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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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AP / TASS

First call

Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny congratulated President-elect Joe Biden on his victory Sunday before there was any reaction from the Kremlin to the U.S. election results.

"This is a privilege which is not available to all countries," said Navalny, who is recovering in Germany from a suspected poisoning earlier this year, congratulating Biden, running mate Kamala Harris and Americans for "defining the new leadership in a free and fair election."

'March of People's Power'

Police in Belarus detained more than 1,000 people during the latest Sunday protest in weeks of unprecedented demonstrations against strongman Alexander Lukashenko, as the opposition reached out to U.S. President-elect Joe Biden.

Police vans and water cannons were deployed to central Minsk with police sporadically

detaining protesters in various locations. Witnesses saw a heavy security presence, with baton-carrying riot police in black balaclavas grabbing protesters and taking them to police vans.

Nagorno-Karabakh

Azerbaijan said Sunday that its forces had captured the key town of Shusha from Armenian separatists in Nagorno-Karabakh, but Armenia insisted that fighting continued for the strategic area.

The capture of Shusha, known to Armenians as Shushi, would be a major victory for Azerbaijan six weeks after fighting erupted anew over Nagorno-Karabakh, an ethnic Armenian enclave that broke away from Azerbaijan's control in the 1990s.

Rising through the ranks

The head doctor of the Siberian hospital which first treated leading Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny — and repeatedly denied that he had been poisoned — was appointed the Omsk region's new health minister.

Alexander Murakhovsky's predecessor was dismissed in late October after two ambulances brought coronavirus patients to the ministry's building to demonstrate a lack of beds in the region's hospitals amid the second wave of the pandemic.

Hand ball

Russia's national football team said Sunday it will leave captain Artyom Dzyuba off the squad's training camp and three upcoming international fixtures after a video appearing to show him masturbating went viral after allegedly being taken from his hacked phone.

Dzyuba, 32, took to Instagram after his Zenit St. Petersburg team's Sunday evening victory to apologize to fans and thank supporters, saying "I can only blame myself."

AFP contributed reporting to this article.

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