

Russian Prime Minister Evacuated from Business Forum

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Sergei Fadeichev / TASS

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, together with other participants of the Open Innovations forum, was evacuated from Skolkovo, Russia's equivalent of Silicon Valley, where the forum took place on Wednesday, Russian news outlets reported.

Ryan Chilcote, moderator of the plenary session that Medvedev attended, asked participants to leave the hall after an extrinsic noise sounded across the room. "I thought it was applause," he was quoted by the Interfax news agency as saying. "While they are trying to figure out what is happening, I ask everyone to leave the hall."

Some outlets claimed that participants could smell smoke in the hall. The Meduza news outlet reported that the evacuation was carried out due to a short circuit that caused a fire.

Shortly after the evacuation, however, sessions at the forum resumed as if nothing happened. Vice President of the Skolkovo foundation Alexander Chernov explained

to the state-owned Rossiya 24 TV channel that the sound came from malfunctioning sound equipment. “The sound equipment malfunctioned,” Chernov said. “It switched itself on, apparently because of some kind of a short circuit.”

He added that organizers of the forum were “very disappointed” by the fact that they had to interrupt the plenary session with Medvedev: the session was “very interesting, fascinating, and the room was full.” “But safety comes first,” Chernov added.

The brainchild of Medvedev, who wanted a Russian version of Silicon Valley, Skolkovo is a technology and innovation hub, which includes the Skoltech university, business incubators and an investment fund.

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