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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Barbie and Bogatyrs: The First Day of Voting in Russia's Election

March 15, 2024



A woman in Barbie costume voting in Tyumen, Siberia. **t.me/my_tyumen**

Newlyweds, a legendary Slavic hero and Tucker Carlson greeted voters at polling stations across Russia as the country's presidential election began.

Here's a look at some of the most colorful scenes from the first day of voting:

The global blockbuster "Barbie" may not have been officially shown in Russia thanks to a studio boycott after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, but that didn't stop Barbie fever from reaching the country. A woman dressed as the blonde doll took her daughter to a polling station.

Voters elsewhere in Russia could come across the iconic Soviet-era cartoon character Cheburashka.

The presence of voters in extravagant costumes is considered a tactic for increasing voter turnout.

Embed:

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> Стас Михайлов голосовал и пел в Омске pic.twitter.com/XVR9Mil8cX
>
> — Кремлевский пул РИА (@Kremlinpool_RIA) March 15, 2024

Pro-war singer Stanislav Mikhailov performed for voters at a polling station in Omsk.

Meanwhile, a woman in Irkutsk was unable to contain her glee and burst into song.

Embed:

> В России началось трехдневное голосование на выборах президента
>
> Россияне смогут проголосовать с 8:00 до 20:00 с 15 по 17 марта.
>
> В Иркутске, например, на участке поют частушки.
> pic.twitter.com/H8GBMtL4kQ
>
> — Дождь (@tvrain) March 15, 2024

The Kremlin and Russian media often appeal to history to justify the invasion of Ukraine, drawing parallels between the "denazification" of the country and the fight against fascism in the Great Patriotic War.

Voters in Tyumen could take pictures with a cardboard cutout of U.S. media personality Tucker Carlson, who looked shocked to receive a half-hour lecture on Putin's vision of history when he interviewed the Russian president last month.

Embed:

> На избирательные участки в РФ выпустили людей в костюмах для мобилизации явки. В Забайкалье «богатырь» пожелал избирателям мира, но его не задержалиhttps://t.co/JGBJFJ2mkv pic.twitter.com/AW8N3IyKsk
>
> — The Insider (@the_ins_ru) March 15, 2024

Putin has pointed to the medieval state of Kyivan Rus to claim that the Ukrainian nation was not distinct from Russia. The bogatyrs were warriors from the Kyivan Rus who worked their way into Slavic mythology.

But the bogatyr that greeted voters in Transbaikalia came with a different message to what Putin might have wanted, wishing for peace in a message for the "new ruler." The Insider reported that the man was not detained for his comment.

Embed:

> Картонного Такера Карлсона поставили на избирательном участке в Тюмени
>
> На это обратило внимание «7x7». Фигуру американского журналиста разместили в центре «Тюмень-Дзюдо». Местные власти утверждают, что после голосования с ним сфотографировался «каждый избиратель». pic.twitter.com/DzGoCJRAzd
>
> — The Insider (@the_ins_ru) March 15, 2024

Before the voting period started, Kremlin officials were keen to maximize voter turnout as much as possible.

Dmitry and Darya Timoshenko from the republic of Sakha wouldn't let their wedding get in the way of casting their ballots. They were greeted with applause at the polling station.

Embed:

Measures were put in place to ensure Russian astronauts in the International Space Station could vote, as well as residents of Kaliningrad.

Belgorod, a region on the border with Ukraine, has come under drone strikes and even faced attacks by pro-Kyiv militia groups during the past week.

Official buildings have also been targeted.

A man in Siberia's Kuzbass region dressed up as Spider-Man to cast his ballot.

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