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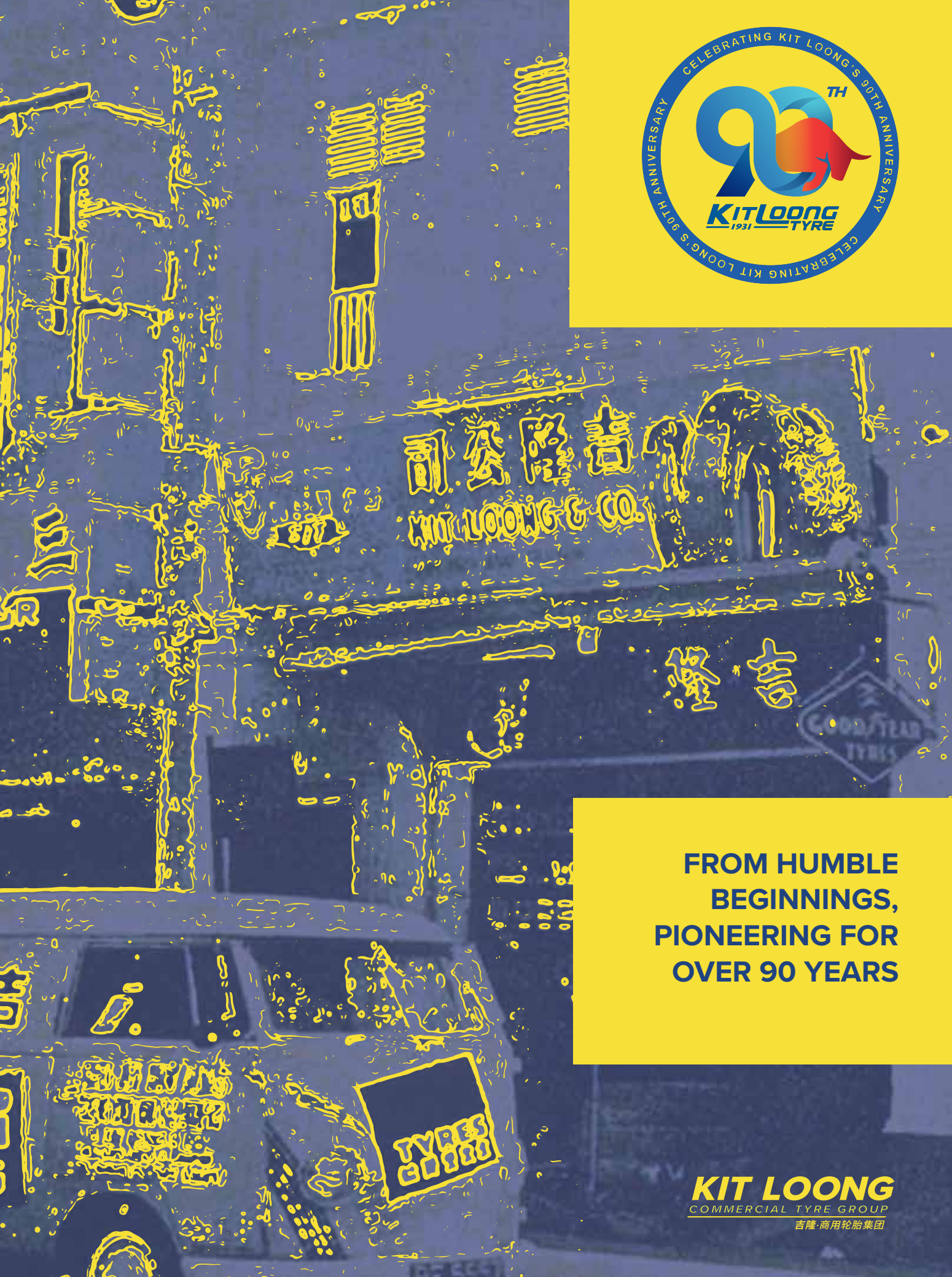

FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS, PIONEERING FOR OVER 90 YEARS

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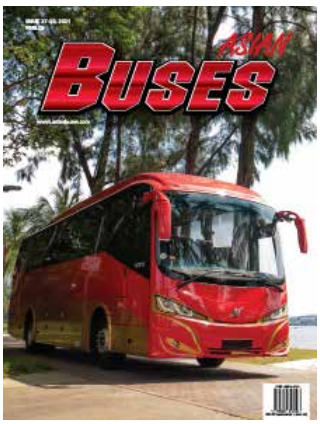

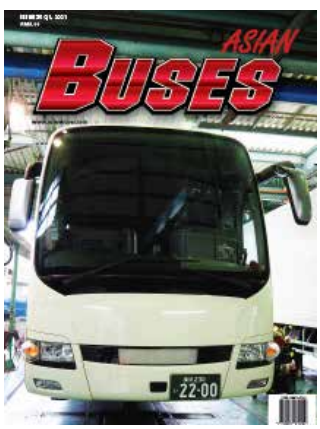

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A New New or an En Core?

There is absolutely no debating this: the year 2021 was an extra tough one. I am sure that many business owners, as well as their staff, are looking forward to putting it behind them. The year-end work might be extending a few days into the new year, but essentially, the motto now is: out with the old, in with the new. It is time to take stock and to move ahead with renewed energy.

The industry has not stopped to produce interesting innovations. Maybe the user behaviour has shifted a bit, but essentially, the core of most bus operators business would still be the same as it has always been. Moving people is what they do. These innovations might be of help, but the bottom line is that the job is to get people onto seats. As such, the new norm is not so much of a new thing I would argue. Only that right now is a chance to show people how much fun a bus journey could be, compared to a flight that results in probes being shoved up your nose every 500 meters.

The care for the vehicles is also nothing new. Looking after the bus, maintaining and servicing it ensures uptime, which in turn is the basis for the income generated. After prolonged periods of standing idle, it is now imperative that the buses are being given a once-over. MAN for instance has recognised this need and is offering a special program that gets the buses moving again. I understand that a full overhaul before re-activating the buses is a financial burden and I hope that the government is looking into ways to ease it. Especially when it comes to moving the workforce, we now depend on buses more than ever and any vehicle not getting groups of workers to their destination represents a dip in the much needed productivity.

When talking about the newest technology, we cannot get away from a discussion about alternative fuels. There is a lot going on in this area and I have spent some time looking into the implications of the move to get away from fossil fuels. Very quickly I have realised that there are a number of crucial aspects. Firstly, I conclude that the good ol' Diesel will still be around for a long time. Secondly, there will be a lot of movement in the industry as new players exploit the possibilities of using only one source of fuel while established players are trying to juggle their obligations towards existing fleets with the ambition to launch new products that embrace fossil fuel-free engine technology. I enjoyed researching the cover story as there are a lot of opposing views and possible directions. Hopefully, you too will find this story useful for your own business. As transporters are already adopting EURO VI engine technology, I am chomping on the bit to write the first articles about local adaptations of electromobility.

The big news in the corporate world has been the split of Daimler into two separate entities. However, as you will learn, this only has positive implications, according to them. One other company that has gone through a lot of changes is Kit Loong. I met with them to learn about their rich history and some of the more radical decisions taken are quiet surprising, even if they make perfect business sense. Poised to offer better service and extended product portfolios, several companies are ready to prance as opportunities will be abundant when the economy is being fully restarted. I expect that by the time you read my next notes that the overall sentiment will have improved dramatically for the better. I hope that we can discuss this at our upcoming expo, which I hope is also a beacon of hope for these that have been looking for a sign that things are improving. It will be a booster shot for the industry.

Be safe,

Stefan Pertz
Editor, Asian Buses

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Hino's Poncho goes on Extended Trials

After their successful first trial run for two months in 2019, Rapid Bus continues with another two trials of the Hino Poncho in Kuala Lumpur and Penang city.

Hino Motors Sales (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd (Hino) and Rapid Bus Sdn Bhd (Rapid Bus) will continue their trial in more challenging routes in Kuala Lumpur, following successfully completing its first trial run for two months in 2019.

The 7-meter low-floor Hino Poncho minibus offers a solution for transport accessibility in tight and narrow roads. The second trial in Kuala Lumpur commenced in early October 2021 and is set to end by April 2022. It will cater to route T180: Taman Dato' Senu - Chow Kit, and route 302: Titiwangsa - KLCC. Making its trial debut in the Penang Island, Hino Poncho will cater to route 11: Pengkalan Weld - Batu Lanchang, and route 201: Pengkalan Weld - Tingkat Paya, Terubong.

In Japan, there are more than 2,000 units Hino Poncho operating in the busy city roads and quieter residential areas. This bus is designed to match the most innovative community transport solution and be the solution to cater the 'first and last-mile' travel. Hino Poncho's short 7-meter length makes it easy to navigate through narrow city roads. Its short front and rear overhang and wheelbase also give the bus a small turning radius of 7.7m, further easing the task of driving in such tight road conditions.

Hino Poncho's small size makes it an ideal solution for operations in low ridership areas. Its small and compact engine consumes lesser fuel compared to the larger-sized buses in the same routes, lowering its operation cost. This will lead to greater profitability for the bus operators. This low-floor minibus is equipped with Euro-V engine, common-rail fuel injection system and 5-speed fully automatic transmission.

Its Euro-V technologically-advanced Diesel engine provides improved engine performance for acceleration, better fuel economy, and reduce harmful emission. Hino Poncho is also equipped with Diesel Particulate Reduction (DPR) system – an after-treatment system that significantly reduces particulate matter. This feature is different from other current Euro-V vehicles whereby the Hino Poncho does not require any additional fluid such as AdBlue, which eventually leads to reduction of operating costs and maintenance time for the customers.

Hino Poncho is famous for its passenger-friendly features and the most often cited one is its low and full flat floor that allows passenger to move in and out easily. Hino Poncho is designed with vehicle height adjusting system that has vehicle height lowering and raising control. The vehicle can be lowered by 50 mm which will ease further the boarding or alighting of passengers at bus stops. It is very convenient for senior citizens, children, and wheelchair-bound passengers to enter and exit the bus. Hino Poncho's full flat floor feature allows a large standing capacity space where passengers only need to climb steps to sit in the last row of seats.

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E-mobility for Heavy Commercial Vehicles: HyFleet Project Launched

In cooperation with Freudenberg, Flixbus and the climate NGO Atmosfair, ZF is participating in a project for fuel cell technology. The objective of the "HyFleet" project is to design and test a purely electrically powered coach.

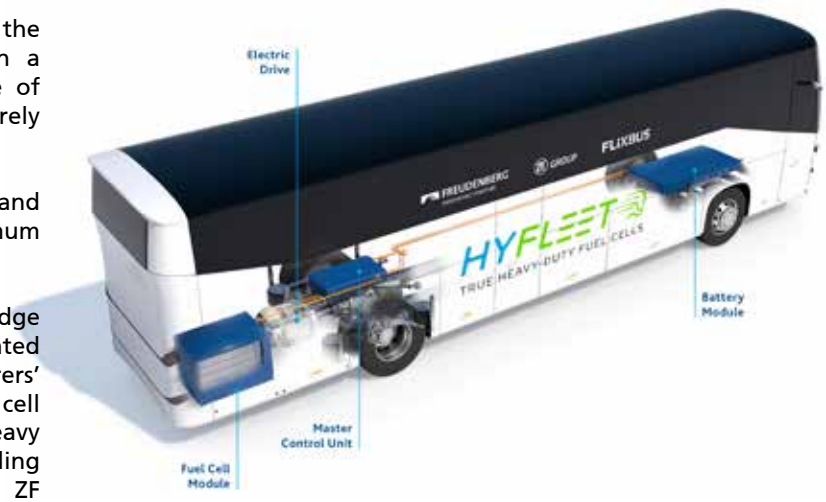
The project is scheduled to run for three years and aims to identify important findings for the optimum design of fuel cells in coaches.

"ZF's broad technology portfolio and knowledge of the electrified driveline as well as the associated systems are already facilitating vehicle manufacturers' transition to e-mobility. In the future, the fuel cell will play an important role in e-mobility for heavy commercial vehicles due to its range and fast refueling times," says Wilhelm Rehm, member of the ZF Board of Management responsible for Commercial Vehicle Technology and Control Systems. "We have always pursued electrification with an open-minded approach to technology – the fuel cell has also played an important role as a drive solution for us from the very beginning."

"Freudenberg will contribute to the project its decades of fuel cell expertise at component and system level," explains Claus Möhlenkamp, CEO of Freudenberg Sealing Technologies. "We want to significantly develop both the durability and efficiency of the technology and thus set standards for total cost of ownership."

