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# 'Poisoned' Russian opposition leader Navalny in coma

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Putin wishes him  
'speedy recovery',  
says Kremlin

MOSCOW, AP/PTI

**R**ussian opposition politician Alexei Navalny is in a coma and on a ventilator in a hospital intensive care unit after falling ill from suspected poisoning that his allies believe is linked to his political activity.

The 44-year-old foe of Russia's President Vladimir Putin felt unwell on a flight back to Moscow from Tomsk, a city in Siberia, and was taken to a hospital after the plane made an emergency landing in Omsk, Navalny's spokeswoman Kira Yarmysh said on Twitter.

She told the Echo Moskvy radio station he must have consumed something from tea he drank at an airport cafe



Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny addresses supporters during an unauthorised anti-Putin rally in Moscow. AFP FILE

before boarding the plane early Thursday.

During the flight, Navalny started sweating and asked her to talk to him so that he could "focus on a sound of a voice." He then went to the bathroom and lost consciousness. "Looks like Putin is doing really badly—was handed some data on protest sentiment growing explosively—if he made the decision to poison Navalny," the politician's close ally Vladimir Milov said

in a tweet. Navalny is currently being treated at the Omsk hospital, he is in a coma in grave condition.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin said President Putin was aware that Navalny was ill and wished him well, but said there was no evidence yet to back claims he had been poisoned. "Like with any citizen of the Russian Federation we wish him a speedy recovery," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists.