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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

March 09, 2020

Participants in a 400-meter running race held on Moscow's Pushkinskaya Embankment to mark International Women's Day on Sunday present flowers to women on the finish line. **Anton Novoderezhkin / TASS**

Price war

The crude oil price plunged around 30% in early trading Monday following top oil exporter Saudi Arabia's decision to slash its official selling price and step up production. That was the biggest percentage drop since 1991.

The decision was made after a deal between the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its allies, led by Russia, collapsed in Vienna.

298 chairs

Relatives of victims from the downed 2014 Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 protested in front of the Russian Embassy in the Hague a day before four fugitive suspects go on trial charged with

the murder of 298 passengers and crew.

Related article: Everything You Need to Know About the MH17 Trial

Family and friends set up white chairs on the lawn opposite the embassy to symbolize the victims and called on Russia to cooperate with the investigation into the crash. The defendants are at large and are not expected to show up for the hearings at a high-security courtroom near Amsterdam's Schiphol airport where they will be prosecuted under Dutch law.

Quarantine jail

Moscow city authorities threatened prison terms of up to five years for people failing to self-isolate in their homes for two weeks after visiting countries hit hard by the coronavirus outbreak.

A total of 17 coronavirus cases have been registered in Russia as of Monday.

Hammer crime

Two Russian citizens have been arrested in Sweden on suspicion of carrying out a hammer attack last month on a blogger critical of Chechen strongman leader Ramzan Kadyrov.

Related article: Two Russians Arrested for Assassination Attempt on Chechen Dissident Blogger

A Russian woman in her thirties is suspected of being an accessory to the attempted murder of Tumso Abdurakhmanov on Feb. 26 in the central Swedish town of Gavle.

A 29-year-old Russian man was previously detained for attempted murder.

Migrant policy

President Vladimir Putin has approved a 2019-25 state migration policy that envisions softening naturalization eligibility requirements to migrants "mentally and culturally close" to Russia.

Additionally, the new policy simplifies procedures for vulnerable migrants, as well as those with "positive social ties to Russia." Putin, instead of the Interior Ministry, also personally grants Russian citizenship to "especially valuable" foreigners.

Includes reporting from Reuters and AFP.

Original url:
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