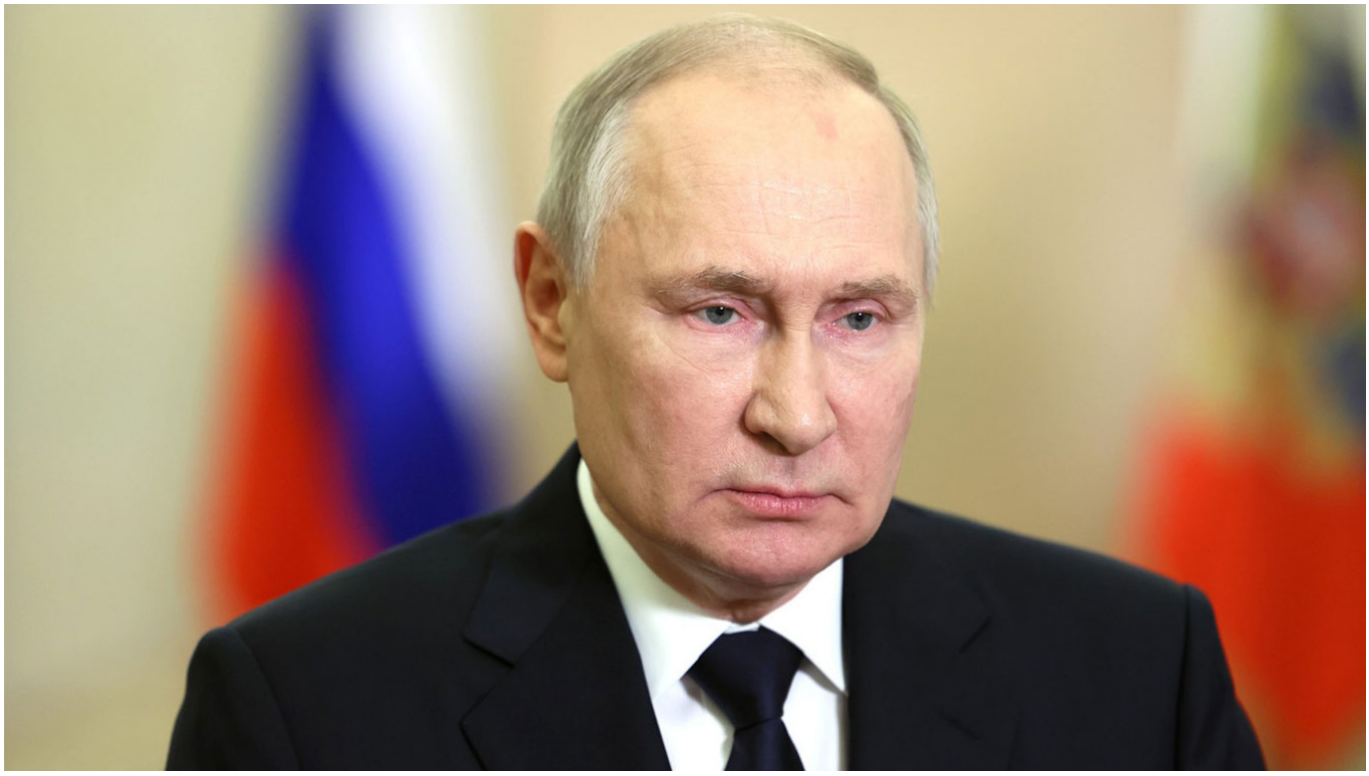
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Kremlin Readying Putin's 2024 Campaign Reveal at Economic Expo – Reports

By Pyotr Kozlov

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Vladimir Putin. **kremlin.ru**

The Kremlin plans to announce President Vladimir Putin's campaign for a fifth presidential term at an economic exposition next month, according to reports citing Russian officials and Kremlin insiders.

Putin may use his upcoming visit to the "Russia" expo — which will see regions and cities showcase their economic successes amid international sanctions — to announce his candidacy, the Kommersant business daily reported Tuesday, citing an unidentified source close to the Kremlin.

The exhibition will be held at the modernized VDNKh exhibition center and pavilion in Moscow, a sprawling monument to Soviet economic achievements built during Stalin's rule in

1939.

Speaking of the Russia-themed exhibition designed to highlight the country's successes, Kommersant's source said: "In fact, these are Vladimir Putin's achievements."

In a choreographed move at the VDNKh expo, Putin "will be asked to run for another term" and he will respond in agreement, the independent Vyorstka news outlet reported in July.

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Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Tuesday that he had no information on the reports of Putin's possible campaign announcement, but did not deny them outright.

Russia's presidential election, which is scheduled for March 17, 2024, is set to take place as Russia remains isolated from the West due to the ongoing full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Nearly all opponents of the regime are now either in exile or imprisoned following a sweeping political crackdown that intensified after the war started.

Under the Russian Constitution, Putin's current presidential term — his second consecutive term since 2012 and his fourth overall — was supposed to be his last. However, constitutional amendments adopted in 2020 reset Putin's number of terms served, allowing him to be elected for two additional six-year terms.

Putin traditionally keeps his plans to take part in elections a secret until the very last minute. Publicly, he has explained this by saying that he prefers for the government not to be distracted by campaigning so it can continue to function properly.

But the Kremlin is effectively already campaigning, with Putin holding many public events and meeting with citizens during his trips in recent months, sources told The Moscow Times.

The Kremlin has started compiling lists of well-known and reputable Russians in cities across the country who can campaign for Putin by proxy, the RBC news website reported, citing anonymous sources in the Kremlin.

"They [opinion leaders] should increase the level of support for Putin," RBC said.

By making the informal campaign launch at the VDNKh expo, the Kremlin aims to send a message to Russians that the country's development is on the right track — and that Putin should thus continue leading it, Russian political strategist Konstantin Kalachev told The Moscow Times.

"[The event will signal that] Russia as a civilized country is inside a ring of enemies, but it is ready to overcome all difficulties," Kalachev said. "All that is needed is the unification of society and Putin as a leader: 'Unity and traditional values will help us all'."

"The exhibition as an element of expanding social optimism [and the] selection of trustees as a confirmation of unity: A blitz campaign on the promise of victory," Kalachev said.

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