Fuel cell: Path to heavy commercial vehicle electrification

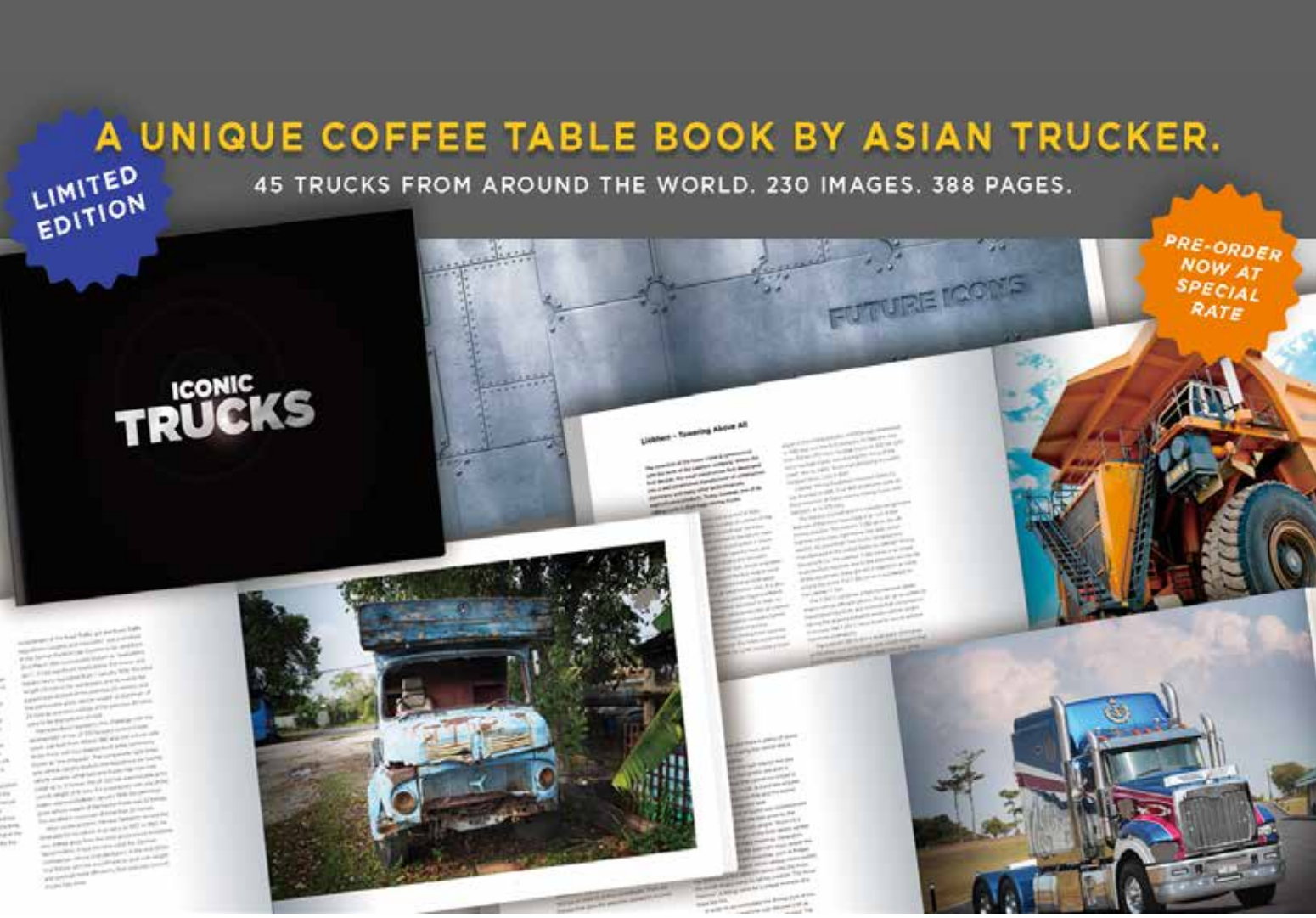
The feasibility study will make it easier in the future to optimally design fuel cell drives for heavy commercial vehicles. Specifically, this involves the respective dimensioning of the battery and fuel cell, the system's cooling concept and the load peaks to be considered



when operating the drive system. In this context, ZF is contributing its expertise for the purely electric commercial vehicle drive – including power electronics and software-based control of all energy consumers. The consortium also benefits from the know-how of the ZF Group in numerous emobility series projects for commercial vehicles. The German Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure has already provided a non-binding letter of intent for funding the project.

The consortium is managed by Freudenberg Fuel Cell e-Power Systems GmbH, a subsidiary of Freudenberg Sealing Technologies; other partners are the mobility provider Flixbus and the climate protection organization Atmosfair. The "HyFleet" project focuses on a high practical benefit of the fuel cell drive. In addition to the energy efficiency of the drive, this also includes driving characteristics and handling, for example in hydrogen refueling.

In addition to the HyFleet project, ZF and Freudenberg are jointly investigating further applications for the development of fuel cell solutions for mobility and industrial use.



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"This practical and resourceful book will be an asset to any fleet operator or workshop that wants to improve the performance of commercial vehicles. It is TB Wong's experience of decades working with wheel alignment systems that shines through and makes this a must-have item for anyone that is serious about their transportation business. The industry had to wait far too long for a resource like this and I am excited to see TB Wong's knowledge now being available to the market."

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

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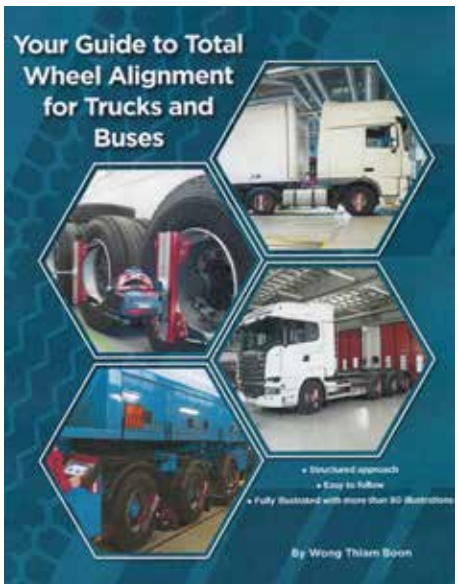

Scania Celebrates Its First 10 Years In Ipoh Through Sustainable Partnerships

Scania celebrates its first 10 years in Ipoh, pledging to continue to build sustainable partnerships that help its customers achieve profitability for business and the environment.

The celebration which was held internally with all the personnel at the Scania Malaysia Sales and Services Centre Ipoh branch (SMYIPH), was graced by Heba El Tarifi, Managing Director of Scania Southeast Asia, Thor Brenden, Services Director of Scania Southeast Asia, Wong NyookLin, Regional Manager – Region North, Scania Southeast Asia and Wan Noaimadudin, Workshop Manager, SMYIPH. A ceremony of signing on the commemorative "F10Y" insignia, ceremonial cutting of cake and the awarding 10-year long-service staff with the First 10 Years Award made the morning a joyous occasion for everyone.

"SMYIPH's success since 2011 has been attributed to building sustainable partnerships as part of Scania Malaysia's wide network of sales and services branches," said El Tarifi. Customers in the state of Perak and along the North South highway continue to benefit from scheduled maintenance avoiding breakdowns, increasing uptime for their trucks, buses and coaches. Scania Assistance 24/7 roadside assistance continues to provide peace-of-mind for customers. Instalment Plan Repair and Maintenance 7 was offered this year to help customers achieve profit immediately. Now all new Scania trucks and buses purchased in 2021 come with a pre-set Economy Mode as default to save even more fuel – customers with vehicles purchased before this year can visit SMYIPH to activate this.

El Tarifi has a special connection with this particular Scania workshop: it was the first one in Malaysia she has visited. Further, during another visit, the SMYIPH staff found out that it was her birthday and they surprised her with a cake. "I promised that we will have more cakes to celebrate milestone events and today is one where I am bringing a cake!" El Tarifi exclaimed.

"SMYIPH technicians lead the way in ensuring our customers get the best uptime," said Brenden. "In 2018, SMYIPH technicians won the Top Team practical challenge in Malaysia. In 2020, SMYIPH again won first place in the Top Team theory challenge for Malaysia. This is a testament of their consistent strength in maintenance and repair of our customers' vehicles."

"I cannot be more proud of my team in SMYIPH," said Noaimadudin. "They have been driving real change for our customers' business, operations and, also for the environment for the past 10 years. They did it through working together as a team, both amongst colleagues and with our customers in true partnership."

"The next 10 years and beyond will be an exciting time for SMYIPH, especially in aiming to reduce CO2 emissions in transportation and logistics in line with our commitment to Science Based Targets" said Wong. "Our customer's appreciation for our total solutions approach continues to grow. Renewable fuels and electrification, safer and smarter transport technologies continue to usher in a new era in transport and logistics. The team at SMYIPH looks forward to continue driving the shift towards a sustainable transport system by building more sustainable partnerships." Wong also encouraged the team by pointing out the possibilities arising from the opportunities presenting themselves in the current market situation, in particular the fact that the adjacent plot of land being vacant.

Volvo Buses Delivered 90 Units Volvo B8L

Volvo Buses handed over 90 the first ever Euro VI double deck buses units of Volvo B8L in Malaysia to Prasarana Malaysia Berhad.

Buses announced today the successful delivery of 90 units of the first ever Euro 6 double deck buses to Prasarana Malaysia Berhad (Prasarana), and the momentous occasion was marked by an official vehicle handover ceremony.

"On behalf of Volvo Buses, we are extremely excited to introduce the Euro VI technology to Malaysia. The current vehicle emission regulation in Malaysia is Euro III, but our partner Prasarana made a commitment to reduce emission level in Malaysia by purchasing the Volvo B8L Euro 6 double deck buses beyond the local regulation requirement," said Mats Nilsson, Director of Volvo Buses Region APAC Central. Late 2017, Volvo Buses Malaysia was awarded a tender of 90 units double-deckers by Prasarana and put into operation by Rapid Bus Sdn Bhd for public transport in Kuala Lumpur.

According to the President & Group Chief Executive Officer of Prasarana Malaysia Berhad, Encik Mohd Azharuddin Mat Sah, "The 12-metre Volvo B8L double-decker buses offer a great solution to our operational challenges. With more seating and standing room, including one (1) wheelchair facility, each bus could hold up to 110 passengers at one time."

"Now that we are in Phase 4 of the National Recovery plan, Rapid Bus expects an increase of 10 percent to 20 percent from our existing load factor during the peak-hour, as well increase capacity per trip. More passengers can board the bus at one time, thus reducing the waiting time for our passengers," he added.

The Volvo B8L chassis is manufactured in Boras, Sweden, and has already been widely tested in the demanding city environments of Hong Kong and UK. Powered by Volvo's proven D8K engine, the B8L delivers lower overall weight, a tighter turning circle and all new axles and suspension providing outstanding ride quality, improved driveability, and higher levels of vehicle performance.

Euro VI benefits

Euro VI vehicles reduce particulate matters, which are microscopic solid or liquid matter suspended in the Earth's atmosphere, by 0.02 to 0.01. It also reduces the amount of nitrogen oxide released into the air from 2.0 to 0.4.

"Environmental Care is one of the Volvo Group's core values. We believe in clean, silent and efficient transport solutions that offer our customers entirely new possibilities for modern city development and sustainable living," shared Karen Tan, Country Manager, Volvo Buses Malaysia.

Facts about the Volvo B8L

- 350 hp D8K Volvo engine
- 1400 or 1600 Nm-rated automatic gearboxes
- New rear axle and driveline configuration
- Fuel-saving electrically powered auxiliaries
- Oil management system ensures the optimal oil level
- Up to 600 kg weight reduction
- Electrically powered hydraulic steering

Assembled locally in Malaysia by Pioneer Coachbuilders Sdn Bhd, these Euro VI double deck buses deliver 350 horsepower and are built with 22-ton capacity, length of 12 meter and height of 4.2m, bodied by Gemilang Coachwork Sdn Bhd, with a carrying capacity up to a total of 110 passengers. The buses are fitted with wheelchair ramps and mother-child seats. The new B8L continues Volvo's focus on safety with several features included as standard equipment, such as Electronic Stability Control (ESP), Electronic Braking Systems (EBS) and acceleration limiter. Also, the chassis is fitted with Volvo's proven telematics system, which allows operators to access the vehicle data in real time.

90 Years of Kit Loong in 90 Minutes

In this exclusive interview Asian Trucker learned about the exciting history of a thought leader in the tyre industry and how the founder's vision still shapes the business today.

