

Kyrgyz Prime Minister Suspected of Accepting Racehorse as Bribe

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Babanov, right, attending a meeting of the Eurasian Economic Community in Moscow in 2011 while serving as Kyrgyzstan's acting prime minister.

A party in Kyrgyzstan's ruling coalition is urging prosecutors to open a criminal case against the country's prime minister, accusing him of accepting an English racehorse in exchange for granting lucrative construction contracts to a Turkish businessman.

Omurbek Tekebayev, Ata Meken leader, said at a party meeting Monday that complaints had already been lodged with Kyrgyzstan's Prosecutor General's Office and Anti-Corruption Service, Interfax reported.

If the case is proved, Ata Meken will call for Prime Minister Omurbek Babanov's resignation, the news agency said.

Ata Meken is part of a four-party coalition that has governed Kyrgyzstan since December last

year. The coalition includes the Respublika party, which Babanov leads.

On Monday, Tekebayev accused Babanov of accepting the thoroughbred horse — worth as much as \$1.5 million, according to The Associated Press — from Turkish citizen Khunkara Adali. The Kyrgyz, traditionally a nomadic people, are famed for their love and knowledge of horses.

In return for the costly animal, Adali's construction firm was allegedly given licenses to build an air traffic control tower at Bishkek's Manas Airport, which also doubles as a U.S. air base for operations in Afghanistan.

Kyrgyzstan's parliament and Air Traffic Control Service had previously moved to block Adali's firm from taking part in the construction project, according to Interfax.

The other two parties in the ruling coalition, the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan and Ar Namys, said they would attend an anti-corruption hearing over the prize horse, Interfax reported, without saying when the hearing was set to take place.

Babanov, who has publicly pledged to fight graft during his time in office, did not immediately respond to Ata Meken's allegations Monday.

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