

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Csaba Krizsán

Easter Monday sprinkling by a west Hungarian folk dance group during the Covid-19 epidemic

UPCOMING EVENTS

Plenary session of parliament

Coronavirus updates

TOP STORY

MINISTER REJECTS RULE-OF-LAW ACCUSATIONS

Hungary does what all do in Europe, Judit Varga, Hungary's minister of justice, said in an interview published in the online edition of Die Welt on Sunday.

The minister qualified the accusation levelled by the European Union and the European People's Party, namely that Hungary's new law on defence against the novel coronavirus epidemic "has emptied" democracy as fake news, a manifestation of "the uncontrolled dominance of liberal views". Once the pandemic is over, Hungary as all countries will lift the state of emergency, she said. The timing of this decision, however, will not be coordinated by others, it will be a matter of national competence, she said.

Varga rejected European Commissioner Věra Jourová's demand that the Hungarian government should relinquish its special powers as soon as possible. "The state of emergency will be lifted on the appropriate date; neither a day before, nor a day after," she said. Concerning Jourová's view that the emergency laws passed in several countries pose a potential danger to democracy, Varga said that as long as these laws are in line with the constitution and the Constitutional Court is in place, democracy is not in danger in either Hungary or in any other European state.

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NUMBER OF CONFIRMED CASES 1,458, TEN NEW DEATHS

The number of registered Covid-19 cases in Hungary has risen to 1,458, while 10 patients died in a single day, koronavirus.gov.hu reported on Monday morning. According to the government website, the total number of deaths caused by Covid-19 so far has reached 109 and there have been a total of 120 recoveries. Fully 198 cases have been confirmed in the Budapest's Pesti Road care home where the epidemic claimed eight victims. Currently, 15,333 people are in official home quarantine. The number of tests carried out so far totals 34,819. Budapest has seen the highest number of confirmed infections, with 703 cases, followed by Pest County (214).

ORBÁN INSPECTS SZEKSZÁRD HOSPITAL

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán made an unannounced visit to Tolna County Balassa János Hospital in southern Hungary and posted a related video on his Facebook page, his press chief told MTI. Orbán viewed two wards ready to receive large numbers of patients requiring intensive care, Bertalan Havasi said. The chief physician said that the hospital is now treating one person with Covid-19 but it has capacity to provide care for people infected with coronavirus on almost 180 beds simultaneously. The prime minister expressed his appreciation for the hospital's preparedness.

CHINA CONTINUES TO SUPPLY PROTECTIVE GEAR TO HUNGARY

During the Easter holidays China continued to supply protective gear to Hungary to support its fight to contain the novel coronavirus epidemic.

An aircraft from Shenzhen landed in Budapest on Sunday morning, carrying 1,365,000 protective masks, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in a Facebook post. Another six aircraft arrived in the early hours of Monday, carrying 5.3 million face masks, 6 million pairs of gloves and 86,000 protective gowns from Beijing and Shanghai, he said. The minister said that Chinese customs regulations are being tightened up to guarantee quality standards, and that shipments are prepared in line with them.

In another development Azerbaijan's minister of economy has assured Szijjártó that health care consignments and aircraft landing in Baku and heading for Hungary would be cleared as quickly as possible at the airport. Szijjártó said in a Facebook post that he had conducted talks with Mikayil Jabbarov over the phone late on Sunday.

"Hungary is supplied with medical personal protective equipment from the East, and shipments from China will continue to play a key role in the fight against novel coronavirus in the coming weeks and months. This is why it is important for the cargo aircraft to have multiple route options," he said.

KARÁCSONY: 'DOCUMENTS PROVE CARE HOME WORKED PROPERLY'

Budapest Mayor Gergely Karácsony has published new documents to prove that the Pesti Road care home hit strongly by the novel coronavirus epidemic over the past few weeks operated in full compliance with the rules of law.

So far 198 cases of Covid-19 have been confirmed in the facility where the epidemic claimed eight victims.

Karácsony published on his Facebook page protocols of checks conducted by the competent government agencies in Budapest care homes. The documents demonstrated that "the staff members of care homes are working excellently, in a self-sacrificing way even if they have to cope with the sectoral problems stemming from decades of neglect, for instance shortage of manpower." The "dawn raid" carried out in the Pesti Road facility on Saturday found no irregularity either, the mayor said. "I will not let the efforts and sacrifices of the staff belittled by those who started a political vendetta instead of working to contain the epidemic," he said.

Ruling Fidesz group leader Máté Kocsis said on Facebook earlier that it was "tasteless" how Karácsony had been "fleeing from responsibility". Kocsis said it was clear that if an institution was maintained by the municipality then the municipality was responsible for what happened there.