North Korea has 1st case of coronavirus infection: report

By Park Si-soo

A North Korean woman living in Pyongyang recently tested positive for coronavirus and those who had contact with her are being quarantined, a South Korean newspaper reported on Friday, citing a source in the reclusive state.

The woman showed symptoms of the infection after a trip to China, according to the JoongAng Ilbo. Further information – including personal details of the patient, the exact date of her infection and her condition – remains unknown.

North Korea's state broadcaster said on Feb. 2 that the country had yet to confirm any case of infection, its most recent update. If the report is true, the woman's infection would have been confirmed early this week.

"As the chances of coronavirus spreading into North Korea increase, authorities started putting all people who had overseas trips recently into quarantine for a certain period," the source was quoted as saying. "The first patient is a woman living in Pyongyang. All people who had contact with her are being quarantined."

Last week, the North announced the launch of a national emergency system against the virus, calling the preventive efforts a "political matter" that could determine the country's fate.

It has closed its borders with China and initiated measures to avoid fallout from the pathogenic disaster.
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