The Moscow Times
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Russia Sets Single-Day Records for Coronavirus Deaths and Infections

October 29, 2020



Mikhail Tereshchenko / TASS

Russia confirmed a new record of 17,717 coronavirus cases and 366 deaths Thursday as the second wave of the disease overwhelms the country's regions outside Moscow.

The latest record increase in infections smashes the previous single-day highs set last Friday and this Monday by at least 370 cases.

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Russia's overall Covid-19 caseload now stands at 1,581,693, the fourth-highest in the world, according to the national coronavirus information center.

The information center also reported 366 deaths from Covid-19 Thursday, breaking the previous records of 320 deaths on Tuesday and 346 deaths on Wednesday.

Thursday's increase in deaths brings Russia's overall Covid-19 death toll to 27,301. Monthly state statistics and experts suggest the real Covid-19 death toll is at least double that figure, which is currently the 13th-highest in the world.

The record-setting figures come amid widespread reports of overwhelmed regional hospitals, with bodies filling up morgues, critical patients dying of oxygen shortages and others relegated to stairwells or forced to bring their own folding cots due to hospital bed shortages.

Russia imposed a nationwide mask mandate starting Wednesday and advised restaurants and other night spots to close after 11 p.m. Moscow, which last week adopted a contact-tracing system requiring restaurant and nightclub visitors to register their phone numbers and scan QR codes, said it will not force its establishments to close early.

The latest measures are a departure from the spring, when authorities introduced unpopular lockdown measures including bans on non-essential walks outside while Russia was seeing fewer than 10,000 daily Covid-19 cases on average. This time, they are opting for targeted measures and urging Russians to follow health guidelines while raising hopes of mass vaccine production in the next few months.

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