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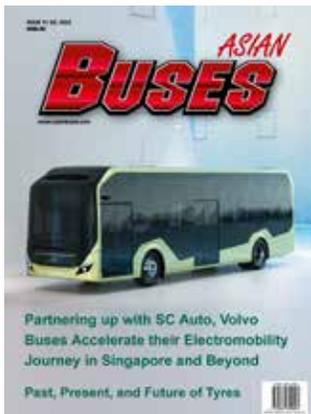
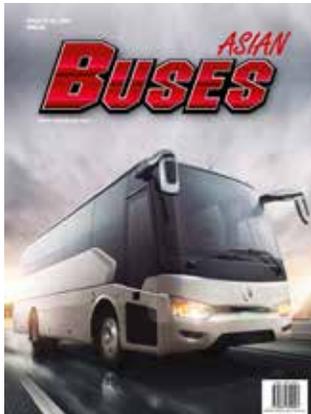
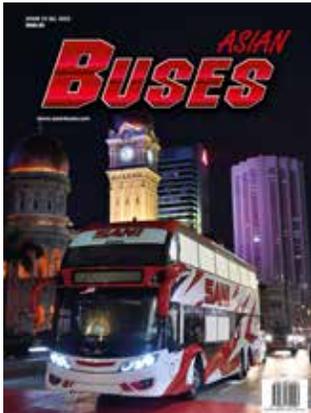
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aware of a lot of things, here again, there were some insights that I have not been aware of. Hopefully, Volvo's input is also useful for our readers as operators are now gearing up to meet the increased demand again with renewed optimism.

In May, we held an event to highlight the risks and dangers of using fake or counterfeit products for your fleets. The industry gathered, showing a strong presence of makers of original parts and components, demonstrating that this is an important issue to talk about. While the attraction of a fake part may be in the lower cost, which may sound good at the time, the risk to the vehicle and even an entire operation is tremendous should something bad happen as a result of using such parts. There is a short video on our website from the event as well, however, our report here is a little bit more detailed as you can find practical tips on how to spot fake / counterfeit products and why you should not use them.

While we talk a lot about the hardware, we should not forget that at the moment, the human drivers are still extremely important to any bus operator. They play a crucial role for the operators and are instrumental in the ambition to reduce emissions. With proper guidance, drivers can achieve a lot in terms of adding to the bottom line and in protecting the environment. I guess, companies would like to hire good drivers. Scania's competition to identify such good drivers is certainly an initiative that needs to be lauded. A dedicated article is giving you all the ins and outs.

I hope that, now that we leave the pandemic behind, we can all merge the software and hardware when we meet at MCVE 2024. Our bi-annual gathering is shaping up to be restored to the full extent of what you have been used to. With less than a year to go, we are now putting the components together, ensuring they are all genuine and that you can get to the venue with ease. Maybe with a bus?

Be a Good Driver, a Genuine Driver,

Stefan Pertz
Editor, Asian Buses

I Could Take the Bus

Indeed, the bus industry had a slower recovery from the pandemic than the brethren on the truck side. However, similarly, developments did not halt and traveling by bus, being it short of longer distances, is now offering a different experience than it had prior to the Covid crisis. Maybe it is also due to the drastically increased airfares that people are turning to buses as a means of getting about. I notice that more of my friends are now not only weighing buses as an option, but they are actually using them. David Bowden, a member of our SuperNiceTour2022, has clearly taking a liking to buses: his latest trip to Singapore yielded a report about his tour, which he shared with us in this issue of Asian Buses.

For me, the biggest story in this current issue of Asian Buses, the one with the most "Aha!", is that of the UD bus which their African office has put to the task. Commonly, we know UD as a maker of trucks, hence the news about a bus from this brand was quite something. Said bus is a crucial enabler for local communities to commute with ease. I think, therein manifests itself a trend: people now want to come back to the office to work. To do so, buses are a great way to move masses and UD is addressing this need with a smart solution.

Volvo Buses is a regular contributor to our magazine and this time again, we have been able to extract a lot of information from them about their plans and strategies. This time around, we are deep diving into the Malaysian market. While I am certainly

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Turkish automotive. Following the North American market we entered through Canada, we are also leaving our foot print in Japan on the other side of the world with the help of Altech company. With this agreement, Karsan will be represented in a wide geographical area from Canada to Japan after Europe. As Karsan, we will take part in these regions with both sales and after-sales services.”

Altech Co Operates in Four Countries

Altech Co., one of the leading companies in Japan was founded in 1976. As a listed company on the stock exchange, importing and selling industrial machines, it is highly active on the Asian continent. Altech Co. Ltd. has also subsidiaries and operations in China, Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia as well as Japan. 

Distributorship Agreement Signed by Karsan in Japan

The e-JEST, Europe’s Most Preferred Electric Minibus Is to Race to the Top in Japanese Market Too!

Karsan, which has been rapidly progressing to become a global brand with the vision of being “One Step Ahead in the Future of Mobility” rolled up its sleeves to exhibit its success in Japan as well, which it achieved in Europe. Accordingly, Karsan, which has been conducting marketing activities in Japan since October 2022, signed a distributorship agreement with ALTECH Co. Ltd, one of the leading companies of the country. Stating that Karsan has become represented in a wide geographical area from Canada to Japan thanks to this agreement, Karsan CEO Okan Bař said, “We believe that Karsan e-JEST model, which has been the leader of the electric minibus market in Europe for three years, will also achieve a great success in the Japanese market in a short time.”

Karsan, which pioneers the transformation of public transportation in Europe, is accelerating its steps towards becoming a global brand with its models that prioritize high technology. Karsan, which repeats the leadership in the electric minibus and midibus markets in Europe with its e-JEST and e-ATAK models, made an agreement for a distributorship this time to enter the Japanese market following the North America.

The Market has Doubled in One Year

In this context, Karsan, which has been carrying out its marketing activities in the Japanese market since October 2022, signed a distributorship agreement with Altech Co. Ltd., one of the largest companies of the country. Following this agreement, Karsan will also accelerate its work on right-hand drive e-JEST. In the market research conducted in Japan, it has been revealed that e-JEST is mostly demanded by the tourism regions and the cities where elderly population lives in, due to its unique compact dimensions and high technology. Stating that work is now underway for the production of right-hand drive e-JEST suitable for the Japanese market, Karsan CEO Okan Bař shared their plan regarding the launch they would like to carry out for this version in Japan at the end of 2023. Okan Bař, who emphasized that Karsan e-JEST is a product that is competitive enough to carry its success in Europe to the Japanese market, said, “We believe that Karsan e-JEST model, which has been the leader of the electric minibus market in Europe for three years, will reach a great achievement in the Japanese market as well in a short time. Entering the Japanese market, we are also breaking a new ground in the history of



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HINO Motors Delivers First Electric Buses to MARA



Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) on 22 June received the first two electric buses produced by HINO Motors. These buses will undergo trial on selected routes in Pulau Langkawi for a period of two years, supporting Malaysia's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in transportation.

