

## **La Corée du Sud face au coronavirus - 2e partie: Explosion (19 février-3 mars)**

Revue de presse du Korea Herald et du JoongAng Ilbo

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200219000891&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200219000891&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Korea in for a long fight against virus: experts

By Kim Arin

Published : Feb 19, 2020

A series of novel coronavirus cases without epidemiological ties to previous patients have been reported in Korea in the past four days, with one believed to be linked to at least 15 others.

A Korean woman, 61, who started having symptoms as early as Feb. 7, continued with her daily tasks until she was found to be infected Tuesday.

Over the 11 intervening days, authorities say she came into close contact with at least 166 people -- 49 of them health workers -- all of whom are now quarantined at home. Among her contacts, 14 from the church she attends tested positive for the virus Wednesday, as well as another from a hospital where she received care.

She told authorities she did not suspect she could have the illness, as she had no overseas travel history or contact with confirmed patients.

"This is likely going to be a recurring pattern of transmission from now on," infectious disease specialist Dr. Lee Jae-gap told The Korea Herald, saying community-based transmission was already well underway.

Ki Moran, the head of Korean Society for Preventive Medicine's committee for virus response, told The Korea Herald that the tricky thing about the illness was that some patients only exhibit mild symptoms, making it difficult to identify the time of onset or even to diagnose.

"We already knew there were asymptomatic patients," she said. "What remains a question is whether a patient having no symptoms could in fact be infectious, in which case a more widespread transmission is expected."

If the epidemic keeps growing, not all patients could get isolated care in negative pressure rooms due to dearth of facilities, she said. "Those with minor symptoms will have to be treated at their respective homes, like they are doing in China."

Korean Medical Association's Vice President Bang Sang-hyok told The Korea Herald that it was possible that more virus patients could be out there without knowing they are infected.

"Because the early signs are similar to those of the flu or a cold, doctors shoulder the responsibility of deciding whether a patient should be tested or not," he said, which is

why patients are advised to consult the Korea Centers for Disease Control Centers at 1339 before visiting a clinic.

“As we have witnessed in recent cases, a visit from a confirmed patient leads to suspension of a hospital’s operations and quarantine of medical workers, in turn leading to placing other patients in need of care at risk,” he said.

Bang said until we gain a better understanding, playing it safe was best advised in guarding off the new disease.

“For instance, the incubation period, which was initially thought to be 14 days, may be as long as 24 days,” he said, calling for tighter preventive measures from health officials.

Former KCDC director Jun Byung-yool told The Korea Herald that the past month was just the beginning of an outbreak that is forecast to persist.

“The health care system will go out of order if infections begin to rise among medics,” he said. “Government should make sure there is no shortage of protective equipment and testing kits at medical institutions.”

He also said community spread here could have been stalled, had authorities taken the right steps at the right time.

“It took only 28 days for a first case of local transmission to emerge in the country,” he said. “Which is about 40 days faster than it did during the 2009 flu outbreak.”

And unlike 11 years ago, we are without a vaccine or treatment this time, he added.

“The best defense against any outbreak is minimizing public’s contact with infectious individuals,” he said, referring to the debated ban on arrivals of visitors from China. “The failure to implement the travel ban in time is attributable for premature spread of the virus here -- which we could have avoided.”

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200219000772&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200219000772&ACE_SEARCH=1)

20 new COVID-19 cases reported, 14 linked to church

By Park Han-na

Published : Feb 19, 2020 The country’s 31st patient was hospitalized through Monday after a car accident Feb. 6. She stayed alone in a four-bed ward at a hospital in Daegu. During the hospitalization period she visited the church twice, including a service this past Sunday that 460 people attended.

The KCDC said the 31st patient had refused to take the COVID-19 kit test at a Feb. 8 visit to the hospital despite doctors’ recommendation.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200220000241&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200220000241&ACE_SEARCH=1)

S. Korea's COVID-19 cases soar to 82 amid fears of community spread

By Yonhap

Published : Feb 20, 2020 - 10:12

This week's surge in the number of infected people, increasing the nation's total infections by more than 50, came as the health authorities declared that the virus has begun spreading locally.

Vice Health and Welfare Minister Kim Kang-lip told reporters that, "At this stage, (the government) judged that COVID-19 is spreading locally with a limited scope."

The government has been adjusting its quarantine and prevention work to cope with local transmission, Kim said.

The health authorities will deploy 24 more doctors to Daegu and expand the number of virus-detection centers to 22 in the city, Kim said. Still, the authorities kept the virus alert level at "yellow," the third-highest, Kim said.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200220000592&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200220000592&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Daegu on alert as coronavirus cases surge

By Yonhap

Published : Feb 20, 2020 - 11:50

The latest development has stoked fears of the virus spreading rapidly in Daegu, the country's fourth-largest city and home to 2.4 million people. The combined population of the city and the adjacent North Gyeongsang Province is roughly 5 million.

To ward off the sprawling virus, the city has taken measures to temporarily shut down public libraries and has ordered kindergartens to suspend classes for the time being.

The Daegu High Court, among other public institutions, temporarily blocked some entrances to its compound and installed thermal cameras.

Major events have been called off or postponed, with a concert featuring BTS and other K-pop stars that was set for March 8 at Daegu Stadium postponed following the outbreak.

The city has also launched a probe into people who attended Sunday services at the Daegu unit of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus, The Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony.

Some 1,000 people reportedly attended the church, which is known for its tight-knit seating arrangement, on Feb. 9 and 16.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200219000783&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200219000783&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Daegu panics with group of COVID-19 infections

By Ock Hyun-ju

Published : Feb 19, 2020 - 17:02

Public panic has deepened in Daegu and North Gyeongsang Province, with at least 15 people from the areas confirmed to be infected with COVID-19 on Wednesday.

The Daegu Metropolitan Government said it will track down some 1,000 people who attended the same church service as the country's 31st patient, who may have been a "superspreader," and test them for the coronavirus.

One kindergarten was closed in Daegu as of 5 p.m. Thursday, according to the Education Ministry. The number is expected to grow, as education authorities have allowed schools near routes where confirmed patients moved around to decide whether to shut down at their own discretion.

“2020 Daegu Super Concert” featuring boy band BTS, set to be held at Daegu Stadium on March 8 and hosted by public broadcaster SBS, was postponed.

Four out of five emergency units at university hospitals in Daegu and North Gyeongsang Province, where confirmed patients visited, were shut down.

A lockdown of the city is not being reviewed, the central government said Wednesday, stressing the situation is not out of control.

Some 147 public facilities -- including eight hospitals -- and restaurants in Yeongcheon in North Gyeongsang Province, were also closed. Three people confirmed to be infected with the virus were from the city.

A 61-year-old South Korean woman, who resides in Daegu, was confirmed to be infected with the coronavirus Tuesday.

On Wednesday, at least 15 more people linked to the woman, the country’s 31st patient, tested positive for the virus. Among them, 14 attended the same church service as her and one person came into contact with her at a hospital in Daegu, according to health authorities.

The nine-story building of Shincheonji Church of Jesus, the Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony, in Daegu, was closed, with the church’s services and gatherings across the country suspended.

The 31st patient is believed to have joined the church service on Sunday from 8 a.m. alongside some 400 others. She attended the service on Feb. 9 as well, along with 600 others.

As of Wednesday, there are a total of 51 confirmed cases of the virus in South Korea.

Communiqué du KCDC du 19/02:

<https://www.cdc.go.kr/board/board.es?mid=a30402000000&bid=0030>

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200220000656&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200220000656&ACE_SEARCH=1)

COVID-19 tests at doctors’ discretion regardless of symptoms, travel records

By Kim So-hyun

Published : Feb 20, 2020 - 14:36

Starting Thursday, anyone can be tested for COVID-19 at doctors’ discretion, regardless of his or her overseas travel record.

People who have not traveled to China can be tested for the coronavirus if they have been in contact with someone who has traveled to the country and show respiratory symptoms or fever, according to the latest guidelines from the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Those who have been admitted to hospitals for pneumonia of unknown cause must be isolated in single rooms or negative pressure wards, and be tested for the coronavirus.

COVID-19 testing has been conducted at doctors' discretion since Feb. 7, but the definition of suspected cases has been widened and specified in the sixth edition of the KCDC guidelines on tackling the virus, which are being applied from Thursday.

Examples of suspected cases include pneumonia patients who do not require in-patient treatment and those who have contacted people who showed respiratory symptoms or fever within 14 days of traveling to countries that have confirmed cases.

The guidelines also made clear that Hong Kong and Macao are included when discussing travel records to China.

Contact with confirmed cases and anyone who has traveled to China is considered a major risk factor, as the new coronavirus spreads easily in the early stage of infection when there are no symptoms.

The criteria for releasing contacts of confirmed cases from the 14-day quarantine has also been toughened.

Even if they do not show any symptoms, close contacts of confirmed cases, such as health care providers, caregivers and people who live with confirmed cases, are required to be tested for COVID-19 on their 13th day of isolation. Other cases where testing is deemed necessary by an epidemiologist will also be tested.

The contacts can be released from quarantine only if they test negative on the 13th day and show no symptoms.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200219000152&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200219000152&ACE_SEARCH=1)

S. Korea reports 5 more cases of novel coronavirus, total now at 51

By Yonhap

Published : Feb 19, 2020 - 10:04

The number of people being checked for the virus and under quarantine came to 1,030 as of early Wednesday, up from 818 the day before the KCDC said in a release. South Korea has screened 10,411 people for COVID-19 since Jan. 3, with 9,335 testing negative and 12 people having been discharged from quarantine after making full recoveries.

The KCDC said Tuesday that the country is entering a "new phase" with some confirmed cases not linked to existing spreads, which means that those patients are judged to have contracted the COVID-19 virus without traveling abroad or coming into contact with other infected patients.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200220000241&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200220000241&ACE_SEARCH=1)

The KCDC said 1,001 members of the church are asked to self-isolate to contain the spread of the virus.

The public health authorities said earlier it is still unclear how the 31st patient contracted the virus as she had not made contact with other confirmed patients or been abroad recently.

The number of people being checked for the virus and under quarantine came to 1,633 as of early Thursday, up from 1,030 earlier in the day, the KCDC said. South Korea has screened 12,161 people for COVID-19 since Jan. 3, with 10,446 testing negative and 16 patients having been discharged from quarantine after making full recoveries.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/27/world/asia/coronavirus-south-korea.html>

### **South Korean Leader Said Coronavirus Would ‘Disappear.’ It Was a Costly Error.**

Opposition politicians are vowing to make what they call Moon Jae-in’s incompetence the top election issue for April 15 parliamentary polls.

There were 28 cases of the coronavirus in South Korea on Feb. 13. Four days had passed without a new confirmed infection. President Moon Jae-in predicted that the outbreak would “disappear before long,” while the prime minister assured people that it was OK not to wear surgical masks outdoors.

As it turns out, the virus had been rapidly spreading at the time through a large, secretive church in Daegu, where it has since mushroomed into the largest epidemic of the coronavirus outside China, with 2,022 cases, including 13 deaths.

Now the president is facing a political backlash over his response as the number of cases continues to climb — 505 new infections on Thursday alone.

DESSIN phase 2:

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074019>

### **Fear is breeding host of viral scams Feb 20,2020**

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074056>

The Ministry of Food and Drug Safety cracked down on a company in Gwangju last Thursday for hoarding more than four million masks. The masks are worth around 7.3 billion won (\$613 million), according to the ministry. The company allegedly began hoarding masks soon after China confirmed the first case of the coronavirus, from Dec. 12 through the end of January. The stockpiled masks amount to about 41 percent of the Korea’s daily production. The ministry says it plans to charge the company for violating the price stability law.

Mask hoarders have also become a target for the National Tax Service (NTS). The NTS launched a tax investigation into an individual who hoarded more than 2 million masks. The individual is suspected of tax evasion and using a loan account to buy masks.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200220000902&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200220000902&ACE_SEARCH=1)

### **S. Korea reports 1st death from coronavirus**

By Yonhap

Published : Feb 20, 2020

South Korea reported the nation's first death from the new coronavirus, with the number of confirmed cases surpassing 100, officials said Thursday.

The patient, who had been under treatment at a hospital in the southeastern city of Cheongdo, died earlier in the day, health officials said.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200220000840&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200220000840&ACE_SEARCH=1)  
Coronavirus cases double in a day to surpass 100

Seoul reports first death, presumably related to COVID-19; Daegu fears becoming Korea's Wuhan with largest cluster

By Park Han-na

Published : Feb 20

Given the situation, the government is adjusting strategies to prevent the virus' spread to a wider public, the official said, which includes raising the infectious disease alert level to the highest. Korea is currently at the third-highest readiness level in the four-tier system.

Fears ran rampant in the southern city of Daegu and nearby North Gyeongsang Province, where 70 people were confirmed to have contracted the virus. In just 24 hours through Thursday afternoon, the area saw 53 new cases confirmed.

President Moon Jae-in vowed to mobilize all available resources to the virus-stricken Daegu during a phone conversation with Mayor Kwon Young-jin. The central government plans to send medical professionals and facilities to help the city deal with snowballing cases.

Among the new cases, 39 people are linked with the Sincheonji Church of Jesus, a Christian sect to which the 61-year-old woman, who tested positive Tuesday, belongs.

KCDC Director Jung Eun-kyeong said 1,001 church members who attended services with the woman are now in self-isolation at home. But the public health agency is leaning toward the possibility that the woman could have contracted the virus via a secondary infection. She has been considered to be a potential "superspreader."

In a phone survey conducted by health authorities, 90 church members answered to having symptoms so far, although 396 people could not be reached.

On Thursday, the government started to check those who showed suspicious symptoms for the novel virus regardless of their overseas travel history, in a bid for early detection.

Among Thursday's newly confirmed patients in Daegu, two are teachers at an art institute and child care center. Their workplaces were shut down and colleagues were told to self-isolate.

In Seoul, a 74-year-old man received a positive result late Wednesday from a local community health center he visited for showing symptoms of pneumonia.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074057>

## **Blue House accepts all suggestions by chaebol** Feb 20,2020

During an economic ministers' meeting held Wednesday, Finance Minister Hong Nam-ki actively encouraged the public to eat at restaurants to help small businesses affected by the coronavirus outbreak, adding that government canteens will be closed once or twice a week to compel government employees to eat at private restaurants.

