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CENTRAL BANK RATES

EURO	USD	RTS INDEX
66.92	62.68	0.31%
1.40	2.02	847.98



Nemtsov Probe Reveals Chechnya Rift

"If the power vertical vibrates at the bottom, it will shake at the top."

By Ivan Nechepurenko
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and Anna Dolgov
newsreporter@imedia.ru

The Boris Nemtsov murder investigation is the latest episode of an ongoing struggle between Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov — President Vladimir Pu-

tin's protege — and Russia's federal law enforcement officials, analysts told The Moscow Times on Wednesday.

The often brazen lawlessness with which Kadyrov's loyal forces have reputedly operated in Chechnya, across Russia and abroad has long been a sore spot for federal law enforcement agencies, according to Alexei Malashenko, a Caucasus analyst with the Carnegie Moscow Center.

"From what I can see, there has always been friction between Kadyrov and the federal forces, because Kadyrov only answers to Putin. This has irked people,

especially since Putin awarded him the Order of Honor," said Malashenko.

Putin gave one of the country's highest awards to Kadyrov the same weekend the Chechen leader described the suspected triggerman in Nemtsov's murder as a "true patriot."

The fact that the Nemtsov murder probe has so far targeted Kadyrov-linked individuals may be aimed at sending a signal to the strongman leader's loyalists that they are no longer untouchable, said Gregory Shvedov, a Caucasus analyst and chief editor of the Kavkazsky Uzel news agency told The Moscow Times.

"This was a direct blow against Kadyrov, so people at the bottom of the power vertical in Chechnya will start to feel the vibration. If the power vertical vibrates at the bottom, it will shake at the top," Shvedov said in a phone interview.

Kremlin Towers

The claim that Nemtsov was gunned down by a devout Muslim who reportedly felt insulted by the politician's support for French satirical magazine

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VLADIMIR FILONOV / MT

Pigeons indulging in a group preening session on an overhead cable near the Krasnopresnenskaya metro station in the warm spring weather Wednesday.

How Kremlin and the Media Ended Up in Bed

Editor's note: This is the longest text ever published by The Moscow Times. We've decided to publish it because it describes in detail a key Russian narrative, of how the Kremlin rules the country with the help of the controlled media. It is a bitter story of how the Russian media, with very few exceptions, have abandoned, sometimes through coercion, but mostly voluntarily and even eagerly, their mission of informing the public and have turned into creators of the Matrix-like artificial reality where imaginary heroes and villains battle tooth and nail in Russia's Armageddon.

By Vasily Gatov

After enjoying a brief interval of freedom, it seems that Russian media are now returning to the conditions of the late 1980s, when editors stood outside

the door of the censorship office waiting for approval to go to press.

However, the "new censorship" that has emerged in Russia is not merely a tool for controlling the media from the outside. The new censorship is like a cancerous tumor that attacks the not-so-healthy body of the media from the inside and supplants everything of value or vitality with diseased tissue.

Like communist propaganda, the principles of this new censorship draw on the Orwellian concept of "double-think," form the basis of state policy and, by definition, completely reject the idea of democracy.

The president and senior officials now use the media as a tool for forming public opinion, forcing citizens to accept a false agenda in place of the real one.

The degradation of Russian media is evidenced by the fact that they implicitly agree to compromise themselves in this way. Many corporate or private media entities simply agree to these terms as a matter of survival, but a surprising number not only agree to the state's manipulations, but go one step further by offering creative ideas for advancing the Kremlin's official line.

The new censorship significantly expands on the classic, encyclopedic definition of the term by permeating not only news and information services, but since the mid-2000s, actively interfering in the arts and academia as well.

Another important feature of Russian censorship is that it is not all-embracing, but permits alternative points of view and even criticisms of itself. However, any journalist or media outlet tak-

ing advantage of that opportunity is walking on a minefield.

The Censorship Toolkit

The most important tool of the new censorship is the state budget as a resource for determining which media thrive or survive.

Access to federal budgetary funds remains a key tool for creating a system whereby the authorities can manage media content and media outlets themselves. Those publications and individual journalists for whom survival or personal enrichment is of primary importance are vulnerable to manipulation by the granting or denial of state subsidies, benefits, increases or decreases in financing for

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NEMTSOV

Continued from Page 1

Charlie Hebdo, has been denounced by critics as an attempt to disguise the roots — and reverberations — of the Feb. 27 shooting.

Tabloid newspaper Moskovsky Komsomolets reported on Tuesday that footage from surveillance cameras revealed the suspects had been tailing Nemtsov since last autumn, before the January attack against Charlie Hebdo took place.

The report did not cite any sources, but some pundits have suggested the newspaper, which has in the past enjoyed Kremlin-related scoops, is reflecting the stance of specific forces within law enforcement or the Federal Security Service, the FSB.

“Conspiracies, of course. But it looks like some FSB guys don’t want the investigation to fizzle out,” opposition firebrand Alexei Navalny said on Twitter, linking to the Moskovsky Komsomolets report.

Navalny echoed suggestions that some forces within the FSB have discarded the theory that Islamic extremists acted of their own accord and are trying to point to higher-level involvement in the murder.

The Islamist motive has been approached with skepticism from the very beginning; while Nemtsov had been a vocal critic of the Kremlin, he was not known for criticizing Islam.

The Untouchables

Pundits have pointed to several other high-profile murders that were committed in fashions similar to Nemtsov’s, which in their own times were also linked by the media to Kadyrov’s forces.

In particular, experts referenced the 2008 murder of Kadyrov’s rival Ruslan Yamadayev in front of Russia’s main government building, and the 2009 murder

of Kadyrov’s former bodyguard Umar Israilov in Vienna.

Oddly enough, both of these murders were carried out with the alleged involvement of men with the surname Dadayev. On Sunday, Russian prosecutors charged another Dadayev — Zaur — for his alleged involvement in the Nemtsov murder.

Officials said that Dadayev — a former commander of Chechnya’s feared Sever battalion, a force reputed for its brutal crushing of the Islamist insurgency in Chechnya and neighboring Ingushetia — already confessed to having fired the deadly shots.

Interfax cited unnamed law enforcement sources as having said investigators have proof that Dadayev was the actual assassin.

The Sever battalion is headed by Alibek Delimkhanov, brother of one of Kadyrov’s closest allies, Adam Delimkhanov, who infamously carried a golden gun past security detectors into the State Duma, and who Kadyrov has previously declared would be his successor as the leader of Chechnya.

More Speculation

Across the political and journalistic spectrum from the Moskovsky Komsomolets tabloid, independent weekly Novaya Gazeta reported Wednesday that high-ranking Chechen security officials are alleged to have been among the organizers of Nemtsov’s murder.

The report — which did not cite any sources — identified one of the alleged organizers by his first name only: Ruslan, and added that the man was a major and that his last name was known to “dozens, if not hundreds” of Russian security officials.

The FSB may have reason to wish to see Kadyrov’s powers diminished: The security agency’s clout in the North Caucasus has reportedly shrunk as the

Chechen leader’s grip on power has bolstered.

“Law enforcement and the secret services have been repeatedly humiliated for the sake of ‘political stability’ in the Caucasus,” Novaya Gazeta said in its article.

Is Kadyrov Disposable?

According to Shvedov, resentment over Kadyrov’s activities has been building up for years.

“There is a certain cumulative effect. For quite some time, the Kadyrov people enjoyed special rights. They could do whatever they wanted,” Shvedov told The Moscow Times in a phone interview Wednesday.

Today, there are signs that the situation is changing. In particular, Shvedov pointed to the decision by a Dagestani court last February to sentence two Chechens to nine and 12 years in jail in connection with an alleged plot to murder Saigidpasha Umakhanov, mayor of Khasavyurt, Dagestan’s third-biggest city.

“The Umakhanov case is a bigger signal than giving Kadyrov a medal,” Shvedov said.

“I have absolutely no doubt that if the Kremlin is forced to choose between Kadyrov and federal law enforcement agencies, it will choose the latter. We have reached the point where Kadyrov can be replaced,” he said.

Malashenko was more skeptical about Kadyrov’s potential ouster.

“Kadyrov has destroyed the inter-clan balance in Chechnya. With him gone, a huge wave of violence would inevitably ensue. Other clans would seek revenge for all of the malfeasances attributed to his rule,” Malashenko said.

“The Kremlin doesn’t want to deal with this inevitable violence,” Malashenko added. “Putin has taken an interest in Kadyrov, and Kadyrov is devoted to Putin. This fact rubs law enforcement officials the wrong way.”

PUTIN’S RUSSIA

By Sergei Elkin



For more Putin's Russia cartoons, see themoscowtimes.com

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Merkel to Skip Moscow Victory Day

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

German Chancellor Angela Merkel will not attend an official ceremony in Moscow on May 9 to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II due to tensions of the Ukraine crisis, government officials said on Wednesday.

“In light of the developments in Ukraine, it is impossible for Merkel to take part in the traditional military parade on Red Square,” a government official said.

However, the chancellor will lay a wreath at the Monument of the Un-

known Soldier in the Russian capital one day later.

Merkel visited Moscow on Feb. 6 together with French President Francois Hollande to prepare with Russian President Vladimir Putin an agreement to end fighting in eastern Ukraine.

The European Union and the United States accuse Russia of arming the separatists in east Ukraine and reinforcing their ranks with troops. Moscow has repeatedly denied involvement and blames the United States for pushing the pro-Western government in Kiev to war.

Activist: Suspects in Nemtsov Killing Probably Tortured

REUTERS

Three suspects in the killing of Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov have probably been tortured while in detention, a member of the Kremlin’s advisory council on human rights said Wednesday.

After visiting three of the five ethnic Chechen suspects at Moscow’s Lefortovo prison as part of a monitoring group, rights activist Andrei Babushkin said the men detained over the Feb. 27 murder had suffered multiple injuries.

Nemtsov was the most prominent of a

string of Kremlin critics to be killed during President Vladimir Putin’s 15-year rule. The brazen shooting in the heart of Moscow has shocked his colleagues and supporters, who say the investigation is a test of the rule of law in Russia.

A Russian judge has said former Chechen policeman Zaur Dadayev, who is being held along with his cousins, Anzor and Shagid Gubashev, has admitted involvement in the murder. Dadayev and Anzor Gubashev have been formally charged.

“There are reasonable grounds to believe that Dadayev and the Gubashev

were tortured,” Babushkin wrote on his website.

He said Dadayev had “multiple injuries” visible on his body, while Anzor Gubashev had abrasions around his nose, wrists and legs that were incurred after he was detained.

In a conversation with Babushkin, Dadayev said he had only admitted his guilt after being promised that the authorities would then free his friend Rustam Yusupov, who was detained at the same time.

“They said if I confess, they would let him out. I agreed. I thought that I

would save him and they would take me to Moscow alive,” he said according to a transcript published in Moskovsky Komsomolets newspaper, whose reporter was present during the visit.

Babushkin said Yusupov had since disappeared.

When Anzor Gubashev was asked where he had received bruises and wounds on his wrists and legs, he said he was beaten, according to the newspaper’s transcript.

“Were the beatings recorded when you arrived in prison?”

“Yes,” Gubashev responded.

His brother Shagid said that he had been beaten by two law enforcement officers who called one another Mikhailovich and Petrovich.

Russia’s Investigative Committee, in charge of the Nemtsov case, said that questions posed by Babushkin and the journalist were an attempt to obstruct its work. It said both would be called in for questioning over their actions.

Babushkin called on the Kremlin’s human rights council to inform Putin of his findings and said law enforcement agencies should investigate the torture allegations.

Aides to Nemtsov, a former deputy prime minister, suspect Russia’s state se-

curity apparatus is complicit in the killing. They are scornful of the investigation and say blaming Chechen Islamists is aimed at deflecting suspicion from Putin, his inner circle or the security services.

Putin has condemned the shooting and promised to bring the perpetrators to justice.

The head of the watchdog group with which Babushkin made his visit to Lefortovo prison said he was unable to confirm the allegations of torture after speaking to the prisoners and reviewing their medical records, the Interfax news agency reported.

Moskovsky Komsomolets also published pictures of the white getaway car allegedly used by the suspects after Nemtsov was shot four times in the back.

Russian investigators said last week they were looking into the possibility that Islamists had shot Nemtsov for defending cartoons of the prophet Muhammad in French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo after Islamist gunmen killed 12 people in an attack on its offices on Jan. 7.

But the newspaper said the car had been seen outside Nemtsov’s house as early as last year, which would undermine the theory of a link to the Charlie Hebdo attack.



MAXIM SHEMETOV / REUTERS

Tamerlan Eskerkhanov, Shagid Gubashev and Ramzan Bakhayev in a Moscow courtroom cage on Sunday.

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Peskov Denies Political Hit List

An opposition activist found a funeral wreath outside her door on the same day the Kremlin said the idea of a political hit list was “absurd.”

THE MOSCOW TIMES

As President Vladimir Putin’s spokesman shrugged off a report of a hit list of Russian politicians and journalists Wednesday, the press secretary of the self-exiled opposition figure Mikhail Khodorkovsky found a funeral wreath outside her door.

A day earlier, opposition-focused newspaper Novaya Gazeta reported that Putin was informed last week of a hit list containing the names of recently murdered politician Boris Nemtsov, as well as Khodorkovsky and even socialite-turned-activist Ksenia Sobchak.

The newspaper said that a team of killers was responsible for each name on the list and implied that at least some of the killers were Chechen. A man who worked in Chechnya’s Interior Ministry troops has been charged with killing Nemtsov.

Putin’s spokesman Dmitry Peskov told Ekho Moskvy radio on Wednesday that the idea of such a hit list would be absurd. But he said he could not deny that Putin could have been informed of such a list because he doesn’t know “all the details of every report by law enforcement and security services.”

Khodorkovsky’s press secretary Kulle Pispanen found the wreath outside her Moscow apartment on Wednesday and uploaded a photo of it to Facebook. The wreath apparently has 60 flowers. In Russian tradition, an even number of



KULLE PISPANEN / FACEBOOK

Kulle Pispanen found this funeral wreath outside her door Wednesday.

flowers is only ever given at funerals.

“There was no note,” Pispanen told The Moscow Times. “I don’t know where it came from, but it is a funeral wreath.”

Khodorkovsky, once Russia’s richest man, served 10 years in jail on fraud

charges that his supporters said were trumped up in revenge for the former oil tycoon’s interference in politics. After being freed in late 2013, he formed the Open Russia civil society platform from Switzerland, where he has lived since his release.



