

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

July 13, 2020



Igor Volkov / AP / TASS

Regional unrest

Massive protests [swept](#) through the Far East Russian city of Khabarovsk in support of a popular local governor who was arrested last week for allegedly ordering the murders of several businessmen.

Sergei Furgal's arrest over crimes allegedly committed 15 years ago triggered a mass demonstration joined by up to 40,000 people on Saturday and several hundred on Sunday.

First vaccine?

A medical university in Moscow says it has [completed](#) clinical trials of the world's first coronavirus vaccine using human volunteers.

Yelena Smolyarchuk, who heads Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University's center for clinical research, did not disclose when the vaccine would enter commercial production.

New leak

Around 45 metric tons of aviation fuel have [leaked](#) from a depressurized pipeline operated by Russian mining giant Norilsk Nickel's Norilsktransgaz, the latest leak to hit the fast-warming Arctic region since 21,000 tons of diesel leaked from a Norilsk plant in late May.

Nornickel said it has informed the emergency ministry and that it was conducting an internal investigation into the leak. Local officials [declared](#) a state of emergency and regional investigators opened a criminal case into environmental violations.

Blazing Siberia

Russia's forest service said there were nearly 300 wildfires blazing across the vast country's northern wilderness on Saturday, as it attempted to contain them with methods including explosives and cloud seeding.

Greenpeace Russia's forest program, which analyzes satellite data, said that a total of 9.26 million hectares — greater than the size of Portugal — have been impacted by wildfires since the beginning of 2020.

Dyatlov Pass

Prosecutors who last year reopened an investigation into the mysterious deaths of nine young hikers in the Ural Mountains in 1959 have said they died as a result of an [avalanche and poor visibility](#).

Various conspiracy theories have spawned over their deaths, partly due to the Soviet authorities' hastiness to close the investigation after describing the cause as a "compelling natural force."

Crimea clash

President Vladimir Putin [denied](#) that Russia's annexation of Crimea had led to the collapse of Russian-Ukrainian relations.

Putin said Crimea "returned to Russia" after protests toppled Ukraine's pro-Moscow president in 2014.

AFP contributed reporting to this article.

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