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Brazil Greenlights Russia's Sputnik V Vaccine in U-Turn

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A Uniao Quimica pharmaceutical employee works at the company's control center for Russia's Sputnik V Covid-19 vaccine in the greater Sao Paulo area on May 20. **AP / TASS**

Brazil has approved Russia's Sputnik V vaccine for import and emergency use in several states, reversing its April decision to ban imports of the jab, its developers have said.

The South American country of over 210 million people is now the 67th in the world to authorize Sputnik V, the jab's official Twitter account said Saturday.

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The first batch of Sputnik V will be delivered to Brazil in July, the account said, citing Kirill Dmitriev, the head of the Russian Direct Investment Fund that bankrolls and markets the vaccine.

The move comes as Brazil continues to battle one of the world's deadliest coronavirus

outbreaks.

Brazil's health regulator Anvisa had banned imports of Sputnik V in April, saying Russia sent vaccine batches containing a live version of a common cold-causing virus. Sputnik V's developer, the state-run Gamaleya Institute, denied the accusations.

"The Sputnik V team fully answered all questions from Anvisa on the vaccine's efficacy and safety," the official Sputnik V account tweeted Saturday.

Russia has heavily promoted Sputnik V abroad as a cheaper, easier-to-store option than its Western-developed competitors despite tepid vaccination rates at home.

Western powers have meanwhile accused Moscow of using the vaccine to boost its geopolitical sway and the vaccine has yet to be approved in the EU and the United States. Moscow accused Brazil in April of succumbing to political pressure from the U.S. to reject its vaccine.

Peer-reviewed research published in The Lancet in January said Sputnik V is safe and 91.6% effective against the coronavirus.

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