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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

What the Papers Say, Jan. 22

January 22, 2014

Kommersant

1. Ilya Barabanov report headlined "Catapult dies, but does not surrender" gives a first hand account of what is going on in central Kiev where confrontation continues between the police and anti-government protesters; pp 1, 6 (926 words).

2. Oleg Trutnev article called "Vodka makers sober up" says the Russian spirits company Sinergiya has reported an estimated 15 percent drop in sales last year. Licensed alcohol producers are losing the market to bootleggers as a result of duty hikes, the report concludes; p 1, 10 (592 words).

3. Yegor Popov article called "KamAZ to be rolled to state" says the state-owned VEB bank and the Rostec state corporation are competing with Daimler to buy a 23.5 percent stake in the Russian truck maker KamAZ; pp 1, 7 (790 words).

4. Maxim Ivanov and Sergei Goryashko article headlined "New party to be created for Vladimir Ryzhkov" says the associates of Vladimir Ryzhkov have registered a party called "Republicans of Russia". They may begin to develop it if no compromise is reached on the "positive" agenda of the opposition RPR-Parnas party that Ryzhkov may reportedly withdraw from; pp 1, 3 (641 words).

5. Anna Pushkarskaya article called "Constitutional Court begins to get lower" reports on a case of nine organizations that is being heard in the Constitutional Court. The claimants are challenging excessive fines that they were ordered to pay for administrative offenses; p 2 (565 words).

6. Irina Nagornykh article headlined "Ethnic policy raises Russian issue" reports on a meeting at the Russian presidential administration where presidential envoys in federal districts briefed the head of the administration, Sergei Ivanov, on the implementation of the ethnic policy. The so-called Russian issue might be put on agenda of the next session of the Ethnic Relations Council under the Russian president, author says; p 2 (608 words).

7. Tatyana Yedovina article called "World economy short of optimism" summarizes the findings of the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2013 survey that says the world economy grew by a mere 2.1 percent last year; p 2 (559 words).

8. Sofia Samokhina and Sergei Goryashko article called "Constitution anniversary amnesty outruns economic one" says almost 2,000 people have been released from prison since the amnesty marking the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Russian Constitution was announced a month ago, compared to only 500 people who were granted amnesty for economic crimes; p 3 (429 words).

9. Viktor Khamrayev article headlined "Duma to call Ukraine to order" says the Russian parliament is to adopt a statement on developments in Ukraine later today, calling on the opposition to end its standoff with the authorities and to start talks; p 3 (437 words).

10. Natalia Korchenkova and Sofia Samokhina article called "Ella Pamfilova being promoted closer to president" says the presidential human rights council has asked President Vladimir Putin to nominate Ella Pamfilova for the post of human rights ombudsman. The seat may also be contested by Communist lawmakers Svetlana Savitskaya and Oleg Smolin; p 3 (501 words).

11. Oleg Rubnikovich article called "Dagestan's vice premier demoted to pre-trial detention" reports on a hearing in the Lefortovo district court of Moscow that ordered that deputy head of the Republic of Dagestan, Magomedgusen Nasrutdinov, should be kept in custody pending trial. He faces charges of major fraud; p 4 (552 words).

12. Vladimir Vodo article called "Lithuania secures half-billion extradition" gives details of a case against Russian banker Vladimir Antonov and his business partner who are to be extradited from Britain to Lithuania where they are wanted on suspicion of embezzling almost 500 million euros ($678.5 million); p 4 (477 words).

13. Konstantin Voronov article headlined "Siberian chemical plant launches production of kickbacks" says an investigation has been completed against three top managers of the Siberian Chemical Plant of the Russian nuclear power corporation Rosatom and a staff member of one of Rosatom's fuel companies. They have been charged with bribery; p 4 (411 words).

14. Alexander Voronov and Pavel Korobov article called "Prayer and entertainment centre" profiles a project by the Moscow region authorities to build a "cultural and education centre" that will feature an Orthodox church, a mosque, a synagogue and a Buddhist temple as well as hotels, shops and cafes; p 5 (521 words).

15. Alexander Chernykh article entitled "Russian amnesty is not categorized as improvement" looks at an annual report by Human Rights Watch that remains strongly critical of the situation in Russia despite a pardon granted to Mikhail Khodorkovsky and the Pussy Riot band members and a major amnesty; p 5 (410 words).

