



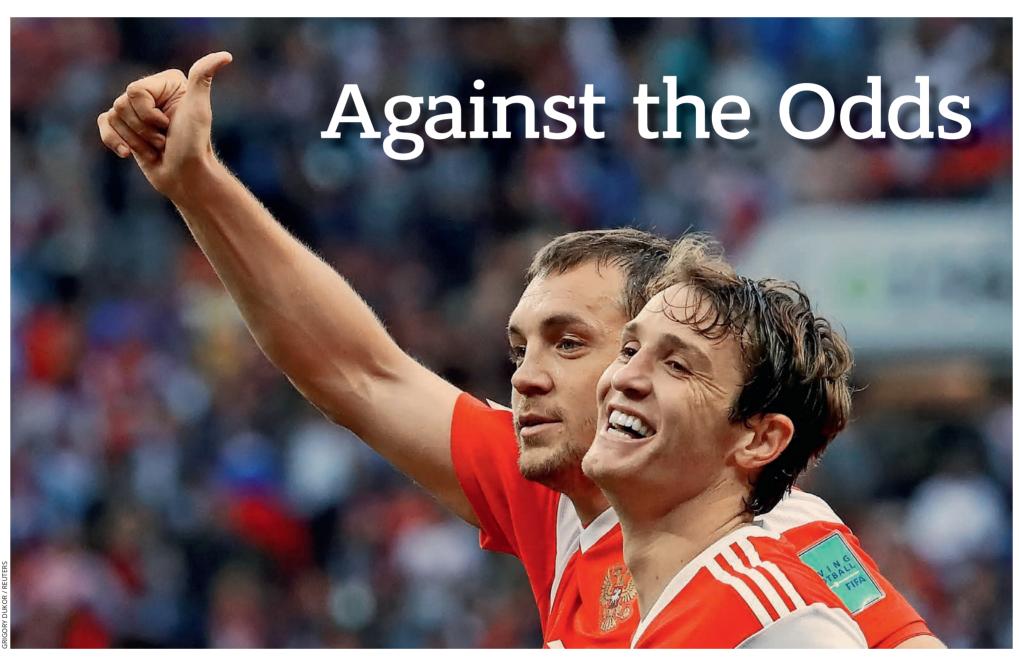


The Moscow Times

SINCE 1992

THEMOSCOWTIMES.COM

June 15-17, 2018



Russia Thumps Saudi 5-0

In the lead-up to the World Cup's opening match Thursday night, the head of Russia's Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill, called on believers to pray for the host nation. Against the odds, their prayers were answered.

Russia sailed to an unlikely 5-0 victory over Saudi Arabia in a match that pitted the tournament's two lowest-ranked teams against each other. Some 78,000 fans roared at the final whistle as Russia dispatched a campaign of negativity that predicted complete World Cup failure.

Dmitry, 35, a long-time Russia supporter, told The Moscow Times that he didn't expect the score to be so high. "We were very worried going into the match because of how badly we were playing."

It was not only Russia's first World Cup victory since 2002. The tournament hosts also went into the opening match without having won in seven consecutive matches.

Before Thursday's opening goal in the 12th minute, followed by the second in the 43rd, the national side had recorded just one shot on goal in their previous two games.

With three goals in the second half — two coming in extra time — Russia has moved closer to getting out of the group stages of the World Cup for the first

time since 1986, when it was still the Soviet Union.

Russia can now breathe easy until its game against Egypt on June 19. "Of course we'll lose to Uruguay, but I think we can beat Egypt next and come in second in the group to advance," Dmitry told The Mos-

Russia's coach Stanislav Cherchesov sounded relieved when speaking with reporters after the match.

"Yesterday, I mentioned that that no one has ever won anything by just speaking," he said. "Today, we have proved with our actions that we want to be worthy hosts of the World Cup."

Police Ordered to Censor Out Negative News

Russian police have reportedly been instructed to stop publishing their usual crime reports for the duration of the World Cup.

Media reports of robbed and scammed tourists have multiplied in the run-up to the tournament. However, regional outlets reported earlier this week that local Interior Ministry press offices have been told to self-censor any reports that could spark concern about crime rates.

Russia's Mediazona news website on Wednesday quoted an Interior Ministry order, which said that local branches should "suspend publication" of reports between June 5 and July 25.

The news outlet found that no regional Interior Ministry website had published its daily crime reports since June 6.

Police spokespersons in the Belgorod, Krasnodar and Tver regions confirmed the "no bad news" trend to Mediazona, but did not directly attribute it to the World Cup.

"We're not breaking our heads about it. We write about things that could spark interest, things that are cheerful. We're not making things up," Alexei Goncharuk, a Belgorod region spokesman, was quoted as saying.

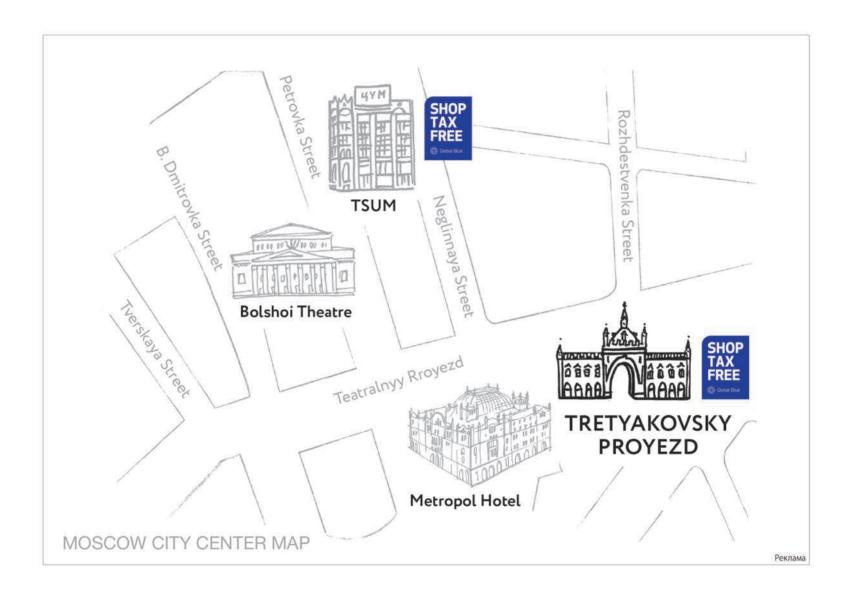




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What's Under the Glam and Glitter?

n a short trip to Moscow for the first time in years, my brother could not stop raving about the revamped city center, its broad sidewalks, leafy beer gardens and fairy lights.

Moscow isn't half-bad these days, especially with its World Cup primping. The fans here for the tournament won't be disappointed. But what's under the glitter is another story.

Russia launched an unprecedented human rights crackdown after it won its World Cup bid.

There are the labor abuses against workers on World Cup stadium construction sites, including wage delays, unsafe working conditions and worker fatalities. But the problem is even broader than that. Russia today is at its most repressive since the Soviet era.

In 2012, 18 months after Russia was chosen to host the tournament, the authorities were apparently spooked by massive anti-Kremlin protests. They

launched an unprecedented human rights crackdown, which only intensified in 2014, in the wake of Russia's occupation of Crimea.

With traditional media largely under state control, the government stepped up its efforts to suppress free expression online. It pushed a raft of laws regulating data storage through the Russian parliament, unjustifiably restricting users' access to information and ensuring that confidential user information and

the content of communications be made available to the security services.

Earlier this year, the Russian authorities blocked Telegram, a popular internet-based messaging service, over its refusal to hand over its encryption keys. They shut down millions of IP addresses in an attempt to stop Telegram from operating, disrupting online services which included search engines, online shopping and airline booking websites.

The government increasingly conflates criticism with "extremism." It then misuses the country's extremely broad anti-extremism legislation to shut down hundreds of websites and prosecute people for social media posts and online videos. People are jailed in Russia today for criticizing the Kremlin's actions in Syria and in Ukraine.

As part of an all-out assault on public protests, police arbitrarily detain peaceful protesters while courts dutifully slap them with short-term jail sentences and fines. Last month around 1,600 people, including 158 children, were detained in 27 cities during the "He's Not Our Tsar" political protests. Authorities pressure universities and parents to discourage students from participating in protests. Last summer, a law student in Kaliningrad, one of the World Cup host cities, was expelled over his role in anti-corruption demonstrations.

