

European Union imports of Russian fish up by a fifth despite war in Ukraine

The Netherlands, Poland and Germany are said to be the biggest buyers of fish from Russia.

By **ROBERT FISK**
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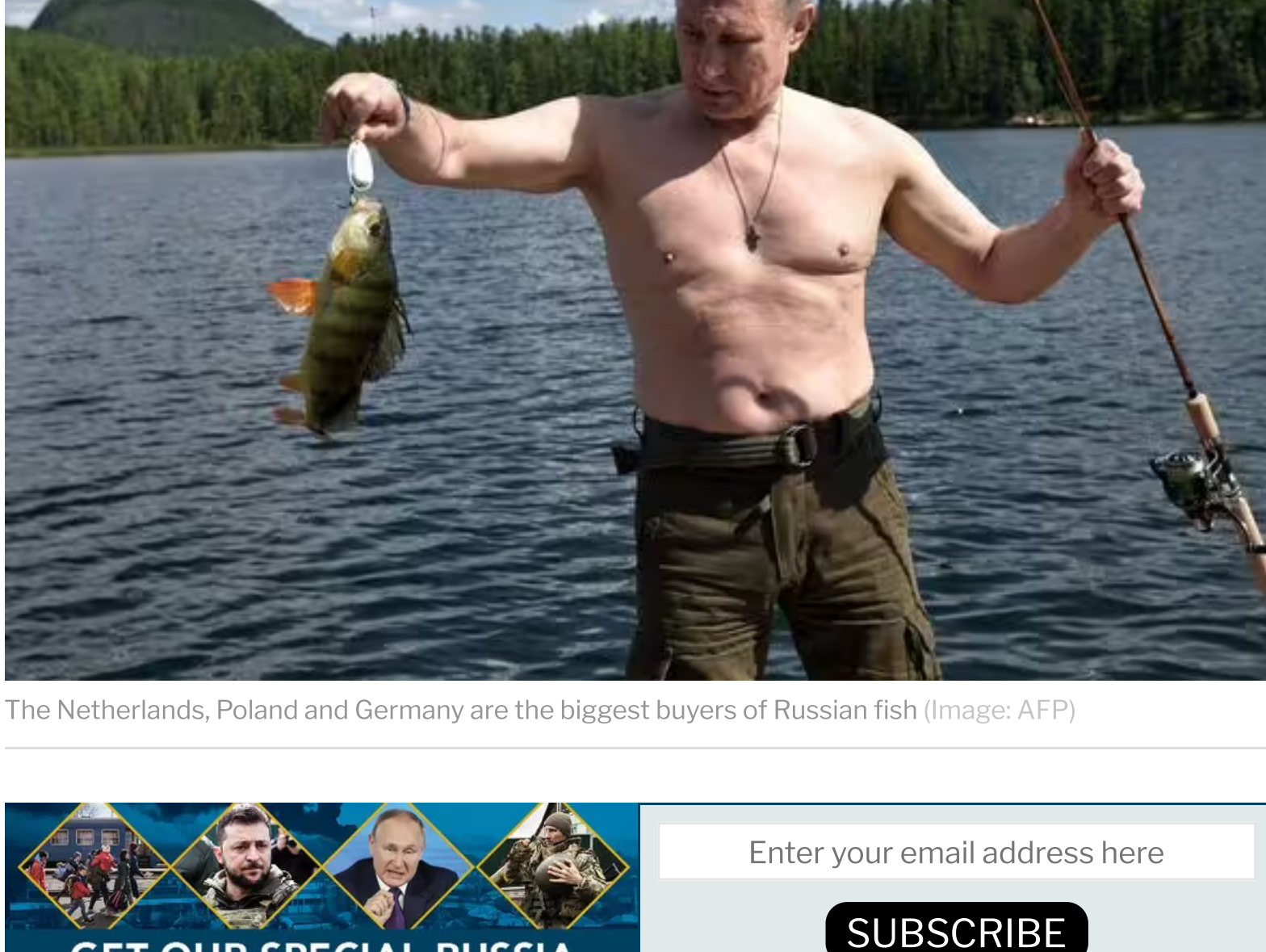
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The Netherlands, Poland and Germany are the biggest buyers of Russian fish (Image: AFP)

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European Union countries are buying almost a fifth more fish from Russia than they did before Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, according to trade figures. Deliveries of fish from Russia to the EU last year increased by 18.7 percent to 198,800 metric tons, the Russian Fishery Industry Association says.

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And the value of the fish exports has risen by 57.6 percent to almost €1 billion (£878 million).