"The government will do its best in turning the crisis to an opportunity," Blue House spokesman Yoon said.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200221000151&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200221000151&ACE_SEARCH=1)

New threats emerge in outbreak while China voices optimism

By AP

Published : Feb 21, 2020

The latest front in the widening global fight against COVID-19 emerged in Daegu, South Korea, where the city's 2.5 million residents were urged to stay inside, wearing masks even indoors to stem further infection.

Mayor Kwon Young-jin made a nationally televised appeal for those preventative measures, warning that a rash of new cases could overwhelm the health system. He pleaded for help from the country's central government.

Daegu and surrounding towns reported 35 new cases of the coronavirus on Thursday.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074058>

## **First double-digit increase in infections**

**Cases go up to 51 after Patient No. 31 went to Daegu church services** Feb 20,2020

Twenty people were confirmed infected with the new coronavirus in Korea Wednesday, 14 traced to a church in Daegu visited by Patient No. 31.

Patient No. 31, a 61-year-old Korean woman from Daegu, was diagnosed Tuesday, but health officials said it was unclear whether she infected the other patients. It's possible she contracted the disease from one of them or another churchgoer who has yet been diagnosed.

It was the first time health officials reported a double-digit increase in the number of infections in a single day.

When Patient No. 31 went to the church on Feb. 9 and last Sunday, she was being treated at Saeronan Oriental Medical Hospital for a car accident that occurred on Feb. 6. She was hospitalized at the hospital for 10 days from Feb. 7, but Daegu officials said she left the hospital several times because her injuries were minor.

Patient No. 31 faced criticism Wednesday as news spread she was offered a coronavirus test while at the hospital but refused, claiming she didn't need it because she hadn't come from China. Netizens pounced on rumors she seemed to have roamed around

Daegu while exhibiting symptoms and refused to inform local officials about her travel routes after getting diagnosed.

Daegu officials acknowledged she was “uncooperative.”

“I think Patient No. 31 is feeling pressured now that her personal information is being revealed,” said Daegu Mayor Kwon. “In the beginning of our investigation, it’s true she was uncooperative.”

A Daegu official said Wednesday that the other Daegu patients were also refusing to cooperate with the authorities in disclosing their travel routes and that was an impediment to government efforts to curtail the spread.

KCDC Director Jung Eun-kyeong admitted Wednesday in a briefing that Patient No. 31 refused the Daegu hospital’s recommendation to be tested.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200220000842&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200220000842&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Parliamentary panel passes 3 quarantine-related bills over new coronavirus

By Yonhap

Published : Feb 20, 2020 - 16:23 Updated : Feb 20, 2020

A bill to revise the quarantine act, if passed, would allow the health minister to ask the justice minister for an entry ban on foreigners coming from areas where an infectious disease is spreading or from regions at risk of such a contagion.

The act is set to be revised for the first time since it was enacted in 1954.

A revision to the infectious disease act calls for permitting the government to provide face masks to people who are vulnerable to infections when the country's contagious disease alert level is raised to the level above "caution."

The bill would also allow the health minister to order a ban on exports of face masks or hand sanitizer for a certain period when the spread of an infectious disease causes a sharp rise in prices of medical products or supply shortages.

The number of quarantine officials at the health ministry would rise to more than 100 from the current 30. The measure also calls for doctors and pharmacists to check patients' records of foreign travel via a shared information program when they prescribe medication.

A proposal to revise the medical service act is aimed at beefing up the country's infection monitoring system targeting patients, their family and health workers. (Yonhap)

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200221000280&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200221000280&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Seoul city to ban rallies, Shincheonji church services to curb virus

By Yonhap

Published : Feb 21,

As part of drastic measures to curb the sprawling new coronavirus, the Seoul city government on Friday said it will be banning rallies and closing down Shincheonji church services.

"We plan to ban use of Seoul plaza, Cheonggye plaza and Gwanghwamun plaza to protect the elderly who are susceptible to contagious diseases," Seoul Mayor Park Won-soon said in a press briefing Friday, referring to places where massive weekend rallies take place.

"The city will notify organizations that were planning massive rallies and also consult with the Seoul police agency," Park said.

Under a local health law, rallies in urban areas can be banned for public health. Those who breach the measure can be fined up to 3 million won (\$2,490).

The city mayor also announced plans to close down Seoul churches of the minor religious sect Shincheonji Church of Jesus, The Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony.

A Daegu branch of the church has emerged as a hotbed of COVID-19, with a majority of the country's cases assumed to be linked to the provincial church in the southeastern city.

As part of precautionary measures, the city government will temporary close down more than 3,000 social welfare facilities across the capital.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200219000732&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200219000732&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Wearing face masks, people go makeup free, change style

By Park Yuna

Published : Feb 19, 2020 - 17:19 Updated : Mar 20, 2020 - 16:30

After Kim Se-han, 30, a research scientist at a dairy company, was notified last month to wear a face mask in the office to prevent spread of the novel coronavirus, she started to feel a sense of freedom from a troublesome routine: wearing makeup every day.

"I used to feel pressure every morning to wear makeup, but now my colleagues and I do not put much makeup on as we started to wear masks at work," Kim said. "This is really comfortable because I do not have to care about how I would look without makeup and it saves time in the morning."

The COVID-19 outbreak is being taken very seriously in Korea, where, as of Wednesday afternoon there were 51 confirmed cases. Many people wear masks to go out every day, and the facial barriers are coming hard to come by, with some online retailers running out of stock.

As the coronavirus outbreak has forced people to wear face masks, many have opted to go makeup-free in the world's sixth-largest cosmetics market.

"I used to wear lipstick almost every day, which I got used to, but I don't have to wear it now because the face mask covers most of my face anyway," said Yoo A-mi, a 32-year-old robotics researcher in Gwangju.

"Actually it is very comfortable. ... I do not have to fix the lipstick throughout the day."  
"People visit clinics for skin troubles after wearing a mask over makeup. They are allergic to some types of face masks, so it is important to find masks that do not cause an allergic reaction," said Joo Ki-yun, a dermatologist at Vitamin Clinic.  
A post on an online community site of mothers in Paju, Gyeonggi Province, asked, "How do you all wear makeup these days when you have to? Wearing a mask is suffocating and smears makeup. This is really stressful."

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074140>

### **Opposition, public slam Moon's response Demands increase for an entry ban on travelers from China** Feb 22,2020

As of now, South Korea has only banned the entry of foreign travelers who visited or stayed in Hubei Province, the epicenter of the deadly outbreak. The Korea Medical Association already recommended Tuesday that Korea step up measures to stop all travelers who have visited any region in China from entering the country.

Despite the growing demands for an entry ban, the government made clear on Friday it has no intention to impose such measure. "We should allow entry of all travelers from outside the country," said Health and Welfare Minister Park Neung-hoo, head of the government's central crisis management center, during a media briefing Friday morning. "It is not appropriate to impose a limit on a certain country and certain nationals."

"We are seriously restricting Chinese nationals and foreigners entering Korea through China," said Park. "Before the outbreak, about 20,000 people entered from China a day, but the number went down to 4,000. Among the 4,000, 1,000 are Korean nationals."

Park also said more infections are attributed to Korean nationals who visited China, not foreign tourists from China.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074138>

Like their Korean counterparts, foreign students arriving from China will be barred from going to school and should isolate themselves for 14 days.

School officials have to give a prior notice on the 14-day quarantine measure to all students who have been to China recently.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200221000060&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200221000060&ACE_SEARCH=1)

S. Korea reports 1st military member infected with coronavirus

By Yonhap

Published : Feb 21, 2020 -

SEOUL/JEJU -- A Navy sailor on the southern island of Jeju was confirmed Friday to have contracted the new coronavirus in the first confirmed case among service personnel in South Korea, officials said.

The sailor, 22, tested positive for COVID-19 in the initial examination the previous day and was finally confirmed earlier in the day, according to the officials.

He visited his hometown, Daegu, 300 kilometers southeast of Seoul, from Feb. 13 to Tuesday. Upon returning to the base, he showed symptoms, such as coughing, prompting the authorities to immediately quarantine him at the base. He is now at a Jeju hospital.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200221000051&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200221000051&ACE_SEARCH=1)

S. Korea designates Daegu, Cheongdo as 'special care zones' over coronavirus

By Yonhap

Published : Feb 21, 2020

South Korea declared the southeastern cities of Daegu and Cheongdo are "special care zones" Friday as a cluster of coronavirus cases have been reported there in recent days.

On Thursday, the country confirmed its first death of a COVID-19 patient in the southeastern city of Cheongdo, with the total number of confirmed cases in the country surpassing 100.

Concerns about community spread have mounted as new cases surged this week in Daegu, the country's fourth-largest city and home to 2.4 million people, and its surrounding North Gyeongsang Province.

"The government will take special measures by declaring the Daegu and Cheongdo areas, where a sudden rise in confirmed cases were reported, as special care zones," Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun said at the start of a pan-government meeting over the virus.

Chung said the government will focus on preventing the virus from spreading locally.

"The government will mobilize all resources to overcome the virus," he added. (Yonhap)

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200222000019&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200222000019&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Korea's virus cases surge to 433 on church services, cluster outbreak at hospital

By Yonhap

Published : Feb 22, 2020 - 10:30 Updated : Feb 22, 2020 - 19:16

South Korea reported 229 new cases of the new coronavirus on Saturday, the largest spike in a single day since its first outbreak in late January, bringing the total number of infections in the nation to 433.

The number of COVID-19 infections here has soared in the past few days, with most infections traced to a hospital in the southeastern county of Cheongdo and a minor Christian sect in the southeastern city of Daegu, which constitute some 80 percent of the total infections here.

Daegu, where the 2.5 million inhabitants have been asked to stay indoors, and neighboring Cheongdo were designated as a "special management zone" on Friday.

Of the 229 new cases, 95 are related to Daenam Hospital in Cheongdo, where South Korea's first coronavirus fatality occurred, the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) said.

A 63-year-old man, who died of pneumonia at the hospital on Wednesday, posthumously tested positive for the virus.

On Friday, another patient died from the coronavirus at a hospital in Busan after being transferred from Daenam Hospital, the second death from the virus in South Korea. The public health agency said 62 new cases are tied to the minor Christian sect known as Shincheonji in Daegu, about 300 kilometers southeast of Seoul, and neighboring North Gyeongsang Province and other areas.

So far, a total of 114 virus cases -- nine hospital staff and 102 patients -- have been reported from Daenam Hospital, and so-called cohort isolation, the shutdown of an entire medical institution to prevent the spread of an infectious disease, was in place for the hospital, according to the health authorities.

The health authorities said 231 virus patients have been traced to the Shincheonji church's services in Daegu, according to the KCDC.

The KCDC said it has placed a total of 9,336 Shincheonji members in self-quarantine. Among them, 544 people suspected of having contracted the virus are being tested for the virus.

The country's 31st patient, a probable "super spreader," had attended the church's worship services in Daegu, and the 61-year-old South Korean woman, who tested positive for the virus earlier this week, is believed to have infected others.

But the health authorities said earlier that it is uncertain whether the patient is the source of the cluster outbreak.

The health authorities vowed to make more containment efforts as the potentially fatal illness spreads fast across the country.

The health ministry said it will allow hospitals to separate respiratory patients from others in an effort to prevent human-to-human transmissions and will also check all pneumonia patients in Daegu hospitals.

Despite the surge in the number of infections here, the authorities said they will maintain the virus alert at the third-highest, or "orange," level, but the virus response will be carried out with an urgency appropriate to the "red" level.

"Community spread of infections began in some limited areas, and we believe that Daegu and North Gyeongsang Province are in a special situation," Vice Health and Welfare Minister Kim Kang-lip told reporters on Saturday.

In a sign that the virus may further spread nationwide, other provinces, including Jeju, Chungcheong and North Jeolla, reported cases. Gyeonggi Province also reported more new cases.

Four virus cases were reported in Busan, South Korea's second-largest city with a population of 3.4 million, the first cases in the city since the country reported the first case of COVID-19 on Jan. 20.

So far, South Korea has released 18 fully recovered novel coronavirus patients from hospitals, the KCDC said.

The number of people being checked for the virus and under quarantine came to 6,037 up from 5,481 on Saturday morning, KCDC said. The country has tested a total of 21,153 suspected cases, with 15,116 testing negative.

Most virus-infected patients are stable, but about nine patients with underlying illnesses are in relatively critical conditions, the health authorities said.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074152>

## **Virus infections shoot up to 556 and death toll hits 4 le 23 FEVRIER**

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200223000036&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200223000036&ACE_SEARCH=1)

S. Korea reports 123 more coronavirus cases, 4th death

By Ock Hyun-ju

Published : Feb 23, 2020 - 10:21 Updated : Feb 23, 2020 - 12:06

South Korea reported the fourth death from the new coronavirus and 123 new cases on Sunday morning, bringing the total number of infections here to 556.

The fourth victim of COVID-19 was a 57-year-old man who had been hospitalized at Daenam Hospital in Cheongdo, North Gyeongsang Province. The third casualty from the virus was reported Saturday -- a 41-year-old man who tested positive in a posthumous examination.

Virus cases have skyrocketed here in the past few days, seeing a tenfold increase from 51 on Wednesday to 556 as of 9 a.m. Sunday, according to the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Out of the 556 infections, 306 cases were traced to the Daegu branch of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus, the Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony, and 111 cases were linked to the Daenam hospital in Cheongdo.

Of 123 new cases confirmed Sunday morning, 75 cases were tied to the church, with 63 of them being Daegu residents. Seven people are from North Gyeongsang Province, two from Gyeonggi Province, and one each from Busan, Gwangju and South Gyeongsang Province.

Health authorities are checking the health status of 9,336 members of the religious group, with the members being placed in self-isolation. More than 1,200 people reportedly said they had suspicious symptoms.

Though most of those infected with the virus, or 465 people, were from Daegu and North Gyeongsang Province, cases of the coronavirus have been confirmed in nearly every part of the country over the weekend, including Busan, Ulsan, Jeju Island and Gangwon Province.

Daegu and Cheongdo were designated as “special care zones” Friday.

Some 6,039 people are awaiting test results and, 18 people have been released after making full recoveries.

In a rare public message on Saturday night, Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun apologized for the recent spike in infections and reassured people that the virus could be contained if the public cooperates with the government’s instructions.

Chung asked people to refrain from attending mass gatherings, including rallies and religious services, to prevent the spread of the virus.

Despite the surge in the number of infections here, the government said it would not raise the four-tier virus alert level from the current “orange level” to the most serious “red level,” as the virus is spreading only in restricted areas.

