

Moscow Forecasters Say Temperatures Won't Rise Above Zero This Week

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Temperatures in the capital will not climb above zero this week, forecasters said Monday, noting that the colder weather would help disperse a buildup of pollutants in the city's atmosphere.

Muscovites can expect temperatures to hover between minus 3 degrees Celsius and minus 5 C in the first half of the week, dropping slightly on Thursday, the regional weather bureau was cited as saying by the Interfax news agency.

The colder weather is about two to three weeks ahead of schedule, forecasters said, adding that temperatures in Moscow will be three degrees lower than average at this time of year, Interfax reported.

On the plus side, the higher pressure associated with colder weather will help to disperse a buildup of pollutants in the city's atmosphere, caused by two separate environmental incidents last week, forecasters said.

A suspected accident at an oil refinery in south Moscow last Monday saw large amounts of hydrogen sulfide released into the atmosphere, prompting a sevenfold increase in in the maximum permissible level of the chemical in the city's air.

Residents were also warned on Friday to limit their outdoor activities after a controlled burning of woodland in the Moscow region led to impurities being blown onto the city by a northeasterly wind.

As a result of the colder weather, carbon oxides and other harmful substances will be moved from the lower layers to the upper layers of the atmosphere, Interfax cited one forecaster as saying.

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