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Sochi Olympics Chief Named Head of Russia's Gazprom Media

By The Moscow Times

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Dmitry Chernyshenko

Major state-run holding Gazprom Media has hired as its new head the chief organizer of the 2014 Sochi Olympics, Dmitry Chernyshenko, to replace Mikhail Lesin, who resigned last week.

Chernyshenko will start in his new job on Jan. 13 under a three-year contract, Gazprom Media said in a statement Thursday, citing a decision by its board of directors. Gazprom Media is the media arm of state energy giant Gazprom.

Chernyshenko's work on February's Sochi Games reportedly pleased President Vladimir Putin, standing him in good stead for career prospects after the event.

The Olympic organizer was recently named president of the Russia-based Kontinental Hockey League — an outfit that enjoys heavy backing from Russia's government-owned companies.

He also took over as head of Volga Group, which manages the assets of billionaire and close

Putin ally Gennady Timchenko, Kommersant business daily reported. Timchenko was sanctioned by the U.S. among other Kremlin allies over Russia's meddling in Ukraine.

Lesin, Chernyshenko's predecessor at Gazprom Media, unexpectedly asked to be discharged from his post earlier this month due to "family reasons."

An influential figure and former press minister, Lesin is credited with the establishment of pro-Kremlin English-language news channel Russia Today, now known as RT.

Gazprom Media's holdings include independent radio station Ekho Moskvy and staunchly pro-Kremlin television network NTV.

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