Honda's level 3 autonomous vehicle speeds up AV race

Article

Select Honda drivers will soon be able to legally kick back and watch movies and TV while their car drives them through traffic, as the automotive giant has plans to launch level 3 autonomous vehicles (AVs) as soon as the end of the month, per Reuters. For context, level 0–2 AVs have little to minimal autonomous functionality, and still require drivers to intervene. Honda's new Traffic Jam Pilot lets the car navigate without any human supervision when

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traveling below 50 kilometers per hour. Traffic Jam Pilot was approved by Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism last November, which clears the way for the car's use on public roads, but only in Japan.

Honda's level 3 AV represents a significant step forward in the long race to make mass consumer driverless cars a reality. While Toyota, BMW, Tesla, and others already have level 2 AVs on the road, Honda's release will make it the world's first certified level 3 vehicle available for purchase and could pave the way for innovation from competitors. Already, Google-owned Waymo and Baidu are reportedly working on developing level 4 AVs, while Tesla claims it's nearing the completion of a level 5 vehicle.

And while this is a big leap, Honda Legend AVs won't be clogging city streets anytime soon. Honda limited the current version to a small batch of 100 vehicles with a steep price tag hovering around $102,000. And in an interview with Nikkei Asia, Honda senior chief engineer Yoichi Sugimoto said he didn't expect the technology to arrive in the company's highest-selling car models for another decade or two. Regulators will also likely watch Legend's rollout with a skeptical eye following a series of high-profile crashes and deaths involving AVs and autopilot features.

Attitudes Toward Autonomous Vehicles (AV) According to Adults in China, Germany, and the US, Aug 2020
% of respondents

	Would use AV	Would use AV only at low speed/parking	Would not use AV
China	59%	32%	9%
Germany	36%	28%	36%
US	38%	26%	36%
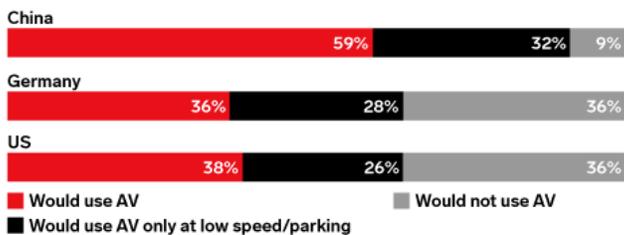
Note: ages 18+
Source: Strategy&, "Digital Auto Report 2020," Oct 19, 2020
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