

AM SCHAUPLATZ: Ischgl - The Corona Hotspot in the Alps

Ischgl im Ausnahmezustand

Ischgl was once a poor farming village - until the longest cable car in the whole country was built there in 1963. The years that followed brought a gigantic economic upturn and the mountains around Ischgl quickly became one of Austria's most state-of-the-art ski resorts. A hotel city hosting 1,4 million overnight stays, with 236 kilometres of ski-slopes and 1,200 snow cannons to attract visitors. The village boasts that its enormous lift system can transport 94,000 people per hour up the mountain.

But since the onset of the Coronavirus crisis, Ischgl has been in a state of emergency. The party atmosphere is a thing of the past, and the situation is tense. The Tyrolean village is thought to be one of the epicentres of the pandemic in Europe. There has been widespread international criticism of the long hesitation of those in charge to close this year's skiing season early, and the situation is now under investigation by the Public Prosecutor's Office. Ischgl has been in quarantine for weeks. Tourists, but also countless tourism workers, are stuck in their rooms, waiting for the restrictions to be lifted.

Ed Moschitz visited Ischgl with a camera, as long ago as January. Over the following weeks he interviewed leaders, workers and residents and his reportage documents how the tourist resort dealt with the crisis.

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