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Far East Construction Chief Fired Over Summit

By The Moscow Times

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Primorye region Governor Vladimir Miklushevsky on Wednesday fired the official in charge of construction ahead of September's APEC summit, citing delays and poor "financial discipline."

Miklushevsky fired Sergei Yakushin, director of the region's construction department, during a government meeting on Wednesday, Interfax reported, citing the governor's spokesman.

Construction delays on an opera and ballet theater in Vladivostok drew Miklushevsky's special ire.

"I visited the construction site recently to find that the 1.6 billion rubles ($50 million) we requested from regional deputies to finish the project still hasn't been spent," he said.

Construction of the theater, featuring 300- and 1,500-seat performance halls, was originally

priced at 2.5 billion rubles, but the cost has ballooned to nearly 4.5 billion rubles, according to local sources.

The move was the latest development in a growing scandal over the misallocation of government funds and shoddy construction ahead of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit.

Last week, a Moscow court authorized the arrest of a former deputy head of the Regional Development Ministry on suspicion of stealing almost $3 million intended for the summit.

On Tuesday, the Audit Chamber said more than 15 billion rubles ($472.5 million) in federal funds allotted over the 2008-2012 period for construction ahead of the summit was improperly used.

Poor-quality construction around Vladivostok also made headlines in June, when sections of a 29 billion ruble ($930 million) road to the event's site on Russky Island collapsed after heavy rain.

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