

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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Vladimir Putin / Kremlin Press Service

Orthodox Christmas

President Vladimir Putin attended a midnight service at the Church of Saints Simeon and Anna in St. Petersburg on Saturday, the eve of Russian Orthodox Christmas.

“This happy holiday brings joy and hope to millions of believers as they feel closer to their spiritual roots and national traditions, united through eternal Christian values and our nation’s centuries-long historic and cultural legacy,” Putin [said](#) in message following the service.

Jewish leader attacked

A car belonging to Ilya Raskin, the chairman of the Jewish community in the northern Russian city of Murmansk, was [set](#) on fire late on Saturday.

Rashkin said the incident was "not only an act of vandalism and hooliganism but a targeted anti-Semitic extremist action aimed at inciting inter-ethnic and inter-religious enmity."

Navalny rejected

The Supreme Court has for the second time rejected an appeal against the decision to bar opposition leader Alexei Navalny from running in presidential elections next year, his lawyer said Saturday.

Ivan Zhdanov [told](#) the Interfax news agency that he intended to appeal the decision to the Russian Constitutional Court, acknowledging that the chances of success were "negligible."

Quirky candidates

The Central Election Commission (CEC) [closed](#) on Sunday the deadline to submit applications to run in the presidential elections next March. Around 70 applications were received before the deadline.

Ella Pamfilova, the head of the CEC, said that "there were candidates with some quirks."

Navalny tailed

Opposition leader Alexei Navalny [wrote](#) on Twitter on Sunday that he and his wife Yulia were followed for two days during a visit to St. Petersburg.

Navalny joked on Twitter that this was a "violation of labor law." Federal Security Service officials should be on vacation, he said.

Campaigners detained

Three activists working for opposition leader Alexei Navalny's campaign headquarters in Moscow were [detained](#) at Zaryadye park near the Kremlin on Sunday.

They were carrying balloons, campaign pamphlets and stickers when police detained them for holding an unauthorized demonstration.

Airport scandal

The director of the Tretyakov Art Gallery [complained](#) at the JFK Airport in New York when her flight was delayed, according to a video published by Mash, the Telegram news service related to LifeNews.

"Lying, lying, lying" she shouted at Aeroflot officials. "What, I, the director of the Tretyakov Gallery, will lie here on the floor? I won't, but tomorrow you'll get a call from the government about your...outrageous behavior," she said.

Service from New York was delayed for three days due to snowstorms.

Gaga anthem

Lady Gaga could sing the opening anthem at the World Cup 2018 hosted by Russia, the Daily Star [reported](#).

The songwriter Nadir Khayat, known as RedOne, said he is "in the running to do the official anthem" and that Lady Gaga promised to sing it.

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