The fishery association, Varpe, reports that The Netherlands, Poland and Germany are the biggest buyers.

Russia accounted for 4.5 percent of the EU's 4.4 million tonnes of fish and seafood imports in 2022.

Varpe president German Zverev says the increase in exports was probably because of wholesalers and processors increasing their stocks in anticipation of possible sanctions on the Russian fish industry.



Moscow has had a lot of sanctions imposed due to Putin's war (Image: AFP)

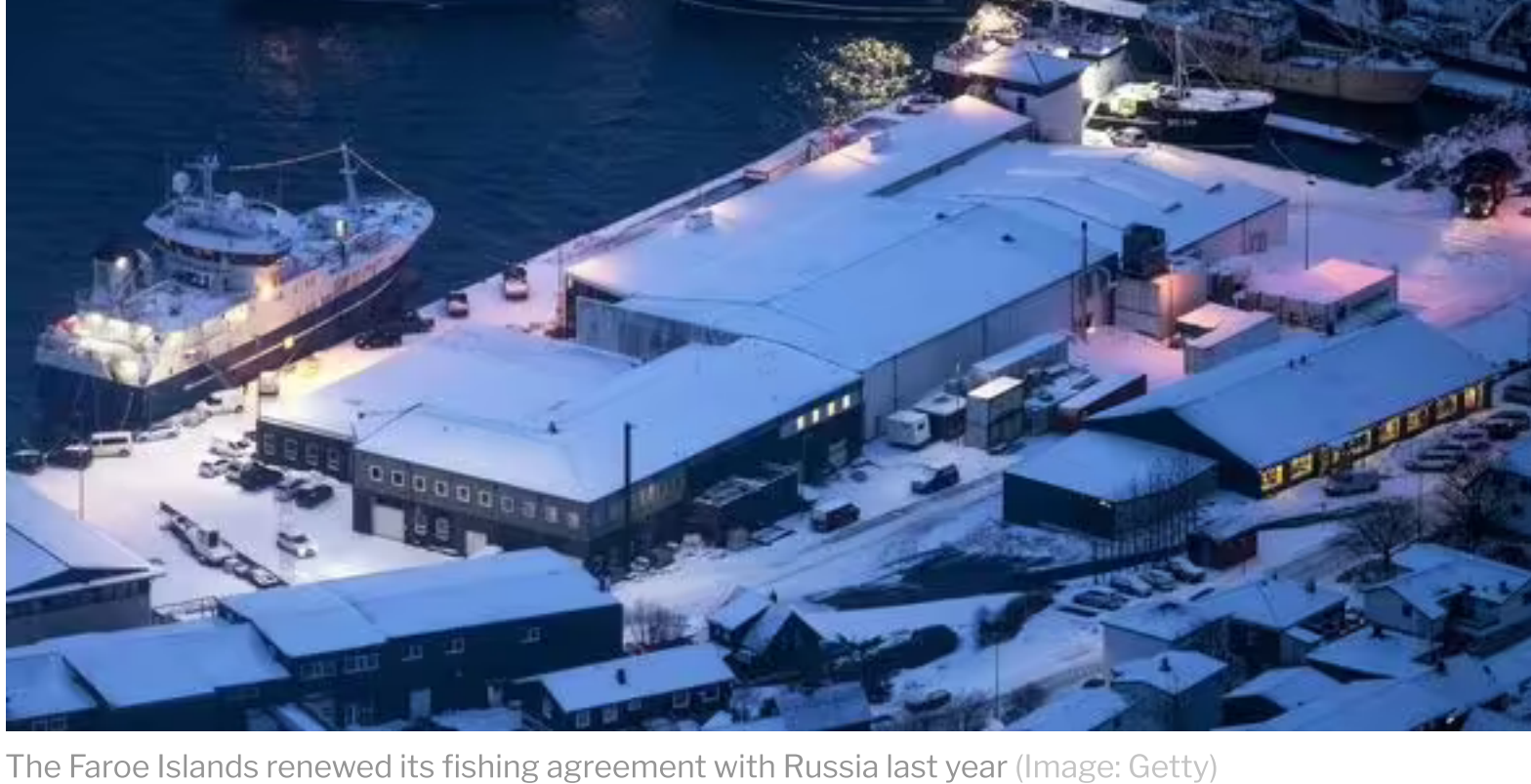
Last spring it was expected that the British Government was going to announce a 35 percent tariff on Russian whitefish imports.

This led to fears that a third of fish and chip shops in the UK could be forced to close – because the sanctions would have made North Sea supplies of popular takeaway staples like cod and haddock much scarcer and pricier.

