

AvtoVAZ Chief to Lead Space Corporation

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The head of AvtoVAZ, the car maker that manufactures Ladas, will be put in charge of United Rocket and Space Corporation, which is expected to be established as part of a major reform in the space industry, a news report said Monday.

Igor Komarov, chief of the country's largest car producer, is expected to become the head of the new joint stock company, an unidentified government official told Kommersant. Both the presidential administration and the government have agreed to the decision, the paper reported.

Sergei Chemezov, head of huge, state-owned technology corporation Rostec, supposedly lobbied for Komarov's candidacy because he wanted to install a person who is loyal to him in the space industry.

Komarov, 49, has an economics degree from the Moscow State University, served five years in

the army and has held high-level positions in the banking sector. He was appointed head of AvtoVAZ in 2009 and is credited with making its production lines more profitable.

However, growth rates have stalled in the wider economy and last week AvtoVAZ released information showing that its sales fell by 12 percent between January and September compared to the same period in 2012. The concern made a 2.6 billion ruble loss in the first half of 2013.

Roman Trotsenko, consultant to the Rosneft chief Igor Sechin, was also put forward as a candidate to head the new company but Rosneft was not keen to let him go.

Vladimir Popovkin — the current head of the Federal Space Agency, whose visions for how the space industry should be reformed clashed with the dominant views in the Kremlin — is expected to announce that he is stepping down Oct. 8. The agency suffered a streak of accidents under Popovkin, such as exploding rockets and malfunctioning satellites, which is also believed to have spurred on the change in leadership.

Deputy Defense Minister Oleg Ostapenko is a likely candidate to replace Popovkin, an unidentified Defense Ministry official said, Kommersant reported.

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