

First Russian Region Returns to Full Lockdown as Coronavirus Surges

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Buryatia is in the second-highest quartile of Covid-19 infections in Russia. [Andrei Ogorodnik / TASS](#)

The eastern Siberian republic of Buryatia has become the first Russian region to impose a second coronavirus [lockdown](#), shutting down restaurants, malls and other places of mass gathering for two weeks starting Monday.

“We need to separate people as much as possible, to relieve the healthcare and testing systems,” Buryatia governor Alexei Tsydenov [told](#) reporters, according to the Znak.com news website.

Related article: [Russia Not Planning Second Coronavirus Lockdown, Officials Say](#)

The region’s coronavirus task force has ordered cafes, bars and restaurants to only offer takeout and delivery services from Nov. 16–30. Cinemas, beauty salons and shopping malls as well as public baths and saunas will also be closed for visitors during the same period.

Pharmacies and grocery stores will remain open during the lockdown.

Tsydenov said the authorities in the region some 5,500 kilometers east of Moscow do not plan to extend the restrictions beyond two weeks, which is the incubation period of Covid-19.

“Otherwise, the economic repercussions will be severe,” he said.

Buryatia is in the second-highest quartile of Covid-19 infections in Russia with 14,838 cases and 273 deaths. It is among the far-flung regions outside Moscow to have experienced severe hospital bed, staff and drug shortages in recent weeks amid record-breaking infection and death rates.

Russia has confirmed 1.9 million coronavirus infections and 33,000 deaths as of Sunday.

Federal authorities have so far resisted returning to a nationwide lockdown and have imposed targeted measures to slow the spread of Covid-19.

In Moscow, the epicenter of Russia’s Covid-19 outbreak, the mayor ordered restaurants to shut down after 11 p.m. and called off Christmas and New Year’s events to curb the spread of the disease.

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