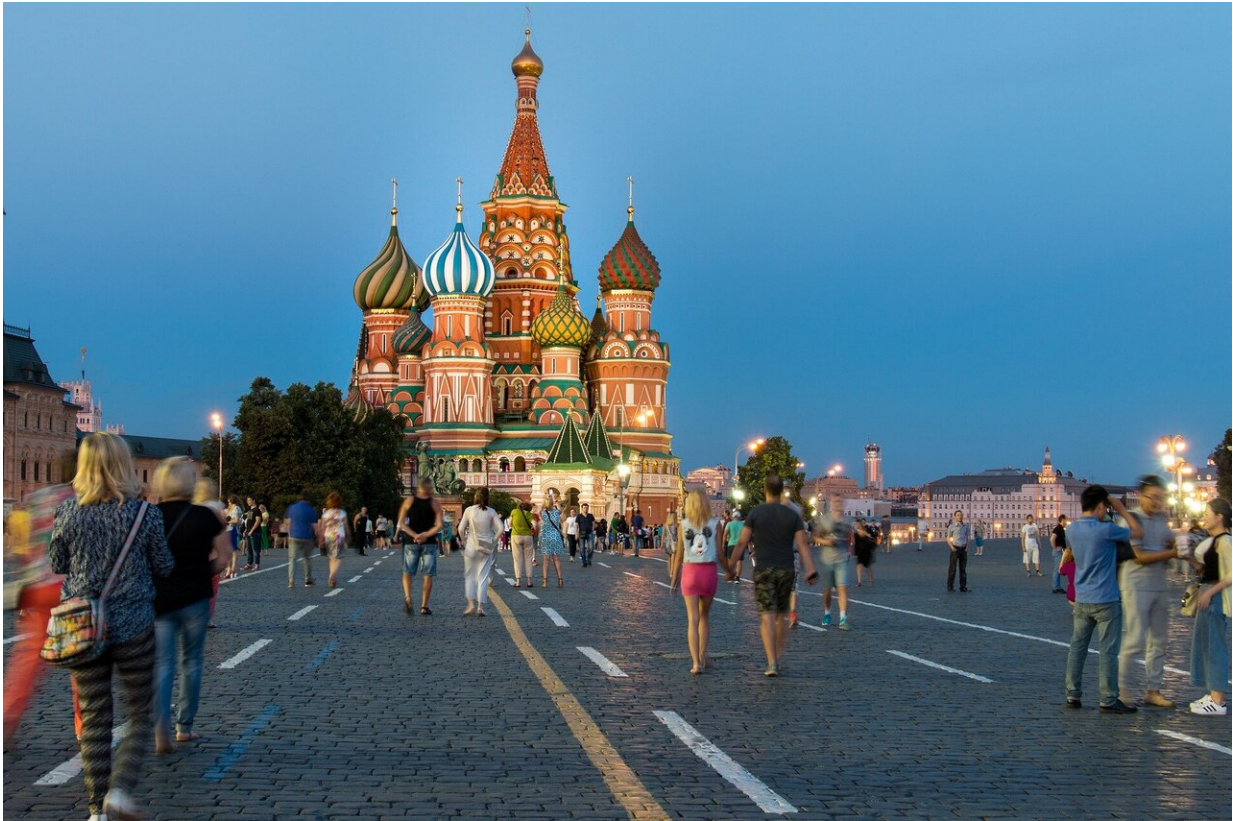


New virus cases in Moscow climb to June levels

September 24 2020



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New coronavirus cases in Moscow on Thursday reached their highest level since late June, raising fears of a new wave in the country with the fourth-largest number of infections worldwide.

Speaking Thursday evening, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said there has been a "serious" increase in hospital admissions.

"This is not a joke at all, this means that the situation is getting more complicated," he said in televised remarks.

Authorities said that the number of daily hospital admissions had grown by around 30 percent over the past week.

On Thursday, the capital recorded 1,050 new cases, the highest figure since June 23.

The caseload increase had remained relatively stable in the capital at around 700 per day for several months, but numbers have begun to climb again since September 15.

Moscow officials said Thursday that Sobyenin had sent a letter to heads of large companies asking them to have some staff return to working from home.

Russia as a whole confirmed 6,595 new cases in 24 hours, the highest figure since July 12. The government's virus website said that 24 percent had no clinical symptoms.

The biggest concentrations of new cases are in Moscow and its surrounding region, as well as the second largest city of Saint Petersburg.

So far 19,948 people have died of COVID-19 in Russia, out of a total 1,128,836 confirmed infections.

Russia has prided itself on registering the world's first coronavirus vaccine, Sputnik V, although it is still undergoing large-scale clinical trials after promising results in early trials.

Numerous high-profile figures including Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and Sobyenin have already had the vaccine.

In a speech to the United Nations this week, President Vladimir Putin offered to inoculate those working at the international organisation for free.

He earlier said that one of his daughters had been vaccinated.

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