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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Putin Says Will Get Vaccine When Possible for Age Range

By AFP

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The 68-year-old president praised the Russia-developed Sputnik V vaccine as safe and effective.
Alexandra Mudrats / TASS

President Vladimir Putin said Thursday he will receive the Russian-developed Sputnik V coronavirus jab once it is approved for people his age, praising the vaccine as safe and effective.

The 68-year-old Russian president said at his annual end-of-year press conference that he had not been vaccinated yet, but "will definitely do so as soon as it becomes possible" according to expert advice.

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Putin claimed Russia had become the first country in the world to "invent" and start

producing a vaccine, which he described as being around 96-97% effective, according to experts.

The Russian leader in August announced the registration of the Sputnik V jab — named after the Soviet-era satellite — ahead of large-scale clinical trials involving some 40,000 volunteers.

The vaccine's developers said interim clinical trial results showed the vaccine to be more than 90% effective.

Russia earlier this month started a large-scale public vaccination drive, offering the jab initially to people in high-risk groups.

Putin said Thursday that by the start of next year Russia will have access to "millions of doses of the vaccine."

He also praised Russia's handling of the pandemic, saying the country met the challenge "with dignity and, in part, maybe even better than other countries in the world."

Yet he conceded that there were a "huge number of problems" associated with the pandemic.

Russia has the fourth-highest virus caseload in the world, registering nearly 3 million infections since the start of the pandemic.

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