VLADIMIR FILONOV / MT

A man talking on his cell phone under the watchful eye — and ear — of a giant chessboard knight near to the White House in downtown Moscow.

North Korea, Russia Declare 2015 the ‘Year of Friendship’

THE MOSCOW TIMES

North Korea has declared 2015 a “year of friendship” with Russia amid efforts to boost ties and cultural exchange as the countries mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, North Korea’s official news agency was quoted as saying Wednesday.

The endeavor will focus on developing diplomatic, business and cultural contacts and include joint cultural events in Moscow, Pyongyang and other cities, South Korean English-language newspaper The Korea Herald cited the North’s Korean Central News Agency as saying in a dispatch.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is already set to visit Moscow in May for

Victory Day celebrations.

The shoring-up of Moscow-Pyongyang ties is occurring against the backdrop of a waning in relations between North Korea and its longtime ally China, the newspaper reported.

Russia has also pivoted eastward amid a series of bids to boost diplomatic and business ties over the past year as the country’s relations with the West have floundered over Moscow’s perceived role in the Ukraine crisis.

The end of World War II is a great source of national pride for Russians because it marks the complete expulsion of Nazi occupiers. The event is revered with similar enthusiasm by Koreans as a liberation from decades of Japanese colonial rule.

Museum Honoring Stalin Set to Open

By Gabrielle Tétrault-Farber
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A museum showcasing Soviet leader Josef Stalin’s political and military bravado, while disregarding the mass political repression he orchestrated, will open in the Tver region in May, the Meduza news site reported Tuesday.

The authorities of Khoroshevo, a village located some 230 kilometers northwest of Moscow, approved the Russian Military-Historical Society’s request to open the facility, according to Meduza.

The Russian Military-Historical Society, established on the order of President Vladimir Putin in December 2012, is headed by Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky.

Some of the mandates the society lists on its official website include the creation of new military-themed museums and the “education of Russian citizens ... in the spirit of love, devotion and selfless service to the motherland, respect for the defenders of the fatherland, [and] the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.”

The museum will be housed in a cottage on the former Kondratyeva collective farm, where Stalin briefly resided in August 1943, Meduza reported, citing the regional administration of human rights organization Memorial.

The museum’s opening is set to coincide with Russia’s 70th-anniversary celebration of the Soviet Union’s victory in World War II this May.

The head of the Russian Communist Party’s branch in the Tver region, Artyom Goncharov, told Ekho Moskvy radio station Tuesday that a hotel would be opened near the site to accommodate tourists and that the new museum would be integrated in a tourist route in the area.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Gangster Caught in Thailand

A suspected Russian gang leader has been arrested in Thailand at the request of the Russian branch of Interpol, state news agency RIA Novosti reported Wednesday.

Sergei Kovalenko, who is accused of founding a criminal gang in Siberia’s Kemerovo region in the late 2000s, was nabbed in the Thai resort of Pattaya on Tuesday night, the news agency reported, citing Vladimir Sosnov, head of the Russian Embassy’s consular division in Thailand.

According to Sosnov, Kovalenko’s criminal gang, which was based in the town of Yurga, is accused of committing a string of serious crimes, including kidnapping, extortion and theft.

Kovalenko will soon be deported to Russia to face justice, RIA reported. (MT)

Putin Delays Kazakh Visit

ASTANA — Vladimir Putin has postponed a visit to Kazakhstan, officials from both countries said on Wednesday, though the Kremlin dismissed another

report that plans had changed because the Russian president was unwell.

Dauren Abayev, adviser and spokesman for Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, announced the delay of the meeting between the two allies, originally scheduled for next week, without giving a reason or a new date.

Another Kazakh government source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said: “It looks like he [Putin] has fallen ill.”

Russia’s Interfax news agency reported Putin’s spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirming the postponement but said the president felt fine. (Reuters)

Smoking to Return to Cafes

Moscow authorities announced on Wednesday that smoking will be allowed in some outdoor cafes despite a national ban on smoking in restaurants that came into force last summer, the city-connected M24.ru news site reported.

Smoking on outdoor terraces will be allowed if such premises are not enclosed in any way, Alexei Nemeryuk, head of the city’s department of trade and services, told the news site. (MT)



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Cossacks Enlisted to Find Draft-Dodgers

By Gabrielle Tétrault-Farber
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Moscow draft-dodgers beware: Cossack brigades are being mobilized to hunt down young men reluctant to complete mandatory military service, local news site M24.ru reported Wednesday.

“Cossacks are concluding deals with [Moscow’s military] enlistment offices to conduct raids to bring military conscripts into the army,” said Sergei Shishkin, head of the Southeast District Cossack Organization, in comments carried by M24.ru. “We can join representatives of military enlistment offices and police in going door-to-door to hand the conscripts their draft papers.”

Some 1,400 Cossacks — members of a quasi-militant group predominantly found in Russia and Ukraine — are available to hunt the draft-dodgers, Shishkin said, adding that the group had already made agreements with two of Moscow’s 27 military enlistment offices.

Cossacks have re-emerged as public defenders of law and order in Russia under President Vladimir Putin, where they are presented as guardians of patriotic values. A few dozen Cossacks began patrolling Moscow’s parks in December, in tandem with policemen, to curb drinking

in public and smoking in places where it is banned, Russian media reported.

The Cossacks’ inclusion in public patrolling was facilitated by the adoption last spring of a law on citizen participation in maintaining public order, which cemented their ability to play such roles in society.

Cossacks, reputed to be ferocious fighters, drew international attention during last year’s Sochi Olympics when they patrolled the Black Sea resort city wearing traditional uniform, at one point attacking Pussy Riot with tear gas and whips during a performance by the female protest group.

This spring’s conscription will take place between April 1 and July 15, following medical examinations held in February and March.

Russian men between the ages of 18 and 27 are eligible for conscription for a mandatory year of military service. Draft-dodgers face fines of up to 200,000 rubles (\$3,222) and face up to two years in prison.

The Defense Ministry recorded that 4,300 men across Russia had evaded last spring’s conscription, a 20 percent decrease in the number of draft-dodgers compared to the previous year, according to M24.ru.

U.S. to Vietnam: Don’t Assist Russian Bombers

REUTERS

The United States has asked Vietnam to stop letting Russia use a former U.S. base to refuel nuclear-capable bombers engaged in shows of strength over the Asia-Pacific region, exposing strains in Washington’s steadily warming relations with Hanoi.

The request, described by a State Department official, comes as U.S. officials say Russian bombers have stepped up flights in a region already rife with tensions between China, U.S.-ally Japan and Southeast Asian nations.

General Vincent Brooks, commander of the U.S. Army in the Pacific, said the planes had conducted “provocative” flights, including around the U.S. Pacific Ocean territory of Guam, home to a major American air base.

It is the first time that U.S. officials have confirmed the role of Cam Ranh Bay, a natural deep-water harbor, in Russian bomber plane activity that has increased globally.

Brooks said the planes that circled Guam were refueled by Russian tankers flying from the strategic bay, which was transformed by the Americans during the Vietnam War into a massive air and naval base.

Vietnam’s willingness to allow Russia to use Cam Ranh Bay reflects Hanoi’s complex position in a geopolitical tug-of-war that frequently pits China and Russia on one side and the United States, Japan and much of Southeast Asia on the other.

Washington is keen to secure greater access itself to Cam Ranh Bay as part of its strategic “pivot” to Asia to counter China’s growing strength in the region. U.S. ships have visited for repairs in recent years. Vietnam, in turn, has sought closer U.S. ties as a hedge against what it sees as China’s aggression, but remains close to Russia in both defense and energy cooperation.

Cam Ranh Bay is now host to three

submarines bought by Vietnam’s navy from Russia to counter Chinese expansion in the South China Sea, with two more expected by early next year.

Brooks said in an interview the flights indicated that Vietnam’s Cold War-era ally Russia was acting as “a spoiler to our interests and the interests of others.”

Asked about the Russian flights in the region, the State Department official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Washington respected Hanoi’s right to enter agreements with other countries.

But the official added, “We have urged Vietnamese officials to ensure that Russia is not able to use its access to Cam Ranh Bay to conduct activities that could raise tensions in the region.”

The Vietnamese government did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the U.S. request.

Brooks declined to say when the flights he referred to took place. He did not say how many had been conducted and how many aircraft were involved. But he confirmed they had occurred since Russia’s annexation of Crimea last March, which

sparked a broader conflict with Ukraine and a surge in tensions between Russia and the United States.

The head of U.S. air forces in the Pacific said last May that Russia’s intervention in Ukraine had been accompanied by a significant increase in Russian air activity in the Asia-Pacific region in a show of strength and to gather intelligence.

Russia’s Defense Ministry said on Jan. 4 that Russian Il-78 tanker aircraft had used Cam Ranh Bay in 2014, enabling the refueling of nuclear-capable TU-95 “Bear” strategic bombers, a statement also reported in Vietnam’s state-controlled media. In that time, Russia has conducted increasingly aggressive air and sea patrols close to the borders of the U.S.-led NATO alliance, including by Bear bombers over the English Channel.



VLADIMIR FILONOV / MT

Novy Arbat traffic under the setting sun on Tuesday, against the backdrop of Moskva-City and the Foreign Ministry.

NATO: Russia Still Equipping Ukraine Rebels

REUTERS

MONS, Belgium — NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said Wednesday that Russia was still arming and training rebel forces in eastern Ukraine and he called for the warring parties to help foreign monitors to reinforce a cease-fire.

Asked at a news conference about a U.S. diplomat’s remark that Russian tanks had crossed into Ukraine in recent days, he declined specific comment but said: “We ... still see Russian presence

and strong support for the separatists in eastern Ukraine. We see the delivery of equipment, forces, training. And so Russia is still in eastern Ukraine.”

On Tuesday, senior State Department official Victoria Nuland told a U.S. congressional hearing that Russian tanks and artillery had crossed into eastern Ukraine in recent days in breach of a cease-fire deal agreed in Minsk on Feb. 12.

Stoltenberg and the top NATO commander, U.S. General Philip Breedlove, told reporters at the alliance’s military

headquarters in Belgium that their priority now in Ukraine was to see monitors from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe given the safe and free access and comprehensive information they needed to reinforce the truce.

Breedlove said NATO could not say if numbers of combatants and weaponry had changed from estimates before the cease-fire due to monitoring difficulties. Men and equipment had moved back from front lines, he said. “But we’re not sure where they’ve been moved.”



MUKHTOR Kholdorbekov / REUTERS

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev speaking before the ruling party congress in Astana on Wednesday.

Nazarbayev Seeks 5 More Years in Early Vote

REUTERS

ALMATY — Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev said Wednesday he will seek re-election in a snap poll next month, which will almost certainly see him extend his 26 years at the helm of the oil-exporting former Soviet nation by another five.

The authoritarian leader’s decision to run in the election on April 26 will for now end speculation over his would-be successor, a question closely followed by

investors. “I declare my consent to run as presidential candidate,” Nazarbayev said to applause from loyalists in his Nur Otan party, who had asked him to seek re-election earlier on Wednesday.

“There is no bigger reward or happiness than to have the trust of my nation,” he said in a speech broadcast live on national television from the capital Astana. “This inspires and invigorates me, and this is why I look youngish,” the 74-year-old quipped with a smile.

Nazarbayev, a former steelworker

nicknamed “Papa” and officially titled “Leader of the Nation,” has run his Central Asian state since 1989 when he headed the local Communist Party.

He faces no real challenge from a small and disparate opposition in his steppe nation, a non-OPEC oil exporter five times the size of France.

A former member of the Soviet Communist Party’s decision-making Politburo, he was last elected with almost 96 percent of votes in 2011. His current term ends only in late 2016.

Spaceport Thieves to Lose Heads

THE MOSCOW TIMES

Russia's giant Vostochny cosmodrome building project faces having its electricity supply cut over unpaid bills, news reports said Wednesday, one day after a deputy prime minister overseeing the project threatened to "rip off the heads" of construction managers found guilty of corruption.

The 150 billion ruble (\$2.4 billion) cosmodrome project has been mired in embezzlement allegations since work began in 2011, and spaceport's completion date has been delayed.

"I will not allow sabotage, I'll simply rip heads off," Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin was quoted by news agency Interfax as saying Tuesday after taking personal control over all financial transactions at the cosmodrome. "Those who try to steal the people's money from the spaceport will be locked up. We will build this cosmodrome," he added.

Three officials at the construction site were arrested last year as part of a 1.8 billion ruble (\$28.8 million) embezzlement case. One of the men arrested was the head of Dalspetsstroy, the lead contractor on the cosmodrome project.

The TASS news agency on Wednesday reported that Dalspetsstroy's energy supplies could be limited by a local energy company, Amurenergosbyt, due to 21.6 million rubles (\$343,000) in unpaid energy bills.

Amurenergosbyt will begin limiting supplies tomorrow until the debt is paid in full, a company spokesperson told TASS.



EDUARD KORNIYENKO / REUTERS

A vendor selling sausage in Stavropol. Import bans imposed last year have helped increase food prices in Russia.

Russia Could Soften Food Import Ban – Minister

REUTERS

Russian Agriculture Minister Nikolai Fyodorov said his ministry was considering softening its ban on food imports from a series of European Union countries, the Interfax news agency reported on Wednesday.

The embargo, introduced last year in response to Western sanctions imposed on Moscow for its role in the Ukraine crisis, restricted many European food

producers' access to the large Russian market.

Combined with a weaker ruble, it also helped push Russian inflation in February to a near 13-year high of 16.7 percent.

Fyodorov said Russia was considering easing the embargo first of all for Greece, Hungary and Cyprus.

"We are actively investigating to see what civilized opportunities there are to their proposals [countries that have asked to lift the embargo]," he told jour-

nalists. "If we help them, we would not want to create problems for them in their relations with Brussels."

Fyodorov also said his ministry did not plan to change its wheat export duty and that it expected 2015 grain exports at up to 25 million tons.

The government has said the export duty, imposed as of Feb. 1, amounted to 15 percent of the customs price plus 7.5 euros and would be no less than 35 euros (\$43) per ton until June 30.

Poll Shows Joblessness Fears Easing

THE MOSCOW TIMES

Anxiety over unemployment or salary cuts has fallen slightly in Russia over the last three months, but 32 percent of people are still either experiencing workplace firings or expect them in the near future, according to a new poll published by the independent Levada Center on Wednesday.

The data showed that 18 percent of Russians expect to be forcibly moved to part-time employment and 22 percent expect salary cuts in the coming months.

A low rate of unemployment has been one of the signature economic achievements of the 15 years since Vladimir Putin first became Russian president in 2000.

