

COVID-19 infections soar to record in Czech Republic

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The Czech Republic's government has resisted tightening COVID-19 rules in recent weeks, but a worsening situation in hospitals has made it consider stricter restrictions on unvaccinated people [File: David W Cerny/Reuters]

Prague, November 18 (RHC)-- The Czech Republic has reported a record number of new daily coronavirus infections since the pandemic started. Health Ministry data published on Wednesday showed there were 22,479 new infections within the preceding 24 hours.

The daily figure represented a 54 percent jump from a week ago and surpassed a previous record of 17,778 infections seen in January. Officials tend to report the highest number of cases on Tuesdays as more people test after the weekend.

The Czech Republic's vaccination rate has lagged those of other countries, with 57.6 percent of the population fully vaccinated versus a European Union average of 64.9 percent, according to data from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

Hospitals reported 4,425 new coronavirus cases on Tuesday, less than half of the record highs seen in March, and 661 patients in intensive care, the health ministry data showed. The nationwide seven-day incidence – the number of new infections per 100,000 inhabitants within seven days – rose to 813.

The surge comes as infections also rise in other European countries including neighbours Austria, Germany and Slovakia. The Czechs have observed relatively light restrictions in the latest COVID-19 wave compared with previous ones, with the government pledging no school closures or lockdowns while promoting vaccination.

People have to show negative COVID-19 test reports or vaccination certificates to enter restaurants and bars, and they must wear masks inside. The government has resisted tightening rules while in transition to a new administration expected to take office in weeks, but the worsening situation in hospitals has made officials consider tighter restrictions on unvaccinated people.

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