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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Moscow Winter 'Warmest Since Records Began'

By AFP

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Muscovites of the elder generation fondly remember snowy winters from decades back. **Sophia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency**

Moscow, which for the past months has largely been deprived of its traditional seasonal covering of snow, has seen its warmest winter since records began, the state weather service said on Saturday.

Roman Vilfand, the head of Russia's forecasting center, told the TASS news agency that the average temperature in Moscow from December to February has been some 2.5 degrees Celsius warmer than the previous record of -2.8 degrees seen in the winter of 1960-1961.

He said such differences between records were extremely rare. Records began 140 years ago in Russia.

"I am sure that we are not going to see such a warm winter again for a long time," he said. He

added that the winter record for Russia as a whole would also likely be beaten, but said the data was still being compiled.

2019 was also the hottest year ever registered in Russia. Muscovites of the elder generation fondly remember crisper and colder winters from decades back, when the parks of the city were covered in plentiful snow.

The Kremlin acknowledges global warming, with President Vladimir Putin saying in December that the rate of warming for Russia was 2.5 percent higher than elsewhere on the planet.

But he cast doubt over whether global warming is of human origin, and stated it could be blamed on cosmological processes. "Nobody knows the origins of global climate change," Putin said.

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