

What the Papers Say, Dec. 19, 2013

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Kommersant

1. Ivan Safronov and Nikolai Sergeiev article headlined "He won't run parade" says that the president has relieved the commander-in-chief of the Russian Ground Forces Colonel General Vladimir Chirkin of his post, reportedly — over bribery charges; pp 1, 6 (776 words).
2. Yelena Chernenko article headlined "Russia to be put on visa hold" says that the European Commission has made a list of drawbacks in the Russian legislature to be eliminated before the EU gets down to drafting a visa cancellation agreement for Russians. The fulfillment of the EU's demands will takes years, experts say; pp 1, 7 (780 words).
3. Anatoly Dzhumaylo et al. report headlined "Industrialists refresh memory about offshores" says that a week after President Putin brought up the "de-offshoring" of the Russian economy in his annual address to the Federal Assembly major companies and businessmen

backed the idea and proposed corresponding plans; pp 1, 9 (669 words).

4. Khalil Aminov et al. report headlined "Olympic investors to start gambling" says that Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has suggested that a gambling zone be set up in Sochi after the Winter Olympics in 2014 in order to avert the default of investors engaged in the construction of Olympic facilities; pp 1, 12 (664 words).

5. Viktor Khamrayev and Anna Pushkarskaya article headlined "Supreme Court taken at third attempt" says that the State Duma has passed in the second reading the bills to merge the Supreme Court and the Higher Court of Arbitration despite broad criticism; p 3 (697 words).

6. Sofya Samokhina et al. report headlined "Amnesty gains ground" says that the State Duma has approved the amnesty bill timed to the 20th anniversary of the constitution; p 3 (777 words).

7. Alexei Chernyshev article headlined "Investors of gambling zone bet money" says that foreign investors in the gambling zone in the Maritime region offer 367 million rubles for their business partner Oleg Drozdov to be released on bail. Drozdov is charged with a fraud causing a damage of 367 million rubles; p 5 (509 words).

8. Oleg Rubnikovich article headlined "Former minister charged with 150 episodes" says that today the French authorities are to consider the extradition of former Moscow regional finance minister Alexei Kuznetsov charged with the theft of 11 billion rubles from the budget; p 6 (506 words).

9. Pavel Tarasenko article headlined "Indian National Congress becomes anti-American" says that Delhi has taken a number of anti-American steps in response to the arrest of the Indian deputy consul general in New York on suspicion of fraud; p 7 (505 words).

10. Sergei Strokan article headlined "EU reinforcing Ukrainian front" says that the agreements reached during Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich's visit to Moscow satisfied neither the opposition nor the West. The agreements have opened a new round of struggle for Ukraine between Russia and the West, experts warn; p 7 (559 words).

11. Vyacheslav Sadovnichy and Dmitry Butrin article headlined "Moscow's present shown to Ukraine" says that soon after the new Russian-Ukrainian agreements were signed the Ukrainian government approved the 2014 budget which the head of the cabinet called "the budget of social development"; p 8 (582 words).

12. Olga Shestopal and Svetlana Dementyeva article headlined "Capital flows as intended" says that the struggle against the withdrawal of capital via the Customs Union countries has not yielded any tangible results; p 10 (896 words).

13. Yury Barsukov article headlined "Ukraine put on quarterly meter" says that the gas discount for Ukraine is to be approved by Gazprom every three months. Thus, Moscow has obtained a new efficient tool for exerting pressure on Kiev; p 11 (487 words).

Nezavisimaya Gazeta

1. Igor Naumov article headlined "Capital fleeing Russia via Customs Union" says that over the last two years some \$47 billion have fled the country due to facilitated customs clearance procedures of the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. Not only illegal turnover of services and goods accounts for the figure, Russian businessmen prefer to open new companies in Kazakhstan thus depriving Russia of new jobs and taxes; pp 1, 4 (600 words).

2. Ivan Rodin article headlined "Amnesty cleared of technical mistake" says that the State Duma has approved the presidential amnesty bill after returning the clause relating to the defendants in the Bolotnaya unrest case and the Greenpeace activists from the "Arctic Sunrise" ship; pp 1, 3 (400 words).

