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Russian Railways to Spend $17 Mln on Bridge to Sakhalin in 2018

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Evgeny Stepanov / Interpress / TASS

Russia's state-run rail company has allocated 1 billion rubles ($17 million) to connect the island of Sakhalin to the Russian mainland in a grand infrastructure bid that could end in Japan.

The railroad connection will be some 580 kilometers long and will connect Selikhino in Khabarovsk to Nysh, a village with roughly 500 residents, on Sakhalin.

The project, which could include a tunnel, is expected to cost some 500 billion rubles ($8.5 billion).

Plans have also been floated to build another bridge connecting Sakhalin to Hokkaido, in Japan. Relations between the two countries have been strained over a chain of islands in the western Pacific, known as the Northern Territories in Japan and the Southern Kurils in Russia. The planned bridge is seen as a symbol of peace.

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Transport Minister Maxim Sokolov says the Sakhalin Bridge project would begin as early as in 2018, the state-run TASS news agency reports.

Russia is also planning next year to open a bridge between Crimea, annexed by Moscow in 2014, and the Russian mainland.

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