In 2020, the UK imported 432,000 tonnes of whitefish at a value of £778 million, meaning the money going to Russia is likely to be over £200 million.

Imports of white fish from Russia have been left unsanctioned but Daily Telegraph reports that Russian caviar has been sanctioned by both the EU and the UK.

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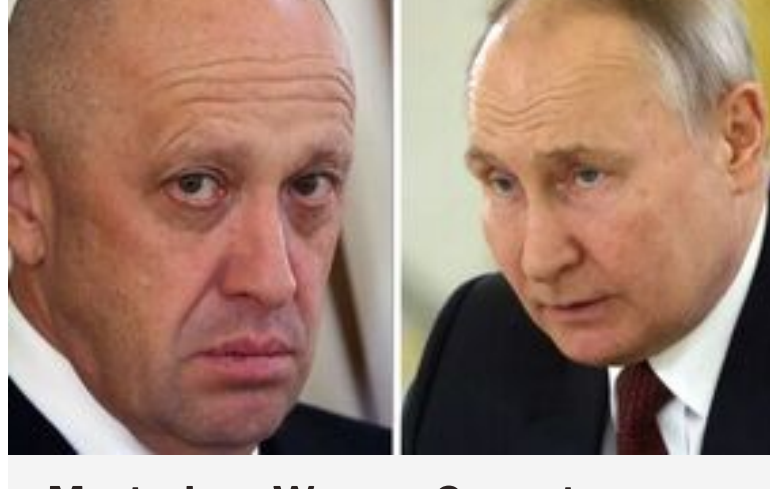


The Faroe Islands renewed its fishing agreement with Russia last year (Image: Getty)

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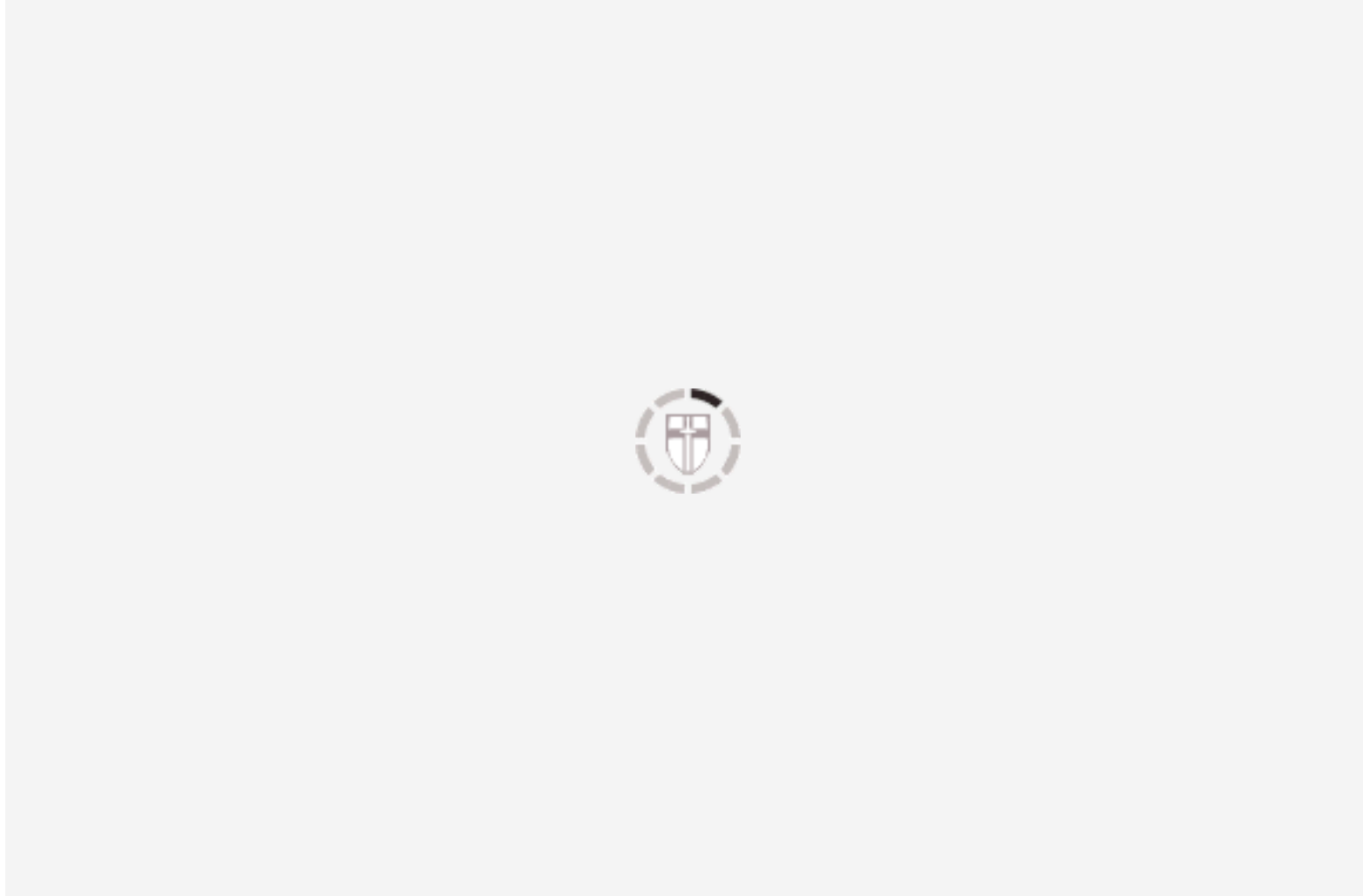
Some Russian boats are even allowed to fish in UK waters.

