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Technology Changes, the Job Does Not

Business might have slowed, however, nothing has ever really managed to stop innovations. So far, this year has already seen a number of ground-breaking inventions as well as companies improving their products and services. Many may think that an innovation has to be something that is shaking the industry. It is often the smaller things that make a difference.

One development that I am following closely is electrification of buses. This seems to be the most radical change that we currently see. It is not just batteries, but hydrogen fuel cells that are now making waves in the industry. Charging solutions are correlated and also the focus of much writing. Having spoken to a number of operators, they actually welcome the new technology, but require more clarification how things work and support from the government.

The other topic I am constantly dealing with is autonomous vehicles. I am reporting here about level 4

autonomous buses and I am sure you all are having an eye on this subject as well. However, while the impact of this technology might be bigger, the implementation seems to be further away. What I find interesting is the discussion about re-training drivers. Surely, there is potential that we can change the career paths of people, however, the sheer number of people driving commercial vehicles is immense and I am not sure if everyone can easily find a new profession to follow.

While these are top level innovations, I am also seeing a lot of smaller improvements that have a big impact. Lowering the center of gravity in a bus or using a different drivetrain, although still using traditional Diesel to power it, can make a big difference on the way the passengers feel about their ride.

Sometimes good ideas are putting on hold due to external factors. In our cover story we talk about the longest bus tour currently available. It takes 70 days! Now, that is a trip I would love to take, but due to restrictions imposed at the moment, this will not be possible for some time. And even if the travel restrictions during the pandemic were lifted, being away for that long period of time would be a challenge as there is still a job I have to do.

As a service provider we innovate as well. It is with great pride that I can announce a new iteration of our website and with that a new Service Locator. This simple, yet effective tool has been on our site for about four years and has just seen an update, which makes it easier to use. There are some new features too. I encourage you to head on over to our website to give it a go. And if you want to give your business a boost, this may be one easy way to try our channels to reach your clients.

Considering all these innovations, changes and new technologies, one thing still remains: the actual task of moving people. The vehicle may be an important asset though. However, it is still the job of the industry to get people from here to there. It just might get more complicated with time. Or maybe it will get easier as technology removes layers of complication? It will be an interesting time ahead and I am glad that I am able to see developments first hand and maybe a little ahead of others.

Drive safe and I see you all soon again!

Stefan Pertz
Editor, Asian Buses

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Truckquip Studies Abroad and Applies Knowledge Locally

Truckquip Sdn Bhd (TQ) is a subsidiary of Tan Chong Motors Holdings Bhd, with its own technology for bus body building, and assembly of Trucks and Buses. The company was selected as the ICP recipient under the Federal Procurement Project to supply 150 units of Volvo Buses for the MRT Corporation back in 2016. TQ is the official contract assembler of Volvo Commercial Vehicles, i.e. assembly of Volvo Trucks and Bus Chassis.

As part of the ICP program, TQ was recommended by Volvo Malaysia as a participant to develop and supply Malaysian designed and built bus bodies, namely the TQ X12, for overseas markets. To date, the collaboration between Volvo and TQ designed bus bodies is servicing customers in Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Myanmar and beyond.

TQ buses in collaboration with Volvo embody the Volvo philosophy of travelling safely and in comfort. As assembler, TQ is committed to continue to produce a "Total Quality", TQ, bus to the world.

Benefitting from the ICP Project

Having been given the opportunity, TQ, with the help of input from Volvo's experts, have been able to refine and improve designs, adopting industry best practises and standards in order to meet and comply with the stringent requirements of the export markets such as regulatory approvals, VTA, as well as the high expectations of Volvo Bus users.

Several on-job trainings were provided to TQ's shop floor staff as well, which enabled them to be one of the pioneer teams in this region involved in the design, installation and testing of Volvo's latest advanced Driver Support Systems, DSS.

The DSS system features advanced forward-collision warning with emergency braking; adaptive cruise control; lane-keeping support; and driver-alert support.

These systems require a high level of integration, not only between the chassis-to-body interfaces, but they also required close collaborations between TQ and Volvo Engineering teams. Commenting on this, a TQ spokesperson said "It was a challenge, for a local team like ourselves to work with this advanced technology, finally, we made it."

Lessons Learnt

Different export markets have different regulatory requirements and also local preferences which are unique compared to Malaysian users. These are sometimes stemming from local cultural differences, environment, weather, and economic background.

For instance, Hong Kong is a market that experiences typhoons and therefore, through sharing of the experiences by the Volvo local team and the end users, TQ developed a special anti-rust treatment for buses.

This is one of the lessons learnt and serving as a reminder about the importance of understanding the market one wishes to enter. Not just in terms of regulatory requirements, but also external factors, such as weather patterns.

Bringing it Back Home

Evaluating the projects and activities that TQ has undertaken greatly advanced their technical knowledge according to them. This has allowed them to improve product quality and to further strive to increase customer satisfaction.

There has also been a significant transfer and input of new technology, for instance the DSS system which involves very precise tolerances and a strong chassis-to-body integration capabilities.

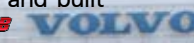
The assistance provided has helped TQ to open up new markets for our products, allowing our Malaysian designed and built bus body, the TQ X12, to be sold and used overseas. 



Photo Courtesy of Volvo Bus Thailand



TSA will significantly contribute to the post-fossil mobility of tomorrow."

TSA: 60 Years of Activities on Electric Motors. E-buses are now in the Spotlight

Traktionssysteme Austria, mostly known as TSA, is anything but a newcomer. It has been 60 years so far that the Austrian company has been developing, designing and producing electromechanical drives for rolling stock. TSA's motors power vehicles in around 60 countries all over the world.

The core business, originally, was the rail sector. But e-buses and electric commercial vehicles are now in the spotlight of the company (as proven by the recent launch of the 'Road' business unit).

In the last 15 years alone, about 50 000 TSA-made motors went into service, the Austrian company points out. TSA is headquartered in the Austrian town of Wiener Neudorf, south-west of Vienna. And it has facilities all over the world: US, Bosnia, India and China. In 2019 it totaled a turnover of 112 million euros.

TSA's technology powers metro trains and trams in Vienna as well as rail vehicles on every continent of the world. In late July, TSA was awarded a supply contract from CAF: it will deliver traction motors for 43 new driverless trains to be operated by Transport for London.

Coming to buses, TSA central motors are mounted on Solaris, Van Hool and Hess battery-electric buses and trolleybuses. Also VDL and Bozankaya are mentioned by the company among the e-bus industry partners. Since 2004, the company recalls it has built more than 2 500 motors for electric buses.

With regards to TSA's bus-related activities, as of March 2020 the Austrian company announced the launch of a new generation of electric motor for road vehicles within a dedicated business unit.

The reason behind this new chapter just opened by the company is easily explained by TSA itself: "Public transportation and the commercial vehicle sector will be assigned a leading role in the reduction of CO2 emissions in the years ahead. TSA will take advantage of these opportunities in order to enter this product segment with the focused development of motors. By offering reliable electric motors for electric-powered buses and commercial vehicles,

TSA CEO, Mr. Robert Tencl, comments: "Traktionssysteme Austria is at the leading edge of technology, design and production of traction motors for the international rolling stock market. Our unique selling point are the individual solutions we offer to our customers worldwide. Within the last six decades, we mastered the e-mobility in the rail sector. The next big step for TSA is to apply our knowledge and experience in order to reach the pole position in the market of electric buses and commercial vehicles."

This year TSA launched two new drive motors developed for battery-electric buses. Both are permanent-magnet motors with liquid-cooling systems (as the acronym TMPW suggests). The TMPW 38-26-8 stands out for a starting torque of 3 100 Nm, coupled with a maximum power of 300 kW.

Currently the TSA Road product portfolio includes also four asynchronous motor models, with power outputs ranging from 120 to 300 kW, powering electric buses with a length of 9 up to 24 meters.

Right now TSA is working on new traction drives for sophisticated road vehicles with business partners from North America, Central Europe and India.

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Fortescue advances hydrogen technology at Christmas Creek



Hydrogen-powered coaches will be added to Fortescue Metals Group's (Fortescue) fleet at its Christmas Creek operations in the Pilbara in a demonstration of the Company's drive towards zero-emissions mobility.

The A\$32 million renewable hydrogen mobility project – the first for an Australian mining operation – will see the deployment of 10 full-sized hydrogen coaches, custom built by HYZON Motors, to replace the existing fleet of diesel coaches at Christmas Creek from mid-2021. It will be supported by the installation of a refuelling station, which will harness renewable electricity from the Chichester Solar Gas Hybrid Project to generate renewable hydrogen onsite.

Fortescue Deputy Chief Executive Officer Julie Shuttleworth said, "This project represents a first step towards decarbonising our mobile fleet, which is an important part of our goal to achieve net zero operational emissions by 2040.

"Fortescue's history of developing and adopting innovation and technology has been key to achieving our industry-leading cost position and we are applying this technology-first strategy to our hydrogen initiatives to ensure we remain at the forefront of this emerging industry.

"As a significant energy consumer, we are actively pursuing opportunities to reduce our carbon footprint and cost base and we expect hydrogen to play a key role. Fortescue's mobile fleet represents around 400 to 450

million litres of diesel consumption per year and presents a significant opportunity for hydrogen to be used as a replacement fuel source to accelerate emissions reduction and diversify our energy mix," Ms Shuttleworth said.


HYZON Motors Co-Founder Craig Knight said, "After almost 20 years working with fuel cell technology, it is hugely rewarding to see the genuine enthusiasm for decarbonisation from one of the leading miners of the world.

"We can see first-hand how Fortescue has forged and sustained their rightful place through constant innovation, and we see hydrogen as another example of their willingness to lead through action," Mr Knight said.

Fortescue has received A\$2 million in funding through the Western Australian Government's Renewable Hydrogen Fund to support the development of this project.

Background

In April 2020, Fortescue and ATCO Australia (ATCO) entered into a partnership to build and operate the first combined hydrogen production and refuelling facility in Western Australia. The facility will initially provide Fortescue, ATCO and approved third parties with the opportunity to refuel hydrogen vehicles.

The project has received A\$1 million in funding through the Western Australian Government's Renewable Hydrogen Fund. 



Sales of first DICV-produced FUSO buses begin

The BA is the first bus model to be produced for the FUSO brand at the Daimler India Commercial Vehicles (DICV) Oragadam plant with over 100 units have produced for customers in the UAE market.

Mitsubishi Fuso Truck and Bus Corporation (MFTBC), with headquarters in Kawasaki City, Kanagawa Prefecture, announces that the first FUSO buses built in India have crossed a 100-unit production milestone.