The figures from the survey of 1,600 people, which had a margin of error of 3.4 percent, are slightly lower than a similar poll conducted in December, when falling oil prices and Western sanctions caused a run on the ruble — suggesting that some of the fears about the Russian economy might be easing.

In the December Levada poll, 42 percent of respondents said firings were ongoing or that they expected them in the coming months.

Unemployment grew 0.7 percent in Russia last week, the slowest rate for a month, according to data published by the Labor and Social Protection Ministry on Wednesday.

Russia is cushioned to a certain extent from high unemployment by its shrinking working-age population.

Ankara Playing Down Turkish Stream Hopes

REUTERS

ANKARA — Turkish concern about too much dependence on Russian energy and an upcoming election mean Russia's plans for a new gas pipeline to southeastern Europe are unlikely to advance as quickly as Moscow might like, Turkish energy officials said Wednesday.

Facing objections from the European Union, Russia in December abandoned its \$40 billion South Stream project, which would have passed under the Black Sea to Bulgaria and carry up to 63 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas annually to Europe.

Instead, Russian gas exporter Gazprom said in January it planned to build an undersea gas pipeline with the same capacity to an as-yet un-built hub on the Turkish-Greek border by the end of 2016.

But officials in Ankara said that timeframe for the project, known informally as Turkish Stream, was unrealistic.

"The issue is not Turkish Stream alone, this is a whole package for Turkey's energy needs. We need to be a little bit patient," Energy Minister Taner Yildiz said.

Turkey is already heavily dependent on Russia for natural gas. Last year it bought 27.33 bcm of gas through the Blue Stream and West-East pipelines from Russia, equiva-

lent to more than half of its gas imports.

Russian state nuclear company Rosatom is also building Turkey's first nuclear power plant.

"Russia is very keen but it's very likely that [Turkish Stream] will be delayed to at least 2017," one industry executive said, highlighting lengthy environmental approvals, especially ahead of a June general election.

A second government official said negotiations over the import price for Russian gas were also a factor. Turkey secured a 10.25 percent discount in late February but wants more.

By 2017, Turkey's gas demand is expected to outstrip current contracted import volumes. Supplies from northern Iraq, one alternative, will not come on line before 2018, leaving Ankara little choice but to buy more from Russia.

There are also political concerns. One Western diplomat in Ankara said the wrangling over Turkish Stream was more about a tussle between Brussels and Moscow over maintaining influence over Turkey.

"People are realizing more and more that Russia is a lost cause and that we need to find more allies to the east and south. Turkey is number one," the diplomat said. "Russia is drawing Turkey into its orbit, and if it's not stopped now, then it may be too late."

'People are realizing more and more that Russia is a lost cause.'

Diplomatic source



Partners:




Moscow, March 31

DOING BUSINESS IN CHINA

GOALS OF THE EVENT:

- Present the current level of Russian-Chinese business cooperation in both Moscow and Russia as a whole
- Acquaint participants with similarities and differences in Russian and Chinese culture, legal requirements, and HR business practices
- Learn best practices for creating business and social contacts, and building cross-cultural communication

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:



Zhang Di,
Minister Plenipotentiary,
Counsellor for Economic
and Commercial Affairs,
**Embassy of China in
Russia**



Vladimir Remyga,
Chairman of the Coordination
Council for Cooperation with business
associations International Congress of
Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (ILAC)
Asia, Doctor of Economics,
Academy of Natural Sciences

AMONG THE PRESENTERS:

- **Andrei Ostrovsky,** Doctor of Economics, Professor, replaced, assistant director of the Institute for Far Eastern Studies, **Center for economic and Social Research of China IFES**
- **Alexey Maslov,** Head of School of Oriental Studies, **Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs HSE, a board member of the Russian-Chinese Chamber of Commerce.**
- **Sarah Zeng,** Managing Partner, **Dentons Beijing office**
- **Vitaly Monkevich,** President, **Russian-Asian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs**
- **Olivier Quesson,** Chief Commercial Officer, **Orange Business Services**
- **Maxim Bunyakin,** Managing partner, **Legal Branan**

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IMF Okays \$17.5Bln in Aid to Kiev

REUTERS

WASHINGTON — The International Monetary Fund's board signed off on a \$17.5 billion four-year aid program for Ukraine on Wednesday, the second attempt in less than a year to pull its economy back from the brink of bankruptcy.

A statement from IMF Managing director Christine Lagarde did not provide details on how large or when an initial payment will be made to Ukraine.

The IMF loan is expected to unlock further credits from other donors. Including the expected fruits of debt restructuring talks with Kiev's existing bondholders, the total package of assistance for the country should be \$40 billion, the IMF has said.

"This new four-year extended arrangement will support immediate economic stabilization in Ukraine," Lagarde said, adding that the assistance is needed because of the country's "protracted" economic problems.

The IMF last year already approved a \$17 billion loan to Kiev over two years. But the IMF deemed insufficient the funds and agreed program duration to support Ukraine's economic reforms while the government continued to battle pro-Russia separatists in eastern Ukraine.

Pro-Russian rebels and the government agreed to a peace deal in Minsk last month, but both sides continue to accuse each other of violations.

Lagarde last week said an infusion of financial support for Ukraine and its success largely hinges on the stability of eastern Ukraine and how the security crisis is resolved. Ukraine's economy is in a tailspin, with a currency that just pulled back from record lows, the highest interest rates in 15 years, and central bank reserves of just \$6.4 billion, barely enough to cover five weeks of imports.

Ukraine's parliament last week approved a raft of IMF-backed amendments to its 2015 draft budget which were key preconditions for IMF approval of the bailout. The fund complimented those steps, including the willingness of Ukraine officials to let the currency float.

"They have maintained fiscal discipline in very difficult conditions," Lagarde said in a release.

Foods Smugglers Getting Creative

THE MOSCOW TIMES

Attempts to smuggle banned foods from Western countries into Russia have used shipments of salt, cardboard and building materials as cover, according to Russia's food safety watchdog.

Food products from the United States and European Union embargoed by Moscow in retaliation for Western sanctions over Ukraine were disguised by importers and detected by Russian customs officials, Rospotrebnadzor head Anna Popova told the TASS news agency Tuesday.

"This is frozen meat, fish and vegetables of unknown origin. Part of it was brought in under the guise of building materials, cardboard and salt," Popova said, TASS reported.

Russia's food import ban, imposed last August, has stoked rising food price inflation across the country and sparked deficits of some high-end goods, including Italian cheeses and hams. Some European food producers have suffered particularly severely from the ban.



DENIS ABRAMOV / VEDOMOSTI

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said Moscow was open to changing the deal if Kiev showed flexibility.

Russia May Soften Ukraine Gas Terms

REUTERS

Russia may ease the terms of its gas supplies to Ukraine, but Kiev will have to pay for the gas Moscow is supplying to rebel-held areas of east Ukraine, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said.

A supply deal for the winter expires on March 31, along with a discount of \$100 per 1,000 cubic meters of gas and a suspension of a take-or-pay requirement.

Novak said in an interview that Russia was open to prolonging those concessions even without a new deal, which has been referred to as a "summer package," for the period after March 31.

"A discount is possible under the contract as well. No separate [summer] pack-

ages are needed if Ukraine and Russia reach an agreement. Take-or-pay [suspension] ... is also possible, it depends on the talks between companies," Novak said.

Russia and Ukraine have clashed over pricing and unpaid gas bills, with the Russians halting supply three times over the past decade, including a stoppage for much of the second half of 2014.

If Moscow and Kiev fail to settle their most recent dispute, supplies to the European Union could potentially be disrupted as gas for EU countries is piped across Ukraine, although there was no such impact during last year's stoppage.

A crisis was averted on Friday, when Gazprom received \$15 million from

Ukrainian state energy firm Naftogaz for gas supplies to last until March 15.

Gazprom's gas shipments to Ukraine are governed by a 2009 contract that runs until 2019, but within that some terms can be adjusted.

Novak said that if the gas price is \$330 or more per 1,000 cubic meters in the second quarter, then the maximum discount for Kiev could be \$100. If the price is lower, the discount would be not more than 30 percent of the price. The price for the second quarter could be in the range of \$350-\$360 with no discount, he said.

That compares to \$329 for the current quarter. Novak said that gas for rebel-held east Ukraine is sold at the same price that Naftogaz pays in the rest of Ukraine.



KALASHNIKOV CONCERN

Kalashnikov rifles, shown here being readied for shipment, are produced by imitators in numerous countries.

Moscow Takes Aim at Foreign AK-47 Fakers

THE MOSCOW TIMES

The Defense Ministry is working on a system to keep track of Russian military innovations at home and abroad in an attempt to wrestle control of copyrights on Soviet-era equipment away from a global industry of imitators, state news agency RIA Novosti reported Wednesday.

"The copying of our exported military products is a very big problem," Defense Ministry official Oleg Vashchenko was quoted as saying. The ministry will focus on preparing legal claims against manufacturers of unlicensed copies of Russian

military hardware, who often use Soviet-era production facilities in former Warsaw Pact countries and even China.

"Of course, we can't scream that they were stolen from us," Vashchenko said. "We need a civilized means to resolve legal issues, to establish a legal claim in defense of the interests of the state."

Russia is the second-largest arms exporter in the world, and the country's military-industrial complex makes a large portion of its income from overseas sales. Exported equipment can be sold at over two times the price given to the Russian Defense Ministry.

With an economic downturn squeezing the federal budget, the government has reduced spending in all areas except defense procurement this year. However, if the economic situation worsens, the defense industry may not be spared — leaving exports more important than ever.

One of the most copied Russian weapons is the iconic AK-47 rifle. When the U.S. sanctioned the weapon's Russian Kalashnikov manufacturer last year, gun owners in the United States found they could still get their hands on one of the many exact copies produced in Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Serbia and China.

Fridman Bids To Save Deal

REUTERS

LONDON — Russian billionaire Mikhail Fridman's LetterOne fund said it had submitted detailed information to the British government as it tries to salvage a deal to buy North Sea assets from Germany's RWE and avoid a legal clash.

LetterOne last week finalized its 5.1 billion euro (\$5.4 billion) takeover deal of RWE DEA, but Britain blocked the sale of its British assets because of concerns that potential additional sanctions on Russia could curb oil and gas production from the fields.

"We ... continue to engage with the department [of energy]. We will leave no stone unturned to find a solution," LetterOne said in a statement.

The Department of Energy and Climate Change confirmed it had received further details from LetterOne and said that it would consider them.

Last week, Britain gave LetterOne seven days to submit assurances about the deal but said it would force Fridman to sell the fields if concerns remained.

Glencore Takes RussNeft Stake

REUTERS

Glencore is to take a 49 percent stake in Russian oil producer RussNeft as a result of a restructuring, its owner said Wednesday, despite fears that an escalating conflict between Moscow and the West over Ukraine could lead to wider sanctions against the Kremlin.

Speaking in an interview on the Russia-24 television channel, Mikhail Gutseryev said the deal was awaiting approval from the Russian competition regulator.

The non-cash transaction will convert shares Glencore has held in RussNeft's subsidiaries into a stake in the parent company, said Gutseryev. RussNeft also owes Glencore \$984 million, according to Glencore's results for 2014.

Glencore declined to comment. The deal is being finalized as the United States and the European Union are considering slapping new sanctions on Russian companies and individuals over Moscow's role in Ukraine's crisis.

MegaFon Has Low 2015 Expectations

REUTERS

Russia's No.2 mobile phone operator MegaFon said on Wednesday that it expected revenues to be flat this year after a 5.9 percent rise in 2014 as the country lurches into recession.

The company forecast a core profit margin at or above 40 percent, compared to 44 percent in 2014, and said it was committed to its earlier outlook for capital spending.

"2015 will likely be a challenging year for MegaFon. We will continue our efforts to rationalize expenses and improve operating efficiencies," said MegaFon Chief Executive Officer Ivan Tavrin.

"We will continue to invest to enhance the quality of our network ... while at the same time focusing on maintaining efficiency in our capital expenditures," he said.

MegaFon said fourth-quarter sales rose 3.1 percent to 82.2 billion rubles but net profit slumped 72 percent to 2.8 billion rubles (\$45 million) as a result of non-cash charges related to the depreciation of the ruble.

CENSORSHIP

Continued from Page 1

state-controlled media and access to capital provided by oligarchs with close ties to the Kremlin and Putin.

Managing the agenda. These practices include both “political briefings” in which chief editors of various media are called in to the presidential administration, and telephone “hotlines” that directly connect the chief editors of key media outlets with the Kremlin. The presidential administration can make use of such methods as directly substituting material produced by its own staff for journalistic reports and manipulating the underlying fears of the masses or otherwise manipulating the emotions of media consumers.

The effective (for the media or their owners) building of a pseudo-reality. Whoever fashions the news agenda also receives the profit, financial or political.

The introduction of “plants” or “observers” from media outlet owners and directly from the Presidential Administration and other key government structures such as the FSB, the Investigative Committee and even the Federal Drug Control Service. A degradation of editorial integrity is the inevitable byproduct of this practice.

The effective use of networks of staff informers. At the heart of the new censorship is a network of paid and voluntary informants. This “new” network — that arose on the basis of the new, post-party loyalty of key editors and journalists — is maintained with access to illicit money connected with journalism for bribes. Without exception, all of these “cooperative” (from the viewpoint of the Kremlin) editors and journalists involved in the scandalous practice of publishing outside material as their own editorial comments have, at the very least, aroused the suspicions of their colleagues.

Turning all news into a show. Those who understood the creation and reporting of news as “one more ratings-based entertainment product” played a role in creating and disseminating the government’s “false agenda,” and those who contributed most to its “artificial” content received rewards and encouragement.

In this way, leaders ensure that the Russian audience sees and hears — down to the smallest detail — only the picture of the world that the Kremlin wants it to see and hear.

The real issues have not disappeared, but it is forbidden to show that reality to the Russian people.

Centrality of Putin

The essence of the new censorship can be described as follows:

Russia — as Putin and his loyal (for now) lieutenants understand it — does not need an agenda based on real information.

To the contrary, the only necessary tool for managing Russia’s imperfect society is an artificially constructed agenda that is “imprinted” on society by television channels that are fully controlled by the state. Not only news and analytical programs serve as tools for applying this pressure, but also broadcasts of the arts and even entertainment.

A key element in this artificial agenda is an exaggerated role for the central character in Russia’s information milieu — the president of the Russian Federation.

