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Large Statue of Putin Unveiled in Kyrgyzstan

By Reuters

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A ski resort in Kyrgyzstan has unveiled a 2.5-meter statue of Russian President Vladimir Putin, after the resort's founder received a $1.2 million loan from a Russian-sponsored development fund.

Erected last month, the monument sees Russia's leader wearing a suit as he looks out over a barren landscape of rocky valleys and snow-capped peaks, 30 kilometers south of the capital, Bishkek.

Resort director Akbar Roziev said he had turned to Kyrgyz banks looking for a credit line but did not find the terms on offer to his liking, whereas the Russian-Kyrgyz Development Fund, opened in 2014, extended him a loan at 4%.

"I didn't know how to express my gratitude," Roziev said, adding that he saw Putin as a role

model. "Thanks to his loan, we now have a (much better) center."

"What else can I say? Putin is the man, with a capital M," Roziev said.

The fund supporting Roziev's project describes itself as the leading mechanism for integrating Kyrgyzstan into the Eurasian Union, a foreign policy initiative promoted by Putin since 2011 which aims to remove barriers to trade, capital and labor movement between Russia and its ex-Soviet neighbors.

The statue joins other monuments of leaders erected by the ski resort, including one of early Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin.

Tourists regularly pose for photos and take selfies with the resort's newest addition, Roziev said.

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