



**PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY
EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY**

REMARKS BY PRIME MINISTER LEE HSIEN LOONG ON THE COVID-2019

SITUATION ON 3 APRIL 2020

My fellow Singaporeans

Good evening

Update on current situation

1. I last spoke to you on COVID-19 three weeks ago
2. Since then, the number of new cases daily has begun to rise
 - a. We used to see fewer than 10 new cases a day
 - b. But in the last two weeks, despite our best efforts, we have routinely had more than 50 new cases daily
3. Initially, many of the new cases were imported from overseas, mostly returning Singaporeans
 - a. Then last week, we began to have more local cases
 - b. Furthermore, despite our good contact tracing, for nearly half of these cases, we do not know where or from whom the person caught the virus

- c. This suggests that there are more people out there who are infected, but who have not been identified. And they may be passing the virus unknowingly to others
4. In the last few days, we have also discovered several clusters at foreign worker dormitories, and one at a nursing home
- a. These are very worrying, because large numbers of people live together in dormitories and nursing homes
 - b. A single case can quickly lead to a large cluster
 - c. Furthermore, nursing home patients are mostly old and frail, and very vulnerable to the virus

Applying a circuit breaker

5. As the situation developed over the past weeks, we have tightened our safe-distancing measures progressively
- a. Singaporeans have responded well, calmly and responsibly, and made adjustments in their daily lives
 - b. By working together, we have kept the outbreak under control
6. But looking at the trend, I am worried that unless we take further steps, things will gradually get worse, or another big cluster may push things over the edge
- a. I discussed this with the Multi-Ministry Task Force (MTF)
 - b. We have decided that instead of tightening incrementally over the next few weeks, we should make a decisive move now, to pre-empt escalating infections

c. We will therefore impose significantly stricter measures. This is like a circuit breaker

- i. It will help reduce the risk of a big outbreak occurring
- ii. And it should also help to gradually bring our numbers down
- iii. This in turn will then allow us to relax some of the measures

d. This circuit breaker will apply for one month, in the first instance

e. The Task Force is holding a Press Conference immediately after I finish speaking to you, to explain the details

f. But let me give you the key points

7. First, we will close most workplaces, except for essential services and key economic sectors

a. Food establishments, markets and supermarkets, clinics, hospitals, utilities, transport and key banking services will remain open. They are essential services

b. We also should not disrupt economic sectors that are strategic, or form part of a global supply chain

c. People working in these industries can continue to go to work, with safe-distancing measures in place

d. But most other work premises must close

e. If the person can work from home, he should do so

f. But others will not be able to, including foreign workers on construction sites and in shipyards

- i. These workers live in dormitories, and we will make arrangements to look after them
 - g. This will take effect from next Tuesday
 - h. We have to ensure that most of our workforce stays at home and limit their physical interaction to as few people as possible
8. Second, we will also move to full home-based learning in our schools and institutes of higher learning (IHLs)
- a. We started with one day of home-based learning this week
 - i. This has gone smoothly, with teething issues being resolved
 - b. MOE will work with the schools to implement full home-based learning starting next Wednesday
 - c. All preschool and student care centres will also be closed, but will provide limited services for children of parents who have to continue working and are unable to make alternative care arrangements
9. Third, we will tighten our restrictions on movements and gatherings of people
- a. It boils down to three things
 - i. First, stay at home, as much as possible
 - ii. Second, avoid socialising with others beyond your own household
 - (1) Gatherings should be confined to your household

- (2) Avoid visiting even your extended families who are not staying with you, especially if they are elderly or vulnerable
- iii. Third, go out only to do essential things
 - (1) For work, if you are in essential services or key economic sectors
 - (2) To buy food at markets, or to take out from restaurants and hawker centres
 - (3) Or to exercise in the neighbourhood park, keeping a safe distance from others
- b. The spirit of these measures is to get all of us to minimise physical contact
 - i. If we don't go out, if we avoid contact with others, then the virus won't be able to spread
 - ii. It is as simple as that
- 10. I know this is very hard to do
 - a. As a practical matter, in places like hawker centres and wet markets, it is difficult to practise safe-distancing, especially on the weekends when it is crowded
 - i. It will help if we all adjust our habits
 - ii. For example, do our marketing on weekdays instead of weekends to avoid the crowd

