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Over 100K At-Risk Russians Vaccinated for Coronavirus

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British vaccine experts have evaluated the adenoviral vector-based Sputnik V as “reasonably effective” following initial skepticism over its data. **Maxim Slutsky / TASS**

More than 100,000 Russians at higher risk of severe coronavirus cases have been vaccinated with the domestically made Sputnik V vaccine, Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said Wednesday.

His announcement at a special session of the UN General Assembly presenting Sputnik V came as President Vladimir Putin ordered the large-scale vaccination of priority groups such as doctors and teachers to start late next week. Earlier in the day, Britain became the first western country to issue general-use approval for Pfizer-BioNTech’s Covid-19 vaccine starting next week.

Related article: Putin Orders Mass Coronavirus Vaccination in Russia ‘Next Week’

“We have started vaccinating high-risk groups. To date, more than 100,000 Russian citizens

have been vaccinated," Interfax quoted Murashko as saying.

Putin said around 2 million Sputnik V vaccine doses have either already been produced or will be manufactured in the coming days, allowing Russian doctors and teachers to receive the two-dose jabs immediately.

British vaccine experts have evaluated the adenoviral vector-based Sputnik V as "reasonably effective" following initial skepticism over the integrity of the data released under the Kremlin's watch.

The two-dose shot will cost less than $10 per dose, Kirill Dmitriev, the head of the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) which funds and markets Sputnik V, said at the UNGA session.

Russia was the first country to register a coronavirus vaccine in August despite Sputnik V's incomplete clinical trials. Its developers have since touted a 95% efficacy rate based on interim results of Phase 3 trials.

More than 50 countries have requested to buy or localize the production of around 1 billion Sputnik V doses. Russia authorized a second coronavirus vaccine, named EpiVacCorona, in October ahead of its post-registration trials that began last month.

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