The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia to Close Borders to Curb Coronavirus

By Reuters and Gabrielle Tétrault-Farber and Anton Zverev for Reuters

March 28, 2020

Russia has reported 1,264 coronavirus cases. **Moskva News Agency**

Russia will close all border crossings on March 30, the government said on Saturday, tightening restrictions after the country reported its biggest one-day rise in new coronavirus cases.

The authorities said they so far had recorded 1,264 confirmed cases, an increase of 228 in 24 hours, and ordered that all vehicle, rail and pedestrian checkpoints, as well as the country's maritime borders, be closed from Monday.

Russia has already grounded all international flights and declared next week a non-working week — which does not apply to workers from key businesses like pharmacies and supermarkets — in a bid to curb the spread of the virus.

Moscow, Russia's worst-affected area, has shut all cafes, restaurants and shops, apart from

those selling food and medicine, until April 5.

Related article: Coronavirus in Russia: The Latest News | March 28

Sergei Sobyanin, the capital's mayor, on Saturday urged residents to stay at home during the extended holiday that was announced by President Vladimir Putin last week.

In a letter to users of Moscow's online portals, Sobyanin said the week-long holiday should not be treated lightly.

"This is not an extra holiday, but a key measure in fighting the spread of the coronavirus," he wrote.

Sobyanin warned that the week off could only help contain the outbreak if Muscovites remained home, at their apartments or dachas, their out-of-town cottages, for the next nine days.

"Do not invite guests and don't be a guest yourself," he wrote. "Do not go to shops without the extreme need to do so."

He also called on Muscovites to refrain from taking walks or to make only short ones, and exclusively with family members.

"The lives of many people depend on each of us, literally," Sobyanin said. "Please stay home."

Pictures circulating on social media on Saturday showed Russians stocking up on construction and gardening materials at hardware stores ahead of the week-long holiday as they prepared to retreat to their dachas.

Other countries have preferred locking down cities, with people only allowed out for food and medicine.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/03/28/russia-to-close-borders-to-curb-coronavirus-a69785