Members of the LGBT community are second-class citizens in Russia by virtue of the infamous "gay propaganda" ban. And there has been zero accountability for last year's anti-gay purge in Chechnya, when local security officials unlawfully rounded up and tortured dozens of presumably gay men. As Chechnya welcomes the Egyptian national team to its capital for World Cup training, the Chechen director of Russia's leading human rights group Memorial, Oyub Titiev, is in jail pending trial on bogus marijuana possession charges. The head of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, and his associates retaliate against even the mildest dissent with brutal repression and Kadyrov has repeatedly threatened and smeared human rights defenders. The case against Titiev is clearly aimed at pushing Memorial out of the region.

Titiev's imprisonment could cast a shadow on the tournament. It would only take one phone call from Russian President Vladimir Putin, Kadyrov's patron, to secure Titiev's release. The leader of FIFA, Gianni Infantino, should use his leverage with the Kremlin to press for Titiev's freedom.

In a small town in northern Russia, far from World Cup glory, Oleg Sentsov, a film-maker from Crimea, is serving a 20-year prison term. In 2015, he was convicted on bogus terrorism charges in a political show trial. On May 14, he began a hunger strike to demand the release of dozens of Ukrainian nationals jailed in Russia and in Crimea on politically motivated charges.

Will Russia release Sentsov and Titiev, as it released several prominent political prisoners around the 2014 Sochi Olympics?

Or will it let these disturbing cases and other abuses mar the World Cup celebrations?

Tanya Lokshina is the Russia program director at Human Rights Watch.

""

"TanyaLokshina"

Harassment 'Conspiracy'

In his first interview since being accused of sexually harassing multiple journalists, a Russian lawmaker answered the claims saying they were part of a conspiracy to discredit him.

Since February, Leonid Slutsky has been accused of unwarranted sexual advances by five female reporters working in Russia's lower house of parliament.

"They tried to test a method in Russia that proved effective in America. It didn't work," Slutsky said in an interview with Russia's Snob magazine Wednesday.

Slutsky addressed allegations that he groped BBC Russia correspondent Farida Rustamova, by saying he "had no physical contact with this lady's groin or other body parts."

The deputy added that he suspects the "mastermind" of the campaign against him will release an audiotape to renew the wave of accusations.

Slutsky went on to say that he had acted as a "vaccine" against the "idiotic and contagious virus" of the global #MeToo movement.

"In a sense, I stopped this wave at the cost of my reputation," he told Snob.



Slutsky denied all accusations of harassment.

Official's Arrest

A Moscow regional head who alleged receiving death threats from top Kremlin officials for opposing a toxic landfill has been arrested.

Alexander Shestun, the head of the Serpukhov district south of Moscow, appealed to President Vladimir Putin over the threats last April after speaking out against a landfill in his district.

"Security services carried out searches in Shestun's office. He's been detained," an unnamed source told the Interfax news agency on Thursday.

The politician has been accused of abusing his authority in an illicit property transfer deal, the 360 local television station reported.

Residents in several towns in the Moscow region have taken to the streets this year to protest against mass garbage dumps that they say adversely impact their health.

Best Friends, Worst Enemies

Nearly half of those questioned in a recent survey consider Belarus to be Russia's closest ally, according to a poll published by the independent Levada Center on Thursday.

Participants also named China (40 percent) and Kazakhstan (32 percent) as allies.

When asked to list the countries which are least friendly toward Russia, the United States topped the list at 78 percent, followed by Ukraine (49 percent) and Britain (38 percent).

Meanwhile, the number of Russians who feel negatively or very negatively toward the United States has increased by 13 percent since March, to 69 percent, the pollster said.

Levada conducted the survey among 1,600 people between May 24-30.

Opposition Leader Released

Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny has jokingly praised the dramatic makeover of a Moscow prison, which he said was refurbished to accommodate foreign World Cup fans.

Navalny was released Thursday after spending 30 days behind bars for organizing mass protests against President Vladimir Putin's inauguration last month

"Every cell had European-style renovations," Navalny wrote in a tongue-and-cheek Instagram post after his release. "They placed goalposts in the



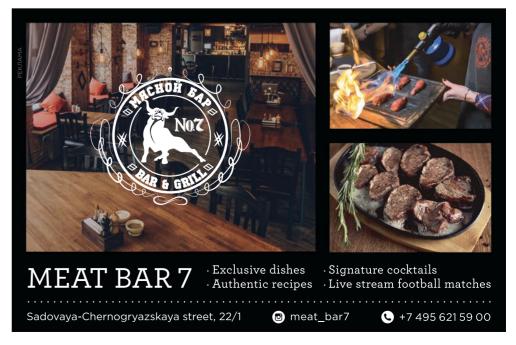
Alexei Navalny

exercise yard and handed out real footballs."

In addition to new toilets and repainted prison bars, Navalny said the blocks have been fitted with LCD screens so that prisoners can watch matches. The regional branch of the Interior Ministry declined to comment on the claims to The Moscow Times

He added that with the tournament only just starting, most of the refurbished cells were empty. "The volunteers are bored and complain loudly, demanding mass arrests so they can start meeting people," he said.

"I'd like to note that space is limited, so those who plan on disrupting public order have to hurry"



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Graffiti Fine

A first-year student at Moscow State University paid a 1,500 ruble (\$24) fine on Thursday for inscribing graffiti on a World Cup stand earlier this month. The student, Dmitry Petelin, wrote the words "no fan zone" on the stand, a continuation of protests by local students against a FIFA fan zone that opened on the university campus during their final exams. Petelin's representative, Oleg Eliseyev, reported to RBC that the student was found guilty of petty hooliganism and subsequently given the fine, which he paid in full. The Interior Ministry reported that the damage inflicted by Petelin and two other students earlier this month amounted to 65.000 rubles.



Patriarch Kirill called on fans to pray.

Pray for Russia

The leader of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, urged Russians on Wednesday to pray for the national football team's World Cup performance.

"I hope this great event will be a success and will have a positive impact on the mood of our people," the patriarch said at a meeting of the Supreme Church Council in Moscow. "Of course, this will largely depend on the performance of our team, but we can only hope and pray that everything is right and dignified, and, of course, rely on the training of our athletes."

He also encouraged Russians to welcome foreign World Cup spectators with hospitality, asking that they "be ready to accept" all those who seek help or demonstrate curiosity about the church. "This is our duty," he said.

Russia Supports U.S. Bid

Despite escalating diplomatic tensions, Russia supported the winning bid of the U.S., Canada and Mexico to host the 2026 World Cup. The North American bid received 134 votes, beating Morocco's bid, which won 65 votes.

Russia's support for North America went against the Russian Football Union's previous promise in March that Russia would support Morocco's bid to host the 2026 World Cup. The North American championship will be the first time that three countries host the event.

MEET THE FANS

Moscow is great, but the weather is too cold. We like being here anyway.



Abdelaziz and Slim from Tunisia

Football Humor



Slepakov struck a chord in Russia with his musical criticism.

A famous comedian's song mocking Russia's World Cup team and questioning the financial logic of the event has touched a nerve.

"Our team is, let's be frank, shit," sings Semyon Slepakov in "Olé Olé Olé," which by Thursday had been viewed almost 7 million times on YouTube.

Slepakov imagines Ramzan Kadyrov, the Chechen leader accused of human rights abuses, as the Russian football team's new but unsuccessful manager. The tongue-in-cheek lyrics have Kadyrov threatening the players with his pistol, cutting off their thumbs so they are not distracted by their smartphones and suggesting they shoot themselves when they lose.

A Chechen official told a Moscow radio station he thought Slepakov should apologize. But Kadyrov himself, in a quip on social media, said only one thing in the song had offended him. "In his song, the team headed by me lost. That is not on." He also invited Slepakov to travel to Chechnya to co-write a new song with him.

Not everyone saw the funny side, however. "It would be not so funny if it was not so sad," wrote one commenter on YouTube. (Reuters)

Putin's Opening

President Vladimir Putin ushered in the World Cup on Thursday with a speech emphasizing Russia's love for football and international unity.

"I congratulate you – the whole big, multinational, friendly global football family, with the start of the most important tournament of the planet!"

"We — loyal fans of football — number, without any exaggeration, billions of people on the planet. And wherever we live, no matter what traditions we follow, we all share a love for football," Putin added before Russia's match against Saudi Arabia at the packed Luzhniki Stadium.