16. Pavel Tarasenko article headlined "Single Europe offered to disband" reports the results of a survey commissioned by The Sunday Mirror and The Independent on Sunday that has revealed a strong and ever growing support for the Independence Party; p 6 (580 words).

17. Sergei Strokan article called "Geneva 2 short of Iran" says the UN has recalled its invitation for Iran to take part in the Geneva 2 peace conference that starts today. The conference is believed to be the last chance of putting an end to a civil war in Syria, but without Iran it is likely to fail; p 6 (479 words).

18. Yelena Chernenko article called "Russia coping with external challenges" highlights the key points made by Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov at his news conference summarizing the results of Russia's foreign policy in 2013; p 6 (645 words).

Vedomosti

1. Margarita Papchenkova et al. article headlined "State companies to be prescribed with dividend increase" says the Economic Development Ministry has suggested that state-owned companies should pay 25 percent of their net profit as dividends; pp 1, 5 (700 words).

2. Grigory Milov article entitled "Attention: U.S." looks at the results of a survey by PwC that interviewed CEOs of major world companies to find out that 44 percent of them believe the global economy is recovering; pp 1, 5 (400 words).

3. Editorial headlined "Putin everywhere" comments on the proposal of academician Gennady Osipov to have Putin as head of the Russian Academy of Sciences; pp 1, 6 (400 words).

4. Alexei Nikolsky article headlined "Student will be taught to be soldier" says the Defense Ministry intends to work out military training options for university students; p 2 (500 words).

5. Polina Khimshiashvili article called "Peace in Syria: Second attempt" looks ahead at the Geneva 2 peace conference that opens today; p 3 (400 words).

6. Maria Zheleznova article called "Insurance for Ryzhkov" says associates of Vladimir Ryzhkov, who was criticized by other opposition leaders for his meetings with President Vladimir Putin, have set up an organizing committee for a new party called Republicans of Russia; p 3 (600 words).

7. Margarita Lyutova article headlined "Protection for welfare" says the Finance Ministry is going to tighten the rules of access to means from the National Welfare Fund for projects with foreign involvement; p 4 (500 words).

8. Yekaterina Shulman article called "Guide to legislators" offers a guide to the Russian parliament's agenda and the logic behind the adoption of laws or the absence of it; pp 6-7 (1,000 words).

9. Andrei Kolesnikov op-ed headlined "Rejection of expert opinion" notes that the country's policy makers have apparently lost interest in expert opinions and analysis; p 7 (400 words).

10. Galina Starinskaya and Milana Chelpanova article entitled "Diesel fuel will not help" says that despite expectations, the railway operator Russian Railways has not increased its tariffs for shipping diesel fuel; p 12 (500 words).

11. Yulia Orlova and Daria Borisyak article headlined "Ruble shakes off five years" says the Russian ruble exchange rate has hit a five-year record low, reaching 34 rubles per $1; p 14 (400 words).

12. Valery Kodachigov and Anna Afanasiyeva article called "Dishes cut off cable" says cable

television subscription rates are stagnating in Russia as people are opting for satellite and internet television; p 17 (600 words).

Nezavisimaya Gazeta

1. Viktor Litovkin article called "Generals approve plan for 2014" reports on an extended session of the board of the Defense Ministry that discussed and approved the ministry's plans for 2014; pp 1, 2 (800 words).

2. Alexandra Samarina article headlined "Ella Pamfilova coming back" says Ella Pamfilova, who has been nominated by the Human Rights Council under the Russian president for Russia's human rights ombudsman, is likely to get the job; pp 1, 3 (914 words).

3. Svetlana Gavrilina article called "St. Petersburg city defenders made equal to Wahhabis" says the St. Petersburg police were instructed to take contact details from young people who were detained at an anti-fascist rally on Jan. 19 and to notify their employers about the detainees' involvement in extremist groups. Human rights activists are concerned about the possible crackdown on youth movements and subcultures; pp 1, 6 (417 words).