Mesures prises par les entreprises:

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074168>

<https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20200228000400325>

Health and Welfare Minister Park Neung-hoo told a parliamentary committee Wednesday **19 FEVRIER** that "South Koreans who have been to China have spread the virus in Korea from the start."

About 20,000 Chinese people entered South Korea from China each day last month. From a common-sense standpoint, how can he be sure that transmissions of the virus from Chinese visitors have seldom occurred?

COVID-19 appears to have originated in Wuhan, China, and South Korea's first confirmed case was Chinese. Of course, before community spread of the virus started, some South Koreans who came from China were infected with the virus, but they likely caught the disease in China. A virus does not distinguish the nationalities of its victims, but the government blames only the Koreans. One cannot but wonder if this is the South Korean government.

Asked why the government ignored recommendations made by the Korean Medical Association seven times for blocking infection sources from China, Park said, "The Korean Society of Infectious Diseases, which is much more authoritative than the association, did not recommend the entry ban for the entire area of China."

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200223000022&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200223000022&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Major South Korean retailers said Sunday they will partially shut down some of their outlets in Seoul for disinfection measures following recent visits by patients diagnosed with the new coronavirus.

Shinsegae Department Store said its store in the posh Gangnam district will close its food court on the basement level for one day, after a patient infected with the COVID-19 virus stayed at the venue for an hour on Wednesday with her husband.

The patient attended a religious service of a minor Christian sect in Daegu, 302 kilometers southeast of Seoul, last week. Her infection was confirmed on Friday.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200223000229&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200223000229&ACE_SEARCH=1)

### **Seoul raises virus alert level to 'highest'**

South Korea reports more deaths as coronavirus cases spike; Reopening of schools delayed by one week

By Ock Hyun-ju

Published : Feb 23, 2020

South Korea raised its alert level for the COVID-19 virus to the highest level Sunday, as the country reported additional deaths from the new coronavirus and a further spike in infections.

As of Sunday afternoon, the number of infections surged by 169 to 602, with most of the new cases traced to the Daegu branch of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus, according to the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The number of deaths from COVID-19 rose to six, with three more deaths reported Sunday.

“The COVID-19 situation is facing the grave turning point. The next days are very crucial,” President Moon Jae-in said at a pan-national meeting on responding to the virus outbreak.

The government will step up efforts to rein in the spread of the virus by raising the four-tier alert level by one notch to the highest “red” level, marking the first time since the outbreak of Influenza A (H1N1) in 2009.

“There is a possibility of the virus spreading nationwide,” Health Minister Park Neung-hoo said at a briefing Sunday, adding “proactive response is needed” given the rapid speed at which the virus is spreading.

Under the highest-level alert, issued when the virus starts to spread nationwide, the government will set up a pan-national control tower headed by Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun. The control tower has a mandate to take such measures as restricting operation of public transport, temporarily closing schools, reducing the number of flights and banning large-scale events.

The Ministry of Education said the start of the new semester for kindergartens, elementary, middle and high schools as well as special schools will be delayed by one week to March 9.

Cases of the disease have skyrocketed here in the past few days, having seen a twelfefold increase from 51 on Wednesday to 602 as of 4 p.m. Sunday.

Out of the 602 infections, 329 cases have been traced to the Daegu branch of the Shincheonji Church and at least 112 cases were linked to the Daenam hospital in Cheongdo. Three of the five deaths were linked to the hospital.

Seven of the patients were in critical condition as of Sunday afternoon, the KCDC said.

The death rate in Korea from COVID-19 stands at 0.8 percent.

Of 169 new cases confirmed Sunday afternoon, 95 were tied to the church, with 75 of them being Daegu residents. Health authorities are trying to identify the infection routes for the rest of the patients.

The KCDC said it is checking the health status of 9,336 members of the Daegu branch of the Shincheonji Church, with the members being placed in self-isolation. More than 1,200 people on the list reportedly said they had suspicious symptoms, and 293 of those people were tested for the virus. Some 61 doctors were dispatched to carry out virus screening tests for the rest of them by Monday, the agency said.

Moon asked the public, religious groups and civic organizations to refrain from engaging in collective events for public safety.

Meanwhile, a 4-year-old girl was diagnosed with the coronavirus in Daegu on Sunday. She is youngest patient in the country so far.

Though most of those infected with the virus, 494 people, have been from Daegu or North Gyeongsang Province, cases of the coronavirus were confirmed in nearly every part of the country over the weekend, including Busan, Ulsan, Jeju Island and Gangwon Province.

In Seoul, a second case was confirmed at Eunpyeong St. Mary's Hospital on Sunday morning. The 63-year-old male patient is believed to have contracted the virus from a 35-year-old hospital worker, who tested positive Friday. That hospital worker came into contact with 302 people, according to the health agency.

Ulsan is also on alert as a 27-year-old woman, at the center of the first confirmed case in the city, joined a service Feb. 9 at the Daegu branch of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus, and another at the Ulsan branch on Feb. 16. The municipality said it will check church members for infection.

In Busan, the number of those infected with the virus rose to 17 as of Sunday noon, with at least eight of them linked to a church in Busan. The patients went on a two-day workshop in a group of about 150, according to the Busan City government.

In Gwangju, six more people were infected with the virus as of Sunday morning. All those cases have been traced to the Shincheonji Church in Daegu.

North Gyeongsang Province reported 25 more infections as of Sunday morning. At least 18 of those infected had made a group pilgrimage to Israel earlier this month and were later confirmed to be infected with the virus.

Daegu and Cheongdo were designated as "special care zones" Friday.

Some 8,057 people were awaiting test results as of Sunday afternoon

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200223000201&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200223000201&ACE_SEARCH=1)

'Worst yet to come' for virus outbreak in South Korea: experts

Doctors say cancel plans, stay home

By Kim Arin

Published : Feb 23, 2020 -

**For about a month since the first case was reported Jan. 20, virus control measures entailed isolating all patients in negative pressure rooms and tracing their contacts was manageable, the doctors said. These were no longer possible, as the number of cases has soared across the country in the past few days.**

"A shift in strategy is called for -- to mitigate rather than contain, because exposure in communities is inevitable at this stage," said Choi Won-seok, an infectious disease professor at Korea University School of Medicine. The "mitigation" approach is aimed at delaying the outbreak's progression so that officials and health workers can pace their response in the meantime, he explained.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200224000109&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200224000109&ACE_SEARCH=1)

11 soldiers confirmed as coronavirus patients, 7,700 in quarantine

By Yonhap

Published : Feb 24, 2020

Eleven service members have been confirmed to have the new coronavirus as of early Monday, and around 7,700 others are quarantined as part of efforts to stop the virus from spreading further into barracks, the defense ministry said.

Eight COVID-19 cases in the Army and one each in the Navy, the Air Force and the Marine Corps were confirmed as of 8 a.m. Monday, up from a total of seven cases the previous day, according to the ministry.

The four newly confirmed soldiers are suspected of having been exposed to the virus after contacting patients inside barracks, according to military officers. South Korea reported the first virus case among its service personnel on Friday.

In the wake of a leap in the number of confirmed cases over the past several days with a cluster of infections linked to a religious group in the southeastern city of Daegu and a hospital in its adjacent country of Cheongdo, the authorities checked all service personnel with a history of visiting the regions or having contact with patients, and they are currently isolating around 7,700 soldiers at their bases.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200224000580&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200224000580&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Most COVID-19 deaths in Korea linked to existing conditions

By Choi He-suk

Published : Feb 24, 2020

With the death toll and confirmed cases rising, authorities have issued funeral guidelines for COVID-linked deaths. Under the guidelines, the bodies should be cremated before any ceremony is held, provided the deceased's family agree.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074173>

Samsung factory closed over fears

Feb 24,2020

A Samsung Electronics smartphone factory ground to a halt after a factory worker was confirmed infected with the new coronavirus.

The factory worker developed a cough and fever two days later and was confirmed infected with the illness on Saturday. Her family and 30 other Samsung staff she came into contact with were asked to stay in their homes.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074215>

National museums, libraries close doors due to outbreak

Feb 25,2020

All national art galleries, museums and libraries throughout the country will be temporarily shut down due to the coronavirus outbreak, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism announced Monday.

“Since the government elevated its official alert level to the highest level on Sunday, we have decided to shut down the 24 public museums, galleries and libraries affiliated with the ministry,” the Culture Ministry said in a statement. “Starting Monday, we will be shutting them down in stages.

All lectures and classes at the center have been canceled as well, through March 2.

Guided tours at four palaces in Seoul have been put on hiatus since earlier this month, but the palace grounds will remain open to the public.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074189>

It is regrettable that the Moon administration contributed to a dramatic downgrade of our hard-earned national image through its failure to manage the situation. The foreign press points to a sixfold increase in the number of infected people in just four days. CNN reported that Korea has become the most infected country after China. Is that really what the Blue House wants?

The Israeli government even turned back a Korean passenger plane. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a tightened travel caution for U.S. citizens. Taiwan raised its travel advisory to its people by two notches, while Vietnam and Thailand canceled passenger flights to Korea.

Korea has suddenly become a country avoided by other countries despite all the work to improve its international image, including the winning of Academy Awards by the movie "Parasite." The government must reflect on what it did wrong and sincerely apologize.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074202>

Targets on our backs

Feb 25,2020

An increasing number of foreign countries are either blocking Koreans from entering their countries or imposing tough regulations. As of Tuesday, 15 countries joined the move. Among them, six countries — including Israel, Bahrain and Jordan — banned Koreans' entry, while nine countries — such as Brunei, Britain and Kazakhstan — made it mandatory to quarantine Korean travelers in an isolation facility for medical checkups. The United States ratcheted up the level of its travel advisory to "increased caution" from "normal precautions."

We can't find fault with foreign governments trying to keep their own people safe. But carrying out entry bans is a different matter. They must protect the human rights of Korean travelers.

In this sense, what happened in Israel and Mauritius was particularly disappointing. On Saturday, Israeli authorities turned back a Korean passenger plane with more than 170 Koreans onboard shortly after it arrived at Ben Gurion International Airport in Tel Aviv. What took place in Mauritius is also embarrassing. The authorities denied entry to 17 newly wedded Korean couples just because some of them showed signs of a cold. As the infection continues to spread here, Koreans will most likely continue to receive such poor treatment overseas.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200224000754&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200224000754&ACE_SEARCH=1)

The National Assembly was shut down Monday for 24 hours from 6 p.m. to be disinfected, as it was revealed that Ha Yun-su, president of the Korean Federation of Teachers' Associations, had attended a parliamentary forum last week. Ha was confirmed to be infected with COVID-19. The plenary session scheduled for Monday afternoon was canceled. The country saw eight deaths from the virus as of Monday afternoon, with a total of six linked to the hospital in Cheongdo.

A total of 16 patients were in critical condition as of Monday afternoon, according to the KCDC.

A 16-month-old baby and a four-year-old child infected with the virus were in stable condition, it, it said.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200224000221&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200224000221&ACE_SEARCH=1)  
S. Korea's virus cases soar to 763, containment of more outbreaks in Daegu in focus  
By Yonhap

Published : Feb 24, 2020

Despite an alarming surge in confirmed cases in recent days, the government has no plan to expand entry bans on foreign nationals from China's other provinces, officials said. Currently, South Korea bans foreign nationals entering the country from China's Hubei province, the epicenter of the virus outbreak.

A petition calling for President Moon Jae-in to expand entry bans to China's other provinces has exceeded 700,000.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074224>

Assembly has to cancel a session due to coronavirus, Feb 25,2020

Annulation de la session du 24 février

The National Assembly canceled its session Monday after the floor leader of the main opposition party had contact with a confirmed coronavirus patient.

The abrupt decision to cancel the session was made after Rep. Shim Jae-cheol, the floor leader of the United Future Party (UFP), took a test in the morning for a possible infection. He had contact with an infected person at a seminar on Wednesday.

Lawmakers were scheduled to hold a voting session at 2 p.m. to vote on Monday on several bills including the formation of a special committee to counter the coronavirus outbreak. The ruling Democratic Party (DP) and the main opposition UFP agreed to reschedule the session.

[https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2020/03/21/coronavirus-comment-l-assemblee-nationale-est-devenue-un-nouveau-cluster\\_6033906\\_823448.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2020/03/21/coronavirus-comment-l-assemblee-nationale-est-devenue-un-nouveau-cluster_6033906_823448.html)

Coronavirus : comment l'Assemblée nationale est devenue un nouveau « cluster »

Alors que vingt-six personnes fréquentant le Palais-Bourbon étaient déclarées contaminées le 16 mars, dont dix-huit députés, l'institution a peu à peu réalisé qu'elle était devenue un foyer de l'épidémie.

C'était il y a quatorze jours, mais c'était il y a un siècle. Jeudi 5 mars, l'Assemblée nationale se vide après des semaines d'activité intense. L'examen de la réforme des retraites vient de s'achever dans un énième débat envenimé. Les députés membres de la commission des affaires culturelles et éducation retrouvent la surface, après avoir passé trois jours au sous-sol du Palais-Bourbon sur la réforme de l'audiovisuel. Les vacances parlementaires commencent. Divin hasard, plongeant l'institution dans une quatorzaine tombée du ciel.

Dans la soirée, la nouvelle se propage : un député du groupe Les Républicains (LR) est atteint du SARS-CoV-2. Jean-Luc Reitzer, 68 ans, est hospitalisé en réanimation. C'est un élu du Haut-Rhin, un département qui est l'un des premiers foyers français de l'épidémie.

L'Assemblée nationale est alors en passe de devenir un autre « cluster ». Au moins vingt-six personnes fréquentant l'institution étaient déclarées contaminées le 16 mars, dont dix-huit députés.

A 22 h 30, un communiqué de presse de Richard Ferrand, président (La République en marche, LRM) de l'Assemblée nationale, annonce que, en plus du député, un salarié est infecté. Un serveur de la buvette, carrefour symbolique du Palais-Bourbon. L'endroit convivial par nature, où l'on vient se sustenter ou comploter, fêter l'adoption d'un projet de loi ou accompagner une longue nuit de travail

Certains parlementaires bravent les gestes barrières pourtant préconisés par les soignants. Elan gaulois bravache à l'image de ce qu'il se passe partout dans le pays. Aide-soignante de formation, Caroline Fiat, députée La France insoumise (LFI) de Meurthe-et-Moselle, enrage. « Dès que les protocoles ont été mis en place, j'ai été la première à m'énerver. Personne ne les respectait ! Au contraire, tout le monde se moquait », lance-t-elle en colère aujourd'hui. Le virus paraît encore loin, et pourtant.

