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Moscow to 'Shut Down' in Case of Coronavirus Outbreak

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Passengers arriving at Vnukovo international airport in Moscow. **Sergei Bobylev / TASS**

Moscow authorities have drafted an emergency plan that envisions a shutdown of the Russian capital in case of a coronavirus outbreak, BBC Russia and the Vedomosti business daily reported Wednesday.

Russia has confirmed seven coronavirus cases, two of whom have recovered last month, with the latest case reported Thursday.

Temperature checks in arrivals for international flights at Moscow's airports, at metro stations and in schools and kindergartens are part of City Hall's "Plan A" preventive measures, according to the reports.

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The first part of “Plan B” took effect after Moscow confirmed its first coronavirus case, which happened Monday, according to a Feb. 27 letter signed by deputy mayor Anastasia Rakova cited by BBC Russia and Vedomosti. It provides for quarantining everyone who had contact with the patient, and disinfecting their homes, workplaces and schools.

The second part of “Plan B” could potentially close down schools, parks, stadiums, malls, museums, cinemas and libraries, and ban public events, the reports said.

It also provides for a coronavirus map to appear on Moscow City Hall’s website, and for authorities to notify Muscovites by text about further infections. Public transportation, malls, restaurants, train stations and airports will be disinfected every four hours, according to the reported “Plan B.”

As a last-resort measure, Moscow’s authorities will consider declaring a state of emergency if both plans fail to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, the reports said.

The emergency will shut down all but the most essential businesses and organizations, halt transportation and ban entry into or exit from Moscow, BBC Russia and Vedomosti reported.

Moscow will also be placed under curfew, with violators subject to detention by police and National Guard troops. Experts interviewed by Vedomosti said Moscow was unlikely to declare a state of emergency unless there’s an exponential growth of coronavirus cases.

The Russian government needs to approve Moscow’s three-step plan before it comes into force because it entails an emergency declaration, an unnamed source close to Moscow City Hall told Vedomosti.

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