

Russia coronavirus cases top 500,000

June 11 2020



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Russia, the country with the world's third-largest coronavirus outbreak, passed the symbolic milestone of 500,000 confirmed cases on Thursday, after the capital lifted tight lockdown restrictions this week.

The latest figures took the country's total to 502,436 cases, after 8,779

new cases were recorded in the last day, a government website said.

The most cases were reported in the two largest cities of Moscow and Saint Petersburg and their surrounding areas.

The capital confirmed 1,436 new cases on Thursday as the numbers of new infections have significantly fallen this week.

Moscow lifted restrictions including compulsory travel passes on Tuesday, a move welcomed by residents who rushed out to enjoy the streets and parks.

Many other regions are lifting lockdown restrictions as Russia is preparing to hold a July 1 national vote despite the pandemic.

President Vladimir Putin is seeking public backing for constitutional amendments that would allow him to stay on at the Kremlin beyond his current term.

Russia has confirmed a total of 6,532 COVID-19 deaths, a far lower mortality rate than in other countries with large outbreaks.

Critics have cast doubt on the low official mortality rate and accused authorities of under-reporting to play down the scale of the crisis.

Russia attributes its lower virus [death](#) figures to mass testing which has identified many cases with mild or no [coronavirus](#) symptoms.

The health ministry is now adjusting how it reports numbers to include all deaths believed to be related to the virus even if the direct cause of death was another condition or the patient tested negative.

Moscow reported Wednesday that it saw 5,260 such deaths in May.

Former finance minister Alexei Kudrin, a liberal politician known for his outspoken comments, said Russia's health system requires more funds and modernisation in many regions.

"Medicine is significantly underfunded even according to the current norms and also it needs a serious overhaul," Kudrin, who heads the Audit Chamber that examines [government spending](#), said in an interview with TASS state news agency.

"We will carry out a check and show these figures," he added.

Nevertheless the economist said Russia "is not doing a bad job with the pandemic," crediting the role of the military, which has built emergency facilities.

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