

《关于高考的英文报道》

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Children and parents anxious about results of National College Entrance Exam

Zhang Libing's son was among the 9.39 million students registered to take the National College Entrance Examination, or gaokao, this year.

The father stood outside the gate of Beijing Hongzhi Middle School, one of the gaokao examination halls in Dongcheng district. He waved to his son as the boy entered the building and flashed the victory sign with his fingers.

The exam began at 9 am.

More than 70,000 students were scheduled to take the exam in Beijing alone. Chinese is the first subject tested.

Zhang said he felt even more nervous than his son.

"My boy usually doesn't get up if nobody wakes him, but he got up on his own at 6 am today," Zhang said.

"I didn't sleep at all."

He worried how his son will perform on the test, since Chinese was not his strongest subject.

Zhang felt a bit relieved when the boy smiled as he entered the hall.

The father then crossed the street and sat in one of the chairs volunteers had set up across the street.

"I'll wait here and drive my son home after the exam ends at 11:30 am," he said.

The road became quiet once the exam began. Dozens of parents waited, chatting in low voices, reading newspapers or sitting silently, doing nothing at all.

There were also police, urban management officers and doctors at the ready.

The gaokao is one of China's most important exams. Families take it very seriously, since it determines children's higher education opportunities. Students invest vast amounts of time and energy preparing for it.

The gaokao was suspended during the "cultural revolution" (1966-76) and has been held annually since 1977.

The number of test-takers has been dropping since it peaked at 10.5 million in 2008. This year's total of 9.39 million is 270,000, or 3 percent, more than in 2013. It marked the first increase in five years.

about 6.98 million of the students who take this year's test will be admitted, according to an overall plan.

Outside the school traffic policeman Liu Feng said it was a busy morning. He and two colleagues started at 6 am, since many people arrived as early as 7:30 am for fear of being late, causing congestion.

"We guided drivers to park appropriately to ensure test-takers' convenience," Liu said.

Head of an urban management officers team Fu Changquan said his responsibilities included stopping vendors from hawking and drivers from beeping their horns to ensure quiet in the hall. It was his fourth time working outside a gaokao testing area, he said.

"My work isn't that hard this morning because everyone nearby knows they should be quiet because of the test," he said.

"But I'll be very busy during the English test on Sunday afternoon because we should make sure it's absolutely silent for the listening part."

Volunteer Li Sujie was busy handing out newspapers and water to parents. The 24-year-old, who works for a community nearby, arrived to serve the parents at 7 am.

"I just want to make a contribution," he said.

"It reminds me of when I took the gaokao in 2007. The difference is that day was extremely hot, while today is comfortable. I wish the students good luck."

In most places, including Beijing, the gaokao lasts for two days - Saturday and Sunday. The results will come out in late June.