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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Sees Second Day of Record Covid Deaths Despite Declining Cases

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Gavriil Grigorov / TASS

Russia reported a new record of 1,251 coronavirus deaths Thursday as case numbers continued declining following nationwide measures to curb the spread.

Thursday's death toll marked the second consecutive day of all-time high coronavirus fatalities, with the previous pandemic record of 1,247 deaths seen on Wednesday.

That brings the country's official Covid-19 death toll to 260,335 — Europe's highest.

But analysis by The Moscow Times of the most recently available official statistics placed Russia's excess death toll since the start of the pandemic — and before the latest and deadliest wave of the virus — at 723,350.

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Russia also became the world leader in Covid-19 deaths during the week of Nov. 1-7 for the

first time since the start of the pandemic, surpassing the United States.

Russia is one of the world's hardest-hit countries with more than 9.2 million Covid-10 cases. Government figures placed Thursday's new infections at 37,374, a decline from the 40,000 daily cases registered earlier this month.

Public health officials have forecast that Russia would come out of the pandemic by 2022, with stubbornly low vaccination levels hampering the Kremlin's initial target of reaching herd immunity this year. But the Kremlin on Wednesday admitted there was "no end in sight" to the pandemic within the country.

Russian lawmakers are racing to mandate vaccine passports for public transport and restaurants in a bid to combat deeply entrenched vaccine hesitancy.

Under the proposed legislation, restaurant-goers as well as air and train passengers will need to prove their vaccination or recent recovery with digital scannable barcode passes known as QR codes between Feb. 1 and June 1, 2022.

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