

# Russia opens new fraud cases over cosmodrome

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Russian investigators said Thursday they had opened two new fraud probes over the construction of a corruption-tainted space centre in the country's Far East.

The Vostochny cosmodrome in the Amur region is one of Russia's most important space projects, designed to reduce reliance on the Baikonur launch site it rents from Kazakhstan to ferry cosmonauts.

But its [construction](#) has for years been tainted by multiple controversies including corruption and wage arrears.

Russian authorities have opened dozens of cases over violations during the building of the cosmodrome.

At a government meeting earlier this month President Vladimir Putin complained that the corruption continued, saying "millions" were being stolen.

Investigators said in a statement Thursday that forged documents had led to the theft of 240 million rubles (\$3.7 million) between November 2018 and May 2019.

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov has told reporters that the government allocated 91 billion rubles (\$1.4 billion) for the construction of Vostochny and 11 billion rubles was stolen.

The [government](#) was able to recover 3.5 billion rubles.

The Vostochny [cosmodrome](#) was originally supposed to be running manned launches from last year but the grand project has been consistently behind schedule.

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