His busy self, Kenneth Teh, Managing Director, Kit Loong Commercial Tyre, is rushing about the office. Clearly, a lot is going on, indicating that big things are about to happen. While the details are not being revealed yet, Kit Loong has been churning away at propelling the brand into the next level of tyre management. Slowing him down with a fried chicken lunch, we get to hear from him about the 90 year history of the company.

Back in the days, things were not recorded as strictly as today and thus, the exact founding day of the business is no longer known. It is however accepted that 1931 marks the year in which the company was originally set up, following a period during which services were provided by the founding father, without being incorporated though. Different times they were!

Retreading was also a very different process to what it is today. Kit Loong traces its roots to a workshop in Batu Road, Kuala Lumpur, an area today known as Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman (TAR). In the back of a workshop, Teh Kim Hye, fixed up tyres using wood fires as a source of the heat needed for the production of such tyres. "We still follow his philosophy of integrity and honesty," Teh reminisces. According to him, this attitude also landed his grandfather the much needed loan from the bank. These were the days when financial services were not as sophisticated as now, just like the production of the tyres: just a few pieces a day were made. Compared to the pneus available today, the tyres made back then could not be described as high-tech. However, Teh reminds us that the vehicles and roads were also a far cry from today's. "It was state-of-the-art for the time the tyres were made. As long as they rolled and there was no tread separation, it was a good tyre!" It was the latest technology at the time.

Teh's second oldest Uncle, Chen jet how was instrumental in industrialising the business. Having gained insights and experience in Europe, he brought his ideas back to Malaysia and convinced his family to move to Petaling Jaya in order to set up a bigger and more modern production facility. Bringing in modern equipment, the first real factory commenced operation in 1959 in Petaling Jaya. With the modern machinery, the production capacity

increased 10-fold: about 100 tyres could be made in a day. The move paid off and by the 70s, Kit Loong was manufacturing up to 500 pieces a day. At the time, 70 percent of tyres were passenger car retreaded tyres. "At that time, we had the biggest share in the market." Teh is also proud to say that the company was the first tyre company to host a dealer seminar in the prestigious KL Hilton, something that was not common in the industry.

As a kid, Teh enjoyed being around the tyres as they made for a great playground. Playing hide and seek was one of his favourites as the tyres offered endless possibilities to hide. Admittedly, initially, Teh had other career plans. When one of the managers needed some help on the retail side, he however discovered his passion for the business when, after several months, he met his master. "This Frenchman would be visiting us regularly from Singapore and he would share all his knowledge with me." Learning the ropes, Teh was sent to Singapore for a 10-day exhibition whereby he was to "pull in people". During that time, he could practice his sales skills as he had to find innovative ways to discuss the aspects of tyres to a wide audience.

One of the milestones in the company's history was the discontinuation of its passenger car retreaded tyre production in 2005. "A bold move as we were the market leader. If you asked me what I would do differently if I could go back in time, then I would say I would stop passenger car tyre career much earlier," Teh quipped. During the same time, Kit Loong also changed the production method from the then common hot-cure to what is the industry standard today, pre-cure. This change in production method was, according to Teh the biggest game-changer in the industry for a long time. Resulting from this, one could also see how the production of tyres would require two separate businesses, one that produces the liner and another, which is the retreader. Making this even more complex are modern requirements for tyres, demanding products that are not just rubber, but gain their respective attributes from the addition of synthetic compounds. New-age tyres, however, still contain a large percentage of natural rubber, for its unique properties.

Shutting down the passenger car retread business was tough as we had also made a lot of friends in the industry.

Located in Kota Kemuning now, Kit Loong was a part of a conglomerate of four partners, including Newera Group. "We tried to model this after a tyre retreading franchise business from India and the US. However, that did not work for us." It is not the first time though that the company has faced and braved hardships: during the second World War, the company was shut down and had to be re-build after the Japanese occupation ended.

What Teh described as the guiding principles has now found its way into the thinking of the company. What is needed, according to him, is transparency and traceability in the tyre business. All this, in his view, stems for the desire of creating safer products. In today's business environment, it is crucial to capitalise on resources. There is a word of caution though: "We might be able to replace certain work steps with machines, but that does not relieve us from our responsibilities." These responsibilities extend into the way Kit Loong does business today. Teh mentioned that one should not be easily blinded by an opportunity. He says that one should not take advantage, giving the example of a new client asking for a better price and promising a certain volume of business. "How would an old customer feel, having been loyal to us when we simply give a new client a better price?" It may not come as a surprise that companies like Bintang have been loyal to Kit Loong for over 50 years now, sharing the ups and downs of the tyre retreader.

Unlike others that might be bragging about their CSR, Kit Loong has been working in the background to do their part. Providing safe working environments and the creation of products that are adding to the safety of the user are mantras that Teh is carrying forward from the founding fathers of the business. "To say it is easy, doing it is a different matter." Consequently, testing and certification of tyres is the first step to enhancing safety. Next would be the maintenance of the tyres, which is easier today as the Internet of Things provides a myriad of possibilities. Essentially, the modern tyre manufacturer is an echo of the petrol station attendant we see in old movies: an expert that ensures the vehicle is fit for duty. Nowadays, Kit Loong can harness the power of technology to do so. "However, the very basics, like tyre pressure, are still best measured manually for best results." The way Kit Loong is positioned today is that it is a knowledge based business. Imagine a fleet manager having to deal with tyres that look almost identical and have similar performance. It takes a tyre management company by his side to best advice such function.

When looking at the history of tyre retreading in Malaysia, one will notice that the number of businesses active in this industry has been heavily decimated from over 200 not so long ago to about 60 remaining now. The reason for Kit Loong's survival is the approach to quality and how tyres are being used. Quality tyres used to be retreaded as a standard, whereas today, it might be cheaper to purchase single use tyres. "This is why we are no longer in the passenger car segment." As people have become more affluent, lesser people depend on retread tyres as a possibility to stretch their dollar.

Standing proud with a head count of just over 200, recently, the business has also seen a refurbishment of the premises. Making space for their in-house tech team, specific areas of the factory have been converted into offices to make space for the incoming staff. Here, Kit Loong has geared up significantly during the pandemic. "The pandemic has also provided us with an opportunity of picking the top talent of the top schools. We have hired groups of students that have even been on scholarships as this has been a time when others were cautious with their staffing."

Looking ahead, Kit Loong is currently looking at ways to recycling tyres effectively. "This is one of the things to come." When asked about how the 90th anniversary will be celebrated, Teh and his team will be applying the +1 principle we have seen at the Tokyo Olympics. "It is the wrong time now, seeing how the pandemic is still challenging us, but there is no doubt that there will be a big party next year."

Events & Exhibitions

HEAVY DUTY AFTERMARKET WEEK

Date :24 – 27 January, 2022
Venue : Grapevine, Texas, USA
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Created by the industry's leading trade associations and marketing groups, Heavy Duty Aftermarket Week (HDAW) is the largest North American gathering of heavy duty aftermarket professionals in the industry. More than 2,500 executives and managers- including distributors, suppliers, service providers, educators and industry media- attend this business-to-business event from the U.S., Canada and six other countries.

MALAYSIA COMMERCIAL VEHICLE EXPO 2022 (MCVE)

Date : 10 – 12 March 2022
Venue : Mines Exhibition and Convention Centre
Contact Info : brian@wtglasgow.com

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 March 2022 with plans to expand the space.

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 trucking.

AUTOMECHANIKA KUALA LUMPUR

Date : 15 – 17 March 2022
Venue : KLCC, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Contact Info: https://automechanika-kualalumpur.hk.messefrankfurt.com/kualalumpur/en/contact.html

With over 22 years in the ASEAN automotive industry, Automechanika Kuala Lumpur continues to play a fundamental role in the Automechanika brand's 15 show lineup. It is an event-oriented exhibition offering the perfect S.E.T (Sourcing, Entertainment and Training) of solutions, products and services to the participants. The platform is organised in an energetic, passionate and professional way to provide an extraordinary exhibition to you.

IAA Transportation 2022

Date : 20 – 25 September, 2022
Venue : Deutsche Messe, Hannover, Germany
Contact Info: https://www.iaa.de/en/transportation/for-exhibitors/plan-your-iaa-attendence/contact

Experience the world of buses, vans, trucks and trailers at the IAA TRANSPORTATION in Hanover - the world's most important platform for the future of the commercial vehicle industry.

TYREXPO ASIA BANGKOK 2022

Date : 26 – 28 October, 2022
Venue : BITEC, Bangkok, Thailand
Contact Info : jane.customer@tyrexpoasia.com

The stage is now set for the next Tyrexpo Asia show in Bangkok, which will take place at the Bangkok International Trade & Exhibition Centre (BITEC), Hall EH102 from 26th to 28th October 2022.

The latest edition of the Tyrexpo Asia series of tyre and automotive events by Tarsus Group, Tyrexpo Asia Bangkok will be presenting up to 120 exhibitors and 3,000 attendees, with key objectives to explore and further increase growth opportunities for both the local and emerging markets as the only fully dedicated tyre and automotive trade show in Asia Pacific.

Scania's Recognition of Good Drivers

In their recent initiative, Scania is to recognise 'A Good Driver" for contributing to "A Good Company" CO2 emission reduction.

Scania's Ecolution customers' drivers are now getting the recognition that they deserve through the launch of the annual 'A Good Driver' Truck & Bus Competition (AGD) that will run from 1 December 2021 to 30 November 2022. 'A Good Driver' is a truck or bus driver from 'A Good Company'.

The drivers automatically qualify as long as they are part of the Scania Ecolution partnerships and drive the specific vehicles under the programme. The vehicles they drive is already marked with a Scania Ecolution sticker. The drivers will get a t-shirt with AGD Qualifier Badge to begin with.

To win, a good driver's driving must result in the best percentage of km/l improvement throughout the duration. This can be tracked using Scania Fleet Management System. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners will then be crowned with a certificate and a host of attractive Scania premium prizes. The best that drives consistently in a safe, fuel-efficient and environmentally-friendly way will get the Champion Jacket with AGD Champion Badge. Corresponding companies to the winners get service vouchers worth MYR5 000/3 000/1 000 respectively. For more information and the terms & conditions of AGD can be found on Scania Malaysia's website.

"It is about time that we elevate the status of heavy commercial vehicle drivers by recognising the role that they play in contributing to their respective logistics and transport companies and to the environment," stated Heba El Tarifi, Managing Director, Scania Southeast Asia. "They are truly the good drivers that drive for good companies that care for the people and planet." 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.

The driver and vehicle performances are tracked via Scania Fleet Management Control (FMS) Packages, analysed and discussed between the customers and Scania periodically to spot improvement areas in order to implement the right solutions. Over 200 vehicles and 400 drivers from over 30 customers in Malaysia are part of Scania Ecolution. These good companies and good drivers are also part of the global effort to achieve the Science Based Targets together with Scania.

Scania is committed towards minimising emissions from its products and its own operations. These include cutting CO2 emissions by 20 percent from its land transport per transported tonne by 2025 (using 2015 as a baseline), and 50 percent from its own operation.

"As Scania celebrates 130 years and the First 50 Years in Malaysia today, we continue to be the leader in driving the shift towards a sustainable transport system through sustainable partnerships," said Heba. "Only by working with our customers and drivers can we achieve a sustainable future."

As an Ecolution partner with Scania, the good company and the driving is part of the journey towards achieving Science Based Target of reducing CO2 emissions in line with Scania's Science Based Target of the Scence Based Target initiative (SBTi).

ZF is Connecting Bus Fleets to the Power of Vehicle Data with ZF Bus Connect

A large vehicle fleet is an interplay of many moving parts: vehicles, drivers, electric power, combustion engines. Routes, fuel consumption, regulations and legal requirements must work together in harmony for smooth and efficient operation.

ZF Bus Connect is a new product which caters to the needs of bus fleet operators. As an advanced fleet management tool, ZF Bus Connect enables public transport or private bus operators to enhance and improve efficiency and performance of their fleets:

Safety: Geofencing and monitoring of driver's behaviour to detect dangerous bus driving situations to prevent accidents and to protect against theft.

Efficiency: Live data evaluation on a per-bus basis allows optimization of driving and route plans and improves fuel consumption.

Uptime: Predictive remote detection of damages or wear and tear of consumable items compatible with real-world bus configurations as well as diagnosis and secure "over the air" updates to reduce downtime.

ZF Bus Connect is developed for city buses and coaches with both electric and combustion engines or hybrid systems also in a mixed fleet. The user can check every aspect of the vehicle, including live view of vehicle locations in real-time, observe current energy or fuel consumption, check the status of battery charge or maintain status of the vehicles parts, brake wear and other system messages.