3. Anastasia Bashkatova article headlined "Hopeless investment of National Welfare Fund" says that President Vladimir Putin has stated that Russia will invest \$15 billion from the National Welfare Fund in Ukrainian government securities and reduce the price of natural gas by about a third. Experts differ on the consequences of the move for the Russian economy; pp 1, 4 (900 words).

4. Sokhbet Mamedov article headlined "Baku, Ankara may change balance of forces in region" says that Azerbaijan and Turkey have conducted talks to further step up military cooperation and looks at the consequences; pp 1, 6 (500 words).

5. Tatyana Ivzhenko article headlined "Putin presents Yanukovych with second presidential term" says that the new Russian-Ukrainian agreements mark another geopolitical victory of Moscow over the West and Ukrainian President Yanukovych's victory over the opposition inside the country; pp 1, 6 (1,000 words).

6. Yury Paniyev article headlined "Marines to defend Japan" says that the Japanese government has increased its defense budget for the first time in 22 years and has announced its intention to step up military cooperation with the U.S. and Asian partners; pp 1, 7 (400 words).

7. Editorial headlined "Pumping money in defense sector does not save from cut-back in production" says that production has been decreasing even in the sectors where the state has been pumping money and wonders if the authorities themselves are aware of the causes of a slump in investment and production; p 2 (300 words).
8. Andrei Melnikov article headlined "Russian Orthodox Church 'nationalizing' culture" says that the presidium of the Russian Interfaith Council has discussed its achievements and set tasks for the future; p 2 (400 words).
9. Alexei Gorbachev article headlined "Fewer elections" says that experts have drafted proposals on the reform of local governments announced by President Putin. They suggest that direct mayoral elections be canceled and the number of electable deputies be reduced; p 3 (600 words).
10. Andrei Kozlov article headlined "Carte blanche: Forcing payments" criticizes a new initiative to allocate a certain sum to servicemen in need of housing; p 3 (600 words).
11. Yevgenia Novikova article headlined "West changing attitude towards Bashar al-Assad" says that the West has stopped demanding that the Syrian president should step down immediately and looks at the reasons behind the U-turn; p 7 (400 words).
12. Yevgeny Grigoryev article headlined "Germany returning to European affairs" says that having formed a new government Berlin returned its attention to European affairs; p 7 (600 words).

Vedomosti

1. Margarita Lyutova and Margarita Papchenkova article headlined "Remaining welfare to go to Siberia" says that the funds of the National Wealth Fund may be allocated to three projects in Siberia; pp 1, 5 (596 words).
2. Margarita Papchenkova et al. report headlined "Repatriation of money" says that major Russian companies have stated that they are giving up offshores following the president's call for further decline in offshoring; pp 1, 4 (1,103 words).
3. Editorial headlined "Eurasian shell games" says that both Moscow and Kiev may interpret the recent agreements between the countries as their own achievement and looks at advantages for each side; pp 1, 6 (400 words).

4. Svetlana Bocharova article headlined "Amnesty for one's own" says that the amnesty timed to the anniversary of the constitution will affect defendants in the Bolotnaya unrest case and will apply to crimes of officials; p 2 (552 words).

5. Alexei Nikolsky and Polina Khimshiashvili article headlined "Friendship with Kiev to help fleet" says that although the Russia-Ukraine agreements in the sphere of the defense-industrial complex are mostly declarations, Kiev made several important promises on the Black Sea Fleet; p 3 (538 words).

6. Editorial headlined "Cap D'Antibes law" says that instead of banning state officials from possessing property abroad the authorities should conduct fair and universal checks to trace the origin of the officials' wealth; p 6 (256 words).

7. Alexei Zakharov article headlined "Causes and effects: Lessons of Serdyukov case" contemplates President Putin's approach to countering corruption; p 7 (687 words).

8. Dmitry Simakov article headlined "Company of week: Gazprom" comments on Gazprom's gas discount for Ukraine; p 7 (470 words).

