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Russian Minister Hospitalized With Coronavirus

By AFP

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Russia's Construction, Housing and Utilities Minister Vladimir Yakushev during a meeting with President Vladimir Putin at the Moscow Kremlin. **Alexei Nikolsky / Russian Presidential Press and Information Office / TASS**

Russian construction minister Vladimir Yakushev has been hospitalized with coronavirus, local media said Friday, just a day after the prime minister announced he was infected.

The construction and housing minister's deputy was also infected, the news agency Interfax reported, as Russia has seen a steady increase in infections that have reached the highest levels of government.

"I will receive treatment under the supervision of doctors at one of Moscow's hospitals," Yakushev told Interfax.

Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin announced on Thursday that he was entering self-isolation

to protect his colleagues.

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He was temporarily replaced by President Vladimir Putin, who has not held any face-to-face meetings for weeks, according to the Kremlin website.

Russia is now the European country registering the most new infections as the number surged past 100,000 on Thursday.

The country now has 114,431 cases — the eighth highest in the world — and 1,169 deaths, mostly in the Moscow region and second city Saint Petersburg.

Putin said this week that the situation remained "very difficult" and officials warned the country's outbreak had not yet peaked.

Despite the steady increase in cases, the government has indicated it could gradually lift confinement measures from May 12, but the easing will depend on the region.

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