MARA Chairman, Dato' Dr Asyraf Wajdi bin Dato' Dusuki, stated that this pioneering project not only promotes sustainable transportation, but also reduces carbon emissions on the island.

This initiative is a continuation and commitment of both parties after signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) last March.

The Poncho ZEV is scheduled to start operating in September this year to test its suitability for Malaysia's weather and

road conditions. The bus, which can accommodate 11 seats and up to 32 passengers, is user-friendly due to its small and low size, making it easy for passengers to board and exit.

Equipped with safety features and zero-emission features, the bus will significantly reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality, and contribute to a cleaner and greener environment.

On the same day, MARA also organized the MARA Brew' 23 Program to introduce and promote coffee entrepreneurs in the food and beverage industry, one of the main industries developed by the agency.

Dr Asyraf stated that this program will serve as a platform to attract more Bumiputera entrepreneurs, especially the youth, to venture into this popular business.

He added that this aspiration aligns with the trend and demand of many urban dwellers today who consider this beverage part of their lifestyle. According to him, we need to seize this trend as an opportunity that can have an impact on the country's economy, including creating job opportunities for the local community.

A total of 10 coffee vendors participated in the program, which was held for four days until June 25th. Visitors could participate in various activities such as Coffee Workshops, Coffee Discussions, Latte Art Throw Down competitions, and various other activities.

This program also witnessed the exchange of MoUs between Callabio Manufacturing Berhad and 4 companies from Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam. The MoUs are aimed at controlling the quality, price, promotion, and marketing of coffee products, as well as the distribution areas for these products.

Callabio Manufacturing Berhad is an entrepreneur under MARA's Gate to Global.





As Ralph Roberts, CEO of McGill's Buses in the UK, said, "Thanks to the genuine technological depth of Yutong products, Yutong BEVs are growing worldwide every year. Such a success is not accidental, because it is based on comprehensive brand strength and performance."

After its market entry in the UK in 2013, Yutong has introduced a wide range of products for such segments as tourist coach, inter-city bus and city bus. In the tourist coach market, it ranks among the top three in the sales in the UK, winning the trust and recognition of more than 200 local tourist coach operators. Since the debut of Yutong battery electric bus in the UK, 250 units of its customized e-buses have been serving the public transport to provide a "China solution" for local energy transition.

Across the European market, Yutong NEVs have shown superior product strength and steady growth of market share. In 2022, it topped the sales of battery electric buses in Europe. For the Chinese NEV builder, the success in Europe, the birthplace of modern bus industry, does not only yield great market value, but also brings tremendous brand value and the confidence to go global.

As carbon neutrality becomes a shared vision of the international community, the green transition of public transport is pursued by an increasing number of countries and regions. Up to now, Yutong has sold more than 170 000 units of new energy buses worldwide. From large-scale adoption demo to boosting the rapid industrial development, the Chinese homegrown automotive brands have been increasing global influence steadily, and Yutong NEV is becoming a better new choice across the world.

Yutong E12 Won UK Authoritative Environmental Certification

Recently, Yutong E12 won the joint certification by Zemo Partnership, an environmental protection agency of the UK, and UTAC, an EV testing agency, for the consistency of Yutong e-bus environmental performance with European standards in energy use and carbon emissions among others. The contribution of Yutong NEV (new energy vehicle) to green transport in the UK has been recognized by the public and highly acclaimed by mainstream media.

Zemo Partnership is an environmental organization in the UK to accelerate transport to zero emission, committed for years to the introduction of zero-emission, low-emission and ultra-low-emission buses and coaches to the UK. And UTAC, as a member of the UITP (International Association of Public Transport), has remained committed to promoting convenient, accessible and sustainable public transport worldwide.

The joint certification of the two authorities in the UK, one of the first major economies to legislate for net zero emission, is a testimony that the Chinese NEV has evolved from a participant to a leader in the global governance. The key components

(battery, motor and electric controller) of Yutong NEV meet or even exceed the current European standard across the board, playing an important role in achieving net zero emissions in the UK.

The high global market penetration of Yutong NEV reflects the competitiveness and recognition of "Made in China" worldwide. In terms of NEV, Yutong has not only established the core advantages of products, but also integrated into the global industrial chain and value chain in all fronts, achieving a development landscape of independent controllability and global superiority, as it continues to pursue overseas expansion with record high export.





UD Trucks Southern Africa Introduces the Croner Bus Range



UD Trucks has re-entered the commuter bus market with the all-new UD Croner Bus, which comes in two variants: a commuter bus (PKE 280) and a rural bus (LKE 210). With the recent launch in KwaZulu Natal, Durban, the UD Croner Bus will provide much-needed solutions to the African market as it seeks to improve commuter experience.

Since 1935, UD Trucks has challenged the status quo in the transport industry. UD Trucks' founder Kenzo Adachi sought out to build the trucks the world needs today. More than 80 years later, UD Trucks still pursues its founder's vision, which is to make modern transport solutions.

"The growing demand for sustainable and comfortable travel options has been a significant development over the past few years. The Croner Bus is the perfect answer to Africa's need for an economical, sustainable ride that will reduce carbon footprint," said Jacques Michel, Senior Vice President, UD Trucks International Sales.

Evolution of the UD Bus Range

In Southern Africa, UD Trucks has manufactured trucks for more than 60 years, through the company's manufacturing plant located in Rosslyn. In addition to truck manufacturing, UD Trucks has made buses since the 1970s with the first CB20 model. This was followed by the CB30 in the 1980s and the UD60 and UD100 models in the 1990s.

Connecting People to Opportunities

"It is an exciting time for our organization, a new chapter," says Filip van den Heede, Managing Director, UD Trucks Southern Africa. "We are proud to extend our Croner product line into the bus market while still maintaining the same quality, architectural design, and reliability."

