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Putin, unfazed by Trump, will fight on



Despite visits to Russia by U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff, Russian President Vladimir Putin believes there have not been detailed discussions on a peace plan, a source said. GAVRIIL GRIGOROV/SPUTNIK/POOL VIA REUTERS FILE

Could seek to take more of Ukraine, sources say

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Hillsborough to decide on controversial warehouse plan

Mike Deak

MyCentralJersey.com | USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

HILLSBOROUGH – Residents will have to wait until September for the Planning Board to decide on a controversial proposal to build more than a half million square feet of warehouse space on Homestead Road.

The decision on the proposal by Homestead Road LLC will come after 21 planning board meetings that started three years ago. The plans for the two warehouses were submitted to the township in December 2021.

The Board heard closing arguments on the case on July 10, but delayed taking a vote because of meeting time limits and the Board has no meetings scheduled in August.

Opponents of the plan argued that the warehouse development would cause traffic and environmental issues in the township while the developer's attorney said it complies with the township's zoning ordinance.

Brian Tarantino, a representative of the grassroots group, Stop Warehouses and Trucks (SWAT), summed up why residents are putting up a fight against the proposal.

"We're fighting to preserve our town," he said.

Tarantino said the proposal has six "fatal flaws," including miscalculations of projected truck traffic

Guy Faulconbridge and Darya Korsunskaya REUTERS

MOSCOW – President Vladimir Putin intends to keep fighting in Ukraine until the West engages on his terms for peace, unfazed by Donald Trump's threats of tougher sanctions, and his territorial demands may widen as Russian forces advance, three sources close to the Kremlin said.

Putin, who ordered Russian troops into Ukraine in February 2022 after eight years of fighting in the country's east between Russian-backed separatists and Ukrainian troops, believes Russia's economy and its military are strong enough to weather any additional Western measures, the sources said.

Trump on July 14 expressed frustration with Putin's refusal to agree a ceasefire and announced a wave of weapons supplies to Ukraine, including Patriot surface-to-air missile systems. He also threatened further sanctions on Russia unless a peace deal was reached within 50 days.

The three Russian sources, familiar with top-level Kremlin thinking, said Putin will not stop the war under pressure from the West and believes Russia – which has survived the toughest sanctions imposed by the West – can endure further economic hardship, including threatened U.S. tariffs targeting buyers of Russian oil.

"Putin thinks no one has seriously engaged with him on the details of peace in Ukraine – including the Americans – so he will continue until he gets what he wants," one of the sources told Reuters on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the situation.

Despite several telephone calls between Trump and Putin, and visits to Russia by U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff, the Russian leader believes there have not been detailed discussions of the basis for a peace plan, the source said.

See PUTIN, Page 2A

Target opening in Hunterdon County

Cheryl Makin

MyCentralJersey.com | USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

RARITAN TOWNSHIP – Target has announced the opening date for its new location in the Flemington Marketplace on Route 202.

A soft opening is scheduled for Aug. 12 with a ribbon-cutting at 5 p.m., and the grand opening is set for Aug. 17, according to Levin Management.

It'll be the first Target in Hunterdon County with the nearest locations in Bridgewater, Phillipsburg and Watchung.

The 75,525-square-foot store was formerly occupied by Burlington, which has moved a mile away to the space vacated by Bed Bath & Beyond on Route 202-31. Flemington Marketplace also has Kohls, Aldi, Michaels, Cold Stone Creamery, Panera Bread, Poke Cafe, Hallmark, Verizon and Chili's. Nothing Bundt Cakes is opening soon. The new "small-format" Target will also include a CVS Pharmacy and a Starbucks.

The shopping center is managed by Levin Management of North Plainfield and is owned by REEP-RTL, part of New York Life Insurance.

The Target will be close to Kohl's, one of the anchors, in the 239,000-square-foot shopping center that has 1.7 million annual visits. according to Levin's brochure on the property.

"We are thrilled to welcome Target to Flemington Marketplace," stated Vanessa Kelty, senior leasing representative at Levin Management. "... Target's presence will further elevate the shopping experience and solidify Flemington Marketplace as a premier retail destination."

The store is expected to employ about 100 team members. Target began posting job openings for the location in June.

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and noise, air and light pollution.

See WAREHOUSE, Page 5A

10 charged with planting skimming devices throughout Central Jersey

Suzanne Russell

MyCentralJersey.com | USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

Ten people have been charged with trafficking personal identifying information by skimming EBT card information across five New Jersey counties, Pennsylvania and New York.

Maru Dumitru, Stefan Lautaru, Boby-Stefan Degeratu, Gabriela Ilie, Claudiu Padeanu, Demetria Costache, Mensi Dumitru, Albert Enciu, Florin Badea and Gheorghe Miclescu, were all charged with second- and third-degree crimes related to the use and trafficking of personal identifying information, theft, and financial facilitation of criminal activity, the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office announced.

Information about the ages and hometowns of the defendants was not immediately available.

Following a July 10 pretrial court hearing, Dumitru, Lautaru, Miclescu and Degeratu were ordered to be held at the Middlesex County Adult Correctional Center, pending trial.

According to the prosecutor's office, starting around February 2025 the defendants allegedly began installing skimming devices at points of sale at various business establishments in order to obtain victims' EBT account information.

See SKIMMING, Page 5A

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