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**Rosatom presented its vision of the prospects for the development of the Northern Sea Route at the VI International Arctic Forum “The Arctic – the Territory of Dialogue”**

*Rosatom’s top managers emphasized the importance of long-term planning for project implementation in the region*

**Rosatom’s top managers took part in the VI International Arctic Forum “The Arctic -the Territory of Dialogue”.**

In particular, at the key session of the Forum on “Long-Term Development Model for the Northern Sea Route (the NSR)”, **Alexey Likhachev**, Director General of Rosatom, spoke about the conditions needed to increase cargo traffic along the northern route. The main speakers of the session included: Advisor to the President of the Russian Federation, **Igor Levitin**; Head of the Presidential Directorate for National Maritime Policy, **Sergei Vakhrukov**; Deputy Minister of Russia for the Development of the Far East and the Arctic, **Gadzhimagomed Guseinov**; Governor of the Murmansk Region, **Andrei Chibis**; and Joint Secretary of the Secretariat of the National Security Council of India, **Venkat Naga Prasanna Telidevara**. They discussed the development of an economic model for the NSR operation, ways to improve predictability and efficiency of logistics in the NSR waters, and creation of mechanisms for international cooperation.

**Alexey Likhachev** emphasized the magnitude of the challenges associated with the NSR development, which are to be taken on in the coming years: “First of all, we need to ensure that there is cargo flow on the NSR. The volume of cargo has already amounted to tens of millions of tons with last year's record nearly 38 million tons. Our northern deposits developers tell us to be prepared for hundreds of millions of tons. The sanctions are a great burden, indeed, affecting not only the area of technological equipment but also transportation, funding, and long-term contracts for the sale of resources extracted in the Arctic region. We are aware of this and we will act in accordance with the scenario. Now, as per the scenario, we need 11 icebreakers, which we already have (including eight nuclear icebreakers). We must move on to the next stage and plan 100 and 150 million tons and 15 to 17 icebreakers instead of 10 or 11. Therefore, we must construct them”.

He also stressed the significance of international cooperation. “An icebreaker does not transport cargo, so we need a cargo fleet. I understand that we do not have enough capacity to meet the demand for cargo vessels in advance, and this is where international cooperation is necessary. We have a very good understanding of business on the international market. Now we are having discussions with several countries that are experts in shipbuilding. First of all, we need to develop a strategy for increasing capacity at our shipyards, but we also need international cooperation tools,” stated **Alexey Likhachev**.

In addition, at the joint meeting of the commissions of the State Council of the Russian Federation for the development of the Arctic and the Northern Sea Route (held as part of the Forum), the head of Rosatom spoke in favor of creating competitive transport conditions for the Northern Sea Route

“It is essential that the costs of icebreaker escorts and cargo transit, cargo services are within the economic framework of the Arctic projects," In this context, it is important to recognize that given the challenging northern environment and the lengthy project timeline, turning these projects into purely commercial initiatives considering modern lending policies - meaning interest rates – would effectively halt their progress,” said **Alexey Likhachev**. He also suggested switching to 30-year planning for the NSR, noting that a comprehensive plan for the route development must be long-term.

**Vladimir Panov**, Rosatom's Special Representative for the Arctic Development, emphasized that Russia's collaboration with China and India on the Northern Sea Route has reached a systematic level. “Last year, international cooperation on the NSR experienced a transformative shift. Under the instructions of the President of the Russian Federation and with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the highest level, intergovernmental partnership forms were established with the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of India. This is systematic work which we continue doing this year,” said **Vladimir Panov**. He also added that regular container shipments between China and Russia via the NSR started two years ago, and the number of voyages has never stopped increasing.

The section titled «Muravyov-Amursky 2030: career in the Arctic and the Far East is a choice for strong people» was focused on the topic of personnel training for the Arctic. The speakers addressed the issues of attracting, training, and retaining highly skilled personnel considering the harsh conditions of the Arctic and remoteness from major urban centers.

