

Czechs partially ease lockdown; kids to return to school

April 6 2021, by Karel Janicek



People pay respect to victims of the COVID-19 pandemic at a spontaneous memorial place set at the Old Town Square in Prague, Czech Republic, Monday, March 29, 2021. The coronavirus pandemic is unleashing enormous suffering as infection rates rise across central Europe even as the Czech Republic and Slovakia, recently among the worst-hit areas in the world, are finally seeing some improvements following tight lockdowns. (AP Photo/Petr David Josek)

The Czech government on Tuesday approved the first easing of its tight lockdown in one of the European Union's hardest-hit countries, allowing at least some children to return to school.

"It's not a full relaxation," Health Minister Jan Blatny said. "The situation hasn't been ideal yet."

Starting Monday, people in the Czech Republic will be allowed again to travel to other counties and the night-time curfew will end. The measures took effect at the beginning of March as the Central European nation was desperate to slow down the spread of a highly contagious virus variant first found in Britain.

With numbers of hospitalized COVID-19 patients on the decline, the Czechs have offered to treat patients from other European countries where infections have been on the rise, Blatny said, offering up to 50 beds.

The number of COVID-19 patients in Czech hospitals dropped to 5,700 on Monday, down from 9,500 a month ago. A month ago, European countries—including Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Poland and Hungary—offered similar help to the then-struggling Czech health system.

Despite the recent decline, the Czech Republic still has the highest number of cumulative deaths (252.7) per 100,000 people in the world and the third-highest number of cumulative cases (14,509.5) again per 100,000, according to Johns Hopkins University.



People pay respect to victims of COVID-19 at a spontaneous memorial place set

at the Old Town Square in Prague, Czech Republic, Monday, March 29, 2021. The coronavirus pandemic is unleashing enormous suffering as infection rates rise across central Europe even as the Czech Republic and Slovakia, recently among the worst-hit areas in the world, are finally seeing some improvements following tight lockdowns. (AP Photo/Petr David Josek)



A man pays respect to victims of the COVID-19 pandemic at a spontaneous memorial place set at the Old Town Square in Prague, Czech Republic, Monday, March 29, 2021. The coronavirus pandemic is unleashing enormous suffering as infection rates rise across central Europe even as the Czech Republic and Slovakia, recently among the worst-hit areas in the world, are finally seeing some improvements following tight lockdowns. (AP Photo/Petr David Josek)



A woman lights up a candle to pay respect to victims of the COVID-19 pandemic at a spontaneous memorial place set at the Old Town Square in Prague, Czech Republic, Monday, March 29, 2021. The coronavirus pandemic is unleashing enormous suffering as infection rates rise across central Europe even as the Czech Republic and Slovakia, recently among the worst-hit areas in the world, are finally seeing some improvements following tight lockdowns. (AP Photo/Petr David Josek)

The nation of 10.7 million has 1.56 million confirmed cases with over 27,000 deaths.

Education Minister Robert Plaga said the children up to the fifth grade

will be back at schools on Monday under strict conditions "to make their return safe and permanent."

All will have to wear face masks and will be tested twice a week, Plaga said. To start, students will return on a rotating basis, in school one week and distance learning the next.

Stores selling children's clothes and shoes, laundries, outdoor farmers' markets, zoos, botanical gardens and some other stores will be allowed to reopen Monday.

An advisory group of scientists at the Health Ministry cautiously agreed with the careful school reopening but said the situation still "hasn't been good despite the gradual decline (of infections)." But it was not consulted on many other easing measures.

Epidemiologist Rastislav Madar, a member of the group, told the Czech [public radio](#) that the relaxed measures pose a risk because "the numbers (of infections) are still too high."

© 2021 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: Czechs partially ease lockdown; kids to return to school (2021, April 6) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-04-czechs-partially-ease-lockdown-kids.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.