

# News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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The treatment center at Kommunarka, Moscow's main coronavirus hospital. **Vladimir Gerdo / TASS**

## Omicron wave

Russia reported a combined total of 56,409 coronavirus infections and 1,409 deaths on Saturday and Sunday as daily case numbers nearly doubled over the past week.

Authorities have warned that the Omicron variant will soon sweep through the country and become the dominant strain, with President Vladimir Putin saying health officials have “a couple of weeks” to prepare for the next wave.

## Ransomware crackdown

A Moscow court on Saturday [remanded](#) eight hackers in custody for two months as Russia cracks down on the REvil cybercrime group at Washington's request.

On Friday, Russia said it had dismantled the hacking group REvil, which carried out a high-profile attack last year on U.S. software firm Kaseya, following a request from the United

States.

## **Wargames**

Ukraine [said](#) Sunday it had "evidence" Russia was behind a massive cyberattack that knocked out key government websites this past week, while Microsoft warned the hack could be far worse than first thought.

On Friday, the United States also accused Russia of sending saboteurs trained in explosives to stage an incident that could be the pretext to invade its pro-Western neighbor.

## **Olympic favorite**

Russia's Kamila Valieva, just 15 years old, hammered home her status as Olympic Games gold medal favorite on Saturday when she swept to the European title in Tallinn.

Russia also claimed titles in the men's event, pairs and ice dance in a stunning performance less than three weeks before the Winter Olympics start in Beijing on Feb. 4.

## **Dancing on ice**

The streets of St. Petersburg turned into a real-life [ice rink](#) due to a freeze-thaw cycle caused by fluctuating temperatures.

Footage showed residents slipping on sidewalks, donning skates to navigate the slippery streets and flocking to emergency rooms to treat injuries.

Some, blaming municipal authorities for failing to address the emergency, took matters into their own hands and bought 250 tons of sand to improve road traction.

*AFP contributed reporting.*

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