The BA bus, which is exported out of the Daimler India Commercial Vehicles (DICV) Oragadam plant as a BU vehicle, is now available to customers in the United Arab Emirates. The FUSO BA bus is a further step in collaboration under the Daimler Trucks Asia partnership; three organizations within the Daimler group -- MFTBC, DICV, and EvoBus – contributed to its realization. The sales strategy for the new product was arranged by MFTBC and EvoBus, while DICV oversaw the design and production process. The product was developed in response to customer demand for vehicles able to transport over 30 passengers.

Since pilot sales for the product began in December 2019, the number of BA buses produced for the UAE market has now crossed 100 units. Cumulative production of the BA bus is planned to reach 800 units by the end of year 2023. The FUSO BA bus, which is modeled on the BharatBenz Staff Bus, seats 36 passengers and is designed to match local demand for student and employee transportation. The application of an existing model allowed for the speedy commercialization of the vehicle for a market with strong growth in urban development and industrialization. The bus is installed with the economical 3.9-liter 4D37 4-cylinder engine that complies with Euro V emission norms.

All seats are equipped with fire-retardant upholstery and 3-point seat belts for increased passenger safety. A roof hatch also enables emergency ventilation or

evacuation, providing another level of assurance during commutes. To match extreme summer conditions, the BA also comes standard with a high-capacity air conditioner. In addition to the new BA bus, the light-duty Rosa bus has also been available locally.

Being the largest market in the MENA region for MFTBC, the UAE has traditionally been a stronghold of the FUSO brand. In 2019, FUSO vehicles achieved a market share of over 53 percent. BU trucks and buses from DICV's Oragadam plant, as well as MFTBC's Kawasaki and Toyama plants are exported to the country. Sales are currently overseen by Al Habtoor Motors, which has been a FUSO general distributor in the region since 1983.

Vehicle Specs Model: BA

GVW: 9.6 tonnes

Engine (output): 4D37 (125kW/170hp at 2500 rpm)


Transmission: MO36 (6 forward, 1 reverse speed)

Capacity: 37 (36 passengers + driver)

Overall length/width/height:

9,080mm/2,350mm/3,137mm approx.

Suspensions: Parabolic leaf spring with shock absorbers in front and rear

Brakes: Pneumatically operated drum brakes with antilock braking system 



Sani Express Gears Up for Better Service

Taking delivery of new ALPHA DD12 buses from Truckquip, Sani Express gears up to serve more routes in more comfortable buses.

On 6 October 2020, Sani Express took delivery of a batch of 23 Truckquip ALPHA DD12 buses. The Doubledeck buses are built upon Scania K410 chassis and promise passengers an extraordinary travelling experience. Seating 48 passengers across both decks, the vehicles are put to work as replacements for older buses as well as to ply new routes Sani Express has added. These new routes are to connect Johor Baru, Kuala Lumpur, Terengganu and Penang.

Innovations Inside


The new buses are designed to be more aerodynamic. Looking closely, one will notice that the width of the bus has been extended. This has the chassis sitting

more stable, providing extra safety, especially when negotiating corners. Aligned with this, the centre of gravity has been further lowered, which is reducing sway, thus adding comfort for the passengers. Being an all new set-up on a Scania chassis, Truckquip noted the superior assistance given by Scania. Extra stability is needed as many of the buses are meant to be operating on windy roads on the East coast of peninsular Malaysia. To make best use of the buses, Sani Express is also signing up for the Scania Ecolution.

Riding in Style

Following the official ceremonies, guests were invited to try the bus for themselves during a short test drive. Thanks to a wider body, the width of seats can only be described as expansive. Overall, the interior is giving a warm and spacious feeling. The craftsmanship inside is superb and passengers would surely be happy to pay a little extra for a smooth glide while enjoying the a well encapsuled engine, which performs quietly in the back.

More to Come

At the event, Truckquip and Sani Express also signed a letter of understanding. In this letter of intent states the intention and desire of Sani Express to purchase fifty (50) units of Double Deck ALPHA DD12 bus from Truckquip between 2020 to 2022. The letter of intent was signed by Mr Wan Mohd Iskandar bin Dato' Salleh, Group Managing Director, Sani United Berhad and Mr Bryan Tan Teow Chang, General Manager, Truckquip Sdn Bhd. 



Volvo Buses Support Daily Transportation of Staff at Westports Malaysia

Volvo Buses Malaysia has delivered two Volvo B8R coaches to Westports. These newly delivered coaches will serve as staff transportation to and from the port.

No.1 Seaport in Malaysia, Westports is located in Port Klang and is one of the three main ports in the straits of Malacca, serving as the main gateway for container and conventional cargo for central Peninsular Malaysia hinterland.

Transporting thousands of employees to the port site on a daily basis, Westports has built their own fleet since 2015. Since then, they have awarded Volvo tenders of 6 Volvo B7R Buses and another two Volvo B7R's in 2016. Now, the newly delivered B8R coaches will further enlarge the company's fleet of Volvo buses.

"We are extremely honoured to be awarded this tender by Westports. Safety Awareness is one of Westport's core values; it plays an integral part in the sustainable growth of business success and leads to an increase in productivity. For Volvo Buses, Safety is in our DNA. Volvo Buses Malaysia is proud to partner with Westports to provide premium coaches to transport the company staff safely and smoothly to the port every day," says Mats Nilsson, Director of Volvo Buses Region Asia Pacific Central.

The 12 meter coaches are built on Euro 3 Volvo B8R chassis', bodied by Malaysian based bodybuilder, Truckquip Sdn Bhd. Manufactured in Sweden, the chassis

comes with the industry known fuel-efficient D8A engine with 330hp - designed to optimise overall operating costs. These coaches are also equipped with enhanced safety systems, such as; the Volvo electronic braking system with disc brakes and ESP (Electronic Stability Program) - to provide high level braking efficiency, safety and comfort for both the drivers and passengers. Volvo Telematics and I-Coaching are also part of the offering to help improve driving behaviour and provide immediate feedback to drivers and the operator.

Upon delivery of the vehicles, Volvo Buses Malaysia organised a full day of driver training for selected drivers, covering both theoretical and practical knowledge. "Drivers play an essential role to ensure our buses perform to their full potential. It is therefore important to support drivers and equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to operate Volvo buses which further enhances uptime and efficiency of the vehicles," said Santhanasamy Mahadevan, Country Manager of Volvo Buses Malaysia.

Since July 2020, these two units have been on the road in full operation with the local Volvo Buses dealer engaged and committed to provide support whenever and wherever needed. ■

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Asian Trucker website with the logo and the tagline "The Premium Provider of Communications Channels for the Commercial Vehicle Industry in South East Asia". Below the navigation is a large banner for "BIG FLEET" with the text "REPAIR & MAINTENANCE SERVICE, PARTS, INSPECTION, ROAD TAX, INSURANCE" and "Rental - Lease - Service - Sales". The banner features images of oil, tires, a solar panel van, a delivery van, and a truck. Below the banner are three service center locations: Cawangan (Street Center 1), Western (Street Center 2), and Southern (New Center 3). Below the banner is a map of Southeast Asia with a sidebar showing "118 SERVICE LOCATIONS" and a list of workshop details including "Cycle & Carriage Bintang (Perak) Sdn Bhd" and "Hap Seng Star Sdn Bhd (Bukit Tinggi)".

Putting Your Business on a Map

Upgraded tool from Asian Buses makes it easier for your customers to find you.

In connection with an overhaul of all online assets, Asian Buses has also been given a better, improved service locator. The tool was originally developed four years ago as part of a student competition Asian Trucker Media is holding for Lim Kok Wing students. Since then it has helped many bus and truck drivers to get help.

A Simple Idea

The idea is simple: when you need to have your vehicle serviced or in case of a breakdown, you want to know which is the workshop that is easiest to get to from where you are or where the tours will be going along. In addition, the locator will be able to show the service networks of major brands. Using this tool, fleet owners may get intel on which brand is best for them as they will know which brands cover their area of operation best.

Finding Help

Zooming into the map, users can see which workshops listed are nearby. Using a smartphone to do so, users can call a workshop right away from the mobile version of the service locator. In addition, the tool allows for navigation to the workshop from a current location. The locator is also very specific as it only lists workshops or brands that are involved in the commercial vehicle industry.

Quick Additions

The ability to be found is crucial. Businesses may miss out if their contact details are not listed online. A website may not be the appropriate tool for many workshops as maintaining it will cost money and time. With the service locator on the Asian Buses / Asian Trucker website, any workshop is listed in a matter of moments. The listing contains crucial contact details and a premium package even allows for images to accompany the listing.

Easy to Use

On the website you will find a video demonstrating how it works and you are encouraged to try the locator using different searches.

You may also use this particular page to advertise your business via an online banner. To get your listing or banner up on the service locator please contact June Ho:

june@asiantrucker.com
+60 19-620 1163

Events & Exhibitions

LTA-UITP Singapore International Transport Congress & Exhibition

Date : 17 November
Location : Online
Website : <https://www.uitp.org/events/sitce-webinar/>

LTA-UITP Singapore International Transport Congress & Exhibition (SITCE) is a leading transport event every two years in the Asia-Pacific region, co-hosted by Land Transport Authority (LTA), Singapore.

Every edition is the platform that connects authorities, policy-makers, urban planners, operators as well as solution providers across the globe to forge partnerships, networking, and exchange knowledge.

This year, organisers have decided to make some changes without a physical edition in 2020. The event will be in the form of a live two-hour webinar on 17 November 2020 which is open to all.

The two-hour online programme will bring together collaborators from the industry to discuss challenges and solutions that will shape the future of our urban mobility landscapes. Registration for the event is free of charge.

Automechanika Kuala Lumpur

Date : 18 – 20 March 2021
Location : Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, Malaysia
Website : <https://automechanika-kualalumpur.hk.messefrankfurt.com/kualalumpur/en.html>

At the heart of the ASEAN region, Automechanika Kuala Lumpur (AMKL) offers industry players a set of high quality solutions and services for business development and leisure needs in the passenger, commercial vehicle, logistics and IoT segments.

Busworld Southeast Asia 2021

Date : 24-26 March 2021
Location : Jakarta International Expo (JIEXPO)
Kemayoran – Jakarta, Indonesia
Website : <https://www.busworldsoutheastasia.org/>

Thanks to all our exhibitors and visitors the first edition of Busworld Southeast Asia was beyond expectations. Both exhibitors and visitors gave us very positive feedback on the show and the results made in terms of sales, new business cooperations and contacts were very good. This gives the Busworld Team great motivation to do better and make the second edition from 24-26 March 2021 even bigger and more attractive to all!

