

Ex-Nissan chief Ghosn denies allegations: media

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Carlos Ghosn was sacked as Nissan chairman Thursday, a spectacular fall from grace for the once-revered boss whose arrest and ouster have stunned the business world

Nissan's former chairman Carlos Ghosn has denied allegations of financial misconduct, claiming he had no intention of making false reports, Japanese media said Sunday.

The Brazil-born tycoon, who headed the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi alliance, has not spoken publicly since he was arrested last Monday. He told prosecutors he did not intend to understate his income on financial reports, public broadcaster NHK said.

Meanwhile in France, economy minister Bruno Le Maire Sunday said Renault had launched an internal audit into Ghosn's pay.

"Renault's new governing body has launched an audit (...) into questions of pay and abuse of corporate assets to make sure there is nothing tricky to be found," the minister told BFM television.

The audit which will take "several days" was being carried out "in full agreement with the government" which hold some 15 per cent of Renault's capital, Le Maire said.

Japan has provided no information on the charges against Ghosn, the minister also said.

Ghosn was sacked as Nissan chairman Thursday, a spectacular fall from grace for the once-revered boss whose arrest and ouster have stunned the business world.

Prosecutors accuse Ghosn and fellow executive Greg Kelly of under-reporting the former chairman's income by around five billion yen (\$44 million).

Kelly also denied the allegations, saying Ghosn's salaries were paid appropriately, news reports said.

Local media reported that Nissan had formed a "secret" team earlier this year to probe the alleged financial misconduct.

A small team involving Nissan's board members carried out its internal probe confidentially on concerns about possible destruction of evidence by Ghosn, Japan's Kyodo News reported, quoting unnamed sources.

The [company](#) speeded up the probe to oust Ghosn swiftly as Nissan officials were increasingly worried about his plan to review the Renault-Nissan capital tie-up, it said.

Ghosn reportedly planned their full-fledged merger although Nissan officials opposed the move due to concerns over Renault's level of control despite the Japanese company becoming the dominant player in the alliance.

Ghosn is being held custody in a Tokyo detention centre.

On Wednesday, prosecutors successfully applied to extend his custody for an additional 10 days as they stepped up their questioning.

Separately, Nissan is considering filing a civil damages suit against Ghosn over his expenses, Kyodo said.

The Yokohama-based company plans to sue him if controversial expenses such as costs of providing luxury residences to him in Lebanon are confirmed improper, it said.

Ghosn's ouster is an astonishing turnaround for a titan of the auto sector who revived the Japanese brand and forged an alliance with France's Renault as well as domestic rival Mitsubishi Motors.

Top executives of the three companies plan to hold a meeting this week, their first gathering since his arrest, local media said.

The meeting will be held in the Netherlands with a video conference available for executives who cannot attend, the Yomiuri Shimbun said.

It had been scheduled before his arrest but executives may discuss the fate of the alliance, Tokyo Broadcasting System said.

Meanwhile, Mitsubishi is to hold a board meeting to discuss his future, as news reports said the firm plans to fire Ghosn as chairman.

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