The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Head of Russian Army Theme Park Placed Under House Arrest

September 17, 2024



Vyacheslav Akhmedov. **Alexei Potitsky / TASS**

The head of Russia's military theme park has been placed under house arrest, state media reported Monday, following his involvement in a plea deal that incriminated a senior defense ministry official.

Vyacheslav Akhmedov, director of Patriot Park, and Vladimir Shesterov, a senior defense ministry official, were arrested last month on fraud charges linked to the park's operations. Weeks later, former Deputy Defense Minister Pavel Popov was also arrested on similar charges.

Akhmedov and Shesterov pleaded guilty and testified against Popov, the Kommersant business daily reported last week, citing anonymous sources. Shesterov had already been moved to house arrest on Aug. 7.

In a closed hearing on Monday, a Moscow military court ruled to move Akhmedov from pre-trial detention to house arrest until Dec. 21, according to the state-run news agency TASS.

Related article: A Timeline of Russia's Defense Ministry Purge

Patriot Park, located in the town of Kubinka some 63 kilometers (39 miles) west of Moscow, is a military theme park and exhibition center featuring interactive exhibits and displays of weapons and equipment. In addition to live-firing ranges, the park hosts a grandiose Orthodox cathedral dedicated to the country's armed forces.

Popov is accused of personally benefiting from his position by coercing Patriot Park's contractors into performing unpaid construction work at his Moscow region residence between 2021 and 2024. He is also alleged to have continued using the park's resources for maintenance after the work was completed.

Akhmedov, Shesterov and Popov are among several senior military officials arrested on fraud charges this year in an apparent purge of the Russian Defense Ministry.

The arrests began in April with the detention of former Deputy Defense Minister Timur Ivanov on bribery charges. Ivanov, who oversaw the construction of Patriot Park, is considered to be a close ally of former Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, who was ousted in May.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/09/17/head-of-russian-army-theme-park-placed-under-house-arrest-a86396