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Moscow Lifts Restrictions as Coronavirus Cases Recede

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Since the fall, Moscow had required that employers transfer 30% of their staff to remote work and bars, restaurants, clubs and other nighttime establishments to close between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. **Pavel Golovkin / AP / TASS**

Moscow has lifted work-from-home measures and restaurant curfews as coronavirus cases continued to recede over the past week, Mayor Sergei Sobyanin announced Wednesday.

Since the fall, the Russian capital had required that employers transfer 30% of their staff to remote work and bars, restaurants, clubs and other nighttime establishments to close between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m.

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Mayor Sobyanin, who lifted these restrictions as of Wednesday, noted on his website that companies were free to keep their own work-from-home rules and restaurants were still required to follow health guidelines.

The Moscow administration will decide by Feb. 6 whether to allow in-person attendance at city universities. All Moscow schoolchildren were allowed to return to classrooms from mid-January.

Sobyanin said the Russian capital's daily coronavirus infections have not topped 3,000 for the past week and hospitalizations have also dramatically gone down since June 2020.

"The pandemic is on the decline and it is our duty ... to create the conditions for the fastest possible economic recovery," the mayor wrote on his website.

Russia has confirmed the world's fourth-highest number of coronavirus infections at more than 3.7 million cases and the third-highest death toll of more than 186,000. Daily tallies published by the national coronavirus information center place Russia's death toll at 70,500.

Russia has approved two Covid-19 vaccines and is planning to register a third vaccine in the next few weeks amid hopes to vaccinate tens of millions of Russians by summer 2021.

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