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Radical Party Nominates a Medvedev for Khimki Mayor

By Alexander Bratersky

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Chirikova, left, being followed Monday in Khimki by pro-Kremlin activists dressed like U.S. symbol Uncle Sam. **Maxim Shemetov**

The far-left Other Russia party has nominated a stevedore with the same last name as the prime minister as its candidate for a closely watched mayoral election in the Moscow region.

Six candidates, including well-known opposition activist Yevgenia Chirikova, have signed up so far to run in the election for mayor of Khimki, a race seen as a critical test of the opposition's ability to challenge the city's pro-United Russia authorities.

The Other Russia candidate entering the race could further complicate efforts by some anti-Kremlin activists to select a consensus opposition candidate.

The unregistered Other Russia party has chosen Sergei Medvedev, 29, to be its candidate in the Khimki mayoral vote, scheduled for Oct. 14, party leader Eduard Limonov announced

Monday in a blog post.

“If he wins, he will establish a climate of true people’s rule,” Limonov said on his blog about Medvedev.

Medvedev, a Khimki resident who has worked as a stevedore at the city’s river port, spent 2 1/2 years in jail for taking part in a fight with members of pro-Kremlin youth groups near Moscow’s Tagansky District Court in 2006.

Bloggers and news websites on Monday played on the fact that the Other Russia candidate has the same surname as Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, who leads the ruling United Russia party.

Some said the family name might not play well with local voters, since Dmitry Medvedev, during his time as president, gave a green light to construction of a Moscow-St. Petersburg toll road that runs through a forest in Khimki, despite protests by activists and local citizens. He had earlier ordered a halt to the project.

Chirikova, trailed by pro-Kremlin youth activists wearing fake white beards, waving U.S. flags and throwing fake $100 bills, submitted her registration as a candidate Monday. Her candidacy has been backed by the liberal Yabloko party.

Chirikova has said she considers the newly appointed Acting Mayor Oleg Shakhov her only serious competitor, calling other candidates “spoilers” last week.

Moscow region Governor Sergei Shoigu, a member of United Russia’s supreme council, told Kommersant last week that he would work with any candidate, even if a “circus horse” is elected.

Limonov, known for his political flamboyancy, has denounced Chirikova on his blog as an “ideological ally” of the Kremlin and said the authorities would help her to become the mayor. He predicted in a blog post that Chirikova would work within the system and would not radicalize if elected.

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