

First Arrest Made in Bolshoi Theater Scandal

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The general director of the building contractor PO Teplotekhnika embroiled in the Bolshoi Theater embezzlement scandal has been put under house arrest, a news report said Friday.

Alexander Semchenko's arrest, which was sanctioned by Ostankino Court, is the first to have been made in the course of the investigation, Interfax reported.

PO Teplotekhnika is accused of embezzling 90 million rubles (\$2.8 million) of state funds during the \$1 billion renovation of Moscow's famous theater. Despite failing to fulfill its contract, the company received the money for work on the theater's electrical system, investigators claim.

Repair work on the Bolshoi Theater, one of the country's most iconic institutions, began in 2005. In the run up to the grand opening in 2011, a soloist ballet star of the theater, Nikolai Tsiskaridze, said that old stucco had been replaced by plastic or cardboard pasted on with glue

and painted gold. He also said that the bronze door handles and candelabra had been replaced with "pieces of iron, painted gold."

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