

S'pore at the forefront with driverless vehicles

Singapore is at the forefront globally in terms of its progress with autonomous vehicles, a top Volvo executive said yesterday.

Volvo Buses president Hakan Agnevall also said that the company is willing to increase its investment in developing autonomous vehicles in Singapore, having already put a significant sum into a joint project with the Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

The Swedish automaker launched a full-sized autonomous electric bus with NTU yesterday, with both organisations saying that the 12m-long bus was the first of its kind.

Mr Agnevall told The Straits Times: "Everybody is looking at developing autonomous vehicles, but I would say that Singapore is very well-formulated in terms of (developing) autonomous vehicles. It also puts (in) a lot of money, effort and

resources to make it happen.

"This is where Singapore stands out."

Volvo signed its partnership with NTU to develop driverless electricity-powered buses in January last year.

Mr Agnevall said that Volvo has invested \$4 million so far in the trials, with the additional amount spent on developing technology for the bus "much, much more" than \$4 million.

Volvo plans to continue investing in autonomous vehicle development here.

"There is a great future in this cooperation. It is highly strategic for Singapore and for Volvo as a group," Mr Agnevall added.

"We are very much looking forward to continuing and deepening the cooperation."

A report by research house Fitch Solutions Macro Research on Mon-



Nanyang Technological University president Subra Suresh (left) and Volvo Buses president Hakan Agnevall at the launch of the new bus. ST PHOTO: TOH TING WEI

day said that Singapore is now a step closer to autonomous vehicle adoption, with the publication of provisional national standards to guide the development and deployment of autonomous vehicles.

The standards, termed as Techni-

cal Reference 68 (TR68), were published by Enterprise Singapore in January to promote the safe deployment of fully autonomous vehicles in Singapore.

Toh Ting Wei