

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

August 24, 2020



Sunday's Belarusian opposition protest in Minsk. **Evgeniy Maloletka / AP / TASS**

'Fled like rats'

Approximately 100,000 demonstrators massed in central Minsk on Sunday to demand the resignation of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, who flew over the scene of the banned protest in a helicopter and called the marchers "rats."

The authoritarian leader, later shown [clutching](#) an automatic rifle upon landing at his central Minsk residence, has ordered the military into full combat readiness in the face of the biggest challenge to his 26-year rule of the ex-Soviet state.

Navalny in a coma

Leading Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, who has suffered a suspected poisoning, was flown to Berlin on Saturday following a standoff over his medical evacuation from Russia. A hospital spokeswoman there [said](#) Navalny's doctors could provide an update on his condition Monday.

The 44-year-old lawyer and anti-corruption campaigner went into a coma after falling suddenly ill Thursday on a plane to Moscow that had to make an emergency landing in Omsk.

S-400 deal

Russia has signed a contract for the delivery of a second batch of S-400 missile systems to Turkey, the head of Russia's defense export organization Rosoboronexport [said](#) Sunday.

The move could further hurt ties between Turkey and the United States, which suspended Ankara from the F-35 stealth fighter jet program after Turkey bought S-400 batteries last year.

Journalist harassed

Authorities in Far East Russia harassed a New York Times journalist filming a report on an LGBT activist who faces criminal pornography charges for body-positive drawings, the activist [said](#).

Law enforcement officials in Komsomolsk-on-Amur allegedly seized the reporter's footage and threatened physical attacks before letting him leave the city, the activist, Yulia Tsvetkova, said on Facebook.

Snow in the mountain

Heavy [snowfall](#) hit Russia's southernmost village of Kurush in the republic of Dagestan on Sunday, according to video footage.

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Local authorities [say](#) snowfall in the mountainous region 2,560 meters above sea level is common closer to autumn.

AFP contributed reporting to this article.

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