

New Russia virus cases top 10,000 for sixth day

May 8 2020



Coronavirus. Credit: European Centers for Disease Control

Russia on Friday registered more than 10,000 new coronavirus cases for the sixth day in a row, after emerging as a new hotspot of the pandemic.

A government tally showed 10,669 new cases over the last 24 hours, fewer than Thursday's record of 11,231 bringing the total number of

confirmed infections to 187,859.

The country also recorded 98 new deaths from the virus, for a total of 1,723, and while some officials are considering softening the current lockdown, the WHO warned Russia is going through a "delayed epidemic."

Russia now ranks fourth in Europe in terms of the total number of cases, according to an AFP tally, behind countries where the epidemic hit considerably earlier: Britain, Italy and Spain.

WHO emergencies director Michael Ryan said in a virtual briefing that "Russia is probably experiencing a delayed epidemic" and must "learn some of the lessons" which came at great cost in other parts of the world.

Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin appeared on television for the first time since announcing that he has been infected on April 30.

Chairing a video meeting about supporting Russia's World War II veterans, Mishustin seemed in good health but did not comment on his condition, though Russian news agencies said he is still in hospital.

On Thursday, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin announced an extension of a lockdown in the capital, where most cases are concentrated, to May 31.

He also brought in a rule that people must wear masks and gloves in public transport and shops and announced that lockdown will be lifted for industries and construction projects.

Residents of the capital are only allowed to leave their homes for brief trips to a shop, to walk dogs or to travel to essential jobs with a permit.

Russia has a national non-working period until May 11 that so far has not been extended.

On Saturday, when the country usually marks Soviet victory in World War II with large-scale military parades, there will only be fly-pasts and fireworks.

For the first time, President Vladimir Putin will give a speech by the Eternal Flame memorial beside the Kremlin walls instead of during a parade on Red Square.

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