BELARE 2007-2008: CONTAINERS PARKED UP ON THE ICE SHELF



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The coast team has now finished unloading all the containers and machines from the Ivan Papanin. Everything has been neatly arranged in rows up on the ice shelf. The ship is due to leave Crown Bay today, Friday December 21.

The biggest challenge occurred yesterday, with the unloading of the Potain crane from the cargo ship. It measures 14 metres long when it is folded up and weighs 10 tonnes. Needless to say that the coast team was a little worried about how the snow would hold up under this heavyweight material. They waited for the night to come and for the air temperature to drop, so that the ramp would become hard enough to support the crane's weight up to the ice shelf.

The last containers to be unloaded were the fridge and freezer containers, which require power to function. It is hoped that during the 20 hours of the traverse during which they will be unplugged, they will maintain a cold enough temperature so as to not defrost.

With three Prinoth tractors driving the convoys, it is expected that a total of 14-15 traverses, carrying 9 containers, will be needed to haul all the material to the base camp. That's roughly 60 days or so of work, without counting the time needed for refuelling and any mishaps.