

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

December 28, 2020



Russia passed 3 million confirmed coronavirus infections over the weekend. **Sergei Savostyanov / TASS**

Sobol released

Opposition politician Lyubov Sobol, an associate of Alexei Navalny, was released from detention Sunday after over 48 hours and charged with illegal entry after she rang the doorbell of an alleged FSB agent suspected of playing a role in Navalny's poisoning.

Sobol denies her guilt and said she believes the criminal charges against her are politically motivated.

"I think that this criminal case against me is, first of all, revenge against Navalny, no matter how absurd it may sound, revenge on him for surviving after being poisoned with chemical weapons, revenge for his anti-corruption activities. And since they cannot do anything with him now, they apparently decided to take revenge on me," Sobol [told](#) the Dozhd news channel.

3 million milestone

Russia on Saturday passed 3 million confirmed coronavirus infections, as authorities hold out against reimposing a national lockdown while the country is battered by a second wave.

Official figures showed that a total of 3,021,964 cases have been detected, with 54,226 deaths.

Putin to get Sputnik V

Russian President Vladimir Putin plans to get vaccinated against the coronavirus with the domestically developed Sputnik V vaccine, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov [said](#).

"He said he will be vaccinated, he made this decision and was waiting until all formalities are completed," Peskov was quoted as saying to the state-run Russia 1 television channel.

The news comes as Russia's Health Ministry [announced](#) it will lift age restrictions on Sputnik V to allow people over the age of 60 to receive the jab starting this week.

During his annual press conference earlier this month, Putin, who is 68, cited the age restrictions as the reason for not getting vaccinated.

Deadly fire

Three people died in a fire on board a Russian fishing vessel docked in the port of La Luz on the Canary Islands, Interfax [reported](#), citing the El Pais newspaper.

Four people were reportedly hospitalized with gas poisoning while firefighters found three dead bodies on the ship. It is believed that fire started in the Sveaborg's engine room around 3:12 p.m. on Christmas Eve. The origin of the fire remains unknown.

Sunken ship

Seventeen people were missing Monday and two were rescued after a Russian fishing boat sank in the Barents Sea, apparently due to icing, the emergencies ministry [said](#).

The privately owned boat, called Onega, sank near the Novaya Zemlya archipelago, with authorities becoming aware of the accident at 7:30 a.m. A search-and-rescue operation was underway.

Cold War spy

George Blake, a famous "mole" in British intelligence who spied for the Soviet KGB during the 1950s before fleeing across the Iron Curtain, [died](#) aged 98.

Putin, himself an ex-KGB agent, on Saturday expressed his "deep condolences" to Blake's family and friends.

In a message published on the Kremlin website, the Russian leader noted Blake's "invaluable contribution to ensuring strategic parity and maintaining peace on the planet."

AFP contributed reporting to this article.

Original url:

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