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Sobyanin Buffs Up New Team

By Natalya Krainova

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Mayor Sergei Sobyanin honed his new City Hall team on Tuesday by appointing a 10th deputy mayor and announcing that all prefects and some department heads would lose their status as municipal ministers.

Sobyanin appointed Valery Vinogradov, who served as a deputy mayor under his predecessor, Yury Luzhkov, as his 10th deputy but changed his portfolio from serving as City Hall's representative to the City Duma to its liaison to the prefects, RIA-Novosti reported.

Sobyanin has nine deputies and one first deputy.

Vinogradov, 52, has served as a deputy mayor since December 2005.

Sobyanin named Mikhail Orlov, 43, head of City Hall's committee for cooperation with religious organizations, as head of the consumer market and services department and ordered him to merge the department with the food supplies department, the report said.

Orlov replaces Vladimir Malyshkov, 69, who had headed the consumer market and services department since 1993.

Sobyanin appointed Federal Service for the Protection of Cultural Heritage head Alexander Kibovsky, 37, as the new chief of City Hall's cultural heritage department, which was a committee with the same name as the federal committee before Sobyanin renamed it.

Kibovsky replaces Valery Shevchuk, who had headed the agency since July 2006.

Sobyanin named Artyom Yermolayev, 34, as head of the information technologies committee, replacing Mikhail Alyoshin, who had headed the committee, which was called directorate before August, since July 2009.

Yermolayev had served as an adviser to Mass Communications and Press Minister Igor Shchyogolev since August and headed a ministry department before that.

Prefects will lose their status as City Hall ministers but will continue to attend City Hall meetings, Sobyanin said.

Oleg Mitvol, who was fired as prefect of Moscow's Northern Administrative District last month, told The Moscow Times that with the loss of ministerial status, prefects will lose powers to coordinate the work of City Hall's district branches for communal services, energy policy, transportation and others. The change will deal a "serious blow to the system of city management," he said.

The heads of the departments for economic policy, health care, land resources, social protection and information technologies will keep their ministerial status, Sobyanin said.

It was not immediately clear which other department heads, if any, will keep their ministerial status.

Reached by telephone, a City Hall spokesman refused to comment on the changes.

Meanwhile, Moscow's Audit Chamber has uncovered violations in state contracts dealing with construction projects struck between 2007 and 2009 and worth a combined 241.4 billion rubles ($7.8 billion), City Hall said on its web site Tuesday.

Also Tuesday, Sobyanin announced an ambitious plan to decrease the cost of metro construction from the current 5 billion rubles ($162.5 million) per kilometer and simultaneously increase the speed of construction, Finmarket.ru reported.

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