BUSWORLD is the world's largest B2B exhibition for the bus and coach industry, exhibiting buses, coaches and minibuses, as well as parts, components and services.

During every exhibition, Busworld Academy, Busworld's knowledge platform, organizes seminars to connect the local industry with Busworld's international network of specialized experts.

Malaysia Commercial Vehicle Exhibition 2021

Date : 17 – 19 June 2021
Location : MIECC, The Mines, Malaysia
Website : www.mcve.com.my

With over 8 000+ square meters of exhibition space, MCVE 2021 is the largest exhibition dedicated to commercial vehicles in South-East Asia. Back for the fifth time, Asian Trucker invites you to be part of the largest dedicated exhibition for commercial vehicles in Southeast Asia. Following the success of the past events, we are returning with the show in June 2021 with a new, more exciting fringe program.

Buyers, purchasers and operators have the opportunity to review the latest offers in terms of trucks, busses, services and components. During the show, relevant government agencies, professional societies, and associations will join the organizer to hold seminars and updates on their products, services and the latest in transport.





"That is why I signed all 14 of my Scania buses on the Scania Fleet management System (FMS) and will be subscribing to the Scania Driver Services soon. With the Scania training and coaching, my drivers will get the necessary guidance to enhance their driving skills further and adopt a more positive attitude towards the Scania buses in their care," added Chew.

When asked what makes the company special, Chew told us that the founders have always been a step ahead. Focused on providing luxury coach travels, they have been leading this segment for a long time. "Most of the people wanting to travel from Penang or Sungai Petani to Singapore would opt for our services."

"Safety is important for us. The Scania chassis come equipped with all sorts of features, such as a powerful retarder and systems to assist the driver. Our captains can now focus on driving the bus and be more aware of the road conditions, thus making the journey safer." In addition, Chew said that the EURO III engines of Scania have proven to be more fuel efficient. From Butterworth to Johor Bahru, the saving would be between 40 to 50 Ringgit Malaysia. "Although the chassis may be more expensive, but as you can see, we can recover the premium very quickly."

Better Together: SuperNice and Scania Ecolution

SuperNice, first operator in the northern region to sign up for Scania Ecolution. In an exclusive Interview, we learn more about the motivation behind this move.

The nicely coloured buses are a common sight on the highways and many associate the name with luxury bus travel. SuperNice Express (SuperNice) is the brand name for Express Seni Budaya (M) Sdn Bhd (Express Seni Budaya). Recently, the company became the first express bus service in the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia to sign up for Scania Ecolution. This move is part of the company's commitment towards reducing its carbon footprint and help care for the environment.

The official signing of the Scania Ecolution agreement was sealed between Daniel Tan Soo Liang, Sales Director of Scania Southeast Asia and Roy Chew Kok Yong, Managing Director of Express Seni Budaya. The signing ceremony was held at the Bread History Sdn Bhd (Bread History) bakery and restaurant at the Juru Caltex R&R where the keys to another Scania K360IB4x2NB bus was also handed over to SuperNice to add on to their 35-strong fleet of buses.

Scania Ecolution is a tailor-made partnership between Scania and customers that focuses on reducing fuel consumption resulting in reduced CO2 emissions. The partnership also focuses on reducing operating cost, translating to improved profitability while fulfilling the growing demand for environmentally-friendly initiatives.



A trend that Chew has observed is that customers are demanding more luxury now. Although there are only 27 seats on the bus now, customers are asking for even more space, with less seats on board.

Realizing that we all need to play a part in reducing the impact on our environment, Chew has taken pro-active steps to reducing emissions. "While customers are not asking for this, we still want to be as eco-friendly as we can be. Later on, we will also run a series of articles to let people know that Supernice is taking these steps."

Just like all the Scania buses that joined SuperNice's fleet since 2015, the Scania K360IB4x2NB that is financed by Scania Credit (M) Sdn Bhd comes with Opticruise gearbox, air suspension, front and back Electronic Braking System, retarder and a 3-fire alarm sensor. All these features are to ensure that the passengers enjoy a comfortable and safe ride on SuperNice buses. As part of the Scania Ecolution program, drivers will be undergoing training in order to make the most out of the systems onboard. Reports are generated on daily basis with a monthly meeting whereby Scania is pointing out ways to further

improve the performance. "We aim at a further fuel saving of five percent within the first three months and 10 percent within a year," said Chew.

Bread History in collaboration with SuperNice serves as the first waiting lounge and pick-up point complete with F&B and washroom facilities for SuperNice passengers. Chew explained that he "Wanted to do something special. Eventually, passengers can book their ticket online and also chose their meal to be had while they are waiting for the departure of their coach. This is to make the wait more convenient and comfortable." Equipped with information systems, travellers can get constant updates on where the bus currently is. There are plans to open-up more of these services in the other Bread History outlets all over the north.

"As a provider of sustainable transport solutions, we are pleased that SuperNice is on board for Scania Ecolution as this move will start SuperNice on a journey towards better profitability through lower fuel consumption while reducing Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions into the environment," stated Tan. 🚩



Company Focus

Established in 1985, SuperNice is a subsidiary of Unimax Group of Companies (Unimax) that is a leading utilities and infrastructure group with diversified businesses under four divisions, namely Commercial Fuels and Lubricants; Transportation and Logistics; Energy, and Building Materials. Apart from SuperNice Express, Roy Chew also helms Unimax as Group Chairman with Joshua Tan as the Group Managing Director and Dato Seri Amran Romli as the Director in-charge of corporate & government affair and business development.





The Longest Bus Journey in the World!



Impressive stats: 18 Countries. 20 000 km. 70 Days. The Longest Bus Journey in the world!

During the Hippie Trail from the mid-1950s to late 1970s, hordes of young men and women packed themselves in “magic buses” and travelled overland from Europe to Asia, in search of ‘enlightenment’. Now, the time has come to roll that dice the other way. The team of Adventures Overland is thrilled to announce the longest and the most epic bus journey in the world, Bus to London by Adventures Overland. It will be the first-ever hop-on/hopoff bus service between London, the United Kingdom and New Delhi, India as a part of which participants will be travelling through 18 countries, covering 20,000 km in 70 days. People from around the world have a chance to become part of this historic journey either for the entire duration or one of the four legs by signing up on the official website.

The founders of Adventures Overland, Sanjay Madan and Tushar Agarwal are avid travellers themselves. As a team, they hold one Guinness World Record and 15 Limca Book of Records for long-distance driving expeditions. After

successfully organising three back to back expeditions from India to London by road famously known as Road to London in 2017, 2018 and 2019, Adventures Overland is organising the first ever bus journey from London to India. Previously, they have also led expeditions in Russia, Iceland, South America (Colombia to Argentina), Africa (Kenya to South Africa), Jordan, Alaska, India to Bangkok etc.

“We share a common love for travel, and now we are thrilled to introduce the first bus service from London all the way to New Delhi with utmost comfort and luxury. Providing a niche and classy experience in a secure environment is our top priority. The route of this journey is tried and tested as we have already executed three back to back road trips from India to London on the same route. Participants on Bus to London can get onboard with the knowledge and confidence that they are in safe hands,” said Sanjay Madan, Co-Founder, Adventures Overland.

“Every single route in each country has been vetted to ensure that the journey is seamless. We take charge of documentation and permits to ensure that the entire focus of participants is on experiencing the



Leg 1, Europe - United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Czech Republic, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Russia)

After completing the longest bus trip in the world from India to the UK, Bus to India is all set to embark upon its' maiden journey to Delhi from London. Bid adieu to London as we leave the comfort and familiarity of this glorious city for the road less travelled crossing the English Channel and set afoot on France making our way towards Belgium where delectable chocolates and exclusive brew make for a great company. A swift drive on the Autobahns in Germany with a stopover in the German metropolis Frankfurt will bring us to the breathtaking Czech capital of Prague, which lies in wait for you with its hundred spires, the imposing Prague Castle and unmatched beer. Allow yourself to be enticed by the lure of Europe, which has been tempting tourists since time immemorial, as you step foot into the Polish capital of Warsaw. The largest city in Poland is marked by its unique vibrance, historical significance and its resilience. It's now time to experience the frigid beauty of the Baltic countries of Lithuania and Latvia, where Vilnius quietly charms its way into your heart with its serene elegance and attractions like the UNESCO certified, baroque Old Town. Crossing the border of Europe, we will enter monumental Russia and make our way towards Moscow, one of the greatest cities in the world. With the Russian capital checked off your bucket list, the first leg of our epic journey is now complete.

journey. We ensure an experienced English speaking local guide is travelling with the group at all hours to ensure personal safety, smooth communication and travel. The bus on this epic journey is being customised to add all the necessities, comforts and luxuries which will ensure that participants travel in the lap of luxury all the way from the UK to India," added Tushar Agarwal, Co-Founder, Adventures Overland.

As part of this unprecedented journey, participants will unwind in historic European cities of Moscow, Vilnius, Prague, Brussels and Frankfurt. They will visit ancient cities of Bukhara, Tashkent & Samarkand in Uzbekistan and cruise on the Caspian Sea in Kazakhstan. The journey will continue towards Xinjiang, the largest province of China where participants will explore the Gobi Desert, hike the Great Wall, meet rare species of Giant Pandas in Chengdu, and travel through the Silk Route. Before concluding the journey in New Delhi, participants will explore thousands of pagodas in Myanmar

The first season of Bus to London is slated to flag off in July 2021 from London but considering the current climate of COVID 19 which has restricted travel around the world, the exact dates will be announced at a later stage.

