

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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Vladimir Putin and Austria's Foreign Minister Karin Kneissl / Kremlin.ru

Tough talks, no deal

Russian President Vladimir Putin and German Chancellor Angela Merkel discussed the conflicts in Ukraine and Syria, as well as Iran and a gas pipeline project opposed by the United States during tough talks outside Berlin that reportedly ended with no clearcut progress.

The leaders raised concerns about the plight of Syrian refugees and discussed the role of Ukraine in gas transit to Europe in their first bilateral meeting in Germany since 2013.

Putin on the Ritz

Before arriving in Germany, Putin attended the wedding of Austria's Foreign Minister Karin Kneissl, with whom he was photographed dancing arm in arm at a vineyard. Putin arrived in a car carrying a bouquet of flowers and reportedly accompanied by a troupe of Cossack singers

booked to serenade the newlyweds.

“It was a nice trip,” Putin said after the event. His invitation to the wedding surprised many in Vienna and Moscow, particularly at a time when the European Union is at odds with Russia over Crimea and other issues.

Rocket fraud

The deputy head of Russian state-owned rocket and spacecraft manufacturer Energia, Alexei Beloborodov, has been [detained](#) with two subordinates on suspicion of attempted fraud.

Beloborodov, the head of Energia’s control and audit department, became the latest official suspected of accepting bribes after a string of arrests in the space industry in recent months.

Health fraud

The head of Dagestan’s state health insurance fund, Magomed Suleimanov, has been [detained](#) on suspicion of embezzling 210 million rubles (\$3.1 million) over eight years.

Suleimanov is the latest senior figure to be [detained](#) on corruption charges in Dagestan since the instalment of retired Deputy Interior Minister Vladimir Vasilyev as the head of the republic.

Young death

The son of former State Duma deputy Maxim Shingarkin [reportedly](#) jumped to his death from a high-rise rooftop while handcuffed to a female companion.

Roman Shingarkin and Alexandra Solovyova, students of economics and medicine, had allegedly changed their social media profile pictures to an image of two Lego figures joining hands with a caption reading “suicide.”

Radio silence

Unknown hackers [took down](#) Ekho Moskvyy radio station’s YouTube channel for nearly four hours on Saturday before chief editor Alexei Venediktov [announced](#) that access to its programming had been restored.

Faceoff

Seven years after unveiling a statue dedicated to Jean-François Thomas de Thomon, the French architect who designed St. Petersburg’s Stock Exchange, a local art historian noted that the monument was depicting the wrong person.

The statue’s sculptor, Alexander Taratynov, [blamed](#) the mistake on the Wikipedia entry for de Thomon, which reportedly featured a photo of Scottish chemist Thomas Thomson. “You should blame the internet resources which post misinformation,” Taratynov [said](#).

Includes reporting from Reuters.

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