

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

July 01, 2019

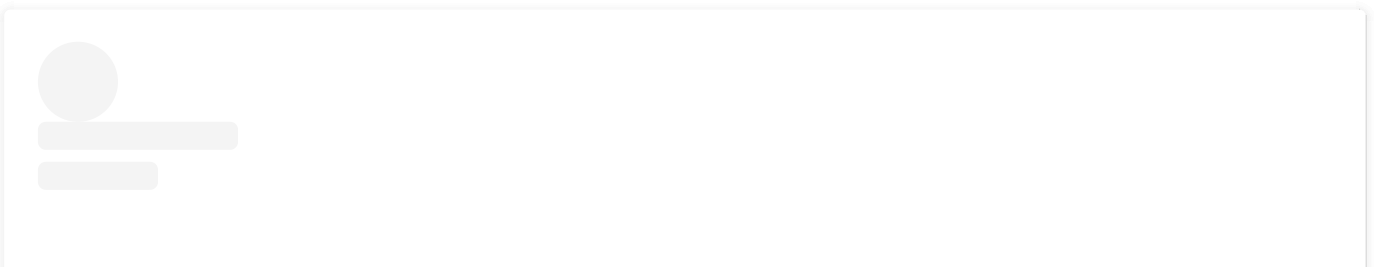


Anna Moskvitina / TASS

Biblical floods

At least five people have been killed and two are missing following severe floods in Russia's Irkutsk region in southern Siberia, while emergency services evacuated over 1,160 people to safety. Total damage was placed at 800 million rubles (\$12.6 million) to local roads, and 300 million rubles (\$4.7 million) in agricultural losses.

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Публикация от Мамусяка (@mamusyaka_store) 28 Июн 2019 в 8:17 PDT

President Vladimir Putin visited the disaster area after the G20 summit in Osaka, and urged the emergency and infrastructure officials to speed up their work.

Skripal 'commander'

A [third suspect](#) in the nerve agent poisoning of former Russian spy Sergei Skripal in England had “commanded” the attack, BBC and the Bellingcat investigative website reported.

According to their [investigation](#), purported GRU military major general Denis Sergeyev’s cellphone data [showed](#) him making 11 calls from London to Moscow around the time of the attack in Salisbury early March 2018.

Oil flows

Russia has agreed with Saudi Arabia to extend by six to nine months a deal with OPEC on reducing oil output, Putin said, as oil prices come under renewed pressure from rising U.S. supplies and a slowing global economy.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, Russia and other producers, an alliance known as OPEC+, meet on July 1-2 to discuss the deal that involves curbing oil output by 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd). The pact expires after June 30.

A nine-month extension would mean the deal runs out in March 2020.

Crimean kiss

A performance featuring same-sex kissing at a government-sponsored [youth forum](#) in annexed Crimea sparked online [backlash](#) over what critics said counted as “gay propaganda” toward minors.

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The event’s organizers later [apologized](#) for the controversial performance, staged by a protege of prominent theater director Kirill Serebrennikov, which they said they hadn’t authorized beforehand.

Gay ‘transformers’

Putin, meanwhile, said Russia had a “relaxed and unprejudiced” attitude toward LGBT people, responding to singer and gay rights activist Elton John’s [accusations](#) of hypocrisy over comments the president made last week.

He also criticized Western attitudes toward LGBT rights, [saying](#) that “they’ve created five or six genders now, including transformers. ...”

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and the raising of my two beautiful sons. This feels like hypocrisy to me. I am proud to live in a part of the world where our governments have evolved to recognise the universal human right to love whoever we want.

— Elton John (@eltonofficial) [June 28, 2019](#)

Includes reporting from Reuters.

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