The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

# News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

December 17, 2018



**Oleg Kozhemyako (Yuri Smityuk / TASS)**

### New Primorye governor

Kremlin-backed incumbent Oleg Kozhemyako has won gubernatorial elections in the Far East Russian region of Primorye with nearly 62 percent of the vote and a 40 percent turnout.

Kozhemyako had been named acting governor of the region by President Vladimir Putin after a previous round of voting on Sept. 16 was annulled over alleged election fraud. An opposition candidate from the Communist Party, Andrei Ishchenko, who said he had won the previous round, was not nominated by his party for this month's re-run.

### Disturbing the peace

At least 12 activists were detained and charged with violating public assembly laws after a small anti-war manifestation outside the Federal Security Service (FSB) headquarters in

Moscow.

The rally was held in place of a planned demonstration in support of two groups that were labeled extremist by the authorities. One of its organizers, human rights veteran Lev Ponomaryov, 77, is currently serving a 16-day sentence over allegedly calling for the demonstration in a Facebook post.

### Rival church

Ukraine chose the head of a new national Orthodox church on Saturday, marking a historic split from Russia which its leaders see as vital to the country's security and independence.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said 39-year-old Metropolitan Epifaniy of the Kiev Patriarchate church had been chosen to head the new church by a council. The Russian church called the council a failure because only two members of the church it supports in Ukraine had attended the meeting.

### World-hide web

Russian lawmakers have submitted a draft bill to tighten state control over the internet in response to what they called an “aggressive” national cybersecurity strategy adopted by the United States in September.

If passed, the bill would reduce the flows of Russian internet traffic via foreign networks and give control over them to the Roskomnadzor federal media watchdog. It also seeks to set up infrastructure to ensure the continued work of the Russian internet if it loses access to foreign servers.

### Dangerous music

Russian President Vladimir Putin said the Kremlin should play a leading role in Russian rap music, rather than trying to shut it down.

"If it's impossible to stop something, you've got to take charge of it," he said.

Addressing a suggestion that rap rests on the “three pillars of sex, drugs and protests,” Putin said: “Of all these, drugs are the most worrying. They are the route to a nation’s degradation.”

### End of an era

The notorious 19th century Butyrka pre-trial detention center will shut its doors and relocate its detainees from central Moscow to the outskirts of the city, the deputy head of the Russian prison system, Valery Maximenko, said.

He said Moscow plans to bankroll construction of a new detention center for 5,000 inmates who will be transferred from Butyrka and two other infamous detention facilities – Presnya and Matrosskaya Tishina.

### Davos do-over

An official Russian delegation will travel to the Davos world economic forum after organizers of the event lifted an earlier ban on three Russian businessmen, an unnamed Russian government source told Russian media outlets.

"The level of the delegation and its composition will be decided later," the source said.

### Scrapped carrier

Two sailors have been sentenced to 3.5 years in prison for stealing parts worth 1.4 million rubles ($21,000) from Russia's only aircraft carrier, the Admiral Kuznetsov.

The sailors were accused of running a workshop inside the ship in which they separated precious metals from the ships' components and sold them on the black market.

### Wartime wounds

An off-duty police officer sustained heavy injuries when a World War II-era land mine exploded in his hands on a Moscow region highway.

The lieutenant reportedly lost an eye and both of his hands after he picked up an unattended box on a thoroughfare in southeast Moscow.

### Costly lawn

Prosecutors in St. Petersburg filed an 11 million ruble ($165,000) lawsuit against opposition leader Alexei Navalny's aides for trampling a lawn during anti-Putin demonstrations last spring.

The damages sought reportedly equal the city's total landscaping costs in the area.

*Includes reporting from Reuters.*

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/12/17/news-from-russia-what-you-missed-over-weekend-63846-a63846