9. Alexandra Terentyeva et al. report headlined "Coal and cars in exchange for pipes" says that the recent Russia-Ukraine agreements envisage increasing trade turnover between the countries and says that it is not clear whether the countries will benefit from that; p 10 (1,315 words).

Rossiiskaya Gazeta

1. Sergei Ptichkin interview with deputy chairman of the Military-Industrial Commission Oleg Bochkarev headlined "Bombs to die quietly" where he says that the elimination of ammunition will be conducted with the use of advanced technologies as of 2014; pp 1, 5 (800 words).

2. Vasily Mironov article headlined "Cote d'-Azur of Seliger" says next year, the State Duma may return to the discussion of a bill that would ban state officials from owning foreign property. The issue was brought up following a scandal over the robbery of a luxurious villa of Krasnoyarsk governor in France; pp 1, 4 (500 words).

3. Article by head of the Centre for Political Information Alexei Mukhin headlined "In line with healthy spirit of conservatism" says that President Putin's influence on the international arena is growing; pp 1, 2 (900 words).

4. Newspaper publishes resolution on the amnesty timed to the 20th anniversary of the constitution; p 2 (1,000 words).

5. Vitaly Petrov article headlined "Principle of reciprocity" says that when speaking at the Federation Council on Dec. 18, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov expressed concern over the European Parliament pushing for its own 'Magnitsky list' and teaching Russia democracy; p 5 (500 words).

Izvestia

1. Ivan Cheberko article headlined "Head of Federal Space Agency ready to abandon Angara" says the space agency boss, Oleg Ostapenko, considers Russia's main space project of the recent years a dead end solution; pp 1, 8 (1,400 words).

2. Yelena Teslova article headlined "Angela Merkel not against coming to Olympics" features Russian expert comments on decisions by some Western politicians to miss next year's Olympics in Russia; pp 1, 2 (600 words).

3. Olesya Yelkova et al. article headlined "Businesses take line towards de-offshorization" says after President Vladimir Putin spoke against offshores, large companies started reporting about complying with requirements of the head of state; pp 1, 11 (500 words).

4. Alexander Yunashev article headlined "State Duma announces amnesty" says lawmakers have voted for a resolution on the amnesty timed to the 20th anniversary of the constitution; p 5 (300 words).

5. Konstantin Volkov article headlined "Different tribes fight in South Sudan" says the fighting in a "young African state" may turn into a civil war; p 17 (400 words).

6. Boris Mezhuiev op-ed headlined "Neighbor you secretly save" says Russia has provided economic backing to Ukraine to protect its own interests; p 17 (600 words).

Moskovsky Komsomolets

1. Nikolay Vardul article headlined "And they eat Russian fat!" looks at negative consequences of a purchase of Ukrainian state securities by Russia; pp 1, 3 (643 words).

2. Irina Badmayeva article headlined "Elvira Nabiullina's mop-up operation" says that the Central Bank is going to do its best to get rid of banks laundering money, its head said; p 2 (466 words).

3. Nikolai Makeyev article headlined "Dmitriy Medvedev exposes energy plot in North Caucasus" says that Prime Minister Medvedev slammed large-scale thefts in the fuel and energy complex of the North Caucasus at a meeting yesterday; p 2 (438 words).

4. Melor Sturua article headlined "President Obama not to go to Sochi" says that for the first time ever none of the U.S. top officials will attend the opening ceremony for the Winter Olympics in Sochi; p 2 (353 words).

5. Marina Ozerova article headlined "Pregnant women discovered in Serdyukov's company" says that head of the State Duma Committee for Civil, Criminal. Arbitration and procedural Law Pavel Krasheninnikov assured lawmakers that the amnesty will not affect former Defense Minister Anatoliy Serdyukov; p 2 (1,048 words).

6. Igor Karmazin article headlined "Big Ukrainian bargaining. Yanukovich to deceive Putin?" features experts' comments on the recent Russia-Ukraine agreements; p 3 (517 words).

