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Tandem Toilets in Sochi Olympic Venue Make Navalny Question Spending

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The twin toilets at the Olympic Biathlon Center **S. Rosenberg / Twitter**

A Sochi Olympic venue has put two toilets side by side in the same stall, sending social networks buzzing about the Games organizers' extreme generosity with the commodes — or their extreme skimpiness on the partitions.

For added irony, the picture of the toilets in a men's bathroom at the Olympic Biathlon Center, originally tweeted by a BBC correspondent in Sochi, showed only one roll of toilet paper in the bathroom — positioned on a side wall and apparently out of reach from at least one of the seats.

Opposition leader Alexei Navalny seized on the picture, and reiterated that much of the Games' reported $50 billion budget had been misspent.

A commentator on news and social network website TJournal said Navalny could also have said the partition between the two toilets had been "stripped," using a Russian word that is a slang term for embezzlement. Navalny had used the same word to name his RosPil blog

dedicated to exposing state corruption.

Others objected to the idea that the extra toilet was a sign of the Games organizers' largesse.

"Russia is so generous that it installs two toilets side by side in its bathroom stalls," another TJournal reader said.

An Ekho Moskvy reader said that the designers had probably planned to install a bidet next to the toilet, but contractors either got confused or ran out of supplies, and put in two toilets instead.

Some bloggers also linked the double toilets to the heightened security measures around the Olympics, which begin on Feb. 7 against the backdrop of recent suicide bombings in a nearby southern region and multiple threats of more terrorist attacks.

"Heightened security, anti-terrorism measures," another TJournal reader said. One toilet "is for a person, the other is for a security agent, clandestinely ensuring security."

Other commentators also linked the picture to the debates over Russia's "gay propaganda" ban.

"People are so perverted these days: The site of two commodes side by side makes them immediately think of gay propaganda," another blogger said, in an apparently ironic remark. "Maybe it was done for those who are afraid to conduct the process alone?"

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