

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

January 18, 2021



Police removed Navalny supporters from Vnukovo Airport. **Sergei Bobylev / TASS**

Navalny Homecoming

Russian police detained prominent opposition leader Alexei Navalny on his arrival in Moscow from Germany on Sunday, where he had been recovering from an attempted poisoning by the nerve agent Novichok.

The United States, the European Union, several EU governments, Canada and a senior aide to U.S. President-elect Joe Biden immediately called for his release, with some in the EU urging new sanctions against Moscow. Amnesty International declared Navalny a prisoner of conscience.

Probing poison

Germany has transmitted to Russia transcripts of interviews with Navalny as part of its response to Moscow's request for assistance in its investigation into the poisoning, Berlin said Saturday.

Russia's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova countered that the answers contained "[nothing of substance](#)." Europe's human rights court has registered Navalny's [complaint](#) against Russia for failing to investigate his poisoning.

Safe passage

Russia announced Saturday it plans to [resume](#) flights starting Jan. 27 with India, Qatar, Finland and Vietnam, where it deemed new daily coronavirus infection rates to be low enough for safe travel.

Russian airlines were reported to have [reopened](#) some 169 flights since Russia began easing its international travel ban due to the Covid-19 pandemic in September.

Emergency disapproval

Brazil's health watchdog has [declined](#) emergency use authorization for Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine for failing to comply with the "minimal criteria" of providing data on phase three trials and advanced production methods.

Russia's sovereign wealth fund, which bankrolls and markets Sputnik V, [maintained](#) that the refusal was a standard request for additional information and has vowed to provide the needed data "soon."

Lawmaker death

Russian lawmaker Nikolai Antoshkin, a leading liquidator of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, has [died](#) "after a difficult illness" at age 78 on Sunday.

Gen. Antoshkin had been hospitalized after contracting Covid-19 late last year.

Sunken ship

Five Ukrainian and one Russian crew member have been [rescued](#) after a Russian freight ship sank off the coast of Turkey in the Black Sea on Sunday.

The fate of six other members, including one Russian national, remained unknown as rescue teams [battled](#) poor weather conditions to reach the sunken vessel.

AFP contributed reporting to this article.

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