"The power of football, and sport, is in this unity," he said. "Welcome to Russia."

Hooligans Barred

More than 1,200 British fans have reportedly been barred from leaving Britain to attend the World Cup. The British Home Office identified 1,312 individuals known for football hooliganism and, beginning on June 4, prevented them from traveling to Russia by collecting passports.

"The World Cup is a festival of football and is no place for violence or disorder," Nick Hurd, the U.K.'s Minister for Policing and the Fire Service, told The Telegraph. "The U.K.'s system of football banning orders is unique and means that people intent on causing trouble in Russia will instead be staying at home."

Foreign Dignitaries

Seventeen world leaders joined President Vladimir Putin at Russia's opening ceremony of the World Cup on Thursday at Moscow's Luzhniki stadium.

Leaders from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan joined the presidents of the internationally unrecognized republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, in addition to the leaders of Bolivia, Panama, Paraguay, Rwanda, Lebanon and North Korea.

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman reportedly met with Putin in the run-up to the game to discuss oil output.



British singer Robbie Williams did not perform his infamous number "Party Like a Russian."

Sex Advice

A lawmaker has warned Russian women against getting too friendly with foreign World Cup fans, especially those of other races.

Tamara Pletnyova, head of the State Duma's Family, Women and Children Committee, on Wednesday told Russian media that having sex with non-Russians could lead to families in which children are raised by a single partent. "These children will later suffer," Pletnyova said, citing the aftermath of the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow.

Russia's birth rate hit its lowest level in a decade last year despite government efforts to encourage Russians to have more children. "We should be giving birth to our own children. I'm not a nationalist, but still," said

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Thursday said he thought Russian women could make up their own minds on the issue. "They are the best women in the world," he was cited as saying by the state-run TASS

He added that the "Say No to Racism" slogan on FIFA Fan IDs best described Russia's attitude toward fan relations during the tournament.



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By Evan Gershkovich

Russia's dismal record

has many fans asking: 'Who

once Russia is knocked out?'

are you going to root for

Even Putin Has a World Cup Plan B

n the weeks leading up to the World Cup, a popular joke circulated among Russian football fans: "Who are you going to root for once Russia is

The tournament's host almost certainly will be eliminated. And likely sooner rather than later. Despite being in one of the tournament's easiest groups and

playing to home crowds, Russia, according to the latest FIFA ranking, is fielding the World Cup's weakest

Having gone without a single win in its last seven matches, Russia has done little to inspire the hopes of its fans. Russia last won eight months ago and only because two South Korean own goals prevented the game from ending in a draw. In Russia's last two

matches against teams that failed to qualify for the World Cup, it was only able to muster one shot on target.

These dismal displays have left Russian supporters clear-eyed about their national team's chances. Of nearly 65,000 respondents to a recent Sports. ru poll on how far Russia will advance in the tournament, 73 percent said the team will fail to exit the group stage. It is a sober prediction: Since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia has never advanced into the World Cup's knockout rounds.

Even the insatiably patriotic President Vladimir Putin has apparently given up on the home team. "Sadly, our team has not enjoyed great results lately," he said last week. Although he added that he hopes Russia will "fight to the finish," he tipped Argentina, Brazil, Germany and Spain to raise the 18-carat-gold trophy at Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow on July 15.

Other Russia supporters are more blunt. "We all know we'll lose pretty early on, so many of us have picked different teams to support," Sergei, a 40-year-old Muscovite, told me outside Moscow's VEB Arena last week. "Some people have picked France, some Germany, another person Spain, another England.

"At the end of the day, we all just love good football."

According to the state-run Public Opinion Foundation pollster, after Russia, most home fans support Germany, Brazil and Spain, respectively.

Sergei, who wore a scarf decorated with the Russian flag, was waiting to watch his team play Turkey in its last match before the tournament kicks off. Unfortunately, good football did not lie in store. Lethargic and plodding, Russia failed to break down the Turkish squad, which on this occasion consisted of fresh-faced players gaining international playing experience.

Like Sergei, dozens of supporters milling about outside the stadium before the match were clad in Russian regalia, but bled the colors of other nations underneath.

Both Timur Sultanov, 10, and his father Kasym, 38, could barely contain their excitement over getting to see France play Peru on home soil. "We can't wait," Kasym said. "We're rooting for both teams," his son added, "because we love Antoine Griezmann" – of France – "and Jefferson Farfan" – of Peru, who plays club football for Lokomotiv Moscow. (Timur agreed to be quoted on the condition it was also noted that he plays for a rival club's youth team: CSKA.)

Unlike most footballs fans at CSKA's VEB Arena, the Sultanovs were confident Russia would find a way out of the group stage. But that wouldn't stop some fans, Kasym said, from rooting for France, Peru and others to hoist the trophy because Russia will at some point "probably lose," he explained to Timur.

Nearby, another parent-child duo were less conciliatory. Draped in a Russian flag, Anastasia Kravchenka, 16, and her mother Elena, 47, said they would be supporting their country no matter what. Anastasia, a military cadet, explained on behalf of her and her mother, a civil servant: "We are patriots."

Still, would the pair not – even just for the fun of it – cheer for another team if Russia crashes out? Elena squinted. After a few moments, she replied, "We'll be with Russia till the end."

Evan Gershkovich is a reporter at The Moscow Times. 🔰 @evangershkovich





Under Vladimir Putin, 34 journalists have reportedly been killed in connection with their work.

Press Freedom Red Card

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has blasted Russia's media crackdown in the run-up to the FIFA World Cup this summer.

RSF ranked Russia in 148th place out of 180 countries in the world press freedom index released earlier this year. The organization says at least 34 journalists have been killed in connection with their reporting since Vladimir Putin came to power almost two decades ago.

"No one ever gets a red card for tackling journalists from behind. From police violence to murders of journalists, impunity is the rule," RSF said in an on-

The press freedom organization launched an awareness campaign ahead of the tournament: Giant portraits of seven imprisoned journalists, made to look like football trading cards, were arrayed on a pitch in Paris.

"More professional journalists and bloggers are in prison now than at any time since the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991," RSF said, noting an environment in which "press freedom NGOs are now being criminalized, foreign media are under threat and the formerly free internet is in the process of being

"Despite determined resistance, independent journalism is losing ground," the NGO said.

RSF vowed to continue its campaign in the course of the month-long tournament to prevent state-run media from disguising "the steady decline in media pluralism in Russia."

Christophe Deloire, the director-general of RSF, said the organization would use the World Cup dates from June 14 to July 15 "to prevent the biggest media event of the year from being reduced to [a] Potemkin sham."

Cossack Mercenaries Guard World Cup

Russian paramilitary units providing security for the football World Cup included among their members Cossack fighters who took part in clandestine campaigns in Ukraine and Syria that Kiev and Washington condemn as backed by Moscow

More than 800 members of at least six local Cossack organizations will patrol the streets, fan zones and team bases during the five-week tournament starting on Thursday, according to Cossack leaders and regional officials.

In some places in Russia they will also work on match days as stewards or volunteers, the Cossack commanders said.

At least 19 members of these groups have been identified by Reuters as having fought either alongside Moscow-backed separatist rebels in eastern Ukraine or as Kremlin-backed private military contractors in Syria in support of Moscow's ally, President Bashar al-Assad.

The Ukraine government views anyone who fought with the separatists as criminals. The Eu ropean Union and the United States also treat the separatist uprising as unlawful and have imposed travel bans and financial freezes on dozens of people involved in the fighting or aiding the separatists.

