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‘This Too Shall Pass’: Putin Announces New Coronavirus Aid

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During a televised meeting, Putin said doctors dealing with coronavirus patients and small businesses would get additional support. **Kremlin.ru**

President Vladimir Putin has announced a new aid package to doctors battling the coronavirus pandemic and ordered support for small businesses suffering under his paid “non-working” month in his third public address in as many weeks.

Here’s a brief look at what he discussed during Wednesday's televised meeting with regional governors and other officials:

Frontline workers

— Putin pledged monthly bonuses between 25,000 rubles ($320) and 80,000 rubles ($1,000) in April-June for paramedics, nurses, doctors and other medical personnel directly involved with treating coronavirus patients.

Small businesses

— Putin granted a six-month deferment on insurance premiums and taxes, except for VAT, for small and medium businesses. He allowed them to repay the accumulated debts in monthly installments for a year or more.

— "I think the following formula is fair: first and foremost, we need to help those companies that maintain employment. But if people still find themselves out of work, we will help them directly."

— Putin gave his cabinet of ministers and the Central Bank a five-day deadline to draft an additional relief program for businesses.

Kadyrov swipe?

— Putin urged regional leaders, to whom he has delegated the authority to take measures against the spread of coronavirus, to refrain from closing internal borders.

"We must not stop the economy, close transport, cargo and passenger links between the regions [or] restrict the work of companies en masse," Putin said.

— "You and I must understand the damage and the destructive toll this could cause," he said. Last week, Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov sealed off the region's internal borders to slow the spread of coronavirus.

'No other choice'

— Putin called on Russians to wait out the nationwide "non-working" month in self-isolation to avoid the further spread of coronavirus.

"I understand that fatigue has piled up from financial, household and other everyday problems. Your usual rhythm of life is disrupted. Being constantly within four walls is demanding and nauseating for most people," he said.

"But there's no choice now. We must, by all means, endure self-isolation and its tests."

— "Everything passes and this will pass. Our country has gone through many serious challenges... Russia has handled them all. We will defeat this coronavirus contagion."

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