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Moscow, St. Petersburg Report Record Daily Coronavirus Death Tolls

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Denis Grishkin / Moskva News Agency

Moscow reported a record number of coronavirus deaths in a single day for the second consecutive day as the Delta variant-driven third wave of the pandemic rips through the country, official figures said Monday.

The Russian capital recorded 124 Covid deaths in the past 24 hours.

The new record came 24 hours after Moscow posted 114 deaths on Sunday, crossing the 100-death mark for the first time since the start of the pandemic.

Record deaths were also reported for the third day in a row in Russia's second-biggest city of St. Petersburg, where officials on Monday reported 110 virus deaths over the past 24 hours.

Russia as a whole reported 611 deaths and 21,650 new infections on Monday, the highest daily figure since January.

The explosion in cases comes as officials in Moscow and more than a dozen other regions are

mandating vaccinations for those in professions that interact with the public.

Starting Monday, Moscow will also require all restaurant patrons to present an official QR code proving their vaccination status, recovery from Covid-19 or negative test results. The city has also mandated that businesses send 30% of unvaccinated employees to remote work.

The measures are an effort to revive vaccination uptake in a country where just 14.9% of the population has been vaccinated with at least one dose due to widespread skepticism.

Russia confirmed a total of 5.45 million cases of coronavirus and more than 133,000 deaths, according to the national Covid-19 information center.

Russia's total excess fatality count since the start of the pandemic, seen as a more reliable indicator of its true toll, is around 475,000.

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