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Kremlin Insider Telegram Channel Sells for Record $340,000

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The anonymous NeZygar Telegram messaging app channel notorious for publishing scandalous insider information about the Kremlin has been sold for a record-setting 20 million rubles ($341,000).

A handful of political analysts and Kremlin insiders have taken to the popular Telegram messaging app in recent years to offer anonymous political commentary to growing audiences. NeZygar, which currently boasts over 93,000 subscribers, was the 17th most-read Telegram channel last month, according to the Medialogia research company.

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"Because NeZygar is on the phones of decision-makers, bureaucrats, and our political elite, you can set absolutely insane prices," the popular blogger Ilya Varlmov said in a Tuesday interview on the Ekho Moskvy radio station.

The channel was sold for 20 million rubles to Mikhailov & Partners, a PR firm founded by the head of the state-run TASS news agency, Sergei Mikhailov, Varlamov reported in a blog on Monday.

The sale comes several months after a popular comedy Telegram channel called "Your Ex-Girlfriend" was sold for 1.2 million rubles ($25,000) and then resold for nearly $100,000 two weeks later.

Meanwhile, hours after Telegram users reported delays in message deliveries Monday, its founder Pavel Durov said in a Twitter post that the setback was due to the app's "insane growth."

Russian authorities have threatened to block access to Telegram in the country this year if the app's founder failed to disclose encryption keys to users' messages.

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