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Shanghai speeds up testing and commercial use of driverless cars

Zhu Shenshen

SHANGHAI is speeding up testing and commercial use of autonomous driving, including allowing more driverless cars on the road, and continually offering free licenses for electric cars, head of the city's economy and information technology commission said on Wednesday.

During a City Life program broadcast online, Wu Jincheng, director of the Shanghai Commission of Economy and Informatization, also spoke about Shanghai's adoption for AI tech like ChatGPT-like services, while building more metaverse applications in the virtual world.

Shanghai is a national highland for autonomous driving, based on the number of intelligent networked vehicle testing enterprises; the number of licenses issued, open road mileage and road testing mileage. The test mileage exceeds 13.27 million kilometers and the manned demonstration application has completed a total of 180,000 times.

"Everyone can experience the convenience brought by driverless vehicles as early as possible (in Shanghai)," Wu said.



A large number of Tesla electric vehicles are parked at the Nangang Port in Shanghai. — IC

For the next stage, Shanghai will start a larger scale of demonstration operation of intelligent network-connected vehicles, explore the commercial landing path, and create a closed-loop application ecology.

On March 22, Shanghai approved eight firms to test autonomous driving, mainly in the Pudong New Area. The driverless cars will also be tested on highways, with reliable networks with 5G,

wireless private network and other frontier technologies.

Meanwhile, Shanghai will continue offering free licenses for electric vehicles, at least until the end of this year, Wu added. But he admitted that the new EV cars bring traffic pressures in Shanghai, and the city will find a new "balance" in the future.

Artificial intelligence brings wide application for Shanghai, Wu added.

He mentioned the integration of AI and digital avatar on social media; AI-assisted chatbots for customized services tailored learning programs for students and AI diagnosis to improve medical service efficiency.

New generative AI services also improves content production efficiency, like a film poster created within 15 seconds and creation of several dozen gaming design posters within several seconds.

Tesla, Shanghai sign agreement for new megafactory

Huang Yixuan

US carmaker Tesla announced last week that it will build a new megafactory in Shanghai to manufacture Megapack, its super-sized commercial energy storage battery.

The initial plan is to manufacture up to 10,000 units of Megapacks annually at the new Shanghai plant, with a storage capacity of nearly 40GWh, according to the automaker. The product will be sold globally.

The Tesla Megafactory Shanghai project is scheduled to break ground in the third quarter of 2023, and start production in the second quarter of 2024.

Wu Xiaohua, deputy director of the Lingang Special Area Administration, and Tao Lin, vice president of Tesla, signed the agreement for the new project in Shanghai. It marks another major collaboration between Tesla and China.

Recently, Tesla unveiled the third part of its "Master Plan," which outlines its goal of transitioning to sustainable energy and achieving 100 percent sustainable energy by 2050. The new Tesla Megafactory Shanghai project is one of the crucial steps toward achieving this goal, it said.

This will be the company's second megafactory to produce Megapacks worldwide.

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