The Kremlin denies providing military support for the separatists in eastern Ukraine. It also says it has nothing to do with Russian private military contractors in Syria. Working as an armed mercenary abroad is illegal under Rus-

Self-governing and semi-military communities mainly in southern Russia and Ukraine, Cossacks traditionally guarded the borders of the Russian Empire but were repressed in the Soviet era. Today many Cossack militia units are registered and funded by the central government in return



Cossack guards next to the World Cup mascot

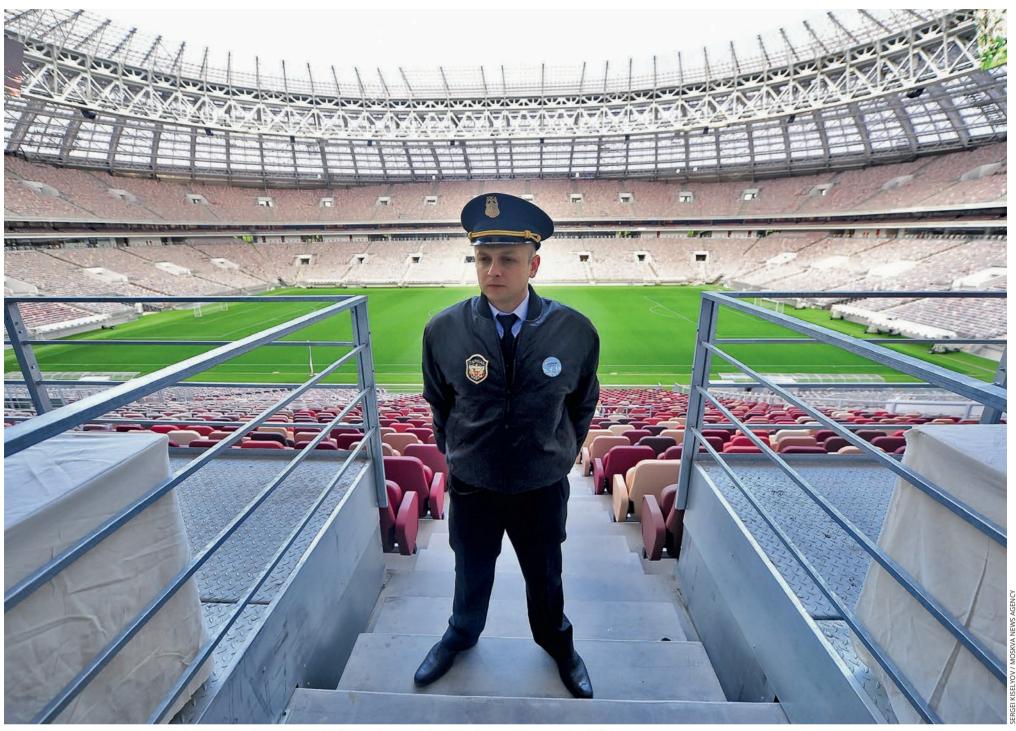
for their loyalty. The 19 fighters identified by Reuters were all members of officially-registered Cossack units.

Cossack groups say that any members taking part in armed conflicts do so as private indi-

But there is evidence that Cossack organizations have been supportive of those deployments. For one thing, they often organize burials with full honors for people killed in combat in Syria and Ukraine, and publish eulogies about

Speaking in his office decorated with flags of pro-Russian separatists fighting in eastern Ukraine, Cossack leader Alexander Anishchenko told Reuters about 200 members of the Great Don Army Cossack organization will guard areas outside the Rostov stadium during the World Cup matches. (Reuters)

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Russian security services have cracked down on hooligans and called in the Cossacks in the hopes of keeping football fans safe.

Russia's 'Ring of Steel'

The Kremlin has imposed stringent security measures. But is its World Cup safe?

BY EMILY FERRIS AND TIMUR BAIGUZHINOV

ith Russia hosting a massive influx of tourists in 11 cities across the country, the question on many people's minds is: Is it safe?

Russia is well aware that the world's attention is fixed on the country this summer and it is eager to show that it can easily accommodate the more than one million foreign fans expected to descend on the country during the World Cup.

Ensuring that the tournament's matches go ahead without a hitch is a matter of supreme importance to the Kremlin, and the government has spared no expense: Official estimates claim that more than 30 billion rubles (\$479 million) have been spent solely on security.

Most foreign fans will be concerned about the threat of terrorism or potential encounters with Russia's infamous football hooligans — farright groups known for promoting and participating in violent skirmishes at matches.

Russia's terrorist threat

During the Sochi Winter Olympics four years ago, the Russian authorities named their extensive security measures around the city "the Ring of Steel."

Before they began, the Caucasus Emirate (CE), an Islamist extremist organization based in the volatile North Caucasus region, threatened to attack the games in nearby Sochi.

In the months running up to the event, Russia experienced several suicide-bomb attacks in Volgograd — another World Cup host city — at tram and bus stations. However, thanks to the Russian authorities' tight security, the Olympics did not see any violent incidents.

The terrorist threat in Russia has evolved since then. After 2015, most of the CE's members pledged allegiance to Islamic State, a terrorist organization banned in Russia, and many have traveled abroad.

Nevertheless, IS militants have on multiple oc-

casions threatened to attack the World Cup and have threatened President Vladimir Putin personally.

The high-profile nature of the tournament makes it an attractive target for militants intending to draw international attention to their cause. To mitigate this, the Russian authorities are attempting to replicate the Ring of Steel across all 11 host cities this summer.

In short: Expect a heavy police presence, metal detectors and checkpoints.

Cracking down on the hooligans After the violent clashes between Russian and

After the violent clashes between Russian and British fans at the Euros in France in 2016, many are bracing for a repeat at the World Cup.

Hooligan leaders have been blacklisted from matches so they cannot prompt unrest.

However, since then, there has been a marked change of government policy towards the "hooligans," whose activities the authorities previously appeared to tacitly approve (former Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko, for example, occasionally appeared with well-known hooligan leaders in public.)

Many of the hooligan leaders have been blacklisted from attending matches, with facial-recognition technology introduced at host stadiums to ensure that they cannot enter and prompt any unrest.

Moreover, the authorities have taken extensive measures to ensure that the games are secure, from introducing Cossack cavalry brigades and deploying drones to monitor the crowd for signs of disturbances, to installing physical measures such as concrete anti-ram barriers near stadiums and metro stations.

Streets around the stadiums have become pedestrianized and metal detectors have been installed on most major railway and train lines.

Petty crime

Urban centers like Moscow and St. Petersburg are natural hubs for criminal activity, given the large concentrations of people convening there, particularly foreign visitors.

While overall crime levels in the country are declining — the Interior Ministry in 2017 noted a 4.7 percent decrease year-on-year — petty crime is still likely to pose a risk to foreign fans.

Railway and metro stations during peak hours, as well as underpasses, are all key locations for pickpockets to target foreigners. Many areas around stations and sometimes even sta-



After clashes between British and Russian football fans in France in 2016, the Russian authorities have cracked down on football hooliganism at home.



Even with the throngs of volunteers assembled to assist foreign visitors, some of the host cities may not be prepared for an influx of thousands of tourists



diums are poorly lit at night.

The usual precautions apply: Avoid vulnerable situations such as public intoxication or visibly displaying large amounts of cash. Note that cities like Samara, Nizhny Novgorod, Rostovon-Don, Kaliningrad, Saransk, Volgograd and Yekaterinburg do not have any experience with hosting events of this magnitude.

Even with a veritable army of student volunteers, medical personnel and the Cossack brigades, reporting a stolen wallet or asking for directions in Samara will not be the same as checking into an international hotel in Moscow.

Weapons and wildfires

Each of the host cities has slightly different security concerns. While places like Sochi and Volgograd are closest to the North Caucasus, the region of Rostov-on-Don abuts rebel-controlled territory in eastern Ukraine, where pro-Russia rebels are pitted against Ukrainian government

Given the multiple military bases in Rostovon-Don, there is a significant number of weapons circulating in the area, meaning that should conflicts occur – for example, between fans – they could violently escalate without warning. In an attempt to mitigate this, Putin on May 25 issued a moratorium on citizens carrying service weapons or hunting rifles in host cities. Those who violate the rules face a heavy fine.

There is also a serious risk of wildfires during the summer months, a routine security issue that Russia deals with every year.

While the Emergency Situations Ministry is on full alert, most of the fire safety resources including fire fighting planes equipped with water tanks – have been deployed to the western part of the country where the host cities are located. There are concerns that this could leave forested areas of the Far East under-resourced and unable to appropriately respond to wildfires.

Consular complications

Diplomatic relations between Russia and the West have soured in recent years, prompted by Russia's annexation of Crimea, military intervention in eastern Ukraine in 2014 and allega-

dential elections in 2016.

In the wake of the poisoning of former British spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in Britain in March, the U.S. expelled 60 Russian diplomats in a show of solidarity for its ally. More than 20 EU countries followed suit.

In a tit-for-tat response, Russia expelled diplomats from the countries and closed down the U.S. consulate in St Petersburg. As a result, many consulates, particularly those of the U.S., are now operating with reduced personnel and have warned that in the event of an incident involving their citizens during the World Cup, they may not be able to offer swift assistance.

