

What the Papers Say, Dec. 18, 2013

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Kommersant

1. Andrei Kolesnikov article headlined "Brotherly Ukraine becomes billionaire" gives an account of the Dec. 17 meeting between President Vladimir Putin and his Ukrainian counterpart Viktor Yanukovich that resulted in Russia's pledge to invest \$15 billion in Ukraine's government bonds and slash gas prices for Ukraine by around 30 percent; pp 1, 8 (890 words).
2. Sofya Samokhina article called "Amnesty under article" says the State Duma might pass a bill on an amnesty already today; but first it will need to consider around 30 amendments to the initiative, so it is no clear yet as to who will be granted an amnesty; pp 1, 3 (641 words).
3. Sergei Mashkin article entitled "One volume enough for Anatoly Serdyukov" says former Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov barely looked through volume one of his case file in connection with negligence on Dec. 17 after which he left the building of the main military investigations directorate. Kommersant sources say Serdyukov is not going to waste time

reading his case file as he expects to be granted an amnesty; pp 1, 4 (664 words).

4. Dmitry Butrin and Yuriy Barsukov column "Price of issue: Welfare becomes international" says through securing hefty financial aid from Russia, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich managed to solve most of his country's acute macroeconomic problems. It is not clear, though, how Russia will benefit from the deal; pp 1, 7 (750 words).

5. Yelizaveta Kuznetsova article called "Rosneft finds replacement for NATO" says Novaport Holding co-owned by Roman Trotsenko, an advisor to Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin, is seeking to take over the management of Kyrgyz airports Manas and Osh that will soon be vacated by NATO; pp 1, 11 (542 words).

6. Musa Muradov and Sergei Goryashko article headlined "Yury Kokov cleaning up Kabarda-Balkaria" comments on the resignation of Nalchik Mayor Zalimgeri Khagasov and Senator Fatima Ivanova following the arrival of the new head of the republic, Yury Kokov; p 2 (611 words).

7. Taisia Bekbulatova article called "More options added to local government reform" reports on an expert meeting that discussed ideas for a local government reform urged by President Vladimir Putin in his latest state-of-the-nation address; p 2 (564 words).

8. Ivan Safronov article headlined "Dmitry Rogozin is to present a concern" leaks the details of a project to set up a concern uniting the Federal Space Agency (Roskosmos) and several space design bureaus; p 2 (431 words).

9. Ilya Barabanov article headlined "Legislative backing sought for lobbyism" considers a bill on lobbyism that has been filed to parliament by deputy speaker Nikolai Levichev; p 3 (601 words).

10. Viktor Khamrayev article called "Unauthorized rallies will be nipped in bud online" says the State Duma has approved in the first reading a bill that would make it possible to promptly block websites containing calls for extremism without a court order. Experts doubt that the bill, if passed, will be of any help to law-enforcers, but may tarnish Russia's reputation internationally; p 3 (592 words).

11. Alexei Sokovnin article called "Fine for bribe reaches billion" reports on the verdict of a court in the case of a Moscow regional official who was ordered to pay a fine of 950 million rubles (\$28 million for accepting a 500,000-dollar bribe; p 4 (532 words).

12. Grigory Tumanov article called "Relatives will be helped not to lose inmates" says a bill is to be viewed by the State Duma that would enable convicts to inform their relatives and lawyers about being transferred to another prison. The bill is being applauded by human rights advocates; p 5 (529 words).

13. Alexei Shapovalov article headlined "Kremlin calls for economic audit" summarizes the key concerns of presidential aide Andrei Belousov who called on the Finance Ministry to reviews its economic support measures in view of a slump in growth; p 6 (585 words).

14. Pavel Tarasenko article called "Outward manifestations of power expected from Kim Jong-un" quotes North Korea expert Georgy Toloray as saying that the recent purges in North

Korea were aimed at consolidating the standing of the DPRK's leader Kim Jong-un. Missile launches are also possible, but not for the sake of military confrontation with the south, but to boost the support of the North Korean population; p 7 (544 words).

