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Victory Day Preparations Delay Moscow Flights

By The Moscow Times

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Passengers may experience flights delays at Moscow airports over the next week as the capital prepares for Victory Day celebrations.

The Defense Ministry has reserved air corridors above Moscow's airports for practice flights ahead of the military parade on Red Square on May 9, which will mark the 68th anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II.

The flights by military aircraft already caused the delay of about 20 flights over the weekend, Izvestia reported Tuesday. Most of the delayed flights were headed for resorts such as Sharm el-Sheikh and Hurghada in Egypt, Heraklion in Greece and Antalya in Turkey. Some passengers had to wait for more than seven hours and were not informed of the possible delays in advance, the Sakha news agency reported.

Domodedovo Airport confirmed that its delays were caused by the parade preparations.

Military pilot rehearsals were also scheduled for April 30, May 3, 4, 6 and 7, and the final flights will take place on the date of the parade, May 9, airport spokesman Yevgeny Konoplev told Izvestia.

But Vnukovo Airport spokeswoman Yelena Krylova denied that any of its delays were linked to the holiday. "Our air corridors do not cross the Air Force routes," she said, according to Izvestia.

Another possible reason for any spike in delays is an increase in the number of official delegations arriving to Moscow for working visits and the holiday. Passenger flights have had to be modified according to VIP plane schedules, Izvestia said.

Among the visitors this week was a delegation led by Japan's prime minister, although it was unclear whether his flight caused any delays.

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