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New Aurora Airline Set to Serve Far East

By The Moscow Times

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Medvedev greeting staff of the airline at Sheremetyevo on Wednesday.

State-owned carrier Aeroflot gave birth to Aurora — a new airline to serve Russia's Far East region, Interfax reported Wednesday.

The new airline was created by merging two Aeroflot subsidiaries, Vladivostok Air and SAT Airlines, already serving 42 and 15 destinations respectively, with a combined fleet of 24 fixed wing aircraft and 11 helicopters.

By 2018, the airline is expected to increase its fleet size to 40, consisting of the mid-range Boeing-737, Airbus-319 and short-range turboprop aircrafts, at the same time increasing the total number of destinations to 128 and servicing 2.4 million passengers per year.

Aeroflot will hold a 51 percent stake of the new airline, while the remaining 49 percent is owned by the Sakhalin regional administration.

Aurora is supposed to stimulate economic development of the Far East region by providing

a system of effective and affordable transportation.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, who ordered the creation of the airline, was present at the document signing ceremony held at Sheremetyevo airport Wednesday. He said that he hoped Aurora "would meet expectations."

"Let the ticket money, which you will be receiving, allow the company to develop, but at the same time remain affordable for our citizens," Medvedev said. "It is important for the development of the Far East," he added.

Konstantin Sukhorebrik was appointed general director of Aurora.

The new airline bears the name of the Russian naval cruiser Aurora, a shot from which indicated the start of the communist revolution in 1917. It is also the name of a former Slovenian charter airline, which ceased operations in 2009.

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