Lorsqu'un cluster est identifié, la consigne de l'ARS est seulement de fermer le lieu et d'y empêcher la réunion. L'ARS ne prévient que les « cas contact » des malades, leurs voisins de commission immédiats, ceux avec qui ils ont partagé un repas, et leurs proches. Les autres ne sont pas tenus de respecter une forme d'isolement. Des collaborateurs parlementaires s'étonnent de ne pas avoir été appelés.

Le député pour lequel travaille Laura [son prénom a été changé] a été testé positif. Elle ressent des courbatures, une très grande fatigue, mais personne ne lui a dit de se confiner. « J'ai appelé l'ARS qui est restée très vague », s'étonne-t-elle, alors qu'elle pense bien avoir passé une heure au contact de son député quand il était contagieux. Un autre collaborateur parlementaire raconte avoir appris « par des tiers » que la députée pour laquelle il travaille avait été atteinte du virus. « On partage pourtant le même bureau, la même poignée de porte, la même machine à café », s'étonne-t-il.

Au même rythme que la France, l'Assemblée nationale a compris en quatorze jours qu'elle était au cœur de la pandémie.

<https://www.bfmtv.com/mediaplayer/video/coree-du-sud-des-centaines-de-personnes-font-la-queue-pour-acheter-des-masques-1224993.html>

## **Corée du sud: des centaines de personnes font la queue pour acheter des masques**

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074219>

Controversial pastor persists with rally plans

Feb 25,2020

### **MESURES JUDICIAIRES**

The Supreme Prosecutors' Office has also launched a task force team to counter crimes associated with the outbreak. Prosecutor General Yoon Seok-youl issued an order that prosecutors must aggressively investigate those who spread false information about the outbreak.

According to the Justice Ministry and the prosecution, a person who produces false information and incurs actual damage to others by distributing it will face criminal punishments for obstructing business, obstructing government administration or defamation. Defamation is punishable by up to two-years imprisonment or a fine of up to 20 million won.

Obstruction of business and government administration is punishable by up to five-years jail time or a fine of up to 15 million won.

The Sokcho branch of Chuncheon District Prosecutors' Office indicted a 54-year-old man on charges of spreading false information about a hospital in Sokcho. Another man was also indicted earlier this month for spreading rumors that a hospital in North Gyeongsang will be shut down due to the outbreak.

“Ordinary people can unknowingly and easily be a part of the dissemination of fake news,” said lawyer Kim Gwang-sam. “In the past, they were just ordered to pay fines, but stronger punishment is now possible.”

The lawmakers are also working to revise a loophole in the Infectious Disease Control and Prevention Act. Anyone who refuses to cooperate, obstruct or avoid an epidemiological investigation of an infectious disease faces criminal punishment of up to two years in jail or a fine of up to 20 million won, but the law has no clause forcing a suspected patient to take a test. The Health and Welfare Committee last week passed a revision bill, and it is pending to be voted on.

The government also plans to punish those profiteering from face masks and hand sanitizer. The Ministry of Food and Drug Safety imposed emergency orders on Feb. 12 that mask producers and sellers report to the government about their production and sales details. Any violation of the new measures or market cornering and price gouging of face masks will be punished by up to two-years imprisonment or a fine of up to 50 million won.

LS Group, a major electrical equipment group, closed its office building in Yongsan District, central Seoul, on Tuesday after one of its employees was infected with the coronavirus.

The move is the latest in a series of business lockdowns in Korea as the deadly virus, which is called Covid-19 by the World Health Organization, continues to spread throughout the country.

The 28-story LS Yongsan Tower is home to Samil PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), the largest accounting firm in Korea, as well as key LS Group companies, including LSIS and LS-Nikko Copper.

About 4,000 people work in the tower.

The worker in question is an employee of an LS company and was confirmed as infected with the coronavirus late Monday night.

The office building will remain shut through the week, and employees from the affected units are required to work from home while the building is being cleaned.

The infected worker, who lives in Gyeonggi, worked on the 16th floor. Employees working on the 16th and 15th floors will be required to self-quarantine at home for two weeks.

Amorepacific's headquarters, the iconic structure next to the LS Yongsan Tower, was closed, and all employees of the cosmetics company were asked to work from home.

As a precaution, the personal care company disinfected the building on Tuesday. Its factory in Osan, Gyeonggi, will be shut Feb. 26 and 27.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074263>

**Closing** of Seoul continues as no chances are taken

One building after the next is being locked down to stop spread

Feb 26,2020

A closure notice is posted on the gates of Lotte Department Store's Yeongdeungpo branch in western Seoul. Lotte decided to indefinitely close one of its department stores on Sunday 23 février after it was found that a person who has tested positive for the coronavirus visited the branch.

Samil PwC advised all of its employees to work from home or on-site at the offices of clients. The spread of the virus took place at the height of the audit season, but the firm said that its digitalization efforts will lessen the impact.

“We acknowledge that people are worried about a disruption in auditing, but we have made a significant investment to digitalize the process,” the firm said in a statement.

Outside of the Yongsan area, similar measures came thick and fast.

A Korean Air Lines flight attendant was found on Tuesday to be infected with the coronavirus, and the airline closed the flight attendant briefing room at Incheon International Airport.

SK Group extended flexible working hours and relaxed the rules for remote work on Monday, requesting employees avoid coming to the office if possible.

KT followed suit, ordering only 50 percent of employees to work in the office until March 6.

LG Electronics and internet companies Kakao and Naver advised workers who are pregnant or raising children under elementary school age to stay home and work there. All Samsung companies are instituting similar policies.

E-commerce or tech-focused start-ups also stepped up their efforts to protect workers from the spread of the virus.

Coupang, eBay Korea, Gmarket, Banksalad and game developer Blizzard have asked employees to work from home.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074236>

Companies establishing their first lines of defense

Checks at front doors and full shutdowns are possible options

Feb 25,2020

With the virus outbreak threatening Korea, companies are doing what they can, incrementally upping their defenses against the contagion.

Much of what they are doing involves creating a first line of defense at their office doors. This includes visual heat sensors, manual checks for fevers and stations for sanitizing hands.

For some companies, the possibility of infection means shutting down sites altogether. Factories, department stores, supermarket chains and entire factories have been closed temporarily out of an abundance of caution.

At Hyundai Motor, anyone with a temperature above 37 degrees Celsius (98.6 degrees Fahrenheit) is advised to check again three minutes later. The person will be sent home if the final figure is above 37.5 degrees Celsius. Outsiders are forbidden altogether.

“With the [government having] raised the level of danger of Covid-19 from caution to serious, preventive measures for [the] Yangjae headquarters will be escalated. Company outsiders will be restricted from entering the building,” read a message sent out to Hyundai Motor staff on Monday.

For contact between employees, face-to-face meetings have been postponed or replaced with video sessions. Employment interviews for preselected job candidates have been postponed indefinitely.

On Monday, LG Electronics and CJ Group completely shut their Seoul headquarters buildings.

Several SK Group companies pushed back working hours on Monday, allowing the workers to come to the office by 10 a.m. The intention was to help them avoid taking public transportation during peak times.

The SK Holdings office in Seorin-dong, central Seoul, normally allows its employees to choose seats reserved through a mobile app. By default, the app does not allow employees to work on the same floor for more than three days in a row. This setting was adjusted on Monday in order to minimize movement inside the building.

Lotte Group, which has retail operations in central Seoul and a cluster of offices in Songpa District, southern Seoul, ordered employees to refrain from visiting each other’s offices. Meetings with more than two participants are to be done by phone. If they must meet in person, masks must be worn. Employees with outside appointments were advised to head straight home after the meeting.

Steelmaker Posco told workers who reside in or have visited Daegu to share their routes with the company.

On Monday, LG Electronics closed its Incheon research and development center after a family member of an employee was confirmed to have the coronavirus on Saturday. The employee in question is still waiting for the results of the test, and the company explained the measure is preventive. The center has 2,500 employees.

The Samsung Electronics smartphone factory in Gumi, North Gyeongsang, restarted operations Monday after being closed over the weekend. This plant manufactures the Galaxy Z Flip and Galaxy S20, the newest smartphone releases by the tech giant.

But more than a thousand workers will stay home after either contacting an employee confirmed with the virus or visiting Daegu, the city with the most infection cases in Korea.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074237>

Korea considers 'containing' areas infected by virus

Feb 25,2020

Korea is considering a "containment policy" for Daegu and North Gyeongsang to control the coronavirus outbreak, stoking fears in the country's southeastern regions that the area might be placed under a lockdown resembling that of Wuhan, China.

Asked what he meant by containment measures, Hong replied that authorities were "reviewing the use of certain administrative authority" to restrict people's "movements," saying further details will be revealed in the coming days after a Cabinet meeting.

Shortly after local media outlets started going to town with reports that the government may impose a virtual lockdown on the Daegu and North Gyeongsang area, the DP explained in a text message to reporters that Hong was not referring to a lockdown and that he meant authorities would "tighten the quarantine system" to stop the spread of the virus among local communities.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200225000794&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200225000794&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Chinese students returning from winter break face 14-day isolation

By Yonhap

Published : Feb 25, 2020

Chinese students enrolled in South Korean universities are returning in growing numbers this week after their winter break in China ahead of the start of the spring semester, putting local health authorities and school officials on the highest alert to halt the spread of the coronavirus outbreak.

Most local universities have already mapped out plans to isolate their Chinese students in separate dormitory buildings for about two weeks, the known incubation period of COVID-19, and closely monitor their health conditions and movements.

According to the Ministry of Education, approximately 19,000 Chinese students are expected to come back to South Korea between this week and the end of March.

The ministry's recent survey found that about 38,000 of some 70,000 Chinese students enrolled nationwide were staying outside South Korea as of last week. Half of those staying abroad expressed an intention to return by end-March, with the other half having yet to fix their return date.

The ministry recently advised Chinese students who have not booked their return tickets to take the semester off, while local universities may delay the new school year by up to four weeks at the recommendation of the government.

Ministry officials say the actual number of those returning to the country may fall short of the estimate, amid growing Chinese concern about a huge rise in infections among South Koreans.

Domestic universities are still taking extra precautions to ensure that their Chinese students avoid contact with other students on and around campus.

Most of the Chinese students arriving at Incheon International Airport, west of Seoul, are being greeted by school officials armed with gowns, masks, gloves, goggles and other protective equipment before being ushered onto disinfected buses heading for school dorms.

Chinese students who don't enter a dormitory are asked to quarantine themselves in their own residence and are prohibited from visiting campus for 14 days.

Seoul's Kyunghee University, which has 3,839 enrolled Chinese students, the largest among domestic universities, began to receive returnees from China this week, ahead of the start of the spring semester slated for March 16.

The university transports its Chinese students by a disinfected bus from the Incheon airport to its main campus in eastern Seoul after having them undergo a brief medical checkup, including temperature measurement, at the airport clinic.

Before entering a designated dormitory, the Chinese students are additionally required to have their body temperatures measured and are asked questions about their health conditions.

They will be provided with one dormitory room with a private bathroom, as well as meals and daily necessities, for two weeks.

"Some Chinese students have canceled their flights to Seoul or delayed their departure dates after the number of coronavirus cases surged in Korea from last week," said an official at Kyunghee University. "The number of Chinese students returning from China could be smaller than expected."

Universities in provincial cities have taken similar quarantine measures for their Chinese students.

Kangwon National University in Chuncheon, 85 kilometers east of Seoul, admitted 52 Chinese students into a dorm building by Tuesday.

The school offered face masks, hand sanitizer and thermometers to the Chinese students who will be isolated in separate rooms for 14 days.

They should check their body temperatures twice a day and record it on the checklist attached to the front door.

As some universities may not have enough space at their dormitories to quarantine all students from China, municipalities of Seoul and other cities have offered to provide temporary accommodations for them.

In Seoul, the government and schools plan to monitor students' health twice a day and run a mobile app where students will be able to report their health conditions. (Yonhap)

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200225000788&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200225000788&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Potential clusters of COVID-19 virus emerge outside Daegu

By Ock Hyun-ju

Published : Feb 25, 2020

Potential clusters of the virus appear to be emerging outside Daegu.

In Seoul, a pastor at Myungsung Church in eastern Seoul, who attended a Sunday service on Feb. 16 along with 2,000 people, was confirmed to be infected with the virus Tuesday. A relative of the pastor also tested positive.

According to the church, the pastor attended a funeral service held at Cheongdo Daenam Hospital on Feb. 14 with some five church members. Myungsung Church was shut down and the upcoming Sunday service was canceled.

Some 21 people at a facility for the severely disabled -- including 11 inmates, five caretakers and five other staff members -- in Chilgok, North Gyeongsang Province, tested positive Tuesday, after a 46-year-old inmate was confirmed infected a day earlier. Some 56 people are housed there.

A cabin crew member of Korean Air tested positive for the coronavirus, the Korean airline said Tuesday, with details of the routes and flights where the crew member worked not yet identified.

In Busan, most cases, 21 of 38 as of Tuesday morning, are tied to a church in the city. Most of them went on a two-day trip with a confirmed patient, the 19-year-old son of a Wuhan resident. A nursing hospital in the city was placed under cohort isolation, with some 200 patients and medical staff inside, as one of the caretakers had been infected with the virus.

The government said it is not considering expanding an entry ban on Chinese people amid growing public concerns as Chinese students are set to return to Korea for the spring semester. Currently, only those flying from Wuhan, Hubei province, the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak, are prohibited from entering the country.

The fast spread of the novel coronavirus is also disrupting the schedule for state exams.

This year's civil service exams scheduled for Saturday have been temporarily suspended, according to the Ministry of Personnel Management.

Some 20 patients were in critical condition as of Tuesday morning.

A total of 22 people have been released after making a full recovery, and 13,880 people were awaiting test results as of Tuesday afternoon.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/petition-to-impeach-moon-over-south-korea-handling-of-coronavirus-as-cases-hit-1261>

**Petition to impeach Moon over South Korea handling of coronavirus as cases hit 1,261**

A security guard with a mask stands in front of the electronics shop in Seoul, on Feb 25, 2020, as South Korean President Moon Jae-in appears on TV. PHOTO: NYTIMES  
Published

Feb 26, 2020, 7:49 pm SGT

[Facebook Twitter https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/petition-to-impeach-moon-over-south-korea-handling-of-coronavirus-as-cases-hit-1261](https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/petition-to-impeach-moon-over-south-korea-handling-of-coronavirus-as-cases-hit-1261)

[Chang May Choon](mailto:changmc@sph.com.sg)

South Korea Correspondent

<mailto:changmc@sph.com.sg>

SEOUL - More than 730,000 people in South Korea have signed a petition to impeach President Moon Jae-in over what they claim is the government's mishandling of the [outbreak of Covid-19](#) in the country.

