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30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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Russia's excess fatality count since the start of the coronavirus pandemic now exceeds 422,000. **Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency**

Fatality spike

Russia recorded almost 30,000 excess deaths during February, the country's statistics agency announced Friday — a figure which takes Russia's total excess fatality count since the start of the coronavirus pandemic above 422,000.

Since the start of the pandemic, Rosstat has recorded 149,000 fatalities directly related to Covid-19 and another 77,000 where the virus was present in a patient when they died from another condition.

Ukraine tensions

European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell on Sunday pledged the bloc's "unwavering" support for Kiev as he expressed major worries over Russian troop movements around

Ukraine.

Ukraine this week accused Russia of massing thousands of military personnel on its northern and eastern borders as well as on the Crimean peninsula annexed by Moscow in 2014.

The Kremlin did not deny the recent troop movements, but insisted that Moscow was "not threatening anyone."

To infinity and beyond

The Russian government has backed an extension of cooperation with the United States on the peaceful exploration of outer space until Dec. 31, 2030, despite the two powers' post-Cold War tensions.

The expansion comes a month after the U.S. tightened export restrictions to Russia as part of sanctions over the poisoning and jailing of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny. The U.S. exempted a list of national security items from the export restrictions, including those in support of aviation and commercial space launches, until Sept. 1.

1 in 10

Argentinian President Alberto Fernandez has tested positive for coronavirus despite receiving both doses of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine earlier this year. Fernandez told local media he has no serious symptoms and asserted that he would be feeling worse had he not been vaccinated.

Sputnik V's developer tweeted in response that the shots are 91.6% effective against infection and 100% effective against severe cases.

WTF?

The number of profanity-laden social media posts by Russian-speaking users rose 10% in the two months since a law requiring platforms to delete them came into force.

The Medialogia media monitor tallied 20.2 million posts containing swear words on Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and their Russian equivalents from Feb. 1-March 31, according to the RBC news website. The same period in 2020 reportedly saw 18.3 million profane posts.

AFP contributed reporting to this article.

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