

# Fighting the coronavirus

Timothy Goh outlines the key moves the Singapore Government has taken since China reported the emergence of a new virus on Dec 31, 2019



## JAN 2

- The Ministry of Health (MOH) tells medical practitioners to look out for recent travellers from Wuhan with pneumonia.
- It also announces the implementation of isolation, temperature screening and health advisory measures.

## JAN 22

- A multi-ministry task force is set up to tackle the virus.
- MOH also advises travellers to defer non-essential travel to Wuhan, and widens its criteria for suspect cases to include the whole of China, or hospitals there.
- Temperature screening and health advisory measures are expanded to all incoming flights from China.



## JAN 27

- The task force announces that temperature screening will cover all incoming flights from Jan 29, with all flights from mainland China coming under additional scrutiny, and checks on all passengers with Hubei passports.
- Anyone with a recent travel history to China has to monitor his health for 14 days from the date of his return.
- Those who had close contact with vulnerable populations will have to observe 14 days' compulsory leave of absence on their return.

## JAN 28

- The task force announces a travel ban on new visitors with a recent travel history to Hubei, or those with Chinese passports issued there, from noon the next day.
- Long-term pass holders and residents with such history or passports can enter, but will be quarantined.
- Recent travellers from Hubei already in Singapore are contacted by MOH and assessed for risk of infection.

## JAN 31

- The task force announces that from the next day, travel restrictions will expand to include those with a recent travel history to China or who have Chinese passports.



## FEB 1

- Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat says the Government will provide targeted support to sectors directly affected by the virus.

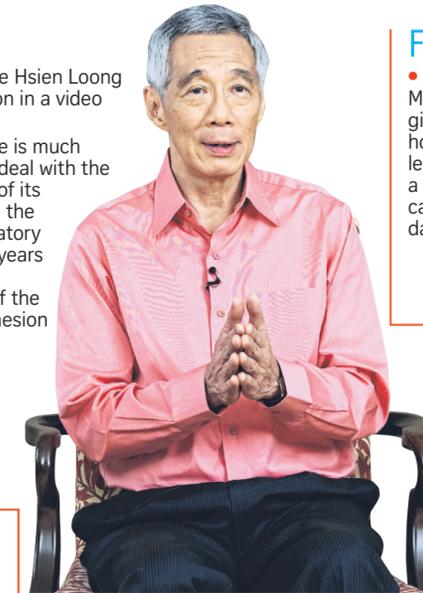


## FEB 4

- Following the first local transmissions of the virus here, the task force says schools will implement staggered recess times and stop certain activities.

## FEB 8

- Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong addresses the nation in a video telecast.
- He says Singapore is much better prepared to deal with the new virus because of its experience tackling the severe acute respiratory syndrome (Sars) 17 years ago, and says the outbreak is a test of the country's social cohesion and psychological resilience.



## FEB 12

- The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) gives details on how people on leave of absence as a result of the virus can apply for \$100 daily support.



## FEB 14

- MOH advises doctors to give five days of sick leave to patients with respiratory symptoms.
- It also re-activates its network of Public Health Preparedness Clinics, which will provide subsidised treatment, investigations and medication for patients with respiratory symptoms.



## JAN 20

- MOH says it will expand temperature screening and health advisory notices to travellers arriving on all flights from China from Jan 22.
- This is in response to the increase in cases of the virus in Wuhan and those exported to other countries, as well as in anticipation of increased travel leading up to the Chinese New Year.



## JAN 23

- Singapore's first imported case is confirmed.
- Contact tracing begins.
- The task force announces that border controls will expand to include land and sea checkpoints by the next day.



## JAN 30

- The task force says all 1.37 million households in Singapore will be given four surgical masks each.



## FEB 7

- MOH raises the risk assessment level here from yellow to orange.
- The Ministry of Education suspends all inter-school and external activities till the end of the March school holidays. Singaporeans start flocking to supermarkets, buying up essentials including toilet paper, and storing up instant noodles. The frenzy continues on to Feb 8 even while politicians and supermarkets call for calm, saying Singapore has enough stocks of essential supplies and food.



## FEB 11

- Singapore and Malaysia say they will set up a joint working group to strengthen cooperation in tackling the spread of the virus.



## FEB 13

- A \$77 million package to help taxi and private-hire drivers, co-funded by the Government, is announced.
- MOM and its partners also announce that public healthcare institutions will help workers who had their leave cancelled get travel cost refunds, or defray all costs.