Your Bus to London

- Wi-Fi
- Mic and audio system
- 2x1 configuration seat layout for wider alley
- Partition between seats for privacy
- Bottle and cup holder on every seat
- Mobile phone charging points via plug and USB
- Private locker with each seat to store valuable items
- Individual entertainment system with AUX and USB port
- First-aid kit, fire extinguisher and multiple emergency exit points
- Foldable tray to help you work on the laptop or eat snacks
- Ample storage for each individual for laptop bags/handbags/snacks
- Spacious room to carry two full-size suitcases of each participant
- Mini pantry with a cool box to store water, beverages, chocolates, snacks, etc.
- Business Class seat with multiple seat adjustment options and ample legroom

Leg 2, Central Asia - Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan

Artistic, historically invaluable and a picture of grandeur, Moscow is home to many World Heritage Sites and a delight to behold for architecture buffs. After feasting your eyes upon the kaleidoscopic wonder that is Moscow, we will make our way deeper into Russia and continue towards Volgograd, formerly Stalingrad, a city in southwest Russia, on the western bank of the Volga River. It was the site of WWII's Battle of Stalingrad. Delve deep into Russian history in Volgograd and move on towards Astrakhan where you will witness the



Leg 3, China

The Chinese memoir opens in Kashgar, located in Xinjiang, the largest province of China, bordering eight countries. For the next 16 days prepare to be awed by the vastness and sheer diversity of landscape in China. Home to the Uyghurs, the distinctive topography of this region brings together the arid Gobi Desert, snow-capped mountains and glaciers. A melting pot of Chinese and Central Asian cultures, Xinjiang is where the modern and the ancient blend and co-exist in surprising ways. Take a step back and relish in the beauty of fascinating towns like Turpan and Kashgar amidst others. Gorge on the exotic kebabs of Xinjiang province and forgive yourself for being confused

confluence of the mighty Volga with the Caspian Sea as you go on a day cruise to admire the pale pink lotus flowers, migratory birds, swans, pelicans and Siberian cranes. With mighty Russia behind us, we will cross the land border into the realm of the 'Stan' countries and enter Kazakhstan. We will pass through the Kazakh steppe over the next couple of days before moving on to Central Asia's crown jewel, Uzbekistan and take the route of the ancient Silk Road. With seven days in hand, let the stunning capital city of Tashkent and the historical wonders of Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva enamour you with its heady mix of Mughal, contemporary and Soviet-era architectural marvels. Passing through the Fergana Valley, we will cross over to Kyrgyzstan and arrive in Bishkek where lively bazaars and exotic food await you. Spend a few days enjoying the delightful nightlife of Bishkek with the friendly and hospitable people as we conclude leg two of Bus to India.



about feeling that you are still in Central Asia. From Xinjiang, we move on to explore the historical relics of the Silk Road and the renowned Mogao Caves, also known as the Thousand Buddha Grottoes that form a system of 500 temples near the city of Dunhuang in Gansu Province, an oasis located at a religious and cultural crossroads on the Silk Road. Progress towards the historic Jiayuguan Pass, the first frontier fortress at the west end of the Ming dynasty Great Wall located in Jiayuguan city. As we move further south, if wilderness and unspoiled nature are what your heart desires, the Ruoergai Grassland in Sichuan Province is sure to impress. Get ready to succumb to some seriously adorable Panda love and conclude your 16-day odyssey in Chengdu, the capital of southwestern China's Sichuan Province.

Leg 4, Thailand, Myanmar, India

Crossing over from China into Laos and driving through the rubber plantations will bring us to the bridge on Mekong River, on the other side of which, Thailand awaits. We head towards the gateway town of Chiang Khong, where warm Thai hospitality will feel like a breath of fresh air. The journey continues southwards, and the enigmatic Bangkok opens its doors to you. Take in the overwhelming zeal of the Thai capital but for a moment, look back and reflect on how far you have come from London. The wheels are greased and all set to roll towards Myanmar, the second to last country on the longest bus journey in the world. The beautiful country of Myanmar gives you a befitting welcome as you hold your breath in wonderment at the Golden Rock Pagoda. A vision in shimmering gold, the pagoda sits pretty upon a boulder which itself seems to be defying gravity as it balances atop a rock near the edge of Mount Kyaikto. Myanmar wouldn't cease to amaze as we make our way towards the vibrant buzz of Yangon and the ancient gorgeousness of Bagan before crossing the 46 WWII iron bridges towards the Indo-Myanmar Friendship Bridge. The final day has us entering India, the 18th and the last country on the greatest journey of your lives. We make our way towards Imphal, the capital of the Indian state of Manipur where you will look back upon your journey of 70 days with nothing but fondness, and an overwhelming sense of having experienced something way beyond the ordinary. Bus to India concludes its' maiden journey to India from the UK.

Border Crossing

Bus to India is a cross-border expedition, which means that you will be crossing multiple borders during the journey. Passing through land borders is a completely different experience compared to airports. Border crossings can be unpredictable and extremely slow. Although we make all the necessary arrangements beforehand to make the border-crossing process smooth and quick, you may still have to wait for many hours at certain borders. Patience will be a massive virtue at the borders.

Route Planning

It is fascinating to be out on the road and even more exciting to take pit-stops and detours! But the route for Bus to India has been carefully planned by professionals to ensure that you have the best experience, without compromising on your safety and comfort. The task is to make you reach Delhi by road, safely and on time. In order to do this, the organisers have to obtain special overland permits, and permissions from government bodies in many countries and some countries do not permit the bus to divert from the designated route.

Sanjay Madan Co-Founder)


A philosopher and dreamer, Sanjay is the powerful medium between people and memories of their journey. Sanjay has captured emotions, drama, beauty and documented heartfelt accounts of travellers during trips. Besides an expedition leader, Guinness World Records & Limca Book of Records holder, he is also a travel show host on



TLC Channel and Discovery Science & Turbo, a photographer, videographer and a counsellor. Sanjay has travelled across 80 countries in six continents creating numerous national and international driving records and leading countless expeditions in different corners of the world.



Tushar Agarwal (Co-Founder)

Known for his penchant for punctuality, practicality and meticulous organizational skills, Tushar has personally organized and supervised expeditions across the world. The first Indian to drive from London to India, Tushar is also the author of two travel books, The Great Indian World Trip and Road Aair. He has appeared in the popular TV show, The Great Indian World Trip, a 10 episode travel show aired on TLC Channel and Discovery Science & Turbo. He's travelled extensively over 80 countries and has 16 National and International driving records. He has been featured in both the Guinness World Records and Limca Book of Records. 



To help reduce rush hour traffic, the first Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in Southeast Asia commenced operations on 15 January 2004. The system is considered as the first revolutionary public transit mode in the capital city of Indonesia, in which buses run in dedicated lanes, and ticket prices are subsidised by the regional government. TransJakarta, a provincially-owned corporation, has the world's longest BRT system (251.2 km), with about 3 900 buses, operating from 5am to 10 pm. As of February 2020, it serves an average of over one million passengers on a daily basis. At present TransJakarta has 13 primary routes and ten cross-corridor routes. In addition, there are 18 "feeder" routes that serve beyond the exclusive busway corridors to satellite cities in Greater Jakarta.

With great enthusiasm, Volvo Buses presented their global BRT technology and experiences to the Indonesia public transport industry. The company has global experience in co-developing BRT systems for close to five decades and till today there are around 5 000 BRT buses in operation globally in 32 cities across 15 countries. On an average, these buses transport 12 million passengers per day. Since 2018, Volvo Buses has delivered a total of 119 units of B11Rs that are operated as part of TransJakarta Busway BRT system. The order was received through PT Indotruck Utama (ITU), the sole distributor for Volvo Buses in Indonesia.

Jakarta's BRT Success

Successful collaboration between Volvo Buses and Steady Safe in the operation of BRT in Jakarta.

The fourth largest country in the world, Indonesia has more than 270 million people, consisting of 55 percent in urbanised areas and 66 percent as part of the working population. This means that Indonesia is a very large market for buses with great opportunities for bus operator and bus manufacturers to support the progress of land transportation through buses that are reliable, durable, safe, economical and environmentally friendly.



To take care of the buses the best way possible, a 10 years gold service contract, which gives the highest level of protection and all-inclusive service plan, was signed between Steady Safe and Volvo Buses' sole authorized dealer in Indonesia – PT. Indotruck Utama. A complete service team and spare parts department is available 24/7 at the Steady Safe bus depot to carry out preventive maintenance and repair services based on the scheduled service plan.

“With the industry leading products and years of global experience from Volvo Buses and the extensive, dedicated service support from our authorized dealer – PT Indotruck Utama, we are confident that the BRT model in the Indonesia public transport will set an example for any other markets who have the same need for an efficient and effective mass public transit.” summarized Himawan Kunto Dewoto, Country Directory of Volvo Buses Indonesia. 📌

First established in 2004, TransJakarta is the owner of BRT routes in Jakarta and manages the BRT corridor system. In its operation, TransJakarta is supported by several buses operating companies that manage the fleets serving each corridor. One such bus operator is PT. Steady Safe. Starting its commercial operations back in 1971, PT. Steady Safe is one of the public transportation companies engaged in the taxi and public bus transportation business, with operations covering the Jabodetabek area, which consists of four satellite cities around Jakarta.

“When we first launched our Volvo B11R BRT in TransJakarta’s corridor in March 2018, I was very much surprised and delighted to see the high enthusiasm of the lined-up passengers. We also noticed that the passengers would rather waiting in longer queues and purposely skip other bus brand in order to hop on our Volvo bus fleets. And it is still happening till today.” says Bpk. I Nyoman Suparta, operation head of PT. Steady Safe.

The Volvo B11R features 6x2 axles with full air suspension, 370 hp engine and 6-speed fully auto gearbox with built-in retarder. The buses also come with high flooring for better access through the elevated corridor. This configuration is known locally as “maxibus” and could accommodate up to 90 passengers.

“As a Steady Safe bus driver, I was very happy and excited when being assigned as a Volvo BRT bus driver. The driving control is light and very easy to maneuver and the bus is very stable when changing directions. The braking system is reliable and precise. The Volvo bus provides me with great driving comfort and I never feel any driving fatigue even after a long working day”, shared Pak Bpk. Asrul, one of the bus captains for the Volvo B11R fleet.

Driver training for around 200 bus captains were conducted at Steady Safe covering both theoretical and practical knowledge and refreshment trainings are also carried out for drivers on a regular basis to ensure that the drivers maintain a high level of understanding of the advanced features of the Volvo buses and provide a safe and pleasant ride for all passengers. Besides driver trainings, experienced technicians are on standby at certain points along several BRT corridors to provide real time assistance and secure uptime of the buses.



A fan of road safety and BRT: Pak Nyoman

He is the General Manager/ Operation Head in Steady Safe and holds a Bachelor degree in law and a Master degree in work safety & accident prevention. As an industry veteran, he has seen many changes in his long career. Entering into this field, he started to work in the transportation industry back in November 1991. Using this as a springboard, he then moved into BRT (Busway/Bus Rapid Transit) in 2007.



Terus Maju Services' Flagship Bus

Following their launch of several innovative buses, Terus Maju Services has not stood still and used the time wisely in refining their top of the line bus, the TMS12A (Auto). We took it for a spin.

The bus itself is dressed up as a rolling advertisement in preparation of a roadshow Terus Maju Services Sdn Bhd (TMS) is planning to have in the coming weeks. Highlighting the technology inside, one can expect a smooth ride and a very comfortable ambience inside. Having made a name for themselves with their buses featuring top-notch riding comfort for a slimmer wallet, the company is visibly proud of the latest addition to their line-up. We took a closer look at the TMS12A (Auto).

