

COVID: WHO urges China to share specific data

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The Daily Morning Voice Online Desk: The World Health Organization on Friday once again urged China's health officials to regularly share specific and real-time information on the COVID-19 situation in the country, as it continues to assess the latest surge in infections.

The agency has asked Chinese officials to share more genetic sequencing data, as well as data on hospitalisations, deaths and vaccinations, reports Reuters. Official figures from China have become an unreliable guide as less testing is being done across the country following the recent easing of the strict "zero-COVID" policy. WHO has previously said that China may be struggling to keep a tally of COVID-19 infections. The agency has invited Chinese scientists to present detailed data on viral sequencing at its meeting of a technical advisory group scheduled for Jan 3.

COVID infections have risen across China this month after Beijing dismantled its zero-COVID policies including regular PCR testing on its population. The United States, South Korea, India, Italy, Japan and Taiwan have all imposed COVID tests for travellers from China in response. The United States has also attributed the recent change in its policy to the lack of information on COVID variants and concerns that the increased cases in China could result in the development of new variants of the virus. Senior Chinese health officials exchanged views with the WHO on the new coronavirus via a video conference, China's National Health Commission said in a statement earlier on Friday. Both sides exchanged views on the current epidemic situation, medical treatment, vaccination and other technical matters, the Chinese health authority said, adding that more technical exchanges would be held.