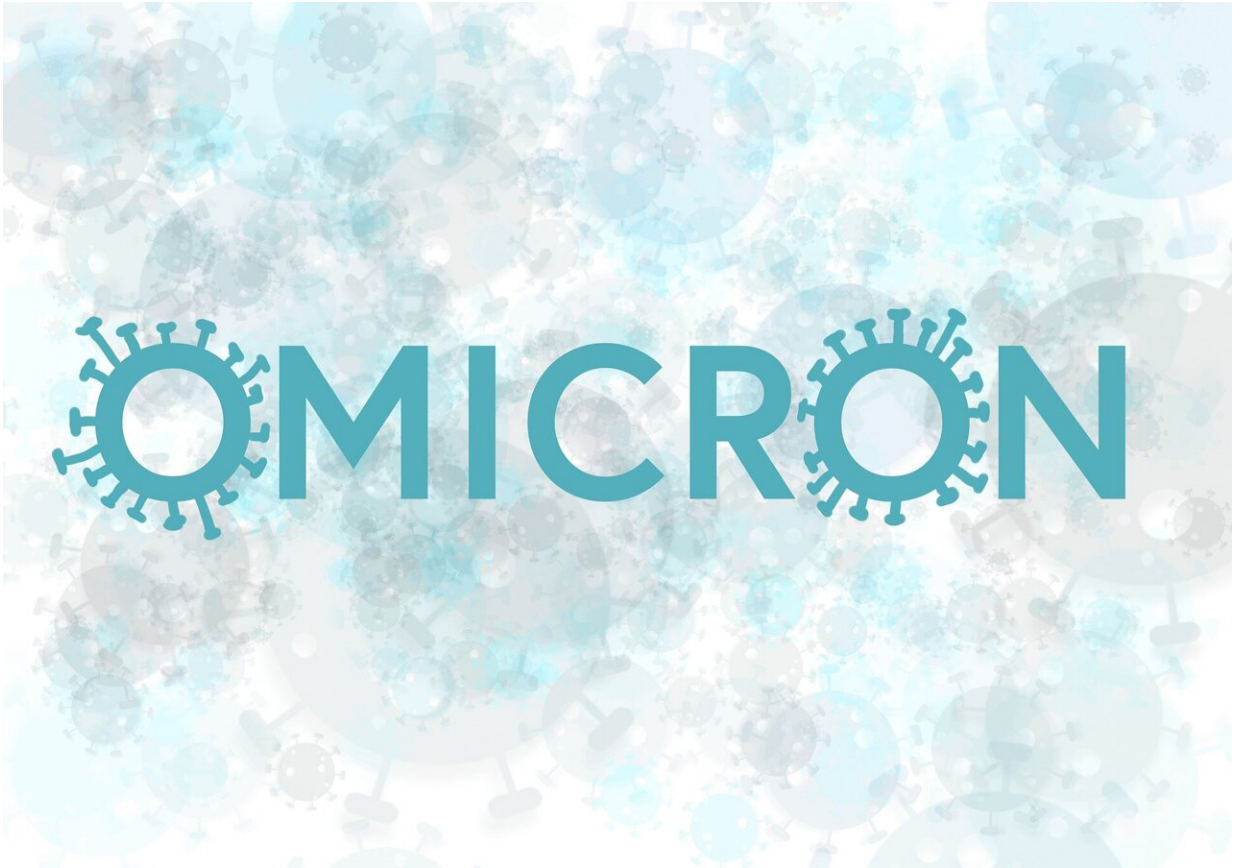


Thailand reports 'likely' case of omicron

December 6 2021



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A Thai health official said Monday that the country's first suspected case of the new omicron variant had been detected but authorities would withhold confirmation ahead of further test results.

Head of the Department of Medical Sciences, Supakit Sirilak, said at a daily press briefing that the "likely" case of the omicron variant had been identified in an American businessman who entered Thailand from Spain.

"The analysis result confirms a 99.92% chance of it being the omicron variant. The ministry and private laboratories are now running parallel tests and we will know the result today. Initially, it is likely to be the first omicron case of Thailand," Supakit said at the briefing.

The U.S. national tested positive for the coronavirus on Dec. 1 after arriving in Thailand.

Supakit said the [test](#) result indicated the omicron strain of the COVID-19 virus, but added that some traits of the variant hadn't been detected in the test result. A second test on Dec. 3 with a new sample from the visitor showed the same result.

Opas Karnkawinpong, director-general of the Department of Disease Control, said the 35- year-old American man had resided in Spain for one year before traveling to Thailand. Currently, he has no symptoms but is being kept at a hospital.

Authorities said they have tested several people who came into contact with the suspected case, but so far none have come back positive.

Thailand's Ministry of Public Health on Monday reported 4,000 new cases of the coronavirus, with 22 deaths.

Government spokesman Thanakorn Wangboonkongchana said Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha had been informed of the case. Prayuth has previously said he foresaw no changes in plans to keep opening up the country, though he urged vigilance against the new strain of coronavirus

and said all Thais should get vaccinated.

Thailand last month allowed many country's nationals to enter if vaccinated and tested, in a bid to restore the lucrative tourism industry. The country was shut to most foreign visitors in April last year. Thailand recently barred visitors from eight African nations because of the new [omicron](#) threat.

If confirmed, Thailand would be the 47th country to report the case of the new [variant](#).

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