This includes diplomatic intervention should

one of their citizens be detained in Russia and the procurement of medical and passport services.

7

The Russian

authorities

have a good

track record

of providing security at

large scale public events. (above). Ahead of the World Cup, metal dect-

Despite these obstacles, Russia has a good track record of ensuring security at large events, not least the Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014 and the FIFA Confederations Cup last year. Both of these events took place peacefully, indicating that Russia is likely to have sufficiently strong police capabilities and resources to pull off an event of this magnitude without significant issues.

Emily Ferris is an Associate Analyst for Russia at Control Risks. Timur Baiguzhinov is the Regional Security Manager for Russia & CIS at International SOS



tors have been installed in transport terminals throughout the country (left). tions of Russian involvement in the U.S. presi-

INFO FOR U.S. CITIZENS TRAVELING TO THE WORLD CUP IN RUSSIA

EMBASSY MOSCOW

Bolshoy Deviatinsky Pereulok 8

+ (7) (495) 728-5577 or + (7) (495) 728-5000 (after hours) moscowacs@state.gov

CONSULATE GENERAL YEKATERINBURG

Ulitza Gogolya 15

+ (7) (343) 379-3001 or + (7) 917-569-3549 (after hours) consulyekatacs@state.gov

CONSULATE GENERAL VLADIVOSTOK

Pushkinskaya Ulitza 32

+ (7) (4232) 300-070 or + (7) (914) 791-0067 (after hours) vladcons@state.gov

SERVICES FOR U.S. CITIZENS DURING THE WORLD CUP

- Replacing lost or stolen passports (only at a U.S. embassy or consulate)
- Providing information on medical resources
- · Helping victims of crime
- · Assisting after an arrest or
- Locating a lost U.S. citizen
- Helping after the death of a U.S. citizen

EMERGENCY SERVICES IN RUSSIA

- All Emergency Services: Call 112 or 101
- Police: Call 102 or 112 if using a mobile phone
- Fire: Call 101
- Medical: Call 103

USEFUL LINKS

- Official FIFA World Cup Russia 2018 Website www.fifa.com/worldcup/index.html
- Fan Guide Information welcome2018.com/en/fan_guide
- · Official ticket reseller www.fifa.com/worldcup/organisation/ ticketing/index.html

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y twitter.com/USEmbRu travel.state.gov/WorldCup

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twitter.com/travelgov

Sign up for the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at step.state.gov to receive important safety and security information.



8 The Moscow Times OFF THE PITCH June 15-17, 2018

The Brain Behind Russia's World Cup Mascot

BY LENA SMIRNOVA 🔰 @LEN_SMIRNOV

alk around any of the 11 World Cup host cities and you'll come face to face with a mischievous wolf, donning a sporty outfit, goggles and a football. This is Zabivaka, the official mascot of the 2018 World Cup. Less conspicuous, however, is Yekaterina Bocharova, the university student who designed him.

Bocharova, 22, grew up in the small Siberian town of Strezhevoi, with a population of around 40,000, before going on to study graphic design at Tomsk State University.

Two years ago, Bocharova submitted one of her drawings to the World Cup mascot contest. After making the shortlist of the top three designs out of more than 500 submissions, her drawing was chosen as the winner in an online vote. The results were announced on the most popular evening show in the country, Vecherny Urgant

The other contenders – a tiger and a cat – have since been forgotten, but Zabivaka is now a constant fixture on billboards and in shop displays across Russia.

Bocharova only received \$500 from FIFA for the copyrights to Zabivaka, she says. But her life has taken a significant turn. Two sponsors have given her private funding to move to Moscow to continue her studies and pursue her dream of working at an animation studio.

The Moscow Times spoke with Bocharova about Zabivaka, her new life and plans for the future.

How did you come up with Zabivaka?

When I was first told about the contest, I started looking at examples of different mascots from the Olympics and other competitions. I studied them to see what worked and what didn't ... My favorites were Fuleco the Armadillo in 2014 and the long-haired leopard from South Africa in 2010, Zakumi. My dog Tyson was also an inspiration. He formed the basis of Zabivaka.

Tyson is a dog, but Zabivaka is a wolf. How did your dog transform into a wolf?

All dogs were wolves at one point. I used a little imagination to make Tyson bigger and turn him into Zabivaka. In the early sketches, Zabivaka was almost a mirror image of Tyson. He had the same big ears and the same kind, innocent eyes.

What is Zabivaka like as a character?

He is very energetic and very friendly. He is al-



Once a figment of Yekaterina Bocharova's imagination, Zabivaka can now be found in stores across Russia.

WHY "ZABIVAKA"?

ways looking for adventure and is very sociable. And he loves football - that's obvious.

When your illustration was chosen as the official mascot of the World Cup, what was your reaction?

When I found out I was among the three finalists, I couldn't believe it. I thought that maybe it was a joke. But then I realized that almost no one knew I had submitted my drawings, and then there was shock and joy, of course.

The winner was announced live on air on the Vecherny Urgant program. I was in the studio with all the other contestants. I cried tears of joy.

How did your family respond?

They were very happy for me. But the live broadcast was in Moscow and my entire family lives in the east, with a four-hour time difference. So when the results were announced it was 4 a.m.

Russian. Former Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko announced the name during the mascot's unveiling on the Vecherny Urgant evening program in October 2016. However, Mutko later admitted that the name was not his own invention, but instead the result of "collective creativity." The name choice is not uncontroversial: The word

can also refer to an individual who beats

' abivaka means "one who scores" in

there. They only found out that I had won the next day.

others up or gives up on something.

Were you expecting to win?

No, I didn't have any expectations. Usually it is someone from Moscow who wins. I know that there are a lot of schools and artists across Russia that are a lot cooler. It's like a lottery and you don't know what will happen. I just sent off my drawings without giving it much thought.

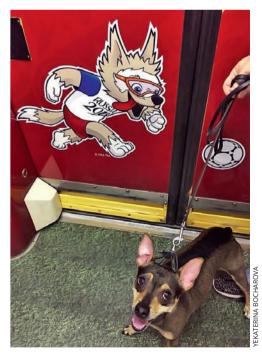
You recently moved from Tomsk to Mo the move connected to winning the contest?

Yes, I got help to do this. A couple of sponsors helped me make the move to start studying here. I chose the school where I wanted to study and got help to enroll there.

What are your upcoming goals? You said before that your dream is to work for Disney. Is that still the case?

Of course. That has been my dream my entire life. Right now I am studying computer graphics. It's given me an insider's look at the industry and how it works. Before that I didn't have a clue, but now I look at it in a more sober way. I know there's a lot of work involved.

Zabivaka is everywhere right now. How do



Spot the difference: Tyson and Zabivaka.

you feel when you see him on souvenirs?

hen I see him in FIFA stores, I don't really have any special emotions about it at all. But when I see people walking around with him, that probably means that they like him and I find that more

Do you have any Zabivaka souvenirs?

I have three small statuettes and a soft toy.

Now that you've already created one mascot, are there more in the pipeline?

Yes, of course. I draw a lot. After I won the World Cup contest, there was a junior world championship in Tomsk for swimming with fins. They chose my mascot there, too: an otter.

This interview has been redacted for length and clarity.



Yekaterina Bocharova dreams of bringing more characters to life in an animation studio.





Unparalleled Excitement

10 The Moscow Times **TRAVEL** June 15-17, 2018



Host of the 2014 Winter Olympics, this Black Sea resort of 'ferocious pirates' is ready for another international sports event

ochi's flagship arena, Fisht Stadium, was completed in 2013, just in time for the 2014 Olympic Games. The primary venue for the Games and the location of the opening and closing ceremonies, it had to look spectacular. The world's eyes were all on this Black Sea resort city, and Russia was eager to improve its image abroad and sell itself as a good place to do business. To accomplish this, the country spent lavishly. At an estimated \$51 billion, the 2014 Olympics remain the most expensive Games in history. Unfortunately, the severe cost overruns received more media attention than the venues

Since the Olympics, the arena has had a hard time attracting more than a few thousand fans to any one event — which is hardly surprising,

given the city's population of just 350,000. Sochi had a professional third-tier football team for just one season in 2014-15, after which the team failed to qualify for subsequent seasons. They are now taking a break, although the mayor, who sees no obstacles preventing FC Sochi from reaching the top tier, has announced that once the FIFA tournament is over, he plans to transfer the stadium to the local team, albeit with reduced seating.

