

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

April 22, 2019



Volodymyr Zelenskiy **Stepan Franko** / EPA / TASS

Last laugh

Ukrainians fed up with entrenched corruption and hungry for change [elected](#) a comedian with no previous political experience as their next president in a run-off vote, an exit poll showed.

Volodymyr Zelenskiy, 41, who plays a fictional president in a television show, won 73 percent of the vote with outgoing President Petro Poroshenko winning just 25 percent, the poll showed.

Easter bombings

President Vladimir Putin joined global leaders in tweeting condolences and condemnation after Easter Day bomb blasts at three Sri Lankan churches and four hotels killed 290 people and wounded 500.

“Vladimir Putin expressed condolences to Sri Lanka President Maithripala Sirisena in

connection with tragic consequences of terrorist acts,” the tweet [stated](#).

Embed:

UN chief condemns terrorist attacks on churches, hotels in [#Sri Lanka](#) which killed 228 people and injured 450 others <https://t.co/lkI8FzfXUA>
<pic.twitter.com/FJG3f4oOWE>

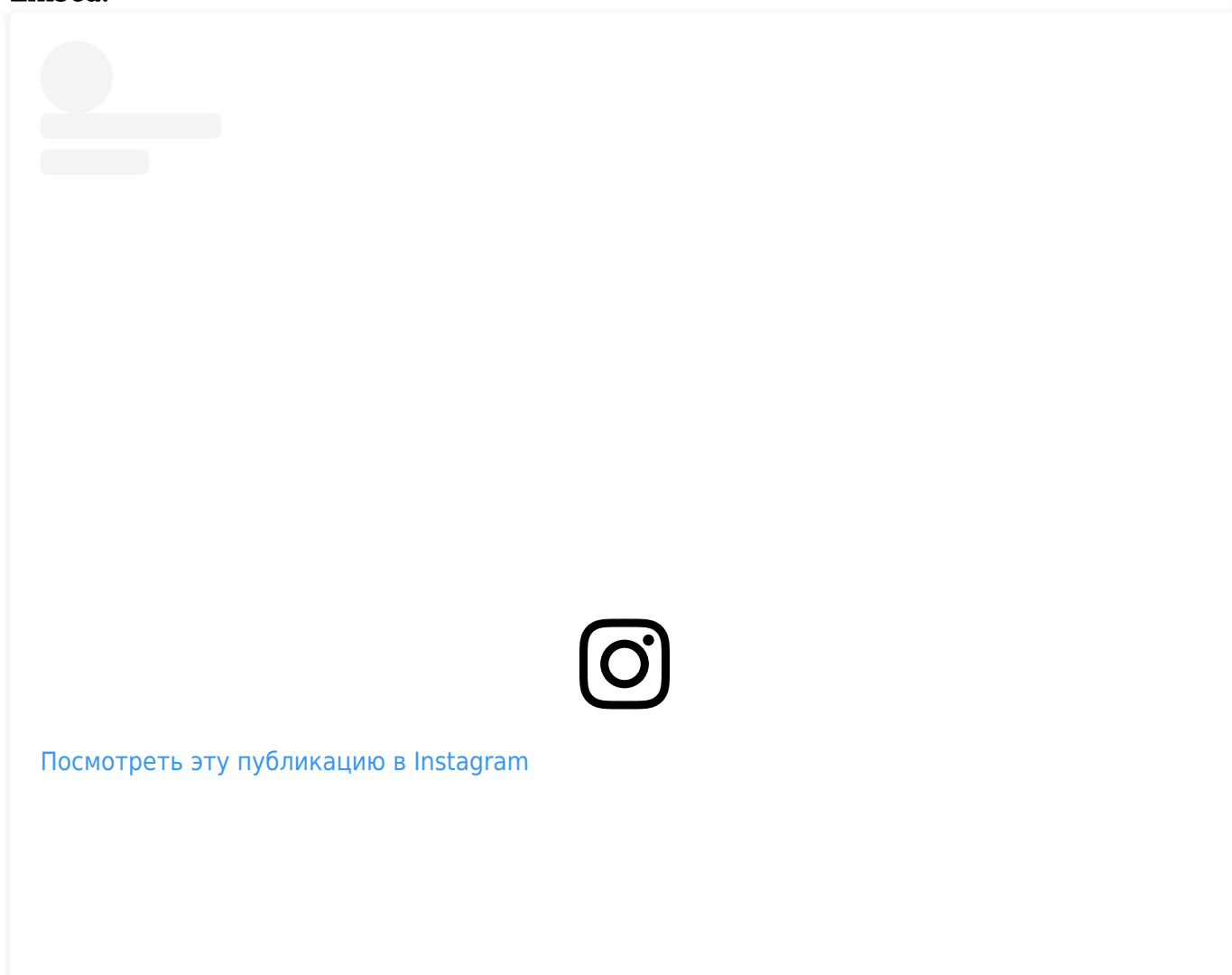
— China Xinhua News (@XHNews) [21 апреля 2019 г.](#)

