We have been monitoring the virus outbreak in China very closely and taking proactive measures in response to the latest advice from the experts. I have said that repeatedly, that we are constantly updating and recalibrating our measures. On Tuesday, we announced travel restrictions on Hubei travelers. And since then the number of reported infection cases has doubled to over 9,000. The virus has spread to every region of Mainland China. The majority of these confirmed cases are still linked back to Hubei province – that is what we said the last time – It remains so that the majority are linked back to Hubei. But there is, according to the medical experts who are assessing the situation, a growing possibility that more individuals from other parts of China may have been infected with the virus. This means that there is a high likelihood of widespread community transmission in other parts of China, and we are likely to see a sharper rise in the spread of the virus in Chinese cities beyond Hubei in the coming days. This is the latest assessment from the team.

So the taskforce has decided to take additional measures now to restrict travel. Specifically we will expand our travel restrictions to all new travelers arriving from Mainland China, so all new visitors with travel history to Mainland China within the last 14 days will not be allowed to enter into Singapore or to transit through Singapore.

We will suspend the issuance of all forms of new visas to those holding PRC passports. Previously issued short term and multiple-visit visas, and visa-free transit facility for those with PRC passports will be suspended. And during this period of suspension, PRC passport holders holding such visas will not be allowed to enter Singapore as well.

Returning Singaporeans, Permanent Residents and residents with long term passes who have travelled in Mainland China will be allowed to enter Singapore, but we will issue an advisory for them to be placed on 14 days leave of absence as a preventive measure, and they will be issued a health advisory to avoid social contact.

So these additional travel restrictions, on top of all that we have already introduced over the past few days, will enable us to limit the number of new imported cases here and to reduce the risk of community spread in Singapore. As we have said repeatedly, the evidence so far is that there is no community spread of the virus within Singapore, so we are doing everything we can to reduce the risk of community spread and to limit the number of new imported cases here, especially now given the latest assessment of the situation in China.
The situation remains fluid; it is constantly changing, and we do not rule out taking further measures. As I have said before, we are monitoring and we will do constant updates and recalibration of all the actions we take. But what is clear is that the Wuhan virus is already having an impact on the economy, and we have to be prepared for this to go on for some time. So the Government is now looking at how we can support businesses and more importantly, Singaporean workers who are impacted. And DPM Heng Swee Keat will share more about the package of measures to assist Singaporeans tomorrow. So he will share more tomorrow on what we can do to assist Singaporeans impacted by this Wuhan virus.

It has been one week since the Taskforce was formed. Across the Government, public officials have been mobilised. They are working very hard to respond to this very challenging situation. You can see our healthcare workers at the frontline, our medical teams at the airport, ICA officers at checkpoints, SAF personnel and PA staff doing the mask packing and distribution or officials getting the quarantine facilities ready – a whole range of work, the whole Government has been galvanised and mobilised towards tackling the current situation. The private sector, too, is stepping up. Private organisations and businesses are taking precautions.

This afternoon, I was at the REDAS lunch. I asked all the businesses and they all are already taking steps – temperature-taking for events that they organise and activities that they hold, making sure that any of their employees who are recently back from China stays at home and they work out some flexi work arrangements, and then make sure that anyone who is sick sees a doctor and stays at home too instead of staying on in the office. So private sector organisations are doing their part. In fact, as you saw recently, Scoot pilots and crew volunteered to fly to Wuhan to bring our Singaporeans home. This is the Singapore spirit at work – Government, private sector and people sector all working together. I believe that is the spirit that will enable us to get through this together. Let me just say a few words in Mandarin.

我们一直在密切关注武汉肺炎的发展情况。

我之前提过，我们会按照最新的情况以及最新的信息，调整措施来阻止武汉肺炎传播。

在刚过去的星期二，我们针对去过湖北的旅客和拥有湖北护照的人实行了入境和隔离措施。

这几天的情况出现变化，病毒已经扩散到中国大陆的各个地区。湖北以外其他地区的人感染病毒的可能性提升了。目前，中国大陆感染病毒的人已经增加了一倍，有超过9000人。

中国大陆其他地区出现社区感染的可能性相当高，病人人数可能大幅度增加。
因为情况一直在出现变化，我们决定扩大针对中国大陆旅客的旅游禁令。

那些过去14天曾经去过中国大陆的新旅客，将不能够入境新加坡，或在新加坡过境。

我们也会暂停签发所有类型的新签证给有中国护照的人。

另外，曾经去过中国大陆的新加坡公民、永久居民，以及拥有长期准证的人，还是可以入境新加坡，但是他们须要采取预防措施，申请14天的缺席假。

我们知道武汉肺炎会对经济造成重大的影响。政府将会尽力帮助受影响的企业和新加坡员工。

王副总理明天将会分享更多有关援助配套的信息。