

# News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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Russians voted for regional governors and lawmakers in regional and city legislatures as well as in several by-elections for national MPs. **Alexei Kushnirenko / TASS**

## Three-day vote

Allies of poisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny said Sunday they had secured city council seats in the Siberian cities of Novosibirsk and Tomsk as independent monitors condemned a reported "stream" of voting irregularities in regional polls.

United Russia chairman Dmitry Medvedev meanwhile praised the party's electoral successes, saying that according to exit polls it was heading for victory in regional legislatures.

## 'March of Heroes'

Riot police harshly detained more than 400 demonstrators in Belarus on Sunday as 100,000 people took to the streets on the eve of crunch talks between strongman Alexander Lukashenko and his main ally, Russia's Vladimir Putin.

Thousands more protesters took to the streets in other cities including Gomel, Grodno and Brest, where police used water cannons against demonstrators.

### **Free-for-all**

Russia's Defense Ministry has proposed removing chemical warfare agents from a list of products that are banned from being sold to the public. The ministry said that because Russia has [destroyed](#) all of its chemical weapon stockpiles, it "[makes no sense](#)" to keep them on the prohibition list.

The military's proposal comes less than a month after the poisoning of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny with what German authorities say is the military-grade nerve agent Novichok.

### **Cave bear**

Scientists have [discovered](#) what they say is the first ever Ice Age-era cave bear carcass to have its soft tissues and internal organs intact in the New Siberian Islands archipelago 4,500 kilometers northeast of Moscow.

Permafrost melt in Siberia has led to the discoveries of mammoths, woolly rhinos, Ice Age foals, puppies and cave lion cubs in recent years.

### **Spaghetti deity**

A court in the western Siberian city of Surgut fined a local man 30,000 rubles (\$400) for "desecrating religious symbols" by sharing images of a religious icon of the Flying Spaghetti Monster on social media.

Nikolai Sokurov [said](#) he had reposted dozens of religiously themed images on the VKontakte social network several years ago but noted that authorities launched the administrative case against him in June 2020.

*AFP contributed reporting to this article.*

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