MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia reported its first two cases of coronavirus on Friday and restricted direct flights to China, its biggest trade partner, as Russians complained of rising prices for medical masks and anti-virus medicine.

The two infected people, both Chinese nationals, are in a stable condition and have been quarantined, officials said.

One of the cases was identified in the Siberian region of Tyumen and the other in the far eastern Zabaykalsky region, Deputy Prime Minister Tatiana Golikova said.

“They are under strict supervision, isolated and are receiving the necessary treatment,” she told reporters.
The outbreak has infected more than 9,800 people globally, almost all of them in China, and has killed 213 people in China. There are more than 130 confirmed cases in 24 countries and regions outside mainland China.

Russia will halt all direct flights to China from 2100 GMT on Friday, with the exception of those operated by its national airline, Aeroflot (AFLT.MM), Golikova said.

Four Chinese airlines - China Southern Airlines, Hainan Airlines, Air China, China Eastern - will still be able to fly to Moscow, Golikova and Moscow's Sheremetyevo International Airport said.

All China-related flights will be routed through a separate terminal at the Sheremetyevo Airport, Aeroflot said, to minimize contact between those flights and other passengers.

Russia's minor Ikar airline will also continue its flights between Moscow and China, the airport said.

Russia has already closed its 4,300 km-long (2,670 mile) land border with China to pedestrians and vehicles in an effort to protect its population, although rail freight continues as does a passenger train service from Moscow to Beijing.

Russia has no plans to limit freight traffic between Russia and China but will restrict Chinese citizens traveling to Russia from Mongolia, Golikova said.

Moscow is also drawing up a government resolution that would suspend the issuance of work visas for Chinese nationals, Golikova said.

Russia plans to evacuate more than 600 Russian citizens now in Wuhan and Hubei province, the epicenter of the outbreak in China, and they will be quarantined for 14 days, she added.

The national anti-monopoly watchdog said it was looking into public complaints it had received about rising prices for medical masks and anti-virus medicine.

The Russian rouble hit seven-week lows against the dollar as coronavirus fears reduced global risk appetite.

Reporting by Olesya Astakhova, Maria Kiselyova, Alexander Marrow, Gleb Stolyarov; Writing by Tom Balmforth and Maria Tsvetkova; Editing by Gareth Jones, Hugh Lawson and Frances Kerry

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