There was anger in November when the Faroe Islands renewed a fishing agreement with Russia, granting Moscow the right to catch tens of thousands of tonnes of blue whiting in a special area shared with Britain.

Ian Gatt, chief executive of the Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association, said: "It is hugely disappointing, if not surprising, that Faroe has concluded a fisheries agreement for 2023 with Russia.

"Faroe has breached its moral obligations to the international community by proceeding."

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Sanctions have been imposed on Vladimir Putin's Russia due to his war in Ukraine (Image: Getty)

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Unlike the situation with fish imports, the EU's trade with Russia has been severely affected by the sanctions imposed on Moscow since its invasion began last February.

Eurostat, the EU's data agency, says both exports and imports dropped considerably below the levels prior to the attack.

Its data reveals that the bloc's trade deficit with Russia peaked at €18.2 billion in March 2022.

This then slumped massively to €6 billion at the end of last year.

The value of imports from Russia fell by 53 percent from €21.8 billion to €10.3 billion by last December.

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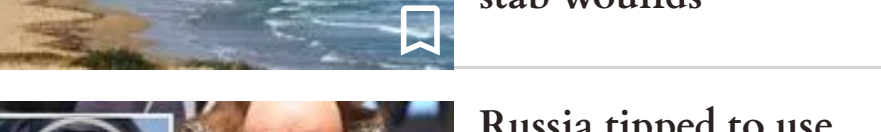
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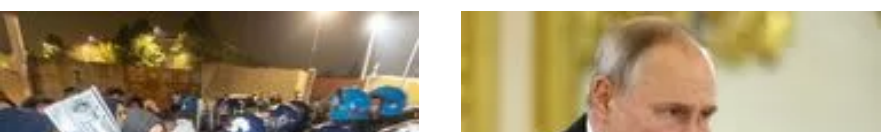