Added Technology

The first thing that TMS is demonstrating during our test drive is the ride height adjustment, which is one of the advantages for Electronically Controlled Air Suspension (ECAS). Not only will the ECAS help with providing a smoother ride, but passengers that are less agile can make an easy entry, thanks to the bus being lowered stopped.

One trend that TMS has observed is that more and more operators move towards automated gearboxes for buses. This is, because an automated gearbox allows the driver to concentrate on what matters most: to drive safely without distractions. For the TMS12A (Auto), TMS has opted to use a ZF automatic transmission with hydraulic retarder. The retarder is said to be more effective than most others that TMS has tested. This, in the view of the engineers at TMS is an important feature as deceleration needs to be both, powerful and smooth as the vehicle carries passengers.

TMS 12A(AUTO)

ENGINE

Model	: Weichai, WP12.375N
Type	: 6 In-line cylinders, turbocharged & Intercooled
Position	: Rear / Diesel
Power (HP/rpm)	: 375 / 1,900
Torque (N.m/rpm)	: 1,800 / 1,000-1,400
Displacement (cc)	: 11,596

CHASSIS

Transmission	: 6 speed ZF automatic transmission with hydraulic retarder
Steering	: Integral power steering
Brake System	: Disc brake with dual circuit air brake and WABCO Anti-lock Braking System (ABS)
Suspension	: Air suspension and dual shock absorber with ECAS System



Mated to the ZF gearbox from Germany is a Waichai engine with 11 596 cc displacement. This East meets West configuration has proven to be a winning formula. Proven and tested, the Waichai engine was chosen as the supplier has a vast support network in the region, while TMS also wanted to opt for a more economical engine, which they found in the China-originating model. Producing 375 hp at 1 900 rpm and a maximum torque of 1 800 N.m. from 1 000 to 1 400 rpm, the engine has plenty of power to move a bus load of passengers with their luggage.

First Impressions

When stepping into the bus, the first thing one cannot help noticing is the console that makes for the dashboard for the driver. Akin to a command centre in a futuristic spacecraft, this workstation could make anyone want to take a seat and be a bus captain. Clean, uncluttered instrumentation allows the driver to go about operating the vehicle with ease. There is plenty of space and the view is very good.

Taking on between 31 and 45 seats for passengers and configured in 2-1 arrangements, the inside of the bus immediately feels comfortable. The seats are wide, plush and inviting. Legroom is plenty, even for taller people. All seats are, as mandated, equipped with seat belts. What is immediately noticeable is that there are no vibrations from the engine. While the sound of the air-conditioning is louder than the engine, this needs to be put in perspective as the entire vehicle is extremely quiet. Overhead controls for the air conditioning at each seat are designed by TMS and feature





"Fasten Seat Belt" signs to remind passengers that it is always better to use the extra safety features, no matter how safe the vehicle is otherwise. It has to be pointed out that the seat belt wears very comfortable in the tested bus.

While the seats are generally very comfortable, our tester did find the back rest a little bit too short, thus to make use of the headrest, one would have to slip forward on the seat a bit.

Smooth Take-Off

The technical specifications promise a smooth ride and the actual experience does not disappoint. With that much power and an advanced gearbox, the bus pulls off the curb with ease while still not getting any louder. Conversations are easily possible and the ride is smooth as the speed increases. Thanks to the suspension, using air bellows, the bus is stable. Speedbumps are barely noticeable as the bus simply rushes over them with the ECAS and suspension reducing roll and dip. Stopping power is provided via disc brakes and the retarder.

Already on the road, one of the TMS12A (Auto) buses has seen some 60 000 kilometres of service and has been back for servicing. Analysing the data, the customer found that he could achieve 4.2 kilometres per litre Diesel (24 litres for 100 Km) when travelling between Kuala Lumpur and their base in Johor Baru.

Value Add

While the hardware is important, skills are equally vital and TMS acknowledged this some time ago. Besides offering the bus, the company also provides driver training to familiarise drivers with their new workplace and to ensure that the

vehicles are run most efficiently. Both automatic gearboxes and retarders may be new features for some drivers and in order to make the most of these, TMS trains drivers when they first receive the vehicle. Later on, refresher courses are offered.

New Ways

Although business is picking up again and according to a TMS spokesperson, new orders have been signed, the company has also been affected by the lockdown and the fact that tourists are currently a rare sight. However, while the government is doing all it can, businesses also need to find their own ways. In the case of TMS, management might be in a good position to pivot the business. Also operating buses for factories, shuttling their workers, some of the ideas floated were to re-purpose the buses to offer rides to those going out for drinks. Meanwhile, several buses await collection from their new owners, which management is confident will take place soon. ■



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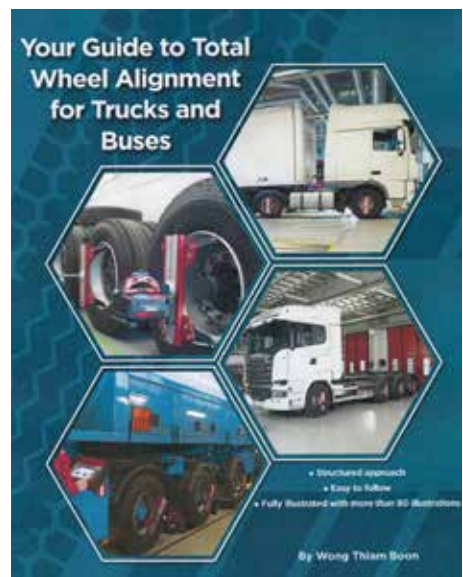
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Stefan Pertz,
Editor, Asian Trucker Malaysia
Editor, Asian Buses

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Trunk Road to Recovery

Building a successful bus operation is not easy and sustaining it during the lockdown is a gargantuan task. Cepat Express shares insights into their operation and what makes them click with their customers.

It is a busy morning in Segamat when we arrive at the office of Cepat Express Sdn Bhd. While businesses generally have re-opened after the Movement Control Order (MCO), bus operators across the country are still dealing with restrictions that could be a threat to their business. However, Abu Hanipah Mohd Said is confident that the company will make it through this challenge too, as he can draw on four decades of experience.

Starting a Network

Cepat Express was founded in 1979 as part of a network of companies. A number of friends and his own brother got together and each started a bus operation in different parts of the country. It was Said who settled in Segamat to offer services covering the South and the East coast. Operation commenced in 1981. From the start, Cepat Express was to offer unique experiences and right away Said deployed high-end coaches. The first route was between Kuantan and Segamat with three buses serving the route. At the time, the highway between the two town was still under construction. "We all had some experience in the bus industry and we took the chance to start our own businesses." The

187 kilometre-long tour would take about three hours and a bus would be in operation for 12 hours, of which three would be for rest times.

Hub and Spoke

Immediately after the first route was set up, Said applied for further routes to be served. Melaka and Johor Baru were the next destinations. Further routes were added over the years, however, Segamat has always been and remains the hub for the operation.

Using Segamat as a base, the operation can now best be described as a hub and spoke set up. "This has served us very well as our typical customer is most likely a student or civil servant. There are several universities around and we connect these places," Said explains. With the services offered by



associated companies, travellers can reach any place in peninsular Malaysia.

Supporting this are now modern terminals that welcome travellers that not only act as a waiting hall, but oftentimes as market place or community centre.

The Need for High Specs

As express bus operator Cepat Express is going long distances. Unlike others, Said has decided to give the highways a miss and to travel along trunk roads instead. As he explains, this has many advantages "We don't have to deal with fatigue so much as our routes are not as boring for the captains. Also, our operating cost is lower as we do not have to pay tolls." Trunk roads, being more bumpy and curvy demand for higher end specs though. Said has learned that air bellows are the best suspension to ensure a smooth ride, which is important for the passengers.

With more gear shifts, accelerations and breaking and the odd pothole, the stress on the chassis is higher though compared to a bus travelling mostly on highways. Said praised the MAN chassis, which in his view was the best that there is to ensure a smooth ride. "I have tried others and when you sit in the last row sometimes it feels like you are on a boat at high sea." The increased stress for the material is countered by monthly maintenance in a MAN workshop and the use of genuine parts to ensure optimal uptime.

While Cepat enjoys the benefits of the trunk roads not having tolls and offering unique connections, a breakdown is way more complicated to handle and therefore, the upkeep of vehicles is crucial. Trunk roads may not have shoulders where a bus can park, speeds are lower, thus rescue services will take longer to arrive and it might be more difficult to find the broken down bus as there might not be kilometres markers. Another issue is the topography, which might put other motorists in danger if a vehicle has broken down after a curve or just past a hill top. "Trunk roads have one big advantage during a breakdown though: with a bit of luck, it happens in a town and there people can get food, which is making things bearable!"

With over 40 years in the business, there are a lot of events that Said can remember, but what stands out is that there have been two births during a trip.

Paused

Like any other operator, Cepat had only two days to react to the upcoming MCO. "We ordered all buses back to their respective depots in Alor Star, Segamat and Kota Baru after finishing all trips we were allowed to do." Buses were fully booked as people tried to get back, however, many had to be turned away. As tickets are sold way in advance, there was no panicked rush for the buses as passengers would have no chance to buy any. Nowadays, most tickets are sold online Said observes, citing portals like easybook or CatchThatBus and the Central Ticketing System that the government has introduced.

With the buses grounded, some drivers decided to leave and try their luck elsewhere. "Now we see some coming back asking for their former jobs back. However, we are operating at a very much reduced capacity." While Said is happy to take back the good drivers, he is also faced with the fact that there is a much reduced demand. Of the 40 MAN buses, only 14 are currently operating. And those running are only filled half, as per SOP mandated. To ensure that service can resume at peak levels again, Said has send his buses for thorough check-ups. Using the downtime to ensure the buses will be in top condition once demand increases, he is hopeful that the situation will return to a "normal" soon.

Factors Impacting Bus Operations

After 40 years in the business, Said now has a number of issues to tackle. While dealing with the impact of the pandemic, he is also having an eye on the development in the railroad department. "Depending on how the high-speed rail is priced, it will either be a competition for us or a great supplement that we can tap into." In addition, airlines are currently offering extremely low fares, also chipping away at the bus market. This, however, may only be temporary as fares could increase again once more people travel. Like many others, Said also points out that there might need to be a revision of the overall business "There is a lot of competition now, but the most pressure comes from the increase in cost to buy and operate our vehicles while the fares have remained fixed for many years." Today, some 60 remaining staff are eager to provide superior service again and Said hopes that he can soon be putting the halted buses back into service. ■



VE Commercial Vehicles: Indian Powerhouse

In 2008, two leading players, Volvo Group and Eicher Motors, in the commercial vehicle business joined hands with a common vision of driving modernization in the commercial transport business in India. Volvo Group comes with global expertise, leadership in product technology, well-defined processes and a brand respected all over the world. Eicher Motors is a leader in the Light and Medium Duty Vehicle segment and brings to the table frugal engineering, considerable after sales infrastructure, and cost-effective operations. Together they complement each other and combine their strengths to deliver effective solutions that favourably impacts the eco-system. This partnership has helped modernise and evolve the industry in India and many other countries with emerging markets.

