The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

June 29, 2020

The Scarlet Sails festival in St. Petersburg. **Peter Kovalyov / TASS**

Taliban bounty

The Russian military intelligence agency that has been linked to assassination attempts in Europe offered bounties to Taliban-linked militants in return for killing U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan last year, The New York Times reported, citing anonymous officials briefed on the matter. The Washington Post reported that an unnamed number of U.S. soldiers have died as a result.

Russia denounced the report, with its embassy in Washington tweeting that the "baseless and anonymous accusations" in the NYT story had "already led to direct threats to the life of employees" at its embassies in Washington and London. The Taliban also denied the report.

Regular testing

President Vladimir Putin gets tested for the coronavirus "every three to four days," he told the

state Rossia 1 broadcaster in an interview that aired Sunday. All of the tests have come back negative so far, he added.

Arctic spill

An enrichment plant belonging to the Russian mining giant behind last month's enormous Arctic fuel spill was found to be pumping wastewater from a dangerously full tanker into nearby tundra.

Norilsk Nickel said it had suspended employees responsible for the incident at the Talnakh enrichment plant near the Arctic city of Norilsk, citing a "flagrant violation of operating rules." The Investigative Committee, which probes serious crimes, said it had opened an inquiry after receiving reports of "unauthorized dumping of liquid waste into the tundra" on the site of the facility.

Siberian fires

Siberian forest fires have grown almost fivefold amid a heat wave scorching the region, The Associated Press reported, citing Russia's agency for aerial forest fire management.

The figures state that 1.15 million hectares (2.85 million acres) were burning in areas unreachable to firefighters. Around 80% of the blazes hit the republic of Sakha, where the town of Verkhoyansk reported possibly the hottest-ever temperature above the Arctic Circle earlier in June.

LGBT protests

At least 40 people in Moscow and three in St. Petersburg were detained for staging solo pickets opposing pornography charges against artist and LGBT activist Yulia Tsvetkova, the OVD-Info police-monitoring website reported.

Tsvetkova, 27, faces up to six years in prison in the Far Eastern Russian city of Komsomolsk-on-Amur for posting body-positive artwork of female genitalia on social media.

E-Scarlet Sails

St. Petersburg held its annual Scarlet Sails festival in celebration of high school graduates with a massive water show, musical performances and a fireworks display.

There were no spectators and ships sailed through the Gulf of Finland instead of the Neva River, according to Euronews. Large events are still banned in Russia's second-largest city due to the coronavirus.

Embed:

> ⊠Fireworks lit up the night sky in the Russian city of St Petersburg on Saturday as it marked the end of the school year with a special celebration. #ScarletSails⊠⊠ https://t.co/rJnpDTlf4K pic.twitter.com/LMg9yY2Ofw

— ▪▪▪▪▪▪ ▪▪ ▪▪▪ ▪▪ ▪▪▪▪ (@RSGovUK) June 28, 2020

AFP contributed reporting.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/06/29/news-from-russia-what-you-missed-over-the-weekend-67-a70724