For example, when Putin was once again experiencing strained relations with Moscow protesters in late May 2013, the main weekly program on Channel One, “Vremya,” ran 11 pieces on Putin’s various activities and only two covering other recent events. What’s more, every mention or depiction of Putin was not only positive, but slavishly complimentary.

The new censorship does not only exclude real



events from the agenda, but replaces them with false messages designed to make viewers feel dependent on the main hero of the stories — Vladimir Putin.

That model did not change during the Ukrainian crisis.

Those broadcasts focused on the idea of “fascist Banderovite” Ukrainians and how they were teaming up with those who had “spawned” them in order to attack Russia or its interests. In any case, the propaganda had to assert that such a war had already almost begun.

This manufactured agenda reached a peak in early summer last year when Russia’s state-controlled television channels began portraying pro-Russian separatist leader Igor Girkin (aka Igor Strelkov) as “the savior of the Donbass Russians” and falsely reported that Ukrainian forces had crucified a young boy in Slavyansk.

These distortions of reality were no mere improvisations by presidential administration staff who were instructed to manage the news on Channel One or the All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company (VGTRK). Senior officials undoubtedly issued clear instructions in this regard and much of the text broadcast on the Vesti television channel and “Vremya” news show and their websites has been introduced from above without any input from editors.

The primary characteristic of the new censor-

ship is that it motivates so-called “journalists” to not only serve the Kremlin agenda, but to creatively advance it.

The “crucified boy in Slavyansk” is just the most superficial example of that. A far more insidious and potentially dangerous phenomenon is the frequent and barely perceptible distortions to reports from previously neutral programs and writers.

For example, by simply inserting promo shorts for the forthcoming “Vremya” news show during the vastly popular prime time women’s talk show “Pust govoryat” (“Let Them Speak”), viewers without intention to watch the newscast are gradually infected and become carriers of the virus of lies and aggressiveness.

In this way, masses of television viewers become not only victims of deliberate manipulation, but also strong supporters of a policy of hatred directed toward Ukrainians whom they know only through state-controlled television reports.

This is a world that has been constructed especially for their consumption. It contains enemies and the one person who can effectively oppose them: Vladimir Putin. The greater their hatred for the enemy, the deeper is their love for Putin, and vice versa.

With this false agenda filling the airwaves so thoroughly and constantly, the average Russian cannot but respond to surveys with the conviction that Putin is the mainstay of his life.

Bittersweet Freedom

Soviet media was first freed from censorship in August 1990 when printing houses stopped requiring publishers to present a stamp of approval from the Main Administration for Safeguarding State Secrets in the Press.

That launched a brief period in which the media enjoyed nearly total freedom. Society began a sober examination of its ideological heritage, retrieved important documents previously classified by the authorities and resurrected episodes from Russian history that censors had previously either ignored or eliminated.

The relative ease of the transition from a totalitarian media model to the new Russian model is due to the fact that former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev’s policy of “glasnost” greatly undermined the status and capabilities of the Communist Party Central Committee with regard to political and ideological censorship.

In addition, Alexander Yakovlev, one of the architects of perestroika, headed the ideological department of the central committee for several years, and it was his support that made possible the appearance of the Moskovskiy Novosti newspaper with its more progressive civil and political reporting.

Party leadership of the media practically ceased in 1991, and it was the disappearance of that control during the final months of the Soviet Union — first in the Baltic states and later in the Caucasus — that made it possible for the republics to rapidly separate and form their own political class.

The journalistic community was caught up in the euphoria of freedom of the press, the freedom to express political views and the freedom to criticize the ruling authorities.

Because the number of “free” media outlets was continually growing, the leaders of the anti-democratic putsch of Aug. 19, 1991 suspended the publication of all newspapers and effectively instituted a wartime censorship regime on television and radio.

However, the ban did not work: A number of printers released the “Obshchaya Gazeta” on Aug. 21, and by the morning of Aug. 23, when the putsch collapsed, both formal and informal structures of party control over the media no longer existed.

When they were first freed from party control, most media had no idea how to view themselves as separate entities with the duty of reporting the truth to the people and earning money at the same time.

The events of August 1991 were probably not only the final chord in the activities of the Communist Party as a political organization, but also the final stage in the existence of the Soviet media in their classical form.

Most editors and journalists had no market understanding of the economics of the media. The situation was easier for television and radio as both received funding from the Finance Ministry.

The economic problems of the transition period affected the entire system of Soviet media: Newspapers and other print publications faced runaway inflation — the money collected in early 1991 from subscriptions ran out long before those subscriptions had ended.

Retail sales were very high, but Soyuzpechat, the state’s monopolistic distributor of newspapers and magazines, began suffering from problems caused by inflation and failed to make timely payments for the publications it delivered to its vast network of newsstands.

At that time, no advertising or sales professionals existed.

Many publications declared their “independence” in the belief that they could earn a great deal of money in the emerging market economy.

However, that turned out to be an illusion. The deregulation of prices and the flourishing barter economy, along with the freeing up of foreign trade from state controls led to an acute shortage of money and newsprint.

Faced with economic hardship, the former Soviet newspapers rushed to ask for help from President Boris Yeltsin and the government that they had been mercilessly criticizing — some for its lack of radical reforms, and others for its infatuation with liberal policies.

As the “stewards of perestroika,” Izvestia, Kommolskaya Pravda, Trud, Argumenty i Fakty and other publications argued that the state had “an obligation to support freedom of speech,” they also demanded that leaders “pay for the support” those publications had given them during the dramatic events of those years.

Many of those editors, along with a number of their journalists, were State Duma deputies, and the Yeltsin administration agreed to extend assistance

Propaganda and the Effects of Media

Scholars began studying the effects of media in the early 20th century, when developed societies were subjected to highly effective war propaganda during World War I.

The process of shaping public opinion through the press — and later radio and especially television — was identified as a separate discipline that stands at the intersection of social psychology and communication theory.

Some effects of media are considered “natural” — that is, arising from the nature of mass communications, whereas others are considered to be “imposed” — that is, arising from the deliberate use of media to achieve specific results.

The practice of managing, or “correcting,” the

public agenda (“agenda-setting theory” in scientific terms) aims to manipulate public opinion by changing the structure of information “packets” presented in the media.

Researchers have shown a direct link between the structure of news programs (the order of the stories, placing certain information in brief announcements) and subsequent changes in public opinion and voter behavior.

The Russian authorities primarily use agenda-setting to show President Vladimir Putin in an exaggerated number of settings and situations in order to create the impression that he is omnipresent and personally involved in every vital aspect of national life. This makes viewers feel dependent on

Putin for the country’s well-being.

Information priming: Social psychology defines priming as a process by which the information a person receives activates thoughts and feelings related to the content of the message.

With regard to media, priming occurs when information stimulates understandings, ideas or knowledge acquired in the past that have some connection with the new information presented. For example, Boris Yeltsin’s election campaign in 1996 used priming by constantly repeating slogans intended to call up negative memories of both the distant and more recent Soviet past — catchphrases such as “God forbid that the communists would return to power.”

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necessary to a genuine strategic plan were either lacking or, after 2000, assigned to Vladislav Surkov for development.

Surkov launched an ambitious ideological search, and in addition to his wealth of ideas, countless hordes of “political consultants” and “political centers” serving the Kremlin made their contribution as well.

While Alexei Gromov and Mikhail Lesin were charged with controlling and managing the media, Vladislav Surkov and his associates from numerous “political centers” were tasked with creating a second important component of the system: an “alternate reality” in which the authorities could fully immerse the country.

The Last Traces of Freedom

The system for controlling the media stabilized by 2005 and has continued almost unchanged until the present. At the same time, it has undergone an inevitable evolution: Having taken firm hold on control over the media, the authorities ventured even further and began manipulating the structure of the public discourse.

Having achieved certain results in managing the public agenda, along with the desired shift in public opinion that resulted, the Kremlin decided to expand its zone of influence beyond traditional media into “new media” — from the broadcasting sector into interactive media, and from manipulating the domestic agenda into influencing the international agenda.

The “new system” is based on new principles. As the Soviet past recedes, today’s leaders have stripped the Leninist and Stalinist propaganda of its ideology and improved it with techniques that produce even better results.

Of course, many similarities between the Soviet and the new Russian system remain, but in the absence of the Communist Party and the many privileges and “persuasions” it could employ, the ruling authorities must now rely on other sticks and carrots such as property, money — primarily budgetary funds — job postings, government “plants” to control operations and so on.

The authorities are forced to operate in a situation

in which, at least on paper, censorship is forbidden.

The new “system” is primarily designed to make the media effective in publicly presenting the agenda — whether real or imagined — which, in turn, helps the president govern the country.

Over time, everything that does not help achieve this goal is considered an “obstacle” or “inimical” to the plan. The task of the new censorship is to produce an agenda for the public discourse that the greater part of society will support, regardless of what it thought yesterday about those ideas or of how it feels now about more personally pressing issues concerning the local situation, jobs and social conditions.

The Yellow Telephone

When Vladimir Putin was triumphantly elected to a second term in 2004, the basic features of the new system were already in place: The state held organizational control over the three major television broadcasters — Channel One, VGTRK and NTV — and could use various mechanisms to, if not dictate, then at least “adjust” the news agenda.

The situation with print media was problematic: Many publications retained a high degree of editorial sovereignty, sympathized with the opposition and sought to provide objective coverage of events within Russia.

Following 2005, the system for managing the media succeeded primarily in producing a stable image of Putin and his messages. Television channels and other media controlled by the state gave a “green light” to Vladislav Surkov and his active efforts to “consolidate” various groups such as Nashi, Young Guard and others around President Putin and United Russia. However, at that time at least, those media viewed their support as a form of “payment” in return for the right to continue operations.

Meanwhile, preparations for the second phase of the new censorship began during this period of 2005-08.

In 2004 Mikhail Lesin left his post as Communications and Press Minister to become an adviser to President Putin and, after forming a close alliance with Alexei Gromov, began working on a system for creating and controlling the public agenda.

Svetlana Mironyuk, who served as chief editor of the RIA Novosti state-owned news agency from 2003 to 2013, explained how that new for-

mat worked and how the authorities “tightened the screws” during her final years at that post. In her opinion, officials had no need to systematically intimidate editors, much less the media owners.

Relations between the authorities and media changed gradually, step by step, in roundabout ways and, most frequently, in connection with specific individuals.

According to Mironyuk, beginning in the early 2000s the authorities divided the media into three categories. (Gromov and Lesin began the task, and later they were joined by first Surkov, and then his replacement: Vyacheslav Volodin.) The three categories are:

- “Outsiders,” or those with views alien to the official line. These include Vedomosti newspaper, Forbes magazine, Novaya Gazeta newspaper, the Lenta.ru website (until March 2014) and several others such as Dozhd television. As with Western media, the authorities either have strictly business relations with them or no relationship at all. They cannot be bought, sold or manipulated.

- “Our guys.” These are primarily state media. Since the mid-2000s, this group included the Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper, and the group of publications and media owned by Aram Gabrelyanov — Zhizn, Lifenevs.ru and Izvestia. According to Mironyuk, this category primarily includes editors with whom Alexei Gromov has long had good personal relations, and with whom he can strike “deals” for informational barter: The Kremlin organizes exclusive interviews for the publications but expects certain “services” in return.

- “In-betweeners.” These are either semi-outsiders or semi-locals with whom the authorities can sometimes strike deals, but not always. Radio station Ekho Moskvy and news agency Interfax are the most notable examples.

Of course, one important tool for manipulating the public agenda is the “media hotline” that the authorities created in the mid-2000s. This is a system of direct communication between Kremlin “handlers” and chief editors at state-controlled media. Later, special yellow telephones were installed on the desks of their news editors that linked them directly to the Kremlin.

Alexander Orlov, who served as deputy editor-in-chief of the Rossia-24 television channel from 2008 to 2012 explained that VGTRK Deputy Chairman Dmitry Mednikov and Rossia-24

chief editor Yevgeny Bekasov frequently take calls on their yellow phones — not so much to receive their latest orders as to consult with Kremlin staff on how best to present this or that news story.

For example, Orlov recalls that during the economic crisis of 2008, the caller on the yellow phone prohibited VGTRK channels from using the word “crisis” in their broadcasts, even while simultaneously requiring that they report on the crisis.

Restricting the Agenda

The existence of the new censorship has been an open secret for the last five years already.

Although Dmitry Medvedev acted as president from 2008 to 2012, Alexei Gromov remained in charge of state-controlled media exactly as before.

The economic crisis of 2008-2010 dealt a major blow to Russia media.

Although a media market ostensibly continued to exist, government subsidies — especially in the form of contracts for “information services” — became increasingly important for any firm’s continued existence. Originally used by governors as a way to control the local media, the practice gradually spread to the capital.

Of course, the main innovation of the new censorship in recent years is the unofficial but complete ban on state-controlled media from formulating their own news agenda.

State-controlled television and radio news stations are now highly dependent on their “yellow phones” and federal funding.

Newspapers were compelled to follow the agenda presented on television. Otherwise, they would find themselves at odds not only with Kremlin handlers, but also with their audiences, who get most of their news from television.

Information agencies were an exception, enjoying some — and, at times, complete — freedom in setting their own news agendas, even during the mass protests from winter 2011 to spring 2012.

However, the restructuring of RIA Novosti in 2013-14 put an end to that relative freedom.

Vasily Gatov is a media researcher, analyst and media investment expert. This is the first installment in a series of articles on the Russian media. An abridged version of this article was published in Russian at www.svoboda.org/content/article/26840571.html.

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17	CUSTOMS 2015: DIALOGUE OF THE GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS
22	TOP 10 HR TRENDS — 2015
22	BANKRUPTCY PROCESS IN RUSSIA. FINANCIAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS

For additional information regarding registration, please contact **Irina Gavrikova**
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www.events.moscowtimes.ru



GOLD

"Gold," a quirky Irish comedy starring Maisie Williams of "Game of Thrones" fame, is a comic yet poignant tale of a husband who returns to his family after almost 12 years away. Now on in English at Formula Kino Gorizont.

CINEMA

AMERICAN SNIPER (2014): Clint Eastwood's biographical war drama based on the book "American Sniper: The Autobiography of the Most Lethal Sniper in U.S. Military History" by Chris Kyle. Stars Bradley Cooper.

