The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

March 25, 2019



Alex Brandon / AP/TASS

Vindication?

U.S. Special Counsel Robert Mueller's report on Russian interference in the 2016 election found no evidence that any member of Trump's election campaign conspired with Russia during the election, a summary of the report said. The investigation reaffirmed the U.S. intelligence community's assessment of Russian efforts to interfere in the election.

Mueller did not find that President Donald Trump committed a crime but also does not exonerate him, the summary said. The special counsel said he would leave it to the attorney general to decide whether Trump had attempted to obstruct justice.

Latin reinforcement

Two Russian Aerospace Forces planes landed in Venezuela's main airport carrying a Russian defense official and nearly 100 troops amid strengthening ties between Caracas and Moscow,

a local journalist reported.

Russian military officials are visiting to discuss strategy as well as equipment maintenance and training, an unnamed Venezuelan official told the Associated Press.

Embed:

> Hoy llegaron al aeropuerto Internacional de Maiquetía estos dos aviones de la Fuerza Aerea rusa.
>
> 1 Ilyushin Il-62M
> 1 Antomov 124
>
> Fotos: cortesía pic.twitter.com/w7hgQhyivr
>
> — Federico Black B. (@FedericoBlackB) 23 марта 2019 г.

Kerch trains

Russia has connected the railway sections of a $3.6 billion road-and-rail bridge linking Russia and Crimea ahead of train navigation scheduled to begin this December.

Save Baikal

Hundreds of activists gathered in the city of Irkutsk to rally in defense of Lake Baikal. Protesters called for a ban against the construction of a Chinese bottling plant on Lake Baikal, which was halted earlier this month after inspections uncovered violations.

Year-long probe

The former head of a Siberian factory that was converted into a shopping mall where a fire killed 60 people last March has been detained on bribery charges in Poland and is awaiting extradition.

A total of 15 people have been brought to justice as part of three criminal investigations, Russia's Investigative Committee said on the one-year anniversary of the deadly fire.

Troubled cruise ship

Four Russian crew members were among 1,373 passengers and crew on board the Viking Sky luxury cruise liner that sent a mayday signal as it drifted toward land in the Norwegian Sea.

Rescue services had airlifted 479 people to safety and began towing the vessel to a nearby port. The 915 passengers were mainly from the United States and Britain, the rescue services said. There were also Canadians and Australians on board, among others.

Embed:

> #vikingsky #hustadvika heavy sea pic.twitter.com/hoiAkYnVI9
>
> — Ludviken (@Ludvikeen) 23 марта 2019 г.

Teenage bomber

A southern Russian court sentenced Ukrainian teenager Pavlo Gryb to six years in prison for plotting a bombing in a Russian school.

Investigators claimed that Gryb was messaging a young woman online to get her to plant an improvised explosive device in the southern resort town of Sochi. Gryb, who says Russian intelligence services kidnapped him from Belarus in summer 2017, denies the charges.

Illicit trade

The U.S. government has named a Russian ship on a list of vessels suspected of providing fuel to Pyongyang, a month after Reuters reported the same ship violated sanctions by carrying out a clandestine transfer to a North Korean tanker.

The Treasury Department, which oversees U.S. sanctions, included the Russian vessel, the Tantal, on a new list of "vessels believed to have engaged in ship-to-ship transfers with North Korean tankers." The Tantal was one of 18 vessels listed by OFAC in its updated guidance as ships believed to have engaged in illicit ship-to-ship transfers of fuel with North Korean tankers.

World champion

Olympic figure skating champion Alina Zagitova claimed yet another crown by winning the world title in Japan, overcoming an uneven season by soaring to a commanding win with an ambitious program.

Second-place finisher Elizabet Tursynbaeva of Kazakhstan made history by being the first woman to successfully land a quad jump in senior international competition. Olympic silver medalist Yevgenia Medvedeva of Russia took bronze, surmounting a rough transition season after moving to Canada to train with coach Brian Orser.

Includes reporting from Reuters.

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