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Sochi Will Have Enough Snow for Olympics, Forecaster Says

By The Moscow Times

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In this Sept. 25 file photo, insulated blankets cover a snow storage unit in the mountains outside Sochi.
Sergei Grits

Sochi will have enough snow for the Winter Olympics in February, Russia's chief weather forecaster vowed Friday.

Concerns about a snowless Olympics were raised after two test events in Sochi had to be cancelled last February because of rainy weather or a lack of snow. The resort city on the Black Sea is the only sub-tropical region of Russia.

Organizers, however, worked out a Plan B, which included storing 450,000 cubic meters of last year's snow on the slopes through summer and installing what they described as Europe's biggest snow-making system.

But Roman Vilfand, director of the Russian Meteorological Office, said Friday that organizers

would probably not need the extra snow because data shows that Sochi will have enough natural snow.

The snow cover now in the mountains above Sochi is already 52 centimeters, unusually high for this time of year, Vilfand told Itar-Tass.

He insisted that the snow base will stay even if January is warm and rainy.

"For the snow cover this deep, this is not a problem," he said.

The 2014 Winter Olympics, which runs Feb. 7 to 23, will hold indoor events like skating and ice hockey in the coastal city of Sochi while outdoor sports such as skiing will be held in the mountains dozens of kilometers away from the coast.

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