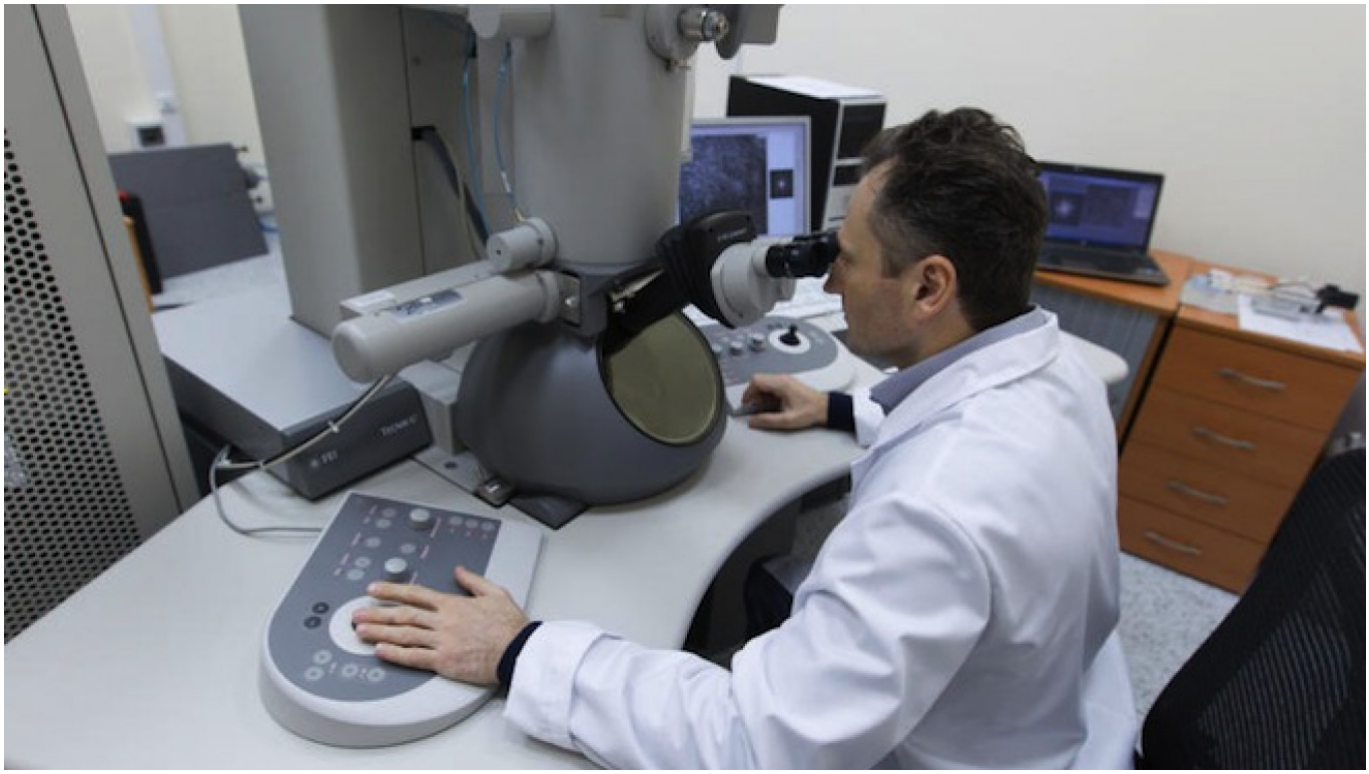
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Brain Drain Worsens as Exodus of Russian Scientists Gathers Pace

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The exodus of Russian scientists has picked up pace during the last 18 months, the president of the Russian Academy of Sciences told Rossia-24 television channel Tuesday.

Vladimir Fortov, a physicist who has headed the academy since 2013, attributed the increase in scientists leaving Russia to more lucrative salaries offered abroad, a lure that has become stronger following the ruble's recent plummet in value.

The ongoing brain drain has not yet resulted in a shortage of specialists, Fortov said, adding that Russia excels in the fields of theoretical physics, mathematics, energy, engineering and mechanics.

Since the beginning of Putin's third term in May 2012, the number of Russians emigrating — many of them skilled professionals — has soared.

According to state statistics bureau Rosstat, 186,382 Russians moved abroad in 2013, compared with 36,774 in 2011. Experts indicate the actual figures may be higher.

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