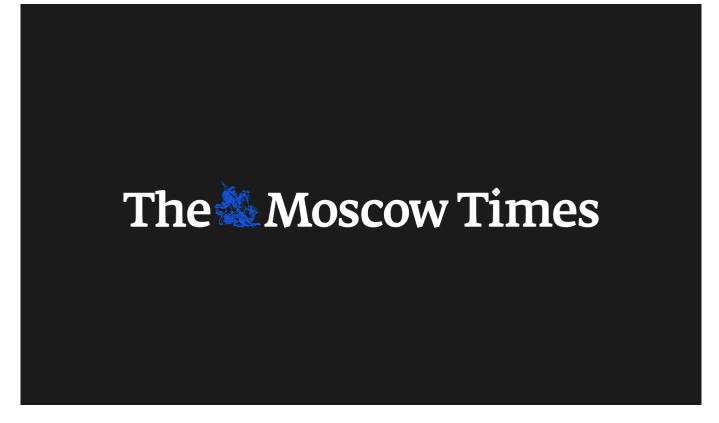


Putin Doubts Ratings

By The Moscow Times

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There is a great deal of vagueness about the rating milieu in the financial world, including about Standard & Poor's, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said.

"We know well what is going on in the financial world: S&P has downgraded the United States' rating and its chief has been sacked, and a probe has been launched against the agency," Putin said. "So, there is a great deal about this business that we do not quite understand, like many other things of a superficial nature," he said.

Putin made this remark at a meeting with members of the Russian Union of University Rectors after a proposal was made to set up an international rating system at universities.

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