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Putin-Inspired Television Character Is Amur Tiger

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A new character suggested by President Vladimir Putin for a popular children's television show is an Amur tiger, it was announced Monday.

The new star of the long-running show "Goodnight, Little Ones!" was unveiled at a news conference Monday, complete with a live tiger cub on display, along with a stuffed toy version of the new character.

The live feline stole the show, according to radio station Govorit Moskva, which reported that journalists had "started an active photo shoot" of the baby tiger at Monday's event.

Alexander Mitroshenkov, chairman of the board of directors of the Klass television company, had earlier announced that the television show's new character was inspired by Putin.
On Monday, Mitroshenko was cited by RIA Novosti as saying the search for the new character had dragged on for an entire year before Putin suggested an Amur tiger.

There were "many different ideas," Mitroshenkov said, listing "a wolf, a monkey and a giraffe, maybe a horse" as suggestions ultimately passed up in favor of Putin's idea.

The character's name is Mur, and he will make his debut by the end of October, Govorit Moskva reported. In his first episode, Mur will make a trip to space, and in later episodes he will tell the audience about various endangered animals. The Amur tiger is itself an endangered species.

Putin has frequently demonstrated an affection for the rare big cats, posing for photos with them and calling for more to be done to protect them from poachers.

Only a few hundred Amur tigers are estimated to remain in their natural habitat in Russia's Far East. (MT)

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