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Major Winter Storm Hits Kamchatka as Schools Close and Workday Shortens

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Motorists crawl to the top of their cars to avoid being submerged in water. **@kamchatkamediaru**

Far East Russia's Kamchatka peninsula is battling its first significant winter storm as a disruptive mix of snow, ice and rain prompted schools in the regional capital to close and authorities to shorten the workday.

Videos on social media showed emergency crews working between Wednesday night and Thursday morning to drain excess meltwater that flooded roads and forced some motorists to crawl to the top of their cars.

The low-pressure storm system battering the region developed off the eastern coast of Japan earlier this week before moving further north to Kamchatka, where it brought heavy snow, freezing rain and winds nearly reaching hurricane force.

"We're at the epicenter of the storm system and the main blow is still ahead... we shouldn't relax at all," Kamchatka region Governor Vladimir Solodov warned early Thursday.

Solodov ordered emergency, utility and road services to operate around the clock and instructed local officials to keep all available snow-clearing equipment operating, drain water where necessary and take steps to prevent any damage to infrastructure.

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Solodov urged businesses in Kamchatka to shorten the workday in order to allow employees to return home before weather conditions worsened further.

Authorities in the capital city of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky on Thursday ordered schools to cancel classes and extracurricular activities for a second consecutive day as another storm system approached from the west over the Sea of Okhotsk.

In the past 72 hours, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky has received around one-third of its monthly norm of precipitation.

The Emergency Situations Ministry said all of its employees in Kamchatka have been placed on high alert as wind gusts reached 21 meters per second (47 miles per hour).

Emergency workers said they helped six residents who were stranded due to the storm. Authorities did not report any disruptions to heating or electricity, while the regional airport continued to function as usual.

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