Forest fires

At least 29 people were injured, four of them in [emergency](#) condition, when wildfires [tore](#) through Zabaikalsky region.

Regional authorities [declared](#) a state of emergency in connection with the blaze that left more than [400](#) people homeless.

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Публикация от Новости Читы и Забайкалья 18+ (@chita.news) 21 Апр 2019 в 6:32 PDT

‘Severe Russophobia’

Russia’s Embassy in Washington published a 120–page response to the Mueller report, [claiming](#) that the \$32 million, 22–month investigation “didn’t show any real evidence to back up claims of Moscow’s cyberattacks and attempts to “subvert democracy.”

“We call on our American partners to finally disavow these allegations and join efforts to repair the damage to bilateral relations, for the sake of our peoples and global security,” the response, titled “The Russiagate Hysteria: a Case of Severe Russophobia,” said.

Syrian advance

Syrian President Bashar al–Assad [met](#) senior Russian officials for talks in Damascus with reports coming out that the sides would soon sign a deal [expanding](#) Russia’s naval presence in the port of Tartus until 2092.

Earlier, several Russian envoys met Assad and discussed a constitutional committee, trade, as well as the ways to improve Syria's relations with neighboring Arab countries, Russia's Foreign Ministry said.

Passover arson

A fire was set and swastikas were drawn at the largest yeshiva in Russia, where the faithful were gathered before the start of the Jewish Passover holiday, Jewish officials [said](#).

No one was reported injured in the April 19 fire at the Torat Chaim school in an eastern Moscow suburb, where about 60 students, rabbis and guests were at the time.

Embed:

Reports from Moscow that the Torat Chaim Yeshiva was attacked last night by what seems to be neo-Nazis. Swastikas painted on the doors and the storehouse entirely burned, the yeshiva community's precious kosher meat/food for Passover gone. pic.twitter.com/XpXJPRLdrC

— Avital Chizhik Goldschmidt (@avitalrachel) [19 апреля 2019 г.](#)

Tainted oil

Belarus temporarily [limited](#) imports of Russian oil after [finding](#) it contained 17 times the normal level of chlorides.

The source of contamination was said to be [found](#) in a Russian junction of the Druzhba pipeline. Russia's oil pipeline monopoly Transneft [vowed](#) to "normalize" the chloride content by Monday or Tuesday.

Bank fraud

A Moscow court ruled that Alexei Khotin, a former shareholder of [Yugra](#) Bank who had been detained on suspicion of embezzlement worth 7.5 billion rubles (\$117 million), should be held under house arrest until June 18.

Office Olympics

A Novosibirsk-based logistics firm [won](#) the so-called "office sports" competition on home turf, proving that its staffers were fastest at running to the cooler and the sharpest shooters at trash can basketball.

Embed:

"We use coffee and pizza provided by the sponsor as doping," the organizer was [quoted](#) as saying.

Includes reporting from Reuters.

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