Putin on failed launch: Those found guilty of spaceport building negligence may face jail

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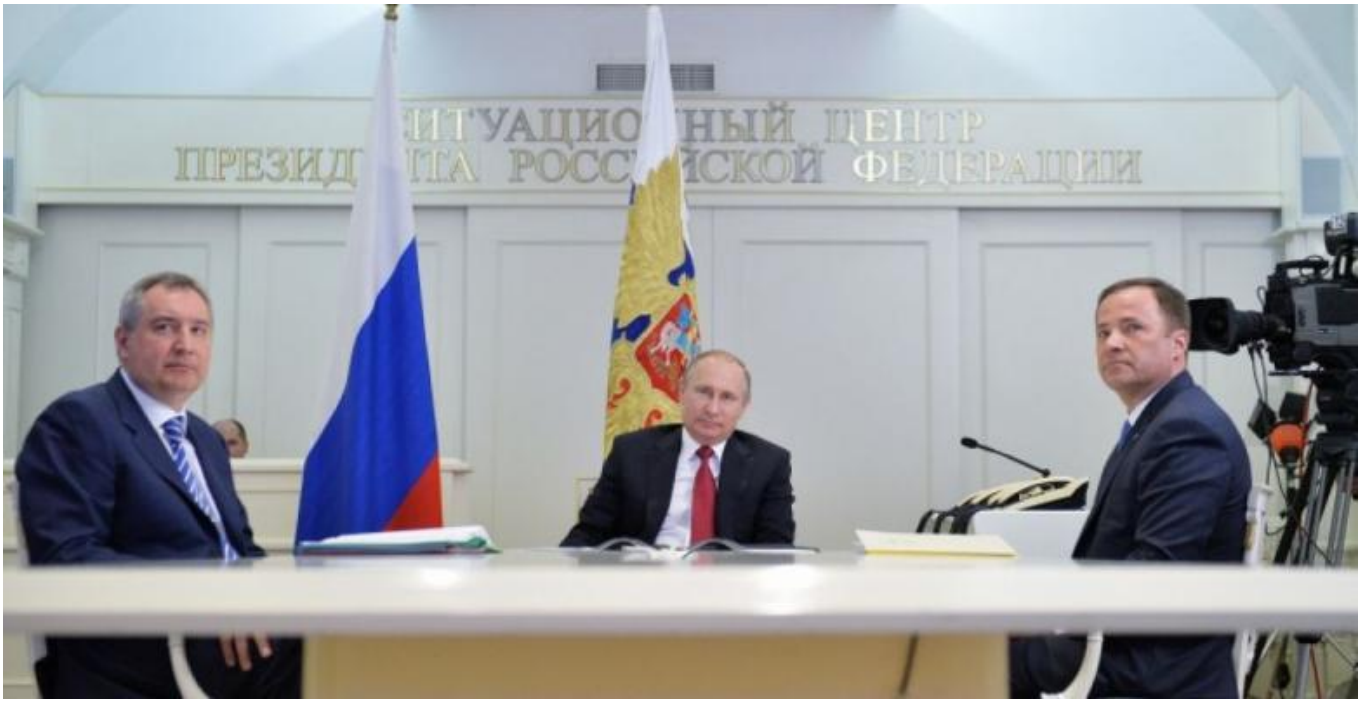

*"Six criminal cases had to be launched, in which four people were arrested. Two of them, however, are under house arrest, while the other two are in pre-trial detention,"* Putin is cited as saying by Interfax.

*"But if their guilt of the suspected of crimes is proven, they'll have to swap their warm beds at home for prison bunks,"* he added.

Putin arrived at Vostochny for its first launch, which was scheduled to take place at 5:01am Moscow time (02:01GMT) on Wednesday.

However, automatic systems canceled the launch of a Soyuz-2.1a space rocket less than two minutes before the liftoff.

The president later said *"the malfunction, as far as I understand, is not due to the condition of the cosmodrome, but to the rocket itself."*

*"I want to hear how the post-launch analysis is being carried out. Without any doubt, conclusions will have to be made," he added.*

Read more Vostochny Cosmodrome ready for 1st launch with rocket placed in take-off position (VIDEO, PHOTOS)

The construction of the Vostochny Cosmodrome began in 2012, with the site to become the maiden Russian cosmodrome for civilian purposes.

The first launch at Vostochny was expected in 2015, but was postponed to April 2016 due to mismanagement of the project and poor performance by subcontractors.

At some point during construction, the workers at the site had to go on strike after salaries were delayed.

Criminal investigations into alleged embezzlement and other corruption-related crimes were launched against those involved in the construction of the cosmodrome.

Putin decided to stay at the Vostochny Cosmodrome until a meeting of the government commission on Thursday morning, which is to set a new launch date.

*“If the commission opts for staging another launch attempt Thursday morning, Putin will be present at the launch site to witness the event,"* Dmitry Peskov, presidential press secretary, said.

Earlier, Putin examined the launch site, saying that despite construction problems *"in general, the cosmodrome was built in line with standards."*