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Luxembourg reports first COVID-19 case, linked to Italy

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A tourist wearing a protective face mask walks in Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in the centre of Milan, on Feb 28, 2020, after COVID-19, the novel coronavirus, spread to Italy. (Photo: AFP/Miguel Medina)

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LUXEMBOURG: Luxembourg on Saturday (Feb 29) announced its first case of infection by the new coronavirus: a man who recently returned from Italy, Health Minister Paulette Lenert told reporters.

The man in his 40s returned to Luxembourg "at the beginning of the week" and, after "more recently" exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, had a test that confirmed the disease, she said.

A second test is being carried out in the Netherlands and the results should be known on Sunday, she added.

The patient was isolated in a Luxembourg hospital and his family members were in quarantine, the minister said, adding that the procedures had "gone as planned" for this scenario.

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Luxembourg, a small EU country of 610,000 inhabitants nestled between Belgium, Germany and France, is the latest European country to register a case, as the new coronavirus spreads around the world.

Lenert said the infected person had returned from Italy via Belgium's Charleroi airport. Italy has Europe's biggest cluster of new coronavirus infections in its north, with 29 deaths and more than 1,000 infections.

Eighteen other Luxemburgers are currently in quarantine in a hotel on the Spanish resort island of Tenerife after an Italian man and his wife who stayed there tested positive for the virus.

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