"With ZF Bus Connect we are helping the bus operators with their difficult change to all-electric fleets," explained Florian Freund, responsible for the ZF Bus Connect development. "With the power of data-analytics of in-vehicle data we are helping operators to manage their fleet efficiently by reducing the energy or fuel consumption whilst giving a clear overview to the CO2 footprint of the fleet."

All in one package: One system, three areas

ZF Bus Connect digital solution covers three areas: The On-Board Unit in the vehicle, the cloud, and the web-based portal for data analytics. Fleet operators have the possibility to purchase this all-in-one solution from ZF as a package or to connect to the cloud solution with their own compatible On-Board Unit and access the information via the portal as a third-party solution.

Established technologies for new markets

Based on the know-how of ZF's current bus connectivity solution supporting over 10 000 buses worldwide, ZF has developed the ZF Bus Connect digital solution. To date, five fleets have converted to the new generation of solution. The solution was developed in the ZF Group's Data Venture Accelerator, which is a worldwide hub for digital business within ZF's global research and development. It was set up to support and accelerate product developments whose ideas and concepts have successfully proven their added value and technological feasibility – from initial realizations to mature digital products and services.

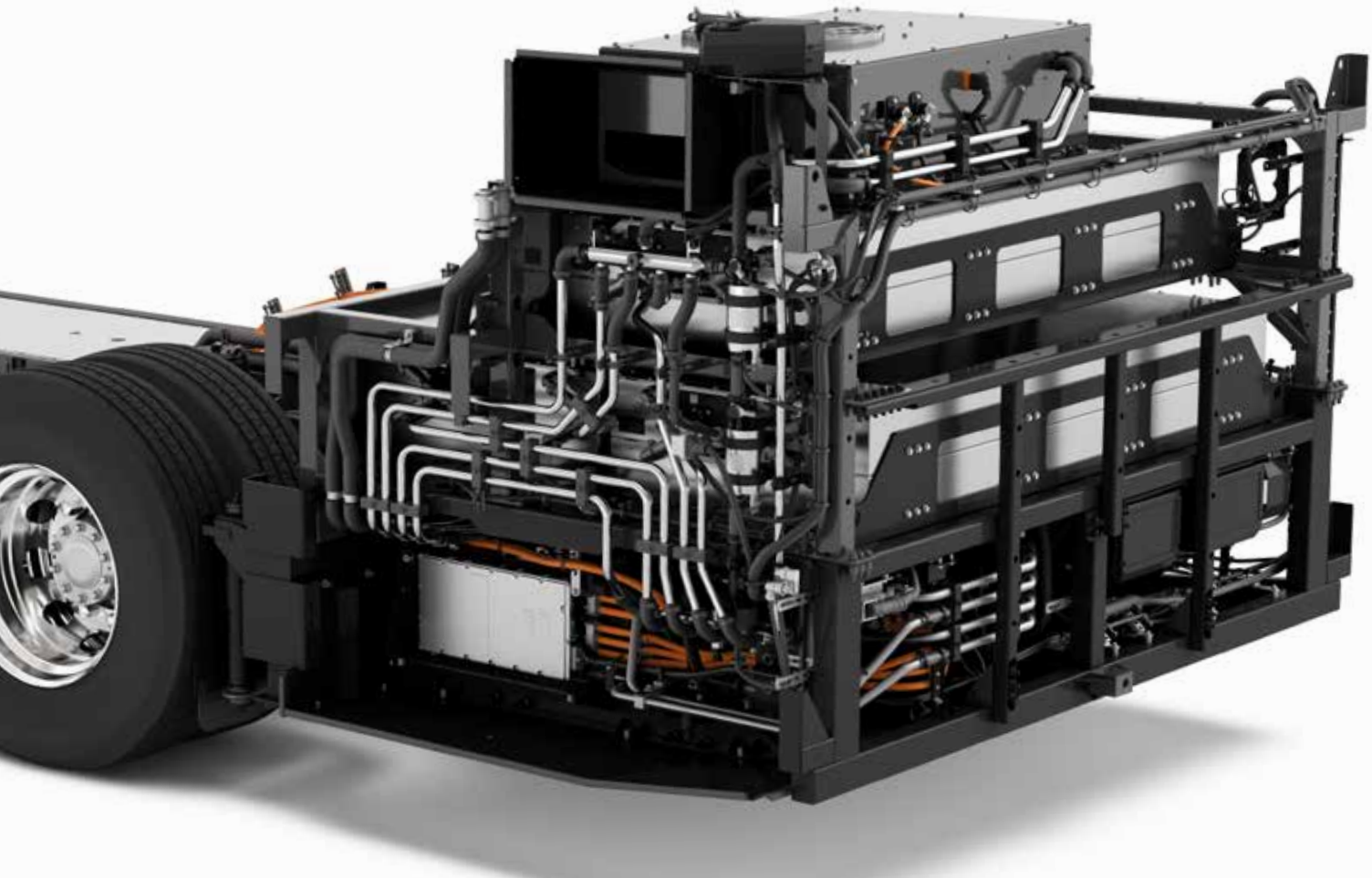
Fuelling an Industry

A drastic shift to alternative fuels is currently shaking up the industry. Time to look at how the industry will move in the future.

One of the current megatrends is the electrification of drive trains. How simple that term may make it sound on the surface, there is a lot more to it. There is no denying that we need to re-design vehicles as the current way of fuelling them is no longer sustainable. Burning fossil fuels has been identified as a major contributor of CO2 emissions, which has reached levels that are putting the entire planet at risk.

The Biggest User

The transport industry has been identified as the major contributor of CO2 emissions and it is only natural that we start inciting change here. It is also interesting to note that the general consensus points at



developments that are very different when it comes to personal transportation compared to commercial vehicles. Millennials for instance are said to shun the ownership of expensive investment goods: cars are better rented when needed, rather than paying for one that is supportive of a flexible lifestyle that sees a young person spend money on food rather than property. With the arrival of autonomous vehicles we will also be able to address the issue that a personal vehicle will be moving only about two percent of its lifetime.

Combining the technology of a ride-hailing app with an autonomous vehicle will allow us to have the cars on the road most of the time, rather than in the basement car park. Cars spending more time driving means that we need fewer of them. Drastically fewer. At the same time, we will see a continued increase in demand for public transport. More and more mega cities are warming up to Bus Rapid Transport systems (BRT) and to connect one city with another. The idea of last mile transportation being possible has given way to concepts that see only a few passengers in a bus-like vehicle, creating personalised routes. The city of the future may be one where there are myriads of public transport systems with very few or no more vehicles owned by individuals. The bottom line is that the need for energy will continue to increase.

Hydrogen & Co

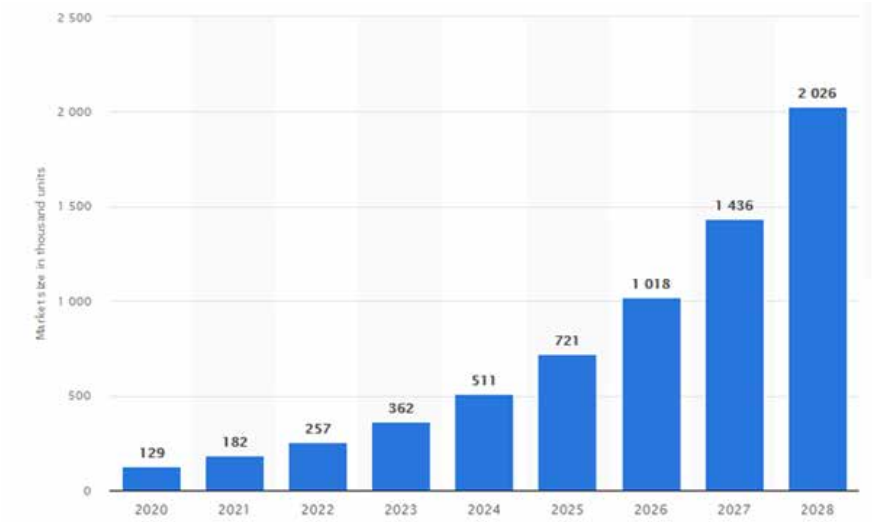
Somehow, electric vehicles are nothing new as such. The very first Porsche, build in 1898, was a fully electric vehicle. However, with the development of new technology, electrification of large fleets and vast distances is now possible. Today, we see a range of new fuels emerging. Hydrogen is one that is being hailed as emission free at the point of use, i.e. when a vehicle uses it as a fuel to move about. Scania for instance is looking at alternative fuels, such as their process to convert waste to energy. Electric vehicles could be either powered by batteries that are charged in depots or through induction spools that are embedded in bus stops or at traffic lights. We also see the delivery of electricity to vehicles via overhead lines, very much as trolley busses would use them.

Fuel cells using hydrogen are providing energy to power a bus through a reaction within the cells, which need re-charging at a depot too. Gas, as a by-product of oil extraction is another viable fuel that can be used to power buses. Recently, DEUTZ AG, now the world's oldest engine company and one of the world's leading independent engine manufacturers has launched a new engine. The hydrogen-powered engine has passed initial tests on the test bench with flying colours and is scheduled to go into full production in 2024. The six-cylinder TCG 7.8 H2 is

based on an existing engine design. Generating a power output of 200 kW it runs carbon-neutral and very quietly. In principle, the engine is suitable for all current DEUTZ applications, but due to the available infrastructure it is likely to be used first in stationary equipment, generators, and rail transport.

The last word on the Diesel engine has yet to be spoken as ongoing development is still delivering improvements in fuel efficiency, thus also contributing to the goal of reducing CO2 emissions.

Projected global market size for electric commercial vehicles - 2020 and 2028, in 1 000 units



Source: Statista

Production and Delivery
Each of these fuel has its own pros and cons. For instance, Diesel is widely available now and while burning it is producing harmful emissions, the energy content is among the highest. Powering a bus using a battery or fuel cell may be emission-free at the point of consumption, but the energy would need to be produced and delivered to the vehicle as well. Electricity could be produced using nuclear power, which results in radioactive waste. Said waste in turn is something that needs to be considered when looking at the overall P/L sheet of this fuel. Another option is the use of solar panels, which would require waste areas of land to be converted into solar farms.

Diesel today also still has the advantage that the delivery system is well rounded out and there is hardly a place on the planet where access to Diesel is a tough call to make. In contrast, any infrastructure for electricity, hydrogen or other means would have to be build first. While the technology is available and viable, it will still take time until the service networks can rival our commonplace petrol kiosks.

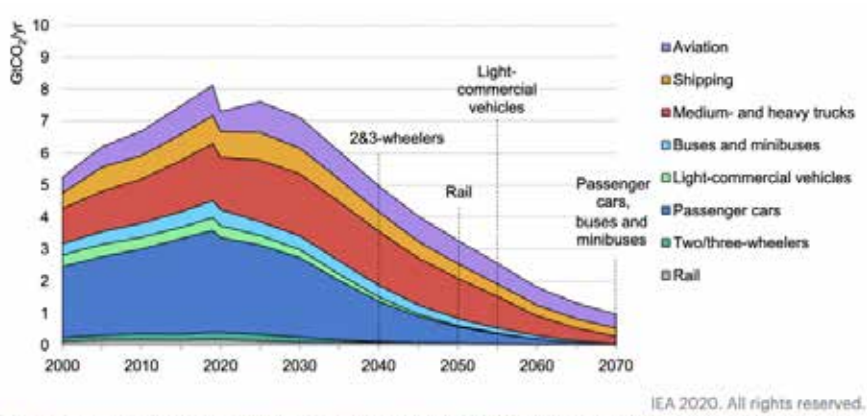
Storage and Safety
While building the infrastructure for delivery of electricity, gas or fuel cells as propellant, safety of each fuel will need to be addressed. Diesel, again, has an advantage as the storage is relatively easy and it does not easily combust. In the wake of a recently launched fully electric bus, the manufacturer also pointed out that safety protocols for a fully electric or even hybrid bus requires adaptation. Dealing with electricity needs technicians to be trained in order to avoid any injuries or fatalities. The same applies for hydrogen and gas, which require extra care as these fuels are highly combustible, unlike Diesel.

Established vs New Players
The rise of new energy solutions has also opened up opportunities for new market entrants. Established companies will have to develop and maintain a number of drivetrain options as they still need to service the existing fleets powered by Diesel while offering new variations. When starting from scratch, one does not have to deal with old structures, promises for warranties and the need to continue servicing older technology. In the past few years, the market has seen new entrants challenging the established, global players: Hyzon, Nikola and Tesla are just a few to name, but maybe the most prominent ones.

