



China confirms spread of coronavirus

January 21, 2020

A deadly new virus related to SARS is spreading outside the Chinese city where it first broke out. Officials over the weekend announced that the number of patients has tripled and a third person died.

1. An outbreak of a new coronavirus in China is spreading to more cities.
2. Chinese health authorities on Monday (January 20) reported 139 new cases of pneumonia discovered over the weekend, including a third death.
3. Experts say a new strain of coronavirus is to blame.
4. The outbreak has been linked to a seafood market in the city of Wuhan, where around 200 cases have been confirmed.
5. The virus belongs to the same family as SARS, and it can cause fever, coughing, and difficulty breathing.
6. But there are still a lot of questions, like whether it's as deadly as SARS and just how easily it can be transmitted between humans.
7. It all comes ahead of Asia's Lunar New Year holiday.
8. In China, hundreds of millions of people plan to travel at home or abroad, leading to fears the outbreak could spread.
9. According to Monday's data, that's already starting to happen.
10. The new cases include two in the capital city Beijing and one in the southern province of Guangdong.

11. Across the border in Hong Kong, residents are watching the situation closely.

(SOUNDBITE) (English) TOM SZE, HONG KONG RESIDENT, SAYING:
"The case of SARS is similar to the case in Wuhan and so yeah I'm worried."

12. The virus has already made its way beyond China's borders.

13. Thailand has reported two cases and Japan has reported one.

14. U.S. health officials are taking no chances and they've deployed inspectors to major airports to screen passengers arriving from Wuhan.

15. Meanwhile, China is working to show it's on top of the situation.

16. Medical experts appeared on state-run television over the weekend to reassure the public.

17. One described the epidemic as "both preventable and controllable."