Pioneer Thurs., Mon. and Wed. at 11:50 p.m., Fri. at 4:30 p.m., Sat. at 11:10 a.m., Sun. at 9:15 a.m., Tues. at 7:10 p.m. **In English; Russian subtitles.**

Zvezda Thurs. at 5:30 p.m., Sat. and Wed. at 12:40 p.m., Mon. at 10:35 a.m. **In English; Russian subtitles.**

BEST SHORTS: STUDENT ACADEMY: a selection of Student Oscar short films. **Center of Documentary Cinema** Thurs. at 5 p.m., Sat. at 3 p.m. **In various languages; Russian subtitles.**

CARMEN: Richard Eyre's staging of Bizet's opera with Elina Garanca and Roberto Alagna in the leads. The Metropolitan Opera production.

Formula Kino Gorizont Wed. at 3 p.m. **In French; Russian subtitles.**

CINDERELLA (Zolushka, 2015): When her father unexpectedly passes away, young Ella finds herself at the mercy of her cruel stepmother and her daughters. Never one to give up hope, Ella's fortunes begin to change after meeting a dashing stranger in the woods. Directed by Kenneth Branagh, stars Lily James, Hayley Atwell and Richard Madden.

Pyat Zvyozd-Paveletskaya Thurs. to Wed. at 10:10 a.m., 12:25, 2:40, 5, 6:20, 7:20, 9:40 and 11:55 p.m. **Dubbed.**

Rolan Thurs. to Wed. at 1:15 and 7:40 p.m. **Dubbed.**

CYMBELINE (2015): Michael Almereyda's crime tragedy, based on Shakespeare's play, about a take-no-prisoners war between dirty cops and an outlaw biker gang stars Ethan Hawke, Ed Harris, Milla Jovovich and John Leguizamo.

35MM Thurs. at 2:10 p.m., Fri. at 4:10 p.m., Sun. at 12:20 p.m. **In English; Russian subtitles.**

DIOR AND I (2014): Frederic Tcheng's documentary about the Christian Dior fashion house.

35MM Fri. at 10:10 p.m., Sat. at 10 a.m. **In English, French and Italian; Russian subtitles.**

Center of Documentary Cinema Thurs. at 9:40 p.m., Sat. at 1 p.m., Mon. at 9 p.m., Tues. and Wed. at 5 p.m. **In English, French and Italian; Russian subtitles.**

Pioneer Thurs. at 9:20 a.m., Fri. at 11:55 a.m., Sat. and Tues. at 9:15 a.m., Sun. at 11:25 p.m., Mon. at 4:50 p.m. and 12:50 a.m., Wed. at 5 p.m. **In English, French and Italian; Russian subtitles.**

DUKHLISS 2 (Soulless 2, 2015): Roman Prygunov's sequel to his 2012 drama about businessman Max Andreyev (Daniela Kozlovsky).

Pioneer Thurs. and Fri. at 9:15 a.m., Sat. at 11:35 a.m., Sun. at 3:40 p.m., Mon. at

2 and 9:15 p.m., Tues. at 7:15 p.m., Wed. at 11:45 a.m. and 9:15 p.m.

Pyat Zvyozd-Paveletskaya Thurs. to Wed. at noon, 2:10, 4:25, 6:40, 9 and 11:20 p.m.

Rolan Thurs. to Wed. at 3:15 and 9:45 p.m.

FILM DELICATESSEN: a selection of the 2014 Cannes Film Festival winning and nominated shorts.

35MM Fri. at 12:15 a.m., Sat. at 7:50 p.m. **In various languages; Russian subtitles.**

Center of Documentary Cinema Fri. at 3 p.m. **In various languages; Russian subtitles.**

FROM HERE TO ETERNITY (Otnye i Vovek): A musical based on the novel of the same name by James Jones. Music by Stuart Brayson, lyrics by Tim Rice, directed by Tamara Harvey. Shaftesbury Theatre production.

Formula Kino Praga Sun. at 7 p.m. **In English; Russian subtitles.**

IL CAPITALE UMANO (Human Capital; Tsena Cheloveka, 2013): The destinies of two families are irrevocably tied together after a cyclist is hit by a jeep the night before Christmas Eve. Paolo Virzi's drama starring Fabrizio Bentivoglio, Matilde Giori and Valeria Bruni.

35MM Sun. at 4:10 p.m. **In Italian and English; Russian subtitles.**

Pioneer Thurs. at 11:20 a.m., Sat. and Tues. at 9:20 a.m., Sun. at 12:15 a.m., Mon. at 11:40 a.m. **In Italian and English; Russian subtitles.**

FESTIVAL IRISH DOC: BROKEN SONG (2013): a documentary about Dublin rappers followed by James Costello's concert.

Center of Documentary Cinema Sat. at 7 p.m. **In English; Russian subtitles.**

FESTIVAL IRISH DOC: ELIZA LUNCH: QUEEN OF PARAGUAY (2013): A documentary drama on the life of Irish-born Eliza Lynch, who became Paraguay's uncrowned queen.

Center of Documentary Cinema Wed. at 6 p.m., March 22 at 5 p.m. **In English; Russian subtitles.**

FESTIVAL IRISH DOC: ONE MILLION DUBLINERS (2014): Aoife Kelleher's historical documentary about the Glasnevin Cemetery.

Center of Documentary Cinema Thurs. at 8 p.m., March 21 at 7 p.m. **In English; Russian subtitles.**

FESTIVAL IRISH DOC: ROCKY ROAD TO DUBLIN: Peter Lennox's 1968 full-length documentary about Ireland and Paul Duane's 2004 short "The Making of the Rocky Road to Dublin."

Center of Documentary Cinema Sat. at 9 p.m., Sun. at 5 p.m. **In English; Russian subtitles.**

FESTIVAL IRISH DOC: ROCKY ROAD TO DUBLIN: Peter Lennox's 1968 full-length documentary about Ireland and Paul Duane's 2004 short "The Making of the Rocky Road to Dublin."

Center of Documentary Cinema Sat. at 9 p.m., Sun. at 5 p.m. **In English; Russian subtitles.**

Center of Documentary Cinema Fri. at 7 p.m., March 21 at 9 p.m. **In English; Russian subtitles.**

FESTIVAL IRISH DOC: THE SAVAGE EYE: the best of the popular Irish satirical TV

show.

Center of Documentary Cinema Fri. at 9 p.m., March 19 at 7 p.m. **In English; Russian subtitles.**

FESTIVAL IRISH FILM: GOLD (Zoloto, 2014): Niall Heery's offbeat comedy about an estranged father who returns to his hometown after an absence of ten years in order to reconnect with his daughter and ex-wife but unwittingly almost destroys their lives. Stars James Nesbitt, Maisie Williams and David Wilmot.

Formula Kino Gorizont Sun. and March 19 at 9 p.m., March 22 at 5 p.m. **In English; Russian subtitles.**

FESTIVAL IRISH FILM: JIMMY'S HALL (2014): Political activist Jimmy Gralton is deported from Ireland during the country's Red Scare of the 1930s. Ken Loach's drama starring Barry Ward, Simone Kirby and Andrew Scott.

Formula Kino Gorizont Sun. at 7 p.m., March 20 at 7:30 p.m. **In English; Russian subtitles.**

FESTIVAL IRISH FILM: LOVE ETERNAL (Lyubov na Veka, 2013): Brendan Muldowney's mystic drama based on Kei Oishi's novel "In Love With the Dead."

Formula Kino Gorizont Thurs. and Wed. at 9 p.m., March 22 at 7 p.m. **In English; Russian subtitles.**

FESTIVAL IRISH FILM: THE CANAL (2014): mystic thriller written and directed by Ivan Kavanagh.

Formula Kino Gorizont Fri. and March 20 at 9 p.m., Mon. at 7 p.m. **In English; Russian subtitles.**

THE IMITATION GAME (Igra v Imitatsiyu, 2014): Morten Tyldum's historical drama stars Benedict Cumberbatch as the British cryptanalyst Alan Turing, who helped solve the Enigma code during the Second World War and committed suicide after his prosecution for homosexuality.

35MM Sat. at 5:40 p.m. **In English; Russian subtitles.**

THE SECOND BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL (Marigold Hotel: Zaseleniye Prodolzhayetsya, 2015): John Madden's sequel to his 2012 comedy starring veteran British actors.

35MM Thurs. at 6 p.m., Fri. and Sun. at 10 a.m., Sat. at 3:20 p.m. **In English; Russian subtitles.**

Pioneer Thurs. at 11:25 a.m., 4:30 and 7:10 p.m., Fri. at 9:20 a.m., 1:55 and 9:30, Sat. at 1:35, 6:15 and 10:55 p.m., Sun. at 11:40 a.m., 4:20 and 6:45 p.m., Mon. at 9:15 a.m., 2:15 and 9:25 p.m., Tues. at 11:15 a.m., 4:15 and 9:35 p.m., Wed. at 9:20 a.m., 2:20 and 9:25 p.m. **In English; Russian subtitles.**

THEORY OF EVERYTHING (Vseleennaya Stivena Khokinga, 2014): James Marsh's drama about Stephen Hawking.

Pioneer Thurs. at 9:30 p.m., Fri. at 7:10 p.m., Sat. at 6 p.m., Sun. at 8 p.m., Mon. at 9:20 a.m., Tues. at 4:30 p.m., Wed. at 9:15 a.m. **In English; Russian subtitles.**

A comprehensive set of listings
and the addresses for all venues
can be found at www.themoscowtimes.com

CONCERTS

THURSDAY THE 12TH

21st-Century Music performed by Svyatoslav Lips (piano), Maria Vlasova (accordion), Viktor Sych (percussion), Alisa Margulis (violin) and Alexander Buzlov (cello). *Philharmonic Chamber Hall.* 7 p.m.

Alexander Rudin (cello) and Ivan Rudin (piano) perform Bach, Debussy and Grieg. *Dom Kompozitorov.* 6:30 p.m.

Novaya Rossiya Symphony Orchestra performs Verdi, Bellini, Donizetti, Rossini and Tchaikovsky. Soloists Yekaterina Lyokhina (soprano) and Nikolai Sachenko (violin), conductor Denis Vlasenko. *Philharmonic-2 Rachmaninov Hall.* 7 p.m.

Olesya Kravchenko (organ) and Sergei Govorov (saxophone) perform Piazzolla, Bach, Buxtehude, Lioncourt and others. *St. Andrew's Anglican Church.* 7:30 p.m.

Olga Martynova (harpsichord) performs Bach, Buxtehude and Weckmann. *Dom Muzyki Chamber Hall.* 7 p.m.

Pavel Slobodkin Center Chamber Orchestra performs Beethoven's Symphony No. 7. Also in program are Beethoven's Romances for violin and orchestra and King Stephen Overture. *Pavel Slobodkin Center.* 7 p.m.

Salut, Spain! Novaya Opera Orchestra and soloists perform Spanish songs and arias in conductor Fabio Mastrangelo's jubilee concert. *Conservatory Great Hall.* 7 p.m.

MT PICK Svetlanov Symphony Orchestra performs Sibelius' Symphony No. 2, Chausson's Poeme de l'Amour et de la Mer and Franck's Psyche et Eros. Soloist Waltraud Meier (mezzo-soprano), conductor Andrei Boreiko. *Tchaikovsky Concert Hall.* 7 p.m.

FRIDAY THE 13TH

Colin Gray (organ) performs Bach, Buxtehude, Vierne and Widor. *Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Cathedral.* 9 p.m.

Johann Strauss, The King of Waltzes: Novaya Opera Orchestra and soloists in concert. *Novaya Opera.* 7 p.m.

Maxim Paster (tenor) performs Tchaikovsky's arias and romances. *Pavel Slobodkin Center.* 7 p.m.

Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle performed by the Blagovest Ensemble, Margarita Korolyova (organ), Tatyana Lanskaya (soprano), Yevgenia Segenyuk (contralto), Konstantin Moshkin (tenor) and others. *Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Cathedral.* 7 p.m.

Rusquartet performs Tchaikovsky, Myaskovsky and Glazunov. *Conservatory Rachmaninov Hall.* 7 p.m.

MT PICK Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra performs Schubert's Symphony No. 9 and Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5. Soloist Michi Koyama (piano), conductor Nikolai Vinokurov. *Tchaikovsky Concert Hall.* 7 p.m.

Thierry Escaich: French composer, organist and improviser in concert. *Dom Muzyki Svetlanov Hall.* 7 p.m.

SATURDAY THE 14TH

Berlioz's Le Damnation de Faust performed by the Russian National Orchestra and the Academy of Choral Art Choir. Soloists Oksana Volkova (mezzo-soprano), Pavel Cernoch (tenor), Andrew Foster-Williams (bass-baritone) and Dmitry Skorikov (bass), conductor Vasily Sinaisky. *Conservatory Great Hall.* 7 p.m.

MT PICK Jose Carreras (tenor) performs arias. *Kremlin Palace.* 6 p.m.

Organ Evening: works by Bach, Buxtehude, Boellmann, Brahms and Rheinberger performed by Polina Bondareva, Yelizaveta Bezel, Maria Shorokhova, Olesya Kravchenko and others. *Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Cathedral.* 4 p.m.

Papin Shakhbazyan (duduk), Tatyana Konina (organ), Ivan Ipatov (piano) and the Russian Sax Quartet perform Bach, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Piazzolla and Armenian folk songs. *Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Cathedral.* 7 p.m.

SUNDAY THE 15TH

Alexander Udaltsov (organ) performs Bach. *St. Andrew's Anglican Church.* 7:30 p.m.

Borodin Quartet performs Brahms. *Conservatory Small Hall.* 7 p.m.

Papin Shakhbazyan (duduk) and Lili Mgeryan (organ) perform Armenian spiritual music. *Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Cathedral.* 7 p.m.

Philharmonic Debut: Nikita Volov (piano) performs Schumann, Brahms, Chopin, Scriabin, Rachmaninov and Kreisler. *Philharmonic Chamber Hall.* 7 p.m.

Russian Philharmonia Symphony Orchestra performs rhapsodies by Rachmaninov, Gershwin, Ravel and Liszt. *Dom Muzyki Svetlanov Hall.* 7 p.m.

Schubert. Songs: vocalists of the Bolshoi Theater Youth Opera Program in concert. *Bolshoi Theater Beethoven Hall.* 6:30 p.m.

Viktor Zinchuk (guitar), Igor Komarov (drums), Dmitry Lobanov (guitar) and Viktor Ponomarev (bass guitar) perform Zinchuk's arrangements of Mozart, Rossini, Glinka, Schubert, Beethoven and Bach. *St. Mary's Cathedral.* 8 p.m.

Virtuosos of Moscow Chamber Orchestra performs Haydn, Corelli and Piazzolla. Soloist and conductor Andres Mustonen (violin). *Tchaikovsky Concert Hall.* 7 p.m.

