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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron (Mikhail Metsel / TASS)

Brief encounter

Russian President Vladimir Putin said he talked to U.S. President Donald Trump at the Armistice commemorations in Paris on Sunday.

Putin, speaking to Kremlin-backed RT France television, said he could meet Trump on the sidelines of a G-20 summit in Argentina scheduled for later this month. He said Moscow wanted to restore full-scale dialogue with the United States about the landmark Cold War-era Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

Fallen soldiers

At a memorial in Paris, Putin paid homage to Russian soldiers who fought in World War I following tributes paid by dozens of monarchs, princes, presidents and prime ministers led by

French President Emmanuel Macron.

Putin also met members of the Russian diaspora who brought flowers and portraits of their Russian relatives to the memorial.

Cooking up trouble

Kremlin-linked restaurateur Yevgeny Prigozhin was filmed attending talks with a Libyan military delegation last week alongside the Russian defense minister and chief of staff.

Russia's investigative Novaya Gazeta newspaper speculated that Prigozhin, who has been linked to Russian mercenary groups in Ukraine and Syria, could have been there to negotiate mercenary deployments in Libya.

Communist governor

A communist candidate was elected governor of the republic of Khakasia in Siberia, weeks after the Kremlin-backed incumbent pulled out of the race after failing to win a majority in the first round of voting held on Sept. 9.

"There's no euphoria, just hard work that lies ahead," Valentin Konovalov, who ran unopposed and gained 57.5 percent of the votes with a turnout of 45 percent, was quoted as saying.

Voting rebels

The rebel-controlled Donetsk and Luhansk regions in eastern Ukraine held leadership elections in the shadow of a conflict that has killed more than 10,000 people and poisoned relations between Ukraine and Russia.

Russia maintains that the elections – in which the incumbents were leading according to preliminary results early on Monday – do not violate the 2015 Minsk ceasefire agreement, while Ukraine and its international backers have condemned the vote as a sham.

Signals jammed

Finland's GPS signal was intentionally disrupted during NATO war games in the Nordic countries over the past few weeks and the culprit could be Russia, Finnish Prime Minister Juha Sipila has said.

Finland's air navigation services on Tuesday issued a warning for air traffic due to a large-scale GPS interruption in the north of the country. Norway posted a similar warning about loss of GPS signals for pilots in its own airspace at the end of October when the NATO exercise began.

Home soil

Russian billionaire Dmitry Rybolovlev, who is a formal suspect in an investigation into corruption and influence-peddling in Monaco, is now back in Moscow, his representative told Reuters on Saturday.

Last week, police in Monaco had detained the billionaire, who also owns the AS Monaco football club, for questioning as part of the probe. Rybolovlev's representative Dmitry Chechkin said the tycoon was freed under "judicial control terms" and was not restricted in his movements.

Up in flames

Dozens of shoppers and staff were evacuated when a Lenta supermarket caught fire and its roof collapsed in St. Petersburg early on Saturday.

Heavy black smoke spread around the shopping mall that housed the supermarket as flames were blazing from inside the building and on its roof, as seen in drone footage of the fire's aftermath.

Includes reporting from Reuters.

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