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St. Petersburg Governor To Leave Post After Football Stadium Scandal — Reports

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Georgy Poltavchenko **Kremlin Press Service**

St. Petersburg governor Georgy Poltavchenko is to leave his post after Russia's parliamentary elections on Sept. 18, the RBC newspaper reported Wednesday.

The move is alleged to have been triggered ongoing controversy surrounding the city's planned World Cup stadium, RBC claimed. The Kremlin has refused to confirm or deny the claims, telling journalists that the president "does not comment on rumors."

Numerous scandals surrounding the construction of the new Zenith Arena football stadium ultimately triggered Poltavchenko planned departure, according to RBC sources.

The stadium, located on the city's Krestovsky Island, is the flagship venue for Russia's 2018 World Cup, as well as for the 2020 European Championships. International soccer body FIFA

has demanded that the stadium be completed by the end of this year.

The project has been increasingly over budget since first breaking ground 10 years ago, with the estimated cost rising to some over $600 million, excluding infrastructure.

Stadium workers once again hit the headlines last week when they threatened to go on strike due to delayed payment of wages. The city government announced last week that a new contractor would be brought in.

Among those tipped to replace Poltavchenko, include Maksim Sokolov, Russia's current transport minister, and Sergey Naryshkin, Russia's current Duma speaker, RBC reported.

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