Yandex Self-Driving Cars Break Into World Top 3

Company reports four million miles driven, but remains far behind Google's Waymo initiative.

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Yandex's self-driving cars fleet has registered more than four million miles of autonomous driving.
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Yandex's self-driving car unit has accelerated through the coronavirus pandemic, becoming one of the world's top 3 companies for the number of miles driven by automated vehicles.

In a conference call with investors Tuesday, the Russian technology giant dubbed 'Russia's Google' said its fleet of 130 vehicles had passed four million miles in autonomous driving.

The milestone is the latest in Yandex's heavy investment into driverless technology. The mile count has doubled since the previous update in February, and its global ranking has climbed from fifth — when the company hit the one-million-mile landmark in October 2019 — to third, deputy chief executive Tigran Khudaverdyan said on the call.

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But Yandex is still well behind market leader Waymo, a project run by Google's parent company Alphabet. In its latest public update in January, Alphabet executives said Waymo cars had hit 20 million miles driven on public roads — more than ten times Yandex's mileage at that point.

Yandex invested almost 1.5 billion rubles ($21 million) in self-driving cars in the first six months of 2020 according to financial results [published](#) Tuesday — almost triple the unit's losses in the same period last year.

"The goal is to develop a fully-fledged robo taxi service, and that's why we're investing as much as we are," said Yandex chief financial officer Greg Abovsky.

The company believes self-driving cars have huge earning potential, especially given Yandex's dominance of Russia's ride-hailing market, where its market share is already more than two-thirds through a joint venture with Uber.