

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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Maxim Grigoryev / TASS

Team spirit

Leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) countries urged Russia on Saturday to stop undermining democracies and said they were ready to step up sanctions against Moscow if necessary.

"We urge Russia to cease its destabilizing behavior to undermine democratic systems and its support of the Syrian regime," said the leaders of the United States, Canada, Japan, France, Germany, Italy and Britain in a statement at the end of their two-day meeting in La Malbaie, Quebec.

Outsider hospitality

Russia would be happy to host G7 members in Moscow, President Vladimir Putin said in reply to U.S. President Donald Trump's suggestion that Russia should have been at the latest meeting, which ended in discord.

"We did not [choose to] leave it, our colleagues refused to come to Russia due to known reasons at some point. Please, we will be glad to see everyone here in Moscow," Putin told reporters at a briefing in Qingdao, China.

Viennese option

Vienna is one of the cities being considered to host a possible summit between Putin and Trump, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

Austria welcomed Putin last week in his first trip to the West since being re-elected to the Kremlin. Putin's most recent trip to Western Europe took him to Finland last July.

Related article: [Trump Wants Russia at G7 Meeting](#)

World Cup labor alarm

Workers at the Red October steel factory Volgograd have [raised](#) the alarm over mass layoffs and salary delays in the run-up to this week's FIFA World Cup. Special laws passed for the tournament stipulate that factories that pose a potential safety risk in host cities be temporarily shut down for the duration of the tournament.

"The current situation at the enterprise is catastrophic and may lead to a total shutdown," the factory's union wrote in a letter to Putin, with up to 3,000 temporarily laid off workers planning to stage protests on June 18 during an England-Tunisia match.

A welcome from Putin

Putin [welcomed](#) foreign fans arriving to Russia for the 2018 FIFA World Cup in a video address, promising an "unforgettable experience."

"We have done our best to ensure that all of our guests – the athletes, the staff and, of course, the fans – feel at home in Russia," the president said.

Phone exchange

Putin and Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko discussed prisoners held in their respective countries on a recent phone call, the Ukrainian president's office said in a statement.

Poroshenko placed particular emphasis on Ukrainian citizens who are on hunger strike and being held in Russia, the statement said. Putin later [said](#) it was "too early" to discuss a possible prisoner exchange with Ukraine.

Anti-repression arrests

At least two participants in sanctioned protests against political repression on the eve of

Russia Day have been [arrested](#) in Moscow for [reportedly](#) making “unacceptable statements” against Putin.

Police said the rally, [organized](#) by rights campaigner Lev Ponomarev, former State Duma deputy Gennady Gudkov and Mikhail Schneider, a member of the Solidarnost democratic opposition movement and the Party of People’s Freedom, was attended by [1,700](#) people.

Leaderless Forbes

The chief editor of Forbes Russia has been fired for what the magazine’s publisher [said](#) was Nikolai Uskov’s poor performance.

Uskov [maintained](#) that he was let go for appearing as a [guest](#) on a local radio show, but also cited his long-standing dispute with the publisher over editorial interference and vowed to sue him for allegedly failing to compensate his employees.

Includes reporting from Reuters.

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