The Moscow Times
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

March 12, 2018



Sergei Fadeichev / TASS

Putin and Megyn Kelly

In an NBC interview aired this weekend, President Vladimir Putin said he "couldn't care less" about allegations that Russia had meddled in U.S. elections and said that bare-chested photos of him had been taken while he was "relaxing."

When interviewer Megyn Kelly asked Putin why he wouldn't allow opposition leader Alexei Navalny to challenge him, the president responded: "I would like to cooperate with those people, and I'm prepared to do so who are trying to make Russia stronger, effective, more competitive county."

"Anyone can be pardoned as long as they deserve it."

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Another Putin documentary

In a two-hour long documentary titled "Putin," the president said his grandfather worked as a cook for Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin.

In the interview, which was published to social media by state television presenter Dmitry Kiselyov, Putin also said that he had ordered a passenger aircraft reported to be carrying a bomb targeting the opening of the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi in 2014 to be downed. The report later proved to be false alarm.

Landfill protest

Thousands of people near Volokolamsk 130 kilometers from Moscow protested against potent smells from a nearby landfill on Saturday.

Following the demonstration, which was attended by presidential candidate Ksenia Sobchak, Moscow region governor Andrei Vorobyov promised to solve the problem by June 15.

Poisoned World Cup

While former Russian double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia continue to be in a critical condition after being targeted with a nerve agent, Russian state media has said the incident actually plays into Britain's hand and is being used to justify a boycott of the World Cup in Russia this summer.

Zakharova says #MeToo

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova has come out in support of five journalists who made harassment allegations against State Duma deputy Leonid Slutsky. In an interview with the pro-Kremlin NTV television channel, she said that she had also been a victim.

"Leonid started to say certain things, in public, which were personally unpleasant for me," she said.

Stanford leaves Russia

Stanford University in the United States has suspended its undergraduate programs in Russia, "due to serious risks to safety and security" to its students.

Hypersonic missile test

Russia's Defense Ministry has published footage on YouTube of a test firing of the hypersonic "Kinzhal" missile system. In a speech to the Federal Assembly earlier this month, Putin described the weapon as being faster than 10 the speed of sound.

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FSB thwarts terrorist attack

The Federal Security Service has said in a statement it thwarted a terrorist attack in Russia's Saratov region on Sunday, with several people fatally injured in a shootout.

Journalist attacked

A reporter working for the "Expert" magazine, Sergei Tikhonov, has been hospitalized with a concussion after being severely beaten in Sakhalin, the outlet said in a statement. The journalist had been working on an article on local corruption.

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