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Record Cold Followed by Heavy Snow Forecast for Moscow

By The Moscow Times

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Moscow will experience its coldest day of the month on Saturday — and then be buried by at least two days of heavy snowfall, weather forecasters said.

The temperature, which was a bracing minus 15 degrees Celsius on Friday afternoon, will drop to between minus 20 and minus 25 degrees early Saturday before rising to the teens during the daylight hours, said Roman Vilfand, head of the state meteorological center.

"This will be the coldest day of March, even falling to minus 25 degrees in some places and not rising above minus 10 during the day," he told reporters.

He noted that the temperature would be lower than the norm for the frostiest days of winter, in late January and early February when the average is minus 3 to 4 degrees.

"This March has been super-cold," he said, adding that the unusually late winter weather was

baffling even meteorologists like himself.

By Sunday, the weather will change drastically as gray clouds roll in and dump snow on the city, said Alexander Frolov, head of Roshydromet, an agency under the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry.

"A very heavy snowfall will start Sunday and continue until early Monday," he said at the same news conference.

"It will be one of the last snowfalls of the season," he added. "There will be one more at the end of March and, after that, I hope the weather will transform into spring and then summer."

Frolov also said spring should come quickly and, since it is so late this year, would be brief.

The weather officials did not call the news conference, however, to discuss the snow but to celebrate their professional holiday, World Meteorological Day, which is marked on March 23.

Meanwhile, Deputy Mayor Pyotr Biryukov cautioned that the snowfall could start as early as Friday night, deluging the city with another 28 to 35 centimeters of snow.

"We haven't had a winter like this in 100 years," he said, speaking at a separate news conference.

This winter is set to make history for a record snowfall in Moscow. The previous record was set in the winter of 2011-12, when 207 cm of snow fell, Interfax reported. The winter with the lightest snowfall on record was in 2007-08, with 112 cm.

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