

The Hindu – Bangalore

"Driving autonomous vehicles in India is the ultimate test"

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INTERVIEW | JAN BRECHT

Driving autonomous vehicles in India is the ultimate test

As chief information officer of Daimler, Jan Brecht is in charge of IT innovation at the world's biggest commercial vehicle manufacturer and the parent of Mercedes-Benz.

On his first official visit to India, Germany-based Mr. Brecht arrived at the Bengaluru airport in the early hours of the morning probably to avoid the traffic congestion in the city.

In an interview with Peerzada Abrar, said the ride from airport to the city was "very good" but running autonomous vehicles in India would be a challenge and an ultimate test. Daimler would expand its talent team at Mercedes-Benz Research and Development India centre in Bengaluru and would also partner with start-ups, as this strategy would play a key role in the company's innovation, he said.

Edited excerpts:

● You succeeded in making self-driving trucks and buses. Where is autonomous driving heading for?

I expect a very fast develop-



ment in that area in the years to come.

● How about emerging markets like India as developers and customers of autonomous vehicles?

There is huge potential in India, particularly with the IT and analytics skills that you have in the country to drive a big portion of the development of these services.

From a market perspective, from what I have seen in the last two days I think it is more challenging to have an autonomously driven vehicle here in India than in Europe or the U.S. But that is probably the ultimate test then to prove the technology. It is difficult for me to judge as we said before it is also a legal question... Which country would legally define a framework to make autonomous driving happen?

● You use 3D printing to make spare parts. What role is it going to play?

It is going to play a very key role. Whenever you have a small number of parts, 3D printing is probably the most efficient way of doing things, particularly in slow running spare parts, spare parts for vintage cars etc. I see a huge potential for that technology, particularly as we are now moving from printing plastic parts into printing metal parts too.

● You recently bought car-leasing firm Athlon and a mapping company HERE. Are there any acquisition plans in India, which is becoming a start-up hub?

I wouldn't look at it from a merger and acquisition perspective necessarily, but what we definitely want to do is to acquire skills and knowledge, that is why we continue to grow the teams here. That is why as an analytics and IT hub India is so important for us. We will also look at companies and start-ups that might or might not be an acquisition, but the key is to get the knowledge and skills and get the intellectual property. M&A is one way of doing it, but organic growth is very important (including) partnerships.

● You are gearing up with self-driving vehicles and even electric cars. Do you see Tesla CEO Elon Musk as a role model?

We certainly are respectful of Tesla and what they have done, I don't think we need a role model to shape the industry. We have been shaping the industry for the last 130 years. Technically it (autonomous vehicle technology) is very advanced in many companies. The legal question is important.

For example, if you look at what we launched in the media a couple of months ago, on the commercial side it might be more imminent. Take for example, Platooning, which means you have three trucks, two of them are coupled wirelessly and you only need one driver. From a technical as well as legal perspective probably it is much closer (to reality) than the fully autonomous passenger car.

While we are respectful of others and we have to disrupt ourselves and be faster, we also have quite a bit of knowledge in leading that field. For electric cars, the key element of Drive-train is that in the future, we have a very elaborate schedule for growing the autonomous way of driving cars.

● What are the innovation bets that you are making for the next decade and what role would India play in those bets?

I think it would be around services that surround the vehicle. Huge innovation would come in terms of maximising the uptime in the commercial vehicle sector. If we see urbanisation and e-commerce as two mega trends, there would be a huge innovation on the last mile of e-commerce, because it is difficult to deliver these parcels. For example, people are at home, while (delivery) vans get stuck in traffic.

In one pilot, what we have done is that one of our brand of microcar and sub-compact vehicles, 'Smart', in Europe, for example, gets the e-commerce parcel delivered to the trunk of your car. Which means two things, that are usually an obstacle for that business model.

At night there is no traffic, so the delivery guy can just once open the trunk with an app and put the parcel. You find the parcel when you wake up in the morning. You (also) don't have to be at home when the delivery occurs.

That is just one example of an innovation. I think we will see more of these. India has a very deep and wide talent pool particularly in the area of advanced analytics and we would certainly grow these capabilities also here in our team in Bangalore and make even more strategic use of that for the company.

We are roughly 3,000 people in Bengaluru, 1,300 of which are in IT. I believe in building a strategic foundation rather than move fast.

The analytics talent that we find here is probably difficult to find elsewhere. It is a key role in the context of today's technologies.

