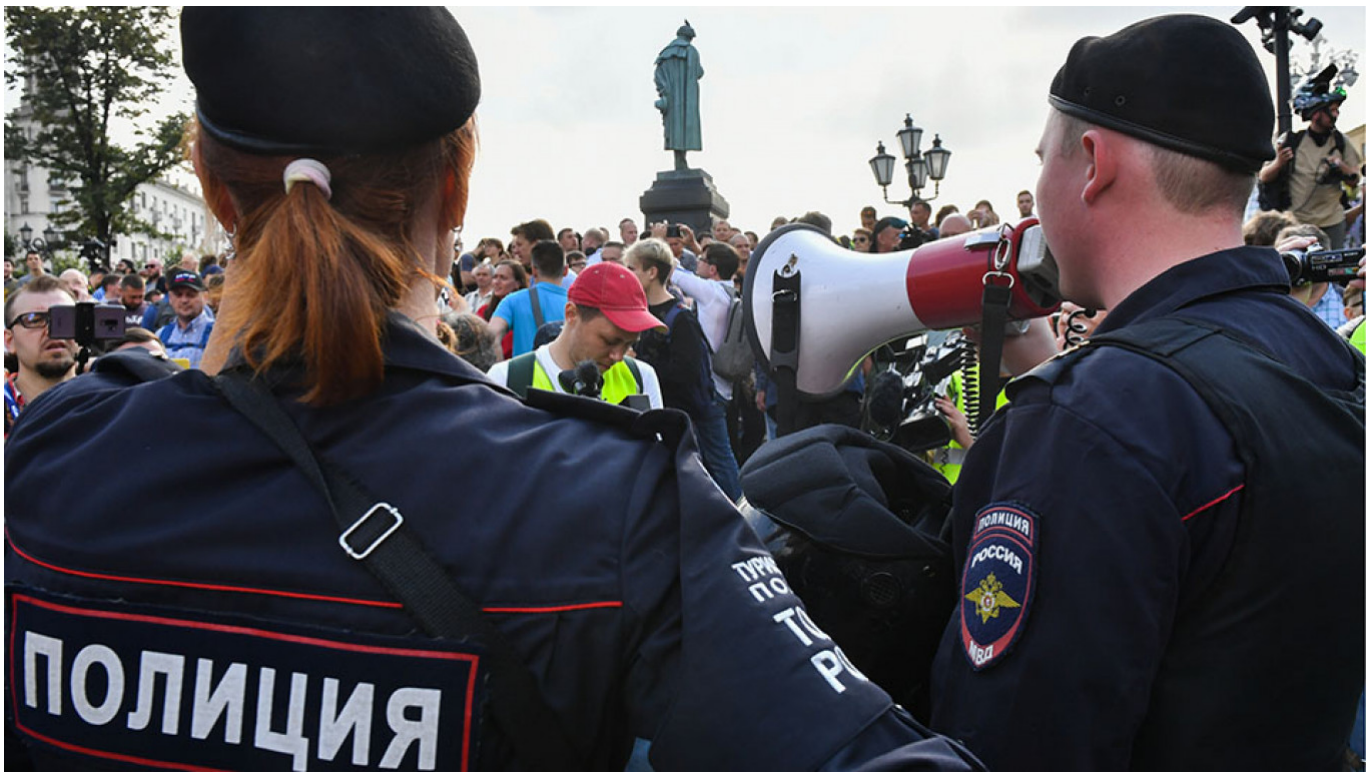
The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

September 02, 2019



Maxim Grigoryev / TASS

Peaceful march

Russians took to the streets of central Moscow on Saturday to demand free elections to the capital's city legislature on Sept. 8, defying a ban which has been enforced with violent detentions during previous protests.

Related article: Trying to Maintain Momentum as Election Approaches, Moscow Protests Again

Witnesses estimated their number at a few thousand, while Moscow police said only 750 attended the event, which has not been sanctioned by the government, making it illegal.

Embed:

> Акция против политических репрессий в Москве.
>
> Несмотря на преступные собянинские отказы в согласовании и очередные запугивания силовиков, москвичи не побоялись и вышли поддержать ребят, незаконно удерживаемых властью по сфабрикованным обвинениям. Браво!#Отпускай pic.twitter.com/zBztFaNiJE
>
> — Команда Навального (@teamnavalny) August 31, 2019

Remembering Beslan

Hundreds of Russians gathered in the Northern Caucasus town of Beslan on Sunday to mourn the victims of the deadly school siege there that killed 334 people, including 186 children, 15 years ago.

Embed:

> Беслан.
> 15 лет прошло. А боль не утихает...
> Вечная память! pic.twitter.com/GHEXPlZ6x9
>
> — Юлия Витязева (@Vityzeva) September 1, 2019

A Russian inquiry into the tragedy failed to reach any conclusions and no Russian officials have been held accountable for the deaths. The commemoration ceremonies will continue for another three days, with people paying respect at the cemetery where most of the victims are buried.

Whose Crimea

At commemorations marking the 80th anniversary of the start of World War II in Warsaw, Polish President Andrzej Duda said that Poland saw a need to maintain Western sanctions against Russia over its 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine. U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry said that Washington will most likely continue to toughen sanctions on Moscow.

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence, also in Warsaw, reassured Ukraine on Sunday that Washington continues to back its claim for Crimea, even as U.S. President Donald Trump mulls cutting aid to Russia's neighbor.

WWII snub

Russia, which wasn't invited to the World War II commemorations, reacted to the snub with a Foreign Ministry tweet saying "it's impossible to deny the fact that it was the Soviet Union that routed Nazism, liberated Europe and saved European democracy."

Vyacheslav Volodin, the speaker of Russia's lower house of parliament, accused Poland of "politicizing" the outcome of the war.

A killing in Berlin

The suspect detained over the killing last week of a Georgian citizen in Berlin had a passport whose number linked him to Russian security services, the German magazine Der Spiegel reported.

Related article: Kremlin Says Russian State Had Nothing to Do With Chechen's Murder in Germany

A Der Spiegel investigation conducted jointly with the investigative networks Bellingcat and The Insider said that no one with the name of the alleged assassin was found in the Russian national passport register. It added that his passport number was associated with an Interior Ministry unit that had in the past issued identity documents for agents of the GRU military intelligence service.

Last week, Der Spiegel reported that German investigators are looking at Zelimkhan Khangoshvili's death as a "professionally planned and executed contract killing" by a foreign intelligence service.

Big band

Some 8,097 musicians gathered in St. Petersburg to perform the Russian national anthem on Sunday, setting what organizers claim is a record for the largest orchestra.

Embed:

> В Петербурге установили мировой рекорд по числу музыкантов, исполняющих гимн. Сводный оркестр состоял из региональных коллективов из 85 субъектов России:https://t.co/Vkhjgepoqi pic.twitter.com/5owFyN49dJ
>
> — ТАСС (@tass_agency) September 1, 2019

The Guinness Book of Records was invited to enter the rendition in the record books and 20,000 people reportedly sang along with the performance.

Includes reporting from Reuters.

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