The Moscow Times
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Russia Sees Fourth Day of Record-High Covid Deaths

October 29, 2021

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Russia reported a record number of coronavirus deaths Friday as most of the country headed into its last day before a partial lockdown aimed at curbing soaring infections.

According to government figures, 1,163 people died from Covid in the past 24 hours.

That brings the official death toll to 236,220 — Europe's highest — though authorities are accused of downplaying that figure.

A Moscow Times analysis of official figures since the start of the pandemic in the spring of 2020 and August 2021 places Russia's excess death toll at 660,000.

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Another 39,849 people have been infected in the past 24 hours, the government tally said Friday.

To curb the record-breaking daily deaths and infections inundating hospitals, Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered paid vacation for non-essential workers between this Saturday, Oct. 30, and Nov. 7.

Moscow and five other regions went into their partial lockdowns earlier this week.

The non-working week, which shutters all non-essential businesses, does not ban Russians from traveling, and tour agencies have reported a spike in demand for trips to destinations like Egypt and Turkey since the measures were announced.

All 85 Russian regions have also mandated vaccinations of certain categories of workers in recent weeks, fueling a slight uptick in uptake and authorities in some regions declaring shortages of Sputnik Light booster jabs.

Only around 32% of Russians have been fully vaccinated with one of the country's several vaccines as of Thursday, according to the independent Gogov monitor.

Putin authorized local leaders to extend the so-called “non-working” period beyond Nov. 7 if Covid-19 cases do not fall in their regions.

Moscow’s health department has projected infections to peak late this week.

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