

This is why, while realizing the full responsibility placed on themselves, the heads of trusts and associations are running risks in having a contingent blindly and guessingly set foot on the Yamal tundra. And the tally of serious errors and losses engendered by such a method of developing the arctic peninsula has already begun.

So the group of drillers establishing a base on the western shore of Yamal found themselves in a difficult situation. They started construction without the aid of geological surveys and geocryological findings. As is the "practice", they smoothed out the site with bulldozers and... ended up in a swamp. With the onset of the first warm days, the permafrost, deprived of protection, started to flow, forming a sea of mash. There were similar occurrences at other projects, where traditional construction methods were used in haste. Having met with failure at one site, builders are now selecting another site, once more at random.

Contributing to the confusion are the often half-baked ministerial instructions and urgent directives. For example, according to one of the latter, an unnecessary and hence currently unpopulated settlement had, in the opinion of some, sprung up at the mouth of Seyakha River.

The simplest calculations would seemingly suggest that the most effective and economical alternative would be to set up a large settlement for shift teams with a unified system of power and heat supply and with common cultural and communal facilities. It was this solution which builders awaited from designers. With this in mind, they set about the construction of a settlement in Sabetta. But the project was forestalled by a stern