MONDAY THE 16TH

Moscow Trio performs Beethoven's Trio in B flat major and Rachmaninov's Elegiac Trio. *Conservatory Small Hall.* 7 p.m.

Pavel Kogan Orchestra performs Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1, compositions by Lyadov, Glinka, Arensky and Rimsky-Korsakov. Soloist Konstantin Shamrai (piano), conductor Vladimir Sherbitsky. *Tchaikovsky Concert Hall.* 7 p.m.

TUESDAY THE 17TH

Alexander Knyazev (organ) and Tatyana Lanskaya (soprano) perform Bach. *Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Cathedral.* 8 p.m.

Dedicated to Svyatoslav Richter: Pianists Yakov Katsnelson, Yevgeny Mikhailov and Pyotr Laul perform Bach, Scriabin, Chopin, Methner, Schubert and Prokofiev. *Conservatory Great Hall.* 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY THE 18TH

Alexei Chernov (piano) performs Scriabin, Beethoven, Chopin and Liszt. *Pavel Slobodkin Center.* 7 p.m.

Alyona Bayeva (violin), Boris Andrianov (cello) and the Novaya Rossiya Symphony Orchestra perform Sibelius' Violin Concerto, Stravinsky's The Firebird Suite, Tchaikovsky's Italian Capriccio and his Variations on a Rocco Theme. *Conservatory Great Hall.* 7 p.m.

Anna Suslova (organ) performs Vivaldi, Buxtehude, Bach and Vierne. *St. Mary's Cathedral.* 8 p.m.

Evening of Chamber Music: Kristina Keselman (piano), Vartan Maillyants (violin) and Ivan Renansky (cello) perform Shostakovich, Haydn, Paganini, Tchaikovsky and others. *Golitsyn Manor.* 7 p.m.

Jerusalem Festival of Chamber Music. *Conservatory Small Hall.* 7 p.m.

Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra Musicians perform Beethoven. *Philharmonic Chamber Hall.* 7 p.m.

National Philharmonic of Russia performs Beethoven's Coriolan Overture, his Piano Concerto No. 5 and Sibelius' Symphony No. 5. Soloist Filipp Kopachevsky (piano), conductor Mikhail Gerts. *Dom Muzyki Svetlanov Hall.* 7 p.m.

Opera and Jazz: Novaya Opera vocalists in concert. *Darwin Museum.* 7 p.m.

DANCE

THURSDAY THE 12TH

NEW Hamlet: Declan Donnellan's dance staging of Shakespeare choreographed by

Radu Poklitaru. *Bolshoi Theater New Stage*. 7 p.m.

Sailors and Whores (Moryaki i Shlyukhi): Oleg Glushkov's contemporary dance staging. *Fomenko Studio New Stage*. 7 p.m.

Strauss Gala: a ballet about ballet staged by Vladimir Vasilyov and Natalya Kasatkina. Grand Moscow Classical Ballet production. *Novaya Opera*. 7 p.m.

FRIDAY THE 13TH

Giselle: Adolphe Adam's ballet about a peasant girl deceived in love by a young aristocrat. *Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theater*. 7 p.m.

NEW Hamlet (see Thurs. listing). *Bolshoi Theater New Stage*. 7 p.m.

The Architecture of Sound: Two avant-garde ballets — Konstantin Semyonov's "Labyrinth" to music by Boris Tchaikovsky, and Kirill Radeyev's "Three Poems" to music by Yury Abdokov. Moskva Ballet production. *ZIL Cultural Center*. 7 p.m.

SATURDAY THE 14TH

Cafe Buto'h: Oleg Glushkov's contemporary dance staging. *School of Dramatic Art*. 8 p.m.

NEW Hamlet (see Thurs. listing). *Bolshoi Theater New Stage*. Noon and 7 p.m.

Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs (Belosnezhka i Sem Gnomov): a classical ballet for kids. Moskva Ballet production. *ZIL Cultural Center*. 5 p.m.

SUNDAY THE 15TH

NEW Hamlet (see Thurs. listing). *Bolshoi Theater New Stage*. 6 p.m.

MONDAY THE 16TH

NEW Tatiana: John Neumeier's newest ballet to music by Lera Auerbach is based on Pushkin's verse novel "Eugene Onegin." Co-production of the Hamburg State Opera and Ballet and the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theater. *Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theater*. 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY THE 18TH

A Hunting Drama (Drama na Okhote): Alexei Fadeychev's ballet to music by Tchaikovsky based on the themes of a Chekhov story. Rostov Musical Theater production. *Bolshoi Theater Main Stage*. 7 p.m.

Romeo and Juliet: Prokofiev's ballet based on Shakespeare's tragedy as staged by Natalya Kasatkina and Vladimir Vasilyov. Grand Moscow Classical Ballet production. *Novaya Opera*. 7 p.m.

OPERA

THURSDAY THE 12TH

MT PICK Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District (Ledi Makbet Mtsenskogo Uyezda): original version of Shostakovich's opera based on Nikolai Leskov's story. Staged by Dmitry Bertman. *Helikon Opera on Arbat*. 7 p.m.

Prince Igor (Knyaz Igor): Alexander Borodin's opera, based on the medieval epic "The Lay of Igor's Campaign," tells of Prince Igor and his son Vladimir in captivity during the war with the Polovtsians.

Directed by Yury Lyubimov, new musical redaction by Pavel Karmanov. *Bolshoi Theater Main Stage*. 7 p.m.

IN GERMAN IN FRENCH Tannhauser: Wagner's opera based on the two German legends of Tannhauser and the song contest at Wartburg. The story centers on the struggle between sacred and profane love, and redemption through love. Performed in German and French with Russian subtitles. *Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theater*. 7 p.m.

FRIDAY THE 13TH

MT PICK Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District (see Thurs. listing). *Helikon Opera on Arbat*. 7 p.m.

NEW Orfeo ed Euridice: Gluck's opera as staged by Irina Lychagina features young soloists. *Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theater small stage*. 7 p.m.

IN GERMAN The Three Pintos (Tri Pinto): Weber-Mahler's comic opera telling a tale

of mistaken identities and misguided love. Directed and choreographed by Mikhail Kislyarov. Performed in German and Russian. *Pokrovsky Chamber Musical Theater*. 7 p.m.

The Tsar's Bride (Tsarskaya Nevesta): the concert version of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera performed by the Moscow Conservatory Opera Theater. *Conservatory Great Hall*. 7 p.m.

SATURDAY THE 14TH

Boris Godunov: Mussorgsky's musical drama based on Pushkin's tragedy about the tsar (1598-1605) who ruled in the Time of Troubles. *Bolshoi Theater Main Stage*. 7 p.m.

MT PICK IN GERMAN Fidelio: the concert version of Beethoven's opera performed by the Musica Viva Chamber Orchestra, Maxim Paster (tenor), Juliane Banse (soprano), Timo Riihonen (bass), Anna Lucia Richter (soprano) and others. *Tchaikovsky Concert Hall*. 7 p.m.

IN ITALIAN La Traviata: Verdi's opera as staged by Alexander Titel. Performed in Italian. *Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theater*. 7 p.m.

MT PICK Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District (see Thurs. listing). *Helikon Opera on Arbat*. 7 p.m.

IN ITALIAN Rigoletto: Verdi's opera based on Victor Hugo's play "Le Roi s'amuse." Performed in Italian with Russian subtitles. *Novaya Opera*. 7 p.m.

the Moscow Conservatory Opera Theater. *Conservatory Great Hall*. 7 p.m.

TUESDAY THE 17TH

IN FRENCH Faust: Gounod's opera about a man's deal with the devil as staged by French directors Philippe Godfroid and Françoise Terrone. Performed in French. Rostov Musical Theater production. *Bolshoi Theater Main Stage*. 7 p.m.

FESTIVAL Golden Mask: The Tsar's Bride (Tsarskaya Nevesta): Rimsky-Korsakov's tragic opera as staged by Andrei Moguchy for the Mikhailovsky Theater (St. Petersburg). *Bolshoi Theater New Stage*. 7 p.m.

IN ITALIAN Il Trovatore (Trubadur): the concert version of Verdi's tragic opera performed by the Symphony Capella of Russia, Yelena Yevseyeva (soprano), Lyudmila Kuznetsova (mezzo-soprano), Oleg Dolgov (tenor) and other soloists. *Tchaikovsky Concert Hall*. 7 p.m.

IN GERMAN Lohengrin: Wagner's medieval romantic opera as staged by Kasper Holten. Performed in German with Russian subtitles. *Novaya Opera*. 6 p.m.

The Tsar's Bride (see Sat. listing). *Galina Vishnevskaya Opera Center*. 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY THE 18TH

IN FRENCH Carmen: Bizet's opera based on Merimee's short story about a man's tragic



A man engrossed in one of Anatoly Brusilovsky's graphic portrayals of the naked female form, which make up his "About That..." exhibition. The Russian Dadaist's erotic drawings will be on display until April 9 at Fine Art Gallery.

IN GERMAN The Three Pintos (see Fri. listing). *Pokrovsky Chamber Musical Theater*. 6 p.m.

The Tsar's Bride (Tsarskaya Nevesta): Rimsky-Korsakov's tragic opera about love and vengeance staged by Ivan Popovski and Galina Vishnevskaya. *Galina Vishnevskaya Opera Center*. 7 p.m.

SUNDAY THE 15TH

Boris Godunov: (see Sat. listing). *Bolshoi Theater Main Stage*. 6 p.m.

MT PICK Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District (see Thurs. listing). *Helikon Opera on Arbat*. 7 p.m.

IN ITALIAN Rigoletto (see Sat. listing). *Novaya Opera*. 4 p.m.

The Legend of Tsar Saltan (Skazka o Tsare Saltane): Rimsky-Korsakov's opera based on Pushkin's comic verse tale about the tsar's lost son, who becomes the king of a fairy island. Staged by Alexander Titel. *Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theater*. Noon.

IN GERMAN The Three Pintos (see Fri. listing). *Pokrovsky Chamber Musical Theater*. 6 p.m.

MONDAY THE 16TH

La Boheme (Bogema): the concert version of Puccini's opera performed by

attraction to a woman he allows to escape from jail on purpose. Performed in French. *Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theater*. 7 p.m.

Strider (Kholstomer): Vladimir Kobekin's opera based on a story by Leo Tolstoy about the life, loves, misfortunes and death of a "useless" work horse. *Pokrovsky Chamber Musical Theater*. 7 p.m.

IN GERMAN The Coffee Cantata (Kofeinaya Kantata): This charming, 40-minute production of Bach's comic opera involves 30 audience members having coffee with the singers. Performed in German. *Helikon Opera Cafe on Arbat*. 7 and 8:30 p.m.

THEATER

THURSDAY THE 12TH

NEW A Common Story (Obyknovennaya Istoriya): Kirill Serebrennikov's updated stage version of Ivan Goncharov's 19th-century novel about a young enthusiastic provincial man in St. Petersburg. *Gogol Center*. 8 p.m.

Electra: Timofei Kulyabin stages Euripides' tragedy about a sister and brother seeking revenge on their mother for their father's murder. *Theater of Nations small hall*. 8 p.m.

MT PICK Eugene Onegin: Rimas Tuminas stages a bold remake of, and commentary on, Pushkin's classic verse novel. *Vakhtangov Theater*. 7 p.m.

Fear and Misery of the Third Reich (Strakh i Nishcheta v Tretyei Imperii): Alexander Koruchekov's staging of Bertolt Brecht's famous play, portraying Germany in the 1930s. *Tabakov Theater*. 7 p.m.

Gibraltar: Konstantin Mishin stages a movement show about male-female relationships, set to music by Erik Satie. *School of Dramatic Art*. 8 p.m.

Hamlet | Collage: Yevgeny Mironov performs all the roles in Robert Lepage's staging of Shakespeare. *Theater of Nations*. 7 p.m.

NEW Nina Lives Here (Zdes Zhivoyt Nina): Polina Borodina's play about a woman who left Moscow to become a teacher at a provincial school. Contemporary Play School production. *Theater Club Na Tishinke*. 7 p.m.

Padmini: This musical show, based on an early Indian epic poem about the beautiful queen of Chittor, features traditional Indian music and dance. *School of Dramatic Art*. 7 p.m.

Romeo and Juliet: Konstantin Raikin renews his grand, energetic version of Shakespeare's tragedy with a new, young cast. *Satirikon Theater*. 7 p.m.

NEW Summer Wasps Bite Us Even in November (Letniye Osy Kusayut Nas Dazhe v Noyabre): Ivan Vyrypayev's one-act comedy directed by Ivan Pachin. *Praktika*. 8 p.m.

The Final Sacrifice (Poslednyaya Zhertva): Alexander Ostrovsky's comedy features Oleg Tabakov and Marina Zudina in the leading parts. *Chekhov Moscow Art Theater*. 7 p.m.

NEW The Suicide (Samoubiitsa): Nikolai Erdman's classic comedy about a man who is almost convinced to kill himself as a sign of support for others' causes. *Studio of Theatrical Art*. 7 p.m.

The Talented and the Dead (see Thurs. listing). *Pushkin Theater*. 7 p.m.

MT PICK The Tempest (Burya): Shakespeare's play as staged by Robert Sturua stars Alexander Kalyagin as Prospero. *Et Cetera Theater*. 7 p.m.

Two Little Ladies Northward (Dve Damochki v Storonu Severa): Nadezhda Arakcheyeva stages Pierre Notte's 2008 comedy "Deux Petites Dames vers le Nord" about two elderly sisters who decide to find their father's grave. *Pushkin Theater affiliate*. 7 p.m.

SATURDAY THE 14TH

NEW Adam and Eve/Shaping: Olesya Nevmerzhiiskaya's staging of Neil LaBute's play "The Shape of Things" that focuses on the lives of four young students who become emotionally and romantically involved with each other. *Yermolova Theater new stage*. 8 p.m.

MT PICK London Show: Konstantin Raikin stages a comedy based on George Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion." *Satirikon Theater*. 7 p.m.

MT PICK Rothschild's Fiddle (Skripka Rotshilda): Kama Ginkas directs his own adaptation of the Chekhov short story about an aging man tormented by the losses life brings. *Theater Yunogo Zritelya*. 7 p.m.

NEW Summer Wasps Bite Us Even in November (see Thurs. listing). *Praktika*. 8 p.m.

The Blind Society Evening Rout (Vecherniy Viyezd Obshchestva Slepikh): Viktor Shenderovich's comedy takes place in the metro when a train is stranded in between stations. *Satire Theater*. Noon.

