

## Tech firms give life to education platform

Rich Zhu

TOP tech firms, including Tencent Education, Dingding and China Mobile, will offer technology and services for Shanghai's online school platform to supplement television broadcasting.

Schools in the city are closed but will offer online classes beginning in March to ensure student-and-teacher safety during the coronavirus epidemic, local education authorities said.

In addition to TV broadcasts on 12 different channels beginning March 2, the local authority, along with tech firms, has established an official online education platform, covering 1.45 million students in Shanghai.

The platform, dubbed a "Classroom in Air," features cloud, online-broadcasting and social-platform technologies that optimize the online-learning process.

Classes with interactive content and services can be pushed to students' or parents' WeChat accounts, said an official with Tencent Education, which provides cloud and broadcasting services to the platform. Xuhui, Yangpu and Songjiang school districts are currently testing Tencent Education's services.

"The new platform addresses the urgent need to quickly build an online teaching platform," said Ren Liju, principal of Rongyi Middle School in Songjiang. "Online classrooms open new avenues to enhance students' thinking, helping students tap creative value from existing resources and boosting lifelong learning."

"Tencent hopes to use digital technology to break through the constraints of time, space and region, accelerate the sharing of high-quality resources and release the true value of education," said Dowson Tong, Tencent's senior executive vice president.

For users who do not have high-definition service, the company plans to offer subsidies for broadband-upgrade.



**Habibur Rahman, a Bangladeshi student staying in Shanghai during the epidemic, dons his mask. He and two other Bangladeshi students donated 2,000 yuan (US\$285) to support China's viral fight.**  
— Dong Jun

## Foreign students help viral fight

Yang Meiping

INTERNATIONAL students in Shanghai are doing their level best to contribute to the fight against the novel coronavirus epidemic.

Students at East China Normal University's School of Advanced International and Areas Studies have donated 5,000 yuan (US\$715) to a university foundation that will send it to Wuhan University's Renmin Hospital.

"As a country with a civilization of more than 5,000 years, China has experienced and overcome numerous hardships and difficulties," said Russian student, Diadichko Aleksandra. "This outbreak is just one more. It will only make the Chinese people more united. We believe that China and Wuhan will win this battle against the virus."

Laotian student Sisavath Phonenasay, chair of the Laotian International Student Association in Shanghai, organized other Laotian students in the city to donate nearly 7,000 yuan to Hubei Province.

Habibur Rahman, a Bangladeshi student majoring in Chinese international education, encouraged other Bangladeshi students in China to donate after he heard a university fundraising channel had opened. He and two other Bangladeshi students donated 2,000 yuan.

Rahman said he and his friends are impressed by the medical staff, deliverymen and drivers in Wuhan and wanted to

do their part, no matter how small.

"The virus is threatening people's lives. We can't just stand by," he said. "No matter which country we come from, we must unite. We also want to express our support and friendship to Wuhan and the Chinese people. We firmly believe China will win this battle soon. We love China. It is our second home!"

### Life on campus

Rahman planned to visit Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, to see his older brother who is working there.

"But when I heard about the viral outbreak on January 25, I decided to follow the government's advice and stay here," he said.

His brother returned to Bangladesh, and his mother wanted him to come back as well.

"She was worried about me," Rahman said. "But after I told her I believe China can solve the problem and everything will be OK soon, she calmed down and asked me to eat more fruit."

According to Shen Jun, director of ECNU's Student Life and Support Office, said there are 180 international students on the two university campuses.

ECNU has postponed the start of spring semester and told faculty and students not currently on campus to delay their return. Those who do return will be quarantined. The university is now closed to the public and only those with valid

campus ID cards are allowed to enter (but need to apply for entry in advance).

Public study areas, including libraries and teaching buildings, are closed, and cafeterias are only offering take-away food.

The university's Global Education Center publishes notices on virus prevention and control every day on WeChat. Many WeChat groups have been established to track students' locations, health conditions and needs.

As some students prefer cooking for themselves, the university has established partnerships with nearby supermarkets that deliver food to the university gate twice a week. ECNU also provides students with masks.

"Everything is convenient in the university. I have only left campus twice in the past 20 days," said Rahman. "Teachers encourage us to exercise outdoors, such as running and ball games, to keep ourselves healthy and happy."

He usually reads books and listens to music in his dorm room and sometimes goes outside to practice cricket.

Elizabeth Miller Holly, a master's student majoring in politics, said although life is a bit different right now, she understands the measures the university has taken.

Director Shen said the university has launched online activities, such as Chinese-idiom competitions, lantern riddles and singing to help students stay busy.

## Necessity sparks fitness creativity amid epidemic

BY spreading a cloth on a table and using beverage cans as a net, Qi Yuan and his parents can now play table tennis inside their home in Lanzhou, capital of north-west China's Gansu Province.

"It is a good way to enhance immunity and develop his skills amid the coronavirus outbreak," said Qi Yuan's father, Qi Feng.

Before the viral outbreak, Qi Yuan regularly played with other kids at the table-tennis club near his home.

"Though the ping-pong table is rough and simple, it's a really interesting experience," said Qi Feng.

In fact, many Chinese families have

figured out creative ways to pass time at home during the epidemic.

Sixth-grader Zhang Mengmeng, skips rope on a mat. "I use the mat is to reduce the noise," she said.

Because of the outbreak, Zhang's school postponed the new semester without a specific reopening date. Through the school's online-teaching platform, Zhang can take some classes online, but not her favorite, physical education.

To compensate, Zhang's parents encourage her to do simple physical exercises, including jumping rope and dancing.

"I've downloaded a lot of videos to

teach her aerobics," said Zhang's mother. Every evening after dinner, we dance along with the teacher in the video."

Many Chinese students are tapping into different online resources to enrich their lives and stay physically active.

Dressed in sportswear, world gymnastics champion, Mo Huilan, performs an aerobics set on a livestreaming platform provided by Youku, a Chinese Youtube-like video website. Two of her nephews follow her step by step.

Mo said she custom designed the set for children. "I think children should do physical exercises at the age of three. It strengthens their physical and mental

health and improves their immunity," Mo said.

Recently, Youku invited several world-champion athletes to teach children different indoor exercises.

"The epidemic requires students and their parents to attach more importance to keeping fit," said Li Shaocheng, a professor in the Department of Physical Education at Lanzhou University. "Stay-at-home fitness also reflects Chinese optimism during challenging times, but parents and children must be aware of potential dangers and choose suitable indoor exercises."

(Xinhua)