Van den Heede further elaborates that, re-entering the bus market is part of UD Trucks Southern Africa's product diversification plan and aligns with the organizations Better Life strategy.

The UD Croner Bus connects rural communities with economic hubs, workers with the workplace, in summary commuters with their destinations, enhancing people's lives. Moreover, the Croner Bus features USB ports on all seats to accommodate commuters' desire to stay connected whilst on the move.

Incorporating the Same Design Philosophy as the UD Croner Truck

Both the PKE 280 and LKE 210 buses are based on the same architecture as the South African medium duty leader, UD Trucks Croner. As such, they are engineered to ensure quality, durability, and fuel efficiency. The Croner Bus PKE 280 can comfortably seat 65 and 10 standing passengers offering a reliable, economical and comfortable urban transportation both to remote rural areas and to urban centers throughout Africa. This variant is powered by a D8A280 engine that meets Euro III and Euro V emissions standards while also being fuel-efficient and equipped with high capacity.

Croner Bus LKE 210 and LKE 240 can accommodate 40 passengers in seating and 12 standing. The D5A210 and D5A240 Euro V engines in this variety deliver excellent torque even at low speeds. "Considering African transport infrastructure challenges, these features will result in rapid response and smooth driving properties, which makes the UD Croner Bus a more fuel-efficient choice," commented Rory Schulz, Sales Director, UD Trucks Southern Africa. Croner goes the extra mile to meet today's business and environmental challenges.

The expansion of UD Trucks transportation solutions into the African market in particular is expected to improve efficiency and accessibility and, at the same time, reduce environmental, social, and economic costs for commuters. With Euro 5 and Selective Catalyst Reduction (SCR), it addresses safer environmental challenges while meeting current market demands.

Filip Van den Heede,

Managing Director at UD Trucks Southern Africa

Would like to frame this particular development for South Africa, the homologation and specifications of the bus is only valid for South Africa and few other Southern African countries, where it is a perfect fit for the customer and market requirements. This is based on our well proven Croner chassis, with fuel efficient engine and Allison gearbox making it a comfortable drive for driver and passengers. Additional features are added for enhanced safety and comfort of passengers. As each country has its own regulations and customer requirements, this development is at this stage place for this part of the African continent and will at this stage not be extended to other markets in the world.

A complete solution Combining Safety, Drivability, Productivity, and Uptime

Croner Bus design prioritizes passenger safety and comfort among other critical features. For improved safety and visibility, bus entrances are illuminated to enhance commuter safety.

Providing support for standing passengers and preventing them from falling while the bus is in motion with full-length handrails enhances the ergonomic features and safety of the bus. As well as the driver's seat belt, each unprotected seat has a lap-type safety belt to protect against sudden stops or collisions.



PKE 280 (air sus) buses come with an electronically controlled air suspension system that is designed to improve driving comfort, contributing to better vehicle ergonomics. On the move, the system automatically controls chassis height and compensates for uneven weight distribution to ensure the bus is balanced.

Based on a Croner chassis with a high front and rear axle rating, the PKE 280 is a lightweight but durable vehicle. Because of the reduction in chassis and bus weight, the bus can carry high loads of luggage inside and outside the coach. The increased carrying capacity of the bus enables the customer to carry more load thus maximizing productivity.

As part of our vehicle health monitoring feature, UD Telematics has been implemented, which comprises customer and dealer telematics and displays all critical alerts from our buses. In this manner, the vehicle is brought to the workshop in time to ensure maximum customer uptime. 📌



to wrap the compressor in. For example, electrical air compressors are quieter than petrol-powered units, not requiring petrol to power the compression pumps. Rotary screw air compressors are also quieter than traditional reciprocating models. However, electric compressors may not have the power or stamina to run extended hours.

Under Pressure: PSI & CFM

Most workshop-level air compressors produce enough PSI (pounds per square inch) for pneumatic tools such as nail guns and impact wrenches. Typically, such tools require between 80 and 90 PSI, whereas this is from 30 to 70 PSI below what most air compressors offer. The CFM (cubic feet per minute) depends on the air compressor's tank. With larger tanks, the CFM can reach a higher status before compressors needing to rest. Most workshop tools do not require a particularly high CFM, though one should consider it a safety precaution to purchase an air compressor that provides at least 1.5 more CFM than the tools operated require.

Compressors: Versatile Tools for Workshops

Most workshops depend on compressed air to power tools. With a right-sized compressor for any need, we look at some considerations when picking the right one.

When designing or upgrading a workshop, several tools need to be considered. Electricity is among the most important, next to compressed air to drive tools, inflate tyres or to clean dusty items. To provide compressed air able to drive power tools, industrial grade compressors are needed. Jason S.Y. Han of Lubetrans shared with Asian Trucker about the use of these versatile tools.

"They come in many sizes and compressors can be one of the most useful pieces of equipment to add to any workshop, small or big." Air compressors can be used for a variety of tasks, from inflating tires to powering pneumatic tools. Whether replacing, upgrading or adding a compressor to your workshop, there are some considerations according to him. His advise is to consider carefully and not just buy anything cheap.

Quiet! Noise Levels

A workshop might be located in close proximity of residential areas or within other industrial facilities. It is important to purchase an air compressor that runs quiet and doesn't produce a lot of noise. While one can build noise cancellation around it, it is best to start with a compressor that runs quiet. This will protect the long-term hearing of staff and reduce the chance of neighbouring business or families complaining about you.

Although modern compressors are designed to be as quiet as possible, they still emit noise, which can become annoying over time. There are several ways to make compressors quieter. For smaller compressors, one can use a sound-proof blanket



It Mattes: Size

The capacity of a compressor depends highly on the size and layout of the workshop. A smaller air compressor is generally more desirable in order to save space. Smaller workshops may want to use compressors on wheels whereas larger workshops may want to instal piping to each workstation.

Unity is strength

Han recommends a range of Michelin-branded units to those that are looking for a dependable, hassle-free compressor for their workshop. "With such a long history, this brand is also a trustworthy brand for air compressors. Their credibility has been underlined as these compressors are used by some of the world's most famous brands," he stated. In partnership with Michelin, this is a tale of power and reliability. Michelin has made clear how experience, knowledge and being into the air-systems scape really matters in order to constantly raise the bar.

However, high quality products and nonstop technological advancements are not the only elements of the relationship with Lubetrans as the official distributor for these compressors. Indeed, both companies share a special focus on professionals. Being able to tailor solutions for these targets is often challenging but remains what they do best.