RBK Daily

1. Alexander Litoy report "Freedom of those who differ" says that the State Duma has passed the amnesty tabled by President Vladimir Putin marking the 20th anniversary of the Russian constitution. Amnesty will be granted only to dozens of prosecuted opposition activists and, on the other hand, to a large number of employees from security and law-enforcement agencies, article says. It will be possible to speak about the number of released people only in six months. Article features comments by politicians; p 2 (850 words).

2. Tatyana Ternovskaya report "Hackers begin to play for high stakes" says that cyber criminals have learned to hack banking systems and steal money not only from clients' deposits, but from banks themselves; p 6 (550 words).

Noviye Izvestia

1. Yelena Ryzhova report "Casting out lines" says that the government has not approved an expanded version of the anti-piracy law drafted by the Culture Ministry. However, according to Deputy Culture Minister Grigory Ivliyev, the ministry will insist that the document should be approved because it offers a "real mechanism of protection"; pp 1, 4

(1,100 words).

2. Arina Raksina report "Escape to shade" says that Elvira Nabiullina, chairperson of the Russian Central Bank, has said at a conference organized by the Association of Russian Banks that capital flight from Russia with the use of dubious schemes has preserved on a critical level; pp 1, 3 (600 words).

3. Vardan Ogandzhanyan report "'It is limited mercy'" looks at the amnesty approved on Dec. 18 by the State Duma and says that the amnesty, which is referred to as "broad", will give freedom to fewer than 1,500 people; pp 1-2 (600 words).

4. Yekaterina Dyatlovskaya report "Peaceful 'Bolotnaya' protest" says that the international expert commission has published a report summing up the results of its probe into the events on Moscow's Bolotnaya Square in May 2012. Human rights campaigners believe that it was law-enforcement agencies that have provoked mass unrest on the square; p 2 (850 words).

5. Artem Lunkov report "'Strange' privatization" says that the State Duma intends to ban the use of the word Russia in the names of independent NGOs; p 2 (600 words).

6. Aleksey Smirnov report "'Big ear'" says that Swedish journalists, using documents given to them by former employee of US intelligence services Edward Snowden, have criticized Swedish special services that were allegedly providing the USA with classified information about Russia; p 2 (650 words).

7. Sergei Putilov report "Agreement under New Year tree" looks at the Russian-Ukrainian agreement recently signed in Moscow; p 3 (550 words).

Komsomolskaya Pravda

1. Dmitry Smirnov report "Putin gives Yanukovych discount" says that Ukraine has received new prices on Russian gas and a \$15 billion loan from Russia; p 2 (600 words).

2. Yevgeny Belyakov report "Why we lent billions to Ukraine" looks at the agreements that Russia has concluded with Ukraine and features Russian experts' comments on the issue; p 3 (700 words).

3. Andrei Baranov report "Is it wasted effort?" says that many people are perplexed about the bailout Russia has given to "ungrateful" Ukraine; p 4 (300 words).

4. Anastasia Zlotnikova report "Putin's media weapons of mass destruction" looks at television channel Russia Today (RT) and says that it is "successfully competing with the BBC and CNN"; p 5 (650 words).

5. Dmitry Nadezhdin report "Pussy Riot and Serdyukov may be pardoned and Khodorkovsky and Kvachkov will stay in prison" comments on the amnesty passed by the State Duma and looks at who may be released from custody; p 6 (900 words).

Krasnaya Zvezda

1. Viktor Ruchkin report "West is no longer against al-Assad" says that Western countries have for the first time indicated to the Syrian opposition that President Bashar al-Assad may stay in office; p 3 (800 words).

Komsomolskaya Pravda weekly

1. Yevgeny Chernykh interview headlined "Is Ukrainian opposition afraid of Yulia Tymoshenko?" with Mikhail Delyagin, director of Globalization Institute, who comments on the situation in Ukraine; p 4 (900 words).

Trud

1. Sergei Frolov report "Oversaturated ethnic solution" comments on initiatives voiced in the EU on restrictions in relation to labour migrants, particularly, in the UK; p 2 (900 words).

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