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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News from Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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Alexei Navalny / navalny.com

Home Free

Opposition leader and presidential hopeful Alexei Navalny was released after 20 days behind bars on Sunday. He told a throng of journalists at the prison gates he had read 20 books, drank 80 liters of tea and learned a little Kyrgyz in detention. He held a campaign event in Astrakhan later that day.

Navalny has been barred from registering his candidacy due to previous embezzlement charges which his supporters say are politically motivated. He was jailed earlier this month for organizing for unauthorized campaign events.

You Say Tomato

Moscow is lifting its import ban on Turkish tomatoes, officials announced Saturday, and

50,000 tons are reportedly due for delivery early November. Russia banned Turkish produce in 2016 after a Turkish fighter plane downed a Russian bomber near Turkey's border with Syria.

Bombed City

A Russian Defense Ministry spokesman compared the taking of Raqqa from Islamic State militants last week to Allied strikes on Dresden in 1945, saying the Syrian city had similarly been "wiped off the face of the earth."

Major-General Igor Konashenkov said the U.S. had killed "thousands" of civilians and its "bravado" over the victory over Islamic State, a terrorist group banned in Russia, "provoked some doubt."

Another senator this weekend said the U.S. was planned on wresting Raqqa from the Syrian regime's control.

Good Cop, Bad Cop

For the fifth time, Russia has unilaterally placed William Browder, head of Hermitage Capital, on the database of inter-governmental law-enforcement agency Interpol.

In the past, Interpol has not responded to Russia's request, calling it a misuse of the system. The U.S. has also denied Browder a visa.

Embed: https://twitter.com/Billbrowder/status/922006881627004929

No Comment

Opposition leader Alexei Navalny said he would not comment on the decision of socialite and former reality television host Ksenia Sobchak to run in the 2018 presidential elections.

But he did say, "Everyone has the right to run in the elections. Some I like better, some less."

Sobchak, who announced her campaign for president last week, has been criticized by some as splitting the scant opposition vote.

Bomb Scare

More than 3,000 people were evacuated from a Moscow mall on Saturday after an anonymous bomb hoax.

Some 950,000 people have been forced to flee hundreds of buildings in 144 Russian towns after 2,300 scares that began in September.

Banned Band

Authorities have barred the punk group Pornofilmy from performing in Murom in the Vladimir region.

The Federal Security Service said the musicians might "initiate protest activity among youth"

and "propagandize an anti-social way of life, and instill lack of trust and hatred toward government and law-enforcement agencies."

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