The [number of infections](#) continued to surge, hitting 1,261 on Wednesday (Feb 26).

The petition criticised Mr Moon for not banning all visitors from China, where the coronavirus originated, and for sending three million face masks to China. Only visitors from China's Hubei province are banned from entering South Korea.

The death tally stands at 12, including a 36-year-old Mongolian who flew in for a liver transplant but caught the virus while in hospital.

A total of 284 new cases were reported yesterday, with most of them linked to [two clusters of infections](#) in the south-eastern city of Daegu and nearby Cheongdo. There are 49 cases in Seoul and 58 in Busan, coming mainly from small clusters of outbreaks at churches and hospitals.

The authorities have said that [mass infections in the country](#) started from a Feb 16 church service by the Daegu branch of the [secretive Shincheonji Church of Jesus](#).

The church has submitted a list of its 212,000 members nationwide to the government, so health officials can start testing those who have flu-like symptoms.

Even as the government goes all out to curb the spread of the virus, such as revising an infectious disease act to fine people up to three million won (S\$3,450) for refusing to a test for the virus and limiting the export of face masks to 10 per cent of the output, criticism of the Moon administration's initial laidback response has grown.

The petition calling for his impeachment was filed with the presidential Blue House on Feb 4.

Related Story

[Coronavirus microsite: Get latest updates, videos and graphics](#)

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/wuhan-virus-follow-our-coverage>

The petitioner wrote: "Seeing Moon Jae-in's response to the new coronavirus, I feel that he is more of a President for China than Korea.

"We cannot just watch this catastrophe any more.... I call for impeachment."

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200226000233&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200226000233&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Parliament reopens after closure due to coronavirus

By Yonhap

Published : Feb 26, 2020

South Korea's parliament reopened on Wednesday morning, after it was closed down two days ago due to concerns of coronavirus infection.

The National Assembly called off a plenary session and shuttered its main buildings on Monday after it was discovered that a person infected with COVID-19 attended a parliamentary forum last week organized by a lawmaker from the opposition United Future Party (UFP).

It was the first time the National Assembly had been shut down for an emergency.

Three UFP lawmakers who sat close to the patient at the conference underwent virus testing Monday and the results were negative.

The National Assembly is scheduled to convene a plenary session in the afternoon to deal with three revision bills that would allow the country to better fight the epidemic.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200226000896&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200226000896&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Churches in Korea consider canceling Sunday services as coronavirus spreads

By Song Seung-hyun

Published : Feb 26, 2020 - 17:37

Protestant churches in South Korea are considering canceling Sunday worship services this week due to the spread of COVID-19.

The disease became an even more serious concern for churches after a pastor at Myungsung Church in eastern Seoul, which has more than 100,000 members, was diagnosed with the virus on Tuesday. He is reported to have attended several services on Feb. 16.

Myungsung Church announced Tuesday that it is shutting down its facility and its Sunday services will be canceled until further notice. The church also added that it would proceed with worship services through online channels.

There are more than 100 Protestant megachurches in Korea -- churches with congregations of at least 10,000.

Some of these megachurches say they have made no decisions about whether to hold Sunday services as scheduled.

“Since there are a few days until this Sunday’s worship service, we are still discussing the matter. We will make an announcement by tomorrow noon at the latest,” SaRang Church spokesperson Park Seung-ho told The Korea Herald. The church has more than 90,000 followers.

Last week, the SaRang Church held Sunday services as usual. At the time, the church had installed five cameras at its main entrances to detect anyone with a fever. The church also asked anyone with virus symptoms to participate in worship through its online channel, SaRang TV.

Another megachurch, the Yoido Full Gospel Church, which has more than 560,000 followers, also said it had not yet made a decision.

“We know that there is criticism on some churches taking time to come up with their decision about canceling Sunday services. It is because protestant churches do not have a top-down decision-making system,” The National Council of Churches in Korea official Son Seung-ho said. “We respect each church’s decision and even within churches they have a system similar to parliament, so it takes a bit of time to make certain decisions like this.”

The National Council of Churches also added that some Christians value tradition and think that it is crucial to attend Sunday services.

“If you look at Korean Church’s history, it is understandable as people even attended Sunday services at hard times like when the country was a Japanese colony,” Son added.

Other churches have decided not to hold Sunday services in person and have asked followers to take part online.

“We decided to shut down our church until March 14,” the Onnuri Church said in a statement Tuesday. The church also added that its Sunday services would be held through its YouTube channel. According to its website, the Onnuri Church had over 82,500 followers as of 2011.

There was speculation that megachurches were hesitant to suspend their activities due to financial concerns.

“It can be one of the reasons,” Son, an official of The National Council of Church in Korea said. “Especially for megachurches, not having one or two weeks of Sunday service can mean losing billions of won. But it is not the main reason.”

Followers also added that offerings can be made online.

“There is an online bank account for our church. We can send our offerings there,” a member of the Onnuri Church said.

“Even before the virus broke out, churches had a system to collect money through an online bank account for followers who live outside of Korea. The offerings cannot be a problem,” said another Protestant church follower, who did not wish to be identified.

As the virus spreads day by day, the government is also asking churches to close their doors.

“We sent out guidelines on the coronavirus several times to religious groups, including Protestant churches. Since other religious groups, like Catholic churches and Buddhist groups, decided to shut down temporarily, we asked Christian churches to do the same. But for religious groups, we can only make recommendations and cannot force them to shut down,” Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism official Lee Hee-ryong told The Korea Herald.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200226000801&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200226000801&ACE_SEARCH=1)  
S. Korea's coronavirus cases exceed 1,200

By Ock Hyun-ju

Published : Feb 26, 2020

Concerns are growing after a pastor at Myungsung Church was confirmed to be infected Tuesday. Health authorities identified some 348 people who had come into close contact with the pastor, who is believed to have joined a Feb. 15 service with about 2,000 in attendance.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200226000748&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200226000748&ACE_SEARCH=1)  
Government takes steps to enhance accessibility to face masks and hospital beds

By Park Han-na

Published : Feb 26, 2020

From Thursday, 5 million facial masks, half of the total of daily domestic production, becomes available to consumers through state-run or public retailers such as the Korea Post, Nonghyup and pharmacies.

The government will supply 1 million protective masks to Daegu and North Gyeongsang Province after consulting with providers.

“The stock that will be sold by public retailers will be offered to special disaster areas and medically necessary places first and then will be released to vulnerable groups and vulnerable workplaces,” Food and Drug Safety Minister Lee Eui-kyung said at a press briefing.

Under a special rule, effective from Wednesday until April 30, the government will limit mask exports to a maximum of 10 percent of total output.

Such measures are designed to cope with skyrocketing demand for sanitary products that have led to the hoarding and reselling of face masks in illegal profiteering.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200227000196&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200227000196&ACE_SEARCH=1)  
S. Korea's virus infections near 1,600, new cases center on hardest-hit Daegu, church followers

By Yonhap

Published : Feb 27, 2020 - 10:14 Updated : Feb 27, 2020 - 15:08

South Korea reported another daily spike in the number of new infections of the new coronavirus on Thursday, and more additional cases may be identified in the hardest-hit city of Daegu and its neighboring regions as virus tests started on more than 210,000 members of a religious sect at the center of the rapid spread.

The whopping 334 new cases took the nation's total infections to 1,595, according to the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A 74-year-old virus patient who is tied to the religious sect in Daegu died of respiratory failure earlier Thursday, bringing the nation's death toll to 13.

About 46 percent of confirmed cases here are tied to a branch of a religious sect in the southeastern city of Daegu.

Amid lingering concerns about a so-called community spread, sporadic cases in other cities and provinces have been growing.

Untraceable virus cases or confirmed cases that are in the process of having their origins tracked down stood at 717, accounting for 45 percent of all infections.

Only 2.1 percent of total infections, or 33 cases, are tied to people who had recently traveled overseas or come in contact with them, the KCDC said.

A 28-year-old Korean national, who was evacuated from the Chinese city of Wuhan, the epicenter of the virus, on Jan. 31, has fully recovered from the virus and will be discharged from a hospital later in the day, KCDC Director-General Jeong Eun-kyeong said.

Of the 334 new cases, 307 are in Daegu, 300 kilometers southeast of Seoul, and four are in neighboring North Gyeongsang Province. The number of total infections in Daegu and North Gyeongsang stood at 1,017 and 321, respectively.

Other major provinces and cities have also reported some infections, with Seoul reporting another six cases, the KCDC said in a statement.

In an alarming sign that the novel coronavirus is spreading more widely in South Korea, the total number of cases in the capital of Seoul and Busan, the second-largest city, rose to 55 and 58, respectively.

Since raising the virus alert level to "red," the highest level, on Sunday, health authorities have focused on halting the spread of the virus in Daegu, the epicenter of the virus outbreak here, and North Gyeongsang Province.

Experts said the number of confirmed cases is expected to jump in the coming days as health authorities began testing more than 210,000 members of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus at the center of the rapid spread in other provinces.

South Korea confirmed its first new coronavirus case from a Chinese woman from Wuhan, the epicenter of the virus outbreak, on Jan. 20, but the pace of infections had not been alarming until Feb. 18, when a 61-year-old woman who is tied to the Daegu branch of Shincheonji tested positive for the virus.

Vice Health Minister Kim Gang-lip said in a daily briefing that authorities are expected to complete virus tests on Shincheonji members in Daegu within two or three days. Tests on about 1,300 Shincheonji members who have shown symptoms have been completed, Kim said.

A total of 114 people, including 10 medical workers, have been diagnosed with the virus at Daenam Hospital in Cheongdo, just south of Daegu. More than half of the fatalities in the country are related to the hospital, where most patients have mental illnesses.

Kim said the government will transfer 60 patients at the hospital to another hospital in Seoul for better treatment.

Despite an alarming surge in confirmed cases in recent days, the government again said it has no plan to expand entry bans on foreign nationals from China's other provinces.

Currently, South Korea bans foreign nationals entering the country from China's Hubei province, where Wuhan is located.

A petition calling for President Moon to expand entry bans to China's other provinces has exceeded 700,000.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200226000947&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200226000947&ACE_SEARCH=1)

South Korean Catholic Church suspends Masses amid coronavirus outbreaks

By Yonhap

Published : Feb 26, 2020 - 23:22 Updated : Feb 26, 2020 - 23:34

South Korea's Catholic Church has decided to suspend all public Masses across the country, the first such decision in the church's 236-year history, to combat the spread of the novel coronavirus.

All 16 dioceses of the Catholic Church made the decision since the dioceses of Daegu, the southeastern city hit hardest by

COVID-19 outbreaks, first suspended its public Mass a week earlier, the church said Wednesday.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200227000879&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200227000879&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Big Protestant churches have no plan to cancel services despite outbreak

By Yonhap

Published : Feb 27, 2020

Many big Protestant churches in Seoul have still remained reluctant to suspend their Sunday services this coming weekend, raising concerns over possible mass infections of the coronavirus.

Yeouido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, the biggest Christian church in South Korea with 560,000 followers, has stopped holding weekday public events and gatherings of its worshipers other than the authorized services.

It said the upcoming service Sunday will take place as scheduled, asking its worshipers to wear face masks when attending the chapel.

Other mega-sized churches, including Kwanglim Methodist Church and Sarang Community Church in southern Seoul, which have 80,000 and 90,000 believers, respectively, have not yet announced plans to cancel their Sunday services.

But some Protestant churches have been moving swiftly to scale back or halt their gatherings in order to join the nationwide effort to prevent further COVID-19 infections.

Myungsung Church, located in eastern Seoul, has closed its facilities and suspended all activities and meetings, including services, after two of its members, including a pastor, were confirmed to be infected with the virus. The church is one of the biggest Presbyterian churches in the world with 80,000 followers.

The pastor attended a church service on Feb. 16 with roughly 2,000 participants. The church said 215 followers who had close contact with him have gone through virus testing, with 142 of them having tested negative.

Somang Presbyterian Church, located in the south of the capital city, said earlier it would suspend all public gatherings, including Sunday services.

The decision coincided with the confirmed virus infection of one of its members on Tuesday. The member visited the church on Feb. 16.

Culture Minister Park Yang-woo on Thursday asked the Protestant Church to cooperate in the government-led preventive measures.

"Many public gatherings take place in religious facilities, so the religious community has to take action more thoroughly," he said during a visit to the Seoul headquarters of the Korean Methodist Church. "As preemptive measures, it is necessary to suspend, cut down or postpone public events and replace services with online ones."

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200227000901&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200227000901&ACE_SEARCH=1)

## **Drive-thru clinics, drones: Korea's new weapons in virus fight**

Experts say at-home testing kits risky, lack accuracy

By Kim Arin

Published : Feb 27, 2020 -

South Korea is trying new ploys to battle the novel coronavirus outbreak, with two of the latest being drive-thru clinics and disinfecting drones.

Goyang, Gyeonggi Province, set up a drive-thru testing facility on Wednesday, where symptom checks, sample collection and payment receipt are done in one-stop fashion in under 10 minutes.

Gyeonggi Province communications official Park Hyun-su told The Korea Herald that the checkups at the drive-thru are about 20 minutes faster than the typical way done at hospitals or public health centers. About 100 people a day visit the temporary clinic in Goyang, which is set to run every day between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. until March 11.

Park said the service will soon be introduced in other regions of the province, with the next expected to be installed in Bucheon. Other cities outside Gyeonggi Province with drive-thru clinics are Daegu and Sejong.

Goyang native Lee Ki-jung, 31, said the drive-thru clinic felt less daunting than visiting state-designated health institutions.

“It’s good knowing that I can make a quick stop if I started having symptoms,” he said. “Plus, it would lessen my chance of running into a virus patient and becoming infected or having to be isolated.”

Demand for COVID-19 tests is high, as its early symptoms are known to be indistinguishable from those of flu or the common cold.

Inquiries from confused patients spiked after the government announced on Monday that three- to four-day self-quarantine is recommended for all those having respiratory symptoms or fever, a nurse at an internal medicine clinic said.

She said the drive-thru clinics would spare patients from risky visits to doctor’s offices where they may come into contact with infectious persons.