Michelin offers compressors without air collection tanks and also compressors with tanks from 6 - 50 litres for a more intensive use. Powerful heavy duty and thanks to the small-sized construction design and to the reduced weight, these compressors may be easily used and transported anywhere by anybody.

Company Focus Michelin

With nearly €650 million spent every year on R&D, innovation is one of the pillars of Michelin's strategy to stand out from competition. The Group's innovation programs have focused on delivering sustainable mobility solutions for more than 20 years.

Today, it is the world's leading manufacturer of fuel-efficient tires and a pioneering champion of the functional economy, which consists of selling a service or the use of a product rather than the product itself. Creating innovative products and services allows Michelin to consolidate its leading position while offering pertinent solutions to its customers.

Since the beginning, Michelin has been a trailblazer in communication. This is thanks to the lovable Michelin Man, Michelin maps and guides as well as unique physical and digital services that take the hassle out of travel.

Today, Michelin enjoys strong brand awareness due both to the quality of the tires it sells and to the Michelin Man, who has been part of our hearts and homes for more than a century and recently was named Icon of the Millennium by Advertising Week.

As well-respected engineering company Michelin is among those leading the way in air compressors producers elite. Their range encompasses a wide range of products focused on four main assets: piston compressors, screw compressor, air tools, air treatments. Lubetrans offers cost and energy efficient, highly reliable products suitable for all sizes and types of workshops.

Excellent Choice: Piston Compressors

Piston compressors are generally considered the best choice for workshops, small industries and studios. Piston compressors are a safe and dependable choice for professional and manufacturing applications.



A piston compressor works using a valve system and two stainless steel valve discs. The piston moves downward and draws air into the cylinder, then the largest disc flexes to fold downward, allowing the air to pass. As the piston then moves upward, the large disc flexes again to seal against the valve seat.

Constant Pressure: Screw Compressors

An opening valve sucks gas into the compressor chamber. Located in the chamber are the two screw rotors; when the machine is on, they will rotate at high speeds. As the impellers rotate, they trap and isolate air in the cavities between the rotors, thus moving the air down the chamber.

Lubetrans offers compressors that are able to ensure constant pressure over a long-run frame. With their latest addition to the product portfolio, they satisfy the increasing demand for generators of compressed air from 3 to 100 HP. The compressors are simple and easy maintenance but breakthrough in technological advancement. 



KEMB swipes the top three wins in Scania's 'A Good Driver' competition.



Evolution partner with Scania, the good company and the driving is part of the journey towards achieving the reduction of CO2 emissions in line with Scania's Science Based Target of the Science Based Target initiative (SBTi) drawn at the Paris Agreement in 2015.

'A Good Driver' (AGD) is a truck or coach and bus driver from 'A Good Company'. The drivers automatically qualify as long as they are part of the Scania Evolution partnerships and drive the specific vehicles under the programme. The vehicles they drive are marked with a Scania Evolution sticker plus a t-shirt with AGD Qualifier Badge.

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.

"Congratulations to KEMB as 'A Good Company' for being the best winner in this competition. Its unwavering commitment in the Scania Evolution partnership will not only produce top-class drivers that saves fuel but also reduce CO2 emissions for the environment and future generation," stated Thor Brenden, Service Sales and Operations Director, Scania Southeast Asia.



The best Konsortium E-Mutiara Berhad (KEMB) drivers won the first, second and third place in Scania's 'A Good Driver' Competition! The winners drove coaches that are subscribed to Scania Evolution agreement and achieved the best fuel economy and CO2 emission reductions. The champion is Razali Mat, the first runner-up is Mohd Ruhaimie Mohd Noor and second runner-up is Mohd Zaki Said. They received their well-deserved recognitions and prizes at the KEMB's headquarters in Kota Bharu.

The total KEMB fleet of 69 units carries 2 brands of coaches: The E-Mutiara Premier brand and the Musafir Economy brand, catering to different set of target passengers. A further 18 units will be delivered accordingly.

After more than 20 years of sustainable partnership, the strong bond that was created between KEMB and Scania, led to KEMB becoming the first to sign the Scania Evolution agreement in Asia when it was introduced in 2018. This move was another milestone as KEMB has already signed-up for the Repair & Maintenance (R&M) and the Fleet management System Control 10 (FMS) for its fleet. This move gave the opportunity to KEMB to reduce CO2 emissions while lowering fuel consumption for its fleet.

As part of KEMB's sustainability development, it adopted Scania's business philosophy of sustainability and recorded successes year after year. To attest to KEMB's commitment to the Scania Evolution agreement, it has managed to significantly lower fuel consumption of its fleet and reduced CO2 emissions by 2 358 338 kg. that is equivalent to the planting of approximately 35 375 trees from day one up till present day of the Scania Evolution partnership.

"Getting the drivers to improve their driving behaviour was key to getting them on the right path towards the win. KEMB tracked their movements and ways of driving via the Scania Fleet Management System Control 10 and used the data to clearly show them the areas that can be improved upon. And with the Scania training and coaching services they were advised to reduce idling, speeding and harsh braking and increase coasting when they are at the wheel. Realising that they are consistently saving fuel and reducing CO2 emissions on their run motivated them to go for the win by changing their set ways of driving." said Che Ibrahim Che Ismail, Executive Chairman of KEMB.

Over 478 Scania vehicles from over 42 customers in Malaysia are part of Scania Evolution. 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 an

Events & Exhibitions

The 20th China Qingdao International Tire&Wheel Fair

Date : 18-21 July, 2023
 Venue : QICC - Qingdao International Convention Center,
 No. 9 Miaoling Road, 266061 Qingdao,
 Shandong, China

Contact Info: <http://en.tyrexpoasia.cn/>

The CTF China International Tyre and Wheel Fair in Qingdao is an international trade fair for the rubber and tire industry. It is an important platform for the exchange of information, market development and corporate communications for the rubber and tire industry in the Asia-Pacific region. This exhibition is communication and information platform in the industry and offers the exhibiting companies the opportunity to present themselves to a professional audience. The visitor can learn in depth and comprehensive about the latest developments, trends, services and products from different areas.

Belt & Road Summit

Date : 13 – 14 September 2023
 Venue : Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre
 Contact info: <https://www.beltandroadsummit.hk/conference/bnr/en>
 The Belt and Road Summit is a premier international platform for promoting business collaboration along the Belt and Road. The Summit gathers senior government officials and business leaders from countries and regions along and beyond the Belt and Road to exchange insights on multilateral co-operation and explore concrete business opportunities.

