

Russia marks another daily deaths record as infections soar

October 29 2021, by Vladimir Isachenkov



GUM State Department store is emptied as most stores inside was closed for visitors due to coronavirus in Moscow, Russia, Thursday, Oct. 28, 2021. The Russian capital has started a nonworking period intended to stem coronavirus infections as daily cases and deaths from COVID-19 surged to all-time highs. Kindergartens, schools, gyms, entertainment venues and most stores are closed, and restaurants and cafes only can provide takeout or delivery service. Credit: AP Photo/Pavel Golovkin

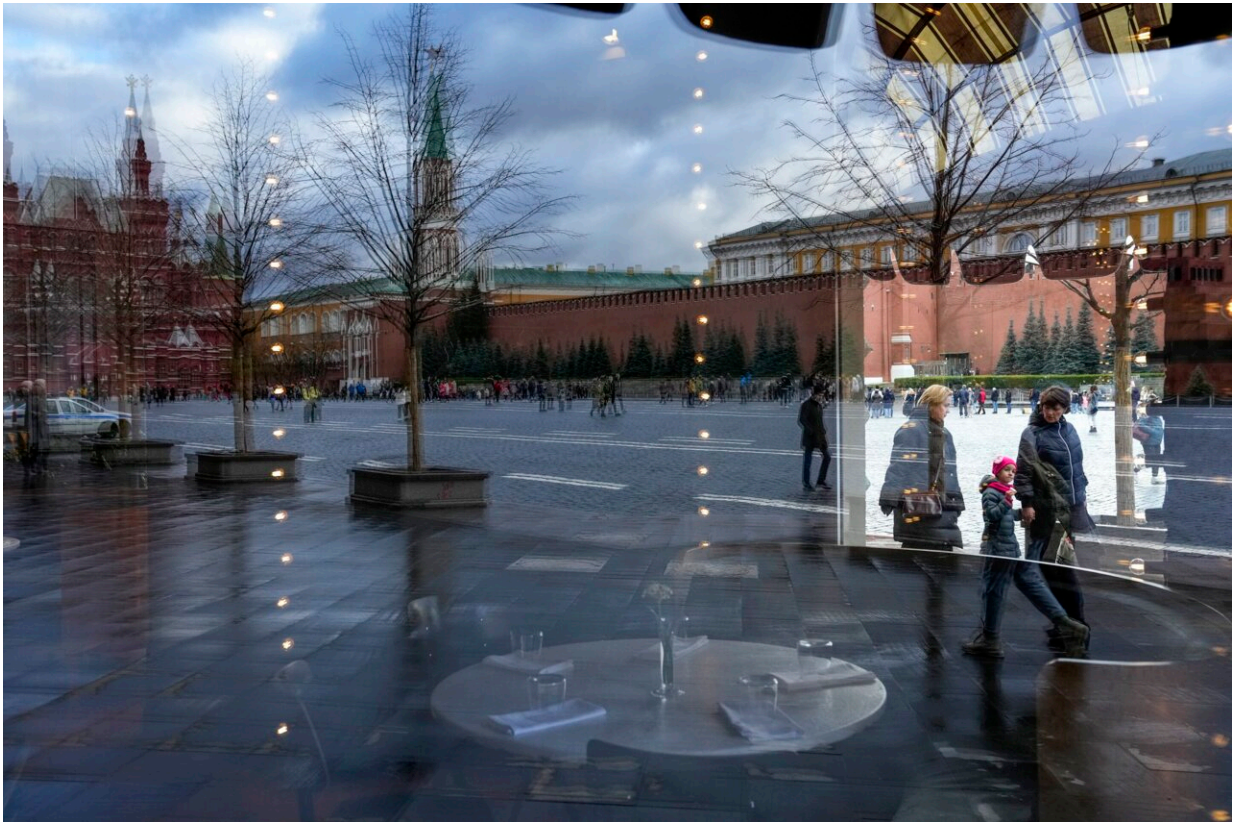
Russia on Friday recorded another record of daily coronavirus deaths as authorities hoped to stem contagion by keeping most people off work.