15. Yelena Chernenko interview with Ilya Rogachev, head of the new challenges and threats department at the Foreign Ministry headlined "People going abroad to fight is our shared failure". He speaks on barriers to cooperation between Russia and the U.S. in fighting terrorism; p 8 (648 words).

16. Sergei Strokan article called "Ukrainian opposition does not disperse with concessions" reports the latest developments in Kiev; says the Ukrainian opposition was not happy with the hefty aid package offered by Moscow and accepted by President Viktor Yanukovich; p 8 (473 words).

17. Vladimir Dzaguto column headlined "Rules of the game" looks at how the bankruptcy of the American producer of enriched uranium USEC Inc. might affect Rosatom; p 9 (402 words).

18. Olga Adamchuk article entitled "Depositors opt for state-owned banks" says Russia people are withdrawing their savings from smaller private banks and are taking the money to state-owned banks; p 10 (734 words).

19. Anna Solodovnikova article headlined "Russian oil producers sail to Montenegro" says Russian oil companies NOVATEK and Gazprom Neft have expressed an interest in offshore exploration and drilling off the coast of Montenegro in the Mediterranean; p 11 (527 words).

20. Yury Barsukov article headlined "Gazprom appetite approved" details Gazprom's newly-approved 806 billion rubles (\$24.5 billion) investment program, p 11 (340 words).

Vedomosti

1. Dmitry Kazmin article headlined "Keeper of Master" says Alfa-Bank has signed an agreement with the temporary administration of Master Bank on using the latter's ATM network. Master Bank was stripped of its license in late November over charges of money laundering; pp 1, 15 (413 words).

2. Editorial called "How to save the people" says the period of the current trend towards a growing birth rate and longer life expectancy in Russia will end soon and looks at what needs to be done to prevent the Russian population from declining; pp 1, 6 (435 words).

3. Margarita Lyutova and Yelena Khodyakova article entitled "Ukrainian welfare fund" comments on President Vladimir Putin's promise to invest an equivalent of \$15 billion in Ukraine's state bonds and to slash the gas price for the country by a third. Alexander Morozov of HSBC notes that the National Welfare Fund where money for Ukraine's bailout will come from was created to solve Russia's own financial problems in the future, so the decision to tap into it could increase the threat of a default; pp 1, 5 (773 words).

4. Liliya Biryukova and Maxim Glikin article called "One year left for self-government" says

a bill on a local government reform that would do away with municipal elections is to have been drafted by the end of January; experts say a year is not enough for implementing the reform; p 2 (416 words).

5. Olga Kuvshinova article entitled "Inventory of stagnation" points to the lack of effect of the Russian government's steps to boost economic growth and says the stagnating economy is closely related to the policy of maintaining social stability in the country; p 4 (898 words).

6. Margarita Papchenkova article entitled "Reaching out to offshore" gives details of the Finance Ministry's plan to prevent Russian companies from transferring their money to tax havens; p 5 (564 words).

7. Editorial called "Battle for Arctic" says the Arctic is believed to be rich in natural resources, but Russia's declared intention to boost its military presence in the area is much easier to accomplish than to explore the resources; p 6 (368 words).

8. Alexander Knobel of the Gaidar Economic Policy Institute article called "Free trade. Collective way to EU" says Russia would benefit from a free trade agreement between the Customs Union and the EU, but it is highly unlikely to be signed in the near future; pp 6-7 (1,443 words).

9. Boris Safronov column headlined "Figure of the week: 51 billion rubles" says the Deposit Insurance Agency is to pay 51 billion rubles (\$1.5 billion) to private customers of the three banks that lost their licenses on Dec.13. Since the Central Bank is determined to continue its crackdown on trouble bank, a "manmade" banking crisis is obvious, the author says, adding that private investors are withdrawing their money; p 7 (461 words).

