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Aeroflot SuperJet Debut Moved Back

By Roland Oliphant

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Aeroflot was planning to begin SuperJet service for passengers on its Moscow-Nizhny Novgorod route Sunday. **Denis Grishkin**

The first of 30 Sukhoi SuperJet 100s will be delivered to Aeroflot by the end of May and will make the initial commercial flight with the airline in June, a Sukhoi Civil Aircraft spokeswoman told The Moscow Times on Friday.

Earlier it was reported that Aeroflot had scheduled the aircraft for its Moscow-Nizhny Novgorod route starting this past Sunday.

An Aeroflot spokeswoman reached by telephone Wednesday refused to comment on plans for the aircraft.

Aeroflot, Russia's largest airline, ordered 30 of the 98-seater regional airliners produced by the United Aircraft Corporation, which includes Sukhoi, in 2005. The first planes were originally scheduled to be delivered in 2008.

In April, Transportation Minister Igor Levitin said Aeroflot's management could fine Sukhoi Civil Aircraft over repeated delays and complaints that the aircraft turned out to be heavier and less fuel-efficient than advertised.

Sukhoi Civil Aircraft delivered its first SSJ-100s to Armenian airline Armavia in April.

United Aircraft said it intends to quadruple production of civilian aircraft this year to 30 units, Interfax reported Friday.

The company is looking to produce 14 SuperJets, eight An-148s, one cargo-hauling Il-96-400T, two Tu-204-300s, and up to five Tu-214/Tu-204 SM aircraft.

The company produced just seven civilian aircraft in all of last year.

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