Sakhalin Police Detain Deputy Mayor on Suspicion of Bribery

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Alexei Leskin

Police in Sakhalin have detained a deputy mayor on suspicion of bribery, a news report said Thursday, in the latest of a series of corruption scandals involving high-ranking officials from the far eastern island.

Two criminal cases have been opened against Alexei Leskin, the deputy mayor of the city of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, who is suspected of accepting two bribes amounting to 15 million rubles ($293,000), Investigative Committee spokesman Vladimir Markin told Interfax on Thursday.

The city's former mayor Andrei Lobkin — who is currently abroad — is also wanted on suspicion of acting as a mediator in the bribes, which saw money exchanged in return for favorable outcomes in local elections, Markin added.

The detention of Leskin follow a series of corruption cases against government chiefs on the resource-rich Sakhalin Island.

Former governor Alexander Khoroshavin, who was detained in early March, is currently in a pretrial detention center in Moscow on charges of receiving more than $5.6 million in bribes to facilitate business deals while in office.

Two former minister in Khoroshavin's regional government were also detained this week and accused of receiving a bribe — the former deputy head in charge of fishing industries, Sergei Karepkin, and the former agriculture minister, Nikolai Borisov, TASS reported Thursday.

A former Sakhalin construction minister, Vladimir Lyovin, is also under investigation on suspicion of abuse of office, the report said, adding that a municipal lawmaker in Yuzhno–Sakhalinsk, Sergei Korotkov, has also been detained and accused of embezzlement.

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