10. Ilya Klishin column called "Maximum retweet: Anything could be the trigger" says the Russian authorities will be taking steps to prevent protests, but they are unlikely to work because anything can spark them, as the developments in Ukraine show; p 7 (478 words).

11. Interview of the Primorye region governor Vladimir Miklushevsky entitled "It is important to make sure that migrants do not feel like castaways" on a wide range of topics, mainly related to the local economy; pp 8-9 (4,967 words).

12. Mikhail Serov article headlined "Russia finds gas for China" says Russia's gas giant Gazprom is to announce the discovery of new gas reserves in the Sea of Okhotsk. The gas is likely to be supplied to China; p 10 (615 words).

13. Milana Chelpanova article called "Oil producers to pay extra to RZhD" says Russian Railways is going to raise its tariff for shipping diesel fuel abroad by 13.4 percent as of Jan. 1 to offset its losses from the tariff freeze ordered by the government; p 12 (456 words).

14. Interview with Qatari Minister of Energy and Industry Muhammad Bin-Salih al-Sadah on his country's role on the world energy market and the prospects of the liquefied natural gas market; p B2-B3 (1,762 words).

15. Margarita Lyutova article called "First steps" looks at which industries have suffered most since Russia became a WTO member and has started bringing its legislation and market regulation in line with the WTO requirements since August 2012; pp 4-5 of Vedomosti.forum

supplement (2,166 words).

16. Yevgeny Primakov article called "We are lagging behind world economy" takes a positive view on the effects of Russia's accession to the WTO, but calls for accelerating the development of the national industry so that it can compete on the world market; p 6 of Vedomosti.forum supplement (535 words).

17. Vladimir Salamatov article headlined "Competing and defending ourselves" summarizes the results of the first year since Russia's accession to the WTO, points to low awareness about the organization's legal framework and tools among Russian businesses and government officials; p 7 of Vedomosti.forum supplement (866 words).

18. Deputy Economic Development Minister Andrei Klepach op-ed headlined "We are not using already available mechanisms" says the state should support Russian exporters and make sure they stay competitive on the world markets following the country's accession to the WTO; p 9 of Vedomosti.forum supplement (1,226 words).

19. Vygaudas Usackas, head of the European Union's delegation in Russia, article headlined "One needs to fully comply with rules that one has agreed to" says on behalf of the EU that Russia is expected to timely bring its legislation and tariffs in line with WTO agreements and voices the hope that a trade agreement will be signed by Russia and the EU; pp 10-11 of Vedomosti.forum supplement (1,067 words).

20. Alexei Ulyukayev article headlined "Latest news: Ice starts to move" comments on the agreements that were reached at the WTO meeting in Bali in early December; p 20 of Vedomosti.forum supplement (543 words).

Nezavisimaya Gazeta

1. Tatyana Ivzhenko article headlined "2008 scenario played again in Kiev" says Russia has outplayed the EU by offering Ukraine a hefty loan of \$15 billion and reducing gas prices, but Ukraine is likely to restart its European integration policy after 2015; pp 1-2 (1,038 words).

2. Ivan Rodin article called "State Duma promises to extend amnesty" says the Russian State Duma considered 10 amnesty projects and backed the one proposed by the Russian president. It is not clear, though, if it will be amended to become applicable to the Bolotnaya Square suspects and the "Arctic Sunrise" crew; pp 1, 3 (855 words).

3. Alexei Gorbachev article headlined "Navalny's criminal cases slightly frozen" alleges that the apparent delay in the investigation against opposition activist Alexei Navalny and his brother on four embezzlement counts might be due to the Sochi Olympics as the authorities want to avoid international scandals. The imprisoned Pussy Riot band members might be released ahead of the Winter Games for exactly the same reason; pp 1, 3 (644 words).

4. Alina Terekhova article headlined "Europeans call South Stream illegal" says the European Commission wants Russia to bring its gas transit agreements with its South Stream partners in line with the EU legislation. Some experts believe the project will not be put on hold because Russia will make concessions; pp 1, 4 (935 words).

