Russia Breaks Daily Coronavirus Fatality Record

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Denis Grishkin / Moskva News Agency

Russia has reported the highest number of coronavirus deaths in a single day since the start of the pandemic amid the country's Delta variant-driven third wave and introduction of mandatory vaccination to prop up sluggish take-up.

Russia's Covid-19 task force which tallies deaths nationwide recorded 652 Covid deaths on Tuesday, beating the previous mortality record of 635 set at the height of Russia's second wave on Dec. 24.

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St. Petersburg, which is hosting the Euro 2020 football quarter-finals this week without tight restrictions, also reported a record death toll for the second consecutive day with 119 coronavirus fatalities.

The epicenter of Russia's outbreak, Moscow, reported 121 Covid deaths 24 hours after seeing a record number of 124 fatalities. Authorities there have ordered all restaurants to admit customers with QR codes proving their vaccination status, immunity or negative PCR test results, and all businesses to send 30% of their unvaccinated staff to remote work.

The national Covid-19 information center, which counts only those whose sole cause of death was Covid-19 toward its tally, says a total of 134,545 people have died from the virus. Russia's total excess fatality count since the start of the pandemic stands at around 475,000.

Russia also reported 20,616 new infections Tuesday, bringing the total caseload to nearly 5.5 million.

The explosion in deaths and cases comes as officials in Moscow and more than a dozen regions are mandating vaccinations for workers that interact with the public as the Delta variant first detected in India sweeps through the country.

Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said Monday that demand for vaccinations has since picked up, leading to 23 million Russians receiving at least one vaccine dose. Several regions have reported vaccine shortages in recent days as a result.

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