The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

August 16, 2021

The Yakut village of Byas-Kyuhel, which suffered from wildfires **Semyon Ryabinin / TASS**

Climate change

President Vladimir Putin on Saturday said the scale of natural disasters that have hit Russia this year is "absolutely unprecedented" as local officials ask for Moscow's help to tackle fires and floods.

A former skeptic of man-made climate change, the Russian leader called on authorities to do everything possible to help Siberians affected by the region's gigantic wildfires, as well as Russians living in the flood-hit south of the country.

Afghan emergency

Russia said it does not plan to evacuate its embassy in Kabul as Taliban fighters reached the outskirts of the Afghan capital in their blistering military takeover of the country, Foreign Ministry official Zamir Kabulov told Russian agencies Sunday.

Russia is working with other countries to hold an emergency UN Security Council meeting on Afghanistan as the Taliban completes its military takeover of the country, Kabulov added.

Press dispute

Russia on Saturday said the expulsion of BBC reporter Sarah Rainsford was "retaliation" for London denying accreditation to an unnamed Russian reporter and had nothing to do with Moscow's alleged bid to muzzle the media.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said "the saga goes back" to summer 2019, when a Russian reporter had to leave the U.K. for visa reasons "without explanation." The BBC accused Russia of a "direct assault on media freedom" by expelling its journalist.

No survivors

Turkey battled disaster on two fronts on Saturday with eight people dying when a firefighting aircraft crashed and rescuers racing to find survivors of flash floods in the north that have killed at least 55.

Ankara and Moscow announced that all eight people on the Russian plane had perished on the fire-fighting mission. Putin sent condolences to his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erodgan saying "the pain of this loss unites us."

License denied

Luxembourg has refused to grant a license for Russian state-backed network RT to broadcast a German-language channel from the country, the authorities said.

Kremlin-controlled RT — formerly known as Russia Today — applied for the satellite broadcasting license in Luxembourg in June to circumvent German regulations blocking licences for state-owned foreign media.

Silver blob

Swiss artist Urs Fischer's "Big Clay #4," a 12-meter aluminum statue of scaled up modeled clay, was erected on central Moscow's Bolotnaya Embankment on Saturday.

Embed:

> Монтаж скульптуры "Большая Глина №4" швейцарского художника Урса Фишера на Болотной набережной.
>
> Как вам такое искусство? pic.twitter.com/A0yOcxlBFb
>
> — Сан Саныч (@ro8KgQdZ4lonLSm) August 15, 2021

The piece, described as a "monument to manuality and to the simplest, most humdrum

creative action," made its way to the Russian capital via Florence and New York.

AFP contributed reporting.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/08/16/news-from-russia-what-you-missed-over-the-weekend-124-a74795