

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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Peter Kovalev / TASS

Death record

Russia reported 752 coronavirus deaths on Saturday, a new national record of pandemic-related fatalities over a 24-hour period, as the country battles a third wave.

Russia has now set seven new pandemic highs for Covid-19 deaths in the last 12 days as it fights a surging outbreak driven by the highly infectious Delta variant and a sluggish vaccination campaign.

Biden and Putin

U.S. President Joe Biden on Friday once again told his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin to "take action" against ransomware hackers operating from Russia, but the Kremlin gave little sign of listening.

The White House said Biden and Putin spoke for about an hour by phone, focusing on the

ransomware threat and separately on allowing humanitarian aid into Syria, where Russia is the Assad regime's main supporter.

Excess deaths

Russia recorded its lowest number of excess deaths in May 2021 since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, statistics published Friday showed before the country was plunged into a third wave of the coronavirus.

Russia's excess fatality count between the start of the pandemic and the end of May, the latest data which is available, stood at 483,000, according to Moscow Times calculations — one of the highest in the world in absolute terms and after adjusting for population size.

Moldova elections

Moldovan President Maia Sandu pledged an "end to the rule of thieves" Sunday as her pro-European party looked set to win snap parliamentary elections she called to shore up her position against pro-Russia forces.

Sandu's center-right Action and Solidarity (PAS) party was leading with more than 47% of the vote, with 90% of the ballots counted as of 11:45 p.m. (20:45 GMT), according to the electoral commission. The PAS's main rivals from the coalition of socialists and Communists, led by former Kremlin-backed president Igor Dodon and former president Vladimir Voronin, picked up about 31% of the votes.

AFP contributed reporting to this article.

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