

Southeast Asia

Covid-19: Vietnam's Da Nang city in lockdown amid fresh outbreak

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- **All flights and train services to and from Da Nang have been suspended, Vietnam's government says**
- **With the new infections, Vietnam has reported 431 coronavirus cases, with no deaths**

Vietnam has suspended all flights and public transport to and from Da Nang for 15 days from Tuesday after at least 15 cases of the novel coronavirus were detected in the city, the government said.

Over the weekend, thousands of local tourists had to end their summer holidays in the popular beach destination following the sudden flare-up of local transmissions.

Da Nang is the third-largest city in Vietnam, with a population of about 1.1 million.

The lockdown has dealt a 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 prematurely ended their stays and cancelled upcoming trips upon the news of the first case, one hotelier said on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to media.

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

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

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

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

On Monday, the government said it had requested the Civil Aviation Authority of Vietnam (CAAV) to allow domestic airlines to significantly increase the number of local flights from Da Nang to 11 Vietnamese cities in order to help evacuate 80,000 people, mostly local tourists.

The evacuation was expected to take four days, a government statement said.

Vietnam is throwing every weapon in its arsenal at its effort to contain the new spread in Da Nang.

Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc has ordered tighter border and immigration controls. Police have made a number of arrests of Vietnamese and Chinese charged with shepherding people into the country illegally.

With the new infections, Vietnam has reported 431 coronavirus cases, with no deaths.

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P.S.

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