

Wuhan virus: Events so far

WORLD

Dec 31, 2019

Chinese authorities flag a series of Sars-like pneumonia cases in the city of Wuhan, in Hubei province, to the World Health Organisation (WHO), which then makes the information public.

Jan 1

A seafood market (right) in Wuhan suspected to be at the centre of the outbreak is closed.



Jan 9

WHO says the outbreak of pneumonia in Wuhan is linked to a novel (new) coronavirus from the same broad family as Sars.

A 61-year-old man in Wuhan is the first to die from the virus, according to Chinese health authorities which announced it on Jan 11. He was reportedly a frequent customer at the seafood market where the virus is said to have arisen.

Jan 13

Thailand reports the first confirmed case of the virus outside China's borders. The patient is a Chinese woman who had recently returned from a trip to Wuhan.

Jan 15

Japan confirms its first imported case, a Chinese man in his 30s who had returned from Wuhan on Jan 6. He had been hospitalised on Jan 10 but recovered and was discharged on Jan 15.

Meanwhile, a 69-year-old man in Hubei dies. His is the second death to be linked to the virus, Chinese authorities report on Jan 16.

Jan 17

Thailand reports a second confirmed case.

Jan 20

South Korea reports its first confirmed case. China confirms human-to-human transmission as healthcare workers begin to get infected.

Jan 23

Chinese authorities commence a lockdown on Wuhan. All public transport services, including buses, railways, flights and ferries, are suspended. Major highways are also shut down.

Residents are barred from leaving without permission from the authorities, but about five million manage to leave the city before the lockdown began, according to Wuhan Mayor Zhou Xianwang.

The number infected worldwide grows to over 600, with 17 deaths in China. WHO says it is still too early to declare a public health emergency of international concern.

Jan 25

Malaysia confirms its first three imported cases. They are the wife and grandsons of Singapore's first case.

Jan 31

WHO declares a global health emergency as the virus spreads to at least 18 countries.

Feb 1

In China, the death toll stands at 259 with 12,024 confirmed cases.

In Singapore, 18 confirmed cases have been reported as at last night.



SINGAPORE



Jan 2

The Ministry of Health (MOH) alerts doctors to look out for suspected patients with pneumonia who have recently returned from Wuhan, and advises travellers to Wuhan to monitor their health.

Jan 3

Singapore begins temperature screenings at Changi Airport (left) for all travellers arriving from Wuhan.

Jan 4

MOH is notified of the first suspected case of the Wuhan virus, a three-year-old girl from China with pneumonia and a travel history to Wuhan. The girl tests negative for the virus the next day.

Jan 10-20

MOH is notified of another suspected case, a 26-year-old man from China. More suspected cases are reported on Jan 16, 17, 18 and 20 but all test negative.

Jan 22

A multi-ministry task force is set up to fight the infectious disease on all fronts.

Temperature screenings at Changi Airport are expanded to cover all inbound travellers arriving from mainland China, not just those from Wuhan.

The definition of suspect cases is also expanded to include those with pneumonia and a travel history to China, and those with acute respiratory infection who had been to any hospital in China, within 14 days of the onset of symptoms.

MOH issues a travel advisory stating that travellers should avoid non-essential travel to Wuhan.

Jan 23

1

Singapore confirms its first imported case, a 66-year-old man from Wuhan who arrived here from Guangzhou with his family on Jan 20. He is warded in an isolation room at the Singapore General Hospital (SGH).

Contact tracing is initiated, with close contacts to be quarantined.

The travel advisory is updated to state that Singaporeans should avoid travelling to Wuhan and the rest of Hubei province.

Temperature checks are also expanded to land and sea checkpoints, in addition to ongoing checks at the airport.

Budget carrier Scoot cancels its daily flight to Wuhan after Chinese authorities lock down the city.

Jan 24

3

Two more confirmed cases are reported, including a 53-year-old woman from Wuhan and a 37-year-old man, also from Wuhan, who is the son of the first confirmed case. The woman is warded at Tan Tock Seng Hospital, while the man is warded at SGH.

Jan 26

4

A fourth confirmed case is reported: a 36-year-old man from Wuhan who arrived here with his family on Jan 22. He is warded in an isolation room at Sengkang General Hospital.

Jan 27

The multi-ministry task force announces new measures, including a mandatory 14-day leave of absence for staff in the education, healthcare and eldercare sectors, as well as students, if they have been to China in the previous two weeks. Some firms say they will follow suit.

Temperature screening is expanded to cover all incoming flights, with extra attention to passengers on flights from China.

Measures are also announced by the Ministry of Trade and Industry to help businesses affected by the outbreak.

Meanwhile, various sites are designated government quarantine facilities, including chalets (right) and hostels at the National University of Singapore.



The fake news law is used against false claims about the Wuhan virus for the first time. The target is a user-made post on the HardwareZone forum claiming someone in Singapore had died from the virus.

The travel advisory now recommends deferring all travel to Hubei and all non-essential travel to mainland China.

5

Later, a fifth case is reported. A 56-year-old woman from Wuhan is warded at the National Centre for Infectious Diseases (NCID).

Jan 28

7

Two more cases are confirmed, bringing the total to seven. The new cases are both Chinese nationals from Wuhan.

MOH starts contacting some 2,000 recent travellers from Hubei who are in Singapore, about half of whom are on short-term visas. Those assessed to be at higher risk are quarantined.

Jan 29

New visitors who travelled to Hubei in the past two weeks and those with Chinese passports issued in Hubei are blocked from entering or transiting through Singapore.

The Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) suspends the issuance of all forms of new visas, previously issued short-term and multiple-visit visas, as well as visa-free transit facilities, to those with Hubei passports.

10

Three more cases are confirmed, all of whom are Chinese nationals from Wuhan.

Passengers who had previously been stranded here after airlines cancelled flights to Wuhan are flown back on a specially designated Scoot flight.

Jan 30

The Government announces that it will distribute 5.2 million face masks to 1.3 million households by Feb 9, with each household getting a pack of four. Errant retailers who have been profiteering from the sale of masks will also be questioned.

Ninety-two Singaporeans who were stuck in Wuhan after the lockdown are flown back to Singapore aboard a Scoot flight. They are quarantined for the next two weeks.

13

Another three cases are confirmed, bringing the total to 13. All cases to date are Chinese nationals from Wuhan.



Jan 31

16

WHO declares the Wuhan virus a public health emergency of international concern.

The multi-ministry task force announces that all travellers who went to mainland China in the last 14 days will no longer be allowed to enter or transit in Singapore.

Immigration authorities suspend issuing new visas to Singapore, and transit passage through it, to those with China passports, with immediate effect. But Chinese passport holders who can show that they had not been to China recently may be allowed entry.

The first Singaporean is confirmed to be infected with the virus. She was one of the 92 Singaporeans flown back home on Jan 30.

18

Two more imported cases are confirmed.

DPM Heng Swee Keat says the Government will provide targeted support to sectors directly affected by the virus.