

Shuvalov Invites Japan to Build 10Km Sakhalin Bridge

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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First Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov invited Japan to work with Russia on building a 10-kilometer bridge to connect Sakhalin Island with the Russian mainland.

Shuvalov, who was speaking Tuesday at a Russian-Japanese business conference, said Sakhalin Governor Alexander Khoroshavin had actively lobbied for the bridge and now the government was ready to form a working group with Japan to discuss the project.

Khoroshavin has proposed that Japan help build bridges connecting Sakhalin with both the Russian mainland and the Japanese island of Hokkaido.

Russia has long looked at ways to connect its mainland with Sakhalin, which belonged to Japan until the 20th century. Talk of building a tunnel under the the Nevelskoi Strait, the narrowest part of the Strait of Tartary separating the island from the mainland, gave way to a proposal to build a bridge instead in 2009.

The Russian-Japanese conference was taking place during [the first visit](#) of a Japanese prime minister to Russia in over a decade.

The sides hope to resolve the long-standing territorial dispute over four islands — known as the Kurils by Russia and the Northern Territories by Japan — and pave the path for the signing of a World War II peace treaty between the two countries.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Tuesday that trust and mutually beneficial relations with Russia were of great importance to Japan given the current situation with North Korea in the Asia-Pacific region.

Speaking at the conference, Abe said his country could share its expertise with Russia in a number of areas, including modern technologies and know-how in urban development, medicine and the food industry.

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