Sochi officially became a city just a century ago, although its exact origins are unknown. Archaeologists have found traces of the earliest human settlements in the area that date back to the Stone Age. The first recorded mentions of the region are from the 6th century B.C., when Ancient Greeks described the region's people, Geniokhs, as "ferocious pirates." A local legend claims

Sochi's Olympic Park

that Prometheus, the hero of Greek myths, was chained to a rock near modern-day Sochi.

Romans colonized the territory in the early vears of the first millennium, but few records remain from that time. Then came the age of the Byzantine Empire and Christianity. The Byzantines built fortresses and churches, with some ruins surviving to this day. A considerable Greek minority still lives in the area.

From the 7th century until the 11th century, the region was influenced by the neighboring

kingdoms of Abkhazia and Georgia. Genova established several trading stations here in the Middle Ages, including Costa, which gave its name to today's Khosta, a city district of Sochi.

The first mention of the name "Sochi" was in the records of the Turkish traveler and statesman Evliva Chelebi, who visited the Black Sea shore in 1641. However, the name refers to the mountains, not the settlement.

The Ottoman Empire took control of the area in the 15th century, spreading Islam along Russia's southern border. The tension between the two empires led to several wars. As a result of the 1828-29 war, the Russian Empire gained control over the coveted Black Sea shore.

The region remained restless, however, because of an ongoing war in the nearby Caucasus, which lasted for almost half a century and ended only in 1864. The result of it was the forced relocation of the native population to the lowlands of Russia or migration to the Otto-

At this time, the contemporary Sochi area was settled by people from all over the Russian Empire. By the end of the 19th century, Sochi started to resemble a resort. Wealthy residents of St. Petersburg built their dachas, villas and palaces here, and several parks and gardens were planted, including the famous Arboretum. In 1902, Sochi got its first wellness center: Matsesta. People started calling Sochi the "Caucasus

In 1917, Sochi was officially recognized as a city. A great construction drive began in 1934, after Soviet leader Josef Stalin built his summer residence there. Communist Party members followed suit and Sochi became the top Soviet

By the late 1980s, around five million people visited Sochi every year and it had more than 200 spa and wellness facilities. Vacationing in Sochi was a sign of status in the U.S.S.R., a perk given only to the best workers. Holiday packages were almost completely free – companies paid for travel, as well as room and

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russians began traveling more to foreign holiday destinations. Sochi's popularity declined, while its infrastructure fell into disrepair. But everything changed in 2007 when the city was select-

ed to host the 2014 Winter Olympics.

Along with the Olympic Park in nearby Adler, a dazzling number of hotels were built both at the seashore and in the mountains. The Rosa Khutor ski resort was completely overhauled. The Lastochka high-speed train was launched, which connects Rosa Khutor to central Sochi.

Four years after the Olympics, Sochi has reinvented itself as a combination sea and ski resort. Once again, it is the resort of choice for





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THE WORD'S WORTH

By Michele Berdy



A Butterfly on the Football Field

Забить гол: to score a goal

n honor of the World Cup 2018, I thought I ought to offer the basics of football slang. Here the key word is "basics." Decades of living next to a stadium – the roar of the crowd, the traffic, the mounted police, the

In the bleachers, fans seem to be in one of two states: either ecstatically happy or insanely enraged. rowdy fans, the loud celebrations and the tendency to use any courtyard as a public toilet — have forever spoiled the sport for me. But I have picked up a few phrases over the years that I'm happy to share so that you know what the fans are screaming about.

Besides, the slang is really fun.

Since this is the World Cup, let's begin with the mascot: an anthropomorphized blue-eyed wolf named Забивака. Забивака is a cute word for a scorer, from забивать/забить гол (to score a goal). The mascot was created by a student at Tomsk State University and beat out a tiger and a cat in a nationwide vote. I'm not sure who dreamed up the name, which threw me off at first — I misheard it as забияка, which is slang for

a bully. Забивать can also mean to beat or kill, which are probably not the best connotations for an international sporting competition. But he is a cute little guy.

Now to the game. In the bleachers, fans seem to be in one of two states: either ecstatically happy or insanely enraged. Happy is easy to understand, since it is expressed by Ypa! Ypa! Ypa! (Hurrah!) or One-one-one! (Olé, Olé, Olé!). The first came to the Russian language from an earlier form of German a couple of centuries ago. The second arrived a few decades ago from Spain via television. Members of several major language groups will feel right at home.

When a player has done something right, happy fans shout: Молодец! (Great! Brilliant!) If the whole team does something right, they shout Молодцы! (stress on the last syllable) (Way to go, guys!). When the fans are really stoked, they shout Волна! (wave), that vast human mass that undulates across the stadium.

Unhappy fans are another matter. They are most likely to be unhappy about the quality of the refereeing. As far as I can tell, the refs are always terrible, unfair and probably politically suspect unless they rule in favor of your team. Otherwise you scream Судью на мьию! This literally means: Turn the ref into soap; and apparently it has been shouted at matches since the early Soviet period — that is, when people still knew how soap was made.

When you hear fans — болельщики — talking about the game, it doesn't sound much like a sports match at all. They talk about household items, like мышелов (mousetrap), авоська (string bag), банка (jar) and домик (little house), and then apparently discuss their backyards where there are огород (garden), розы (roses) and бабочки (butterflies).

It turns out that мышелов (mousetrap) is the goalie, who is in front of the авоська (string bag), which is slang for the goal netting. Банка (jar) is actually the bench, and домик (little house) is the spot between a player or goalie's legs. Забить в домик is to score a goal through the goalie's legs. Сесть на банку (literally, to sit on a jar) is to be sent to the benches.

Oropoд (garden) is a poor-quality pitch, posa (a rose) is a fan scarf and бабочка (butterfly) is when the goalie has butterfingers and lets the ball slip past him.

From listening to my fan friends, I've learned that ударить по воробьям (hit the sparrows) and зажечь свечу (light a candle) are Very Bad Moves, but it took a while to figure out that the first is a shot that goes wide and the second is a shot straight up into the air.

Best of all is попасть в девятку (to hit a nine), which is a shot into the top corner of the goal. All together now: Ура! Ура! Ура!

Michele A. Berdy is a Moscow-based translator and interpreter, author of "The Russian Word's Worth," a collection of her columns. Follow her on Twitter \mathbf{y} @MicheleBerdy.

DAY TRIPPIN'

Get Out of Town

Do you have a day to spare during your trip and feel like doing some wandering outside of Moscow? There's a lot to choose from, but here are a couple of good recommendations.



Abramtsevo

The Abramtsevo Estate, just 60 kilometers from Moscow, has a long and eventful history. It began as the center for the Slavophile movement in the early 19th century. Under the leadership of Sergei Aksakov, the estate was frequented by the likes of Nikolai Gogol and Ivan Turgenev. After Aksakov's death, Abramtsevo was bought by industrialist Savva Morozov, another known patron of the arts, who brought together many of the greatest minds of his time at the estate. Among the well-known artists who spent time and worked at Abramtsevo were painters Valentin Serov, Ilya Repin, Isaac Levitan, Viktor Vasnetsov and Mikhail Vrubel.

You can grab a train and view these artists' works and visit the on-site buildings, which contain more paintings and historical items. Don't miss the small church designed by Viktor Vasnetsov and a tiled majolica bench made by Mikhail Vrubel. At the entrance to the estate there are stands with traditional Russian baked goods and soft drinks. Alternatively, stop at café Abramtsevo for a light bite or head to the slightly pricier restaurant at the Galereya Club Hotel.

To get there, take the train from Yaroslavsky Station to Khotkovo, which takes just over an hour, and then bus No. 55.





Sergiyev Posad

The main attraction of Sergiyev Posad, a small town about 70 kilometers north of Moscow, is the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The monastery was founded by Sergius of Radonezh, one of the most revered 14th century Russian saints. The monastery's architecture is breathtaking. While you're there, be sure to visit the Trinity Cathedral, which houses Andrei Rublyov's icon "The Trinity," the Assumption Cathedral and the refectory building built in the Baroque style. Both St. Sergius himself and Tsar

Boris Godunov are buried on the site.