Some have argued that these new players will outperform the established brands as they are able to offer the latest, newest technology without having the historical baggage of the Diesel era. What many may forget is that most OEMs are listed companies that cannot announce forward looking statements about their upcoming technology or sales estimates. One thing is for sure though: the established brands are not sitting idle either.

For example Daimler and Volvo Group are developing fuel cells in a joint venture and many other similar agreements between brands have been formed in order to further accelerate the development on new fuel technologies.

Figure 3.16 Global CO_2 emissions in transport by mode in the Sustainable Development Scenario, 2000-70



Notes: Dotted lines indicate the year in which various transport modes have largely stopped consuming fossil fuels and hence no longer contribute to direct emissions of CO_2 from fossil fuel combustion. Residual emissions in transport are compensated by negative emissions technologies, such as BECCS and DAC, in the power and other energy transformation sectors.

Source: Our World in Data

The fuel revolution is also seeing interesting alliances being formed. Recently, new entrant Nikola and Iveco formed a joint venture thus increasing threats from a reputable competitor accessing new technology. Meanwhile, the promises of a cleaner future are not always kept by a challenger. For example, Tesla's yet to be sold Semi Trailer could be identified as threat upon introduction in 2017. This may no longer be a valid as Volvo Group started selling electric vehicles although Volvo Group's record number is lower than Hyzon's sales in Australia.

A Question of Strategy

Both, transporters and OEMs will need to find a strategy that balances needs and demands from the industry with the call for greener transportation. At the moment, alternative fuel technology is also implicating a higher price tag for the bus or truck. Strategic planning needs to consider the financial position of these company. When deciding to make a switch from Diesel to any of the alternative fuels, due diligence has to be carried out, applying

various methods to appraise possible providers of vehicles and infrastructure, ensuring that investments provide long terms financial gains and strategic advantages derived from the new technologies. As an overarching basis for any recommendations made the following can be used:

Two mega-trends impact this industry: population growth and increasing demand for transportation, the latter accelerated through urbanisation. Driven by the demand for emission free vehicles, the market is projected to grow to USD 178 560 Million by 2026, from USD 11 0540 Million in 2020.

The market is growing: transport companies needs to ensure appropriate financial resources to exploit opportunities. The introduction of a new fuel technology can be accelerated by untaxed reserves a manufacturer may have, while its global network is a financial burden due to high fixed cost. An extensive network is, however a good method to start spreading a new fuel technology.

Recommended Strategy Changes

Established OEMs can apply an Achilles' heel strategy and counter new entrants at their two biggest weaknesses: lack of distribution and being focused. Those with a long history have the chance of creating a blue ocean by being a provider of vehicles using alternative fuels covering all common applications.

New entrants typically have a narrow and flat product portfolio as they do not (yet) deploy platform thinking. The foundation to countering such competition rests in the dynamic deployment of resources already present within global players. To accelerate the development of a complete range of commercial vehicles with drive lines using alternative fuels, organisational structures need to be re-aligned. Key staff from various disciplines are to the pooled to make full use of the shared knowledge within the company. The advantage of established brands is that incremental changes can be quickly rolled out.

It cannot take much longer before bus makers will create a comprehensive, wide and deep, multi-product product range comprising of buses that address all types of applications. It can be expected that such new offering is to be rolled-out globally via the existing global network, whereby products are modular, thus generating economies of scale. Clients using products for different applications will be able to gain advantages from using one supplier, who is also offering required services

across borders. Depending on the mission, the good ol' Diesel engine may still be the best possible option when it comes to long distance transport.

Impact on Suppliers

Parallel to the development of a revised comprehensive product portfolio based on alternative fuels, the value chain is to be re-designed for the components needed for the development of electric vehicles and reduction of supply base complexity. For instance, electromobility has also created opportunities for new companies to be created, offering new product specifically needed for the new generation of vehicles. One can also expect a race for integration: by acquiring companies that have expert knowledge, said knowledge will also no longer be available to new entrants or competitors.

Reputation Paying Forward

Having direct and full control over new technology allows for the production of vehicles that comply with the vision of the company. As mentioned, electromobility has new safety risks, such as electric shocks. New entrants will lack reputation and a safety track record while established brands have built such reputation and trust over the past decades.

The allure of a new product cannot be denied and wanting to try a new technology has already created pioneers that bought into the idea of new fuels. The product strategy of established brands will have to be supported by a business unit strategy that is focused on the retention of clients through servitization. The efforts made are to prepare markets for the arrival of the revised new generation of vehicles.

Switching cost can be identified as low and clients may switch to new entrants, offering a ready product in a limited number of countries. Meanwhile, global brands on business unit level needs to aim at retaining customers by offering peripheral services that support the hardware. This will force new entrants to take the position of challengers, whereby they may have to outspend established brands, which in turn depletes their capital needed for expansions.

These peripherals include telematics, driver training or buy-back offers, in accordance with technical readiness and prevailing legislation in each market, fine-tuned by localised analysis. In particular, the offer to trade in combustion engine-powered vehicles for electric vehicles within the next five years could ensure customer loyalty.

Who Wins?

Readiness of countries, availability of infrastructure and demand from the market are key determinants of the success of any alternative fuel. What may seem like a simple switch from one to the other is, apparently, not an easy task. While we should all work towards a greener future, this transition takes a lot more than initially meets the eye.

The requirements surrounding alternative fuels will also impact both, users and providers of vehicles. The push for new fuels and drivelines offers opportunities, but also poses threats. The end of the Diesel engine may not be coming soon, while transporters should be able to pick a propellant that is aligned with their mission and user profile. Eventually, the quest greener transportation will end in the creation of a myriad of options, all of which are going to be valid and in support of the global ambitions for a sustainable future.

Addressing the Acute Shortage of Drivers in the Transport Industry

The Pan Malaysian Bus Operators Association consists of State Associations and companies which operate stage and express buses. A number of members also operate school, chartered, factory and tour buses. In a memorandum presented to the Ministry of Transport last year, challenges impacting the industry were highlighted. According to its president, Datuk Mohamad Ashfar Ali, these issues have yet to be addressed.

According to Ashfar Ali, the transport industry has been facing the problem of driver shortage for more than 20 years. The situation is getting more critical each year. Presently there is an acute yearly shortage of approximately 5 000 bus and lorry drivers in the country. This acute shortage is attributed to the following reasons:

- Old drivers retiring.
- Drivers migrating to work in Singapore.
- Drivers leaving the industry to work in other industries.
- Many potential workers who are interested to become bus or lorry drivers cannot afford the high cost of entry (approximately RM 5 000) to qualify as a bus/lorry driver.

The shortage of drivers has caused hardship to bus and lorry operators and created disciplinary problems among drivers. The drivers, knowing they are difficult to be replaced have mostly ignored the directives of their employers and refused to pay summonses for various offences committed by drivers like speeding, wrongful parking, ignoring red traffic lights etc but issued by the relevant authorities to the operators.

However, despite repeated appeals for assistance from the Government over the past years to help resolve this shortage, no substantive action has been taken to alleviate the problem. The association repeatedly calls for the Government to allocate funds for schemes to provide free training to yearly generate adequate numbers of bus and lorry drivers to overcome the shortage of drivers. Ashfar Ali said that this will result in several benefits.

- It will ease the current shortage so as to fulfill the needs of the whole transport industry in line with the Government to make Malaysia a logistics hub for E-commerce.
- With more drivers, the transport industry can have better selection of quality drivers and get rid of the bad ones to reduce road accidents in the long run.
- School leavers/the unemployed will be able to obtain a skill (i.e. driving) to enable them to earn a living.
- With more drivers, Malaysia can happily send them to Singapore or other counties. Their remittance back to Malaysia will help Malaysia earn foreign exchange.
- More drivers will enable the tourist industry to expand resulting in more earnings for Malaysia.
- More drivers will ease the acute shortage of drivers in the transport/ logistic industry particularly in the ports and road transport sectors which are the back bone of the Malaysian economy.

Having initiated a number of activities on their own accord, the members of the association highlight that the following steps were taken by transport operators and the Government but were not successful.

(a)Transport Operators

Transport operators advanced monies for prospective "drivers" to obtain their driving licenses for buses/lorries. Once the licenses were obtained a majority of these drivers "disappeared" without working for the transport operators who funded them or returning the monies advanced to them by the transport operators.

(b)Roadshows conducted by Transport Operators jointly with the Ministry of Transport

The main purpose of the road shows was to inform prospective drivers of the vacancies existing in the bus/lorry industry. Unfortunately, almost all the enquiries were from drivers who were already employed in the transport industry and were planning to change jobs or from those who did not have driving licenses. This did not serve our purpose of getting new drivers to join the transport industry to overcome the shortage.

(c)HRDF Scheme

HRDF introduced a scheme whereby transport operators could draw on their HRDF Contribution Fund to train drivers. But first these "drivers" had to be employed by the transport operators. Salaries had to be paid for these "drivers" before they can be qualified to apply for the use of the HRDF Fund. This scheme did not go well with the transport operators as after paying for the salary, EPF etc for these "drivers" there was no guarantee that once these "drivers" got their driving licenses, they will continue to work for the transport operators who sponsored them. As a result, this scheme was not taken up by transport operators.

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In-Depth with Volvo's BZL

The launch of Volvo's latest offer has certainly answered a number of questions regarding the direction and state of electromobility. However, there are also some new questions that arise and in this exclusive interview Asian Buses gets to the bottom of things.

Immediately after the global launch of the BZL, we spoke to Dan Pettersson, Head of International, Volvo Buses. The first thing one will notice is that the latest product offered by Volvo Buses is labelled a "Electromobility Offer" and not a bus. Pettersson has obviously expected this question and elaborated that a bus nowadays is not the only offer, but part of a system, something that Volvo offers. "Along with a bus come a number of services. We work with partners to offer charging infrastructure."

When considering a new solution, fairly quickly one will need to address the issue that many fleets of commercial vehicles are mixed brands. Just like a fuel would be the same for any brand of buses, the electricity-powered buses offered by Volvo share this approach. In this case, the charging infrastructure is being standardized. According to Pettersson, the industry has to standardize this. "We are using standardised solutions - CCS-2and OppCharge are examples which are standard charging interfaces used around the world by suppliers."

Volvo offers a revolutionary chassis, which will require the input from experienced body builders. Priding themselves in offering a global solution, Volvo Buses is working with a number of body builders. Said Pettersson "We are working with some of them on a global basis, others on regional and yet another are appointed for local applications." The choice of the respective partner depends on the specifications and local content needed in the buses.

"Our focus market in Asia Pacific for the launch is Australia, where we have started with Volgren, a Marco Polo company," he said. In summary, he said that the partner chosen will always be the best possible one in each market. "With the introduction of electromobility, one also has to acknowledge that there are big changes in the supply chain."

The radical shift comes after Volvo has been working on Diesel-powered buses for over 100 years. Besides new technology, new competences are needed. A number of body builders have already acquired the know-how to address the needs of the technology this new paradigm is built upon. Pettersson stated that Volvo is also assisting its partners with the transfer of required skills.

Picking antipodean markets, Australia and the UK, as the launch markets might have raised some eyebrows. Recently, the market has witnessed a number of new products being launched in small and highly developed markets that allow for close monitoring of new tech. Citing the strong market position in the two markets picked for this launch, Pettersson hopes that the ambitious plans to implement electromobility in these two countries will accelerate the deployment of the new system.

However, Pettersson also cautioned that the enthusiasm around electro mobility needs to be channelled in the right way. "We cannot serve all markets at the same time; we need to start somewhere". In parallel to this, the prioritisation must go hand in hand with the assessment of the readiness of the market. The sales force needs to be ready, as has to be the local partners and of course the spare parts pipeline. To get this right, it is all about the application of the Volvo BZL. "This needs to be done absolutely right. Therefore, the sales force has to be trained accordingly to get the requirements right and right from the start." This is just one aspect of the system that has to be ready with all aspects, including the services.

Globally, parts and major components for electro-mobility are being offered and developed by myriads of start-ups and established players. Although certain sub-systems are standardised, the BZL still contains a high level of Volvo-own components. "Batteries for instance are a good example. There is such a rapid development that it is best to work with partners."

Beyond the hardware, one also has to address the changed needs of other key components, especially the driver. While the behaviour of a driver could already be instrumental in contributing to the bottom line of an operator, this is even more so the case with electric vehicles. A heavy right foot for instance can drastically impact the range of such vehicle. Overall, the behaviour of the vehicle changes: acceleration and braking changes with the new technology. Emphasis will have to be on driver training to get the system performing optimally.

