

Russia puts surveillance, AI on guard against virus threats

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Russia has launched hi-tech systems that monitor social media for "fake news" on the coronavirus and spot empty supermarket shelves, while an app will provide free telemedicine consultations, officials said Tuesday.

President Vladimir Putin toured a new coronavirus information centre in Moscow that is pulling together IT resources including [surveillance cameras](#) and [artificial intelligence](#).

Russia so far has 114 confirmed cases with no fatalities.

"Though medically speaking the epidemic has not taken on great proportions, the same cannot be said of the psychological aspects," said deputy prime minister Dmitry Chernyshenko.

"The centre... also effectively fights so-called 'fakes' and rumours," he said, citing a recent example when people began to share a false report of 32 deaths from the virus.

"Artificial intelligence, the neural networks that were trained to do a semantic analysis, identified the anomaly. A minute later the operator here had it... and Russian internet giants made their front pages to show only aggregated information from official sources," he said.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin, in charge of the state [coronavirus](#) response, said the centre has a database of contacts and places of work for 95 percent of those under compulsory quarantine after returning

from virus-stricken countries.

"We have identified where they are," he said.

"When the person leaves the building we record it," he said.

Sobyanin also showed Putin images of well-stocked supermarket shelves on a huge screen.

"This is the analysis regarding food and other crucial products. You can see there is a televised online picture fed from surveillance cameras," Sobyanin said,

"We also have images made by inspectors who go around warehouses and stores," he said. "This happens in real time."

"We have agreed with (Russia's biggest bank) Sberbank that starting Monday, anybody who wants it will be able to download a free app... to consult a doctor for free, Sberbank will pay for it," Mishustin said, before setting up a call with a doctor for Putin.

"This system is unique in the world," Mishustin told Putin of the information centre.

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