The company's product portfolio includes the complete range of Eicher branded trucks and buses, exclusive distribution of Volvo Trucks in India, engine manufacturing and exports for Volvo Group, non-automotive engines and Eicher component business. A multi-brand, multi-division company, backed by innovative products and services, VE Commercial Vehicles (VECV) today, is recognised as an industry leader in CV industry.

VECV offers a range of ultra-modern trucks across 4.9-55Tonnes, along with a wide range over 150 fully built and bus chassis variants across light, medium and heavy-duty applications.

The world of commercial vehicles is always on the move, be it new emerging markets, state-of-the-art infrastructure, new policies and the aspirations of customer. VECV is always ahead with a continuous transformation of a holistic ecosystem which is based on progressive thinking, advanced technology and unshakable values. This keeps VECV miles ahead from the rest.

VECV, one of the India's leading manufacturers of trucks and buses, has always spearheaded the Future of Indian Trucking with the next-gen vehicles and innovative support solutions. Through every vehicle that we produce we

Tracing its roots to the 1940s, this joint venture between two globally recognised brands is a powerhouse with eight manufacturing facilities and reach to over 30 countries.

help achieve people their dreams, ambitions and ensure they or their products reach their destination safely and on time. We understand the importance of trucks and buses, and how integral they are to keep the country running. Every day with relentless pursuit of perfection and exceptional quality, these vehicles are brought to life in state of the art VECV's facilities.

Bringing vehicles to life since 1986

VECV, one of the India's leading manufacturers of trucks and buses, has always spearheaded the Future of Indian Trucking with the next-gen vehicles and innovative support solutions. Through every vehicle that we produce we help achieve people their dreams, ambitions and ensure they or their products reach their destination safely and on time. We understand the importance of trucks and buses, and how integral they are to keep the country running. Every day with relentless pursuit of perfection and exceptional quality, these vehicles are brought to life in state of the art VECV's facilities.

Pithampur Plant

ETB completed 34 years of operations in India in the month of June 2020. The first Eicher truck was rolled out from its manufacturing plant in Pithampur, Madhya Pradesh in 1986 and over the past years, the products have got endorsement from hundreds of thousands happy customers. The plant is spread over 87 acres of land with current installed capacity of 90 000 vehicles per annum, producing over 1 000 vehicles per acre.

Baggad Plant

To capitalize on the opportunity of improved road infrastructure and growth of smart cities, an ultra-modern bus body manufacturing facility was set up at Baggad (Madhya Pradesh) in September 2013. The plant is spread over a huge expanse 43 acres has a current installed capacity of 15 600 per annum, expandable to 19 200 per annum.

Bhopal Plant

To expand further and cater to dynamic market requirements and evolving customer needs, the Bhopal facility was initiated in November 2019. In less than a year, the assembly of first engine was rolled out in November 2019 from the new plant. The new facility will be utilized to manufacture VECV's Pro2000 light duty BSVI range. Manufacturing plant in Bhopal spread over 147.8 acres of land and has an initial capacity of 40 000 trucks per annum, which would be scalable up to 100 000 per annum to align to future business plan volume requirements.

DEWAS PLANT

Located in Central India in the industrial area of Dewas, Madhya Pradesh, India, the set-up is spread over approximately 30 acres, with another around 16 acres' land available for future expansion. The state of art plant houses the latest technology in various processes for gear manufacturing, Crown wheel Pinion, Bevels and transmission assembly.

THANE PLANT

Located at the suburbs of Mumbai, Maharashtra, India, the plant has a total area of 6.5 acres. This plant is the first commercial gear manufacturing facility in India, with the plant setup in 1964, while Eicher took it over in 1992.

SEZ PITHAMPUR PLANT

Located in the Special Economic Zone of Pithampur, Madhya Pradesh, India, the plant has a total area of 9.4 acres. The constructed area is around 1 acre with around 8 acres available for future expansion. The plant manufactures diverse variety of auxiliary gearboxes and aggregates for global customers



Eicher Engineering Components (EEC) is one leading transmission, aggregate and component business of VE Commercial Vehicles Limited. EEC came into existence in 1992 in a take-over of a Unit in Mumbai which was the first commercial gear manufacturing facility in India in the auto-ancillary sector. In the ensuing years, EEC has grown from strength to strength and is one of the leading transmission, engine and axle components and aggregates manufacturers in India. EEC has customers across the globe and is strategic supplier to large OEMs like Volvo, Caterpillar, John Deere, Mahindra etc. besides meeting the captive requirements of Eicher Trucks and Royal Enfield.

Network

Eicher, believes that the sale is just the beginning of the relationship and so it's extremely important to partner the customer right through the life cycle of the vehicle. Therefore, Eicher has developed an extensive after-sales network that provides comprehensive support services.

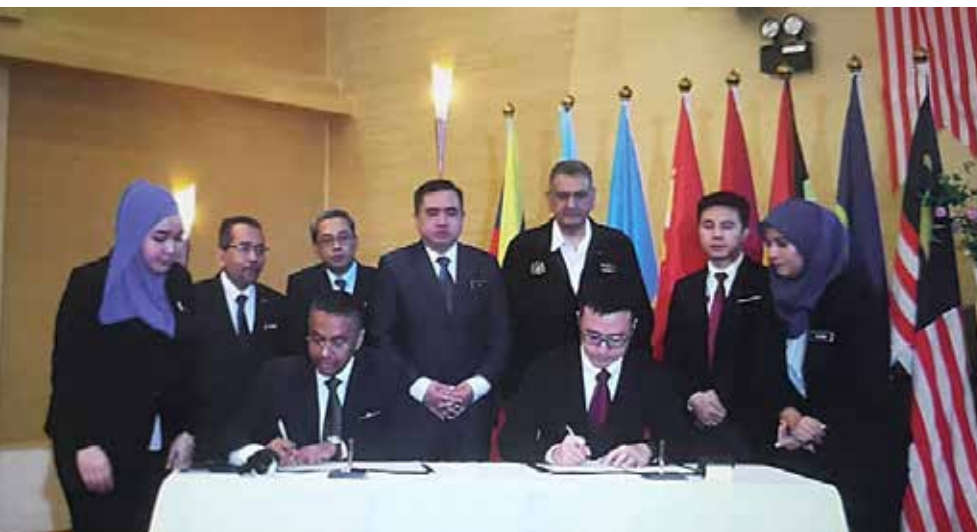
The network of channel partners is fully equipped, trained & empowered to deliver best-in-class services, across all the highways & industry hubs in the country. The endeavour is to partner the channel to capitalize on the growth areas and opportunities in the CV industry, in not just vehicle sales but aftersales services, from genuine parts to site-support and resale too. The goal is to have a strong and fully engaged, efficient, customer centric, well-equipped and profitable dealer network, to achieve the status of 'Customer Satisfaction No.1'.

All channel partners are supported by dedicated and professional teams, which lay a firm foundation of sustainable business growth, understanding customer expectations and delivering a consistent experience. The network channels comprises of:

3S Dealerships (Sales, Service and Spares) – 143
 2S Dealerships (Service & Spares) – 151
 SPD(Spare parts distributor) -26
 EGP (Eicher Genuine Parts Shoppe) - 96
 MBR(Multibrand Retailers) – 2110



A Vital Industry at the Brink of Another Crisis?



Asian Buses met with the President of the Pan Malaysia Bus Operators' Association to get an update on the issues the industry is currently faced with.

The Pan Malaysia Bus Operator's Association (PMBOA) is an umbrella association, representing the interests of various state-level associations of stage and express bus operators. There are currently 110 members in PMBOA. Its President, Datuk Mohamad Ashfar Ali, gave us an update on the current state of affairs in the Malaysian bus sector. As one can imagine, the pandemic has hit these businesses hard, but there are more issues that are currently being addressed and has repeatedly petitioned several activities to be taken to ensure sustainability and success of its members. According to him, there is also a feeling in the market that the government has abandoned this group of people, although being crucial for the development of the country.

"In Malaysia, we already have a unique situation whereby APAD is responsible for peninsular Malaysia and LPKP is their counterpart in East Malaysia," he said. In East Malaysia, each state has their own regulatory board, which makes things more complicated in the view of PMBOA. Currently, the

industry laments that the loading factor has significantly dropped, due to the pandemic. Listed as essential service, some operators were obliged to operate, although people were not even allowed to leave their home. "Some of our members were made to operate to get front liners to their workplaces and back, but as one can imagine, that is not enough to run at a profit." As cross border transport is still allowed again, a large number of operators are still standing still. "And as far as we are concerned, there is little or no help from the government for those."

Beyond the most pressing matters, integration of payment systems is one issue that needs to be addressed. Electronic Ticketing Systems (ETS) need to extend to collection of fares by the government, thus eliminating the need of conductors on certain routes. "Every other person has a Touch and Go card, why not use it?" Ashfar Ali said in this context. Uncertainty persists as the efforts of the previous Minister of Transport have not been continued and with a new government coming in is starting from scratch.

In appeals for support from the government, the following have been requested by PMBOA, representative of the industry:

For Stage and Express Buses**For Stage Buses**

- **Interim Stage Bus Support Fund and Stage bus Service Transformation**
According to PMBOA, most bus operators have not received these funds and are facing cash flow issues. The government has been urged to release these payments.
- **Conversion of Interim Stage Bus Support Fund Scheme to Stage Bus Service Transformation**
All buses under ISBF to convert to SBST scheme in order to give better service to the public and to allow for easier collection of fares
- **Contract Period for ISBF and SBST to be extended to five years**
Even if operators wanted to acquire new buses, this is difficult as borrowers may not see the contracts as very secure with contracts being as short as they are now to provide public transport.
- **Extension of age limit of stage buses from 15 to 20 years**
With modern built material and technology, the 15 years age limit is outdated in the view of PMBOA. An increase in the age limit would allow operators to generate profit off the now more expensive assets.
- **Return of Charter Licence**
The withdrawal of the Charter Licence has resulted in loss of income for stage bus operators and service levels have decreased in rural areas.