Automechanika Dubai

Date : 2 – 4 October 2023
 Venue : Dubai World Trade Centre, UAE
 Contact Info : <https://automechanika-dubai.ae.messefrankfurt.com/dubai/en.html>

As the largest international automotive aftermarket trade show in the Middle East, Automechanika Dubai acts as the central trading link for markets that are difficult to reach connecting the wider Middle East, Africa, Asia and key CIS countries.

Be part of the 20th Anniversary Special Edition to find out more about the latest products and services, find new suppliers, source products and compare product alternatives.

Busworld Europe

Date: 7 – 12 October 2023
 Venue: Brussels Expo
 Contact info: <https://www.busworldeurope.org/howto reach>
 Busworld is very excited to announce some brand new names in the vehicle manufacturer exhibitor list from different regions around the world: Ermisbus from Greece, Gelushi from Egypt, Habas from Turkey, Ikarus from Hungary, JBM from India, Rampini from Italy, Quantron from Germany, Skoda from Czech Republic, Steyr

Automotive from Austria, TAM from Slovenia and VagBus Bus from Romania. On supplier side, there are even more new names. The full exhibitor list, which contains more than 400 exhibitors at this moment, can be consulted on the Busworld Europe website.

Busworld welcomes its old and new exhibitors with open arms. European ZEB Conference For the first time, the European ZEB Conference will coincide with Busworld Europe, after a series of previous editions taking place in Paris (2021), Online (2020), in Cologne (2018) and in London (2016). The 5th edition of the European ZEB Conference is expecting 450 attendees from the zero emission bus and coach sector. New in this edition will not only be the collaboration between Busworld Foundation and ZEB, but also the special attention for zero emission long distance coaches.

Malaysia Commercial Vehicle Exhibition 2024

Date : 9 – 11 May 2024
 Venue : MIECC, Mines International Exhibition &
 Convention Centre, Malaysia
 Contact: www.mcve.com.my

Over 8 000+ square meters of exhibition space: MCVE is the largest exhibition dedicated to commercial vehicles in South-East Asia. Back for the sixth 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 May 2024 with a new, more exciting fringe program.

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





Hengst Gallops into Vietnam

The recently held Automechanika Ho Chi Minh City offered opportunities to understand the market and to establish connections vital to the success in the automotive aftermarket.

Automechanika Ho Chi Minh City 2023 took place from 23 to 25 June 2023, highlighting the latest technologies and market trends through booth showcases, industry conferences, as well as lifestyle events. Hengst, through their regional office in Singapore, took the opportunity to probe the market in order to boost its presence in the emerging market of Vietnam. The country is seen by many as an opportunity to be tapped into as strong growth of the economy brings with it significant demand for transportation solutions; Vietnam is also a unique market as commercial vehicles from all over the world are being used.

Speaking exclusively to Asian Buses was Frank Maergner, Sales Director, Hengst Asia Pacific Pte Ltd, who made it his personal mission to be present during Automechanika Ho Chi Minh City to gain first hand insights into the market. “As a Filtration expert, we have a lot more to offer than we are showing here. Hengst covers segments outside the automotive aftermarket as well, however, here we are focusing on our Blue.maxx and filtration solutions for the automotive aftermarket,” he said. In particular, the Blue.maxx is a product that is best suited as a door-opener in markets like Vietnam. Southeast Asia, with its humid climate and relatively lower fuel quality in many countries, requires water separators for fleet operators to protect their assets. Maergner told Asian Buses that there has been a very good response to the pre-filter during the event.

“We have been motivated to participate in this trade show by our ambition to find new distributors for the Vietnamese market. The event seemed to be professionally organised, and has proven to be, and we decided to give it a try.” Although Maergner and his team have been visiting Vietnam several times over the past two years, there has been no significant progress. This was to be changed through the participation in the Automechanika, a confluence of market players. At the moment, Hengst is selling through one distributor that focuses on selected products while Hengst is aiming to offer their entire product range in Vietnam.

Echoing what others said and what could be observed inside the hall, the event attracted not only local players but a truly international audience and stock of exhibitors. “It has been surprising to us how many overseas visitors came here. These are obviously also people who we would want to connect with as we are a



Our locations worldwide.



globally operating business.” Maergner was positive that he and his team will be returning to future instalments as the show already showed the hallmarks of a truly big event like the Automechanika Shanghai.

Being present, with a booth and team, has given Hengst a boost in visibility

Product Focus: Hengst oil filter modules for Mercedes-Benz

With the OM654 four-cylinder diesel engine and the Six-cylinder gasoline engine M256 Mercedes Benz marked the start of a trend-setting engine family. On board: Hengst developed the oil filter modules, which, with their hybrid design to a weight saving and more Contribute to efficiency. The environmentally friendly and patented Energetic oil filter element E159H D311 contributes to sustainability. The oil drain valve is integrated directly into the module and a sealing lock prevents the installation of an incorrect filter insert. Vehicle applications: Mercedes-Benz A-Klasse (W177) A 200 d, A 220 d B-Klasse (W247) B 200 d, B 220 d CLS-Klasse (C257) CLS450, CLS53 AMG E-Klasse (W213) AMG E 53 EQ GLE-Klasse (W167) GLE450 S-Klasse (W222) S 450 EQ, S 500 EQ AMG GT (X290) 43 EQ Boost



and credibility. According to Maergner, customers are aware of the brand and its products, however are sceptical regarding the authenticity of the products. Hengst Filtration is a German; it has been a family owned business since its founding in 1958, now in its third generation, with 21 subsidiaries world-wide, in 11 countries. “The market has been unsure about these products as they do not know our set-up. Now, having been able to talk to the source, they understand how we operate and and that Hengst products are directly shipped from Germany to the customer.” Elaborating on this topic, Maergner said that there are not many fake or counterfeit Hengst products available in Vietnam as the brand is not

