

1. KEEP CALM, STAY VIGILANT, AND CARRY ON

Singapore confirmed its first case of the Wuhan coronavirus on 23 January. As at 30 January, there were a total of thirteen cases. All were Chinese nationals from (or arriving from) Wuhan, the capital city of China's Hubei province.

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said in his Chinese New Year Message that Singapore was "gearing up for such a situation ever since (it) dealt with SARS in 2003". In an interview on 23 January, he made the following points on why Singapore was better prepared now:

- **Improved medical facilities and infrastructure in Singapore**, including isolation wards as well as scientific testing and capabilities after a thorough review following SARS. The National Centre for Infectious Diseases, purpose-built to handle large-scale outbreaks, was operational since late-2018.
- **Scientific progress**. Scientists were able to identify and sequence the virus faster, and share the information with other countries more expeditiously.

On 22 January, it was announced that a multi-ministry task force, jointly led by Minister for Health Mr Gan Kim Yong and Minister for National Development Mr Lawrence Wong, was set up to fight the spread of the coronavirus. These are some measures put in place:

- **No entry or transit through Singapore** for holders of PRC passports issued in Hubei and for all new visitors with recent Hubei travel history within the last 14 days.
- **Temperature screening** at all checkpoints.
- **Mandatory quarantine** for all recent travellers to Hubei.
- **Compulsory Leave of Absence** of 14 days upon return from China, for students, teachers, and staff with close contact to vulnerable groups in pre-schools as well as healthcare and eldercare sectors.
- **Declarations** on health and travel, to be given by individuals with travel history to China in the last 14 days to their respective organisations.
- **Travel advisory**. Singaporeans were advised to avoid non-essential travel to mainland China and defer all travel to Hubei.
- **Surgical masks**. About 5.2 million masks will be given to over 1.3 million households from 1 to 9 February.

“*We must remain vigilant and take precautions to protect ourselves, but as the saying goes, Keep Calm and Carry On.*”
 – PM Lee on the response to the Wuhan coronavirus in his Facebook post on 26 January

MINISTRY OF HEALTH SINGAPORE

What is Wuhan Coronavirus?

- The Wuhan Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a new coronavirus strain identified in China, which has caused cases of severe pneumonia in China
- Coronavirus is a family of viruses known to cause illnesses ranging from common cold to pneumonia
- Cases of 2019-nCoV have been exported to other cities and countries, including Singapore

Typical Symptoms include Cough, Runny Nose, Fever and Shortness of Breath

MONITOR YOUR HEALTH CLOSELY

- 1 All Travellers to monitor your health closely for 2 weeks upon returning to Singapore
- 2 If you have fever, cough or runny nose, wear a mask and seek medical attention promptly
- 3 Call the clinic ahead of your visit and inform the doctor of your symptoms and travel history

PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE

- Avoid contact with live animals, poultry & birds
- Avoid consumption of raw and undercooked meat
- Avoid crowded places and around people who are unwell
- Observe good personal hygiene at all times
- Wash hands frequently with soap
- Wear a mask if you have a cough or runny nose
- Cover your mouth with a tissue paper when coughing or sneezing
- See a doctor if you are unwell

REMAIN VIGILANT AND ADOPT GOOD PERSONAL HYGIENE PRACTICES.
 The situation is evolving. Check MOH website for regular updates: www.moh.gov.sg

[Sources: CNA 22 & 29 Jan; Gov.sg 29 Jan; MOH 7 Sep 19, 30 Jan; PMO 24 Jan; ST 7 Sep 19, 23, 27 & 30 Jan]

Falsehoods about the Wuhan coronavirus and the Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act (POFMA)

At a press conference on 27 January, Minister for Communications and Information Mr S. Iswaran said swift action had to be taken against falsehoods as they could spread and cause panic. Some recent falsehoods regarding the coronavirus included:

- A post on HardwareZone (HWZ) Forum which suggested that someone in Singapore had died from the virus. The post was viewed by 4,600 visitors before it was taken down. On 26 January, the office overseeing POFMA issued a general correction notice to SPH Magazines which operated HWZ.
- Another thread on HWZ which suggested that Singapore had repatriated more than 100 Wuhan tourists. The Ministry of Health and the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority had refuted the falsehood.

PM Lee and President Halimah also posted on Facebook on 28 and 29 January respectively, calling on Singaporeans to share news responsibly, and remain united and calm as we fought the virus together.

People can access accurate and up-to-date information on the Wuhan coronavirus situation through government channels such as the Gov.sg WhatsApp group, www.moh.gov.sg, and www.gov.sg/factually.

[Sources: ST 27 & 28 Jan]

2. PRIME MINISTER LEE ON MULTILATERALISM AND SINGAPORE



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“...an open system where everybody plays by the same rules of the game...is a great help to a small country like Singapore because without that, if I am arm wrestling one on one, Singapore versus whoever the other side is, chances are the other party is bigger than us.”

– PM Lee during “Leading a New Multilateralism”, a dialogue session at the 50th WEF on 22 January

PM Lee visited Davos, Switzerland from 20 to 24 January to attend the 50th World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting.

At a dialogue session on multilateralism, he made these points:

- Singapore and Singaporeans needed to support an open, rules-based multilateral trading system, which provided “great help to a small country like Singapore”.
- Singapore protected itself from the trade war by establishing itself in growing sectors such as technology, and providing support for workers affected by changes in the global economy to help them enhance their employability or transition to new jobs.

On the topic of US-China relations, PM Lee said:

- The US created an environment where small countries could compete with others. The US was also a major market and source of investments for Singapore.
- Singapore’s engagement with China had grown over the last four decades as China reformed its economy. Singapore was the biggest source of foreign investments in China.
- The strategic balance in the region was shifting because of China’s rising influence. Singapore would like to continue to work with both countries. However, if Singapore were to be pressed to choose sides, it was very important that people understood that Singapore’s choices were “on its own behalf”.
- For Singapore to prosper in the new globalised but troubled environment, it had to raise its capabilities and bring in new investments in new centres of growth.

[Sources: CNA 23 Jan; PMO 22 Jan; ST 24 & 22 Jan]