- iii. We will also deploy more Safe-Distancing Ambassadors to encourage people more firmly not to crowd together, so please cooperate with them
- b. Safe distancing is also hard for a psychological and emotional reason: it goes very much against our human instincts
- i. It is in our nature to want to socialise, to be close to those we are talking to, to take comfort in the warmth and company of friends and family
 - ii. I fully understand this
- c. But I hope you will also understand why we all have to take social distancing extremely seriously in this period
- i. This is the only effective way to slow the transmission of the virus, so that we gradually bring our numbers down
 - ii. It is also the best way to keep our families safe, and particularly to protect our seniors from getting ill
- d. So please bear with the painful adjustments that we have made
- e. Each and every one of us can, and must do our part, to keep everyone in Singapore safe from COVID-19

11. Saudara saudari sekalian

12. Dalam beberapa minggu lepas, bilangan kes baru COVID-19 telah meningkat. Kami memantau perkembangan ini dengan teliti, dan mengetatkan langkah berjaga-jaga secara beransur-ansur.

13. Rata-rata, rakyat Singapura mematuhi arahan. Bagi masyarakat Melayu/Islam, anda telah membuat beberapa pengorbanan dan penyesuaian yang besar, seperti kaum lain juga. Anda faham kenapa masjid ditutup, anda mengamalkan Salam Mufti, dan menundakan majlis keramaian yang penting seperti majlis perkahwinan. Seperti yang diterangkan Mufti, masyarakat Islam juga perlu membuat penyesuaian bagi Ramadan dan bulan Syawal yang bakal menjelang. Saya sendiri kecewa kita tidak akan ada bazar di Geylang Serai tahun ini, tetapi ini tidak boleh dielakkan. Terima kasih kerana memberikan kerjasama anda.

14. Keadaan masih terkawal. Tetapi Pemerintah bimbang sekiranya kes baru terus meningkat, mungkin kemudian bilangan kes akan melonjak dengan tinggi. Oleh itu, kami telah memutuskan untuk melaksanakan langkah berjaga-jaga yang lebih ketat, selama sebulan.

15. Kami akan menutup sebahagian besar tempat kerja, sekolah dan pra-sekolah. Tetapi perkhidmatan penting seperti pasar dan pasar raya, tempat makan, dan pengangkutan awam akan terus dibuka. Anda masih boleh mendapatkan barang-barang dapur anda, dan masih boleh membeli makanan di pusat penjaja.

16. Kami juga akan menutup sekolah dan pusat pra-sekolah. Saya harap ibu bapa akan terus membimbing anak-anak anda ketika di rumah, supaya pendidikan mereka tidak terjejas.

17. Kami akan perketat langkah-langkah untuk memastikan jarak selamat. Sebelum ini kami pernah katakan bahawa orang ramai boleh berkumpul, asalkan tidak melebihi 10 orang. Tetapi sekarang, kami mahu anda duduk di rumah jika boleh, dan elakkan daripada bergaul selain daripada lingkungan keluarga anda sendiri.

18. Saya tahu ini suatu yang sangat susah untuk dilakukan, kerana kita semua mahukan teman dan berhubung dengan orang lain, serta berbual and beramah tamah bersama rakan-rakan dan saudara-mara kita. Tetapi saya harap anda boleh bersabar dengan apa yang kita harus laksanakan, dan patuhi peraturan demi keselamatan anda sendiri dan kita semua.
19. 过去几个星期，冠状病毒的确诊病例逐步增加。我们密切关注事态的发展，并且随着疫情的演变，逐步加紧防控措施，以保障国人的健康。非常感谢大家的合作，遵守相关的规定
20. 现在的情况继续受到控制。但我担心，如果这种趋势持续下去，我们迟早会面临病例大幅度增加的风险。因此，我们决定暂时采取更严格的措施，尽量减少人与人之间的接触，防止病毒扩散。这些措施将为期一个月
21. 我们将下令暂时关闭，提供非必要服务的商店。但是巴刹、超市、小贩中心、餐馆和公共交通等基本服务将照常营业。你还是可以买到日常用品，蔬菜，肉类等，也还可以向摊主购买食物，带回家享用
22. 我们也将关闭学校和学前教育中心。但我们会给你时间去安排，在关闭期间孩子由谁照料
- a. 我们会为那些还是需要工作，或是无法安排人手照顾孩子的父母提供协助。教育部长稍后会详细说明
23. 此外，我们将加强安全距离措施。过去的做法是，人们可以继续有聚会，只要人数不超过十个
- a. 但现在，我们希望你尽可能留在家里，除了与一起同住的家庭成员以外，请避免出门参加社交活动