In tandem with the BZL, Volvo introduced "Volvo Connect", a way to monitor fleets and to learn from data gathered from the telematics system build into the vehicles. One aspect of this is to optimise the charging pattern in accordance with routes and driving patterns. Pettersson calls this an enabler to increase profitability of a fleet by way of creating value out of the data. Requiring the cooperation with the clients is expected to provide valuable input.

With new technology come new requirements. In the case of the BZL, a significant number of safety features have been added. In detail:

- Electric Cables & Connectors pre-made to length ensuring quality
- Hazardous Voltage Interlock Loop (HVIL)
- Isolation resistance monitoring
- Floating ground (earth)
- Traction voltage discharge
- Emergency cut-off switch
- Battery cell level: safety is ensured with separators, vent and CID(Current Interrupt Device)
- o Inbuilt fire protection on module and pack level
- Battery protection casing and internally fused
- Continuous monitoring of for instance temp and voltage
- Thermal runaway detection
- Comprehensive test program verifying legal requirements and Volvo internal requirements
- Full training including safety requirements based on EU standards

With the backdrop of the pandemic, some interesting developments emerged. One might have expected that a mega event like this may impede the development of a new technology. However, Pettersson noted that the development has really sped-up in the past 18 months. "We expect that this technology will really take off now and that city buses will be where a rapid growth with be seen." Following that, Pettersson expects that a whole range of new products will be introduced.

Volvo is confident that they are on the right track with the new offer as the company not only offers sophisticated products. Pettersson pointed out that launching a new bus is just one aspect of the business. What it takes is the network, the ability to deliver consistent service over decades, not just months and the readiness with parts to ensure the vehicles are performing over their life-span, which can be up to 20 years.

SuperNice Expands Fleet to Spur the Market and Industry with Scania

SuperNice Express, the brand name for Express Senibudaya (M) Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Unimax Group of Companies spurs the industry and market with Scania – expands with four new and six pre-owned coaches, financed by Scania Credit and under Ecolution partnership.

This expansion was celebrated by a handover, and a signing ceremony at the newly launched flagship Scania Malaysia Senai Sales and Services Centre. Heba El Tarifi, Managing Director, Scania Southeast Asia handed the keys to Joshua Tan, Group Managing Director, Unimax Group. Present at the ceremony was also Roy Chew, Group Chairman, Unimax Group, Steve Wager, Managing Director, Scania Finance Asia and Daniel Tan, Sales Director, Scania Southeast Asia.

The additional 10 SuperNice coaches consists of four new Scania K360IB4x2 units, plus six refurbished pre-owned Scania K360IB4x2 (4 units) and Scania K310IB4x2 (2 units). "SuperNice is one of the key players in the north to spur the express coach market and the passenger transportation industry into an upward momentum leading towards a quicker economic recovery. This momentum is supported by Scania total solutions, leading to better profitability and sustainability for their company," stated El Tarifi.

With Scania Financial assistance, SuperNice will also benefit from the flexible financing solutions by Scania Credit Malaysia providing it with predictable cost over the entire lifecycle of the Scania coaches. It is a one-stop provider that is focused on giving its customers tailored and sustainable financial packages that best suit their business needs. Scania Credit Malaysia also offers insurance solutions that help minimise their financial loss and handling of damages while optimising uptime. SuperNice can now appreciate how to leverage the credit facilities that we offer so that it can use its cash for other investments, maintaining a steady cashflow for the business.

SuperNice Express, was the first express coach service in the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia to sign up for Scania Ecolution back in 2020. Registering positive results in fuel economy for the first 14 Scania coaches has led to a decision to include all 10 additional Scania coaches handed over today to be signed on this sustainability partnership as well.

Additional Base

Besides the purchase of these buses, an additional depot in the South is being added to their network.

Located in Pasir Gudang, the location was recommended as a hub to cover the expansion the company is currently is undergoing. As a previous container yard of a haulage company, it has all the assets that one would need, including fuel pumps. Further, the addition of this depot will support Express Senibudaya's parent company, Unimax Group of Companies (Unimax). As Joshua Tan, Group Managing Director, Unimax Group of Companies, explained, the location serves as a central hub to store and distribute Shell fuels, which is the company's primary business.

Combining both businesses in one location, buses and their drivers are now safer as they do not need to park outside. Access to services, repairs and refuelling is now easier for the SuperNice buses too. "After our companies partnered, we have looked at ways how we can synergise on our businesses. This is one location that demonstrates our approach," he said. Further expansion using this model could be on the cards, in line with a more pro-active strategy now taken.

Different Thinking

While most other operators are cautious about the future, Chew is taking a different approach. "People still travel. Not as much, but some still need to get around. We decided to maintain our headcount and continue running all our routes," he said. According to him, the reason is that the drivers have been with them for a long time and it would be difficult to find drivers once the economy opens up again. Also, word that the buses were still running has gotten around. Now that bus journeys are possible again, ticket agents are confident to sell tickets for SuperNice.

We are young, maybe a bit crazy, but sometimes you need to try something different!

"Others may still be in the process of restarting and they cannot capitalise on the increasing demand for tickets." Obviously, this thinking has paid off as the company is seeing demand sharply increased. Chew admits that this has required resources to be poured into this approach, however, the gamble seemed to have worked in his favour. "We are young, maybe a bit crazy, but sometimes you need to try something different!"

Tan and Chew gave a big nod to Scania Credit. Having exhausted all other means of financing, they found that banks were extremely cautious when it came to financing vehicles. Not so the Swedes: Scania enabled SuperNice to continue financing the existing buses as well as these newly added ones. Chew recalled that many banks rejected his requests as transportation was not seen as a dependable business to invest in.

Moral Booster

A good year ago, Express Senibudaya signed up for Scania's Ecolution (Asian Buses reported). "I am more than happy with this program. The obvious reason is to reduce fuel consumption, however, it has been a real morale booster for our drivers!" Chew quipped. Drivers have gained a lot from Ecolution as there has been a lot of hands-on training provided and they learned a lot.

With the economy opening up, the drivers are now better equipped with skills and ready to resume full service. "We have managed to reduce fuel consumption a lot and it was an obvious decision to also have these ten buses we just added to be taken into this program. It is definitely a win-win arrangement."

"Overall, our approach has proven to be the right one," Tan added. Supporting the ticket agents and to keep drivers on the payroll is now paying dividends. "Drivers will not forget that bosses have stood by them, just as those passengers that depended on our services. Although there were very few passengers, mainly government officials and public servants, those have spread the word about our service not being disrupted."

Chew and Tan parted by giving others words of encouragement. They urged to keep up the good work and remain hopeful that the new year will bring about a positive change.

radius Telematics radius Fuel Solutions

Radius gets You Straight to Improved Performance

There is no denying that managing your vehicles can improve the bottom line. Radius Business Solutions helps you with their unique combination of a fuel card and telematics solution.

Radius Payment Solutions is a payment and fleet services company headquartered in Crewe, Cheshire, founded in 1990. It operates a technology centre in Manchester, which was established in March 2016, and has a presence in 29 countries. It opened offices in Singapore and Malaysia in September 2016. It opened offices in Singapore in 2016 and Malaysia in 2017 making Malaysia the regional hub for South East Asia, Radius operates under the name of Radius Business Solutions.

Principal activities of the company comprise of fuel cards, telematics, insurance, telecoms and solutions for electric vehicles. Here, in Malaysia, Radius is offering the fuel card and telematics only at the moment. As the Malaysian office was only established five years ago, Radius is first penetrating the market with this integrated solution. What makes this offer unique is that Radius is the only business that can offer both. Many providers can fit telematics, others offer fuel cards, however, the integration of both is something that Radius prides itself in. In addition, telecommunication and insurance businesses are highly restricted in Malaysia, which explains the absence of these components in Radius' local offering.

Overall, the idea of Radius' business is to offer a one-stop shop, covering some of the most important aspects of the business. Eventually, Radius will add-on products to the portfolio here, allowing for cross-selling to customers. The aim is to also offer the same products that are already very successfully sold in Europe.

In South East Asia, Radius is an exclusive distributor of the Shell Fleet Card. It was Shell that roped Radius in to expand the use of this tool rapidly among fleet operators. This is a unique situation as Radius would operate differently in Europe for instance. Here, in SEA, Radius only distributes the Shell Fleet Card, whereas in Europe, Radius would partner with all fuel suppliers and giving customers access to a flat fee for fuels, regardless of which brand of fuel they would use for their vehicles. As the fuel prices are regulated in Malaysia, there is no possibility to offer discounts though.

Fleets are managed through the online platform called Velocity. The integration of the telematics and fuel card happens in Velocity. The caveat is that a client cannot upgrade from a fuel card issued by Shell directly: customers are encouraged to consider the package right from the beginning. Velocity offers what many consider as standard telematics information. The sim card is provided by default at no cost to customers. All devices

comes standard with it, whereby the best-seller at the moment is the combo with telematics and the fleet card with about half of Radius' clients are opting for this. While the offer works best for fleets, it is the SME segment that has been most receptive to the offer from Radius. Installation of devices is carried out through partners nation-wide.

While it is possible to just pick one of the products, Radius' advice is that one should opt for both items from them in order to get the most out of the investment. Through the application of both products from Radius, one is able to generate more sophisticated reporting from one source. Instead of having to generate and analyse various reports, Velocity is providing these reports with just a few clicks. Savings of up to 20 percent are achievable according to Radius.

Beyond that, the detection of fuel theft is a crucial aspect. With the fuel card, it is possible to prevent fraud at the pump. Considering that savings through theft prevention can amount to as much as RM 4 000 per month, the cost for the telematics solution is easily recovered. The bottom line is that the deployment of these tools is improving efficiency and profitability of a fleet.

To make the use of these tools easier, Radius have rolled out 3 different apps for telematics alone. Among them, the vehicle tracking app deserves a highlight: Velocity for day to day tracking view, Vehicle Check app, drivers are encouraged to do a walk-around of the vehicle every day before starting their journeys. Going through a series of checks and questions, the app captures the status of the vehicles, including e.g. Tyre thread status, Driver App for drivers to monitor their driving behaviour from the past trip histories. With images uploaded to the app, the fleet manager can assess the status of each vehicle at any time. Drivers play a crucial role and this is reflected in the sharing of the data collected by the telematics system. Allowing the data to be reviewed by the drivers allows for a deeper involvement whereby the drivers can immediately gauge their own performance.

Encouraged by the initial success, Radius aims to become the biggest provider of this type of solutions. A possible expansion throughout South East Asia is boosted by a successful year 2020 despite the pandemic. One of the factors that could accelerate this expansion would be the reduction of restrictions of movements for commercial vehicles across borders. "With the 50 percent year on year growth, I am hopeful of scaling the business particularly towards the underserved SMEs. One of the vision is to help SMEs digitalize their fleet management and our products are also ready for the EV transition in years to come, " said Jonathan Goh, Regional Director - South East Asia of Radius Business Solutions.

MANN+HUMMEL: Reduction of the CO2 Footprint along the Supply Chain

Climate change poses immense challenges for all of us. MANN+HUMMEL, is responding to these challenges and takes responsibility. The company defined a Carbon Zero Strategy, which describes its path to a carbon neutral footprint. In the future, MANN+HUMMEL will also align operational decisions, products and manufacturing processes as well as procurement strategies with this Carbon Zero Strategy.

Corresponding to the requirements and goals of the Paris Agreement on Climate Protection, MANN+HUMMEL is committed to implement the principle of "Avoid - Reduce - Compensate". Accordingly, strategy declares the aim to procure electricity requirements in a climate-neutral manner starting in January 2022 and to make the manufacturing processes at all MANN+HUMMEL sites CO2-neutral by 2030.

"We can only achieve our climate protection goals with your support," urges the management of the company. Encouraging others to follow them on our path to climate neutrality. For our supplier network, we have identified the following key measures to continuously reduce your respective carbon footprints:

- Increase the energy efficiency of manufacturing and logistics processes
- Usage of renewable energies
- Usage of secondary materials/recyclables e.g. for steel, aluminum, plastics, packaging materials
- Application of life cycle analysis (LCA) in the development of parts and components to optimize energy requirements during the use phase and recyclability in close coordination with our engineers
- Application of methods and tools to calculate the product carbon footprint (PCF) and identify CO2 hotspots
- Integration of the supply chain to optimize upstream CO2 emissions

To ensure that MANN+HUMMEL's climate protection requirements are taken into account in their supply chain, the Supplier Code of Conduct has been adapted accordingly. Also included are the requirements of the German Act on Corporate Due Diligence Obligations in Supply Chains. The current version can be found on MANN+HUMMEL's homepage under 'Downloads'.