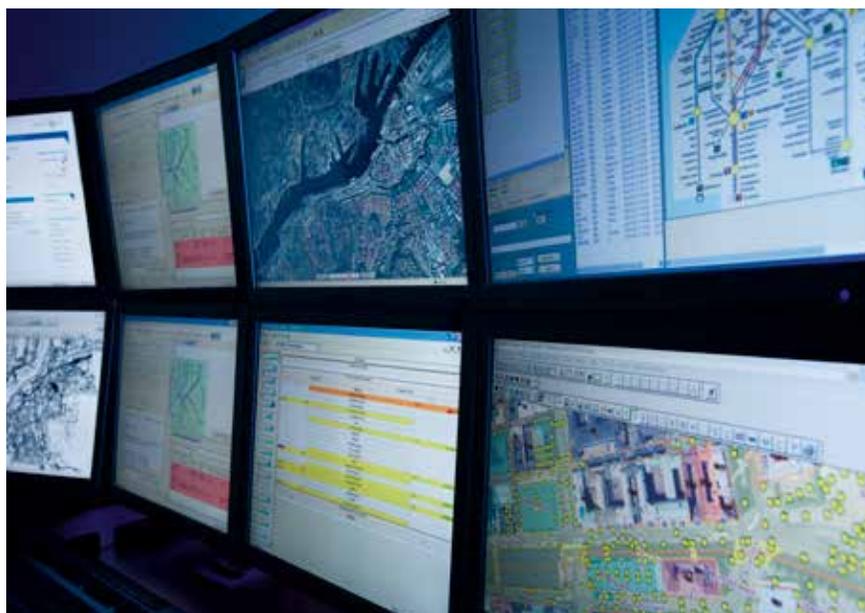
yet successful enough that it is worth to copy their products. In his view, fake or counterfeit products can also be seen as an indicator how well a brand is recognized in a market as nobody would copy a brand which is hard to sell. However, if no quick action is then taken the brand may take huge damage and lose its original value.

Hengst operates multiple productions plants throughout the world, so Hengst can be as close as possible to our OE business partners. Meanwhile, almost all of the products sold in the Southeast Asian aftermarket are manufactured in Germany and shipped to the markets. Of about 3 500 part numbers available to the Asian market, only about 50 are made in China. Maergner stresses that the production location has no impact on the quality as all Hengst products are made to identical OEM specifications regardless of origin.

The next step will be to follow up with all the connections made, regardless of what walk of life they are from to thank them and to see how the discussions can be moved forward. Many visitors have commented that they like German brands and feel strongly about the brand that the country stands for. As such, Maergner also views German brands doing business in Vietnam as Ambassadors for the country. Looking ahead, he and his team are considering to return to Automechanika with a bigger booth as that will enable them to showcase more of their products and expertise. ■



Global Trends in the Bus Market



A the saying goes, there is a silver lining to every cloud. The recent pandemic has ground the bus industry to halt, battering the operators and severely impacting the manufacturers as well. Emerging now, the past two years could also be seen as a great reset that will send the bus industry on new trajectories with new technologies and approaches that make this mode of transport even more interesting for city planners and tour operators alike. If anything, there are opportunities in abundance for those that look for them. It is estimated that the bus market will be worth over USD 60 Billion by 2028. The biggest growth is predicted to be happening in Southeast Asia.

New Players

Currently, the bus market is dominated by the top five brands that produce and supply a good two-thirds of all buses globally. It is interesting to note that these five are not European, which may have more brand recall, but among the top players are Chinese brands too. The latter will have the advantage that their domestic market is gigantic while European brands will have to address the needs of many markets with individual solutions. Chinese brands are now also aggressively pushing into the global markets in their ambition to expand. This makes a lot of sense in the context of the Chinese Belt and Road initiative that sees the Middle Kingdom providing infrastructure to spur the growth of nations. Naturally, with that expansion of reach from the Chinese brands, local players can capitalise on the need to have supporting infrastructure to support these new entrants.

Meanwhile, electrification has brought with it the possibility to develop new vehicles with relative ease and high speed. Utilising components readily available in the market, new brands can have a go-to-market product ready in a short time, utilising the latest technology that is available. Their advantage is that they don't have to consider the integration of their vehicles into the existing portfolio. However, it is yet to be seen if these new brands, would sustain over longer periods of time. The

advantage of existing, established brands is that they can depend on an existing stream of income and a wide network of service centres. The idea of creating a new brand is tempting; the crucial factor is the access to service and maintenance.

The biggest owner of bus transport solutions are city councils, governments and their related organisations dealing with the operating of the vehicles. These organisations will now have to consider the pros and cons of ordering from new brands or returning to the established ones with their business. Industry insiders have told Asian Buses that there are now tenders being answered by up to 40 brands bidding.

Post Pandemic Trauma

Shutting down entire fleets of buses was easier than re-deploying them. Although some governments mandated that companies could not lay off staff during the pandemic, many bus operators have seen their staff make moves into other industries. Since bus captains are oftentimes paid per trip, an employment contract is not worth much if there are not trips that pay the salary. Training new drivers takes time, getting the bus fleets to move again requires the vehicles to be serviced first. During the pandemic, bus drivers were exposed to infection risks and it is hard to blame them if they decided to quit and work elsewhere. The profession of commercial vehicle drivers is not seen very favourable at the best of times, now it might have gotten worse. Now would be the time for drivers to dictate their demands for higher salary: clearly an opportunity for a new generation of bus captains to capitalise on this situation. Unfortunately, it will be at the expense of the operators, that already had to deal with the loss of incomes during the pandemic.

It would be safe to say that many anticipated demands for bus transportation to bounce back swiftly after the pandemic. However, this has not happened. On the contrary, people are increasingly turning to either their own passenger cars or favour alternatives, such as cycling or walking. As a global trend, it can be observed that public transport by bus is not as favoured as it should have been. One could argue that there might be a fear lingering that it is crowded spaces where one could get infected with the virus and that it is safer to travel alone, although one would be inconvenienced by traffic jams.

New Fuels

Pushing for a cleaner environment, governments are increasingly demoting Internal Combustion engines (ICE) while favouring Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV). The search for cleaner transportation is currently seeing many OEMs offering ICE, Hybrid and full BEVs, meeting the individual needs of the operators. The search for cleaner energies has given the industry a jolt. It is widely acknowledged that the move to BEVs will take time as the development of charging infrastructure takes time. Hurdles like standard charging facilities need to be addressed. Fuels like Diesel and petrol will likely be around for some time while, although it is clear that BEV are no longer confined to applications that can be seen as test grounds for this new technology, such as airports.

