

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

Putin sings the national anthem, Sobchak attacked and Russia sanctions

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Mikhail Metzel / TASS

Putin election concert

Thousands of people gathered at Moscow's Luzhniki stadium on Saturday to attend a concert rally in support of Russian President Vladimir Putin and his candidacy in the upcoming presidential election.

Putin paid a short visit to the pre-election rally dubbed "For a strong Russia," standing on a stage in the middle of the pitch and singing the national anthem surrounded by Russia's Olympics-winning hockey team and celebrities from TV stars to pop singers.

Putin said on Friday he would reverse the collapse of the Soviet Union if he had a chance to

alter modern Russian history, news agencies reported, weeks before a March 18 election that polls show he should win comfortably.

U.S. prolongs Russia sanctions

U.S. President Trump on Friday [signed](#) an executive order extending sanctions imposed on Russia in 2014 for annexing Crimea for one year.

“The situation in Ukraine continues to pose a threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States,” the White House said in an online statement.

Putin’s press secretary Dmitry Peskov [called](#) the order “unlawful” and “harmful not only to the people of both the United States and Russia, but the entire world.”

Space coordination

Russia and China on Saturday signed an [agreement](#) on space exploration cooperation, with the countries considering a joint orbital flight of the Earth in 2022 and a possible Moon landing in 2023.

The agreement was signed by Russia’s space agency Roskosmos and the Chinese National Space Administration in Tokyo. It builds on a previous [signed](#) in November 2017.

Deripaska gets foreign citizenship

Russian aluminum magnate with close ties to Putin, Oleg Deripaska, has acquired Cypriot citizenship through a [controversial](#) scheme that gives foreign businessmen passports in exchange for investments.

Deripaska was this year the subject of an anti-corruption [investigation](#) by opposition politician Alexei Navalny, who claimed Deripaska acted as a messenger between U.S. President Donald Trump’s ex-campaign chief Paul Manafort and a top Kremlin foreign policy official.

Dagestan crackdown

Another official in the restive North Caucasus republic of Dagestan was arrested on Friday as part of ongoing anti-corruption crackdown. Magomed Dzhelilov, a senior district administrator was [charged](#) with abuse of office.

Dagestan’s acting prime minister, his two aides, the former education minister, and the mayor of the region’s capital, have all been arrested on corruption charges this year. Putin [said](#) on Friday the arrests would continue “for the sake of the people of Dagestan.”

Sobchak attacked

Opposition candidate Ksenia Sobchak had water poured over [her](#) at an event honoring Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow on Sunday.

According to Sobchak’s social media [posts](#), the attacker, Alan Dzutsev, was an aide to the chairman of the Moscow city Duma.

The incident was in response to a televised presidential debate last week when Sobchak threw water at Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the outspoken leader of the Liberal Democratic Party.

French film award

Andrei Zvyagintsev's "Loveless" [became](#) the first Russian film to win the prestigious French Cesar film award on Saturday.

The film was awarded the Cannes Jury Prize earlier this year and is [one](#) of the five Best Foreign Language Films nominees at the Oscars on Sunday.

Zvyagintsev is one of the most critically acclaimed directors working in Russia today. His 2014 film "Leviathan" was the first Russian film to be [awarded](#) the Golden Globe since 1969.

Olympian sells Medvedev SUV

A Russian Olympic medalist is reportedly [selling](#) a luxury SUV gifted to him by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev. While it is unclear which athlete is selling the vehicle, it is clearly [marked](#) with Olympic insignia.

As part of the tradition that [dates](#) back to 2006, all medalists receive a luxury vehicle from the government following the Olympic Games, with the value of the car dependent on the color of the medal won.

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