**Tatyana Terentyeva**, Deputy Director General of Human Resources at Rosatom, participated in the discussion. “We think of the Arctic is a region with boundless opportunities and a platform for the realization of groundbreaking and unique projects. These include SMR-based NPPs, upgraded floating power units for the Baimsky Mining and Processing Plant, the world’s only floating NPP in Pevek, and, of course, the Northern Sea Route. Our Arctic companies currently employ around 10,000 people. With the expansion of our operations, primarily after the launch of the Kola NPP-2 and the construction of three new power plants, we are going to create 10,000 jobs more by 2035. To achieve these objectives, we are developing our cooperation with specialized educational institutions and vocational training organizations in the area, including within the «Professionalitet» project. We interact with young talented people – we offer career advice to schoolchildren and run educational programs, support youth initiatives,” she told the participants.

Speaking at the plenary session, **Marina Kirdakova**, Director of the Department for Regional Cooperation at Rosatom, highlighted the unique aspects of creating master plans for “nuclear” cities, including those developed in the Arctic region.

“The population of Polyarnye Zori is projected to grow by 60% during to the construction of the Kola NPP-2. At the peak, during the construction of the new power units, the workforce may reach up to 9,000. Meanwhile, the population of the satellite city of Polyarny Zori is approximately 14,000. Rosatom has included the potential influx of migrants in its master plan for this Arctic city. The main feature of our approach to contributing to the working out of such strategic development documents is the harmonization of economic, industrial, and urban planning. It is crucial that these components are synchronized. It is impossible to plan a decade-long construction project that involves 9,000 new employees without thinking in advance about where they will live, what their families will do or where their children will study, etc.,” pointed out **Marina Kirdakova**.

The development of tourism and hospitality in the Arctic was a central topic at the section «Delightful North: Tourism Opportunities Beyond the Arctic Circle», which took place on March 26. **Anna Zhigulskaya**, Director of the Project Office for Internal Communications and Corporate Social Responsibility at Rosatom, participated in the discussion.

“There are three «nuclear» cities in the Arctic: Polyarnye Zori in Murmansk Oblast, Pevek and Bilibino in the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug. These are pilot cities for the new industry program “Hospitable Cities of Rosatom”, which aims to develop leisure and tourism infrastructure in “nuclear” cities. Rosatom is actively working towards improving the quality of life in the cities where it operates. The company is actively involved in developing healthcare, education, and community initiatives. In the past year, we also included leisure, hospitality, and support for local businesses in the area of our efforts. Along with their unique industrial facilities and cutting-edge technology, “nuclear” cities boasts their cultural and historical delights, as well as breathtaking natural beauty. We seek to make these cities appealing places to live and visit. We also show them to young professionals from various fields so that they come, fall in love with, and stay in our cities,” said **Anna Zhigulskaya**.

**For reference:**

**The Arctic International Forum** is a main platform for addressing crucial matters concerning the socioeconomic advancement of the Arctic as well as for working out multilevel multilateral mechanisms to jointly explore and efficiently harness the region's abundant natural resources. The event bring together governmental entities, international organizations, scholars, and business leaders from Russia and other nations that join their efforts to share opinions on sustainable development of the Arctic region. The forum is held with the support of the State Commission for Arctic Development and is attended by the President of the Russian Federation.

In 2018, the Russian Government appointed Rosatom the NSR (Northern Sea Route) infrastructure operator. The corporation oversees the federal project "Development of the Northern Sea Route" also being involved in the plan for the development of the Northern Sea Route until 2035 and the initiative for the socio-economic development of the Russian Federation until 2030 "Year-Round Northern Sea Route" approved by the order of the Russian Government. One of Rosatom's strategic goals is to make the Northern Sea Route an efficient transportation artery connecting Europe, Russia, and the Asia-Pacific region. In December 2024, a federal project was approved to develop the Great Northern Sea Route, a transport corridor between St. Petersburg, Kaliningrad, and Vladivostok.

In 2024, the Northern Sea Route saw a record cargo volume, with a total of 37.9 million tons transported. The volume of transit cargo continues rising (having increased by 44 % with a total of 3.09 million tons).

The comprehensive development of the Russian Arctic is a national strategic priority. To increase the NSR traffic is crucial for the success of the outstanding tasks. This logistics corridor is developing due to cargo shipping on a regular basis, building of new nuclear icebreakers and modernization of the relevant infrastructure. Rosatom is actively involved in these efforts.