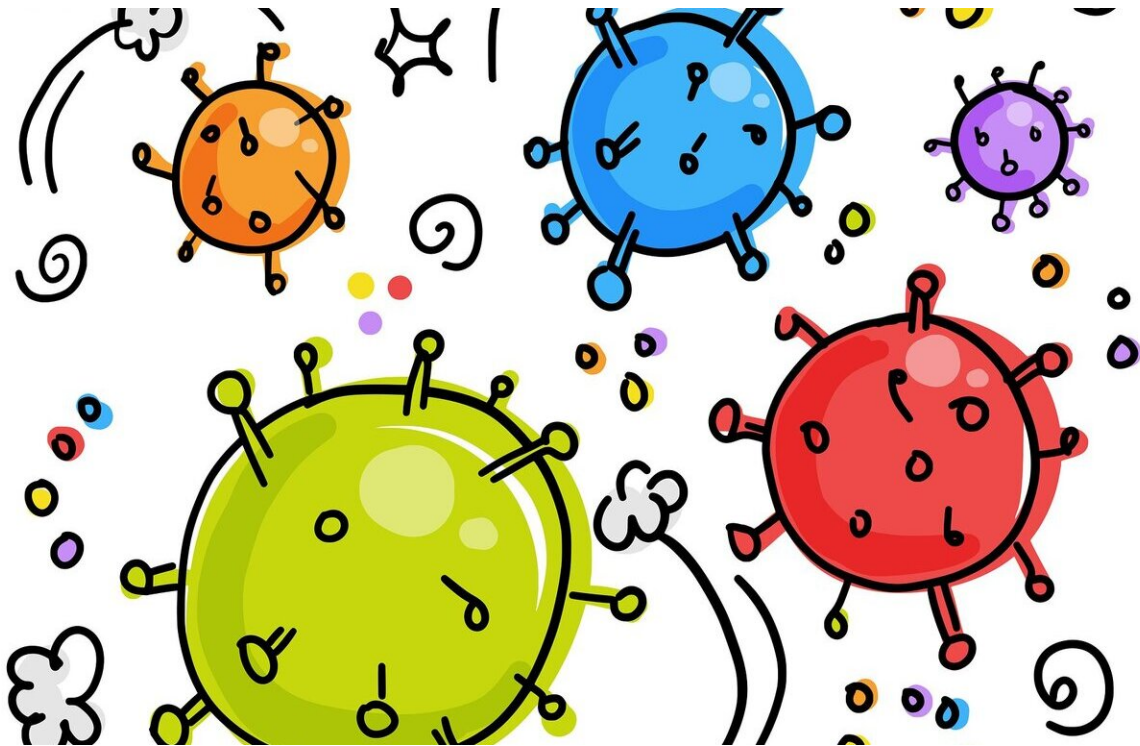


Turkey unveils deal for 50 mn Sputnik V doses

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Turkey announced on Wednesday it has signed a deal for the delivery of 50 million doses of Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine.

Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said the first deliveries will arrive in May as Turkey tries to speed up the inoculation effort.

The nation of 84 million has delivered one shot to more than 13.5 million people and the full two doses to nearly nine million since launching its vaccination drive with China's CoronaVac jab in mid-January.

Koca said Turkey was also extending the time between the first and second shots of BionTech/Pfizer from the current four weeks to six-eight.

Turkey has so far secured only 4.5 million BionTech/Pfizer doses and is experiencing delays in the [delivery](#) of a promised 100 million shots from China.

"The vaccine supply is getting more difficult over the coming two months, but we expect it to become more abundant thereafter," Koca said.

Turkey goes into a 17-day lockdown starting on Thursday to combat a sharp spike of COVID-19 infections and deaths.

The restrictions are harsher than during two previous waves last year.

People will be barred from going outdoors without a valid reason and [alcohol sales](#) are being limited to discourage public gatherings.

The third wave has also been deadlier than the previous two.

Turkey has been reporting around 350 deaths daily for the past week. Official [infection](#) numbers approached 60,000 a day earlier this month before slipping down to 40,000—still the highest in Europe.

A total of more than 39,000 deaths and 4.7 million infections have been recorded since the pandemic began.

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