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# Russia to Start Mass Deliveries of Coronavirus Vaccine Next Month

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A vaccination campaign will begin among Russian volunteers in October. **Moskva News Agency**

Russia plans to begin the first mass deliveries of its coronavirus vaccine in September, Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said Monday.

Russia has registered the Sputnik V adenoviral vector-based vaccine and is touting it as the world's first despite it not having undergone large-scale trials to prove its safety and effectiveness. Russia is one of several countries racing to develop a proven vaccine against the disease that has infected 25.4 million and killed more than 850,000 people worldwide.

"First deliveries in large quantities will begin in September," Murashko was quoted as saying by the state-run TASS news agency.

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The health minister said production was underway in parallel with post-registration monitoring of the vaccine's effectiveness.

A mass vaccination campaign will begin among Russian volunteers in October, a month after industrial production is expected to launch, according to the head of the national sovereign fund paying for the vaccination project.

"The vaccine will be first and foremost shipped to health workers and teachers," Murashko said, adding that the vaccination will be "completely voluntary."

Some 2,500 out of 40,000 volunteers have been recruited for Phase 3 trials of the vaccine so far, he said.

"Several more vaccines are going through registration. We'll reach maximum capacities in November-December," Murashko said.

Russia says more than 20 countries have requested over 1 billion doses of the Sputnik V vaccine despite safety concerns.

Western scientists have raised concerns over the speed of development of Russian vaccines, suggesting that researchers might be cutting corners after coming under pressure from the authorities to deliver. Russia has dismissed the criticism as an attempt to undermine its research.

Sputnik V is expected to enter civilian circulation on Jan. 1, 2021, according to a registration certificate on the Russian Health Ministry's website.

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