

What the Papers Say, Dec. 20, 2013

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Kommersant

1. Andrei Kolesnikov article headlined "Fifth hour of truth strikes" reports on President Vladimir Putin's news conference and notes that his announcement about pardoning former oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky has become the most significant news, although Putin made it when the conference had already been over; pp 1-2 (2,177 words).

2. Alexei Sokovnin et al. report headlined "Mikhail Khodorkovsky gives himself in for pardoning" says Khodorkovsky may be freed by the end of 2013, as Putin has agreed to sign a decree pardoning him. It means that Khodorkovsky acknowledged the legality of his trials and sentences and will not be able to return his property either in Russia or abroad; pp 1, 3 (817 words).

3. Alexander Gabuyev et al. interview "No problem with agreeing position with president"

with Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich speaking on the work of the Russian government and the issues to be considered in 2014, such as privatization of state companies and Gazprom's position on the gas market; pp 1, 6 (621 words).

4. Olga Shestopal article headlined "Non-cash account" says that in order to urge businesses and individuals to use non-cash payments, the Finance Ministry wants to impose fines for using too much cash. Experts note the measure is unlikely to be effective; pp 1, 10 (689 words).

5. Irina Nagornyykh et al. report headlined "Elected mayors get president's vote" says that Putin backed mayoral elections at his Dec. 19 news conference. However, he has not canceled the municipal government reform; p 2 (584 words).

6. Viktor Khamrayev and Maxim Ivanov article headlined "Russians to accept mercy" says Russians are expected to welcome Khodorkovsky's pardoning not because they sympathize with the former tycoon, but because they back all actions by Putin; p 3 (552 words).

7. Unattributed article headlined "Has he earned pardoning?" polls opposition politicians and public figures connected with Yukos, who comment on Khodorkovsky's pardoning; p 3 (545 words).

8. St. Petersburg-based Anna Pushkarskaya article headlined "Constitutional Court slows 'locomotives' down" says the Russian Constitutional Court has prohibited political parties from distributing seats in the parliament won with party tickets after so-called "locomotive" figures from the top of the ticket refuse to become parliamentarians; p 4 (570 words).

9. Ivan Safronov article headlined "Peru flies for \$500 million" says Russia and Peru have signed a contract to sell 24 helicopters Mi-171Sh for \$500 million ; p 4 (450 words).

10. Grigory Tumanov et al. report headlined "Amnesty starts dealing with cases" says as the presidential amnesty has come into effect, criminal charges against four people involved in the Bolotnaya Square disturbances case were dropped; p 5 (548 words).

11. Sergei Mashkin article headlined "Yevgenia Vasilyeva becomes fully home person" says a court has imposed some restrictions on former Defense Ministry official Yevgenia Vasilyeva currently staying under house arrest. She was barred from leaving home and talking to the press; p 5 (710 words).

12. Vyacheslav Kozlov report "No place in prisons for 'foreign agents'" says that the Justice Ministry wants to ban members of NGOs recognized as "foreign agents" from becoming

observers in relation to prisons and remand centres; p 5 (500 words).

13. Sergei Strokan article headlined "Syrian conference brings mediators closer together" says that although no breakthrough has been reached in the preparation for the international conference on Syria, the stances of Moscow and Washington on the problem have become closer; p 7 (351 words).

14. Yelena Chernenko article headlined "Visa problem heard well" says journalists have been allowed to listen to the talks of the Russian and Polish foreign ministers behind closed doors by mistake. The ministers discussed prospects of visa-free travel; p 7 (634 words).

15. Pavel Tarasenko article headlined "CSTO to shift to 'color revolutions'" says the Collective Security Treaty Organization member states have agreed to prevent the West from plotting new 'color revolutions' in former Soviet states by using the internet and social networks; p 7 (439 words).

Nezavisimaya Gazeta

1. Igor Naumov article headlined "Crisis may leave banks without ruble deposits" says the global financial crisis may affect Russian banks in 2014, as some financial institutions in the country are already on the verge of bankruptcy; pp 1, 4 (852 words).

