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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

February 15, 2021



Several hundred women formed human chains to show support for Navalny's wife Yulia and female victims of political repression. **Peter Kovalev / TASS**

'Love stronger than fear'

Residents of Moscow, St. Petersburg and other Russian cities staged Valentine's Day flashmobs in residential courtyards and public squares, lighting their phone flashlights in support of jailed opposition politician Alexei Navalny. At least 19 detentions have been reported in cities including Kazan, Simferopol and Novosibirsk.

Earlier in the day, several hundred women formed human chains in Moscow and St. Petersburg to express support for Navalny's wife Yulia and female victims of political repression. No detentions were reported during their "chain of solidarity and love."

'Potential opponents'

President Vladimir Putin accused the West of using Navalny to try to "contain" Russia.

Putin suggested that the wave of protests recently held across Russia in the wake of Navalny's arrest and imprisonment had also been fed from abroad, against the backdrop of the widespread "exhaustion, frustration and dissatisfaction" arising from the coronavirus pandemic.

'Snowpocalypse'

A record-breaking snowstorm that descended on Moscow on Friday continued to wreak havoc into the weekend, paralyzing traffic, grounding flights and straining local authorities' response efforts.

Forecasters said the "snow apocalypse" shattered a one-day precipitation record set in 1973, but snow depth fell one centimeter short of the 60-centimeter record.

New mutation

Russian health authorities said they have developed what they called the world's first test kit to identify the more-contagious British mutation of the coronavirus.

Developers of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine say their jab is effective against the U.K. variant, which first appeared in the country in late 2020.

Open invitation

SpaceX and Tesla CEO Elon Musk invited Putin to a "conversation" on the popular invitation-only audio chat app Clubhouse.

"It would be a great honor to speak with you," Musk followed up in a Russian-language tweet.

Embed:

> .@KremlinRussia_E would you like join me for a conversation on Clubhouse?
>
> — Elon Musk (@elonmusk) February 13, 2021

Bicentennial burial

The remains of French and Russian soldiers who died during Napoleon's retreat from Moscow in 1812 were Saturday laid to rest with military honors in a rare moment of unity between the two countries.

Officials gathered with descendants of 19th-century Russian and French military leaders at a windswept ceremony in the western Russian town of Vyazma to re-bury the remains of 126 people killed in one of the bloodiest battles of Napoleon's Russian campaign.

AFP contributed reporting to this article.

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