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Russia to Subsidize Tourists on Domestic Vacations – PM

By AFP

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Russians are still barred from holidaying abroad due to international travel controls imposed to slow the coronavirus. **Sergei Malgavko / TASS**

Moscow will subsidize holidays taken by Russian tourists who vacation at home instead of the Mediterranean, Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin said Wednesday.

The push to boost domestic tourism comes after officials lifted most coronavirus restrictions in June.

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Yet Russians are still barred from holidaying abroad due to international travel controls imposed to slow the pandemic.

"We have already provided subsidies in the amount of about 3.5 billion rubles ($49.3 million)

to tour operators," Mishustin told parliament during a report on government work in 2019.

"The government has decided to allocate an additional 15 billion ($211 million) to develop domestic tourism," which will be used to partially compensate Russians who vacation at home.

Russians will receive between 5,000 ($70) and 15,000 ($211) rubles, depending on the tour, he said.

The Association of Russian Tour Operators said companies already received information about the cashback scheme meant to stimulate tour sales.

It said people would be eligible for the rebate if they buy a tour from a government-compiled list and use the Russian Mir bank card — a would-be competitor of Visa and Mastercard heavily promoted by the government.

The tours would have to be at least five nights long and cost at least 25,000 rubles ($352), it said. The promotion would begin in August and last through Dec. 20.

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