Avifavir

- Russia will start giving its first drug approved to treat COVID-19 to patients next week, its state financial backer said, a move it hopes will ease strains on the health system.
- Russian hospitals can begin giving the antiviral drug, which is registered under the name Avifavir, to patients from June 11.
- Avifavir, known generically as favipiravir, was first developed in the late 1990s by a Japanese company later bought by Fujifilm as it moved into healthcare.
- RDIF head Kirill Dmitriev said Russian scientists had modified the drug to enhance it, and said Moscow would be ready to share the details of those modifications within two weeks.
- Japan has been trialling the same drug, known there as Avigan.
- It has won plaudits from Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and $128 million in government funding, but has yet to be approved for use.