4. Tatyana Dvoynova article headlined "Deputy's kidnappers put on trial" gives details of a criminal case over the kidnapping of Dmitry Suleyev, a member of the Vladivostok city council. Four men are to stand trial on charges of kidnapping him and extorting ransom; pp 1, 6 (474 words).

5. Svetlana Gamova article called "Romanian police to break up Moldovan Maidan" says the Moldovan Interior Ministry has requested an extended mandate to break up unauthorized protests. In case of unrest in the capital Chisinau, Romania will send its police forces to render assistance; pp 1, 7 (678 words).

6. Tatyana Ivzhenko article entitled "Firearms may be used in Kiev" gives an account of what is going on in Kiev; says a kind of guerrilla war has started in the Ukrainian capital: anti-government activists have reportedly caught several people who say they were offered $50 per night to set cars on fire and smash shop windows so that the authorities had plausible grounds for declaring state of emergency; pp 1, 7 (1,278 words).

7. Yekaterina Trifonova article called "Lessons of Biryulevo slowly learnt" looks at the measures being taken to make it easier for migrants to adapt to life in Russia, but the results are uninspiring because of rampant corruption and anti-immigrant sentiments; pp 1, 7 (912 words).

8. Editorial headlined "Maidan lessons" points to increasing anti-Western sentiments in Moldova and Georgia; p 2 (525 words).

9. Alexei Gorbachev article called "Green Alliance grows thanks to fleeing A Just Russia members" previews a conference of Oleg Mitvol's Green Alliance party. Gennady Gudkov and lawmakers Ilya Ponomarev and Dmitry Gudkov, who were members of the A Just Russia party, are expected to join the alliance. Experts say, though, that it is too early to speak about a major exodus from A Just Russia and the prospects of Green Alliance are not clear; p 3 (684 words).

10. Ivan Rodin article headlined "Opposition against 'Foggy court'" says the State Duma has approved in the first reading a bill that would enable people to challenge voting results in their own constituencies in court; p 3 (674 words).

11. Vladimir Mukhin column headlined "Carte Blanche. There will be no army ombudsman in Russia yet" says the Defense Ministry has reportedly objected to the creation of the post of military ombudsman despite the fact that cases of bullying in the army are not rare; p 3 (730 words).

12. Anastasia Bashkatova article called "People's Front protects Putin from expensive electricity" says the All-Russia People's Front has spoken against a new hike in electricity prices, saying it would be "a political mistake"; p 4 (859 words).

13. Alina Terekhova article called "Investors sceptical about BRICS markets" looks at a report by Ernst and Young that has showed the number of companies that went out of business in 2013 doubled year on year. Meanwhile, experts are skeptical about growth prospects for emerging markets; p 4 (835 words).

14. Igor Naumov article headlined "Doctors' salaries checked against May instructions" reports on Putin's meeting with the cabinet to discuss health care issues. The sector seems to be making progress as the mortality rate was down 1.5 percent, heart diseases decreased 4 percent and doctors were given a pay rise. Middle class people, however, prefer to receive medical treatment abroad because the quality of medical care in Russia is believed to be low; p 4 (615 words).

15. Sergei Nikolsky report headlined "Folks" laments a lack of education and critical thinking in Russian people; p 5 (2,206 words).

16. Sergei Nikanorov article called "North Caucasus electricity sector on the edge of precipice" says electricity arrears have amounted to 24 billion rubles (about $700m) and calls for an immediate overhaul of the electricity reselling system that has emerged in the area; p 6 (625

words).

17. Yevgenya Novikova article headlined "Absence of Iran at Geneva 2 is mistake, but not disaster" summarizes the key statements made by Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov at his annual news conference; p 8 (779 words).

18. Vladimir Skosyrev article called "Washington ready to help its Olympians out" says the U.S. has sent two navy ships to the Black Sea, but the arrangement is unlikely to boost security at the Sochi Olympics. Meanwhile, the fact that the Chinese leadership is going to attend the Olympic opening ceremony is viewed as a good sign for Russia-China relations; p 8 (460 words).

Izvestia

1. Alexandra Bayazitova article headlined "Federal Tax Service tighten rules of internet trade" says that, according to the letter by head of the Federal Tax Service sent to inspection boards, online traders should print the sales slip no longer than within five minutes after the payment was made by the customer, or face a fine amounting to 30,000-40,000 rubles (about $1,000); pp 1, 4 (450 words).

2. Yelizaveta Mayetnaya and German Petelin article headlined "Company owned by Medvedev's cousin bring partners to ruin" says that businessmen in the city of Stary Oskol have complained that the company co-owned by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev's cousin, Andrei Medvedev, owes them more than 350 million rubles (about $10.3 million) spent on the construction of the agricultural complex; pp 1, 7 (1900 words).

3. Olesya Yelkova article headlined "Federal Drug Control Service to hire informers from railway workers" says that the anti-drug service plans to closer cooperate with Russian Railways to fight against drug trafficking and pay for the information about drugs smuggling; pp 1, 4 (700 words).

4. Yury Matsarsky article headlined "Kiev barricades occupied by nationalists" gives an eyewitness's account of the situation in Kiev, portraying protesters as insurgents; pp 1, 8 (800 words).

5. Yelena Teslova and Svetlana Subbotina article headlined "Abstract wording to be taken out of anti-extremist law" says that United Russia lawmaker Alexei Zhuravlov proposes to change the definition of extremism in the Russian anti-extremism law to make it more specific; pp 1-2 (700 words).

Moskovsky Komsomolets

1. Igor Karmazin article headlined "Kiev warming by Molotov cocktail" features a special correspondent's report on the ongoing riots in Kiev saying that people no longer trust the authorities, but the opposition cannot suggest the ways of resolving the crisis; pp 1, 3 (600 words).

2. Matvei Ganapolsky op-ed headlined "Kiev bargain" describes the Ukrainian situation as "a deadlock". The authorities cannot forcefully disperse protests as it would put an end to any relations with the European Union, while the opposition leaders are not strong enough to force President Yanukovych to agree to their demands; pp 1, 3 (800 words).

3. Mikhail Rostovsky article headlined "Why Chubais walks out through door and returns through window" says that the dismissal of the head of the state corporation Rosnano, Anatoly Chubais, may have been a technical move; pp 1-2 (450 words).

4. Natalia Rozhkova article headlined "Internet to be punished for violating sovereignty" looks into the pack of anti-terrorist bills submitted to the State Duma; p 2 (400 words).

5. Anastasia Gnedinskaya and Oleg Bazak article headlined "Catapult shot 10 meters" says the police forces in Kiev managed to destroy a wooden catapult built by Kiev protesters; p 3 (300 words).

6. Andrei Yashlavsky article headlined "Invitation to Iran withdrawn" says that the Syrian opposition would participate in the Geneva 2 conference only provided that Iran is crossed out from the invitations list; p 3 (200 words).

7. Unattributed article headlined "Russia tested" features pundits' forecast saying that 2014 will be a year of "a creeping disaster" for Russia; p 4 (1,400 words).

Rossiiskaya Gazeta

1. Natalia Yachmennikova interview with director of the Civil Aviation State Research Institute Vasily Shapkin headlined "Russian sky: Friend or foe" covers a broad range of issues from flight safety to aircraft building; pp 1, 9 (2,156 words).

2. Fedor Lukyanov op-ed called "Open-ended game" calls the Geneva 2 conference "the most intriguing diplomatic event since the Cold War", says Russia and the U.S. are not allies, but not enemies either, and their interests with regard to Syria are compatible; p 8 (731 words).

3. Yevgeny Shestakov editorial headlined "One cannot hide lard in sack" says nationalists are going wild in Kiev because the liberal opposition has lost control of the situation. President Viktor Yanukovych has not clamped down on the riots yet because he wants to avoid bloodshed; p 8 (938 words).

4. Igor Zubkov article called "Davos plays hockey" previews the 2014 World Economic Forum in Davos where the Russian delegation will host a session headlined "Prospects of Russia"; p 4 (515 words).

5. Vladislav Vorobyov article headlined "Battle of Montreux" describes the relaxing ambience in the Swiss town Montreux that is hosting the Geneva 2 peace conference; says the UN's decision to recall its invitation to the conference for Iran dealt "yet another blow to the reputation of the organization"; p 3 (526 words).

6. Interview with Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky called "Is request for patriotism existing now?" who shares his views on patriotic education and history studies; p 17 (1,653 words).

