News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

July 20, 2020

Saturday's protest in Khabarovsk. **Alexander Yanyshev / AFP**

Eastern discontent

Tens of thousands of people took to the streets in Russia's Far East in a rare show of defiance against the Kremlin as they protested the arrest of their region's popular governor.

Related article: [Tens of Thousands Stage Anti-Kremlin Protests in Russia's Far East](#)

The protests in Khabarovsk, a city of some 600,000 people, began a week ago following the sudden arrest of governor Sergei Furgal in a murder probe. Smaller rallies also took place in nearby cities and towns including Komsomolsk-on-Amur and Amursk as well as the Pacific port of Vladivostok in the neighboring Primorye region.

Vaccine clash

British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said he was "absolutely confident" in allegations by

the UK and its allies that Russia targeted labs conducting coronavirus research, branding the behavior "outrageous and reprehensible."

Moscow quickly rejected the accusations as "groundless," and its ambassador to London said in a British television interview Sunday the claims made "no sense."

LGBT rights

More than 30 people were [detained](#) outside Russia's lower house of parliament in Moscow and St. Petersburg for staging solo pickets against legislation that would outlaw gay and transgender marriage and adoptions.

Lawmakers submitted the draft bill to ban same-sex marriage in Russia's Family Code two weeks after voters approved constitutional amendments that include a provision defining marriage as a "union between a man and a woman."

Embed:

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> источник: [https://t.co/L8LnCoRHh6#ЗаконОРазрушенииСемьи#ProtectRussianTransLives](https://t.co/L8LnCoRHh6) pic.twitter.com/YRhiuSlMVT
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> — канцлерка горчакова за #СвободуМиле (@kanzlerin_grchk) [July 19, 2020](#)

Holocaust landslide

A landslide caused by heavy rains has [destroyed](#) the largest mass murder site of Jews by the Nazis in Russia near the southern city of Rostov-on-Don.

Authorities promised to build a tall barrier to prevent further destruction of the Zmievskaya Balka, where 27,000 Jews and Soviet citizens are believed to have been massacred from 1942-43.

Young life

Olympic figure skater Yekaterina Alexandrovskaya, who represented Australia at the 2018 Winter Games in Pyeongchang, has died aged 20 after falling out of a window in Moscow.

Russian media said Alexandrovskaya, who had suffered from depression and was diagnosed with epilepsy earlier this year, had left a note reading "Lyublyu (I love)," suggesting it could have been a suicide.

AFP contributed reporting to this article.