

Russia Could Get Rail Link With Japan

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Investors from China and South Korea are interested in infrastructure projects in Russia, including the Trans-Siberian Railroad and Baikal-Amur Mainline, Russian Railways president Vladimir Yakunin said at a railway coordination council in Khabarovsk on Thursday.

Over 117 billion rubles (\$3.6 billion) are planned to be spent to modernize railways in Russia's eastern regions in the next two years while more than 562 billion rubles are needed by 2018, Ria Novosti reported Yakunin as saying.

President Vladimir Putin said earlier that 260 billion rubles are to be allocated for the reconstruction of both the Trans-Siberian Railroad and BAM. In addition to state funds, Russian railways are to channel 300 billion rubles from their investment program to increase the capacity of railways in the country's east.

"When we are talking about modernizing the Trans-Siberian we understand that it should be a high-speed railway," Far East Development Minister Viktor Ishayev was quoted as saying by Otkriytiy Gorod information agency.

Ishayev also said that the railway should reach seaports in Sakhalin and then, via the island chain, could be linked with Japan, giving the region a new economic boost.

Russia's Far East has the necessary rare materials needed for Japan's high-tech industry. It also has oil, gas, coal and other resources sought by rapidly developing China and South Korea, which are eyeing infrastructure projects in the region.

"Several investors from China and South Korea have spoken with me and they are interested in [Russia's] infrastructure projects," Yakunin told Ria Novosti at the meeting in Khabarovsk.

But there are difficulties which hamper the inflow of funds. Namely, there are no adequate laws to allow private investors to put money into infrastructure projects, Yakunin said.

Putin on Tuesday scolded officials for not completing proposed projects for the Far East on time. He said that 80 percent of the plans needed a deadline extension and that residents were leaving the region.

The program includes increasing the capacity of railroads and developing road networks, the electric energy industry, regional aviation, airport and port infrastructure.

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