Report 1 – Essential Tips to Prepare Before Coming to Beijing

Coming to a new country can be both exciting and overwhelming, especially when facing culture shock or unfamiliar customs. China is no exception, and based on my personal experience as an exchange student, here are some essential tips to help you prepare before coming to Beijing:

1. Payment
   In China, most merchants including street vendors only accept electronic payments. Therefore, it's important to download mobile payment apps like Alipay or WeChat Pay, which can be linked to your Mastercard. While electronic payment is the norm, it's also a good idea to bring some cash for emergencies.

2. Transportation
   Transportation in China is incredibly convenient. You can access and pay for public transport using just your phone. To do this, make sure your Alipay account is set up. Then, activate it through "Transport" feature to generate a QR code that allows you to scan and pay for rides on the subway (MRT), buses, local trains, and more.

3. Telecommunication
   Before arriving in China, I recommend activating international roaming on your phone for a few days. You may not be able to access certain apps immediately upon arrival due to internet restrictions. Once you've settled in, you can purchase a local SIM card from providers like China Mobile, China Unicom, or China Telecom.

4. VPN
   If you plan to use international apps or websites (e.g., Google, Instagram, WhatsApp), you'll need a VPN. I personally recommend **LetsVPN**, it's fast, secure, and reliable, offering full access to blocked content. Be sure to download and activate your VPN before arriving in China.

5. Power Adapter
   Check whether your power plug is compatible with the Chinese socket type (Type A, I, or C). If not, be sure to bring a universal adapter or purchase one upon arrival.

6. Local Apps
   To help you adapt quickly to life in China, consider downloading some local apps. These may include: