

Itar-Tass to Regain Control of Prime News Agency

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The  **Moscow Times**

State-run news outlet Itar-Tass will assume a controlling stake in Prime business news agency following the liquidation of its current owners RIA Novosti.

Margarita Simonyan, editor-in-chief of *Rossia Segodnya* — the agency slated to replace RIA Novosti — said Prime would be rejoining Itar-Tass, which owned 35 percent of the business news agency from 1996 to 2011, *Lenta.ru* reported Friday.

Rossia Segodnya, or Russia Today, intends to keep most of RIA Novosti's subsidiary agencies, Simonyan said, though legal news outlet RAPSI won't be counted among them. Reports suggest that RAPSI, which fell under the umbrella of the RIA Novosti group, is keen to become an independent, self-funded organization.

In December, a presidential decree ordered that RIA Novosti and Voice of Russia state radio station be disbanded and their remaining structures merged into a new organization, *Rossia Segodnya*.

Prime was founded in 1993 and its name changed to Prime-Tass in 1996 following the stake purchase by Itar-Tass. In 2011, RIA Novosti bought out 100 percent of the agency and the company re-adopted its former name.

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