Disease control officials at district offices across the country are also employing drones to disinfect high-risk spots.

An army of drones flew over a hospital in Cheongdo, North Gyeongsang Province, on Thursday afternoon, where at least seven deaths and 114 confirmed cases have been reported.

Amid the surge in suspected patients waiting to be tested, companies are rushing to develop diagnostic kits that can be done at home.

One such company is PCL, which announced Wednesday to cheers from the public that it had succeeded in developing an at-home COVID-19 test kit. The kit would be faster than the

current molecular diagnosis used at medical institutions that are state-accredited to treat the virus, the company said.

In a phone interview, the Drug Safety Ministry said the alleged success in developing an at-home rapid test kit for the virus was “what the company claims,” and that its viability was “not at all confirmed.”

Sung Heung-sup, a laboratory medicine specialist at Asan Medical Center in Seoul, said that because the rapid antigen test lacked greatly in specificity and sensitivity, its use was not advisable when coping with a highly infectious disease like COVID-19.

“Prompt detection followed by isolation is the only way to mitigate the spread of an infectious disease for which there exists no vaccines or treatment,” he said, adding that the kits risked false-negative patients going on with their daily routine believing they are not infected and transmitting the disease.

Lee Hyuk-min, director of the Korean Society for Laboratory Medicine, said that the rapid kit is based on an immunoassay technique, which is used neither by the World Health Organization nor the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to test for COVID-19.

“There’s a growing number of companies claiming to have developed diagnostic tools for the virus, without due verification,” he said.

Jang Cheol-hoon, director of the Korean Society of Clinical Microbiology, also expressed skepticism over the test kits, which he said used “a much older, less accurate method” than ones used now by specialists.

PCL did not respond to The Korea Herald’s calls and an email requesting comment.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074345>

More corporations opening wallets for victims Feb 28,2020

More Korean conglomerates on Thursday 27 FEVRIER touted their donations aimed at mitigating the fast-spreading coronavirus.

Steel maker Posco and its affiliates gave 5 billion won (\$4.2 million) to Hope Bridge Korea Disaster Relief Association, a non-profit organization devoted to helping those affected by pandemic diseases and natural disaster.

Four billion won came from the steel manufacturer. The other 1 billion won was donated by Posco ICT, Posco E&C and Posco Chemical.

Doosan Group offered 1 billion won to the nonprofit.

GS Group said it gave 1 billion won to Community Chest of Korea, one of the country’s largest welfare organizations. The company said it hoped the donation would be given marginalized groups living in Daegu, home to the bulk of Korea’s confirmed coronavirus patients.

“As the spread of the coronavirus has placed people under unprecedented hardships, we hope that [the fund] will be helpful for the victim and medical professionals,” GS Group Chairman Huh Tae-soo said in a statement.

GS Retail also donated 100 million won worth of relief supplies last month for those who have relocated from Wuhan, China, to Korea. GS Homeshopping, a TV home shopping network owned by the group, gave out 300,000 face masks last month for low-income children and elderly people.

Hyundai Department Store Group followed suit Wednesday by providing 1 billion won to the Community Chest of Korea. Cosmetics giant Amorepacific offered 500 million won to the same organization.

Retail and entertainment CJ Group also offered 1 billion won to Hope Bridge Korea Disaster Relief Association. CJ's affiliates CJ Cheiljedang and CJ OliveNetworks took on their own role, offering relief products to affected people and medical staff in Daegu.

Chemical company Hyosung delivered a 500 million won fund and equipment to the Korean Red Cross.

The company delivered 50,000 medical gloves and hand sanitizer to medical staff. LS Group put out 300 million won to the Community Chest of Korea.

From the IT industry, the online platform Naver offered 2 billion won in donations to the same organization.

Food companies also chipped in. SPC Group, the operator of bakery chain Paris Baguette, announced Thursday it would donate 10,000 units of bread throughout the month of March. Nongshim Kellogg's also offered more than 32,000 units of energy bars and protein shakes to Daegu.

The government isn't doing its job Feb 28,2020

At Daenam Hospital in Cheongdo, North Gyeongsang, where 83 people are being quarantined, the medical staff are taking care of patients with only facial masks on and they are not equipped with protection suits. The pitiful sight suggests how lax the government has been in its battle with a contagious disease.

The shortage of masks is another example. There are 113 registered face mask producers in the country. They are capable of producing 13 million masks a day. But the bulk went to China, leaving little for the country. The government hurriedly decided to roll out 3.5 million masks through drug stores, post offices, and other designated locations.

In Daegu, around 100 patients cannot be hospitalized due to a critical lack of beds. The swift spread is a reason, but still authorities worsened the matter because they did not pay heed to warnings from experts about the danger of community contamination. Medical professionals also are lacking. About 200 doctors volunteered to help in Daegu and North Gyeongsang. But the number is far short. The Daegu city government has been pleading the central government to send military doctors. As commander in chief, President Moon must give an order to the Defense Ministry. The military has yet to act.

The government also should have been stricter with the Shincheonji church, who refused to hand over the list of its followers although they were in danger of spreading the disease. The police and local governments should have acted instead of waiting around until the church gave them the names.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/01/opinion/covid-face-mask-shortage.html?action=click&module=Opinion&pgtype=Homepage>

### **How South Korea Solved Its Face Mask Shortage**

At the end of February, it announced that it would purchase 50 percent of KF-94 masks from the nation's 130 or so manufacturers. The government began to ship these masks, at a discounted price of 1,500 won each (about \$1.23), to some 23,000 pharmacies, in cooperation with the Korean Pharmaceutical Association.

On March 5, the government increased its share of mask purchases to 80 percent of national production. The following day, Ms. Yoo received a text message from President Moon Jae-in, addressed to "the pharmacists of Korea." In addition to expanding mask manufacturing, the government was about to start a new rationing system.

"Starting today, 70 percent of all masks acquired through the public distribution system will be sold at pharmacies," Mr. Moon wrote. "Pharmacies are the primary on-the-ground node in our public health system." All citizens and registered noncitizens could buy two masks per week on an assigned weekday, depending on their year of birth — a system similar to one used in Taiwan since early February.

The Incheon Pharmaceutical Association encouraged its members to stay open on Sundays, to receive as many daily shipments as possible, so Ms. Yoo began working seven days a week. Her daily shipment went from 50 to 400 masks, with more on the weekends.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200227000878&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200227000878&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Bungled mask supply scheme irks citizens fretting over coronavirus

By Yonhap

Published : Feb 27, 2020

Many South Koreans, increasingly concerned over the fast-spreading new coronavirus, are queuing and nimbly logging on to online shopping malls to purchase protective masks, but they are being frustrated by a hastily-orchestrated state scheme.

Many citizens expected to buy state-supplied face masks from Thursday at designated outlets, but most selected mask sellers apparently were not supplied with enough facial masks.

South Korea on Wednesday announced that some 3.5 million face masks will be supplied daily to post offices, pharmacies and stores of National Agricultural Cooperative Federation, better known as Nonghyup here, starting Thursday.

From early morning, people formed long lines at post offices and Nonghyup's retail stores, but most of them returned home empty handed.

A housewife in Busan said she first visited a post office in her neighborhood, but had to turn around after seeing a sign that the post office planned to sell masks from next Monday. She

then visited a pharmacy next to the post office, but was told adult-size face masks were all sold out.

The situation was no different in other parts of the country.

Many people visiting post offices had to leave in disappointment after officials told them masks will be available for purchase next week.

"It feels like I've been betrayed by the government," one citizen said. "It seems like the government doesn't know what is really happening on the ground."

At major retail stores where face masks were in stock, people had to form long lines even before the stores opened. To maintain order, store officials had to distribute numbered tickets to those in line.

"People at the front of the line said they have waited here from 4 a.m.," a citizen in Daejeon, 164 kilometers south of Seoul, said while waiting in line to purchase masks. "If the situation gets worse, we may see people wait in line with their own tents."

As many people complain about buying face masks, the government said Thursday it may take a couple more days to get enough face masks in stock. However, it said that masks will be supplied to public retail channels as promised.

"We have been working hard to make the country's 145 mask producers ink supply deals with post offices and Nonghyup stores," a government official said. "It takes one or two days to produce masks and actually deliver them to designated stores."

Finance Minister Hong Nam-ki said at least 1.2 million face masks will be available for purchase at pharmacies from Friday, adding that the price of those masks will be cheaper than the masks currently sold in the market.

Industry insiders expected that the government-supplied masks are likely to be sold for around 1,000 won (\$0.80), one-fourth the price of masks sold on the market.

South Korea has been imposing strict regulations as demand for face masks has been soaring during the novel coronavirus outbreak.

Under the toughened regulations, hoarders of face masks can face a prison sentence of up to two years or a maximum fine of 50 million won. Distributors are also obligated to notify authorities if they sell more than 10,000 surgical masks to a single buyer. (Yonhap)

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074315>

### **Korea to refresh supply of masks**

Government will provide 3.5 million units to consumers

Feb 27,2020

Korea to refresh supply of masks

Government will provide 3.5 million units to consumers

Feb 27,2020

The government will provide 3.5 million face masks per day to local consumers at pharmacies and post offices as early as Thursday afternoon, officials said Wednesday. The announcement came during a task force meeting related to the coronavirus outbreak. Out of the total, 2.4 million units will be used to distribute 100 face masks each to 24,000 designated pharmacies across the country.

The rest of the 1.1 million units will be distributed to post offices and branches of the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation - not including the ones in Seoul and Gyeonggi.

The Ministry of Economy and Finance also decided to provide a further 500,000 face masks to medical institutions and will secure an extra five million units to be used in Daegu and North Gyeongsang, the two regions accounting for the lion's share of confirmed cases of the virus.

There will be a limit of five face masks per person for purchase at designated sellers to ensure the additional volume is available to as many Koreans as possible, the ministry added.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074336>

Face mask promise was not kept

Shelves were empty despite government assurances of supply

Feb 28,2020

Face masks promised by the government have been delayed, with people showing up at designated retailers and distributors yesterday only to find that they are still out of stock.

Deputy Prime Minister Hong Nam-ki said during a press briefing Thursday the government will ensure 90 percent of all face masks made per day will be available to consumers in Korea.

“We apologize to Korean citizens as the supply disruption of face masks is continuing despite the implementation of measures to tackle the issue,” Hong said. “The government will ensure that 90 percent of daily production is available domestically.”

According to Hong, around 10 million face masks are made in Korea per day, and the government is setting aside nine million for domestic consumption. Face masks cannot be exported until the end of April as a result of emergency measures to ensure supply.

Of the nine million, five million face masks will be available at 1,900 Hanaro Mart stores and 1,400 post offices outside Seoul and Gyeonggi. In Seoul and Gyeonggi, face masks will be distributed via 10,000 pharmacies.

The government announced a day earlier that it will distribute five million units of face masks per day for sale to local consumers starting Thursday.

In that announcement, the government said one million units were to be allocated to Daegu and North Gyeongsang, the two areas most affected by the coronavirus outbreak, and 500,000 units were to be shipped to medical institutions.

The other 3.5 million units were to be shipped off to designated sellers in other areas. Officials set a limit of five face masks per person for purchase at designated sellers to ensure the additional volume is available to as many Koreans as possible.

Local demand for face masks skyrocketed due to the coronavirus outbreak. Physicians were running short on face masks, and many Koreans were forced to buy masks at inflated prices, as the supply couldn't meet the soaring demand.

A large quantity of face masks have been exported to China, where the virus originated.

President Moon Jae-in said Wednesday that he wants to ensure Koreans "actually feel" the effects of the government's measures to provide a sufficient supply of face masks.

But even after the government announced its own supply measure, many consumers still faced difficulties securing face masks for themselves Thursday, as the designated sellers were yet to receive the face mask supplies as promised.

People rushed to local pharmacies and Hanaro Mart stores only to hear that there were no face masks.

Hong said in the briefing that the government has yet to finalize contracts with manufacturers and distributors. The national supply chain for face masks is also not ready at this point, but the government said all contracts should be finalized by this weekend.

Yet Hong said the government is going to source around 1.2 million units of masks per day to be on available at pharmacies across the country starting Friday.

Around 550,000 face masks will be shipped to Hanaro Mart stores in areas outside Seoul and Gyeonggi, while another 550,000 units will be distributed to 1,400 post offices in other regions.

As some consumers had to buy face masks at inflated prices, the government said it will also ensure face masks are offered at lower prices.

Addressing the difficulties of small- and medium-sized enterprises amid the virus outbreak, Hong said the government will work to lower the rent price by two-thirds through the end of this year for entrepreneurs in government-owned properties.

The deputy prime minister added that officials will work to revise legislation to provide the benefit as early as April 1.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200227000789&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200227000789&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Daegu battles shortage of hospital beds, medical personnel

Health authorities say no genetic mutation found in COVID-19 outbreak

By Ock Hyun-ju

Published : Feb 27, 2020

South Korea's southeastern city of Daegu, the epicenter of the coronavirus spread here, faces a lack of hospital beds and medical personnel as the country saw another spike in infections Thursday.

A 73-year-old man, the 13th casualty from the coronavirus, died while waiting to be hospitalized after having tested positive Tuesday, raising alarm that a shortage of hospital beds could lead to more deaths.

Daegu Mayor Kwon Young-jin called for voluntary work from doctors and nurses as 64 percent of the cases in Korea were reported in the fourth-largest city as of Thursday afternoon.

The city secured some 1,013 hospital beds as of Thursday. Out of 1,017 confirmed patients, 447 had been hospitalized, some 100 were to be admitted to hospitals within the day and others were waiting to be hospitalized while under self-isolation, according to the municipality.

Korea saw the number of cases climb by 505 to 1,766 Thursday afternoon, with most cases traced to a unit of Shincheonji Church of Jesus in Daegu and Cheongdo Daenam Hospital in Cheongdo, North Gyeongsang Province, according to the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

It is the largest jump in one day for the country since the outbreak began in late January.

The number of people being checked for the virus came to 25,568. The country has tested a total of 64,886 suspected cases, with 39,318 testing negative.

“In the case of Daegu, it is true that it takes a considerable amount of time (for confirmed patients) to be assigned to hospital beds in accordance of severity (of symptoms),” Vice Health and Welfare Minister Kim Gang-lip said at a regular briefing.

Health authorities are setting up a system to more promptly classify patients according to the severity of their symptoms and assign hospital beds, he added.

The government is focusing efforts on containing the spread from a few big clusters and mitigating the impact of the coronavirus.

