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Singapore

Singapore confirms first case of Wuhan virus



Employees at Singapore's National Centre for Infectious Diseases putting on protective gear before carrying out testing for the novel coronavirus.



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SINGAPORE: Singapore on Thursday (Jan 23) announced a confirmed case of the Wuhan virus (</news/wuhan-virus-pneumonia-coronavirus-number-cases-12307566>), a new coronavirus that has sickened hundreds of people and killed at least 17.

In a media briefing on Thursday evening, the Ministry of Health said the patient is a 66-year-old Chinese man. The Wuhan resident, who arrived in Singapore with his family on Jan 20, flew from Guangzhou via China Southern flight CZ351.

He is currently in isolation at the Singapore General Hospital and is in stable condition.

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He reported having a sore throat while on the flight but no fever. The man developed a fever the next day and began coughing.

When he went to SGH on Wednesday, he was immediately isolated, diagnosed with pneumonia and identified to MOH as a suspect case at 10pm.

He tested positive for the new coronavirus at 6pm on Thursday.

CONTACT TRACING INITIATED

The ministry said contact tracing has been initiated to identify approximately 30 people on the man's flight who were seated two rows in front and two rows behind him.

Those identified will be contacted by MOH.

His nine travel companions have been identified. One of them is his 37-year-old son, who has been warded as a suspect case. The other eight have left Singapore, said MOH in an update later on Thursday evening, adding that authorities of their destination country have been informed.

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(https://cna.asia/wuhan-virus?cid=h3_referral_inarticlelinks_24082018_cna)

The man stayed at Shangri-La's Rasa Sentosa Resort and Spa and indicated that he kept within the hotel vicinity.

Shangri-La Rasa Sentosa on Singapore's first Wuhan virus patient



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MOH said there have been a total of 28 suspect cases so far, with the ages ranging from one to 78 years old. Out of these, seven have tested negative.

One is a preliminary positive case, pending the results of a second round of tests. She is a 53-year-old Chinese woman, also a resident of Wuhan. Her condition is stable.

MORE CASES EXPECTED

MOH said Singapore can expect more imported cases given the large number of cases in

China and high travel volume from China to Singapore.

 The number of people infected by the SARS-like virus in China has topped 570.

The virus, which causes respiratory symptoms similar to a cold or flu, has been linked to a seafood market in Wuhan, the largest city in central China with a population of about 11 million. That market has since been shut down.

The virus has spread to Beijing, Shanghai and Chongqing, as well as provinces in northeastern, central and southern China.

Across the world, confirmed cases have also been reported in Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and the United States.

INTENSIFIED BORDER SCREENING

The news of Singapore's first confirmed case came a day after Health Minister Gan Kim Yong announced the [formation of a ministerial task force \(/news/singapore/wuhan-virus-singapore-ministerial-task-force-inevitable-12301610\)](/news/singapore/wuhan-virus-singapore-ministerial-task-force-inevitable-12301610) to deal with the situation.

Authorities also announced on Thursday that border screening will be expanded to all land and sea checkpoints, while a travel advisory has been expanded for Singaporeans to avoid travelling to Hubei province, where Wuhan city is located.

► **[READ: Schools ask parents to declare Chinese New Year travel plans in light of Wuhan virus outbreak \(/news/singapore/wuhan-virus-schools-declare-chinese-new-year-travel-plans-12310972?cid=h3_referral_inarticlelinks_24082018_cna\)](/news/singapore/wuhan-virus-schools-declare-chinese-new-year-travel-plans-12310972?cid=h3_referral_inarticlelinks_24082018_cna)**

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Earlier on Thursday, [schools in Singapore sent out a notice to parents \(/news/singapore/wuhan-virus-schools-declare-chinese-new-year-travel-plans-12310972\)](/news/singapore/wuhan-virus-schools-declare-chinese-new-year-travel-plans-12310972) asking that

they declare their travel plans for the Chinese New Year weekend beginning on Friday.

Meanwhile, Singapore Airlines' budget carrier Scoot has cancelled its daily flight to Wuhan (/news/singapore/wuhan-virus-scoot-cancels-flights-mtr-train-12309076) as a precautionary measure.

Singapore businesses with a presence in Wuhan (/news/singapore/wuhan-virus-singapore-companies-precautionary-measures-employees-12307948) have also taken measures. ST Engineering, which has rail projects in Wuhan, has stopped all business commutes there.

CapitaLand, which has several developments in Wuhan, said employees have been advised to observe personal hygiene and monitor their health closely. Workers have also been provided with face masks and advised to avoid crowded places.

PRECAUTIONS FOR TRAVELLERS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

MOH has urged travellers to monitor their health for two weeks upon returning to Singapore and to seek medical care if they feel unwell.

Patients should also inform their doctor of their travel history. They should wear a protective mask if they experience fever or respiratory symptoms, such as cough and shortness of breath, as well as call the clinic ahead of their visit.

The ministry has also advised members of the public to adopt the following precautions at all times:

Avoid contact with live animals including poultry and birds, and consumption of raw and undercooked meats

Avoid crowded places and close contact with people who are unwell or showing symptoms of illness

Observe good personal hygiene

Practise frequent hand washing with soap (for example, before handling food or eating, after going to the toilet, or when hands are dirtied by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing)

Wear a mask if you have respiratory symptoms such as a cough or shortness of breath

~~Cover~~ your mouth with a tissue paper when coughing or sneezing, and dispose the soiled tissue paper in the rubbish bin immediately

Seek medical attention promptly if you are feeling unwell.

For full coverage and latest developments on the Wuhan virus outbreak: <https://cna.asia/wuhan-virus> (<https://cna.asia/wuhan-virus>)

Source: CNA/hs(hm)

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