Emergency services urged drivers to use public transport unless there was "extreme need," and Moscow authorities announced that children need not come to school, although they would remain open.

Moscow authorities have struggled to clear the streets and told children they could skip school after the Russian capital was hit by massive snowfall.

The national meteorological service said on February 5 that more than the monthly average of snow fell on Moscow over the weekend, with the height of snow reaching up to 55 centimeters in some parts of the capital.

"That's an anomaly of course," Nadezhda Tochenova, the deputy head of the Hydrometeorological Center, told AFP news agency.

However, she denied claims that the snowfall was an all-time record.

Calling the event "the snowfall of the century," Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin hailed utility workers and other municipal employees he said had kept the city "functioning normally."

"There is no collapse, no catastrophe," Sobyanin told journalists.

The mayor said on February 4 that one person had been killed when a tree brought down electricity lines, and that 2,000 trees collapsed due to the massive snowfall.
The city authorities said more than 100 of those trees fell on vehicles.

Thousands of city workers have been working to keep Moscow's roads and the subway system open, while the Russian military said it had sent soldiers to help clear snowdrifts on the streets.

Deputy Mayor Pyotr Biryukov said snowplows had cleared 1.2 million cubic meters of snow from the streets.

Meanwhile, the emergency services urged drivers to use public transport unless there was "extreme need," and Moscow authorities announced that children need not come to school, although they would remain open.

The heavy snowfall triggered the cancelation or delay of dozens of flights at Moscow's airports, as well as power failures in hundreds of smaller towns around the city.

Officials at the Emergency Situations Ministry said that heavy snowfall also affected the regions of Leningrad, Tatarstan, Saratov, Penza, Ulyanovsk, Kaluga, and Vladimir, where power cuts affected tens of thousands of people.