

Updates from China - The Outbreak of Coronavirus

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China

Israeli Ministry of Tourism

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak in China – as of 5 March 2020

The number of people worldwide who have been infected with the coronavirus has passed 90,000. More than 3,000 people have died since the outbreak began in December. The vast majority of cases — more than 80,000 — have occurred in China, but around 60 other countries are now also dealing with outbreaks. Many nations are preparing for a global pandemic, as reports of cases caused by community spread — rather than importation from China — rise. South Korea, Italy and Iran are fighting the largest outbreaks outside of China.

Actions Taken by Chinese Government:

1 MAR | China will step up monitoring of the health of travelers entering and leaving the country in a change of strategy to stop the international spread of the coronavirus as the number of cases in other countries surges, the central government said on 1 March. With the number of new domestic cases falling, the announcement indicates a widening in Beijing's anti-virus strategy to include a focus on preventing contagion between countries. Currently, all travelers who enter or leave China will now have to fill out a detailed health declaration.

2 MAR | To help contain the epidemic, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) sent more than 10,000 medical personnel to the central Chinese city of Wuhan and other hard-hit areas in Hubei province, according to Chen Jingyuan, head of the Logistic Support Department's medical bureau under the Central Military Commission (CMC)

4 MAR | China has reported a slowdown in COVID-19 (coronavirus) infections over the past day. China's National Health Commission counted 125 new coronavirus cases in the past day - the lowest number since Jan 20. Also, China's infection rate of new patients with the coronavirus is now below that of those recovering. That's a positive.

Impact on Business & Changes on Daily Life

1. **Back to office and work from home:** some larger companies starts to organize their staff back to office, with smaller firms continuing to struggle, most of Chinese white collars start their regular work at home. Take an example of Guangdong, the Human Resources and Social Security Department of Guangdong said over 6.08 million migrant workers had returned to work, which represents around a third of the overall migrant worker population in the province.
2. **The surge in mobile usage began over the Lunar New Year holidays,** with Chinese citizens spending 20% more time on their smartphones than the same period last year, according to Nomura analysts Jialong Shi and Thomas Shen. Consumers throughout China are also turning to their smartphones for practical purposes, such as ordering groceries and food delivery. Alibaba's online grocery platform Freshippo saw numbers double, and TenCent's MissFresh grew by 61%.
3. **Searches for the word "boring" on social media site Weibo grew substantially and topics such as "how to spend time at home when bored" also started to trend on the website.**

Entrepreneurs began to realize there were ways of keeping in touch with their customers.

 - A number of gyms have started classes online so their customers can keep fit from home.
 - Cloud clubbing is where people can watch live DJ sets and send in messages to give them the feeling that they're in a club. The cloud clubbing events usually take place on apps such as Douyin, China's TikTok.
 - The surge of inquiries has also been driven by healthcare platforms offering some services for free amid the epidemic.

According to JD Health, an arm of JD.com Inc, its daily volume of respiratory-related online consultations jumped by ninetimes while

mental-health consultations have grown five to seven times since coronavirus outbreak.

- Some real estate agents have set up online sales offices and resorted to live-streaming to attract consumers.

IMOT China offices actions

The Israeli Ministry of Tourism has 2 offices in China- in Shanghai and Beijing. Both offices are monitoring the situation and in daily contact with the Chinese travel trade- airlines, tour operators, travel agents, media channel, KOL's etc. the offices have started preparation for recovery plans for the industry and promote Israel as a leading long haul destination for the Chinese traveler as soon as the Coronavirus epidemic would be over. We stand besides our Chinese partners, hold massive presence on the Chinese social media channels and launching webinars, online trainings and cooperation's with the Chinese tourism industry leaders.

Wishing you all a happy Purim festival and looking forward for future cooperation's,
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