

TRANSPORT

Volvo to test driverless electric bus in Singapore

SINGAPORE: Sweden's Volvo Buses and Singapore's Nanyang Technological University (NTU) yesterday unveiled a full-size autonomous electric bus for testing this year in the city state.

High-density Singapore has been encouraging the development of driverless technology in hopes that its residents will use more shared vehicles and public transport.

Tests with one bus on the university campus could begin in a few weeks to months, before moving to public roads after regulatory approvals, NTU president Subra Suresh told reporters.

He hoped the tests could be extended to public roads in a year. A second bus will undergo tests at a city bus depot.

"The 12-metre vehicle can carry up to 80 passengers and is the world's

first full-size, autonomous electric bus," Volvo and NTU said.

It uses 80% less energy than a diesel bus of a similar size and is equipped with sensors and navigation controls managed by an artificial intelligence system.

"This is the type of vehicle that real operators would use and that's why it is a milestone," Hakan Agnevall, president of Volvo Buses, told reporters.

Singapore ranked No. 2 globally in an index that assesses countries' openness and preparedness for autonomous vehicles, according to a recent report by KPMG.

The city-state is hoping to deploy autonomous buses on public roads in three different districts from

2022. REUTERS



FROM LEFT Volvo Buses president Hakan Agnevall, Nanyang Technology University president Subra Suresh and Land Transport Authority's chief innovation and technology officer Lam Wee Shann pose after unveiling Volvo's first full-size autonomous electric bus in Singapore yesterday. AFP