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Russia's Media Bigwigs Weigh In on 2018

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"Keep an eye on dancer Sergei Polunin, for whom even an entire stage is not enough. And look out for white ankle boots, especially in the first three months of the year. Will they become a permanent element of fashionistas' wardrobes following the earlier success of white sneakers?"

"We'll be monitoring cryptocurrencies. Pavel Durov's ICO this year is a sign of things to come. Also, everyone is trying to understand when U.S. economic growth will hit a ceiling. If there's a collapse, the Russian ruble will suffer as investors pull out of developing markets. The oil price is another risk for the ruble: There are plenty of signs the future is not bright. The longer the uncertainty around the tightening of U.S. sanctions continues, the more careful investors will be."

"The person of the year is Pavel Durov, Russia's genius IT entrepreneur and, on top of that, an idealist. His Telegram service is changing the way we communicate and the media landscape. Who knows what more it'll change in the coming years? An important trend to watch is medical genetics. Last year, a human embryo underwent genetic surgery for the

first time. Procedures like this will become common quickly."

"Last year, we all learned that the smallest mistake or thoughtless statement — even in the distant past — could not only cause a scandal, but could cost you your relationship, career or even your life. In 2018, it pays to be conscious of what you do and how you look after yourself. I'll be looking out for Russian rapper Pharaoh. He's been in the shadows but he'll prove himself this year."

"Russian design is gaining momentum. Honest and pure design, not the type sponsored by wealthy husbands. There are a lot of designers who sell a limited number of handmade items and have a small but loyal army of fans. Examples are Artem Shumov, Jean Rudoff's Lumiér Garson, Anastasia Dokuchaeva and Katya Komarova. Some of them will undoubtedly become stars."

"The important question is not who to look out for — those names are already well-known: opposition leader Alexei Navalny, Rosneft head Igor Sechin, economic adviser Alexei Kudrin — since in the current Russian political system they play a marginal role. It is what to look out for. Will the graduates of the KGB and its successor, the FSB, continue to dominate the top layer of Russian officials? As of now, 60 percent of senior officials in the presidential administration and in the government are in epaulets, with all the strings and biases attached."

"In 2018 we'll be watching Gosha Rubchinsky, the main hope of Russian fashion, and his colleagues Andrei Artyomov, from Walk of Shame, and Vika Gazinskaya.'

This article first appeared in our special 'Russia in 2018" print edition. For more in the series, click here*.*

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