Deccan Herald -- Bangalore

Auto future driven by data: Daimler CIO

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Auto future driven by data: Daimler CIO

BENGALURU, DHNS: Daimler Chief Information Officer Jan Brecht — who is on a visit to India as part of a maiden international trip, post his appointment — on Wednesday said that the future of the automobile industry will not just lie in products, but largely in developing and providing efficient mobility services.

Addressing reporters at the Mercedes-Benz Research and Development India (MBRDI) centre here, Brecht said, “For the last 200 years, industrialisation has been directed towards energy, which was fueled by oil. In the 21st century, it’s all about transforming data, which is the new ‘oil’. The industry is moving from product to customer service, and also to mobility service. Digital is at the heart of this shift.”

With the significant importance of IT in product development, infotainment and connectivity applications, the new Daimler IT Strategy outlines getting more closer to customers and code, while being



Jan Brecht

more data/metric driven to be universally connected.

“‘IT is everywhere’ has been a philosophy within the company for quite some time, acknowledging that, without the support of state-of-the-art IT solutions, important activities such as product development, order processing, production, simulation, testing, aftersales-service, billing and payment cannot be done successfully.

Brecht said that he also wants to boost the role of IT in areas that include production, development, marketing and sales, while Daimler IT will continue to look for specialised talent for its India centre.

Times of India -- Bangalore

Merc-Benz sets up new-age analytics facility

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Merc-Benz sets up new-age analytics facility

Bengaluru: Mercedes-Benz Research & Development India (MBRDI) is building an advanced analytics competency centre in Bengaluru and is looking to hire “a couple of hundred people” in the near term, chief information officer Jan Brecht of parent company Daimler AG said.

“The growth in this centre will increase not only by numbers, but also on strong skills in analytics. Analytics will help us better utilize our assets through predictive maintenance, and build up an ecosystem of connected vehicles,” he said. Brecht, who joined the century-old German auto maker from sportswear company Adidas last year, added the centre can also be an centre for app creation which will help Mercedes be really fast on mobile development.

MBRDI, one of Daimler’s largest R&D centres outside Germany with 3,500 engineers, focuses on areas ranging from computer-aided design and simulations for powertrain, chassis and exteriors to embedded systems, telematics and developing various IT applications and tools. It was founded in 1996 as a captive unit to support the parent company’s research, information technology and product development activities. **TNN**

Business Standard -- Bangalore

Daimler looks at India for mobile first strategy

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Daimler looks at India for mobile first strategy

APURVA VENKAT
Bengaluru, July 20

Daimler, which owns brands such as Mercedes Benz and Maybach cars on Wednesday said it plans to hire few hundred engineers at its Bengaluru research facility to build the company's next phase of becoming a mobility services company.

The global car industry is ripe for disruption with the emergence of luxury electric cars promoted by Tesla and the concept of autonomous and driverless cars. Earlier this week, Mercedes Benz tested its autonomous self driving bus in Netherlands, which it says would be the future of public transport. It already has

tested driverless trucks on European roads and is also working on driverless luxury cars.

At the same time, on demand companies such as Uber are changing behaviours of consumers from owning cars to renting them for a trip on their smartphones. Uber on Tuesday said it has completed two billion rides by users globally with the last billion rides in six months as against the first billion in six years.

"There are two things to this as every other company will evolve more into a software company. There is no way to not be a

software company. Secondly, the question to any company is where is profit. Right

now profit is in selling products, in the future profit will be selling mobility," Daimler CIO, Jan Brecht on his first visit to Mercedes-Benz Research & Development India (MBRDI) in Bengaluru.

"We will still make cars and trucks, but there might be different models in it. You will see the product promi-

nently but you might not have to own the product. We will shift from selling a mechanical product to selling mobility services," said Brecht

The global car industry is ripe for disruption with the emergence of luxury electric cars promoted by Tesla and the concept of autonomous and driverless cars

Online Coverage

Coverage Report

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1	Your Story	http://yourstory.com/2016/07/jan-brecht-daimler/
2	Times of India	http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bengaluru/Daimler-to-boost-role-of-IT-says-official/articleshow/53306611.cms
3	Business Standard	http://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/daimler-looks-at-india-for-mobile-first-strategy-116072001216_1.html
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6	ET Auto	http://auto.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/industry/daimler-to-boost-role-of-it-plans-to-be-a-data-metric-driven-company/53312341