

Russia, Hungary and Finland leaders gather

by UPI

SARANSK, Russia -- Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in Saransk, Russia, Thursday to attend a festival with the leaders of Finland and Hungary. Putin, Finland President Tarja Halonen and Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany are taking part in the First International Festival of Finno-Ugrian peoples, Itar-Tass reported Thursday. The three leaders are to speak at the opening ceremony of the festival before visiting a new Ice Palace and a folk exhibition at the center of the city. They are also expected to meet with the International Consultative Committee of the Finno-Ugrian peoples and the Association of the Finno-Ugrian peoples of Russia. Putin also intends to have bilateral talks with the two heads of state during the conference, Itar-Tass said. The festival aims to familiarize participants with the everyday lives and traditions of Finno-Ugrian peoples, including displays of folk costumes and visits to churches, schools and other cultural centers.

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