

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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Island giveaway

Around 2,000 people [gathered](#) in Moscow to defend Russia's ownership of a chain of islands captured by Soviet troops from Japan during the final days of World War II.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, due to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on Tuesday, is pushing for a treaty on the islands, known as the Kuril Islands in Russia and the Northern Territories in Japan.

Stable outlook

Standard and Poor's rating agency reportedly [affirmed](#) Russia's "BBB-/A-3" credit rating, saying its solid external and public balance sheets should enable its economy to absorb shocks from possible new international sanctions.

S&P believes that a scenario whereby the United States imposes sanctions on the secondary market for Russian sovereign bonds would be disruptive to financial markets, according to its outlook cited by Reuters.

Doping justice

A Swiss federal court has rejected the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) [appeal](#) against a sports court's ruling that [cleared](#) 28 Russian athletes of doping bans, a lawyer for Russian cross-country skier Alexander Legkov has said.

"Legkov can rightly claim: 'My medals are clean!'" his lawyer, Christof Wieschemann, [said](#) in a statement.

Ice-cold Epiphany

More than 250,000 people marked the Christian feast of the Epiphany in Moscow by [plunging](#) in the icy waters of the Moskva River and various ponds around the city, local authorities [said](#).

Every year on this day Orthodox believers commemorate the baptism of Jesus Christ in the River Jordan by submerging themselves in lakes and rivers.

Terror plot

A court in Norway has reportedly [ordered](#) a 20-year-old Russian man to remain in custody for one month pending trial for an alleged stabbing and terror attack plot.

Norway's PST domestic intelligence agency is said to be investigating a stabbing in downtown Oslo last Thursday as a terror-related attack. His possible links to Islamic extremists are also being investigated, The Associated Press reports.

Model apology

A model from Belarus who claimed to have evidence of Russian interference in U.S. President Donald Trump's election has apologized to aluminum tycoon Oleg Deripaska for the claim.

Anastasia Vashukevich, also known as Nastya Rybka, made the [statement](#) in a Moscow court, appearing to head off what the AP says is any chance of her speaking to U.S. investigators. Vashukevich, 27, faces charges of inducement to prostitution following a year-long detention in Thailand and eventual deportation to Russia last week.

Fatal collision

The body of a third pilot of a Sukhoi Su-34 fighter-bomber that [collided](#) with another Su-34 during a training flight in Far East Russia last week has been reportedly [found](#) in the Sea of Japan.

The Russian Defense Ministry initially wrongly reported that two pilots had been rescued after the crash, later revising the casualty count to one pilot rescued and two dead. The ministry said search operations were still ongoing for the fourth pilot of the two-seat jet.

Hacker's extradition

One of six Russians the United States [indicted](#) in November for scamming websites including Pornhub through a network of bots has been extradited from Bulgaria, Russia's Embassy in Washington [said](#).

The embassy said Russia's Consulate in New York plans to visit Alexander Zhukov in the Brooklyn jail where he is currently held.

Includes reporting from Reuters.

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