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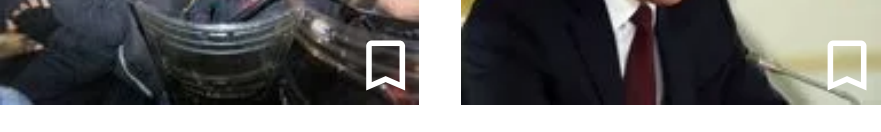
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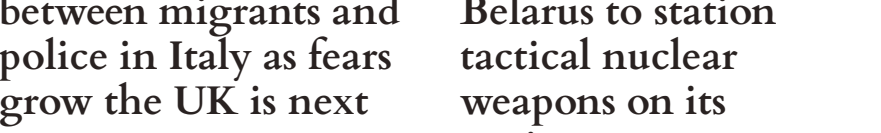
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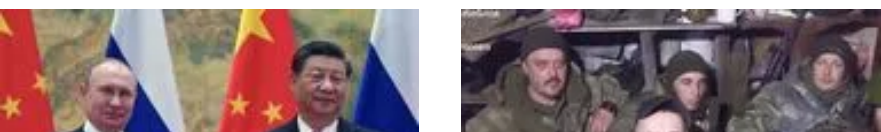
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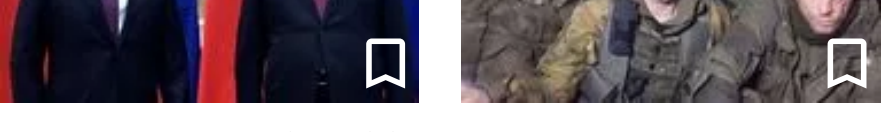
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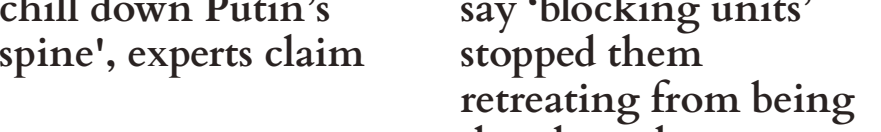
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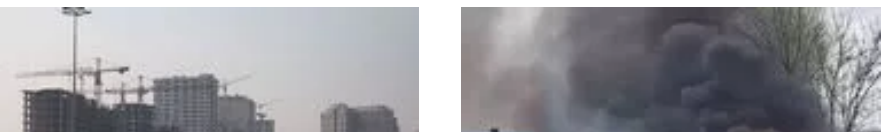
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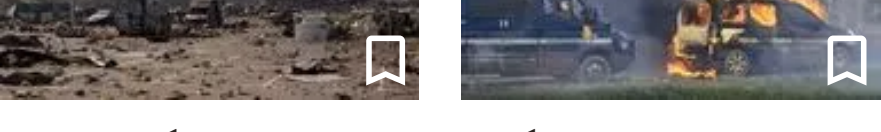
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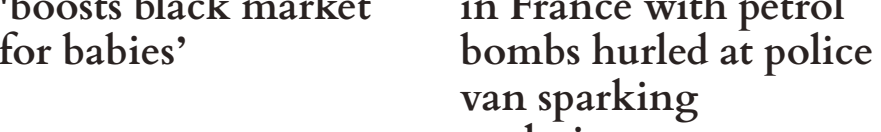
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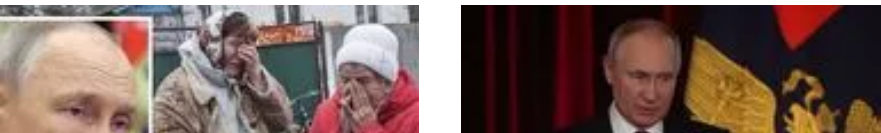
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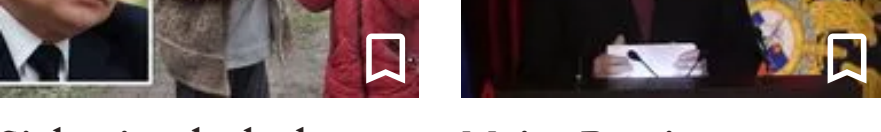
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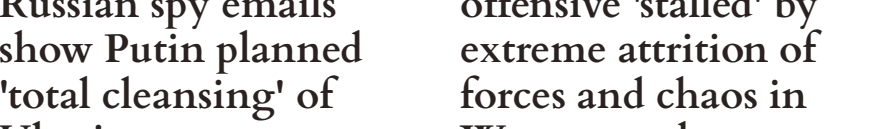
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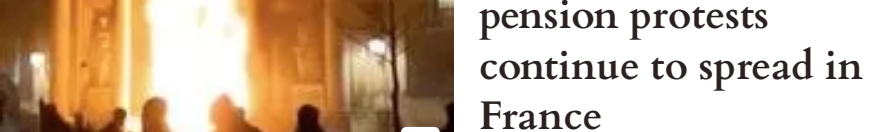
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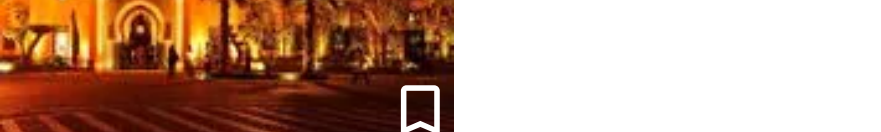
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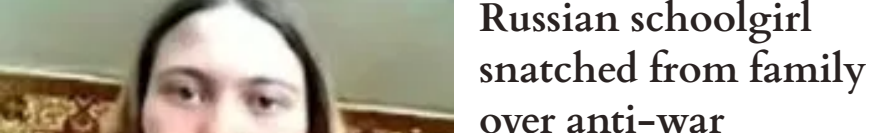
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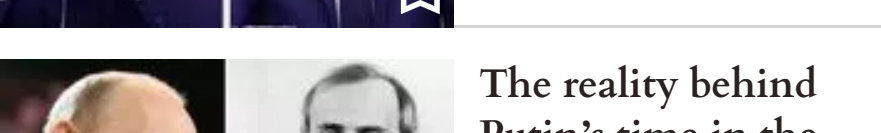
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