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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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Starting Monday, Moscow's 12 million inhabitants will only be allowed to leave their homes to seek emergency medical care, shop for food or medicine, go to work, walk pets or take out the garbage.
Sergei Kiselyov / Moskva News Agency

Virus lockdown

Moscow will enact an indefinite citywide quarantine starting Monday, Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said as the city's number of coronavirus cases surpassed 1,000 over the weekend.

The city's 12 million inhabitants will only be allowed to leave their homes to seek emergency medical care, shop for food or medicine, go to work, walk pets or take out the garbage. The mayor's office said it will deploy "smart monitoring" to enforce the new rules and develop a special pass system for people to leave their homes.

Border closure

Russia will close all border crossings starting Monday, the government announced,

tightening restrictions after the country reported its biggest one-day rise in new coronavirus cases.

A decree on the government's website said Russia would "temporarily restrict traffic" across all vehicle, rail and pedestrian checkpoints, as well as the country's maritime borders, to prevent new infections.

Rosneft out

Russian oil giant Rosneft announced it is halting its activities in U.S. sanctions-hit Venezuela and selling its assets there to an unnamed company owned by the Russian government.

The U.S. has ramped up pressure on Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's government, including imposing sanctions on two Swiss-based Rosneft units — Rosneft Trading and TNK Trading International — that Washington said provided PDVSA a lifeline by acting as intermediaries for its crude.

Church v. state

The head of Russia's Orthodox Church urged believers to pray from their homes in the latest call from religious leaders around the world to avoid gatherings that could help the coronavirus' spread.

About 60% of Russia's 144 million people consider themselves Orthodox Christians, but fewer were worshipping in churches on Sunday and some were wearing masks, according to media reports.

New START

The United States and Russia have halted onsite inspections as part of the New START bilateral arms control treaty set to expire next year, a senior U.S. arms control official told the state-run TASS news agency.

Executive Director of the Arms Control Association Daryl Kimball said the countries agreed to suspend inspections until May 1. The New START, or the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, limits launcher and warhead numbers fielded by Russia and the U.S.

Includes reporting from Reuters and AFP.

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