

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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Gas suspense

U.S. President Donald Trump signed a bill Friday imposing sanctions on firms laying pipe for the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia to Germany. The pipeline seeks to double gas capacity along the northern Nord Stream pipeline route.

Germany's finance minister and vice chancellor, Olaf Scholz, said Berlin "firmly rejects" U.S. sanctions. Russia's Foreign Ministry also said that Moscow "will continue to implement its economic projects regardless of anyone's sanctions."

Nationalist leanings

The suspect behind last week's [shooting attack on the FSB](#) security agency in Moscow may have been a member of a nationalist group advocating unity among Russians, Ukrainians and Belarussians, unnamed FSB sources who examined his computer and smartphone have [told](#)

media.

The National Liberation Movement (NOD), whose flag was found in Yevgeny Manyurov's home, has [denied](#) any connection with the attack.

Big deal

In a major breakthrough, Russia and Ukraine have reached a new deal for Moscow to supply Europe with 225 billion cubic meters of gas via Ukraine for at least five years and pay a \$2.9 billion settlement by Dec. 29.

Related article: [Russia, Ukraine Outline Terms for Five-Year Gas Transit Deal to End Row](#)

In exchange, Ukraine is expected to sign a legal settlement and withdraw all outstanding claims, also before Dec. 29, aiming to resolve the issue before the existing supply deal expires.

Integration roadblock

More than 1,000 Belarussians [gathered in Minsk](#) to oppose integration talks with Russia.

Embed:

☒☒ Минск захлестнула волна протестов, тысячи вышли против "Союзного государства" pic.twitter.com/qy5vdt1x9e

— Александр Кайдаш (@wizardaleks) [20 декабря 2019 г.](#)

Protesters held up placards reading “stop annexation” and chanted “independence” as talks between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Belarussian President Alexander Lukashenko ended Friday with key differences over oil and gas issues unresolved.

Remote doping

Russian doping whistleblower Grigory Rodchenkov, the former head of Moscow's suspended anti-doping laboratory, had remotely altered data that led to Russia's ban from the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, the Investigative Committee [said](#).

Rodchenkov's lawyer [called](#) the allegations “a farce” and “a charade.”

Stalin's 140th

Josef Stalin's supporters [laid flowers](#) at the Soviet dictator's grave on Red Square to mark his 140th birthday on Saturday.

Elsewhere, Communist Party members [unveiled](#) a Stalin bust in the city of Volgograd, which was known as Stalingrad until 1961. A giant billboard depicting Stalin as the Terminator with a

caption reading “I’ll be back” was [put](#) up in the Nizhny Novgorod region.

Includes reporting from Reuters.

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