The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Travel Agency Staff Arrested After 3 Tourists Die on Siberian Peak

April 22, 2026



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Russian law enforcement authorities said Wednesday that they arrested the head of a travel agency and two of its employees after three tourists died in the mountains of Siberia's republic of Buryatia.

Two senior managers and a guide from the Krasnoyarsk-based agency were taken into custody as part of a criminal investigation into a deadly expedition on Mount Munku-Sardyk, the highest peak in the Eastern Sayan range along the Russian-Mongolian border.

The Investigative Committee, Russia's top investigative body, said a group of 15 tourists reached the 3,500-meter (11,500-foot) summit on Monday. As the group began its descent in roped teams, a team of two women and one man fell behind and failed to reach the base camp.

"The remaining members ascended the slope, where they discovered their bodies," the Investigative Committee said.

While forensic examinations are pending to determine the exact cause of death, investigators noted that facial injuries on one victim suggested a fall or rockfall.

Local media reported that the bodies were recovered on Monday night under “extreme conditions” characterized by high winds, blizzards and low visibility.

Emergency officials said the three victims were all in their 40s.

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