The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

January 31, 2022



Sergei Savostyanov / TASS

Pandemic toll

Russia on Friday confirmed at least 995,000 excess deaths between the start of the pandemic and the end of 2021, according to The Moscow Times' calculations comparing fatalities in pandemic months with those recorded in 2019.

The federal statistics agency Rosstat said that Russia's population declined to 145.5 million in 2021 from 146.2 million in 2020, a historic drop not seen since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The excess death figures came as Russia reported more than 100,000 daily coronavirus cases for the first time on Saturday, registering 234,340 new cases over the two-day weekend.

'Goodwill gesture'

The Russian military said Saturday it will relocate planned Feb. 3-8 naval drills that were

originally set to take part in Irish fishing waters and had triggered concern in Dublin and other European capitals.

Irish leaders said the drills were “not welcome” and urged Russia to reconsider, while fishermen, whose activities were set to be disrupted, threatened to thwart the Russian ships taking part.

‘Crushing’ sanctions

U.S. senators and Britain’s foreign secretary on Sunday flagged new and "devastating" economic sanctions against Russia, as Washington and its NATO allies step up efforts to deter any invasion of Ukraine.

Senator Bob Menendez, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, indicated some penalties could be levied over actions Russia has already taken in Ukraine, including cyberattacks, but that "devastating sanctions that ultimately would crush Russia" would come if Moscow were to invade.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said Britain would unveil sanctions legislation this week targeting "a much wider variety" of Russian economic targets and warning “there will be nowhere to hide for Putin's oligarchs.”

Cultural loss

Russian actor Leonid Kuravlyov, known for Soviet classics “The Golden Calf,” “Ivan Vasilyevich Changes Professions” and “Afonya,” died at age 85 on Sunday.

Kuravlyov was hospitalized at Moscow’s main coronavirus hospital with pneumonia on Jan. 10, though he had reportedly tested negative for Covid-19 several times and was discharged less than two weeks later.

AFP contributed reporting.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/01/31/news-from-russia-what-you-missed-over-the-weekend-148-a76200