

Dubai aims to launch hover-taxi by July

Dubai has tested a Chinese prototype of a self-driving hover-taxi with the aim of introducing the aerial vehicle in the emirate by July.



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The test of the one-man electric vehicle comes as the city state in the United Arab Emirates seeks to ensure a quarter of its means of transport are self-driving by 2030.

The EHang 184 can travel on a programmed course at 100kph (60 mph) at an altitude of 300 metres (1,000 feet), its transport authority said in a statement.

A passenger simply needs to select a destination for the autonomous taxi to take off, fly the route and touch down in the chosen spot monitored by a ground control centre, it said.

Recharge in two hours, trips of 30 minutes

The vehicle, made by Chinese drone manufacturer EHang, can recharge in two hours and make trips of up to 30 minutes.

"The autonomous aerial vehicle exhibited at the World Government Summit is not just a model," said authority head Mattar al-Tayer. "We have already experimented [with] the vehicle in a flight in [the] Dubai sky," he said.

The authority was "making every effort to start the operation of the autonomous aerial vehicle in July 2017" to help reduce traffic congestion, Tayer said.

Other features

The quadcopter is powered by eight propellers, has highly accurate sensors, and can resist extreme temperatures, it said.

In November, Dubai agreed a deal with US startup Hyperloop One to study the construction of a near-supersonic transport link to the Emirati capital Abu Dhabi.

Source: AFP

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