5. Alexander Chernyavsky article called "Will Krasnoyarsk governor run for second term?" says local pundits disagree as to whether the robber at governor Lev Kuznetsov's house in France could affect his future in politics; pp 1, 6 (568 words).
6. Yevgenia Novikova article headlined "Turkey caught supplying arms to Syrian rebels" quotes a report by the Turkish newspaper Radikal on firearms shipments from Turkey to Syria; expert Teodor Karasik says Turkey's support for Syrian insurgents may backfire as their defeat looks increasingly likely; pp 1, 8 (780 words).
7. Viktor Litovkin op-ed headlined "An unfunny joke" praises the Ukrainian defense industry, but says it can only stay afloat in cooperation with Russia; p 2 (960 words).
8. Editorial headlined "Euro-Maidan sets Moscow and Brussels apart" says the EU summit that opens tomorrow in Brussels is expected to pass a resolution in support of opposition protests in Kiev, which is likely to anger Moscow. Russia and the EU are to discuss their disagreements at a summit in late January; p 2 (521 words).
9. Yelena Trifonova article headlined "Migrants to undergo adaptation, but not any time soon" says Regional Development Minister Igor Slyunyayev suggested setting up an agency in charge of helping immigrants adapt to life in Russia. NGOs that are already doing the job complain about the lack of state support for their activity; p 3 (572 words).
10. Leonid Radzikhovsky op-ed headlined "Carte Blanche. Policy of real deeds" comments on President Putin's state-of-the-nation address, says he made it clear that the country is about to hit dire straits" and put forward an agenda for responding to challenges; p 3 (928 words).
11. Igor Naumov and Mikhail Sergeiev article called "Confused minds make it difficult to overcome stagnation" says presidential aide Andrei Belousov denied signs of stagnation in Russia, while people believe the opposite is true as job insecurity is growing and layoffs are on the rise; p 4 (745 words).
12. Taras Voznyak op-ed headlined "Maidan is middle class revolution" argues that the protests in Kiev started because people, both middle class and those living on social security, know that the existing political and economic system is dysfunctional, replace Viktor Yanukovich with somebody else won't help. Their only hope is the adoption of European standards and social norms; p 5 (788 words).
13. Yakov Gilinsky article headlined "An emphasis on restriction" analyzes Russia's current anti-drug laws and the work of anti-drug agencies claiming that "endless, pointless criminalization of actions that pose no danger is observed"; p 5 (2,070 words).
14. Gleb Postnov article headlined "Tatarstan stirred up with rumors about arrested radical Islamists being tortured" covers an investigation by the religious authorities of the predominantly Muslim republic of Tatarstan into ways suspects on Christian church burning cases were interrogated; p 6 (450 words).
15. Gleb Nikanorov article headlined "LNG exporters club as a key to the Arctic" states that the recent passing of legislation revoking Gazprom's monopoly on liquefied natural gas (LNG)

export opens way for major private companies to export LNG to the Asian Pacific region via the Northern Sea Route; p 6 (600 words).

16. Anton Khodasevich article called "Lukashenko's secret" mulls over the true purposes of Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko's visit to Sochi and Moscow next week; p 7 (761 words).

Rossiiskaya Gazeta

1. Mikhail Falaleyev interview with head of the main internal affairs directorate of the Interior Ministry Maj-Gen Alexander Makarov, who shares police corruption statistics, headlined "Stop staff"; pp 1, 9 (2,463 words).

2. Kira Latukhina article headlined "Gas, Shevchenko and a loan" gives a factual account of the Dec. 17 meeting of President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich in Moscow; pp 1-2 (915 words).

3. Yury Gavrillov article called "Nobody will catch up with missile" says a new ICBM system code-named Sarmat is to enter service with the Russian army in five or seven years; p 2 (301 words).

4. Tatyana Zamakhina article entitled "Without office party expenses" says Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has started a series of board meetings with the management of state-owned companies to see how they have succeeded in cutting costs. Gazprom seems to have done a good job as its investment program for 2014 has been slashed by 22 percent; p 3 (581 words).

