

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency

New mutation

The new, heavily mutated coronavirus variant Omicron may be spreading across Russia by tourists returning from Egypt, Senator and Honored Doctor of Russia Vladimir Krugly [said](#) Sunday.

Russia's consumer protection watchdog Rospotrebnadzor, which leads the country's Covid-19 response efforts, later [denied](#) Krugly's claims.

Ammo blasts

Several explosions at an ammunition plant injured at least two people in central Russia's Nizhny Novgorod region, authorities [said](#) Saturday.

Authorities opened a criminal case into [safety violations](#) at the Sverdlov arms plant.

Rock loss

One of the earliest performers of rock music in Soviet Russia, singer and composer Alexander Gradsky, [died](#) at age 72 on Sunday.

Gradsky, who co-created one of the first Soviet rock bands Slavyane in 1965 and later Skoromokhi in 1966, was hospitalized in Moscow on Friday for a suspected stroke.

EU blacklist

The European Union has [banned](#) a Russian air carrier for the first time — the Kaliningrad-based charter operator Skol Airlines — for failing to meet international safety standards.

The EU [said](#) Friday that its Air Safety List acts as a “strong preventive tool” that could spur Russia to “improve [its] safety oversight to avoid seeing [its] air carriers on the list.”

Space module

Russia's new docking module Prichal on Friday successfully docked with the International Space Station (ISS), the Russian space agency Roscosmos said.

Prichal — which means "pier" in Russian — is the second permanent addition to the Russian segment of the ISS this year, after the long-awaited arrival of the Nauka science module.

AFP contributed reporting.

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