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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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Roman Abramovich (Sergei Savostyanov / TASS)

Visa woes

An expired visa kept Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich from attending his Chelsea football club's FA Cup final match in London. Relations between Britain and Russia hit a low after London accused Moscow of poisoning former double-agent Sergei Skripal in Britain in March.

Although the application is taking longer than usual, British authorities are expected to renew Abramovich's visa, one of two sources familiar with the matter told Reuters.

Terror attack

An attack on an Orthodox Church in Russia's Chechen republic has left two policemen and a churchgoer dead, as well as four attackers.

The Islamic State terrorist group claimed responsibility for the attack while Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov suggested that the attackers had "received orders from one of the Western countries."

Paid bills

Sanctions-hit Russian tycoon Viktor Vekselber and his Renova Group have repaid loans totaling over $1 billion to three Western banks, which had until early June to avoid being hit by sanctions themselves.

The loans were repaid to JP Morgan, Credit Suisse and UBS after Renova received a credit line from Russia's Promsvyazbank, a lender taken over by the Central Bank and earmarked to provide credit to sanctioned entities.

Anti-torture rally

Several hundred activists gathered in St. Petersburg to draw attention to "the use of torture by police and FSB members, which has become the norm."

"World Cup of Torture," read one of the banners featured in the demonstration organized by the Rupression.com collective as Russia prepares to host the FIFA 2018 football championship next month.

Navalny's party

Supporters of opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who is serving a 30-day prison sentence for organizing anti-government rallies ahead of President Vladimir Putin's inauguration, have chosen the name "Russia of the Future" for his political party as it seeks legal registration.

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