

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

May 31, 2021



Russian President Vladimir Putin hosted Belarusian strongman Alexander Lukashenko in Sochi. [Kremlin.ru](https://kremlin.ru)

Open arms

Russian President Vladimir Putin noted Russia's close ties with Belarus as he hosted Alexander Lukashenko in the Black Sea resort of Sochi on Friday and Saturday.

The Kremlin [said](#) that Russia has vowed to send Belarus a second \$500 million loan in June following the talks — other results of which have not been announced. The Kremlin also said Putin raised the situation concerning Russian citizen Sofia Sapega, who was taken off the diverted Ryanair flight and arrested in Minsk alongside dissident journalist Roman Protasevich.

U.S. sanctions

The United States on Friday announced punitive measures against Belarus, targeting the

regime of strongman President Alexander Lukashenko, who met with Putin amid a global outcry over the forced diversion of a European plane.

The White House also issued a "Do Not Travel" warning to U.S. citizens for Belarus, and warned American passenger planes to "exercise extreme caution" if they decide to fly over Belarusian airspace.

CAR blast

A military convoy struck a roadside bomb in the northwest of the conflict-wracked Central African Republic (CAR), leaving two policemen and three Russian paramilitaries dead, the CAR government [said](#) Sunday.

Moscow, which wields significant influence in the poor African nation, has since 2018 maintained a large contingent of "instructors" to train the Central African army.

Leaving on a jet plane

The first plane carrying Russian diplomats ordered to leave the Czech Republic following a diplomatic spat last month took off Saturday from Prague airport. The special flight is to be followed by another on Monday, the deadline for 63 Russian embassy employees to leave the Czech Republic.

Prague and Moscow decided to cap the number of diplomats at their respective embassies at 32 in April, following a rift over Russian intelligence services' role in two deadly explosions on Czech soil.

Once in a century

Transport authorities [opened](#) the first train station in 100 years near the RZD Arena football stadium in northeastern Moscow.

[Vostochny](#), Moscow's 10th railway terminal, is part of a transport hub that includes the Cherkizovskaya and Lokomotiv metro stations.

AFP contributed reporting to this article.

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