V•A

China Locks Down Peking University after 1 COVID Case

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Chinese officials locked down a major university in Beijing on Wednesday after one person there tested positive for COVID-19.

China is continuing its "zero-COVID" policy despite growing unpopularity.

Students and professors at Peking University were not permitted to leave the property unless necessary. Classes at the main campus, where the case was found, have been moved online until Friday, a university notice said.

Still, some people could be seen entering and leaving the main campus Wednesday. The university is in Beijing's Haidian district.

Beijing reported more than 350 new cases in the latest 24-hour period. That is a very a small number considering its population of 21 million people. However, it was still enough to start local lockdowns and quarantines under China's zero-COVID policy.

Nationwide, China reported about 20,000 cases, up from 8,000 a week ago.

Officials are ordering fewer citywide lockdowns to try to lessen the effects on freedom of movement and a struggling economy. They want to avoid a repeat of the Shanghai lockdown earlier this year that froze shipping and started neighborhood protests.

The government released new national COVID guidelines last week. The guidelines call on local governments to follow a targeted and scientific approach that avoids unnecessary measures.

Peking University has more than 40,000 students across several campuses. Most are in Beijing. It was unclear how many students were affected by the lockdown.

The 124-year-old university is one of China's top universities and has in the past been a center of student protests. Its **graduates** include leading writers, politicians, thinkers and businesspeople.

Recent lockdowns in other cities across China have led to protests. Earlier this week, videos published online showed crowds pulling down barriers in the southern city of Guangzhou. The protests were in a crowded area that is home to migrant workers in the clothing industry.

Guangzhou is an industrial export center near Hong Kong. It reported more than 6,000 new COVID-19 cases in what is the nation's largest ongoing outbreak.

Other cities with major outbreaks include Chongqing in the southwest, Zhengzhou in Henan province and Hohhot, the capital of the northern area of Inner Mongolia.

I'm Ashley Thompson.

Dan Novak adapted this story for VOA Learning English based on reporting by The Associated Press.

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Words in This Story

campus — *n.* the area and buildings around a university, college, school, etc

fraction — *n.* a part or amount of something

quarantine — *n.* the period of time during which a person or animal that has a disease or that might have a disease is kept away from others to prevent the disease from spreading

approach — *n.* a way of dealing with something

graduate — *n.* a person who has earned a degree or diploma from a school, college, or university