The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

August 12, 2019

Yuri Kochetkov / EPA / TASS

Opposition rallies

An estimated 50,000 people took to Moscow's streets to rally for fair elections on a rainy Saturday despite weeks of heavy crackdowns, making it one of Russia's largest protests in eight years. Police placed the turnout at 20,000.

Police detained more than 200 near the presidential administration building following the rally. Similar protests in solidarity to Moscow's resulted in 80 detentions in St. Petersburg and a small number of detentions in other cities.

As the scenes unfolded in Moscow, President Vladimir Putin was shown on state television in a leather jacket at a biker show organized by the Night Wolves motorcycle club on the annexed peninsula of Crimea.

Embed:

> На «Урале»: Владимир Путин приехал на байк-шоу под Севастополем pic.twitter.com/w1CQKXiflv
>
> — Дмитрий Смирнов (@dimsmirnov175) August 10, 2019

Nuclear blast

Russia's state nuclear agency Rosatom acknowledged for the first time that nuclear workers were involved in an explosion during a rocket engine test that caused a spike in radiation in nearby Severodvinsk.

Related article: Moscow Acknowledges Mysterious Rocket Explosion Involved Nuclear Workers

Russia will consider bestowing posthumous awards on five nuclear experts and "national heroes" who died in a mysterious explosion at sea during a rocket engine test, authorities said on Sunday. U.S.-based nuclear experts said they suspected the explosion occurred during the testing of a nuclear-powered cruise missile vaunted by Putin last year.

The St. Petersburg-based Fontanka.ru news website quoted a video statement by one of the nuclear center leaders as suggesting that the blast occurred at a "compact nuclear reactor."

Higher rating

Global rating agency Fitch upgraded Russia's investment-grade rating on Friday to 'BBB' from 'BBB-,' citing strengthened policy mix, robust fiscal and external balance sheets which it said will help the country cope with heightened sanctions risk.

Russia's Finance Ministry welcomed the decision and said it hopes it "will become a legitimate reason for raising Russia's credit sovereign rating by the rest of the Big Three rating agencies."

Sacrificial fest

Nearly a quarter-million of Moscow's Muslim worshippers congregated at four of the city's mosques and two other locations to celebrate the religious holiday of Kurban Bayram, or Eid al-Adha, local authorities said.

The "Festival of Sacrifice," which celebrates the willingness of Prophet Abraham to sacrifice his son on a command from God, has moved to outside city limits the tradition of slaughtering sheep, goats, camels and cows to commemorate.

Burning Tesla

A Tesla electric car caught fire after crashing into a tow truck on a Moscow motorway as the

automaker stood by safety claims for one of its models amid U.S. regulatory scrutiny last week.

State-run media posted a video showing the car driving in the left-hand lane of Moscow's ring road, MKAD, before crashing into a tow truck parked by a safety fence that separates the carriageway from oncoming traffic.

Embed:

View this post on Instagram

Авария на МКАД и пожар Car exident and fire on ring road around Moscow (MKAD) 10 августа, 21:00, внутренняя сторона МКАД в районе поселка Мосрентген. Службы вызваны Говорят, Тесла загорелась... #авария #аварияномкад #пожар #пожарномкад #горитмашина #горитмашинаномкад #мкад #мосрентген #fire #carexident #caronfire #mkad #moscow #moscowmkad #тесла #теслазагорелась #tesla #teslaonfire

A post shared by Gago (@gagorun) on Aug 10, 2019 at 11:14am PDT

Swim meet

More than 700 swimmers from around the world took to the waters of the Neva River in the heart of St. Petersburg for a tour around the Peter and Paul Fortress.

With eight events so far in 2019, organizers plan six more swimming events this year, including in the Arctic next week and in Dubai in December.

Embed:

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A post shared by Alexander Bazanov (@alexander_bazanov) on Aug 10, 2019 at 10:44pm PDT

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