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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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Alexei Navalny / Maxim Shemetov / Reuters

Free at last

Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was released on Sunday after spending 20 days in jail on charges of staging an illegal protest against pension reform last month.

Navalny had been detained on Sept. 24, immediately after serving a 30-day stint that began in late August for planning an unauthorized demonstration in January.

Probable cause

U.S. President Donald Trump has said Russia's Vladimir Putin was "probably" involved in unsolved assassinations and poisonings in a televised interview.

"Probably he is, yeah," he told CBS News' "60 Minutes" when asked about Putin's involvement. "Probably. But I rely on them; it's not in our country," Trump said.

Eastern pivot

China has completed construction of its section of the first rail bridge to connect the country to Russia across the Amur River, known as the Heilongjiang River in China.

Construction of the 2,200-meter bridge between Nizhneleninskoye in Russia and Tongjiang city in China began in 2014. It is expected to serve as an international goods transportation channel with an annual shipment volume of 21 million tons by the time it opens sometime in mid-2019.

Church burning

Moscow police opened a criminal case into property damage after unknown arsonists set fire to a wooden church and a Sunday school building in east Moscow.

Surveillance cameras reportedly showed a masked perpetrator pouring liquid from bottles and igniting the church grounds.

Militant raid

Two militants suspected of killing at least two police officers in Chechnya have been killed during raids in Dagestan's Khasavyurt district on the Chechen border.

Russia's Anti-Terrorist Committee said the shootout in Endirey village marked the final phase in efforts to root out Islamic State fighters in the district.

Avangard snag

Russia is reportedly having difficulties in finding a reliable source for carbon fiber components needed for its highly touted hypersonic Avangard missile, although it is still on track to achieve initial operational capability by 2020.

"The body of the hypersonic glide vehicle cannot withstand the heat on re-entry, and therefore the internal systems fail," the CNBC business channel quoted an unnamed source with direct knowledge of a U.S. intelligence report as saying.

Avangard's next flight test is set for December, the outlet reported.

Drunk football

Two Krylia Sovetov football club players have been detained in the southern city of Samara for allegedly driving under the influence, days after internationals Alexander Kokorin and Pavel Mamayev were placed in pre-trial detention over violent attacks.

Midfielder Yevgeny Bashkirov and defender Georgy Tigiyev were reportedly apprehended in seperate incidents over the weekend.

Human capital

Russia placed 34th in the World Bank Group's new system to rank countries based on their

success in developing human capital, an effort to prod governments to invest more effectively in education and healthcare.

Russia ranked ahead of its post-Soviet neighbors, with the exception of Estonia and Kazakhstan, in the list that compiles health, education and survivability measures of citizens in the World Bank's 157 member nations.

Nations League

Goals either side of halftime by Roman Neustadter and Denis Cheryshev handed Russia a 2-0 win against Turkey in their UEFA Nations League B, Group 2 match.

Russia, surprise quarter-finalists at this year's World Cup, lead Group 2 with seven points.

Indian summer

Thousands of Muscovites and visitors took to the parks of the Russian capital to enjoy unseasonably warm weather that beat a 50-year record.

With temperatures about 6 Celsius degrees higher than the average for this time of the year, the Russian Weather Service promised that warm weather would last a few more days.

Russian Salisbury

A "From Russia With Love" classical music concert was held in the English city of Salisbury, where former Russian spy Sergei Sripal and his daughter Yulia were poisoned in March.

Organizers say it was arranged months before the suspected nerve-agent attack and deny any secret subtext in using the title, although the controversy has thrown an unwelcome spotlight on Salisbury.

Includes reporting from Reuters.

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