

Mayor Buys Crimean Sanatorium

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The Moscow mayor's office will purchase a fifth sanatorium in Crimea for city officials to use on vacation, Mayor Yury Luzhkov said.

"Naturally, we have many sanatoriums near Moscow, but we, as a state that [after the collapse of the Soviet Union] has become northern, lack sun," Luzhkov said Friday. "We are prepared to invest; we are ready to expand."

Luzhkov was making his second trip to Crimea since being banned from Ukraine in May 2008 for suggesting that the Crimean port of Sevastopol rightfully belonged to Russia. The ban was lifted when pro-Kremlin Viktor Yanukovich assumed the Ukrainian presidency in February.

With the two countries' warming relations, Luzhkov said talks on resuming some shelved investment plans can begin.

"We are prepared to invest money but only in a transparent, clear, well-constructed system of power and organization, which first and foremost protects investment and protects the

proprietor," Luzhkov said of the purchase of the new sanatorium near Kerch.

Luzhkov also pushed for a renewal of talks over finishing the construction of a Crimea-Caucasus bridge by 2014 — in time for the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.

The bridge would cost \$1 billion and traverse the Kerch Strait, shortening the route between Kherson, Ukraine, and Novorossiisk, Russia, by 450 kilometers, said Vasily Dzharty, head of the Crimean government, RIA-Novosti reported. The entire project including infrastructure is estimated to cost between \$1.4 billion and \$1.7 billion.

In return, Luzhkov presented Sevastopol Mayor Valery Saratov with a blueprint of a school building and kindergarten as a gift.

"With this, construction costs can be reduced by up to 10 percent," Luzhkov said.

Luzhkov added that the gift was worth \$3 million.

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