The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

December 30, 2019



Ukrainian government forces and pro-Russian separatists completed a prisoner swap. **Alexander Reka / TASS**

New Year's gift

Russia said it thwarted terrorism attacks reportedly planned in St. Petersburg thanks to a tip from Washington, bringing personal thanks again from President Vladimir Putin to his U.S. counterpart Donald Trump.

News agencies cited Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) as saying that thanks to the information, two Russians were detained on Dec. 27 on suspicion of plotting attacks during the New Year festivities in St. Petersburg.

Two years ago, the Russian leader also phoned Trump to thank him for a tip that Russia said helped prevent a bomb attack on a cathedral in St Petersburg.

Big swap

Ukrainian government forces and pro-Russian separatists in the east completed a large-scale prisoner swap after bussing scores of detainees from the five-year conflict to an exchange point in the breakaway Donbass region.

The swap should help build confidence between the two sides, who are wrangling over how to implement a peace deal after the loss of more than 13,000 lives, but major disagreements remain and full normalization is far off.

Rich grow richer

Russia's 23 wealthiest people have added $52.9 billion to their net worth in 2019, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

Metals tycoon Vladimir Potanin saw the biggest wealth increase of $8.5 billion, making him Russia's richest person with $28.2 billion, Bloomberg said.

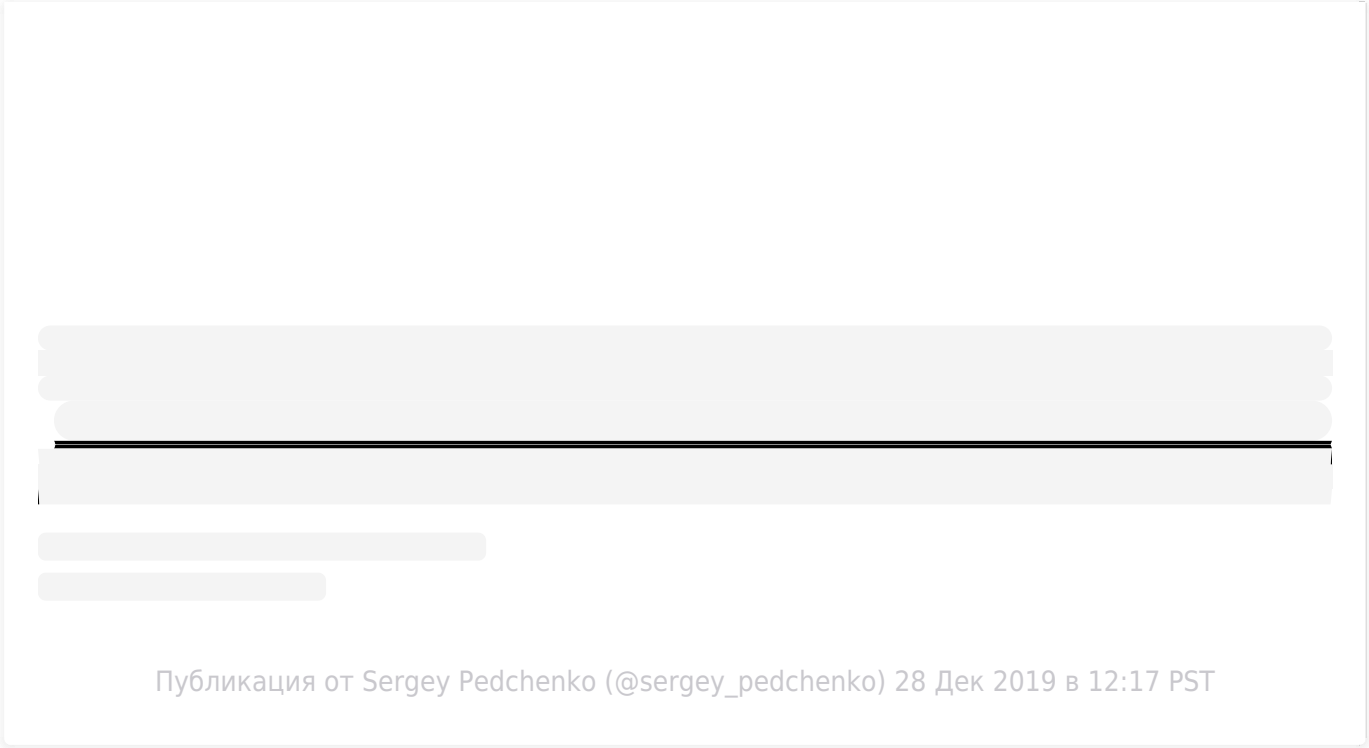
War of words

Poland's prime minister has accused Putin of "lying" about Poland being responsible for the outbreak of World War II to deflect attention from current issues.

Poland's foreign ministry summoned the Russian ambassador to voice opposition toward Putin's "historical insinuation," comparing his recent remarks to a "Stalinist narrative" and "totalitarian propaganda."

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Публикация от Sergey Pedchenko (@sergey_pedchenko) 28 Дек 2019 в 12:17 PST

Fake snow

Trucks brought tons of snow to central Moscow's Zaryadye Park and Tverskaya Street in an attempt to boost the holiday spirit in what has so far been a snow-free December.

The snow was brought from the city's ice rinks and will be used to create snowboarding slopes, First Deputy Director of the Mayor's Office Alexei Nemeryuk told Interfax.

Includes reporting from Reuters.

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