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Staff at Top Russian Paper Offer Replacement for Controversial Editor

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Vedomosti's previous owner announced its sale this spring. **Evgenij Razumnyj / Vedomosti / TASS**

Staff at Russia's leading business newspaper Vedomosti have put forward a candidate to replace the current editor-in-chief, whose editorial decisions have ignited a censorship scandal at the leading independent publication, the paper reported Thursday.

Writers and editors rebelled against acting editor Andrei Shmarov, who was appointed after Vedomosti's previous owner announced its sale this spring. Shmarov has been accused of banning coverage of negative opinion polls on President Vladimir Putin, threatening to fire those who criticize the president's controversial constitutional amendments and interfering in coverage of Russian oil giant Rosneft.

Vedomosti's new owner Ivan Yeryomin, who heads the little-known regional news agency FederalPress, on Wednesday asked his editorial staff to name their own candidate.

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The paper's legal representative Olga Kurzyakova said that out of 90 full-time employees, the 66 who cast their ballots Thursday all voted in favor of veteran Vedomosti journalist Anfisa Voronina.

Voronina, 39, has been with the publication for more than 15 years and currently heads its partnership program.

Shmarov did not receive a single vote, Kurzyakova noted.

"Anfisa has Vedomosti DNA, she's a carrier of the publication's every principle," said deputy editor Filipp Sterkin.

This is the second attempt by Vedomosti writers and editors to replace Shmarov with Voronina.

Vedomosti's board of directors now has to consider Voronina's candidacy, Yeryomin said, without specifying a timeframe. He said Shmarov would continue in his current post until Vedomosti's first board meeting under the new ownership.

"I'm interested in ensuring that the newsroom's opinion is taken into account and the rights of employees are fully respected. I'm glad that it was able to mobilize and nominate its candidate despite the tight deadline," Yeryomin said.

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