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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Sees Record Virus Deaths Despite Falling Cases

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The country confirmed 820 coronavirus deaths in the past 24 hours, an all-time high since the start of the pandemic. **Denis Grishkin / Moskva News Agency**

Russia reported its highest daily coronavirus death count Thursday as cases continue to decline and major regions lift restrictions they had reintroduced during the summer surge.

The government's Covid-19 information center said that 820 people have died over the past 24 hours.

The new record fatality count beats the previous one-day record of 819 deaths set on Aug. 14.

The latest figures bring Russia's total officially reported Covid fatalities to 179,243, the world's sixth-highest and Europe's highest death toll.

Related article: As Coronavirus Fatalities Hit a Record High, Russia's Vaccination Campaign Falters

Official figures published by Russia's statistics agency show that the country's excess deaths topped 531,000 since the start of the pandemic, according to The Moscow Times' analysis.

Russia's coronavirus information center also reported 19,630 new cases Thursday, a decline in infections from the peak of almost 28,000 in mid-July.

Russia has reported the world's fourth-highest total number of coronavirus infections at more than 6.8 million.

The surge in deaths comes amid Russia's slow vaccination drive among a vaccine-skeptic population despite more than half of the country's regions mandating inoculation for certain workers.

Russia administered fewer than 500,000 first and second vaccine doses for the first time in two months Wednesday as numbers of newly vaccinated Russians continue to decline, according to analysis of available data.

Only 43 million Russians, or 29% of the population, have received a first vaccine dose and 35.5 million, or 24%, are fully vaccinated, the available data states.

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