



China / Society

China coronavirus: Nepal reports first case of infection as virus reaches South Asia

Nepali student in his 30s tests positive for the illness after coming home for the holiday from Wuhan, the epicentre of the epidemic

Nepal is the seventh country to confirm a case of the deadly virus

Topic | China coronavirus outbreak



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Nepal has reported its first case of the China coronavirus infection, the first in South Asia, according to Reuters and Agence France-Presse.

Nepal's Ministry of Health and Population said on Friday that a Nepali student who had come home for the Lunar New Year holiday from studying in Wuhan, the epicentre of the outbreak, tested positive for the illness "after preliminary tests and final confirmation from the WHO Collaborating Centre in Hong Kong".

The student, in his early 30s, arrived in Nepal on January 9. He went to Sukraraj Tropical and Infectious Disease Hospital in Kathmandu four days after running a fever and having breathing problems, Agence France-Presse reported.

The student was now being monitored and those who had been in close contact with him "are being searched, identified and tested" for infection, the statement said.

Nepal is the seventh country, along with the United States, Thailand, Vietnam, Japan, Singapore and Korea, to confirm coronavirus cases.

The World Health Organisation so far has refrained from declaring the virus' spread a global emergency.

In Geneva on Thursday, WHO director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the outbreak was “an emergency in China” and there was “no evidence” of human-to-human transmission outside China, “but that doesn’t mean it won’t happen”.

China has reported more than 1,200 cases of the illness, with most of them in Hubei province.

The death toll has climbed to 41 across the country, with all but two in Hubei, of which Wuhan is the provincial capital.

Almost all cities in Hubei have been locked down and put under travel bans, according to local government notices.

Flights, trains, buses and ferries connecting Wuhan to other cities in Hubei have been suspended. The city is a hub for several major high-speed railway lines.

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