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Russia Says Registers Third Coronavirus Vaccine

By AFP

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Russia was the first country to register a vaccine against Covid-19. **Sergei Kiselyev / Moskva News Agency**

Moscow announced Saturday it had registered its third vaccine against the coronavirus and promised to introduce the jab to the Russian population by March.

Russia was the first country to register a vaccine against Covid-19 in August ahead of clinical trials, and the Sputnik V jab has been authorised in more than two dozen countries around the world.

"Today we note that a third vaccine, CoviVac, has been registered," Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin said at a government meeting broadcast on state television.

"And already in mid-March, the first 120,000 doses will be distributed within the civilian circulation," he told the cabinet.

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First greeted with scepticism, the effectiveness of Sputnik V was confirmed by the Lancet medical journal earlier this month.

Moscow relied on the nationwide rollout of the vaccine to stave off the impact of a second wave of infections that battered the country late last year.

But mortality data released recently revealed that Russia's death rate was still one of the highest in the world.

President Vladimir Putin announced in October that the country had registered its second vaccine, EpiVacCorona, which health officials had said would enter mass production this month.

Mishustin said Saturday that Russia had produced 10 million doses of Sputnik and 80,000 batches of the EpiVacCorona vaccine developed by the Siberian Vektor laboratory.

With the introduction of the third jab Saturday, the prime minister said that: "Today Russia is the only country in which there are already three vaccines for the prevention of Covid infection."

CoviVac was produced by the state-run Chumakov Centre based in Moscow, which employed a different method of development from Sputnik and EpiVacCorona, using an inactive virus.

The vaccine is due to complete final stage clinical trial with 3,000 participants in March and has so far been recommended for people below the age of 60.

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