NEW The Marriage (Zhenitba): Filipp Grigoryan's eccentric staging on the themes of Gogol's play about a man who does not want to marry. *Theater of Nations*. 7 p.m.

NEW Walpurgis Night (Valpurgiyeva Noch): Mark Zakharov's staging on the themes of Venedikt Yerofeyev. *Lenkom Theater*. 7 p.m.

SUNDAY THE 15TH

NEW 1933 Voyage (Morskoye Puteshestviye 1933 Goda): Yury Yeryomin's staging inspired by Stanley Kramer's 1965 film "Ship of Fools." *Mossoviet Theater*. 7 p.m.

FESTIVAL IN ENGLISH Moscow Irish Comedy Ardal O'Hanlon: Irish comedian and actor in concert. *Dom Kino*. 8 p.m.

Mtsyri (see Sat. listing). *School of Dramatic Art*. 7 p.m.

Smile Upon Us, Lord (Ulybnis Nam, Gospodi): Rimas Tuminas' staging on the themes of novels by Jewish writer Grigory Kanovich. *Vakhtangov Theater*. 7 p.m.

NEW Summer Wasps Bite Us Even in November (see Thurs. listing). *Praktika*. 8 p.m.

NEW Walpurgis Night (see Sat. listing). *Lenkom Theater*. 7 p.m.

MONDAY THE 16TH

Anarchy (see Sat. listing). *Yauza Palace*. 7 p.m.

NEW Anna in the Tropics (Anna v Tropikakh): Alexander Ogaryov stages Nilo Cruz's play set in 1929 in a Florida cigar factory. *Stanislavsky Electrotheater*. 7 p.m.

Devichnik Club: Three widows meet once a month for tea before visiting their husbands' graves. Roman Kozak's staging of Ivan Menchell's play "The Cemetery Club." *Pushkin Theater affiliate*. 7 p.m.

FESTIVAL IN ENGLISH FRINGE: Human Child: an adventure fantasy show with live music directed Dan Colley for the Collapsing Horse Theater Company. In English with Russian subtitles. *Gogol Center small hall*. 8 p.m.

UFO: Ivan Vyrypayev's play and one-man show. *Praktika*. 8 p.m.

TUESDAY THE 17TH

NEW Anna in the Tropics (see Mon. listing). *Stanislavsky Electrotheater*. 7 p.m.

IN ENGLISH IN GERMAN IN FRENCH Family Happiness (Semeinoye Schastye): Pyotr Fomenko's sensitive adaptation of Leo Tolstoy's novella about the rise and fall of a marriage. English, German and French

subtitles available. *Fomenko Studio New Stage*. 7 p.m.
FESTIVAL IN ENGLISH FRINGE: Boys and Girls: Dylan Coburn Gray's play about the adventures of four friends during a single night in Dublin. Irish Fringe Festival production. Performed in English with Russian subtitles. *Mayakovsky Theater small stage*. 7 p.m.
FESTIVAL IN ENGLISH FRINGE: Human Child (see Mon. listing). *Gogol Center small hall*. 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY THE 18TH

FESTIVAL IN ENGLISH FRINGE: Boys and Girls (see Tues. listing). *Mayakovsky Theater small stage*. 7 p.m.
FESTIVAL IN ENGLISH FRINGE: Human Child (see Mon. listing). *Gogol Center small hall*. 8 p.m.
FESTIVAL IN ENGLISH FRINGE: Pondling: Genevieve Hulme-Beaman directs and performs a story about a teenage girl. Performed in English. *Freelabs*. 7 p.m.
NEW The Fruits of Enlightenment (Plody Prosveshcheniya): Mindaugas Karbauskis' version of Leo Tolstoy's play about peasants outwitting their masters. *Mayakovsky Theater*. 7 p.m..

GIGS

THURSDAY THE 12TH

AeroTV: power pop. *FAQ-Cafe*. 8 p.m.
Alexei Kozlov and Arsenal: jazz rock, funk, fusion. *Soyuz Kompozitorov*. 8:30 p.m.
Cafe Chantante: Flamenco en Vido show. *Kozlov Club Scnd Floor*. 8 p.m.
Diamond Hand: rockabilly. *Rhythm & Blues Cafe Small Hall*. 8:30 p.m.
Gasan Bagirov Quartet with a new program. *Jazz Esse*. 8 p.m.
MT PICK Inna Zhelannaya: beautiful, strong vocals, jazz, trance, psychedelic. *Dom Muzyki Theater Hall*. 7 p.m.
FESTIVAL IN ENGLISH Irish Week: Myles Manley: Irish singer-songwriter. *Masterskaya*. 9 p.m.
FESTIVAL IN ENGLISH Irish Week: Spies: rock. #LOL. 11 p.m.
Konstantin Gevondyan and Co.: New Orleans jazz. *Roadhouse*. 9 p.m.
KOSMAX: Maxim Drobeko (guitar) and friends play fusion. *Kozlov Club*. 8 p.m.
Latin American Dances: master class. *Pancho Villa*. 8 p.m.
Levan Lomidze and Blues Cousins. *Igor Butman Club Na Taganke*. 8:30 p.m.
M:Pire of Evil from Britain, and Rezet from Germany: metal. *Brooklyn*. 8 p.m.
Marina Volkova Jazz Band. *Cafe Mart*. 9 p.m.
Mess and P.L.U.S.: garage and indie rock. *Kitaisky Lyotchik Dzhao Da*. 8 p.m.
Mister Twister: rockabilly. *DeFAQto*. 8 p.m.
NSWE: from ambient to rock, multimedia project. Culture For Children: crossover. *Vermel*. 8 p.m.
Pavel Chekmakovsky Quartet: funky jazz. *Forte*. 8 p.m.
Stepan Yurlov and Live In: jazz, blues, rock. *B.B. King*. 8:30 p.m.
Treol: lounge. *China Town Cafe*. 8 p.m.
Udachnoye Priobreteniy: r&b. Guest Andrei Makarevich. *Rhythm & Blues Cafe Big Hall*. 8 p.m.
Vadim Eilenkrig (trumpet) and jazz quintet. *Durov*. 8 p.m.
Wake Me Up: Moscow rock band. *Teatr Club*. 8 p.m.
Xuman: electro pop rock. *Shestnadsat Tonn*. 9 p.m.

FRIDAY THE 13TH

Alexei Kozlov and Arsenal: jazz rock, funk, fusion. *Kozlov Club*. 8 p.m.
Blues Cousins. *B.B. King*. 8:30 p.m.
Crossroadz: r&b. *Rhythm & Blues Cafe Big Hall*. 9 p.m.
Easy Dizzy: AC/DC tribute show. *Teatr Club*. 8 p.m.
IN ENGLISH Elliott Munnerlyn, (vocals), Kim Polote (vocals) and the Yevgeny Lebedev-Anton Revnyuk Project: neo jazz. *Kozlov Club Scnd Floor*. 8 p.m.
Frederick Belinsky: jazz guitar. *Igor Butman Club Na Taganke*. 8:30 p.m.
Friday the 13th Party with Leo Fishhead, Twang Bang and The Gunfighters. *China Town Cafe*. 11:30 p.m.
GKChP: Red Hot Chili Peppers tribute band. *FAQ-Cafe*. 9 p.m.
FESTIVAL IN ENGLISH Irish Week: Myles Manley, Spies, Costello and Yana Blinder. *Brooklyn*. 9 p.m.
Mama Ro: Russian instrumental and vocal jam. *Kitaisky Lyotchik Dzhao Da*. 9 p.m.

IN ENGLISH Morcheeba: trip-hop, lounge from Britain. *YotaSpace*. 8 p.m.
Oleg Kireyev (saxophone): ethno jazz show. *Forte*. 8 p.m.
MT PICK Opera Night: classical, jazz, pop, experimental vocal and instrumental music. *Kozlov Club*. 10:30 p.m.
Petrovich and Hot Rod Band: blues. *Rhythm & Blues Cafe Small Hall*. 8:30 p.m.
Priklyucheniya Elektronikov: punk. *Concert Club*. 9:30 p.m.
Private Radio: ska punk, modern rock. *China Town Cafe*. 8 p.m.
Raspirator: ska. Radiostation: new ska band. *Vermel*. 8 p.m.
MT PICK Sepultura: metal from Brazil. *Volta*. 7 p.m.
Shaky Jake: r&b, Southern rock, country. *Duma Club*. 9 p.m.
Sin Fronteras: Latino. *Pancho Villa*. 9 p.m.
SunSay: reggae, funk, folk from Ukraine. *Red*. 8 p.m.
Sup Kharcho: rock. *Shestnadsat Tonn*. 9 p.m.
Tomcat: rock. *Schwein*. 7 p.m.
Vadim Ivashchenko and The Boneshakers: r&b, rock, rockabilly, swing. *Rhythm & Blues Cafe Big Hall*. 11:30 p.m.
Vasily Uriyevsky: singer-songwriter who is a self-described freak bard. *B2*. 8 p.m.
VIA The Champions: disco. *DeFAQto*. 10 p.m.
Vladimir Kuzmin: rock *Soyuz Kompozitorov*. 8:30 p.m.

SATURDAY THE 14TH

Alexei Kozlov and Novy Arsenal: jazz rock, funk, fusion. *Igor Butman Club Na Taganke*. 8:30 p.m.

RawCats'88: rockabilly, boogie, swing. *Roadhouse*. 9 p.m.
Samoye Bolshoye Prostoye Chislo: rock from St. Petersburg. *Red*. 8 p.m.
Sergei Golovnya Quartet: jazz. CD release party. *Jazz Esse*. 8 and 10 p.m.
Shootiki: ska. *Vermel*. 8 p.m.
Stone Shades: The Rolling Stones tribute band. *Rhythm & Blues Cafe Small Hall*. 8:30 p.m.
Svyatoslav Tekuchev: saxophone. *Forte*. 8 p.m.
Underwood: rock. *Shestnadsat Tonn*. 9 p.m.
Zorge: power pop, art wave. *Kitaisky Lyotchik Dzhao Da*. 9 p.m.

SUNDAY THE 15TH

Arfasound: jazz, Oriental music, classical music and DJ set fusion. *FAQ-Cafe*. 7 p.m.
Alexei Inshakov: guitar. *B.B. King*. 8:30 p.m.
Ameli Na Meli: singer-songwriter. *China Town Cafe*. 8 p.m.
Anton Zaletayev (flute, saxophone) and Dmitry Yakovlev (piano): jazz duet. *Kozlov Club*. 3:30 p.m.
MT PICK Malinen: acoustic folk from St. Petersburg. *Masterskaya*. 9 p.m.
Manuk Gazazyan Band: ethno jazz. *Kozlov Club*. 8 p.m.
Marina Volkova Jazz Band. *DeFAQto*. 8 p.m.
Masha i Medvedi and Mystic Rose: alternative, psychedelic. *Teatr Club*. 8 p.m.
Mister Twister: rockabilly. *Rhythm & Blues Cafe Big Hall*. 8 p.m.
Open Blues Jam. *Roadhouse*. 8 p.m.

Bratya Grim: rock. *Shestnadsat Tonn*. 8 p.m.
Delta Blues Party. *B.B. King*. 8:30 p.m.
Gordo Rei Latino: Brazilian folk and pop. *Kitaisky Lyotchik Dzhao Da*. 8 p.m.
Ivan Farmakovskiy Trio: jazz. *Igor Butman Club Na Taganke*. 8:30 p.m.
Jam Session With Yakov Okun. *Jazz Esse*. 9 p.m.
Latinos Band: Latino. *Pancho Villa*. 8:30 p.m.
Marina Volkova Jazz Band. *Soyuz Kompozitorov*. 8:30 p.m.
Mogu: indie, Brit pop. *China Town Cafe*. 8 p.m.
Moscow Jazz Passengers: jazz. CD release party. *Kozlov Club*. 8 p.m.
Open Blues Jam. *Rhythm & Blues Cafe Big Hall*. 7 p.m.
Salt Peanuts: funk, soul. *DeFAQto*. 8 p.m.
St. Patrick's Day Party with Mervent, Art Ceilidh and Irish musicians. *Vermel*. 7 p.m.
Valentin Dmitriyev Band: funk, hip-hop, drum 'n' bass. *Kozlov Club Second Floor*. 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY THE 18TH

Alex Rostotsky Jazz Bass Theater. *Kozlov Club*. 8 p.m.
Denis Mazhukov: boogie, rockabilly, rock 'n' roll. *B.B. King*. 8:30 p.m.
Fluktatsiya Razuma: rock. *FAQ-Cafe*. 8 p.m.
Jazz Art Club: Vagif Sadykhov Quartet. *Jazz Esse*. 7:30 p.m.
Joio: Brit rock. CD release paarty. *Brooklyn*. 8 p.m.
Khoronko Orchestra: jazz rock chansons cabaret. *TsDKh*. 8 p.m.



Heavy metal band Sepultura, Brazilian pioneers of the death metal genre, will be making heads bang as they rock out this Friday at Volta Club. The band to see if hardcore punk with hints of world music influences takes your fancy.

Betty Boop Lovers: swing, jazz, rockabilly. *DeFAQto*. 10 p.m.
Blastromen: Finnish electronic duet. *Shestnadsat Tonn*. 11:55 p.m.
Boris Bulkin: r&b. *Rhythm & Blues Cafe Big Hall*. 7 p.m.
Cubamania: Latino. *Pancho Villa*. 9 p.m.
MT PICK IN ENGLISH Deitra Farr (vocals): Chicago blues. *Kozlov Club*. 8 p.m.
Golos Omeriki: alco reggae cabaret. *Schwein*. 9 p.m.
FESTIVAL IN ENGLISH Irish Week: Spies: rock. *Masterskaya*. 9 p.m.
FESTIVAL Irish Week: St. Patrick's Day and Night: Akvarium, Cruachan, Trill Gnyot Yel and others. *YotaSpace*. 2 to 11 p.m.
FESTIVAL Irish Week: St. Patrick's Day Parade. *Sokolniki Park*. Noon.
Jackknife Rockabilly Trio. *Rhythm & Blues Cafe Big Hall*. 11:30 p.m.
Jane Air and Evil Not Alone: alternative. *Teatr Club*. 5 p.m.
IN ENGLISH Jazz Fireworks: Elliott Munnerlyn (vocals), Kim Polote (vocals) and the Oleg Butman Band. *Jazz Esse*. 8 and 10 p.m.
Jazz Transformations with Andrei Makarevich, Irina Rodiles and the Yevgeny Borets Trio. *Soyuz Kompozitorov*. 8:30 p.m.
Konets Filma: rock. *Concert Club*. 9:30 p.m.
Ksenia Fedulova: blues rock. *B.B. King*. 8:30 p.m.
Levan Lomidze and Blues Cousins. *Rhythm & Blues Cafe Big Hall*. 9:30 p.m.
Moscow Ragtime Band. *Duma Club*. 9 p.m.
Rakety iz Rossii: rock. *China Town Cafe*. 9 p.m.