2. Alexandra Samarina article headlined "Who Putin talks to?" says Putin has used his news conference to reach his electorate. His statement on pardoning Khodorkovsky was the main sensation of the event; pp 1, 3 (924 words).

3. Tatyana Ivzhenko article headlined "Ukraine may spark again" says Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich is going to mark time in integration talks both with Russia and the EU. At his news conference in Kiev, he said that political and integration issues had not been raised at his recent talks with Putin; pp 1, 7 (924 words).

4. Yekaterina Trifonova article headlined "Amnesty in operative regime" says that four people, who are on trial as part of the Bolotnaya Square disturbances case, have been released and charges against them have been dropped as the presidential amnesty came into effect; pp 1-2 (712 words).

5. Viktor Myasnikov article headlined "Moscow loses even to Beijing and Delhi in space" says the Russian orbital group is smaller than Chinese and Indian ones. Russia lags behind the West and the East in the use of military and civilian satellites; pp 1-2 (439 words).

6. Viktora Panfilova article headlined "Dushanbe chooses Kiev's way" says Tajikistan has followed Kyrgyzstan's example and decided to wait with joining the Customs Union due to possible political and economic risks; pp 1, 7 (749 words).
7. Editorial headlined "Putin is conservative in everything" says Putin wanted to portray himself as a conservative at his Dec. 19 news conference; p 2 (475 words).
8. Ivan Rodin and Alexei Gorbachev article headlined "Khodorkovsky allowed to go home" says some experts believe that the Kremlin has drafted Khodorkovsky's appeal for pardoning which was supported by Putin; p 2 (962 words).
9. Anastasia Bashkatova report "After mega regulator, mega auditor set up in Russia" says that the Audit Chamber is ready to engage in the state audit of the budget expenditure and will assess the effectiveness of the work of federal and regional state bodies; p 4 (1,000 words).
10. Yevgenia Novikova article headlined "Saudi Arabia may split Syria" says Sunnis and Shi'is in the Persian Gulf countries are raising money to support the sides in the Syrian conflict. A Russian expert does not rule out that the country may split in accordance with religious groups; p 8 (695 words).
11. Darya Tsilyurik article headlined "Obama recommended to conduct pin-point spying after Americans" says a group of experts have suggested that U.S. President Barack Obama should impose some limitations on the work of the National Security Agency; p 8 (583 words).

Vedomosti

1. Anastasia Kornya and Svetlana Bocharova article headlined "Khodorkovsky to be pardoned" says Putin's pardon of ex-tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky has become unexpected news even for his lawyers. The request for pardoning must have been submitted to the Kremlin by some middlemen, the authors note; pp 1-2 (880 words).
2. Editorial headlined "Putin's trump card" says the pardon of Khodorkovsky is unlikely to have economic effects, and as far as political consequences are concerned, it strengthens Putin's positions; pp 1, 6 (476 words).
3. Yelizaveta Sergina and Maxim Tovkaylo article headlined "Communication via state" says the state will not hold a control stake in a new mobile phone operator set up on the basis of Rostelekom and Tele2; pp 1, 16 (769 words).

4. Maxim Glikin and Liliya Biryukova article headlined "Putin's vegetarian period" says Putin's rhetoric has become less harsh as he sees no serious threats to his regime either in Russia or abroad; p 2 (599 words).
5. Kirill Kharatyan article headlined "Thing of week: Putin's microphone" says Putin's microphone must have been "bored" during the news conference as no controversial statements were made and even the sensational news about pardoning Khodorkovsky was made public after the conference had been over; p 7 (345 words).
6. Another editorial headlined "Exegi monumentum" criticizes the Russian authorities' decision to install plaques dedicated to Soviet rulers on Moscow buildings; p 6 (276 words).
7. Alexei Nikolsky report "Return to six districts" says that the Defense Ministry may reinstate six military districts in Russia; p 3 (500 words).
8. Polina Khimshiashvili report "CSTO's weapon is counterpropaganda" says that Nikolai Bordyuzha, Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Secretary-General, has said that the main threat for the organization's member states is "color revolutions"; p 3 (800 words).
9. Maxim Trudolyubov report "Good move in bad game" comments on Putin's decision to pardon Khodorkovsky; p 7 (600 words).

