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YoMobile Hybrid Car Production Delayed Indefinitely

By The Moscow Times

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A YoMobile driving in Moscow. **Igor Tabakov**

Production of the YoMobile, a long-planned Russian hybrid gas-electric car sponsored by billionaire Mikhail Prokhorov, has been delayed indefinitely, an official told reporters Thursday.

Production in St. Petersburg will be delayed due to "major difficulties" in creating the car, said Maxim Meyksin, a spokesman for the city's industrial policies and innovation committee, Vedomosti reported.

Speaking at an auto investment conference, Meyksin did not specify the reasons for the delay, but said that developing the car required a large amount of funding. As of 2011, investment in the YoMobile was estimated at about 260 million euros ($356 million).

The car's development and production by Yo-Auto, partly owned by billionaire Mikhail

Prokhorov's Onexim group, have been repeatedly delayed since the vehicle was announced in 2010. YoMobiles were scheduled to start coming off the assembly line in 2013. The most recent announcements had pegged production to start at the beginning of 2015.

At the end of January, Prokhorov deflected questions from reporters about the car, viewed as a symbol of innovation in Russia, preferring to focus on the upcoming Winter Olympics.

The vehicle, propelled by its catchy name and its promise of renewal and innovation in the moribund domestic car industry, attracted widespread attention after developers said that the cars will cost 350,000 to 450,000 rubles ($9,800 to $12,700) and be able to travel 400 kilometers on one tank of gas.

In July 2013, the production target for the YoMobile was cut from 90,000 to 40,000 cars per year.

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