b. 我知道有些是大家庭，亲人也住得很近，不过在这一个月，也请大家忍耐一下，在这期间请不要互相拜访、串门或搬来搬去住，请暂时把住所定在一个地方

c. 但希望大家继续以其他方式保持联络，例如视讯聊天、打电话

24. 我知道要严格遵守安全距离措施，并不容易

a. 毕竟社交活动是我们日常生活的一个重要部分，我们都需要通过社交，感受到亲情和友情的温暖，都渴望有亲人和朋友在身边陪伴，相互扶持，排忧解闷

b. 尤其是我们的乐龄人士，之前政府不得已，已经取消了大部分他们喜欢参与的活动，他们不能去上课、跟老朋友一起喝茶聊天、唱歌、跳舞、做运动，可能会觉得生活很单调

c. 幸好，网上和电视上有很多节目让年长人士在家也可以继续过精彩的生活

i. 例如华文媒体集团每天就推出一系列网上直播，邀请人民协会的教练和老师继续陪大家晨运、学习烹饪和唱歌

ii. 8频道也有电视节目教大家运动，分享保健贴士等等，让人们呆在家里也不会无聊

d. 所以，在对抗疫情的非常时期，为了全民的健康，请大家必须暂时忍一忍，没有必要的话就不要出门。这么做既是照顾好自己，也是为了保护好我们的年长家人以及体弱的人士，避免他们受到感染

25. 我吁请大家积极配合这些新的防疫措施，齐心对抗疫情，保障我们的家人和新加坡的安全

26. I decided to speak to you directly today to explain why we need to make this major move

27. But also to reassure you that things will be alright

a. Essential services will continue running so that all of us can cope with this new situation, as we hunker down to fight this virus

b. We have enough food supplies to last us through this period and beyond

c. You can still shop at the supermarket or wet market

d. And you need not rush to stock up for weeks at a time

e. You can still buy food from your favourite hawker centres or coffee shop

i. Though you will have to take out and eat at home with your own family

ii. Rather than hang out and eat outside with your friends

28. I know these measures will impact our workers and businesses severely

a. This is already a very difficult time for them

b. We will help them come through this

c. On Monday in Parliament, DPM Heng will announce additional support for households and businesses, over and above what was provided in the two earlier Budgets

d. We will also legislate to require landlords to pass on property tax rebates fully to their tenants

- e. And pass new temporary legislation to let businesses and individuals defer certain contractual obligations for a period, such as paying rent, repaying loans, or completing work

Face Masks

- 29. Besides implementing this circuit breaker, we also are rethinking our advice on face masks
- 30. Up to now, the Government has advised the general public that you only need to wear a mask if you are not feeling well, and this is to protect others from your germs
 - a. This was based on scientific advice and guidelines from the WHO
 - b. We also did not have community spread in Singapore then, so it was very unlikely for you to run into anyone with COVID-19 on the street, much less be infected by them
 - c. Nevertheless, the Government gave each household four surgical masks, to use in case you got sick, and to give people peace of mind
- 31. Now, the situation is changing
 - a. We now think there are some cases out there in the community going undetected, though probably still not that many
 - b. We also now have evidence that an infected person can show no symptoms, and yet still pass on the virus to others
 - c. This is why the WHO is reviewing the issue of face masks, and so is the US CDC
- 32. Therefore we will no longer discourage people from wearing masks

- a. Wearing a mask may help to protect others, in case you have the virus but don't know it. This is so that you keep your droplets to yourself
- b. It can also protect yourself a little better, especially if you are elderly, or vulnerable because of pre-existing conditions

33. We still want to conserve surgical masks for the people who really need them – healthcare workers in clinics and hospitals

- a. For everyone else, in a community setting, alternatives like reusable masks will give some added protection
- b. So from this Sunday, the Government will distribute reusable masks to all households
- c. Meanwhile, many community groups have been making and distributing reusable masks for the elderly and vulnerable. I applaud these efforts. They show our community spirit and care

34. But remember, mask or no mask, you still need to wash your hands, and keep a safe distance away from other people

Conclusion

35. The next few weeks will be pivotal

- a. Even after these stepped-up measures, the number of cases will quite likely still go up in the next few days
- b. They can be cases who have already been infected earlier
 - i. Except they have not yet shown symptoms, or gone to see their doctor

c. But if we keep our efforts up, within a few weeks we should be able to bring the numbers down, and get into a more sustainable position

36. We will keep on doing our utmost to protect every Singaporean from COVID-19

a. Many people have been working tirelessly for the past two months

i. Our nurses and doctors, our contact tracers and healthcare staff

ii. We thank them all for their efforts and sacrifices

b. Now we are all enlisted to join them on the frontline

37. It will be a long fight

a. But if any country can see this through, it is Singapore

b. We have the resources. We have the determination. We are united

c. By helping one another through this, we will prevail, and emerge stronger

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