The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

February 08, 2021



Stefan Sauer / DPA / TASS

Ominous homecoming

Chechen authorities were reported to have pressed terror-related charges against two gay men who had been seized near Moscow and sent back to their native region last week.

An LGBT rights group that had helped them flee Chechnya for Nizhny Novgorod after their alleged torture last year warned that they now face "mortal danger."

Unbending pipe

Pipe-laying work has resumed on Russia's massive Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, the project's consortium said Saturday, following "completed sea tests" in Danish waters.

France on Monday urged Germany to scrap the pipeline in protest over the imprisonment in Moscow of opposition leader Alexei Navalny, but the plea fell on deaf ears in Berlin.

‘Stark contrast’

Russia’s Foreign Ministry expressed surprise with “strong contrasts” in EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell’s statements made during and after his Moscow visit.

Borrell, whose two-day trip culminated in the shock expulsion of German, Swedish and Polish diplomats last week, said Sunday that Russia’s rejection of constructive dialogue with the EU could lead to sanctions.

Investment rating

Global rating agency Fitch affirmed Russia’s investment grade rating at “BBB,” citing its “prudent” fiscal strategy and coronavirus response efforts.

Fitch warned that protests in Navalny’s support risk challenging the governing majority after this fall’s parliamentary elections and cause “less fiscal consolidation than forecast.”

Deadly standoff

Two Russian National Guardsmen were detained in the North Caucasus republic of Dagestan on suspicion of fatally shooting an ex-village head over an alleged dispute.

The National Guard has vowed to “spare no effort to fully and objectively handle all the circumstances of the incident.”

Tennis stars

A relentless Russia crushed Italy 2-0 to win their maiden ATP Cup Sunday with Daniil Medvedev and Andrei Rublev in ruthless, red-hot form leading into the Australian Open.

Russia were the only nation in the 12-team event to boast two top 10 players, who kick off their Australian Open campaigns on Tuesday and are scheduled to meet in the last eight.

AFP contributed reporting to this article.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/02/08/news-from-russia-what-you-missed-over-the-weekend-99-a72855