

Vedomosti Sale Delayed Amid Pro-Kremlin Censorship Scandal

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Demyan Kudryavtsev, the former owner of *Vedomosti*. **Yekaterina Kuzmina / RBC / TASS**

The sale of Russia's top business newspaper *Vedomosti* has been postponed as the paper struggles to maintain independence under its new chief editor, the Open Media investigative website [reported](#) Wednesday.

Claims of censorship have swirled around *Vedomosti* since its sale was [announced](#) in March. In the span of a month, acting editor-in-chief Andrei Shmarov has been accused of removing columns critical of Russian oil giant Rosneft, as well as banning coverage of independent poll results and articles criticizing President Vladimir Putin's proposed constitutional changes.

Related article: [Leading Russian Paper *Vedomosti*'s New Editor Bans Putin Criticism](#)

"Some deadlines are being shifted due to the coronavirus, but I can't say that these are fundamental changes," Open Media quoted former *Vedomosti* owner Demyan Kudryavtsev as saying.

Kudryavtsev said it was “too early” to consider bankruptcy following reports of depleted funds, adding: “I hope the deal doesn’t fall through.”

The Bell business outlet [reported](#) last week that businessman Alexei Golubovich, one of *Vedomosti*’s buyers, was considering pulling out of the deal because of the censorship scandal.

The announcement of *Vedomosti*’s sale to Golubovich and publisher Konstantin Zyatkov in March drew concern among the paper’s staffers, with former editor-in-chief Tatiana Lysova [describing](#) the two buyers as “alien to *Vedomosti*’s rules and ideals.”

Shmarov’s hiring as acting editor-in-chief sparked further backlash within *Vedomosti*’s ranks and upset Russia’s heavily regulated media landscape. Five deputy editors appealed to *Vedomosti*’s new owners to appoint a different chief editor on March 31.

Founded in 1999, *Vedomosti* largely operated independently with backing from foreign media organizations until 2015, when Russia passed a law limiting foreign ownership in media companies to 20%. Kudryavtsev, a former chief executive of another business daily *Kommersant* and associate of the late oligarch Boris Berezovsky, bought the newspaper that year.

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