

Vietnam locks down its 3rd largest city as virus cases grow

28 July 2020, by Hau Dinh



The once crowded beach is empty following a lockdown order in Da Nang, Vietnam, on Tuesday, July 28, 2020. Vietnam on Tuesday locked down its third-largest city for two weeks after more than a dozen cases of COVID-19 were found in a hospital. (AP Photo/Luke Groves)

Vietnam on Tuesday locked down its third-largest city for two weeks after 22 cases of COVID-19 were found linked to a hospital, the government said.

The new cases in the central city of Da Nang are the first confirmed local transmissions of the virus in the country in over three months.

Public transport into and out of Da Nang was canceled. Over the weekend, thousands of mostly Vietnamese tourists cut short their summer holidays in the popular beach destination. The lockdown dealt a hard blow to the city's tourism industry, which was just being revived after earlier coronavirus cases mostly subsided at the end of April.

Hotel guests quickly ended their stays and canceled upcoming trips upon the news of the first case, one hotelier said on the condition of

anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

"Our hotel is now empty," the hotelier said. "But we had to help our guests leave the city when they still had the opportunity yesterday."

Da Nang beaches, which host some 50,000 people a day, are now closed. Only security personnel were seen on the beaches Tuesday as they patrolled to ensure no one was gathering.

Authorities estimated several thousand people would be stranded by the transportation shutdown and asked hotels to shelter them.



Entrance to a beach is cordoned off following a lockdown order in Da Nang, Vietnam, on Tuesday, July 28, 2020. Vietnam on Tuesday locked down its third-largest city for two weeks after more than a dozen cases of COVID-19 were found in a hospital. (AP Photo/ Luke Groves)



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Traffic is quiet following a lockdown order in Da Nang, Vietnam, on Tuesday, July 28, 2020. Vietnam on Tuesday locked down its third-largest city for two weeks after more than a dozen cases of COVID-19 were found in a hospital. (AP Photo/ Luke Groves)

"We did not want to rush to the airport to leave the city because of the risk of being in a crowded place. So we are now stuck here," said Lien Nguyen, who is traveling with her family of four for their summer vacation.

"But it is not a bad place to get stranded for two weeks," she said.

On Sunday, the government ordered unessential business to close and required people to practice social distancing in the city of 1.1 million people.

All 22 cases in the new outbreak are patients and health workers at Da Nang hospital and family members.

With the new infections, Vietnam has reported 438 cases of COVID-19 without a death.

It had recorded no local transmissions of the virus since April, with all new cases coming from overseas. Vietnam on Tuesday dispatched an aircraft to Equatorial Guinea to repatriate 129 workers who have COVID-19, the health ministry said.

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