For Express Buses

- **Deregulate Express Bus Fares**
While bus fares have not increased since 2008 (8.5 cents per kilometer), operating costs have been on the rise by as much as 40 percent. Currently, ridership is also reduced as a consequence of the pandemic. Meanwhile, an agreement reached between APAD and Express Bus operators has yet to be implemented to deregulate bus fares as agreed by the Ministry of Transport.
- **Extension of age limit of stage buses from 10 to 15 years**
With modern built material and technology, the 10 years age limit is outdated in the view of PMBOA. An increase in the age limit would allow operators to generate profit off the now more expensive assets.
- **Review Second Driver Requirement**
In essence, PMBOA acknowledges the positive impact on road and passenger safety when trips are broken down into stretches of 300 kilometres after which a driver change has to happen. However, PMBOA views the current requirements as not only impractical, but also dangerous as the second driver might be already fatigued by the time the driving duties start. A second driver should come on board only at the time of the hand-over, when the relief driver can be fresh and well rested, rather than sitting on board by the time of departure.

- **Deferment of Repayments for Loan and Hire Purchase** With severely reduced ridership, the cash flow situation of many operators has put them in an extremely difficult situation to repay their loans and to service their hire purchase agreements. While Bank Negara has instructed banks and financial institutions to offer a moratorium, this directive is not applicable for corporate borrowers as these facilities come under the Money Lenders Act 1951.

• **Wages**

Here, PMBOA has appealed to the government to provide a blanked subsidy of 75 percent of the monthly wages of employees of bus operators for the duration of the MCO and three months thereafter. The current subsidies are deemed insufficient.

- **Suspension of EPF, SOCSO and EIS payments**

Bus operators are suggesting that payments to EPF, SOCSO and EIS are to be suspended. This would not impact the income of the government and it is seen as only fair that employees help bear a portion of the burden of their employer in times like this

- **Insurance waiver for non-operational buses**

Buses currently not in operation and parked in workshops of yards should be exempted from insurance as the risk of accidents is nil.

- **Waiver of Booth Rental Fees**

Terminal operators should waive the rental fees for booths and bays for those operators not being able to make use of these facilities.

- **Stop the issuance of Bus Licences**

While PMBOA views competition as a good thing to elevate service levels, too many operators fighting for an increasingly reduced market have resulted in the industry "dying slowly". Cost cutting, low levels of service and unsatisfactory servicing of routes have been the results of too many new players that could enter the industry too easily.

- **Immediate action against Rodthu Services (Illegal van services carrying passengers)** Rodthu services have been pioneered by Thais and Indonesians. Using ICP to enter Malaysia (Northern states of Malaysia from Thai side and Sarawak / Sabah from Kalimantan), these operators use their vans to transport commuters, thus stealing passengers from correctly and legally licenced bus operators.



In a sprawling city, connectivity is crucial. However, this is not currently not aligned with the needs of commuters. "Add to this the fact that cars are relatively cheap here with financing options and you will face diminishing demand for bus services." If possible, Lew would like to see new competitors to enter this market, given that this industry segment is brought back into a situation where the operation becomes sustainable again.

As electrification is on everyone's mind, Lew is also hoping the government will take initiative to implement new systems as modern technology has numerous advantages. "However, we cannot do this on our own. If we look at China, operators are getting support from the government. With help, we can try and move this industry forward." Range anxiety is no issue for Lew as the current electric buses will easily cover the distance the operator covers each day.

Amidst all the uncertainty about the future, the present proved to be rather difficult. "Drivers did not want to come to work. They would rather not have their pay than take a risk," Lew explained. Besides, Lew remarked that it was a bizarre situation whereby operators were asked to offer their services, but people were asked to stay at home. Depending on bus services, foreign workers shunned the buses for a while as they did not need to go to work. Lew is hoping that the demand will soon pick up again as factories are re-opening. Appealing to the government, he closed by emphasising that "Bus men need help!"

On the Ground

What PMBOA summarises may already paint a bleak picture. Combining all these issues with other difficulties the industry is facing, the overall situation seems even more challenging for bus operators trying to stay afloat. Anson Lew of The Selangor Omnibus Co Bhd reflects on the current situation.

Established in 1937, the company is providing city bus services from Kuala Selangor to Kuala Lumpur. "We are one of the old boys, I would say. However, there is only one other company like ours left." Over the years, private operators have found it increasingly difficult to carve out a living. Back in the days, one would need to be a shareholder to be a driver or conductor with the company. Nowadays, the salary is not enough to attract interested people to take up the job. One solution Lew suggests is to allow for limited contingents of drivers to be foreigners to take up these vacancies.

For those unfamiliar with the concept of the City Bus, here a quick recap: Any route the operator wants to serve has to be applied for. The route is strictly fixed, whereby even a small detour is penalised. As a result, riders may not want to take the bus as they have to get to the bus, rather than the bus coming to them. According to Lew, his company has not been given any additional, new routes which could yield income for him. At the same time, the cost of his operation has constantly increased.



ASIAN BUSES



SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Personal/Company details

Mr/Mrs/Mdm/Ms :

New I/C No :

Company :

Address :

Tel no (O) : (HP) :

Email :

I hereby enclose RM Cheque.....

being made payable to Asian Trucker Media Sdn Bhd

4 issues RM40

6 issues RM60

Mail/fax this form to:

Asian Trucker Media Sdn Bhd (902834-K)

8th Floor, West Wing,

Menara Rohas Perkasa,

50450 Kuala Lumpur.

Fax no : 03- 2719 5588



Marcopolo's Attivi Express



A new articulated bus for 100 percent electrical technology

Keeping up with its tradition of leadership, innovation and advanced technology, Marcopolo presents Attivi Express, its new articulated urban body model dedicated to the electric propulsion chassis for trunk lines and mobility systems for medium and large cities. The model, which is part of the project's release of the first light vehicle on 100 percent electric tires in Brazil, is in the final stage of development and will be supplied, in partnership with BYD to the Green Line in São José dos Campos.

According to Rodrigo Pikussa, Marcopolo's Bus Business Director, Attivi Express is being developed in record time and is expected to start homologation tests by the end of this year. The modern design and Marcopolo's bold and attractive DNA has external lighting with full LED headlights, ensuring greater light efficiency and



will set a new standard for the segment with a lot of onboard technology and new equipment in the segment, such as the absence of rear view mirrors,



Other unprecedented items are the entertainment system for passengers, with two 15.6" monitors installed on the ceiling, radio and internal speakers, double-leaf pantograph doors with greater clearance and an anti-crushing system that when encountering obstacles, automatically reopen and avoid crushing or injuring the passenger. The vehicle is equipped with a monitoring system with four internal cameras, City upholstered seats with headrest and USB sockets, full accessibility with ramps for wheelchair users, facilitating and ensuring faster and more efficient boarding and exiting.



Marcopolo's articulated Attivi Express has a D11B chassis with lithium iron phosphate batteries (LifePO4) and a range of up to 250 kilometers, and has the capacity to transport 168 passengers - 60 seated and 108 standing, in addition to space for a wheelchair - 22 000mm (22 meters) in length, total width of 2 600mm and height of 3 730mm.



Marcopolo's new Attivi Express model will also feature Marcopolo BioSafe solutions, never before seen in the Brazilian urban transport system. The vehicle will be equipped with seats, grab-poles and hand grips with antimicrobial additives to ensure disinfection of the points of contact of the hands and reduce the risk of contamination through viruses and bacteria. 📌

replaced with a system composed of six high definition cameras, two of them with infrared technology and monitors that cover a larger field of vision than mirrors and eliminate any "blind spots" the drivers may have on the sides of the vehicle, facilitating maneuvers and increasing traffic safety.



Sometimes, a Little Help is Needed from the Big Brother

Although they may not clock in the kilometers like their long haul brethren, city buses may also have breakdowns. That is the time when the big brother, the tow truck needs to come and give them a lift.

Prasarana operates over 1500 buses, of which around 700 are stationed in the Klang Valley, with the balance plying the routes in Penang and Kuantan. These buses are supported by depots in which workshops are housed as well as rescue teams and tow trucks. There are four tow trucks in total, always on standby to pull out any bus that has broken down. Three MAN tow trucks are delivering the bulk of the towing with one being permanently based in Penang.

On average, a bus would run between eight to 11 hours every day. Drivers are slotted into three shifts with the rush hours also being the busiest for the bus operator. Mohd Khalid and Amir Rahimi share insights into the rescue operations. He explained that it is not accidents that usually require the tow truck to go out, but issues with the cooling or air system. "Accidents do happen, but they are not the main problem." Every day buses can break down and as per Prasarana's calculations, the number of tow trucks is sufficient to handle this volume of incidents.

Should a bus break down, the bus captain will report the issue to the control centre. A rescue team with a mobile workshop will attend to the vehicle first. Only if the repair cannot be carried out on the road, the rescue team will call for a tow truck for an extraction. Buses are stationed in four depots: Maluri, Shah Alam, Batu Caves and Balakong. "Any bus that breaks down will be taken back to their respective depot where we have workshops. The most important task is to clear the road as a broken down vehicle will surely cause congestion." "As people are all stressed, they will not be very understanding and just honk at us," said Jahaya Bin Saad, driver of the MAN tow truck. As managing traffic is not their job, Prasarana coordinates the flow of traffic with the police in case of a breakdown or accident. "This adds another layer of communication, but is helping us a lot to get the immobile vehicle back to the workshop." Using a fleet management system, locating the buses that need towing is made easy though as the location can be identified with pinpoint accuracy.



Jahaya Bin Saad and his MAN tow truck

Tow truck drivers will have to undergo special training. "We have a special training module we need to complete, plus on the job training," said Jahaya. However, the fact that tow truck drivers need special skills is exactly what attracted him to do this job, beyond a passion for big rigs. Seven years of driving the MAN truck has revealed the true talent of the vehicle: effortless climbing of steep hills and plenty of power to tow buses.

Purchasing decisions for trucks are based on tenders. Having passed the technical evaluation, Prasarana decided to purchase the MAN vehicles as the truck was deemed to be the most economical. "The only thing I am missing is a trailer brake as a bus being towed is pushing the tow truck quiet a bit when going downhill. This also means I need to adjust my driving style between going to the site empty and coming back with a bus in tow," Jahaya said. One consideration for tow trucks is compatibility: towing a bus may be difficult as the hook may not fit precisely. 🚚



Will Bus Operators be Ploughed Under by Technical Innovations?

While we are all struggling to adapt to a new post pandemic world Stefan Pertz believes that technology could be waiting to deliver another punch to the gut.