Sergei Manukyan (soul, jazz vocals, keyboards) in a jubilee concert. *Forte*. 8 p.m.
Stratosfera: musicians of Moralny Kodeks in a rock concert. *Rhythm & Blues Cafe Small Hall*. 8 p.m.
Yekaterina Ungvari (jazz vocals) and Matvei Baidikov (guitar). *Igor Butman Club Na Taganke*. 8:30 p.m.
Yeshchyho Nikak: new neo folk band. *Vermel*. 8 p.m.

MONDAY THE 16TH

MT PICK Alex Hutchings (guitar), Anton Davidyants (bass guitar), Valery Stepanov (keyboard, vocals) and Alexander Murenko (drums). *Kozlov Club*. 8 p.m.
Anastasia Glazkova: jazz vocals. *DeFAQto*. 8 p.m.
Anna Korolyova and Jump: jazz, funk, ethno jazz. *Forte*. 8 p.m.
Blues Gravity: power rock and blues. *B.B. King*. 8:30 p.m.
Live Jazz Jam Session. *FAQ-Cafe*. 8 p.m.
IN ENGLISH Mark Lanegan Band: rock. *Shestnadsat Tonn*. 8 p.m.
Sonora Latina: Latino. *Pancho Villa*. 8 p.m.
St. Patrick's Eve Party with Old Folk Drink 'n' Sing Band. *Vermel*. 8 p.m.
Tablao Flamenco: dance party. *Soyuz Kompozitorov*. 8:30 p.m.

TUESDAY THE 17TH

IN ENGLISH Blonde Redhead: American rock band. *Teatr Club*. 8 p.m.

museum
BROTHERS LUMIERE CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY:
The Last Shift (Poslednyaya Smena): Soviet life in photographs by Emmanuil Yevzerikhin. *to March 29*.
MT PICK NEW Wynn Bullock. Immersion: retrospective of works by one of America's most innovative and experimental photographers of the 20th century. *Wed. to May 10. Located at 3 Bolotnaya Naberezhnaya, Bldg. 1. M. Kropotkinskaya. Noon to 9 p.m., Sat. and Sun. 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., closed Mon.* 495-228-9878, www.lumiere.ru
CCC GARAGE:
Grammar of Freedom. Five Lessons: Works From Arteast 2000+: works from the 1960s to the present from the Ljubljana Museum of Contemporary Art, *to April 19. Located at 9 Krymsky Val, in Gorky Park, near Pionersky Prud. M. Oktyabrskaya. Noon to 8:30 p.m.* 645-0520, garageccc.com
KOVCHEG GALLERY:
NEW Periods (Periody): a series of recent paintings by Vitaly Bespyaty, *Fri. to April 5. Located at 12 Ul. Nemchinova. M. Timiryazevskaya, then bus 87 or 206 to Gostinitsa Molodyozhnaya. Ticket office open 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., closed Mon.* 499-977-0044/88, www.kovcheg-art.ru
KROKIN GALLERY:
NEW Intercom (Peregovornoye Ustroystvo): an interactive performance by Kirill Alexandrov, *to March 29. Located at 9 Klimentovskiy Pereulok. M. Tretyakovskaya, Novokuznetskaya. By appointment.* 8-964-564-0303, www.krokingallery.com
MANEZH EXHIBITION HALL:
FESTIVAL Fashion and Style in Photography: works by Ricardo Lopez Bueno, Isabel Munoz, Margo Ovcharenko, Michel Platnic and others, *to April 2. Located at 1 Manezh Square. M. Okhotny Ryad, Alexandrovsky Sad. Noon to 10 p.m., closed Mon.* 495-645-9277, moscowmanege.ru
MOSCOW MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ON GOGOLEVSKY:
FESTIVAL Fashion and Style in Photography: works by Mary Reid Kelley, Chen Jiagang, Maria Ionova-Gribina and Lilia Li-Mi-Yan and others, *to March 29*.
NEW Homo Sapiens Solitarius (Chelovek Razumny Odiokny): Ilya Fedotov-Fyodorov analyzes the relationships of man with himself and with outward things, *Fri. to April 19*.
MT PICK The Art of Being Close (Iskusstvo Byt Ryadom): a charity exhibit of works by acclaimed contemporary Russian artists, *to April 5. Charity auction on April 2. Located at 10 Gogolevsky Bulvar. Metro Kropotkinskaya. Noon to 8 p.m., ticket office to 7:15 p.m., Thurs. 1 to 9 p.m., ticket office to 8:15 p.m., closed every third Monday of the month.* 495-231-3660, www.mmoma.ru
MOSCOW MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ON YERMOLAYEVSKY:
FESTIVAL Fashion and Style in Photography: Cristina Lucas' "La Liberte Raisonnee," Igor Samolyot's "Herbarium," Jutta Strohmaier's "Passengers," Ivan Lungin's "Exodus," Marie Bovo's "Subak" and other exhibits, *to March 29. Located at 17 Yermolayevskiy Pereulok. M. Mayakovskaya. Noon to 8 p.m., ticket office to 7:15 p.m., Thurs. 1 to 9 p.m., ticket office to 8:15 p.m., closed every third Monday of the month.* 495-231-3660, www.mmoma.ru
MOSCOW PLANETARIUM:
Permanent shows: interactive museum with the Lunarium, Big and Small Star Halls, the Urania Museum and 4D Cinema Theater.
MT PICK ProCosmos: new series of paintings by Konstantin Batynkov, *to April 11. Located at 5 Sadovaya-Kudrinskaya Ul. M. Barrikadnaya. 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., weekends and holidays 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., closed Tues.* 495-221-7690, www.planetarium-moscow.ru
MULTIMEDIA ART MUSEUM:
Albert Watson: works by this acclaimed British fashion and art photographer, *to May 10*.
FESTIVAL Fashion and Style in Photography: Robert Doisneau: works by this French pioneer of photojournalism, *to May 10. Located at 16 Ul. Ostozhenka. M. Kropotkinskaya. Ticket office open noon to 9 p.m., closed Mon.* 495-637-1100, www.mamm-mdf.ru/en
MUSEUM OF PRIVATE COLLECTIONS:
MT PICK Svyatoslav Richter: exhibit of paintings, graphics, photographs, posters and archival documents dedicated to this virtuoso pianist, *to April 5. Located at 10 Ul. Volkhonka. M. Kropotkinskaya. 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Thurs. 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., closed Mon. and Tues.* 495-697-1610, www.arts-museum.ru, artprivatecollections.ru

EXHIBITS

MT PICK Highlights of Jewish Theater in Russia. 1919-49: This historical exhibit that tells about the Habima Theater and the Moscow State Jewish Theater features designs by Marc Chagall, Natan Altman, Robert Falk and other artists, *to March 19. Located at 31/12 Ul. Bakhrushina. M. Paveletskaya. Ticket office open noon to 6:30 p.m., Thurs. 1 to 8:30 p.m., closed Mon., Tues. and the last Fri. of the month* 495-953-4470/4848, www.gctm.ru/

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VLADIMIR FILONOV / MT

Visitors looking at one of Andrei Filippov's most famous installations: plates with hammers and sickles instead of knives and forks, at the Yekaterina Cultural Foundation in a new exhibit devoted to the artist. Until April 19.

Brightman Heads Into Space, Promises to Sing

COMBINED REPORTS

After a stellar career ranging from the disco hit "I Lost My Heart to a Starship Trooper" to global success in "Phantom of the Opera," British soprano Sarah Brightman is preparing for a unique performance: a live concert from space.

Arranged by private space company Space Adventures, Brightman, 54, will be the eighth space tourist, and first professional singer, traveling as one of a three-person team to the International Space Station (ISS) in a Soyuz space rocket that will launch from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on Sept. 1. She will spend 10 days orbiting the Earth. The last private client to go to ISS was Guy Laliberte, founder of Cirque du Soleil, in 2009.

"I cannot explain in full why this is something that has been very strong within me," Brightman said on Tuesday at a press launch event for her trip.

"I am incredibly excited and as I have said, sometimes overwhelmed, but I am finding all sorts of things about myself."

She was inspired to travel into space when she watched the first moon landing on television in 1969 and says she has nurtured the ambition ever since.

Brightman is reported by British media to have paid 35 million pounds (\$53 million) for the trip. She said that for contractual reasons she could not reveal the amount.

The singer was assessed for suitability for the trip at Star City outside Moscow in July 2012, and since then has undergone a grueling 16-hour daily training regime, according to state news agency RIA Novosti.

She plans to perform a song from the space station, accompanied by an orches-



TOBY MELVILLE / REUTERS

Sarah Brightman will go into space.

tra back on Earth, but has not yet selected the tune. She has been working with ex-husband Andrew Lloyd Webber, the composer of multiple hit musicals including "Phantom of the Opera," which made Brightman a global star.

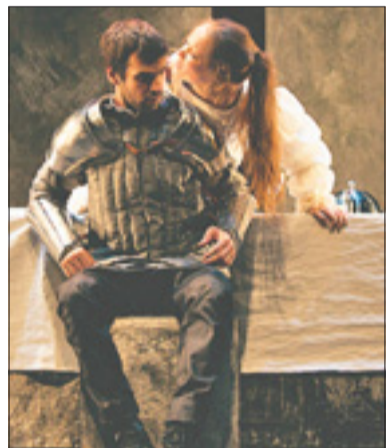
"I'm trying to find a piece that is beautiful and simple in its message, as well as not too complicated to sing," she said.

"Because of the complexities of this I don't want to promise too much," she added.

Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield recorded songs during his time in space, including a rendition of David Bowie's "Space Oddity" that was viewed by millions on Earth, but Brightman will be the first professional musician to record in space.

"I found many parallels between the training I'm doing and what I've been doing as a performer," Brightman said.

(Reuters, AP, MT)



MEYERHOLD CENTER

Sforza also mixes in modern music.

SFORZA

Continued from Page 16

playing the out-of-favor Duchess Beatrice, laments the role that love has played in her life. Alone at a long banquet table that soon will be filled with half-bored revelers, this scheming, covetous character unexpectedly reveals a depth of humanity and experience that no one else provides.

Another highlight is Yefimov on the guitar leading a live band of quite capable rockers through several anthemic rock songs. Sukhoretzkaya does a fine imitation of Grace Slick in that final, rocking blast.

On the whole, however, "Sforza" emerges as a very long, disjointed collection of scenes. The concerted efforts of the cast to put across disinterest as the epitome of cool rarely succeed. Denisova's purposefully simplistic text make the politics of "Sforza" sound banal, while the love scenes, not lacking in occasional cuteness, seem to have been drawn from an Internet site of stock romantic situations.

"Sforza" (*Sfortsa*) plays March 23 and 24 at 7 p.m. at the Meyerhold Center, located at 23 Novoslobodskaya Ulitsa, Metro Mendeleyevskaya. Tel. 495-363-1048. meyerhold.ru. Running time: 3 hours, 45 minutes.

The Moscow Times

April 2015

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VLADIMIR FILONOV / MT

Picture of the Day A woman sitting on a bench on the muddy, tree-lined Tsvetnoi Bulvar as the city's warm weather and spring sun come as a pleasant surprise to the city wanderer.

'Sforza' Mix of Politics and Love Fails to Convince

By John Freedman

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"Sforza," Sasha Denisova's new play at the Meyerhold Center, suffers from a case of schizophrenia. That becomes especially evident as it reaches its end.

Against a back wall we see flickering images of Stalin and Hitler, while the pounding rhythms of Jefferson Airplane's rousing 1960s hit "Somebody to Love" cascade around us — "Don't you want somebody to love / Don't you need somebody to love ..."

What is this, then? A love story or a political tale?

That question is never fully answered, despite the fact that director Alexei Zherebtsov's production takes nearly four hours to reach its conclusion.

Two stories stand at the center of "Sforza" — that of Bianca (Inna Sukhoretskaya) and that of her father, Duke Visconti of Milan (Alexander Userdin). The former is a dreamy, but volatile, girl with love in mind — although only if it comes exactly as she wants it. The latter is struggling to keep the kingdom together.

War, hostility, corruption and repressions have begun to try his personal patience and sap the strength of his government. Milan is in danger.

Enter Francesco Sforza (Andrei Smirnov), a dashing soldier who might save the city if the duke were to give

his daughter to him in marriage. Ah, but court intrigue! Where would we be without a bit of subterfuge? After presenting Sforza to Bianca as marriage material, the duke, alas, finds he must renege and put a price on the young man's head.

Meanwhile, a bit of comic relief is provided by the further intrigues of a genius artist named Bonifacio (Mikhail Yefimov) and his acquaintance, the good priest Girolamo (Ilyas Tamayev). Bonifacio we come to recognize as

Leonard Da Vinci — not because he invents the electric guitar and impressively runs off Jimi Hendrix riffs, but because he has invented a flying contraption and is ready to show how to use it.

There are, in other words, plenty of tongue-in-cheek shenanigans in "Sforza."

Another takes place as a vision of the future begins acquiring shape. In it a nasty red king lives in a red castle in the middle of a red city. Oh where and what could this possibly be? Then comes the punch line: "Beware, the doors are closing. Next stop, Krasniye Vorota (Red Gates)."

For those of you not entirely familiar with Moscow, Krasniye Vorota is a metro stop — on the red line, by the way — northeast of the Kremlin.

Other attempts at playing with humorous time warps, with a little politics thrown in, include the duke's big speech about returning Milan to its tried and true cultural traditions. It



MEYERHOLD CENTER

Denisova tries to link the inner workings of Milan's aristocracy to modern life in Moscow with costumes to match.

sounds like Denisova may just have lifted a few phrases from Russia's current minister of culture, Vladimir Medinsky.

"We doubt what is sacred to us," the duke intones, "and we forget what our great nation is founded on."

Userdin, like most in this produc-

tion, plays his role with a fat dose of deep ennui and disconnect. It is as if nothing concerns him at all — neither death nor life — and the only task he really has is to get on with things and be done with them.

In case we missed the references, costume designer Maria Chernyshova

dressed Userdin in a combination Mao-Stalin jacket. Designer Alexander Arefyev placed all the action in a faux stone castle.

One of the production's finest moments comes as Arina Marakulina,

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