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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Bike Sales Spike in Movement-Starved Russia

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Russians are gradually emerging from self-isolation after more than six weeks of nationwide coronavirus lockdown. **Gavriil Grigorov / TASS**

Russia's bicycle sales have spiked by 6,000% so far this month as Russians gradually emerge from self-isolation after more than six weeks of nationwide coronavirus lockdown, the online retail giant Wildberries told state media Wednesday.

Overall, Russia's largest online retailer said sporting goods sales jumped sixfold on May 1-24 compared with the same period in 2019.

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Wildberries sold 60 times more bicycles, 10 times more jump ropes and skateboards and eight times more scooters in that period, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency's economic desk reported.

“The temporary closure of fitness clubs, bike, scooter and roller skate rentals has led to a surge in purchases of sports equipment,” it quoted Wildberries’ press service as saying.

President Vladimir Putin declared a nationwide “non-working” period to slow the spread of Covid-19 in late March, closing non-essential businesses and ordering employers to continue paying staff. He ordered to lift the “non-working” period six weeks later on May 12, authorizing regional leaders to start easing restrictions according to the local epidemiological situation.

Major Russian cities have seen increasing numbers of people going outside their homes since then, according to data collected by Russian tech giant Yandex.

Wildberries has launched online sales training sessions for entrepreneurs, focusing on sectors hit hardest by the coronavirus outbreak, including entertainment, fitness, culture, education and restaurants.

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