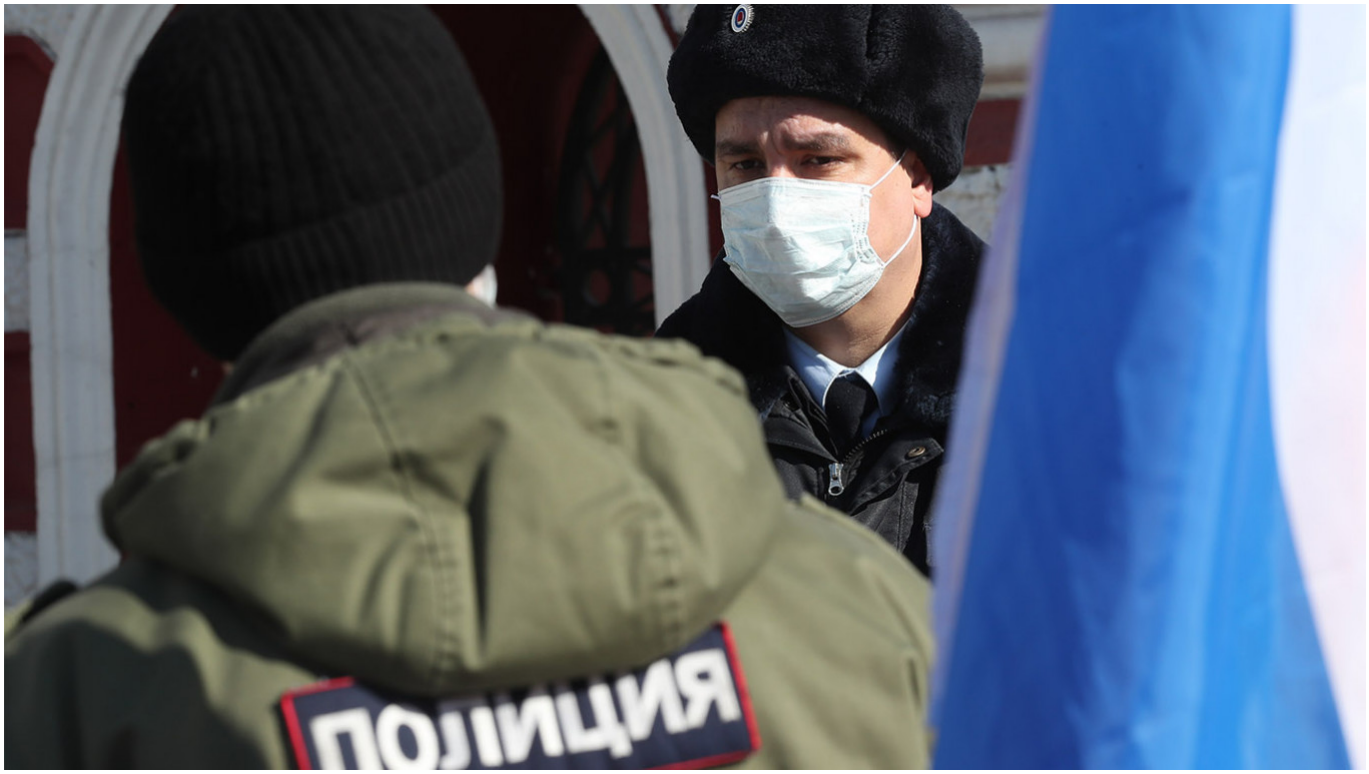
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

March 23, 2020



Yegor Aleyev / TASS

Coronavirus updates

Russia confirmed 71 new coronavirus infections on Monday, bringing the country's official number of cases up to 438.

The news came as Moscow authorities again ruled out the possibility of a citywide lockdown. Meanwhile, Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said the city's metro will not close down if the number of cases continues to rise.

On Sunday, Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin said Russia plans to build new isolation units for patients with infectious diseases in several regions in response to the virus' spread. He said the units would be based on close study of such units built in China and that the Russian government was discussing its plans with Chinese partners in the construction sector.

‘From Russia With Love’

The Russian army on Sunday began flying medical help to Italy to help it battle the coronavirus after receiving an order from President Vladimir Putin, a goodwill gesture that Moscow labeled "From Russia with Love."

Giant Il-76 military planes began taking off from an airbase in the Moscow region after Putin spoke to Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte on Saturday and agreements were later reached between respective defense ministers.

Constitutional protests

Small-scale protests against Vladimir Putin's plans to amend the Russian constitution so he can run for president again in 2024 took place in several medium-sized Russian cities on Sunday, local media reported.

Protests against the changes, which would overturn a constitutional ban on Putin running for another term, were called off in Moscow and St. Petersburg due to measures imposed to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

Northern explosion

An artillery ammunition explosion injured five service people at a military warehouse in the Murmansk region, the Northern Fleet’s press service said Sunday. The state-run TASS news agency said two of the injured were hospitalized in serious condition.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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