

Putin Gets Love From New State TV Show as Poll Ratings Slide

By [Bloomberg](#)

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Kremlin.ru

Russian state television started a new weekly show devoted to Vladimir Putin, lauding the president's leadership qualities, physical energy and attentiveness to public needs.

The first hour-long episode of "Moscow. Kremlin. Putin" broadcast in prime time on Rossiya-1 TV on Sunday featured breathless commentary on Putin's meetings and visits in the past week, including footage of him on vacation in Siberia and meeting with students in Sochi. A discussion on a controversial pension reform that has dented Putin's popularity praised the president's sense of responsibility in tackling the issue, while failing to mention protests attended by thousands of Russians in major cities.

"Putin doesn't only love children, he loves people in general," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told host Vladimir Soloviev during a segment on the president's attitude to Russia's young. "He's a very human person."

Peskov, who also said that Putin, 65, exercises for 90 minutes daily, said the program would attempt to show how the president's week went. The new addition to the program schedule appeared even as state TV's daily news broadcasts are already dominated by coverage of Putin's activities. It debuted as Putin's popularity has slumped to its lowest in seven years over the proposal to raise the pension ages for men and women.

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Ratings Slump

Some 89 percent of Russians oppose the plan, according to a Levada Center poll in July, which also found that Putin's approval rating had fallen to 67 percent from 79 percent in May. Putin sought to appease public anger by softening aspects of the reform in a televised address to the nation last week.

A report on Putin hiking and boating in Russia's remote Tuva Republic with Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu emphasized his physical fitness, a theme also stressed by the TV channel's correspondent assigned to accompany the president on visits as he crisscrossed the country from Siberia through Moscow to Sochi on the Black Sea.

"I don't really understand how such a schedule is maintained, such a marathon," marveled Pavel Zarubin to Soloviev. "It's physically very difficult."

The president, agreed Soloviev, "is in great physical shape."

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