Izvestia

1. Alena Sivkova and Pavel Panov article headlined "Vladimir Putin stakes on regions" sums up the results of Vladimir Putin's news conference and notes that journalists were equally interested in economic and political topics; pp 1-2 (968 words).
2. Yelena Malay and Dmitry Runkevich article headlined "Property of corrupt officials' relatives to be seized" says a bill to seize the property of corrupt officials and their close relatives is to be submitted to the State Duma; pp 1, 4 (569 words).
3. Yelizaveta Mayetnaya and German Petelin article headlined "Serdyukov's secret surpluses" says the Defense Ministry has been illegally charging servicemen for so-called "surpluses" in the housing they received from the state. The practice started when former Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov was in office; pp 1, 5 (2,121 words).
4. Yelizaveta Mayetnaya and German Petelin article headlined "Mikhail Khodorkovsky to be freed without formalities" details the procedure of freeing Khodorkovsky after Putin signs

a decree to pardon him; pp 1-2 (486 words).

5. Maxim Sokolov report "Talked and pardoned" comments on Putin's news conference; p 8 (700 words).

6. Sergei Roganov report "Big politics done" says that a poll by Levada Center has shown a considerable decrease of Russians' interest in politics; p 9 (1,00 words).

Rossiiskaya Gazeta

1. Article headlined "Putin's response" publishes excerpts from Putin's news conference on Dec. 19 ; pp 1-3.

2. Article by Yury Chikhanchin, director of the Federal Service for Financial Monitoring, speaking on measures taken to stop money laundering in Russia; pp 1, 6 (1,400 words).

3. Tamara Shkel report "Road map instead of European biscuits" looks at the "open forum" discussion at the State Duma dedicated to the situation in Ukraine; p 4 (900 words).

4. Vladimir Poletayev report "Go home from courtroom" says that four Bolotnaya case suspects have been amnestied; p 7 (450 words).

5. Yury Gavrilov report "Relieved of duties, but not sacked" says that Ground Troops commander Vladimir Chirkin has been relieved of his post and is under investigation; p 7 (450 words).

6. Vladislav Vorobyev report "Maidan — embassy" looks at Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's visit to Poland to discuss the situation in Ukraine, among other things; p 8 (900 words).

7. Alexander Yemelyanenko interview "Missile carrier to be commissioned" with Igor Vilnit, head of the central maritime equipment design bureau Rubin; p 9 (1,700 words).

8. Yelena Brezhitskaya interview "Money is blood of war" with Sergei Chenchik, head of the Interior Ministry's main directorate for the North Caucasus Federal District; p 11 (2,300 words).

Moskovsky Komsomolets

1. Alexander Minkin article headlined "Putin ends with Khodorkovsky" comments on Putin's decision to pardon ex-tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky; pp 1-2 (1,048 words).
2. Mikhail Rostovskiy article headlined "President no longer 'Vova'" comments on the style of Putin's rhetoric during his news conference, which showed that he is the only leader in the Russian political space; pp 1-2 (1,083 words).
3. Stanislav Belkovsky report "Free and not dangerous" says that Putin is ready to free Mikhail Khodorkovsky because he has "stopped being afraid of him"; p 1 (150 words).
4. Kirill Saltykov report "Serdyukov does not agree to amnesty, so far" says that former Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov will make a decision on whether to agree to be amnestied after he studies the materials of his criminal case; p 1 (150 words).
5. Mikhail Zubov and Natalya Rozhkova article headlined "It is sensation of decade" polls opposition politicians and pro-Kremlin ones who comment on Putin's decision to pardon Mikhail Khodorkovsky; p 2 (698 words).
6. Stanislav Belkovskiy report "Third year of perestroika" looks at the political situation in Russia; p 3 (1,000 words).
7. Svetlana Samodelova interview headlined "We wait for Nadya with soup with meat balls" with the father of jailed Pussy Riot member Nadezhda Tolokonnikova; p 4 (850 words).
8. Yelena Samoylova report "Dagestan's militia men come out in support of Said Amirov" says that Dagestan's militia men have backed Said Amirov, the arrested mayor of Makhachkala; pp 1, 6 (2,700 words).
9. Natalya Rozhkova report "Navalny sees himself as threat" features comment of blogger Alexei Navalny on Putin's statements on him made during his news conference on Dec. 19 ; p 2 (200 words).

