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Kremlin ‘Shocked’ by Apparent Suicide of Ex-Transportation Minister

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Roman Starovoit. **VK**

The Kremlin said Tuesday that it was “shocked” by the apparent suicide of former Transportation Minister Roman Starovoit, who was found dead with a gunshot wound just hours after President Vladimir Putin dismissed him on Monday.

“It can’t not shock normal people, and of course it shocked us, too,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. He said Putin had been “immediately informed” of the death but declined to comment further, citing the ongoing police investigation into Starovoit’s death.

Starovoit’s body was found on Monday near his Tesla in the upscale Moscow suburb of Odintsovo, according to police. He had led the Transportation Ministry for just over a year after serving as governor of the Kursk region from 2018 to 2024.

His removal and subsequent death have fueled speculation that he may have been facing criminal prosecution as part of an ongoing investigation into alleged corruption in the

construction of border defenses in the Kursk region, which saw a major Ukrainian incursion last August.

Though Starovoit had not been formally implicated in that investigation, Russian media cited unnamed sources as saying that suspects in the case, including his predecessor in the Kursk region, Alexei Smirnov, had recently testified against him.

Russian media previously reported that the border defenses, completed during Starovoit's time as governor, cost almost 15 billion rubles ($190 million) and took nearly three years to construct. Despite the large sums spent on the fortifications, Ukrainian troops managed to rapidly seize large swaths of territory in the Kursk region, facing little resistance.

On Tuesday, Russia's lower-house State Duma unanimously approved Deputy Transport Minister Andrei Nikitin as Starovoit's replacement.

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