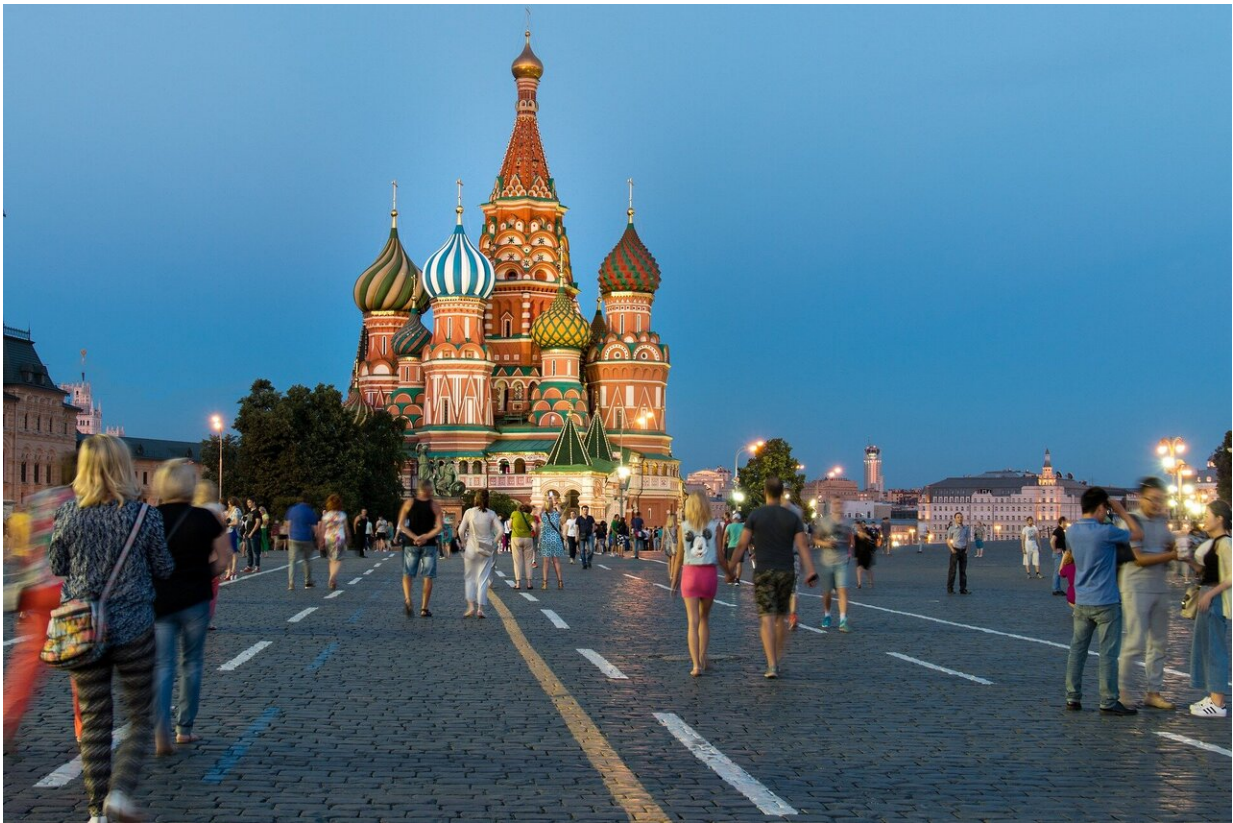


Moscow mayor warns of worsening virus spread, new restrictions

April 20 2021



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The mayor of Moscow said Tuesday the coronavirus situation had deteriorated in the Russian capital and announced a vaccination campaign for the elderly to avoid reimposing virus restrictions.

Life in Moscow, the centre of Russia's outbreak, has all but returned to normal, with officials in January ending restrictions on [in-office workers](#) and allowing bars and restaurants to work through the night.

"In the last two to three weeks the situation around the spread of the infection due to the coronavirus has indeed deteriorated," Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin wrote on his website.

In the statement, he announced the upcoming launch of an inoculation program to encourage the elderly to get vaccinated to avoid lockdowns.

He said after meeting the local chamber of commerce that the vaccination program for people older than 60 was to avoid imposing restrictions "introduced in many countries and cities around the world, which caused enormous damage to entrepreneurs".

To protect the economy, Russia did not impose confinement during the second wave that hit the country hard in the fall of 2020.

The Russian capital has recorded some 2,000 daily cases in recent days, peaking at 2,822 on Saturday, while the country as a whole is registering around 8,000-9,000 new cases daily.

Russia's registration of the Sputnik V vaccine in August last year triggered criticism both at home and abroad over the fast-track procedure, but a leading medical journal said this year it was safe and highly effective.

Sobyenin said last week more than one million Muscovites had received a first vaccine shot and that over 820,000 residents of the capital had been fully inoculated.

Vaccine scepticism runs high in Russia and the developer of Sputnik

recently said 3.8 million people had received both doses, in a country of about 146 million people.

Official data show Russia has seen more than 200,000 virus-related deaths—around double the daily count published by an official [coronavirus](#) tally.

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