The government's coronavirus task force reported 1,163 deaths in 24 hours, the largest daily number since the pandemic began. The latest deaths brought the total toll to 236,220, by far the highest in Europe.

To contain the spread of infection, Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered a nonworking period from Oct. 30 to Nov. 7, when most state organizations and private businesses are to suspend operations. He encouraged Russia's worst-hit regions to start sooner, and some ordered most residents off work earlier this week.

Moscow introduced the measure starting from Thursday, shutting kindergartens, schools, gyms, entertainment venues and most stores, and restricting restaurants and cafes to only takeout or delivery. Food stores, pharmacies and companies operating key infrastructure remained open.

Access to museums, theaters, concert halls and other venues is limited to people holding digital codes on their smartphones to prove they have been vaccinated or recovered from COVID-19, a practice that will remain in place after Nov. 7. Unvaccinated people older than 60 have been ordered to stay home.



Red Square and the Kremlin Wall are reflected in a window of an empty BOSCO cafe in the GUM, the State Shop in Red Square, which is closed due to COVID-19 in Moscow, Russia, Thursday, Oct. 28, 2021. Moscow followed Thursday, shutting kindergartens, schools, gyms, entertainment venues and most stores, and allowing restaurants and cafes to only provide service for takeout or delivery. The number of new daily cases in Russia rose by over forty thousand on Thursday, topping a previous record reached earlier this week. The government hopes that the nonworking period will help curb the spread by keeping most people out of offices and public transportation. Credit: AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko



The Kremlin wall is reflected in a window of closed GUM State Department store in Moscow, Russia, Thursday, Oct. 28, 2021. The Russian capital has started a nonworking period intended to stem coronavirus infections as daily cases and deaths from COVID-19 surged to all-time highs. Kindergartens, schools, gyms, entertainment venues and most stores are closed, and restaurants and cafes only can provide takeout or delivery service. Credit: AP Photo/Pavel Golovkin



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A museum security, right, scans a QR code to confirm visitors' vaccination status at the entrance of the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow, Russia, Thursday, Oct. 28, 2021. The Russian capital has started a nonworking period intended to stem coronavirus infections as daily cases and deaths from COVID-19 surged to all-time highs. Access to museums, theaters, concert halls and other venues is limited to people holding digital codes on their smartphones to prove they have been vaccinated or recovered from COVID-19, a practice that will remain in place after Nov. 7. Credit: AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko



The Spasskaya Tower, center, and the St. Basil Cathedral are reflected in a window of a closed GUM State Department store in Moscow, Russia, Thursday, Oct. 28, 2021. The Russian capital has started a nonworking period intended to stem coronavirus infections as daily cases and deaths from COVID-19 surged to all-time highs. Kindergartens, schools, gyms, entertainment venues and most stores are closed, and restaurants and cafes only can provide takeout or delivery service. Credit: AP Photo/Pavel Golovkin

The number of new daily cases in Russia rose by 39,849 on Friday, just below an all-time record reported the previous day. The government hopes that by keeping most people out of offices and public transportation the nonworking period would help curb the spread, but many Russians rushed to use the surprise time off for a seaside vacation in the country's south or to take a trip to Egypt or Turkey.

Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova, the head of the government coronavirus task force, voiced concern about a spike in beach vacations.

"We are particularly worried about our citizens booking tourist trips to other regions," she said.

Authorities have blamed soaring infections and deaths on Russia's lagging pace of vaccinations. About 51 million Russians—just over a third of the country's nearly 146 million people—were fully vaccinated as of Friday.

Russia was the first country in the world to authorize a coronavirus vaccine in August 2020 and proudly named the shot Sputnik V to showcase the country's scientific edge. But the vaccination campaign has stalled amid widespread public skepticism blamed on conflicting signals from authorities.

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