Daimler CV Spin-Off

Daimler is separating its passenger car business from the commercial vehicles as the two will become separate entities. We find out what this means for the markets.

In our exclusive interview, Chief Executive Officer, Daimler Commercial Vehicles South East Asia Pte. Ltd (DCVSEA), Harald Schmid shares what the spin-off means for our markets. Setting the stage, he said that "The transformation of the business for cars and trucks has a different focus and develops in different speed. Now as an independent organization we will be able to have more speed in decision-making and we will get a better grip on opportunities for example, when it comes to partnerships or the cooperation with local production partners, which might play a bigger role in the future."

There are of course a lot of benefits, which he identifies as following. Firstly, as mentioned before, the decision making will be much faster. Secondly, the split will allow DCVSEA to focus even more on customer requirements, which are very different in the commercial vehicle segment vs. passenger cars. And lastly, the biggest impact is for the Regional Logistic Center, where DCVSEA will be able to serve customers with spare parts better, as the brand will be able to stock-up more dedicated parts for the commercial customers across SEA region.

On top of that, with Daimler Truck AG there is now a bigger focus on our brands in the region: Mercedes-Benz Trucks, FUSO and Bharat Benz. "We can tap on the entire portfolio that the company has to offer and tailor our offerings to the market," he said.

The news about the upcoming split has already made the rounds and certain comments have been anticipated. However, Schmid said that "We don't expect the public to get confused as the split is very straight forward. There will be a company, Mercedes-Benz AG which covers Passenger Cars and Vans, and a company, Daimler Truck AG, which focuses on Daimler Trucks and Buses." Customers that do have a fleet of Mercedes-Benz Passenger Cars as well as Daimler trucks, will be approached by the respective sales team.

Customers in our region will continue to benefit from the dedicated local team. There is no change for the headquarters of the South East Asia region in Singapore. It houses a dedicated sales and aftersales team for Daimler Trucks and Buses who is taking care of the business for South East Asia. "I am very confident that the split and the dedication will further strengthen the focus on our customers, and will bring the overall business in the region forward."

The existing staff here in SEA is hardly affected, as DCVSEA have already in most of the markets dedication for trucks and buses. In addition, DCVSEA will increase the headcount to inbound activities, which were taken care of by passenger car colleagues before the split. For example in the Logistic Center, there will now be dedication to Trucks and Buses too.

"In some of our markets, we had to sign new contracts due to the separation. Other than that, the impact for the dealers and distributors is kept to a minimum to ensure business is running smoothly." Schmid is confident that the customers will not be affected in any way by this transition.

During their last Global Conference, which was held online due the ongoing pandemic, the board members presented the new setup. Overall it was well received by the General Distributors of our region and everyone is looking forward to the split which will allow Daimler to focus even more on their customers' requirements. "We will only be able to achieve our ambition with the customer at the centre, and this split of the company will allow us to do so," said by Antonio Randazzo, Vice President of Daimler Truck Sales & Marketing South East Asia.

Concluding, Schmid said "I am very confident that this is the right direction moving forward and will enable us to allocate resources optimally for both internal combustion vehicles and electric vehicles. This is very important because not all markets in South East Asia will move towards electric vehicles at the same time. The focus on trucks and buses will ensure a balanced approach when it comes to the rollout of EV. "

What Goes Together: Filters and Oils

It is in the nature of the thing: the original doesn't come around a second time. And that is why the Hengst filter brand is unmistakable in the worldwide independent aftermarket.

When we talk about filters, then we also need to consider what they actually filter: Oil, air, diesel and a number of other fluids. To match the performance of their filters, Hengst is also offering lubricants. These are formulated to match OEM quality and the specifications of the filters, which in many cases are installed as OEM components on many vehicles.

As original equipment manufacturer and development partner with well-known vehicle and engine manufacturers, Hengst implements the best ideas in the best quality. Their comprehensive product and material knowledge puts them in a position to set standards again and again in the aftermarket.

Products in focus
10W-40 HD LA PLUS FULLY SYNTHETIC ENGINE OIL
A HC synthetic formulation for heavy duty applications, Suitable for engines with after treatment systems.

Applications
Due to its versatile specifications, it is suitable for a variety of commercial vehicles. Particularly recommended for engines of large trucks to meet the standard EURO VI, TIER IV interim, TIER IV final, TIER V, Stage IIIB, Stage IV and Stage V.

Features
After treatment protection: full after treatment system protection. Total engine protection: outstanding engine cleanliness and durability.

15W-40 PRO HD LA MULTIGRADE ENGINE OIL
This is a "Low SAPS" oil, made of specially selected, high-quality base oils and a customized additive package, in order to meet Euro V, EURO VI and U.S. EPA 07 emission standards. Compared to other motor oils, it offers exceptional protection against wear and guarantees lower pollution.

Applications
Suitable for all four-stroke diesel Euro V and Euro VI engines of trucks, with or without catalysts (e.g. SCR) or particulate filter. Meets most American and European manufacturers requirements and can also be used in older engines (Euro III and IV). Features After treatment protection: full after treatment system protection. Total engine protection: outstanding engine cleanliness and durability. Drain interval extension: long oil drain interval.

75W-140 GL-5 LS SYNTHETIC TRANSMISSION OIL
This is a semi synthetic lubricant based on carefully selected highly refined base oils. This is a high performance transmission oil for all differentials, including those equipped with a "limited slip" mechanism. It is characterized by an exceptionally high viscosity stability at different temperatures and a very high fluidity at low temperature.

Applications
This product is used in highly loaded axles and reduction gears of cars, trucks and off-road equipment. It has "limited-slip" characteristics, and is specifically recommended for 4X4 vehicles. Features Frictional properties: very smooth gear shifting, no vibration. Anti-wear protection: extended transmission life. Extended oil life: excellent thermal and oxidation stability.

ADBLUE
AdBlue Is an aqueous solution of urea, which helps to reduce the emissions of nitrogen oxides in diesel engines and thus to meet the ever-stricter, legally prescribed exhaust gas standards.

Properties
AdBlue is the additional fuel used to implement the EURO IV and EURO V emission levels in order to offer a future-proof and environmentally compatible drive concept with regard to economy and performance. The SCR technology (selective catalytic reduction) is based on a catalytic reaction in which harmful nitrogen oxides are reduced to the harmless substances nitrogen and water by means of a reducing agent.

AdBlue from Hengst is available in sealed containers at storage temperatures of max. 30°C (average 20°C) for up to 9 months. Specification Levels: DIN 70070 and ISO 22241-1.

MAN helps Bus Operators to Rise Back Up

As bus travels are restarting again, it is crucial to ensure that the assets are in perfect working order. MAN Truck & Bus Malaysia initiated the "Rise Back" campaign to help operators.

A number of issues arise when vehicles are parked for extended periods of time. The flat battery is an obvious problem, one that is quickly fixed, but it is not the only issue that needs to be considered when re-starting your fleet. Rodents may have gnawed on pipes and wires, filters may need replacing and oil changing. We spoke to Navin Manogaran, Head Customer Service Management, General Manager, MAN Truck & Bus (M) Sdn Bhd (MTBM) about their current campaign to help the industry to "Rise Back".

"As the bus industries were badly affected throughout this pandemic many operators are dealing with heavy losses," he said, adding that MTBM pledges to assist as much as possible in the country's big restart. Since the government has now lifted many travel bans, bus operators are slowly starting to open up their business again. Bus journeys are now possible again.

Specifically, MTBM would like to support with discounts on services, which is

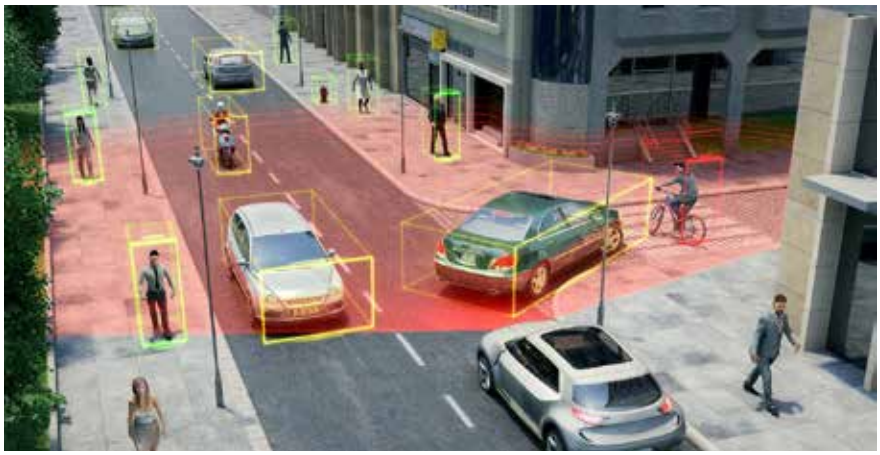
a. 40 percent discount on parts
b. 20 percent on labor
c. Free engine oil filters if the buses are getting oil change service.

Manogaran explained "As the buses were not in operation for quite some time, the above mentioned discounts will definitely support the operators to repair or rework their fleets into operating condition." On top of this, MTBM will also offer complimentary diagnostic checking and free health checks to ensure these buses are safe to be used in operation once they are brough into the MAN workshops.

According to him, these offers are valid in all their own branches which are in Rawang, Prai, Port Klang and Johor Bahru. The validity for these offers will be until 31st January 2022 at the moment. "We might continue till end of first quarter in 2022 if necessary," Manogaran said.

One additional point, he highlighted is that MTBM would like to offer on-site support for large fleet operator with more than five buses, whereby MTBM will not charge any travelling fees to the fleet owners.

With its New Generation LiDAR, Valeo makes Autonomous Mobility a Reality



In December, Valeo, the global leader in driving assistance systems (ADAS) presented its third generation scanning LiDAR, set to make its market debut in 2024. This new technology, which offers significantly enhanced performance, makes autonomous mobility a reality and provides previously unseen levels of road safety.

Geoffrey Bouquot, Valeo's Senior Vice-President, R&D and Strategy said: "Valeo's third generation LiDAR is a major technological advance toward the autonomous vehicle. This upgrade strengthens Valeo's technological and industrial leadership in the field, when it was already the only supplier on the market currently series-producing an automotive-grade LiDAR scanner. Our number one goal with this device remains the same – to save lives on the road."

Valeo's third generation LiDAR delivers unrivalled performance in terms of range, resolution and frame rate. It reconstructs a 3D real-time image of the vehicle's surroundings at a rate of 4.5 million pixels and 25 frames per second. Compared to the previous generation, the resolution has been increased 12-fold, the range 3-fold and the viewing angle 2.5-fold.

Thanks to its unique perception capabilities, this new LiDAR can see things that humans, cameras and radars cannot. This means that driving can be delegated to the vehicle in many situations (level 2 automation and above), including on the highway at speeds of up to 130km/h. Even in such situations, a vehicle fitted with the third-generation scanning LiDAR can manage emergency situations autonomously.

Valeo's scanning LiDAR detects, recognizes and classifies all objects located around the car. If the objects are moving, it measures their speed and direction. The scanning LiDAR can adapt to all light conditions, whether it's dazzlingly bright or pitch black. It even measures the density of raindrops to calculate the right braking distance. It tracks nearby vehicles, even when they are no longer in the driver's line of sight, and uses algorithms to anticipate their trajectories and trigger the necessary safety manoeuvres.

Thanks to these features, the scanning LiDAR protects people inside the car and those around it – pedestrians, cyclists and other road users. Beyond the vehicles it equips, this LiDAR will alert, via the Cloud, other vehicles of road hazards so that the community benefits from its exceptional perception capabilities.

Valeo designs and manufactures the entire system, including the hardware, the software and the associated artificial intelligence, the "brain" that combines collected data and enables the vehicle to instantly make the right decision. Its software automatically adapts to the environment and improves its performance over time through regular updates.

Valeo's LiDARs are produced in Germany at Valeo's Wemding plant in Bavaria, where components are assembled with a micron level of precision. The plant's production lines draw on Valeo's state-of-the-art expertise in optics, mechanics and photonics (the branch of physics that focuses on the emission and detection of light particles, or photons). 300 engineers at Valeo are dedicated solely to this technology, for which over 500 patents have already been filed.

Valeo was the first, and to date remains the only, company to produce a scanning LiDAR on an industrial scale. It has already produced over 150 000 units and 99 percent of cars equipped with a scanning LiDAR scanner worldwide are equipped with a Valeo scanning LiDAR.