ICE engines are far from being obsolete. They have their place still as there are areas where implementing BEV would not make sense. One can observe a massive push to further refine Diesel engines, said to be far from their full potential, while alternative fuels are springing up. Recently, Honda announced that they have developed a car engine using Ammonia, a fuel that is also used



in rocket propulsion. Fuel cells offer an interesting alternative to batteries, however, we have yet to address the need for massive amounts of energy needed to generate Hydrogen. Amidst the discussion about BEV the market may not have realised that today we have more than just two methods of fuelling a bus. A massive ripple going through the Oil and Gas industry can be observed: the development of BEV has triggered a re-orientation of this industry to become energy providers, rather than explorers of oilfields. On a global scale, the effects of the search to the climate crisis are drastic.

Again, city councils and governments face a conundrum as they need to balance the demand for healthier environments with the availability of various propulsion methods. Given the current speed of developments, any new, clean, vehicle maybe obsolete within a few years. Who would blame a decision maker to still opt for a ICE-powered bus which has known performance and does not become outdated within a short period of time? We are now also at a point where long distance coaches could effectively run on batteries. In many countries, the consent is though that the investment into the new technology must be incentivised, however, governments are oftentimes lagging behind.

Perhaps the biggest opportunity in the context of new fuels is for the next generation of fresh graduates to join the workforce in the workshops. Long gone are the times of the “grease monkey” as newer buses are highly complex machines using a lot of computing power and electronic components. With both technologies (ICE and BEV) now operating in tandem, there is an increased need for staffing. Dedicated workshops dealing with BEV only could be a niche that could be exploited.

Software and Technology

A key component of modern life is the Internet of Things. It is the interconnection via the internet of computing devices embedded in everyday objects, enabling them to send and receive data. With this, cities are aiming to become smart cities: places where traditional networks and services are made more efficient with the use of digital solutions for the benefit of its inhabitants and business. A smart city goes beyond the use of digital



technologies for better resource use and less emissions. Thus, the demand on the bus manufacturers to incorporate the idea of smart cities is increasing. The importance of using artificial intelligence can already be felt as the complexity of modern transport networks can be overwhelming.

We now have the opportunity to streamline our bus operations with the use of IoT. For instance, we can now predict peak hour traffic by way of analysing ridership, thus deploying the right vehicles in the right quantity. Traveling on a bus will be more comfortable for the user, thanks to booking portals, apps, tools and onboard entertainment. Providing a more refined user experience, buses now signify an opportunity for operators to offer an evolved product. Utilising modern technology, operators can also streamline their operation to add to the bottom line. For instance, on-board, over-the-net advertising can be broadcasted into buses, thus opening up new ways of earning money.

Although one can argue that the use of high-tech ties the operator closely to the chassis manufacturer, the advantages are clear: running a bus fleet is less about managing the vehicle, but more and more about focusing on what matters, which is moving people. With predictive maintenance and sophisticated service and maintenance contracts, the burden of having a high uptime is shifted from the operator to the OEM. With the data gathered from thousands of connected vehicles, OEMs can harvest insights while at the same time offering add-on Software as Services (SaS) to create solid revenue streams.

Sizes Matter

Today's consumers of public transportation depend on a range of services. The clustered nature of work and life adds a layer of complexity to the public transportation system of big cities. One would need larger vehicles, such as articulated buses to move volume while at the same time, smaller vehicles are needed to provide the crucial last mile transport. Nowadays, buses even compete with micro mobility solutions in a bid to get passengers as close to their desired destination as possible.



A surge in offerings of smaller buses can be witnessed as transportation solutions providers embrace the notion of the need to provide last mile transportation.

At the same time, super-sized buses, articulated or double-deckers, are seeing an increase in demand in order to address the needs of modern urban landscapes. Today's product offerings are much more refined than they used to be. The challenge will be to integrate the various sizes of buses to ensure that the route network is as efficient as possible. Thanks to increasing urbanisation, bus makers will be seeing greater demand for their products.

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Tan Teck Meng Regional Parts Manager (I) and Navin Manogaran, Head of Customer Service Management | General Manager (R), MAN Truck & Bus (M) Sdn Bhd

Spot the Fake – Protect your Assets

Industry leading brands joined forces to educate about the potential harm that fake and counterfeit pose to the transport industry.



Frank Maergner, Sales Director, Hengst Asia Pacific Pte Ltd

It was an early start to a full day filled with presentations and interactive sessions when the “Spot the Fake – Protect your Assets” was held on the 18th of May 2023 in the Courtyard by Marriott in Setia Alam. Almost 100 participants flocked to the session, eager to know more about the topic.

Identifying Fakes

Part of each presentation by the supporting brands was an elaboration on how to identify genuine and fake or counterfeit parts. In particular, packaging is a significant component of any product and users may be able to spot a dodgy part just by looking at the packaging. For instance, a fake or counterfeit product may only be supplied in a brown carton, whereby the original would be in a colourful box with high-quality livery printed on it. Today, QR codes are another important tool that can help users to identify original parts and components.

Label and Packaging

One of the most obvious ways to spot a fake is to look at the packaging. Almost always, the packaging is made to look like the original, while showing some obvious differences. For instance, the logo may not be correct, using a different name or letters. Imitating a logo, termed “Passing off a mark” is commonplace in counterfeiting and constitutes a trademark infringement as well as posing risks to the buyer.

Beyond Parts and Components

Providing a theoretical framework for the seminar were KASS, a local law firm dealing with Intellectual Property and UOB, which highlighted the most common scams at the moment and how to spot them.

In a brief overview, participants learned about how Intellectual Property (IP) is created and what they could do to protect their intellectual property. It was further discussed what measures one can take to report and fight IP infringements. When talking about scammers, UOB urged the audience to be vigilant and alert. Here again, the mantra was that if a deal is too good to be true, it almost certainly is something to stay away from.



Anwar Jumbhoy, Regional Partner,
21CC Education



Jason Nicholas Soyza General Manager,
Services, Allegiance Malaysia Sdn Bhd

The original packaging is typically changed in regular intervals. Buyers of spare parts and consumables are urged to familiarise themselves with the look and feel of original packages. If in doubt, as sometimes there could be older versions of the original packaging still in circulation, a call to the principal will clear up any doubts.

