

Russian fund: India's top vaccine maker to produce Sputnik V

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A medical worker administers a shot of Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine at a vaccination center in Gostinny Dvor, a huge exhibition place in Moscow, Russia, Monday, July 12, 2021. Russia has been facing a sharp rise of contagions in recent weeks, with daily new infections increasing from around 9,000 in early June to over 25,000 on Friday. Credit: AP Photo/Pavel Golovkin

Russia's sovereign fund on Tuesday announced a deal with a top Indian vaccine manufacturer to produce the Russia-designed Sputnik V vaccine.

The Russian Direct Investment Fund, or RDIF, said its deal with the Serum Institute of India, the world's largest vaccine manufacturer by volume, envisions annual production of more than 300 million doses of the vaccine in India starting in September.

"This strategic partnership is a major step to substantially increase our production capabilities demonstrating a perfect example of joining forces and expertise to save lives both in India and around the world," RDIF chief executive Kirill Dmitriev said in a statement.

The RDIF, which bankrolled Sputnik V and markets it abroad, has previously negotiated Sputnik V production deals with manufacturers in several countries, including India, South Korea, Brazil, China, Turkey, as well as Belarus and Kazakhstan.

Russia gave Sputnik V regulatory approval in August 2020, raising criticism at home and abroad because it had only been tested on a few dozen people at the time. However, the criticism was blunted by a report in the British medical journal *The Lancet* earlier this year that said large-scale testing showed it to be safe, with an efficacy rate of 91%.



People wait in line for a COVID-19 vaccine at a vaccination center in Gostinny Dvora huge exhibition place in Moscow, Russia, Monday, July 12, 2021, the banner, center, reads "Let's win COVID-19 together!". Russia has been facing a sharp rise of contagions in recent weeks, with daily new infections increasing from around 9,000 in early June to over 25,000 on Friday. Credit: AP Photo/Pavel Golovkin

President Vladimir Putin revealed last month that he had received the Sputnik V vaccine earlier this year.

"With high efficacy and a good safety profile, it is critical that the Sputnik vaccine is accessible in full measure for people across India and the world," said Adar Poonawalla, the CEO of the Serum Institute of India.

Dmitriev said that Sputnik V vaccines manufactured by the Serum Institute of India will be supplied to the Indian market and also be exported to more than 60 countries that have registered for the Russian vaccine.

The announcement came as coronavirus deaths in Russia hit another daily record Tuesday with authorities reporting 780 more fatalities amid a continuing surge in infections.

Russia's coronavirus task force reported 24,702 new coronavirus cases on Tuesday. The daily tally of confirmed infections has soared from around 9,000 in early June to over 23,000 in early July.



A medical worker administers a shot of Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine at a vaccination center in Gostinny Dvor, a huge exhibition place in Moscow,

Russia, Monday, July 12, 2021. Russia has been facing a sharp rise of contagions in recent weeks, with daily new infections increasing from around 9,000 in early June to over 25,000 on Friday. Credit: AP Photo/Pavel Golovkin



A man, center left, holds his arm after receiving a shot of Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine at a vaccination center in Gostinny Dvor, a huge exhibition place in Moscow, Russia, Monday, July 12, 2021. Russia has been facing a sharp rise of contagions in recent weeks, with daily new infections increasing from around 9,000 in early June to over 25,000 on Friday. Credit: AP Photo/Pavel Golovkin



A man holds his arm after receiving a shot of Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine at a vaccination center in Gostinny Dvor, a huge exhibition place in Moscow, Russia, Monday, July 12, 2021. Russia has been facing a sharp rise of contagions in recent weeks, with daily new infections increasing from around 9,000 in early June to over 25,000 on Friday. Credit: AP Photo/Pavel Golovkin



A couple fill documents before receiving a shot of Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine at a vaccination center in Gostinny Dvor, a huge exhibition place in Moscow, Russia, Monday, July 12, 2021. Russia has been facing a sharp rise of contagions in recent weeks, with daily new infections increasing from around 9,000 in early June to over 25,000 on Friday. Credit: AP Photo/Pavel Golovkin



People wait in line for a COVID-19 vaccine at a vaccination center in Gostinny Dvor, a huge exhibition place in Moscow, Russia, Monday, July 12, 2021. Russia has been facing a sharp rise of contagions in recent weeks, with daily new infections increasing from around 9,000 in early June to over 25,000 on Friday. Credit: AP Photo/Pavel Golovkin



A medical worker prepares to give an injection of Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine at a vaccination center in Gostinny Dvor, a huge exhibition place in Moscow, Russia, Monday, July 12, 2021. Russia has been facing a sharp rise of contagions in recent weeks, with daily new infections increasing from around 9,000 in early June to over 25,000 on Friday. Credit: AP Photo/Pavel Golovkin

Officials have attributed a steady rise in infections and an increase in mortality on Russians' lax attitude toward taking precautions, the growing prevalence of the more contagious delta variant and vaccination reluctance.

Authorities have sought to boost vaccinations which have remained at a lower rate than in many Western countries.

As of Tuesday, about 27 million Russians, or just 18.5% of the 146 million strong population, have received at least one shot of a vaccine, and 18.5 million, or 12.6%, have been fully vaccinated.

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