

BAJA SAEINDIA 2024 Kicks Off at ARAI: A New Era of Autonomous Mobility

Pune, 04th October 2024: The Autonomous BAJA SAEINDIA 2024 (aBAJA) commenced with great enthusiasm, marking the inaugural day of the unique student challenge focused on autonomous all-terrain vehicles. The event, hosted by the Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI), Pune, is a significant milestone for BAJA SAEINDIA, as it introduces autonomous vehicle technology to this renowned engineering competition. This 3-day competition from 4th to 6th October 2024 features five teams from across the nation, each facing a series of distinct challenges designed to assess their vehicles' performance and team expertise.

In the lead-up to the competition, pre-event readiness checks were conducted from 30th September to 3rd October at ARAI, Kothrud, Pune. These included thorough technical inspections, where vehicles were rigorously evaluated for electrical, mechanical, and autonomous systems to ensure compliance with competition standards. In addition, safety briefings and team readiness assessments were carried out. Trial run tracks for the dynamic events—Object Detection, Classification, and Tracking (ODCT) and Remote Driving System (RDS)—were set up for teams to test and fine-tune their autonomous vehicles, further ensuring they met the high standards of the competition.

Static Events like the Business Presentation and Design Evaluation took center stage on the first day. These events allowed the teams to present their innovative strategies and detailed designs, highlighting the complexity and forward-thinking involved in developing autonomous systems.

The grand inaugural ceremony, held in the evening, saw the presence of esteemed dignitaries from both industry and academia. **Ms. Ujjwala Karle, Joint Convener, Phase 3 of aBAJA SAEINDIA 2024 & Deputy Director, Technology Group, ARAI**, delivered the welcome address on behalf of ARAI. She highlighted the significance of hosting the event at ARAI, a global leader in automotive research. *"It is an honor for ARAI to host Phase 3 of aBAJA SAEINDIA 2024. This event highlights our commitment to bridging academia and industry. It is inspiring to witness students exhibit the passion and boldness necessary to tackle the complexities of the automotive landscape. BAJA SAEINDIA serves as a vital 'Introduction to Industry' (i2i), providing hands-on experience with real-world challenges. Furthermore, initiatives like the iTELLIMOBILITY Ideathon empower participants to address pressing mobility issues with innovative solutions. We at ARAI are proud to support BAJA SAEINDIA and wish all participants great success in this year's event."*

The **Chief Guest** for the event, **Mr. Umesh Shah, Managing Director, Autoliv**, emphasized the importance of technological innovation in shaping the future of mobility. *"aBAJA represents a confluence of creativity, engineering, and technology. It is through such initiatives that we inspire the next generation to think beyond conventional solutions and tackle real-world problems with courage and a spirit of innovation. I congratulate the participants for taking up this challenge and encourage them to bring forward their passion and ideas that will shape the mobility landscape in India and beyond."* He further applauded the organizers for successfully bringing together five teams from across the nation to compete in this dynamic event. *"The efforts of the organizing committee and all those involved in this competition are commendable. Their dedication ensures that aBAJA continues to be a platform where emerging engineers are not only tested but also encouraged to innovate and grow. I wish all the participants the very best in their endeavors and extend my best wishes to BAJA SAEINDIA as they continue to break new ground with aBAJA SAEINDIA 2025."*

Mr. Shahkar Abidi, Assistant Editor at Autocar, graced the occasion as the **Guest of Honour**. He stressed the importance of continuous learning and practical exposure for engineering students. *“Autonomous driving and intelligent mobility are no longer just concepts; they are the future. BAJA SAEINDIA has always been ahead of the curve in providing hands-on experiences to students, and aBAJA is a testament to this vision. The passion and drive I see among these students will surely propel them to become future leaders in the automotive industry.”* He was joined on the dais by Mr. Ganesh Rao, Director of R&D at Continental; Mr. Shantanu Sonar, DGM at Daimler Truck Innovation Centre India (DTICI); Dr. P. Rajalakshmi from TiHAN, IIT Hyderabad; Mr. Balraj Subramaniam, Chairman of the Organizing Committee of BAJA SAEINDIA; and Mr. Saurabh Chitnavis, Joint Convener of aBAJA SAEINDIA 2024.



Distinguished guests light the ceremonial lamp at the Autonomous BAJA SAEINDIA 2024 inauguration

The second day promises to showcase the dynamic events, where teams will test their vehicles' capabilities in real-world conditions, bringing the focus on engineering excellence and innovation.

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