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Azerbaijan's Aliyev Skips Informal CIS Summit in St. Petersburg

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Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev. **president.az**

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev chose not attend an informal summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States in St. Petersburg on Monday due to his "busy work schedule," Azerbaijani state media reported.

The Commonwealth of Independent States, a regional bloc formed after the collapse of the Soviet Union, includes nine member countries.

President Vladimir Putin welcomed leaders from seven other member states at the Hermitage Museum, where they reviewed cooperation in 2025 and discussed plans for the coming year.

A statement from Azerbaijan's presidential administration said the country "regularly" takes part in CIS meetings and "values cooperation within the CIS framework" despite Aliyev's absence on Monday.

Tensions between Moscow and Baku arose in December 2024 after an Azerbaijan Airlines

passenger plane en route to the republic of Chechnya was mistakenly fired on by Russian air defense systems and later crashed in western Kazakhstan, killing 38 of 62 people on board.

The Kremlin initially sought to deflect responsibility for the disaster, provoking ire in Baku.

Relations between the two countries appeared to improve in October, when Putin publicly acknowledged for the first time that Russian air defense missiles were responsible for the downing of the aircraft.

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