

Musk predicts Tesla self-driving cars 'later this year'

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Tesla CEO Elon Musk spoke via video link at the opening ceremony of the World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai.

Electric car giant Tesla is set to realize fully autonomous vehicles "later this year", CEO Elon Musk said Thursday, in the billionaire's latest

forecast for the long-anticipated milestone.

"In terms of where Tesla is at this stage, I think we are very close to achieving full self-driving without human supervision," Musk said via video link at the opening ceremony of an artificial intelligence conference in Shanghai.

"This is only speculation, but I think we'll achieve full self-driving, maybe what you would call four or five, I think later this year," the billionaire added, referring to two of the most advanced levels of autonomous driving technology.

The mercurial entrepreneur and Twitter owner admitted that he had been wrong in previous predictions on this timeline, but added: "I feel like we're closer to it than we ever have been."

Musk has missed his own deadlines for a fully autonomous vehicle—and Tesla's driver-assistance technology has provoked regulatory probes in the United States.

China is the world's biggest electric vehicle market and Tesla announced in April it would build a second massive factory in Shanghai.

His appearance at the World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai marks his latest effort to maintain close links to China, following a visit to the country in May.

Electric vehicles make up a quarter of car sales in China, the world's largest car market, and dozens of new models from domestic and Western brands were unveiled in April at the country's first auto show since COVID restrictions were lifted.

Tesla reported a drop in first-quarter earnings this year, with the

company undertaking a series of price cuts in the face of competition from other automakers.

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