Japan has quarantined a cruise ship carrying 3,711 passengers and crew members and was testing them for the new coronavirus (https://www.japantimes.co.jp/tag/coronavirus/) Tuesday after a passenger tested positive for the virus in Hong Kong.

Eight people on the vessel, which arrived at Yokohama Bay on Monday, have symptoms such as fever, top government spokesman Yoshihide Suga said.

The 80-year-old man flew to Japan and boarded the ship, the Diamond Princess, run by Carnival Japan Inc., in Yokohama on Jan. 20 and disembarked in Hong Kong on Jan. 25, the company said.

Photographs and video posted on Twitter by a passenger with the handle @daxa_tw showed health workers in full-length plastic gowns with white caps and face masks walking down a deserted corridor, as well as views of empty lounges and a deserted deck.

The vessel’s departure from Yokohama would be delayed by at least 24 hours to Wednesday or later, Carnival Japan said.

The cruise ship has already been quarantined once, on Saturday at a port in Naha Okinawa Prefecture.

But a second quarantine was organized after the man who disembarked in Hong Kong was found to be infected.

Quarantine officials are now checking the condition of everyone on board and testing those with symptoms of illness for the new coronavirus, as well as other infectious diseases including malaria and Dengue fever, a health ministry official said.

The decision on whether to allow the vessel to dock at Yokohama port and let passengers land “will be made at the quarantine station,” taking into consideration the World Health Organization’s estimate of a 10-day incubation period, Suga said.

Once everyone’s health was checked, those with fevers or who felt unwell would be tested, after which authorities would decide whether to let people leave the ship, Suga said.

Japan was also preparing to expand the scope of its screening for the virus (https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/02/03/national/science-health/japan-shinzo-abe-coronavirus/#XjjJE8zY1k) and test criteria after initial tests failed to detect the virus in some people who were later found to
be infected, Health Minister Katsunobu Kato told reporters Tuesday.

Previously, the virus tests covered people who have visited Wuhan — the Chinese city at the epicenter of the outbreak — have had contact with people in Wuhan with fevers and respiratory symptoms, and have fevers of 37.5 degrees Celsius or more, as well as respiratory problems and pneumonia symptoms such as severe coughing.

People now subject to the tests will be those who have visited Hubei province, of which Wuhan is the capital, have had close contact with those who have been to Hubei, and have such symptoms as fevers of 37.5 degrees Celsius or more, respiratory problems and severe coughing.

Opposition parties and some experts have criticized the government for responding too slowly (https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/01/31/national/japan-coronavirus-abe-takes-flak/#.Xjlm008zY1k) to the risks posed by the virus spreading in China and elsewhere.

Since Saturday, Japan has been barring foreign nationals (https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/02/04/national/science-health/japan-may-expand-ban-foreign-nationals-visited-china-amid-virus-outbreak/#.XjlmvUbzY1k) who have been to Hubei in recent weeks, as well as holders of Chinese passports issued in Hubei. Arrivals displaying symptoms of the new virus can also be denied entry.

A total of eight foreigners have been barred from entering so far, Suga said Monday.

Japan has 20 confirmed coronavirus cases, with 17 of them having been in Wuhan.

Asked if the epidemic would affect a visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping expected to take place in April, Suga said preparations for the visit were proceeding as planned.

Japan has flown more than 500 citizens out of Wuhan.