Beat: Miscellaneous

Russian helicopter carrying notorious businessman goes missing

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USPA News - A search-and-rescue operation was launched Sunday after a private helicopter carrying at least three people, including a notorious businessman and the son of a former government official, went missing near the capital of Moscow, officials said. The four-seat Robinson R44 helicopter took off at around 5:30 p.m. local time on Saturday from the village of Ploski in the Konakovo district of Tver Oblast, located northwest of Moscow.

It is believed the aircraft was heading for a village in the Dmitrov district of Moscow Oblast. A spokesman for Russia`s Ministry of Emergency Situations said a signal from a distress beacon was briefly picked up, but authorities were unable to determine where exactly the signal came from. He said a large search-and-rescue operation involving more than 400 people and several aircraft had been launched. Russian newspaper Moskovsky Komsomolets, citing unidentified sources, said the helicopter was being flown by notorious businessman Fedor Tsarev. The 35-year-old businessman was recently charged in connection with deforestation, corruption, illegal mining and had been accused of landing helicopters on playgrounds and other places not intended for landings. Moskovsky Komsomolets, citing neighbors and local residents, said Tsarev owns multiple helicopters which he would regularly land on a nearby football field or right next to his mansion. The neighbors said the businessman had also repeatedly been seen doing aerobatics in a small plane and once fled by helicopter when police attempted to arrest him. In addition to Tsarev, the newspaper said the aircraft was also carrying Yuri Petrov, the son of the former head of the Federal Agency for State Property Management (Rosimushchestvo). The third person on board the helicopter was identified as 49-year-old Moscow resident Oleg Skopintsev.

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