While virus tests for some 212,000 members of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus are underway, the KCDC said it had asked for an additional list of an estimated 70,000 people training to become members of Shincheonji.

In North Gyeongsang Province, all remaining 60 patients at Cheongdo Daenam Hospital were to be transferred to the National Center for Mental Health for treatment by Friday. At the hospital alone, 114 cases were confirmed. Seven out of 13 casualties were linked to the hospital, with critics taking issue with its poor conditions, lack of equipment and professional personnel.

In Seoul, containment efforts are focused on the city’s biggest hotbed of infections -- Eunpyeong St. Mary’s Hospital, where 11 cases were confirmed since the first case was reported Jan. 21. The infection route for the first case remains unidentified, sparking worries about possible cases being undetected.

Meanwhile, no genetic mutation has been confirmed in the coronavirus outbreak so far, after an interim analysis of six genes from the virus, according to the KCDC. This indicates little likelihood of sudden changes in toxicity and errors in DNA tests.

With some 42 countries imposing restrictions on the entry of Korean nationals, the government said it is making diplomatic efforts for such “excessive” measures to be withdrawn.

The government reiterated it is not considering expanding an entry ban on other countries, saying the focus would be on mitigating the impact of community transmission in Korea. The nation has barred entry of those coming from Hubei province in China, the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak.

The surge in infections led the South Korean and US militaries to delay annual joint military drills on the Korean Peninsula.

More than 81,700 cases have been reported in every continent except Antarctica, pushing the world closer to a pandemic. Italy and Iran have emerged as major clusters outside of China, with more than 400 and 140 cases confirmed, respectively.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200228000202&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200228000202&ACE_SEARCH=1)

S. Korea's virus cases top 2,000, citizens urged to avoid mass gatherings

By Yonhap

Published : Feb 28, 2020

The number of people being checked for the virus and under quarantine came to 24,751, it added. The country has tested a total of 68,918 suspected cases, with 44,167 testing negative. South Korea's confirmed cases of the new coronavirus surpassed 2,000 on Friday as the nation aggressively counters the fast-spreading virus with massive testing. Health authorities renewed calls for citizens to increase social distancing and avoid mass gatherings such as religious ones over the weekend.

The 256 new cases brought the nation's total infections to 2,022, according to the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Only two days ago, the number of infections exceeded 1,000.

So far, 13 people have died in South Korea from the virus that emerged in China.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200228000527&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200228000527&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Culture minister urges religious groups to halt gatherings amid coronavirus

By Yonhap

Published : Feb 28, 2020

South Korea's culture minister urged local religious groups on Friday to halt regular services and gatherings as the country is struggling to contain mass outbreaks of the novel coronavirus.

"This weekend and next weekend are expected to be critical points in (containing) the spread of COVID-19 and (preventing) the situation's prolongation," Culture Minister Park Yang-woo said in his emergency appeal to religious groups.

"I earnestly ask (such groups) to refrain from any religious services and gatherings for a while in order to prevent further coronavirus infections and the extension of the situation," Park said.

As of Friday morning, South Korea's coronavirus infections had reached 2,022 after 505 new cases were reported in a single day on Thursday. The death toll was at 13.

Many large Protestant churches in the country were reluctant to suspend their Sunday services this coming weekend, raising concerns that often densely packed religious gatherings in closed spaces could become a hotbed of virus infections.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200228000769&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200228000769&ACE_SEARCH=1)  
Department stores, malls shut down temporarily due to new coronavirus  
By Jo He-rim  
Published : Feb 28, 2020

With the COVID-19 virus spreading across the country, department stores and malls are temporarily shutting down branches that confirmed patients are found to have visited.

On Friday, Shinsegae Department Store closed its Gangnam branch in Seoul, when one of the employees of its partner company was confirmed to be infected by the new coronavirus.

According to the department store, the employee had been off duty for personal reasons since Monday, and then went into self-quarantine on Thursday after informing the company that they had been in contact with a COVID-19 patient.

While the employee has not been at the Gangnam branch since Monday, the department store said it decided to shut down as a preventive measure on Friday, and disinfect the entire building before reopening on Saturday. The branch recorded annual sales of 2 trillion won (\$1.71 billion) in 2019, becoming the first single store to do so in the retail industry in South Korea.

IFC Mall, the country's largest mall, located in Yeouido, Seoul, also closed Friday after a confirmed patient was reported to have visited.

The patient, who had also visited the Export-Import Bank of Korea, was confirmed to be infected Thursday evening.

The Gangnam branch of NewCore outlet, operated by E-Land Group, also enforced a closure on Friday following the news of a confirmed patient's visit, and will reopen after disinfection operations on Saturday.

As for Shinsegae Department Store, Friday is the fifth time to temporarily close its branch due to the coronavirus.

The retail giant has partially closed the 6th floor of its Gyeonggi branch, located in Yongin, Gyeonggi Province on Thursday, after a confirmed patient was found to have visited the floor in the store.

Up to this week, the Gangnam branch had shut down the floor for groceries and food court, and Daegu and Gimhae branches had closed and reopened this week.

Lotte Department Store reopened its Daegu branch on Thursday after it closed and fumigated the store on Wednesday.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200301000290&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200301000290&ACE_SEARCH=1)

S. Korea to take masks from schools for general public

By Yonhap

Published : Mar 1, 2020 - 19:25

The government will take millions of face masks from schools and redistribute them to the general public in order to address a supply shortage amid the surge of coronavirus cases.

The education ministry announced Sunday that 5.8 million out of 12.7 million masks purchased by elementary, middle and high schools will soon be available at post offices and stores of the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation, better known as Nonghyup here.

According to the ministry, schools in Seoul and surrounding regions of Gyeonggi and Incheon donated 1.6 million masks Saturday, and those in a dozen other regions will soon follow suit with 4.2 million.

Schools in Daegu and North Gyeongsang Province, the areas hit hardest by COVID-19, will be exempt.

Police have been cracking down on illegal hoarding of face masks, with some merchants and distributors purchasing them in bulk in anticipation of soaring prices.

The move to take away masks set aside for students drew the ire of school officials Sunday.

A vice principal at a Seoul elementary school said he was angry that he had to give away masks that he had worked hard to secure with his school's budget.

"We won't be able to get another mass supply of masks until after May," he added.

The government's disaster control headquarters said these schools will receive new masks before the start of the school year. The new school year was initially scheduled to start Monday, but it has been pushed back by three weeks in Daegu to March 23 and by a week in the rest of the country to March 9.

While being briefed about the current mask supply status, President Moon Jae-in called for priority to be placed on "devising all possible measures to resolve (supply) problems," according to Yoon Do-han, Cheong Wa Dae's senior secretary for public communication.

Pointing to the difficulty people have had purchasing masks, Moon stressed that making "plans for how to supply masks is not enough," and ordered officials to check what has gone wrong and resolve the problems.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200301000206&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200301000206&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Most Koreans concerned of prolonged coronavirus spread: survey

By Shim Woo-hyun

Published : Mar 1, 2020

Blind, a local operator of employees' community application, surveyed some 2,427 office workers over the nationwide spread of the viral outbreak.

The survey also showed that 29 percent of the workers are currently working from home or are considering it as a precautionary option.

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?>

[ud=20200301000035&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200301000035&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Govt. supplies nearly 4.5 million face masks via public organizations

By Yonhap

Published : Mar 1, 2020

South Korea's government distributed nearly 4.5 million face masks via public organizations nationwide Saturday to fight a sharp supply shortage amid the surging coronavirus.

To purchase face masks, many people lined up in front of pharmacies and marts operated by the agricultural cooperative Nonghyup as the government intervened to stabilize their supply.

The government supplied 1.54 million masks to the southeastern city of Daegu and its adjacent county of Cheongdo, where more than half of COVID-19 infections have been reported. Some 2.1 million masks were distributed to Seoul and its surrounding areas.

But despite the government's efforts, demand still far surpassed supply amid the fast spread of the new coronavirus in communities.

Earlier this week, the Cabinet approved a plan to limit mask exports to a maximum of 10 percent of total output and distribute 50 percent through government and public organizations.

The rule took effect Wednesday, but public criticism mounted as the government hastily announced the plan without fully securing the supply.

People in the central city of Daejeon lined up in front of Nonghyup Hanaro Mart hours before it opened to buy face masks supplied by the government. The daily volume of masks was quickly purchased, with forty-five people buying six masks each.

"I gave up my weekend to buy a few masks. It's like it is more difficult to buy masks than a gold ring," a 30-year-old citizen said.

Police, meanwhile, strengthened their crackdown on illegal hoarding of face masks as some merchants and distributors bought the piece of protective wear in bulk in anticipation of higher prices.

The Seoul Geumcheon Police Station booked two men for an alleged attempt to smuggle out around 20,000 face masks.

Police in Incheon, west of Seoul, are investigating two merchants over an alleged violation of the inflation stabilization law. They were arrested for the suspected hoarding of some 29,000 masks. (Yonhap)

S. Korea reports 476 more coronavirus cases, total at 4,212

By Ock Hyun-ju

Published : Mar 2, 2020

The number of COVID-19 cases in South Korea surpassed 4,200 on Monday, with 22 deaths so far. Eight out of 10 cases were reported in Daegu, the city at the center of the outbreak.

<https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20200302007051320>

'Drive-through' testing centers expand across S. Korea

All Headlines 17:53 March 02, 2020

SEOUL, March 2 (Yonhap) -- More "drive-through" facilities to test for the novel coronavirus were set up across South Korea on Monday as the country's health authorities strive to provide easier and quicker ways to test the virus and contain its further spread.

The country reported 599 new cases of COVID-19 on Monday, bringing the total number of infections here to 4,335, the largest outbreak outside of China. So far, 26 people, mostly patients who were elderly or had underlying illnesses, have died.

What went down at Shincheonji leader's first press conference

Leader of cult with 2,418 infected followers refuses to be tested for virus

By Kim Arin

Published : Mar 2, 2020

A string of infections spread through the church helmed by Lee -- who claims he is the second coming of Jesus Christ -- in less than two weeks since the first case emerged in mid-February. As of Monday, 57 percent of over 4,300 confirmed cases in Korea are linked to the church's branch in Daegu.

PHOTO queue pour obtenir des masques, date du mardi 3 mars

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200303000251&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200303000251&ACE_SEARCH=1)

S. Korea reports 600 more cases, total at 4,812

By Ock Hyun-ju

Published : Mar 3, 2020

The number of COVID-19 cases in South Korea has surged to 4,812, with 28 deaths reported so far, as the government struggles to prevent further fatalities amid hospital overcrowding.

The country reported 600 more cases and six additional deaths as of midnight Monday, according to the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Of the new cases, 519 were confirmed in Daegu (86.5 percent), 61 in North Gyeongsang Province (10 percent), 7 in Seoul 1.6 percent), 3 in South Chungcheong Province (0.5 percent), 2 each in Busan, Gwangju and Gyeonggi Province. (0.3 percent)

Of the country's total, 3,600 are concentrated in Daegu and 685 in North Gyeongsang Province, accounting for 89 percent of the total.

The latest fatality is a 78-year old woman from Daegu. She had pre-existing conditions including stroke, diabetes and high blood pressure.

The data is based on the number of patients and fatalities tallied at midnight Tuesday.

Excepting confirmed patients, testing has been carried out on 121,039 people. 85,484 people have tested negative for the virus, and 35,555 are waiting for the results.

A total of 29 people died from the coronavirus, with most cases being in their 50s or over with preexisting illnesses. The fatality rate stands at 0.6 percent for all age groups, 4 percent for those in their 70s and 5.4 percent for those aged 80 or over.

Some 34 patients have so far released from quarantine after making full recoveries.

The number of coronavirus cases is expected to soar in the coming days with testing of more than 210,000 members of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus -- the country's biggest cluster of infections -- still underway. Nearly half the testing for the members was done as of Monday.

Starting Monday, the government began to categorize confirmed patients in four groups according to their condition and transfer those with mild symptoms to designated state-run facilities for quarantine and treatment.

This comes as part of efforts to secure more room for high-risk patients at hospitals' intensive care wards, as the country saw several patients die while waiting to be hospitalized.

Daegu, in particular, has suffered from a shortage of hospital beds and medical personnel as most of the new virus cases are traced to the Shincheonji branch in the city.

More than 80 percent of the country's cases show no severe symptoms and are expected to be fully cured, the KCDC director Jeong Eun-kyeong said at a briefing Monday.

Amid coronavirus fears, some 82 countries and regions are imposing travel warnings on Korea or entry bans or toughened quarantine procedures on visitors from Korea.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=3074540>

Moon apologizes for continuing face mask shortage

Daegu mayor retracts request for presidential emergency order

Mar 04,2020

President Moon Jae-in issued Tuesday 3 MARS an apology to the public for the shortage of face masks as the coronavirus spreads.

"I am extremely sorry for causing inconvenience to the people because face masks were not supplied quickly and sufficiently," Moon said in opening remarks during a joint video conference of the cabinet and the Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasure Headquarters.

President Moon Jae-in presides over a cabinet meeting in the Blue House on Tuesday to discuss how to cope with the coronavirus crisis. [YONHAP]

It was the first time Moon offered an apology to the people about the government's failure to resolve the shortage of face masks. Public frustration is high as people queue for hours to buy masks promised by the government - only to find they are sold out.

Moon told officials to admit that the government's promises to supply masks repeatedly failed. "If we cannot have sufficient supply, we must inform the public and seek the people's understanding and cooperation about an effective way of using face masks," he said.

After apologizing, Moon ordered the government to support manufacturers making them by securing raw materials. He urged the government to come up with a fair and pragmatic distribution system. "If supplies are lacking, the shortages must be shared evenly," he said.

Moon hosted the video conference at the government complex in central Seoul. Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun joined the call from Daegu while ministers participated from Sejong. Fifteen mayors and governors joined the session.

At the beginning of his remarks, Moon continued to blame the secretive Christian sect for the rapid spread of the disease.

"The situation was completely different before and after Shincheonji," Moon said, referring to the public health authorities' conclusion that the controversial doomsday sect was a nexus of the outbreak. "Shincheonji followers' mass infections and their extremely, unusually high infection rate have become a serious threat to our efforts to fight the epidemic. The crisis in Daegu and North Gyeongsang peaked, and the entire country started a war against the infectious disease."

Moon also stressed the need for extraordinary government spending to boost the economy. "We announced a comprehensive measure last week," he said. "And we will submit a supplementary budget bill to the National Assembly after holding a cabinet meeting tomorrow. We will inject 30 trillion won [\$25 billion] directly and indirectly. We will use all possible means."

