

**COVID-19 - Asia Update**  
**Concordia Consultancy (Asia Pacific) Pte Ltd**

Here in Singapore, there is high confidence in the measures being taken and in some ways the country is becoming a safe haven compared to neighbouring countries.

**Singapore**

The Singapore Government has been rightly praised for its management of the pandemic. Pro-active management of the situation by the Government has meant only two fatalities from Covid-19. It looks as though returning citizens/residents accounted for Monday's spike of new cases - 54, the highest daily total so far. Of this total, 48 were residents returning before the Government order that, from 21<sup>st</sup> March, all returning residents would be issued with a stay-at-home notice. From that date, short-term visitors are not allowed, not even to transit.

Such restrictions, and similar ones imposed by other countries, have devastated Singapore's famous flag-carrier, Singapore Airlines. They have cancelled 96% of their capacity until the end of April. The Group CEO referred to the disease as the "greatest challenge", the Company has ever faced.

Meanwhile, life goes on much as normal - shops, restaurants and bars remain open, albeit with fewer customers as the population heeds the Government's words on "social distancing" and prevention.

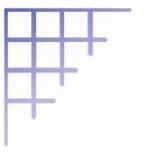
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## **China**

From elsewhere in Asia comes the news that in Hubei Province in China, where Covid-19 is thought to have originated, travel curbs have been lifted after a two-month lockdown. The country as a whole has seen 87,000 confirmed cases, with nearly 3,300 fatalities. There are said to be few or no new domestic cases, only imported ones. Amid stories of people being unable to be tested, manipulated numbers, and unreported cases, the statement on domestic cases may not bear close scrutiny.

## **Sri Lanka**

In Sri Lanka, the curfew was lifted briefly today but then re-imposed across many areas until either Thursday or Friday of this week. So far, there are about 100 confirmed cases of Covid-19. All commercial inbound flights have been halted.

## **South Korea**

There is slightly better news from South Korea. In Seoul, the population is less anxious, as a sense of normality returns. New cases have fallen from several hundred per day in February (909 cases on 29<sup>th</sup> February) to around 85 per day currently. Interestingly, there was a cluster of confirmed cases in an insurance company call centre.

This “flattening of the curve” of new cases is attributed to an aggressive programme of testing - 20,000 per day (a total of 3.7 million people).



## **Thailand**

Thailand has over 800 confirmed cases, with 4 fatalities. Shopping malls in the nation's capital, Bangkok, have been closed until 12<sup>th</sup> April.

## **Hong Kong**

In Hong Kong, the Government has announced a total ban on non-resident arrivals from 25<sup>th</sup> March, similar to that imposed in Singapore. A further measure is a ban on the sale of alcohol in restaurants and bars in the hope of reducing the number of groups out socialising.

## **Final Comment**

As the UK starts to learn to live with "lockdown" conditions, such a step is perhaps not too far behind for several countries in Asia, and the International Olympic Committee with a huge decision to make over the 2020 Games.

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