The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

December 27, 2021



Russia announced Saturday that more than 10,000 troops had finished month-long drills near Ukraine, **mil.ru**

Rights monitor blocked

Russia has blocked the website of the OVD-Info rights monitor, which tracks opposition protests and also provides legal support to victims of political persecution, saying it promoted terrorism and extremism, amid an unprecedented official crackdown on dissent.

The Roskomnadzor media regulator confirmed Saturday that it had blocked OVD-Info's website because the Moscow region court had ruled that the group's activities were aimed at promoting "terrorism and extremism" in Russia.

Troops withdrawn

Russia announced Saturday that more than 10,000 troops had finished month-long drills near Ukraine, amid Western accusations that Moscow was plotting an invasion of its ex-Soviet

neighbor.

The Defense Ministry said in a statement that the drills for Southern Military District forces had taken place in a host of southern regions including Rostov, Krasnodar and Crimea, the latter of which Moscow seized from Ukraine in 2014.

NATO sit-down

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg has sought a meeting of the NATO-Russia Council next month and contacted Moscow to secure its attendance, an alliance spokesman said Sunday.

"We are in touch with Russia" about the Jan. 12 meeting, the first proposed by Stoltenberg since Moscow made its sweeping security demands, said the NATO spokesman, who asked not be identified.

Russia's Foreign Ministry said it was considering NATO'S proposal to meet on Jan. 12.

Gas games

Russian energy giant Gazprom has rejected accusations that Moscow is limiting gas deliveries to Europe via the Yamal-Europe pipeline and denounced Germany's resale of gas to Poland amid soaring prices.

The pipeline was operating in reverse mode this week, public data showed, sending gas from Germany to Poland as European gas prices ticked up.

Chechen crackdown

Six Chechen opposition activists critical of regional head Ramzan Kadyrov's leadership have reported dozens of their relatives being detained or kidnapped over the weekend.

Committee Against Torture lawyer Abubakar Yangulbaev estimated on Instagram that at least 41 of his relatives were detained by unidentified men wearing black uniforms, with their passports and phones seized.

Christmas message

A projection on the facade of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow on Saturday wished "Uncle Sam" a Merry Christmas and listed a series of Russian achievements since the Soviet collapse 30 years ago to proclaim that "Great Russia is reborn."

The projection included references to Russia's annexation of Crimea and the Sochi Olympics in 2014, the FIFA World Cup in 2018, as well as Russia's first floating nuclear power station the Akademik Lomonosov.

Embed:

> Christmas trolling at the US embassy Moscow: "Crimea, the Olympics, the Angara A5, the floating nuclear power plant, the World Cup. Great Russia is reborn!"

pic.twitter.com/JodZo5nQtN

— Alec Luhn (@ASLuhn) December 25, 2021

AFP contributed reporting.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/12/27/news-from-russia-what-you-missed-over-the-weekend-143-a75931