The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
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Cosmodrome Builders Fired for Cannabis Use

July 11, 2013



Five builders working at the site of Russia's newest cosmodrome in the Far East have been fired for illegal drug use, the Federal Drug Control Service said.

"There were five men aged between 25 and 50 detected with signs of drug use. Express-testing showed traces of drugs from the cannabis group. They were all fired," FSKN spokeswoman Svetlana Fedotova said.

Suspicions about drug use at the Vostochny cosmodrome construction site, located in Russia's Amur Region, were first aroused in April when sniffer dogs found signs of illegal substances during an inspection, Fedotova said.

Vostochny is due to be completed in 2018 and is expected to become the country's flagship satellite launch site, replacing the Baikonur facility in Kazakhstan that is currently Russia's main cosmodrome.

The Kremlin's space program has suffered a number of setbacks in recent months. As well as

several major corruption scandals, there have been a string of launch failures. In the latest, on July 2, a Proton-M rocket carrying three satellites crashed just seconds after takeoff.

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