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Moscow Expects Year-End Coronavirus Vaccine Rollout

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Moscow has been the most-affected Russian city during the pandemic. **Moskva News Agency**

Moscow could receive bulk shipments of Russia's coronavirus vaccine by the end of 2020 while the vaccine continues to undergo final clinical trials, Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said Thursday.

Phase 3 trials of Sputnik V, an adenovirus-based vector vaccine that the Russian government approved in August, are expected to wrap up in May 2021. A second vaccine developed in Siberia has received a patent this week ahead of its expected registration on Oct. 15.

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"I hope that we'll have the first large batches of the vaccine in November or December," Sobyanin, the head of Russia's national coronavirus task force, said in an interview on state television.

Industrial-scale production of the vaccine is expected to begin sometime between late December and January, he added.

Around 6,000 out of 40,000 volunteers and 600 medics have been inoculated with the Sputnik V vaccine in the Russian capital as part of post-registration double-blind trials so far, Sobyanin said.

Small batches have also been sent to other Russian regions.

Russia has the world's fourth-highest number of infections at 1.18 million. Its daily caseload has risen sharply from less than 5,000 to nearly 9,000 in the past month, stoking fears of a second wave.

In the capital, the daily count of new Covid-19 infections has more than doubled over the past week, surpassing 2,400 on Thursday.

To curb the resurgent spread of Covid-19 in Moscow, Sobyanin announced an extended two-week school break, ordered offices to send one-third of their workforce home starting next Monday and strongly urged the elderly to stay indoors.

The mayor warned that he may reinstate tougher measures if the city of 12.7 million fails to observe the rules and health guidelines.

Sobyanin maintained Thursday that the city is still experiencing its first wave of the virus.

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