Without dwelling too long on the past few months, let's just say this year was extremely tough for bus operators. Currently trying to get back on their feet, I am afraid that the next onslaught is already coming, and it will take the industry by surprise. What I am talking about is the technical innovations that will soon have a massive impact on the industry. From what I observe, the European brethren are much better prepared for this.

What is Coming?

I try to give our readers as much information about developments as possible, however, I can only do so much, and from what I feel, I think that most operators are not aware of what is happening in the R&D departments of the OEMs. To be prepared for the next evolution of

transportation, one would have to know what is coming. Obviously, I understand that currently the focus is somewhere else, and that the survival of the business takes top priority right now.

However, consider this: there are very few countries left where EURO II engines are sold. One day, not so far away, OEMs will decide that to continue to manufacture these engines will no longer be worth it. I expect it will be a rather abrupt stop. When these engine makers pull the plug, will you have prepared the business to take on vehicles with EURO IV to VI technology?

Add AdBlue

In tandem with that, one will need to have AdBlue on hand. There is currently not even a distribution network for it in some countries while the understanding of the fuels is equally lacking. I have written about it before and I say it again that the term Euro 5 Diesel can be misinterpreted.

And while we are on the subject of fuelling your bus, what about the upcoming electrification? Vehicle makers are all excited about this as electric vehicles don't need gearboxes, which means reduced development cost, parts inventory and easier maintenance. In recent months, this topic has dominated every newsletter I have received, with buses now running on hydrogen, or as trolley buses with overhead powerlines. What I am wondering is if the government is looking into this as there needs to be infrastructure put in place way ahead of the deployment of electric buses.

Internet Connectivity

Speaking of infrastructure, more and more services are added, requiring Internet connectivity. Already strained in some parts of the world, will the increased amount of data be too much to handle? Managing your fleet will also be completely different as a consequence as the vehicles will be called for inspections at the "most effective" moment rather than at the end of a certain period of time or distance.

Human resources have also been extended with the 'planning' aspect. Given that autonomous vehicles are finding more and more uses and are being put to use in pilot projects that are serving actual routes, one should ask what will happen to the drivers? Combine connectivity with electrification and autonomous driving and I wouldn't think we need drivers anymore. Or not in the sense as we see them today. They might have to be retrained to be cabin crew or learn something else altogether.

No doubt, the pandemic has hit us all hard. Getting back on our feet should be something that we look seriously into, but I would argue that the push of the big companies towards electrification, automation and connectivity can be a lurking punch in the gut too, should the industry not prepare itself to embrace these developments. ■

Zero-emission Capable ADL Enviro400ER Double Deck Completes Ultra Low Emission Bus Certification



decker has been fully certified as an Ultra Low Emission Bus by the UK's Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership. The ADL Enviro400ER is an electric range hybrid capable of running in zero-emission mode for up to three miles.

Developed in partnership with BAE Systems, it uses an electric driveline for smooth acceleration and braking. Powered by a 32kWh battery and charged by an onboard generator, the Enviro400ER delivers zero emissions without any dependency on additional external charging infrastructure. Alternatively, it can be charged externally through an industry standard plug-in connection. The Enviro400ER has now been fully accredited as an Ultra Low Emission Bus by the UK's Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership, saving 31% well-to-wheel greenhouse gas emissions over the UK Bus Cycle compared to a Euro VI diesel bus of equivalent passenger capacity. ■

Alexander Dennis Limited (ADL), a subsidiary of NFI Group Inc. (NFI), one of the world's largest independent global bus manufacturers, today announced that its zero-emission capable Enviro400ER double



Karsan to Establish an Electric Vehicles Laboratory Dedicated to Students' Training

Turkish bus manufacturer Karsan is establishing an electric vehicles laboratory. As part of its efforts to contribute to vocational training in the automotive industry, Karsan announced it has signed a "Protocol of Collaboration in Vocational and Technical Training" with Bursa Governor and Bursa Provincial Directorate of National Education.

The protocol embodies the collaboration for the purposes of establishing the "Karsan Technology Laboratory for Electric Vehicles" and training the qualified human resources required.

Karsan laboratory to train young professionals

A total of 20 students will be selected from 10th grades of vocational and technical Anatolian high schools for the project and at least 50% of these students are planned

to be female, where the purpose is to set a precedent for contributions to women's employment. The students who will be attending studies at the Karsan Technology Laboratory for Electric Vehicles will become individuals who will create added value in the future for the industry and for new technologies. The protocol also envisages designing of study fields in schools in collaboration with industry professionals and supporting the program's graduates in their careers.

In the signing ceremony, Karsan CEO Okan Baş reported "Today is among our most exciting and merriest days, as we are now able to share our experience in the field of electric vehicles with our young friends, who are the skilled professionals of the future. We believe that every step, taken together, will create added value for our industry, as well as employment of women". ■

Shaping the future of the Indian Bus Industry

“Volvo Buses India integrates with VECV

Definitive Agreements have been signed for the integration of Volvo Buses India business into VECV. They will cover the manufacture, assembly, distribution, and sale of the Volvo Buses in India, and other rights forming part of the business. Consequently, the bus manufacturing facility at Hosakote, Bengaluru, and all employees of Volvo Bus India (VBI) will be transferred to VECV. Volvo Bus India is currently a division of Volvo Group India Private Limited (VGIPL).

Speaking on the announcement, Siddhartha Lal, Chairman, VECV said, “This is a momentous occasion and testimony to a very strong relationship between Eicher Motors and Volvo Group. Over a period of time, the Volvo brand for buses in India has become synonymous with safety and comfort in both inter-city and intra-city public transportation, and we are extremely proud to have this iconic brand in our joint venture. With the integration of Volvo Buses India into VECV, we aim to shape the future

of the Indian bus industry by offering the widest range of transport solutions to our customers. Post the completion of the transaction, VECV and VBI will consolidate their bus businesses into a newly formed bus division within VECV. This division will offer Volvo and Eicher branded buses, and will maximize synergies to capitalize on market opportunities. This strategy will be extended to exports, wherein the new bus division will offer products and services that are complementary with Volvo Buses’ core product portfolio in select international markets.”

With this integration, VECV will be able to leverage synergies in the areas of product development, purchasing and manufacturing with access to Volvo Group’s world class technology in buses.”. “The Volvo Bus is a flag bearer of the Volvo Brand in India and we expect going forward this will be reinforced even further by our JV partner – VE Commercial Vehicles.” added Kamal Bali, President & MD, VGIPL “



IHSE helps manage traffic flow at motorway control center

The state infrastructure company operates toll motorways and expressways in this European country. The organization operates several control centers which are continuously staffed to monitor national traffic. In a refurbishment of the country’s traffic reporting center a KVM solution from IHSE was chosen for management of, and access to, all computers and monitoring equipment.

The control center houses five operator workstations and a crisis room with two additional workstations. Operators monitor the traffic, remotely control all digital motorway signs and instruct emergency measures.

For maximum efficiency and status overview, all operators are able to access all relevant computers from their own dedicated workstations. Each workstation has four 24-inch screens and three 55-inch screens. An IHSE multiviewer takes four separate external video feeds, each of up to 4K resolution, and combines them

into a single image that is transmitted via an IHSE matrix switch to one of the 55-inch screens.

Monitoring and control systems can be viewed at a glance from the workstation. Instant switching is possible between incoming sources, including computers, cameras and monitoring devices. This allows operators to react quickly to hazards by activating localized lighting systems or displays for speed limits and warnings. In emergencies, they can immediately alert the police, ambulance or fire department.

The IHSE solution is based around a central KVM matrix switch which offers operators superior control capability and is capable of future expansion.

“The centralized KVM infrastructure maximizes operator efficiency, reducing the risk of errors and speeding up their responses to critical and emergency situations,” said Michael Spatny, Managing Director at IHSE. “The space-saving design of the KVM system, combined with the relocation of the computers to a separate technical room, supports an ergonomic workstation layout and protects the equipment from external access and harmful environmental influences.”

Retreading & Fleet Tyre Management Key Topics at TyrexpoAsia 2021



At Tyrexpo Asia 2021, to be held in Singapore in March, a series of international business conferences will take place during the three-day event organised by Tarsus Group.

The Retreading Conference, to be hosted by David Wilson, MD of Retreading Business magazine, will survey important issues such as the progress of tyre retreading on a global basis, the current challenges facing retreaders in Malaysia plus new developments in both SE Asia and the Indian Continent. Mr Wilson states, "The Retreading Conference will look at the entire aspect of retreading commercial tyres and what the future holds for the industry, especially Post-Covid 19."

The Fleet Tyre Management Conference will be hosted by John Stone – Owner of Sapphire Media (International Media Business Consultants). The conference will look at various aspects of global tyre management including Mobile Tyre Fleet

Fitment and Equipment, The Asian truck tyre market, Future tyre sales trends in Europe, part-worn tyres and the car tyre fleet market in South East Asia.

A 15-minute 'Question & Answer' session will follow each session and a 'Panel Discussion period of open debate' will take place in the afternoon. John Stone says, "Fleet Tyre Managers in the global industry have never been more crucial to the success of tyre sales and this conference has been specially designed to provide an informative insight into this market."

On Day 2, 'Digitalisation in the tyre industry within SE Asia' will present topics associated with the 'digital age in the SE Asian market and the emerging presence of Social Media in the international tyre market'. Several conferences are planned for the second day which will be confirmed later.

Alwin Seow, Project Director at Tarsus says, "The 'new look' Tyrexpo Asia 2021 promises to be an informative show with time for networking and growing business contacts. Our dedicated and experienced international sales team are always on hand to answer any enquiries about any aspect of the show including our Hosted Buyers scheme." 

24 Units Golden Dragon Electric Buses Delivered to Tibet

Recently, a grand ceremony was held in Changdu, Tibet to mark the arrival of 24 units Golden Dragon 8-meter electric buses and the opening of three new bus routes. On the same day, an online bus tracking application was launched. Through the new application, passengers can easily know of exact location of buses, giving them more convenience and helping them save a lot of time.

"Public transport is a key part of a city's infrastructure and acts as a window to showcase a city's development. Despite all the challenges, we will continue to work

closely with Golden Dragon to improve our city's public transport network", said Wei Dong, Deputy Secretary of CPC Changdu Municipal Committee.

In 2018, Golden Dragon handed over 20 units electric buses to Changdu as a part of Fujian province's aid program to Tibet. In August, 2019, six units Golden Dragon 8-meter buses arrived in Changdu. After the new arrivals, the city has 50 units buses working on its public transport network, providing much more convenience for local people. 

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