Up to 30 percent of premium new vehicles are set to reach level 3 automation by 2030, and to do so will need to be equipped with LiDAR technology. As well as cars, autonomous shuttles, robotaxis, delivery droids, autonomous trucks or the agriculture, mining and infrastructure sectors will need to be equipped with one or more LiDARs. The LiDAR market is expected to represent more than $50 billion by 2030.

Solaris Charging Park – an Innovative Charging Station for Electric Vehicles

Solaris Charging Park is a new investment being built at the premises of Solaris in Bolechowo near Poznań. Featuring different charging systems and with bidirectional power flow capability, the park will be one of the most innovative of its kind in Europe. The possibility it will provide to test a variety of solutions will allow Solaris to respond precisely to the growing demand for electric buses from European operators.

The Charging Park will open for use in the first half of 2022. In 2021 Solaris delivered several hundred e-buses to almost 30 towns and cities across Europe. It is zero-emission vehicles that are the sales priority of the company and year by year they are accounting for an ever larger share of orders fulfilled by the producer. Investment in its own Charging Park - i.e. a single central site for charging e-buses - marks a natural step in the dynamic development of Solaris's zero-emission range.

The Charging Park will feature charging systems made by three different suppliers. This will allow various battery charging modes to be tested and thus provide offerings tailored to different market needs. The first solution is a charger with eight charging points (with a power output ranging from 150 kW to 600 kW) that can charge three vehicles at the same time. The system is compatible with all connectors available on the market and can connect to both buses and trolleybuses. It also supports the Vehicle-to-Grid (V2G) functionality, i.e. bidirectional energy flow between vehicles and the grid. Solaris Charging Park will be the first bidirectional charging park in Poland and one of the first innovative sites of its kind in Europe. The deployment of V2G technology is a complete novelty, one which will make it possible to discharge buses for test purposes and to use vehicles as mobile energy storage facilities.

The charging site will also boast a charger with four charging points with a total power output of 300 kW. It will feature two socket outlets as well as one conventional and one inverted pantograph. What is more, two independent plug-in chargers with a power output of 150 kW each and V2G capability will also be installed. A central management system will allow the operation of the Charging Park to be monitored and remotely controlled. The construction work is slated to be completed by the end of this year and the Park will be fully operational by mid-2022.

Taking Matters in Own Hands

It has always been an interesting debate to see who should be pushing for change. Should it be the government that makes decisions that the industry has to follow? Or should it be the industry that is not content with the imposed regulations, pushing through the barriers with solutions that exceed what the government is asking for as the benchmark? The implementation of higher emission norms is one of these topics that is discussed often and at length.

The protection of the environment should be a priority for all of us. However, a government will have to find a balance. There is no disputing that and, while politicians may actually want to incite change, sometimes they cannot. There might be a number of issues at play that we cannot fathom. Locally, the number of countries moving up in the emission norms applied is one external factor that will have an impact. The more countries move to EURO V or VI, the less motivation there is for OEMs to produce EURO II or III engines. This will eventually trigger the OEMs to simply stop supporting the old technology.

We might be at a tipping point where we see the industry in Malaysia making significant moves. The recent hand-over of 90 (!!!) buses in EURO VI was a sign of the times perhaps. Acknowledging the benefits of using vehicles with this specification, the order is a signal not only to the people directly involved in the industry, but also to the government. My immediate thought though is that it appears that the industry is taking matters into own hands now when it comes to the quasi-implementation of higher emission norms.

The purchase of these vehicles will certainly be triggering a few reactions. With these vehicles now on the road and in operation, AdBlue needs to be made available. In a case of a rather small fleet of "just" 90 vehicles, this is still an easy task as a barrel of AdBlue will be providing ample supply. In the case of city buses, the logistics of refilling AdBlue is also rather straight-forward. Things will get a bit more tricky for long distance buses that may need to re-fill AdBlue when away from the depot. I would expect the providers of this additive to be pro-active and not taking the clues from the press releases announcing the sale of vehicles with EURO V and VI engines.

Over in the truck department, one German brand is no only offering their latest truck in EURO V. I can only imagine that it won't take much longer before the same will be said about their buses. It is said that the higher specs are more fuel efficient and as that is the biggest cost for any operator, the choice would then be to opt for the one with the high-specced engines. This will create pressure on the other OEMs and it is my expectation that we will shortly see all major players having moved up to the same specs or even going straight to EURO VI. In a year's time, I am sure we will see that it took just one pioneer to be brave enough to start a revolution.

There might be a rift when it comes to the expectation of how long Diesel engines will still be around, however, I would want to take the stance that they are yet to be totally replaced. The discussion about the implementation of emission norms for fossil fuel-powered engines will certainly still be with us for a while. The next discussion we would have to have is how the government is now reacting to the fact that operators are seemingly no longer content with the minimum they have to comply with, but pushing the envelope.

At the end of the day, it might be a business case that has tipped the scale in favour for more advanced vehicles, however, at the same time it could also be an answer as to who should be in charge of leading change.

Overwhelming Majority of Shareholders in Favour of Spin-off of Daimler Truck and Renaming of Daimler AG

At the virtual Extraordinary General Meeting of Daimler AG (ticker symbol DAI) on 1 October 2021, the shareholders decided by an overwhelming majority on the historic realignment of the company. The spin-off of the truck and bus business and the subsequent listing of Daimler Truck Holding AG as an independent company on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange were approved by 99.90 percent of the capital stock represented for the resolution.

Furthermore, the shareholders approved also with an overwhelming majority of 99.89 percent of the votes cast the renaming of Daimler AG as Mercedes-Benz Group AG effective as of 1 February 2022. The new name emphasises the future focus on cars and vans of the brands Mercedes-Benz, Mercedes-AMG, Mercedes-Maybach and Mercedes-EQ. The two measures must now be entered in the Commercial Register. Both companies can then create decisive value added for all stakeholders.

Two current members of the Daimler Supervisory Board, Marie Wieck and Joe Kaeser, will step down from their positions and join the Supervisory Board of Daimler Truck Holding AG. As their successors in the Supervisory Board of Daimler AG, the shareholders elected Helene Svahn with a majority of 99.34 percent and Olaf Koch with a majority of 98.60 percent. Around 3 000 viewers followed the virtual Extraordinary General Meeting on the Internet. A total of 56.45 percent of the share capital was represented.

PETRONAS Wins 'Best in Future of Connectedness Award

PETRONAS Digital Sdn Bhd (PDSB), the digital arm of PETRONAS, has clinched the "Best in Future of Connectedness" Award at the recent 2021 IDC Future Enterprise Awards Asia Pacific.

PDSB was awarded for their connectivity technology in industrial areas using Software-defined Networking in a Wide Area Network (SD-WAN), Cloud Service Providers and Pervasive Wireless Connectivity.

PETRONAS Chief Digital Officer Aadrin Azly said, "Connectivity has been one of the key building blocks in the company's digital transformation journey. We have taken a multi-prong approach in modernising our global connectivity to empower the connected workforce to function seamlessly, while providing unparalleled opportunities for value creation and capture. Establishing connectivity globally across all our operations has also been pivotal for insights, productivity and safety."

The deployment of SD-WAN at PETRONAS Groupwide has enabled the integration of multiple business units and consumer channels more cohesively, including improving user experience and reliability at PETRONAS stations, such as enabling SETEL e-payment solution and providing high-speed and reliable payment card transactions. It also provides additional avenue to diversify services enabled at petrol stations.

Additionally, overall network availability has also increased to above 99.98 per cent with more than 20 per cent OPEX reduction achieved through bandwidth rightsizing and direct-internet-access to support mission critical applications.

With reliable high-speed connectivity, online data synchronisation and collaboration can also be done across countries and continents, with significant time saved in large data set transfers.

Real-time location tracking and positioning of field workers with connected devices such as RFID tags have also been made possible at PETRONAS' assets and sites, providing improved visibility of people movement within large complexes and enabling quicker response in emergency situations.

ComfortDelGro Bus To Operate Spore's Largest Electrified Private Bus Fleet

ComfortDelGro Corporation Limited, through its wholly-owned private bus company, ComfortDelGro Bus Pte Ltd, is set to operate Singapore's largest electrified private bus fleet after winning the National University of Singapore's (NUS) tender to provide shuttle bus services at its campus. The multi-year contract, which is valued at more than S$30 million, is for the electrification of the University's entire fleet of shuttle service buses.

The NUS electric buses, which will begin operations from third quarter of 2022, will continue to serve the eight existing shuttle bus routes within the campus covering NUS Kent Ridge Campus, University Town as well as NUS Bukit Timah Campus daily from 7am to 11pm, including public holidays. They will be wheelchair accessible and equipped with smart 2 features such as a telematics system, an anti-fatigue system as well as a forward collision and side collision warning system.

The successful NUS bid comes about two months after its sister company, ComfortDelGro Engineering, had won a strongly-contested tender to operate 479 of 632 electric vehicle chargers slated for introduction next year. The chargers, comprising 192 x 22kW AC chargers, 279 x 7kW AC chargers and 8 x 50kW DC chargers, will be installed in the Central, East and West regions of Singapore.

Asian Buses Wins!

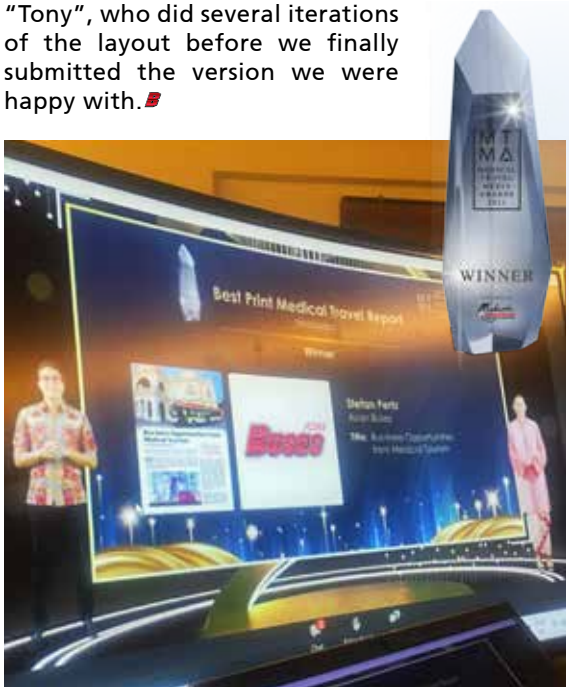
On December 9th, the Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council (MTHC) celebrated excellence in medical travel journalism at the virtual Medical Travel Media Awards Presentation Ceremony 2021 (MTMA2021). Graced by the Honourable Khairy Jamaluddin, the Minister of Health Malaysia, the annual awards event honoured local and international media for their contributions in positioning Malaysia as a safe and trusted destination for healthcare.

This year's MTMA received 420 submissions, a 20 percent increase from 2020 with entries coming in from countries such as Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Italy, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, the United Kingdom, the United States and Malaysia.

With decades of experience, travel writer David Bowden joined us and we decided to partner in order to co-author a bid for the award. On first sight, the idea that buses would have anything to do with medical tourism is, of course, somewhat obscure. However, in our cover story

"Bus-iness Opportunities in Medical Tourism", we weaved together material about buses, hotels, travel, Malaysia and how people go about having a vacation while getting healthy. You can read it in our Issue 27, which is available for free on our website.

Our work bagged us the Best Print Report of the Year! Special thanks must go to our designer "Tony", who did several iterations of the layout before we finally submitted the version we were happy with.



Tyrexpo Asia Bangkok 2022 in Motion

Thailand is now opening its borders to fully vaccinated travellers from a growing number of approved countries, so the stage is now set for the next Tyrexpo Asia show in Bangkok. The event will take place at the Bangkok International Trade & Exhibition Centre (BITEC), Hall EH102 from 26th to 28th October 2022.

The latest edition of the Tyrexpo Asia series of tyre and automotive events by Tarsus Group, Tyrexpo Asia Bangkok will be presenting up to 120 exhibitors and 3 000 attendees, with key objectives to explore and further increase growth opportunities for both the local and emerging markets as the only fully dedicated tyre and automotive trade show in Asia Pacific.

Alwin Seow, Event Project Director at Tarsus says, "Asia is one of the growing trade platforms within the global tyre market and particularly for emerging economies in South East Asia. Therefore, Tyrexpo Asia Bangkok 2022, will provide the perfect opportunity for leading and growing international and regional suppliers in tyres, equipment and tools plus tyre accessories to effectively showcase their latest technology and equipment and discuss other future solutions to drive their business to an even higher level of sales and profit."

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