7. Vladislav Kulikov article headlined "Asylum order" details a new bill on granting asylum in Russia; p 12 (480 words).

8. Yury Gavrilov article called "Surveillance marches through networks" says a session of the board of the Defense Ministry has discussed the establishment of a global network intelligence system integrated into the ministry's information support system; p 2 (511 words).

9. Mikhail Falaleyev article headlined "Tagged bomb will not explode" reports that the Russian police will soon receive new portable explosives detectors able to detect explosives from a distance and identify their type; p 12 (600 words).

Novaya Gazeta

1. Olga Musafirova report "Slaughter is authorities' last chance" says that clashes in Kiev are not the beginning of a civil war in Ukraine, but the peak of people's war against the regime; pp 2-3 (1,900 words).

2. Pavel Kanygin report "And Maidan is still singing Chervona Ruta" looks at what has been happening in Kiev's Maidan over the last few days; pp 4-5 (1,700 words).

3. Ivan Zhilin brief report "Police wash hands of it" says that the showing of the film about slain journalist Anastasia Baburova has been cancelled in Perm; p 6 (200 words).

4. Irina Gordyenko report "Control over valve" looks at the "political implication" of criminal proceedings in relation to Magomedgusen Nasrutdinov, Dagestan's deputy head; p 6 (500 words).

5. Viktoria Makarenko report "Shines, but does not heat" says that ahead of the Olympic flame relay in Rostov-on-Don, local opposition activists have been arrested in the city; p 7 (250 words).

6. Alexei Polukhin report "Money for Ukraine is not marriage, but trick" says that having given a loan to Ukraine, Russia has made Ukraine economically dependent on it. Russia made a debtor of not only President Viktor Yanukovych, but also of anyone who will replace him, article says; p 9 (750 words).

RBK Daily

1. Andrei Kotov et al. report "Davos outside crisis" looks at the World Economic Forum that opens in Davos today and at the Russian delegation's program; pp 1, 4 (800 words).

2. Yulia Sinyayeva report "Sport will help economy" says that the Sochi Olympics will increase the GDP growth by 0.4 percent; p 3 (400 words).

Noviye Izvestia

1. Yekaterina Dyatlovskaya interview "'Bill on mass media as 'foreign agents' is anti-state'" with Alexei Simonov, head of the Zashchita Glasnosti, or Defense of Glasnost Foundation, who speaks about the consequences that the bill on mass media will have for our society when it is passed; pp 1-2 (650 words).

2. Gennady Petrov interview "Talks in Geneva will not stop war" with Georgy Mirsky, senior researcher at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences, who looks at the peace conference on Syria that opens in Switzerland today; pp 1-2 (850 words).

3. Oleg Maximov report "Streets of broken shop windows" says that confrontation in Ukraine is increasing and spreading beyond Kiev; pp 1-2 (1,200 words).

4. Artyom Lunkov report "Freedom not for everyone" says that only some 2,000 people out of several hundred thousand were granted amnesty this year; p 2 (700 words).

Komsomolskaya Pravda

1. Yelena Krivyakina report "Officials should be weighed! Fat ones should be sacked..." says that LDPR leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky has proposed imposing restrictions on officials' weight; p 3 (150 words).

2. Viktor Baranets report "Shoigu holds generals responsible for mistakes during exercises" says that Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu has chaired a meeting of the Defense Ministry board and listed new threats to Russia's security; p 4 (500 words).

3. Masha Gorelova report "Does Maidan eject itself?" looks at recent clashes in Kiev; p 6 (500 words).

4. Alexander Grishin report "From Bolotnaya to Maidan" compares opposition protests in Moscow and in Kiev; p 7 (500 words).

Trud

1. Sergei Ilchenko report "Kiev: Manhunt under way" looks at protests in Ukraine; pp 1-2 (1,900 words).

2. Anna Afonina report "Abramovich's girlfriend put to shame for 'racist' armchair" looks at a scandal involving Daria Zhukova, editor-in-chief of Garage Magazine; p 1 (550 words).

Tvoi Den

1. Andrei Muraviyev report "Fire hell" looks at clashes between police and protesters in Kiev; p 2 (400 words).

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