Novaya Gazeta

1. Yulia Latynina article headlined "Why has Putin given \$15 billion to Yanukovych?" says President Putin wasted \$15 billion while buying Ukrainian bonds and notes that in this way

Putin's cronies want to get hold of Ukrainian assets; p 5 (686 words).

2. Vera Chelishcheva article headlined "Khodorkovsky takes burden of choice" says Khodorkovsky did not consider public opinion when asked Putin about pardoning, he was guided by family reasons; p 4 (943 words).

RBK Daily

1. Alexander Litoy et al. article headlined "Ten years is a serious punishment" says Putin spoke about pardoning Khodorkovsky after his end-of-year news conference. However, the pardon does not mean there would not be another Yukos case; pp 1, 2 (700 words).

2. Alexander Litoy article entitled "Rights activists will be assigned to policemen" says the Moscow Helsinki Group will monitor the work of Russian police in 2014 in 15 Russian regions; p 2 (450 words).

3. Inga Vorobyeva article entitled "Peskov puzzled" says that Putin's end-of-year news conference was held in a "strange way": part of the questions were asked last year and Putin was bored answering them, while some of the question were just absurd; p 3 (300 words).

Tvoi Den

1. Alexander Yunashev article headlined "Vladimir Putin: There will never be presidents for life in our country" reviewed the highlights of the president's new conference — his answers to questions about aid to Ukraine, his political rivals, Moscow mayoral election; Edward Snowden and others; pp 2-3 (700 words).

2. Unattributed article entitled "President will pardon Khodorkovsky" says that the former Yukos head has asked the president to pardon him and will be released in the near future; p 2 (150 words).

Komsomolskaya Pravda

1. Unattributed article headlined "Vladimir Putin about his successor, salaries of officials and billions for Ukraine..." gives a gist of the news conference; pp 2-3 (1,500 words).

2. Unattributed article entitled "Vladimir Putin on spies, opposition and personnel reshuffle" continues the summary of the president's news conference ; pp 4-6 (2,200 words).
3. Dmitry Smirnov article headlined "Putin will pardon Khodorkovsky" says Putin said so after the news conference; p 6 (100 words).
4. Yevgeny Suprycheva article entitled "Maidan is losing momentum" says the "territory of freedom" is turning into a camping-ground; p 9 (300 words).

Noviye Izvestia

1. Anatoly Dmitryev article entitled "Putin speaking" says Putin's news conference lasted four hours and reminds readers of its highlights; p 2 (700 words).
2. Unattributed article entitled "Sensation of the day: Mikhail Khodorkovsky may be released in the next few days" says the statement that was made public after the news conference was a real scoop; p 2 (100 words).

Trud

1. Yury Ryazhsky and Sergei Frolov article headlined "Talk with Putin is lavish with news" says Putin is prepared to pardon Khodorkovsky and help miners in the Kemerovo region, among other things. The way reporters tried to draw attention to the questions makes the authors think that soon Putin's news conferences will turn into entertainment shows; p 2 (900 words)
2. Vladislav Rzhnevsky article headlined "No panic!" says that restructuring Russian banks has turned out to be a complicated business; pp 1-2 (700 words).

Krasnaya Zvezda

1. Dmitry Semenov article headlined "From the first person: openly and frankly" reminds readers of the highlights of President Putin's end-of-year news conference; pp 2-3 (2,700 words).

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