

Weather Delays Putin Norilsk Visit

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Putin visiting Lena-2010, a Russian-German scientific expedition, on Sakha's Samoilovsky Island on Monday. **Alexei Druzhinin**

Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's plane was diverted from the airport of the Arctic town of Norilsk to another town, Khatanga, on Monday because of bad weather, his spokesman said.

Putin was due to visit Norilsk, hometown of mining giant Norilsk Nickel, amid a dispute between two powerful tycoons who each own 25 percent in the world's largest nickel and palladium producer.

"Due to unpredictable weather conditions, the prime minister's plane could not land in Norilsk. The visit has been postponed until a later date," Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

Rain and fog worsened visibility in Norilsk at the time Putin was to land, Channel Five reported.

From Khatanga, which is 1,300 kilometers northeast of Norilsk, Putin was expected to continue his trip around East Siberia and the Far East, which will last several days.

Rumors about the state buying Norilsk, which has a market capitalization of \$32 billion, have hit the market regularly over the past decade as the Kremlin tightened control of natural resources. A Kremlin source, however, rejected any plans to buy into the company earlier this month.

After landing in Khatanga, Putin traveled to Samoilovsky Island on the Lena River in Yakutin to talk to Russian and German geologists.

He told the scientists that the reserves of natural resources in East Siberia — such as oil, gas, gold and diamonds — were worth \$5 trillion.

Putin's next stop will be Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, capital of the Kamchatka region, where he will talk about fisheries, Channel Five said on its web site.

(Reuters, MT)

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