The Moscow Times
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

April 13, 2020



Kirill Kukhmar / TASS

Shuttered Moscow

Moscow traffic police have been deployed at all city entry points to control movement and ask drivers why they're entering the Russian capital during its coronavirus lockdown, according to state media.

Vehicles with license plates from outside Moscow are turned away at the Moscow Ring Road, a motorway known as MKAD that forms the de facto border around the city, other outlets noted.

Moscow introduced a system of digital passes for movement around the city starting this week.

'Historic' cut

President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump hailed the new OPEC+ oil deal Sunday which agreed a historic cut in oil production to boost plummeting prices.

The two leaders agreed on the "great importance of an agreement in the 'OPEC+' format during a phone conversation, said a statement from the Kremlin. Putin, Trump and Saudi Arabia's King Salman also held a joint phone call, the statement added.

Prison riot

An inmate was found dead Saturday after a riot and a blaze swept through a Russian prison under a coronavirus lockdown in eastern Siberia, authorities said.

Trouble erupted at penal colony No. 15 in Angarsk on Thursday with authorities blaming prisoners, while human rights activists said inmates self-harmed en masse to protest systematic mistreatment.

On Friday, the colony's work yard was engulfed in flames as riot police cordoned off roads leading to the prison, turning away independent observers. The fire was extinguished by Saturday morning.

Space wars

The head of Russia's space agency accused Elon Musk's SpaceX of predatory pricing for space launches, which is pushing Russia to cut its own prices.

Dmitry Rogozin said the Roscosmos space agency "is working to lower prices by more than 30% on launch services to increase our share on the international markets." The market price of a SpaceX launch is $60 million, but NASA pays up to four times that amount, he said.

Holy Week

The Russian Orthodox Church has urged worshippers to stay home in the wake of climbing coronavirus cases and ordered Moscow's churches to restrict visits during the Holy Week of April 13-19.

This Orthodox Palm Sunday, footage across Russia showed worshippers congregating in churches.

Includes reporting from AFP.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/04/13/news-from-russia-what-you-missed-over-the-weekend-56-a69959