
UZBEKISTAN TO TEST THREE COVID-19 VACCINES, PLANS NO LOCKDOWN

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Uzbekistan has no plans to impose another lockdown despite the growth in COVID-19 cases globally and intends to take part in the final trials of Chinese and Russian vaccines, a senior health official said.

Tashkent is in talks with Chinas Anhui Zhifei Longcom Biopharmaceutical, a unit of Chongqing Zhifei, and Sinopharm about stage III trials, as well as the developers of Russia Sputnik V vaccine, deputy health minister Shakhrukh Sharakhmetov said.

The country of 34 million has imposed two nationwide lockdowns this year to curb the spread of the coronavirus but hopes that extensive preparations for a potential second wave will allow it to avoid imposing severe restrictions again.

Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has instructed officials to learn to live and work in pandemic conditions.

The Tashkent government has used large part of a \$1 billion anti-COVID-19 fund to build specialized hospitals, buy medicines and equipment such as lung ventilators, and train more medical staff. More than \$100 million has gone towards special bonuses for doctors and nurses.

Uzbekistan has not carried out mass testing. Cases peaked between July and September and so far, have not spiked again. This month, the number of daily new infections has gradually edged below 250, with an overall total of 67,626 cases and 575 deaths.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-uzbekistan-idUSKBN27L0YV>