

Heavy Snow Blankets Moscow

March 23, 2013



A Ukrainian man riding on a snowboard behind a car after an unusually heavy snowfall in Kiev on Saturday. **Sergei Polezhaka**

After a record one-day cold spell, a snowstorm swept into Moscow on Sunday that threatened to dump up to 35 centimeters of the white powder on the city.

But city officials insisted that the heavy snowfall, which prompted Kiev to declare a state of emergency, would not lead to any problems here.

The snowfall that started Sunday was expected to continue into Monday, burying the city in 28 to 35 centimeters of snow, Deputy Mayor Pyotr Biryukov said.

He said the city authorities were well prepared to handle the situation, and roads and other infrastructure would remain in working order.

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 centimeters of snow fell, Interfax reported. The winter with the lightest snowfall on record was in 2007-08, with 112 centimeters.

Sunday's snowfall will be one of the last this winter, said Alexander Frolov, head of Roshydromet, an agency under the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry.

"There will be one more at the end of March, and after that, I hope the weather will transform into spring and then summer," he told reporters Friday.

Saturday proved to be the coldest day of March, with the temperature dropping to minus 25 degrees Celsius in parts of Moscow during the nighttime hours, weather officials said. The temperature was 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.

Kiev, meanwhile, has declared a state of emergency after the Ukrainian capital was paralyzed by an unprecedented snowstorm that has stalled car, railway and air traffic. The city was hit by about 50 centimeters of snow in 24 hours, more than it usually receives per month during this season.

Kiev's main airport, Boryspil, was working with delays over the weekend, the smaller Zhulyany airport was closed, and Ukraine's International Airlines grounded all its planes Saturday.

Material from AP was included in this report.

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