5. Tamara Shkel article headlined "A defensive reaction" details a bill enabling the Prosecutor-General's Office to shut down websites without a court order; p 3 (600 words).

6. Tatyana Shchadrina article headlined "Click a job" says the Russian authorities are going to encourage the use of online government services by offering discounts on fees and making the appropriate websites user-friendlier; p 5 (678 words).

7. Yevgeny Shestakov article headlined "Without false insinuations" reports on Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's news conference following his meeting with foreign ministers of 28 European states in Brussels; p 8 (900 words).

8. Fedor Lukyanov column headlined "Coalition state" describes Ukraine as a country governed by a coalition of regional oligarchs. This coalition is now falling apart because it failed to ensure the development of the country; p 8 (667 words).

Izvestia

1. Dmitry Runkevich and Yelena Malay article headlined "Officials will be banned from having foreign property" details a United Russian party repeat initiative to restrict government officials from having real estate property outside Russia. Experts are mainly optimistic about

the bill passing; pp 1, 4 (1020 words).

2. Yegor Sozayev-Guryev article headlined "Vladimir Putin makes Viktor Yanukovich an offer he cannot refuse" details the Russia-Ukraine deal: Russia to invest in Ukrainian securities and slash gas prices; p 2 (900 words).

3. Lyudmila Podobedova article headlined "Rosneft defends its stance on localization" says the oil company Rosneft is lobbying against law amendments that oblige oil extractors to use no less than 70 percent of Russian-made equipment when developing shelf deposits; pp 1, 4 (900 words).

Moskovsky Komsomolets

1. Alexei Lebedev interview with Vitaly Klitschko, in which he explains why Ukraine needs an early presidential election; pp 1, 3 (300 words).

2. Marina Ozerova article headlined "Screws to be tightened on websites" says that the State Duma has approved in the first reading a bill that will make it possible to block websites "publishing illegal information" without a court ruling; p 2 (300 words).

3. Konstantin Smirnov article headlined "Pipeline more important than Customs Union" comments on Putin's talks with Yanukovich in Moscow yesterday; p 3 (250 words).

Novaya Gazeta

1. Pavel Kanygin interview with Vitaly Klitschko headlined "Ukrainians and my country now need me not on the boxing ring", who comments on protests in Ukraine; p 5 (320 words).

2. Vladimir Pastukhov article headlined "Wrong mirror of Ukrainian revolution" analyses the current events in Ukraine and says which lessons Russia should learn from them; p 9 (1,000 words).

3. Yelena Racheva article headlined "What a job people have" looks at the construction of Olympic facilities in Sochi and at the problem of wage arrears; pp 12-13 (2,200 words).

RBK Daily

1. Alexander Litoy article headlined "Western front" says that the political situation in Russia and a number of criminal cases against opposition activists have led to a new wave of political emigration from Russia and looks at oppositionists' activity abroad; pp 1, 3 (1,750 words).

Krasnaya Zvezda

1. Oleg Surovtsev interview with the head of the Combat Training Directorate of the Eastern Military District, Col Anatoly Khromov, who speaks about the results of combat training in 2013 and plans for 2014; p 5 (900 words).
2. The second part of Oleg Surovtsev interview with the head of the military investigations department of the Investigative Committee for the Eastern Military District, Radik Garayev, who speaks about crime in the army. The first part of the interview was published on Dec. 11 ; p 7 (1,700 words).

Trud

1. Alexander Dmitriyev article headlined "Who will pay for rent of Maidan?" looks at Russian President Vladimir Putin's meeting with the Ukrainian leader yesterday; p 2 (650 words).

Argumenty i Fakty

1. Yekaterina Mirnaya article headlined "Ukraine is turning into Yugoslavia" looks at the recent developments in Ukraine and says that the EU and US are putting more pressure on Ukraine; pp 10-11 (1,600 words).

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