Singapore to test self-driving buses, shuttles in three new towns from 2022

#Singapore News Singapore
Ashraf Jamal Wednesday, November 22nd 2017

Singapore’s tryst with modern technology will have a new dimension in 2022 as three new towns Punggol, Tengah and Jurong Innovation District will have self-driving buses and shuttles plying their roads.

Making this announcement, Khaw Boon Wan, Transport Minister of Singapore, said, “Starting from 2022, self-driving buses will be deployed in these three towns during off-peak periods. At the same time, autonomous shuttles will provide first-last mile connection for residents and workers in these districts.”
The Minister was opening Singapore's first Autonomous Vehicles (AV) test centre, called the Centre of Excellence for Testing and Research of AVs (CETRAN) today. The centre has been jointly developed by Land Transport Authority (LTA), Nanyang Technological University and JTC.

“To facilitate the testing of AV navigation controls in a real-world environment, CETRAN is designed to replicate the different elements of Singapore’s roads, with common traffic schemes, road infrastructure, and traffic rules,” said LTA in a joint press release. It added, “The autonomous scheduled services will complement human-driven public buses and will initially travel on less crowded roads.”

“LTA is also exploring the use of self-driving buses for express transit links to connect the North-East Line to the North-South, East-West and Thomson East Coast Lines. Commuters will be able to hail the services via their mobile phones,” LTA added.
The Minister said, “We expect that the AVs will greatly enhance the accessibility and connectivity of our public transport system, particularly for the old, families with the young, and the less mobile. More importantly, we can gain further insights into how we can develop new towns or refurbish existing ones for the safe mass deployment of AVs.”

The Minister also informed that a Request for Information was launched today to seek feedback from industry and research institutions on the key requirements and enablers needed for successful pilot deployments in these towns. It will be open until May 31 next year.

Regarding the opening of the new AV testing centre, Khaw said, “It will provide a safe, controlled and configurable testing environment for developers to trial their technologies using a range of simulated on-road scenarios, with advanced test equipment like pedestrian simulators.”

At the news AV testing centre CETRAN, LTA has installed a network of seven 360-degrees CCTV cameras at strategic locations. Real-time footages from these CCTVs will be streamed back to the AutOnomous VehicLe MonItoring and EValuation SystEm (OLIVE), housed at LTA’s Intelligent Transport Systems Centre.
The centre also has a rain simulator and flood zone to test the AVs’ navigation abilities under different weather conditions. Photo courtesy: Facebook/LTA

The centre also features a rain simulator and flood zone to test the AVs’ navigation abilities under different weather conditions. Lam Wee Shan, LTA’s Chief Innovation and Technology Officer said, “The launch of the CETRAN AV Test Centre today marks a significant milestone in our efforts to become a leading global hub for the development of autonomous vehicle technology. He added, “As the safety of all road users is paramount, the Test Centre has been outfitted with equipment and infrastructure that can be configured to simulate various traffic scenarios for AV testing in a dense urban setting.”