

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

February 01, 2021



More than 1,500 people were detained during Sunday's protest in Moscow. **Alexander Nemenov / AFP**

Record-breaking protests

Tens of thousands of Russians nationwide [took part](#) in a second weekend of unsanctioned protests calling for the release of jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who faces years in prison in a trial that starts Tuesday.

Related article: [Navalny Supporters Defy Crackdown to Protest Across Russia](#)

Many protesters also rallied against President Vladimir Putin and Russia's ruling elite, chanting slogans like "Putin is a thief." More than 5,000 people were detained across the country — a new one-day record — with numerous videos showing a harsh police crackdown on peaceful protesters.

New START

President Vladimir Putin [signed](#) a five-year extension to the New START, a key nuclear arms control treaty between Russia and the U.S., prior to its Feb. 5 expiration.

New START is the only remaining nuclear arms control deal between the two countries after Moscow and Washington withdrew from the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 2019. Its extension comes amid a tense U.S.-Russia relationship.

Medvedev vaccinated

Former President Dmitry Medvedev [said](#) he has been vaccinated with Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine.

Medvedev, who now acts as deputy chairman of the Security Council after stepping down as Prime Minister last January, said he got the jab about two months ago "without consequences." He is the latest high-profile official to receive the jab, while Putin himself has yet to be vaccinated.

Rotenberg's 'palace'

Russian billionaire and Putin's longtime friend Arkady Rotenberg [claimed](#) that he owns the lavish Black Sea estate that Navalny says cost over \$1.5 billion and belongs to the Russian president.

"I have successfully concluded a deal with some creditors and I became the beneficiary of this site," Russian news agencies quoted Rotenberg as saying. His media service said the billionaire wanted to turn it into an apartment hotel.

AFP contributed reporting.

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