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Russia Sets New Daily Covid Death Record

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According to government figures, 1,123 people have died from Covid-19 over the last 24 hours. **Sofia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency**

Russia confirmed a new record number of coronavirus deaths for a second consecutive day Wednesday as the country with Europe's highest official Covid-19 death toll counts down the days until nationwide restrictions come into force.

According to government figures, 1,123 people have died from Covid-19 over the last 24 hours.

Wednesday's increase brings the official death toll to 233,898 — Europe's highest — though authorities are accused of drastically downplaying that figure. A Moscow Times analysis of excess deaths published by the federal statistics agency Rosstat puts Russia's total excess fatality count since the start of the pandemic at 660,000.

Russia's coronavirus task force also reported 36,582 coronavirus cases Wednesday.

Russia has the world's fifth-highest total caseload of more than 8.3 million infections since the start of the pandemic, with the more-infectious Delta variant and stubbornly low vaccination rates fueling the virus' spread since the summer.

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The latest figures come days before Russia's mandated paid vacation for non-essential workers that aims to halt spiraling Covid-19 cases and deaths from this Sunday, Oct. 30, to Nov. 7.

President Vladimir Putin on Monday instructed regional leaders to order restaurants to close between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. and to ban all entertainment events.

At least one Russian region has also imposed a curfew for the duration of the 10-day "non-working" period.

Moscow, the epicenter of Russia's coronavirus outbreak, will go into the so-called "non-working" period this Thursday, with all businesses and services except grocery stores and pharmacies suspended.

Only around 36% of Russians have been fully vaccinated despite the availability of four homegrown vaccines and several regions mandating shots for certain segments of the population.

All of Russia's 85 regions across 11 time zones have now mandated vaccines for certain categories of workers, Anna Popova, who heads the federal health watchdog that is leading the country's response to the virus, said Tuesday.

A number of regions including Moscow have since reported an uptick in vaccination rates.

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