Meanwhile, the Blue House said Tuesday the president has no plan to issue an emergency order to help Daegu deal with the rapidly increasing number of infected people. Daegu Mayor Kwon Young-jin asked Moon on Monday to do so.

"Please support us to find more than 3,000 hospital beds by using training institutes of public companies and conglomerates," Kwon said in a press briefing Monday.

"During the conference, Kwon apologized to Moon for having requested him to issue an emergency order to get 3,000 beds," Kang Min-seok, presidential spokesman, said Tuesday.

"I apologize to the president for making the request without having proper legal reviews in advance," Kang quoted Kwon as saying. "I earnestly beg for the president's understanding because the situation here was so urgent."

Constitutional law experts told the JoongAng Ilbo on Tuesday that the current situation is not enough to justify an emergency order. “Even during the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the president did not issue an emergency order for financial and economic actions,” Professor Chang Young-soo of the School of Law at Korea University said.

There is only one precedent in which the president exercised his emergency order power. In 1993, President Kim Young-sam abruptly proclaimed an emergency presidential order on real-name financial transactions and protection of confidentiality.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200303000714&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200303000714&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Reasons why so many in 20s, women contract virus in S. Korea

By Ahn Sung-mi

Published : Mar 3, 2020 - 16:01      Updated : Mar 3, 2020 - 17:30

The number of COVID-19 cases in South Korea is fast approaching 5,000 and paints a rather peculiar picture of patient demographics: 20-somethings make up the biggest age bracket, and women clearly outnumber men.

According to data from the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, of the country’s total 4,812 confirmed cases as of Tuesday afternoon, people in their 20s accounted for 29.4 percent, or 1,417 cases, followed by those in their 50s at 19.8 percent (952 cases).

By gender, 62.4 percent, or 3,002, were female, whereas 1,810 or 37.6 percent were male.

This departs from the World Health Organization’s observations on coronavirus cases in China, which showed nearly 78 percent of the infected were from 30 to 69 years old, with the median age at 51.

According to officials at the KCDC, this is largely due to the fact that most cases here are linked to a particular religious group, the Shincheonji Church of Jesus. Around 60 percent of total cases are traceable to the Christian sect’s branch in Daegu.

“Women in their 20s-30s reportedly make up a large amount of Shincheonji followers, and it is showing in the high percentage of COVID-19 cases in those age groups,” KCDC director Jung Eun-kyeong said at a news briefing.

Local reports have said Shincheonji targets younger people aggressively with clandestine evangelistic activities, and that nearly 60 percent of its worshippers are thought to be in their 20s and 30s.

One possible explanation for the greater number of infections among women can be found in Korea’s patient No. 31, a 61-year-old female Shincheonji follower who contracted the first identified infection within the church. She is suspected to have spread the virus at church services she attended in Daegu.

Observers say it is likely that she was in contact with more female church members, as men and women sit separately at Shincheonji services.

Of all COVID-19 patients in Korea, people in their 20s made up the greatest number with 1,417 cases (29.4 percent), followed by people in their 50s with 952 (19.8 percent), people in their 40s with 713 (14.8 percent), people in their 60s with 597 (12.4 percent), people in their 30s with 578 (14.8 percent), people in their 70s with 224 (4.7 percent), people 10-19 years old with 204 (4.2 percent), people over 80 at 93 cases (1.9 percent) and children under 10 with 32 (0.7 percent).

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200303000482&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200303000482&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Compared with other OECD nations, Korea has far fewer doctors, nurses, per 1,000 people  
But Korea is No. 2 in number of hospital beds, despite quarantine infrastructure gaps in Daegu

By Kim Yon-se

Published : Mar 3, 2020 - 11:39

SEJONG -- South Korean health care workers are suffering the effects of severe overwork from taking care of an exponentially increasing number of COVID-19 patients.

More and more doctors and nurses from across the country are volunteering to join emergency medical teams serving the Yeongnam area, which encompasses Daegu and neighboring North Gyeongsang Province, where the highest and second-highest numbers of infections with the new coronavirus disease have been reported among the nation's eight major cities and nine provinces so far.

International comparison data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development showed that Korea lags far behind most OECD member nations, as well as some nonmembers, in the proportion of doctors to the general population.

In 2018, Korea ranked 30th of 35 countries (30 of the 36 OECD members plus five other major economies) with 2.34 medical doctors per 1,000 people. This means doctors comprised only 0.234 percent of the population. Of the 30 member countries the OECD looked at, Korea ranked 29th.

Many emerging economies were ahead of Korea in this respect. Russia had 4.04 doctors per 1,000 people, placing seventh on the list, whereas Slovakia stood at 14th with 3.42, Hungary at 17th with 3.32, Israel 20th with 3.14, Mexico and Japan tied for 27th with 2.43 and Poland 29th with 2.38.

Austria topped the list with 5.18 doctors per 1,000 people, and proportions were relatively high in Nordic and Baltic nations as well. Norway ranked second at 4.82 per 1,000, Lithuania third at 4.56, Sweden sixth at 4.12, Denmark eighth at 4.0, Estonia 13th at 3.47 and Latvia 18th at 3.21.

Among English-speaking countries, Australia ranked 12th with 3.68 whereas New Zealand ranked 16th with 3.33. The UK ranked 24th with 2.85 and Canada 25th with 2.76. The US was in 26th place with 2.61.

China, where the novel coronavirus originated, was 32nd on the list with 2.01 doctors per 1,000 people. Italy, where the COVID-19 epidemic has also had a severe impact, was in ninth place with 3.99.

As of Tuesday, China, Korea, Italy, Iran and Japan were the top five countries in terms of number of coronavirus infections. Korea had 4,812 cases and 29 deaths, making it the world's worst-affected country outside China.

In a similar vein, the OECD looked at the proportion of nurses to the general population in 38 major countries -- 32 members plus six nonmembers.

Of all 38 countries studied, Korea ranked 21st with 6.91 nurses per 1,000 people, meaning nurses were 0.691 percent of the population. Of the 32 OECD members included in the analysis, Korea was 20th.

This figure far falls behind the proportion of nurses in Norway, which was first on the list with 17.81 per 1,000. Switzerland stood at No. 2 with 17.23, Iceland at No. 3 with 14.85, Germany at No. 4 with 12.93, Ireland at No. 5 with 12.16 and the US at No. 6 with 11.74.

Japan ranked ninth with 11.34, followed by Belgium (10th) with 10.96 France (12th) with 10.80, Slovenia (16th) with 9.92, Russia (17th) with 8.47, the Czech Republic (18th) with 8.06 and the UK (19th) with 7.80.

In contrast, Korea ranked second among the OECD members in the number of hospital beds per 1,000 inhabitants, with 12.27. But some of the nation's metropolitan cities and provinces are suffering shortages of quarantine beds for coronavirus-infected patients.

Some coronavirus-positive patients in Daegu and North Gyeongsang Province died while waiting for spots in hospitals, because the two regions had vastly insufficient numbers of isolated hospital beds as well as the state-of-the-art quarantine hospital beds that were introduced here after the Middle East respiratory syndrome crisis of 2015.

Japan topped the list with 13.05 hospital beds, while the figures for China and Italy stood at 4.34 and 3.18. The figure for the US was especially low at 2.77, followed by New Zealand at 2.61, the UK at 2.54 and Canada at 2.50.

Meanwhile, devotees of a religious sect known as Shincheonji must be held accountable for the recent surge in the number of patients in the Daegu-North Gyeongsang area, online commenters say. They made up a significant portion of the 4,812 infections reported as of Tuesday. Some politicians from the ruling Democratic Party of Korea are looking into alleged misconduct on the part of Shincheonji's leaders and its membership.

But the majority of Koreans share the view that a more critical factor is the lukewarm nature of the countermeasures taken by President Moon Jae-in, with many denouncing him for not issuing an entry ban on travelers from parts of China other than Hubei province.

"Doctors and nurses are engaging in desperate struggles to save patients. In contrast, President Moon has been conducting humiliating diplomacy versus China and Xi Jinping over the past month," said an online commenter.

"It is lamentable that Moon has belatedly ordered ministers to secure masks for Koreans after donating 3 million masks (including 1 million for medical purposes) and 100,000 hazmat suits to the Chinese," a commenter said.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200303000790&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200303000790&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Korea tops 5,000 virus infections in 43 days since start of outbreak

Coronavirus fatality rate stands at 0.6% in S. Korea: KCDC

By Ock Hyun-ju

Published : Mar 3, 2020 - 16:39      Updated : Mar 3, 2020 - 19:00

South Korean authorities said Tuesday that the probability of those infected with the novel coronavirus dying is 0.6 percent here, as the government battles community spread of the deadly virus in Daegu.

The country reported 851 more cases on Tuesday, bringing the total number of infections to 5,186. The death toll has risen to 29, according to the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To prevent further fatalities, health authorities said they will prioritize testing for “high-risk groups” -- the elderly and those with preexisting medical conditions -- and early detection in Daegu as about 75 percent of the country’s cases are from the city.

“Given the test results of Daegu citizens, we assess that community transmission had progressed more than a certain level,” Vice Health and Welfare Minister Kim Gang-lip said at a briefing Tuesday.

Of the new cases, 519 were confirmed in Daegu (86.5 percent), 61 in North Gyeongsang Province (10 percent), seven in Seoul (1.6 percent), three in South Chungcheong Province (0.5 percent), and two each in Busan, Gwangju and Gyeonggi Province. (0.3 percent)

The change in the government’s priorities comes after it has nearly finished checking the health status of all members of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus, the single largest cluster here, accounting for about 56 percent of all infections.

Testing has been carried out on half of the Shincheonji members showing symptoms of the infection, of whom 2,685 people tested positive. Some 62 percent of its Daegu-based members tested positive. Outside Daegu, only 1.7 percent were found to have contracted the virus.

In the worst hit city, about 11,000 ordinary citizens underwent testing over the past week and 1,300 people were confirmed to be infected.

Daegu already suffers from a shortage of hospital beds and medical personnel. Some 1,800 people were waiting to be hospitalized as of Tuesday.

To free up more beds for the critically ill, health authorities on Monday opened state-run treatment centers for patients with no symptoms or mild symptoms. They said they will open more facilities so that some 2,000 confirmed patients can be accommodated by early next week.

More than 80 percent of the country’s cases show no severe symptoms and are expected to be fully cured, according to the government’s analysis.

A total of 29 people have died from the coronavirus as of Tuesday, with most being in their 50s or over preexisting illnesses. The fatality rate stands at 0.6 percent for all age groups, 4 percent for those in their 70s and 5.4 percent for those aged 80 or over, according to the government data.

Except confirmed patients, testing has been carried out on 121,039 people. Of those, 85,484 people have tested negative for the virus, and 35,555 are waiting for the results.

Some 34 patients have so far been released from quarantine after making full recoveries as of Monday at midnight.

Of the country's total caseloads, 3,600 were concentrated in Daegu and 685 in North Gyeongsang Province, accounting for 89 percent of the total as of Monday midnight. Most confirmed cases were in their 20s (29.4 percent), followed by those in their 50s (19.8 percent) and those in their 40s (14.8 percent). Six in 10 cases were women.

The government views this week and next as critical for the country's containment strategy, given the 14-day incubation period of the virus. The religious sect's last service at its Daegu branch was held Feb. 16 before it was shut down.

Two Shincheonji followers had visited the central Chinese city of Wuhan, the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak, the authorities said, and a further epidemiological investigation is underway. One of them tested positive for the virus.

The government has yet to identify how the mass infections among the Shincheonji followers began.

COVID-19 is fast spreading and highly contagious, but its transmission can sufficiently be contained with the public participating in "social distancing" and enhancing personal hygiene, according to Kwon Jun-wook, a KCDC official.

Amid coronavirus fears, some 89 countries and regions are imposing travel warnings on Korea, or entry bans or toughened quarantine procedures on visitors from Korea.

[http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200303000765&ACE\\_SEARCH=1](http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200303000765&ACE_SEARCH=1)

Parents' woes deepen as school shutdown prolongs

By Park Han-na

Published : Mar 3, 2020 - 16:05      Updated : Mar 3, 2020 - 17:46

Working parents in S. Korea are grappling with extended school closures as the coronavirus outbreak is showing no signs of abating.

In an unprecedented move, the government on Monday postponed the start of the spring semester of all schools by an additional two weeks, adding to the woes of parents who are struggling to adjust their work schedules to look after their kids.

Some 20,528 kindergartens, elementary, middle and high schools across the country will kick off the new school year on March 23, three weeks later than initially planned. The

government pushed back the date twice as the country reported the fastest growing number of COVID-19 cases outside of China.

“The next two weeks are crucial to curb the growth of the coronavirus infections. Even after a downturn, one more week is needed to ensure a safe environment for students,” Education Minister Yoo Eun-hae said, announcing the second postponement.

She said there were a total of 201 underage patients, accounting for 4.8 percent of Monday’s total 4,212 cases.

Kindergartens and elementary schools will run emergency child care services for working parents, the minister added.

For those who take unpaid leave to look after their children, the Labor Ministry plans to give out a daily subsidy of 50,000 won (\$42) per each parent for up to five days. Some 90,000 households are expected to benefit from the measure.

The Education Ministry also plans to offer online educational resources and digital textbooks for distance learning at home to fill the void of regular classes.

Despite such supportive programs, parents are avoiding sending their child to day care centers fearing virus infection among students.

“There used to be more than 10 children. But after the outbreak of the coronavirus, my son is one of two who attends class as other working moms prefer their mother-in-law or babysitter to limit the potential of virus exposure,” said Seo Hyun-ah, a 40-year-old working mother, who has been sending her 9-year-old son to his elementary school’s day care program since last year.

In fact, 44 percent of those who had applied for emergency child care services actually sent their children to the program, apparently due to concern over people-to-people transmission, according to Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education. Out of 602 primary schools in Seoul, 576 offered the service on Monday.

The online course, which starts next Monday, is another burden for her.

After a long day at office, she will have to set aside time to watch her son taking an online session until he finishes. “It will almost double the difficulty.”

On Tuesday, the Korean Federation of Teachers’ Associations welcomed the postponement of the new school year, calling it an “inevitable choice” to protect the health and lives of students and teachers.

It called for measures to shut down for-profit cram schools as students can flock to such institutes during the lengthy vocation which will negate the rescheduling of the start of schools, it said in a press release.

<https://www1.president.go.kr/petitions/584593>