You are allowed inside the churches during services, but be sure to respect the monastery's dress code. Women are advised to bring a scarf to cover their head and modest clothing for all visitors is a must. Near the monastery there is a picturesque park where you can rent a boat and relax after all of the sightseeing. If you're looking for a pit stop, there's a great little place with burgers, cider and craft beer called Bar Svoi on the way from the monastery to the train station—perfect if you have time to kill before your train.

You can reach Sergiyev Posad by taking a train from Yaroslavsky Station directly to Sergiyev Posad. Trains leave every 20-30 minutes and take about 1.5 hours.

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Graffiti Turns Streets Into Galleries

By Andreas Rossbach | 🔰 @rossbachandreas

Moscow's murals have a story to tell

oscow is a multicultural city, and its international bearing is only increasing in light of the World Cup. Graffiti artists have joined this trend, painting the city walls with murals by artists from every corner of the globe, from Australia to Argentina. Local curators are taking advantage of the growing popularity of international graffiti, as demonstrated by the 2018 MOST Street Art Festival and a new Banksy exhibit on show at Moscow's Central House of Artists.

Harry Lebrun of Tumby Bay, in south Aus-

tralia, has never been to Moscow. Thanks to a famous Argentinian street artist named Martin Ron, though, the 10-year-old's face has quite literally left its mark on the Russian capital ahead of the upcoming 2018 FIFA championship.

The colorful large-scale mural on the side of a five-story apartment block located close to Luzhniki Stadium, the championship's main stadium, features a boy in a red jersey taking the throw-in. Ron was visiting South Australia's Eyre Peninsula to paint the Tumby Bay silos when he met Lebrun, the mural's subject.

Lebrun said he had observed the mural's progress and was thrilled that millions of people

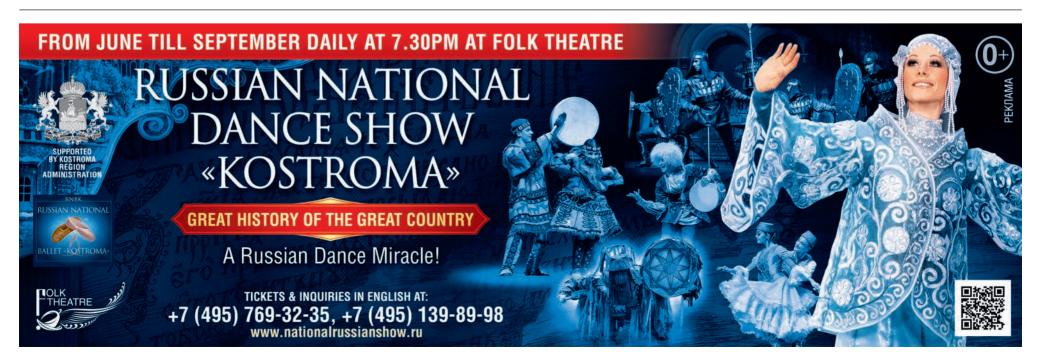
would see it. "Everyone who goes to the World Cup and everyone in Moscow who drives past it to work will see it," he said.

The World Cup mural by Ron was painted as part of the 2018 MOST Moscow Street Art Festival, which will be held in the city until mid-June.

"Over the past decade, Muscovites' perceptions of graffiti have changed: Graffiti artists are no longer viewed as just vandals or hooligans," Ivan Panteleyev, the main organizer of MOST, told The Moscow Times. "Demand for graffiti-style work has been coming from architects, interior designers, stores, restaurants and even city authorities."

For most of Russia's recent past, graffiti was illegal. Moscow-based street art curator Oxana Bondarenko told The New York Times in 2010 that "The state invests millions of rubles in hunting down graffiti artists and painting over the works," resulting in arrests and a warning if an artist was caught. In recent years, street art has become more accepted in major metropolises like New York and London, which have seen a boom in street paintings, and Moscow is no exception.

Besides Ron, Mue Bon from Thailand and Farid Rueda from Mexico have taken part in this year's mural fest dedicated to the football championship.



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Banksy's street art satirizes war and politics.

Asked about his recent work, Ron explained: "No one has ever painted a mural of a player bringing the ball back into play... The concept is of Russia returning to the World Cup."

The murals are financed by MOST's team and the Moscow city authorities. "The World Cup murals will remind Muscovites about the upcoming championship, as well as the benefits

of sports for school students and youth. This is why one of the art works includes superheroes and teens playing football," said a spokesperson for the city committee.

Besides World Cup-specific street art, Muscovites are also getting a glimpse at the most famous graffiti artist of all time. The Banksy exhibit that opened at Moscow's Central House of Artists on June 2 is the first of its kind in Russia. Featuring about 100 original works, rare prints, photographs and 3D objects, as well as a unique multimedia zone, it combines artworks from the Lilley Fine Art gallery with pieces from multiple museums of contemporary art and private collections. The immersive exhibit introduces visitors to key works of a street artist whose powerful, satirical designs revolutionized the art world and transformed the culture around street art.

Having started his career as a graffiti artist in the early 90s, for almost 30 years Banksy has been a powerful anti-establishment artistic voice. Always anonymous, always just a step ahead of the chase, he infuses his works with an active message: anti-political, anti-capitalist, anti-war and anti-moralizing. Commentators have pointed out that it is an ironic testament to his role in the contemporary art world that even as other, lesser-known street artists are picked on, and their works are painted over in a matter of days, Banksy's art is often preserved behind glass, even right on the street, or celebrated in museums.

This exhibit offers the unique opportunity to not only consider the artistic merits of Banksy's instantly recognizable stencils-based style, but also to examine the social and political ideas behind the works.

Australian artist Jamin paints on a Moscow wall (above). A bear mural by Farid Rueda in the southwestern part of the city (right).



With so many graffiti-based events occurring in Moscow, locals have the opportunity to immerse themselves in world-renowned street art both in the comfort of a gallery and also organically, on the very streets where it is created.

Martin Ron's mural of Harry Lebrun is located at 21 Prospekt Marshala Zhukova. At 1 Ulitsa Solzhenitsyna, Bldg. 5, another mural by Ron depicts superheroes from the movie

"The Avengers," including Iron Man, Spiderman, Captain America and other characters, playing with footballs.

The Banksy exhibition runs through Sept. 2 at the Central House of Artists, 10 Krymsky Val, Metro Park Kultury, Oktyabrskaya. See more at banksyart.ru.

Emma Friedlander and Alina Shubina contributed reporting.

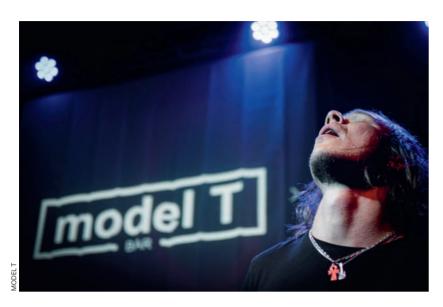




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FOR THE WEEKEND

The Hottest Bars and Clubs in Town



Model T

Model T is a bit of a dive and underground bar, but it is also a music lover's dream with great live performances. It offers everything from death metal to experimental folk to avant-garde jazz.

8 1st Yamskaya Ulitsa. Metro Dmitrovskaya, Dostoyevskaya. facebook.com/modelt.musicbar



Gazgolder

Gazgolder is located in a recently renovated historical gasholder tank at the former Arma factory, next to the Kursky train station. The club and restaurant belongs to Russia's top rapper, Basta. There are plenty of rap and hip-hop concerts, as

well as techno parties that sometimes go on for three nights in a row.

5 Nizhny Susalny Pereulok, Bldg. 6. Metro Kurskaya. gazgolderclub.ru

Time Out Rooftop Bar

This 13th floor bar on top of the Pekin Hotel offers one of the city's best views. An exciting and extensive cocktail list only adds the enjoyment. Open from midday every day, Time Out Rooftop Bar catches the sunshine and the atmosphere of this lively city, and on the weekend, the space lights up with music acts and dancing through the night.

5 Bolshaya Sadovaya Ulitsa. Metro Mayakovskaya. timeout-bar.ru





MOSCOW LIFEHACK

How Do I Get Past 'Face Control'?

Face control is a barbaric ritual carried out by stern-faced bouncers at the city's more upscale establishments. It essentially involves you either getting the nod of approval or the brutal statement "tonight there is a private party." The latter is often combined with a gesture towards the exit or an aggressive crossing of the arms.

