The Moscow Times
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What you Missed Over the Weekend

May 07, 2018



Alexei Navalny **Mikhail Pochuyev / TASS**

Arrested youth

More than 1,500 mostly young Russians were arrested in two dozen cities during anti-government rallies on the eve of President Vladimir Putin's inauguration, including protest organizer Alexei Navalny, a 12-year-old boy and a raccoon.

Moscow and St. Petersburg accounted for almost 1,000 of the arrests at the "He's Not Our Tsar" protests on Saturday, where police at times used violence to disperse crowds.

Chief captive

Navalny later said he was released from custody, with a court hearing expected for May 11. He faces fines and jail time of up to 30 days for organizing an unsanctioned meeting and disobeying police.

“Apparently the order came down not to ‘jail me before the inauguration,’” Navalny tweeted.

Taxpayers’ whippings

The Tsarist-era Cossack warriors who were photographed beating protesters with infamous “nagaika” whips were found to have been financed by Moscow’s City Hall.

The mayor’s office reportedly paid the “Central Cossack Army” 15.9 million rubles ($254,000) in 2016-2018 for training to ensure public order and security at events including the FIFA World Cup next month.

Related article: ‘He’s Not Our Tsar’: Russians Protest Putin Ahead of Inauguration

Israeli visit

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has announced plans to visit Moscow on Wednesday for talks with Putin as Tel Aviv lobbies world powers to “fix or nix” a 2015 nuclear deal with Iran.

The Kremlin said that Netanyahu was invited to attend the May 9 Victory Day parade on Red Square, a year after only one foreign leader took part in the yearly military procession in Moscow.

Loko champs

Lokomotiv Moscow clinched their first Russian Premier League football championship title in 14 years with a 1-0 win against Zenit St. Petersburg on Saturday.

Portuguese forward Eder's goal in the last minutes clinched the title for Lokomotiv with one game to spare in the race, guaranteeing the Moscow club its third championship win since 2002 and 2004.

Morse defiance

A Russian state media regulator’s blacklist of websites has been reportedly altered to spell out a slogan against efforts to ban the Telegram messaging service.

The phrase “Digital Resistance” was written in Morse Code on the eve of Russia’s Communication Workers’ Day by unknown users, who manipulated blacklisted addresses to make them appear as lines and dots on a graph that tracks the list.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/05/07/news-from-russia-what-you-missed-over-the-weekend-61365-a61365