

## Beijing leaves no stone unturned to tighten “bubble” for Olympics

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 23 January, 2022



Dhaka: Beijing is preparing to welcome thousands of athletes and teams for the Winter Olympics from February 4. However, the recent ongoing detection of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus is raising doubts among people whether the Olympic “bubble” is tight enough for protection against the risky variant.

"The overall situation remains under control," said Huang Chun from the Beijing Organising Committee for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, according to reports.

He referred to the government's call for residents to avoid interacting with Olympic-related personnel or even vehicles; to avoid "unnecessary travel" during the holidays; and proof of negative test results for domestic travellers entering Beijing.

On the Games site, there will be mandatory routine testing for participants; set up of hospital and isolation units; 50 ambulances on standby in surrounding Games precinct, banning overseas spectators and even shouting; while nothing, not even trash, will be allowed to leave the Olympics bubble until the Games end.

The International Olympics Committee announced on January 17 that they would "invite groups of spectators to be present on site during the Games...[who would] strictly abide by

the Covid-19 countermeasures before, during and after each event so as to help create an absolutely safe environment for the athletes".

Protocols will only be adjusted in the event of a large-scale outbreak.

The Games will be held in three zones across Beijing, the city of Zhangjiakou and the district of Yanqing between February 4 and 20, 2022, and the Paralympic Winter Games will be held from March 4 until 13, 2022.

On the other hand, Singapore Airlines is coming forward as a connecting hub for the Winter Olympics, operating daily chartered flights for Singaporean and overseas athletes and teams from January 21 until March 16.

Singapore's Minister for Transport S Iswaran called this a "good opportunity" to enhance people-to-people exchanges.

- T