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China-Bound Flight From Moscow Canceled Over 200 Identical Coronavirus Tests

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China has reportedly ordered negative serologic in addition to nucleic acid test results for inbound flights due to the recent global surge in imported Covid-19 infections. **Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency**

A Russian airline has canceled a China-bound flight from Moscow after nearly 200 passengers provided identical negative coronavirus test results, the Chinese Embassy in Moscow said Thursday.

Pegas Fly grounded the Moscow-Zhengzhou flight Wednesday when the embassy uncovered more than 190 "completely identical" serology tests, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency quoted the embassy as saying. China reportedly ordered negative serologic in addition to nucleic acid test results for inbound flights due to the recent global surge in imported Covid-19 infections.

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“There’s no way to guarantee the accuracy of these tests and as a result the passengers were unable to receive a ‘health code’ to board the plane,” the Chinese diplomatic mission said.

Neither the Krasnoyarsk-based Ikar Airlines, which operates as Pegas Fly, nor the organization that conducted the test “could provide a reasonable explanation for the exact same test results,” the Chinese Embassy said. It asked the airline to arrange for new tests and to accommodate the stranded passengers.

Over the summer, the Chinese Embassy in Moscow warned that some of its citizens had been forging negative coronavirus test results to fly home from Russia.

Russia temporarily banned Chinese nationals from entry in February to prevent the spread of Covid-19 inside its borders. China mirrored this move in November, suspending entry for Russians with valid visas and residence permits as infections surged in its northern neighbor.

Since then, Russia has confirmed nearly 2.2 million coronavirus cases, the fourth-highest in the world with record-breaking deaths and new infection rates in recent weeks. China, where the virus originated one year ago, has reported 86,490 cases.

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