Those who are rejected are plunged into an existential crisis. Why me? What did I do wrong?

Waving a foreign passport isn't going to cut the mustard, and while the decisions and reasoning of heavies at the door are both mysterious and sometimes illogical — you may

get in one week, and not the next — there are a few rules of thumb you can follow to improve your chances.

First, dress to impress. There's no such thing as overdressed in Moscow, unless you're aiming to get into a grimy-but-cool basement club. Second, Moscow is one of the few places where being a girl isn't necessarily an advantage. If you're in a large group, split into smaller groups of three or four with a mix of genders. And then the obvious: Be fashionably early, don't be loud in line and definitely don't exude the air of being drunk and/or obnoxious. If you don't get in, take heart that you'll probably have a better time somewhere else.

Berlin Bar

This bar was founded by celebrity German expat and DJ Chris Helmbrecht. The interior is the creation of award-winning Berlin designer Thilo Ferdinand Reich, known for his work at bars Saint Jean and The Coven. The menu includes Berlin specials like currywurst and other German favorites—meatballs with potato salad and herring rolls.

14 Bolshaya Sadovaya Street, Bldg. 6. Metro Mayakovskaya. facebook.com/from.berlin.to.moscow

Strelka Bar

Dance parties, concerts, lectures, movies, Strelka is the place to be. You're bound to bump into an editor of an edgy publication sharing a drink with a bunch of clean-cut Moscow hipsters, while expats dance to a Woodkid set. The view of the Moscow River and the biggest church in Moscow is spectacular, and you'll enjoy it even more sitting on the open terrace in the summertime.

14 Bersenevskaya Naberezhnaya, Bldg. 5. Metro Polyanka, Kropotkinskaya. strelka.com

Propaganda

It seems that Propaganda—or "propka" as cool Muscovites call it affectionately—has been around forever. Or nearly forever. It first opened its doors in the 1990s and is still packed every weekend. Go there during the afternoon when the kitchen is still open—the food is quite decent. The most popular and crowded parties are the traditional DJ Sanchez Thursdays and gay Sundays.

7 Bolshoi Zlatoustinsky Pereulok. Metro Lubyanka. propagandamoscow.com



Denis Simachev Shop & Bar

Founded by designer Denis Simachev in the 2000s, this club quickly became a traditional hangout for Moscow's fashionable sets. The kitschy interior features mirrors, chandeliers and washbasins in the middle of the dance floor. The music is consistently good and so are the cocktails. Simachev also offers some delicious bar snacks. It's crowded on the weekends, so dress smart to pass face control. (See Lifehack above).

12 Stoleshnikov Pereulok, Bldg. 2. Metro Lubyanka.

facebook.com/dsbar

Ketch Up

Ketch Up is an outpost of a popular St. Petersburg burger chain on weekdays, but it turns into a bar with dancing on weekends. Try any of the 13 burger varieties on offer and combine with cocktails like Penicillin or New York Sour. You'll find listings for upcoming parties on their Facebook page.

6/3 Ulitsa Kuznetsky Most, Bldg. 3. Metro Kuznetsky Most.

facebook.com/ketchupmoscow

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6th Moscow International Biennale For Young Art

All Weekend

The Moscow International Biennale of Young Art has been held since 2008. It has become one of the largest and most ambitious projects in the field of contemporary art in Russia. Lucrezia Calabrò Visconti, a young independent curator from Italy, was chosen to headline the 6th biennale. In this project, entitled "Abracadabra," Visconti focuses on performance, video and sound. She chose 58 artists out of 1,500 applications from around the world to showcase at an abandoned industrial space, "Rassvet" (Dawn), that used to belong to the furniture factory Muir & Merrilies, an imperial court supplier. Recently, the buildings were carefully reconstructed.

"Ideal Age" is the Biennale's special project, shown simultaneously in the courtyard of the AZ Museum and at the Educational Center of MMOMA, a short walk from each other. In the courtyard you can see the sculptures of Ivan Gorshkov, an artist from Voronezh, and works by Yegor Koshelev installed on the back wall of the building. The MMOMA exhibit touches on topics such as the cult of youth, ageism issues and the difficulties of growing up.

"Rassvet"

3 Stolyarny Pereulok, Bldg. 1. Metro 1905 Goda.

Museum AZ

20-22, 2nd Tverskaya-Yamskaya Ulitsa, Bldg. 2. Metro Mayakovskaya.

Educational Center of MMOMA

17 Yermolayevsky Pereulok. Metro Mayakovskaya. youngart.ru/en



Concert Liza Gromova

June 15

Liza Gromova is a newcomer best known for her collaborations with indie pop band Malbek & Suzanna. She will present her debut album at Pluton, one of the latest additions to Moscow's dance scene. The album, titled "Prelest" (Precious), was released just last week. Together with Malbek & Suzanna, Gromova recently opened for Lorde at her Moscow concert. Pluton

8A Nizhnyaya Syromyatnicheskaya Ulitsa. Metro Kurskaya, Chkalovskaya. facebook.com/plutonmoscow



Ballet The Kreutzer Sonata

June 16

This ballet is commissioned and performed by Ballet Moskva, with music by Gity Razaz, choreography by Robert Binet and inspiration from Leo Tolstoy's "Kreutzer Sonata." Binet has created performances for the New York City Ballet, the Royal Ballet and the National Ballet of Canada. The performance will be held at the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Mos-

cow Music Theater.

Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Moscow Music Theater

17 Bolshaya Dmitrovka Ulitsa. Metro Tverskaya, Pushkinskaya, Chekhovskaya. baletmoskva.ru

Theater (M)uchenik (Student)

June 15

(M)uchenik is a play on words combining muchenik (martyr) and uchenik (student). It is one of the most critically acclaimed theater productions by Kirill Serebrennikov, the embattled director of the Gogol Center. (He's been under house arrest for almost a year, charged with fraud, in a case which is seen as politically motivated.) Based on a play by Marius von Mayenburg, it's a story about a high school student channeling his teenage revolt into religious fanaticism, becoming a belligerent Christian zealot. Serebrennikov turned the production into the film "The Student," which won an award at the Cannes Film Festival in 2016, though he said "the theater performance is actually funnier."

Gogol Center

8 Ulitsa Kazakova. Metro Kurskaya. en.gogolcenter.com

Concert Triagrutrika

June 16

Triagrutrika is a rap band from Chelyabinsk that came up with their unique name by figuring out a word that gets zero hits on Google. They have been around for more than a decade, but became popular nationwide after signing up with the Gazgolder label founded by Basta. Triagrutrika raps about life in big cities and their lyrics speak to younger people in the big

city. Last March Triagrutrika released their first full-length album in four years—"By Triagrutrika, Pt. 1"—and their concert at Glavklub is part of the supporting tour.

Glavklub

11 Ulitsa Ordzhonikidze. Metro Leninsky Prospekt. glavclub.com



Concert Axwell ∧ Ingrosso

June 15

After Swedish House Mafia — an extremely popular electronic trio from Scandinavia — disbanded, two of the participants decided to continue as a duo. Under the new name Axwell Λ Ingrosso, they play pretty much the same electro house, perfect for stadiums and festivals. Last December they released their debut album "More Than You Know." Their Friday concert at Adrenaline Stadium is part of the supporting tour.

Adrenaline Stadium

80 Leningradsky Prospekt, Bldg. 17. Metro Sokol

adrenaline-stadium.ru

Ballet Anna Karenina

June 16, 17

The classic Russian story gets a contemporary update in this ballet premiere. Pyotr Tchaikovsky's original composition is meshed with the music of Alfred Schnittke and Cat Stevens, placing Anna Karenina's timeless story in the modern age. John Neumeier is the choreographer, set and costume designer, lighting concept author and libretto author for this much-anticipated Bolshoi Theater production.

1 Teatralnaya Ploshchad. Metro Teatralnaya. bolshoi.ru



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Issue produced by Eva Hartog, Jonathan Brown, Guy Archer, Daniel Kozin, Michele Berdy, Igor Grishin, Emma Friedlander, Anna Savchenko.

ADVERTISING

Irina Buryakova irinabur@korsamedia.ru

Head of hotels, restaurants, clubs, medical centers, education categories Tatyana Nosova t.nosova@themoscowtimes.com

Advertising sales manager Kamilla Magomedova k.magomedova@themoscowtimes.com

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