The Price is not Right

We are all familiar with the idea that if something is too good to be true, then it is likely not. The same applies to spare parts and consumables. If a product is offered at half the price of what it usually is or what the same product would cost from other suppliers, then there must be something wrong. While discounts may be offered from time to time, there is no way that the distributor and principal would slash prices to levels that seem unbelievable. An example given during the seminar was that a filter might have been half the price and swapped regularly, thus the fleet operator might save money. However, as the filter was of inferior quality, it comes apart when in use, thus offering no filtration: an engine thus might be destroyed, causing replacement costs far exceeding the saving that one could possibly achieve by using fake, cheap parts.

The Right Partner

Typically, spare parts and consumables are sold via dealers (seldom direct from the manufacturer, but the same idea put forward applies). Original Equipment Manufacturers go to great lengths to ensure that they have appointed a trustworthy and dedicated dealer. Therefore, they will list all the appointed dealers on their

website. If someone is offering a part or consumables, the buyer can easily check on the OEMs website if the dealer is listed. If not, chances are that the dealer is not appointed or is selling knock-offs. In addition, many of the OEMs issue certificates that the dealer would have to produce upon request. These certificates are usually limited to one or two years. The inability to produce a valid certificate would also indicate something being wrong.

Extending, it is recommended that beyond market prices, users also become familiar with the brands they use and their portfolio. The question one could ask in assessing a part for authenticity is if a brand would be offering that kind of product. If a brand suddenly offers a part that is not aligned with their philosophy (quality level for example) or product portfolio, it might be worth checking if the product is offered by the OEM.

Touch and Test

Counterfeit products can be of high quality with no obvious tell-tale signs of it being a fake product. Sometimes fake products are hard to identify without taking them apart. Sometimes it may be a good idea though to spend on an extra part to understand how it is constructed in order to know what makes an original part. For instance, an air filter could be bend and if it cracks, it is of lower quality, indicating it is a fake. The number of pleats, the folding of the pleats and how the filter material is connected to the end caps are further indications for genuine products. As a general rule, a fake product would always be one that uses less and / or inferior material and production methods in order to reduce the cost.

Stickers and Numbers

Utilising the internet, buyers of parts and consumables can also check online if their purchase is legit. The product labels can now serve as a quality seal, with distinguishing features such as holograms. In addition, QR codes and other identification numbers can be fed into online portals that verify a part to be genuine.

Production Quality

When companies offer multiple years of warranty on their products and promise superior performance, then they do so as their components are manufactured to the highest standards. Gears, piston

rings, shafts and rods may look like they are original, but a closer inspection may reveal a fake: non-treated surfaces easily scratch, holes may not be chamfered, and logos may only be printed on the parts.

Mixing Oil

With the exception of highly complicated assemblies, such as a complete gearbox, not much is safe from imitation or tampering. That includes lubricants and other fluids. Mixing cheaper fluids into high quality grade fluids is one method applied by fraudulent sellers. Old fluids could be mixed in with new liquids or packaging swapped to sell low grade products for a higher price. The two remedies to prevent fraud are again to know the supplier and to be familiar with the product. A fake lubricant may smell different or feel different than the genuine item.

Too Complex to Fake

Modern components and parts may be highly complex as many suppliers have taken the strategic approach to become solutions providers. Those wanting to make a quick buck by copying products would do so by offering simpler, easier to copy products. As these components also require trained and qualified staff to sell them to the market, OEMs nowadays work with reputable distributors and dealers, which can typically be identified via the brands' websites. Those fraudulent suppliers would simply not have the motivation to create a complex product or appearance.

Knowledge is Key

As spare parts are crucial to maintaining a high level of uptime, it is important for fleet operators to be knowledgeable about the market. One should get to know the brands, their market prices, the distribution network and the people behind them. When a part is offered at a price that is "too good to be true" and out of sync with the market price, surely something is wrong. Should a vendor offer a branded component that is not typically offered by a brand, alarm bells should ring.

Damage to the Industry

A fake or counterfeit product may pose a threat to the lives of those on the road. For instance, unscrupulous individuals may offer brake pads that use sawdust as filler, this putting people at risk. In case a non-genuine part is causing harm to a transporter, the damage is not limited to metal and plastic: one's reputation is also at stake and authorities may rule that a company may have to be shuttered as it may be deemed unsafe. In addition, fake parts, as they are typically cheaper, also rob governments of revenue. In this context, under-declaring the value of parts upon importation also causes the government losses. Meanwhile, fake or counterfeit products take away jobs from those that are offering genuine parts.

Damage Done

To illustrate the severity of impact of using fake or counterfeit parts, Malaysian industry insiders often refer to a case in 2014, whereby insurance companies had

to pay out a whopping RM 600 million. Only two automotive brands were involved in repair claims. According to World Trademark Review, the estimated global economic cost of counterfeiting in the automotive industry could have reached \$2.3 trillion by 2022. In Europe, it is estimated that €2.2 billion is lost annually to counterfeit tyre sales alone, while counterfeit battery sales effectively steal €180m from OEMs.

The impact of fake or counterfeit products is severe: loss of lives, loss of income, loss of tax income and threat to the existence of genuine parts manufacturers are just the most obvious. ■



Ben Zhang, Head of Commercial Vehicle Aftermarket Business Line Commercial Vehicle Aftermarket Business Line, Asia Pacific



Eugene Kumar, Senior Executive, Product Training Excellence AM – APAC, ZF Asia Pacific Pte Ltd

Platinum Sponsor: **Hengst** FILTRATION

Genuine Trucks: **MAN**

Genuine OEM Providers: **ZF** **WABCO** Secure Banking: **UOB**

Road Safety Advocate: **SHINVENGO** IP Experts: **KASS** World's The IP Experts

Genuine Parts: **Alligiance** Supporting Partner: **BOSCH** Invented for life

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Built on a Foundation of Trust

Emerging from the pandemic with record sales, Hino has found an approach that ensured sustainability during a global crisis. Managing Director of Hino Motors Sales (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd (HMSM), Atsushi Uchiyama, discussed with Asian Trucker how the brand managed to not only stay relevant, but to enhance their brand value in such tough times.

AT: Last year you have posted a sales record and a record in service intake. Why do you think people spent more on their vehicles last year?

AU: What I notice is that passenger cars have also seen record sales last year, which can be traced back to the SST exemption. When we are looking at commercial vehicles, the situation is different. A lot of vehicles sold last year were from the backlog of the previous years. During the lockdowns in the years 2020 and 2021, there was strong demand for trucks, as a result of the increased need for transportation for courier services and to support online shopping. However, due to the MCO (Movement Control Order), we could not operate as usual and even had to stop production for several months. In summary, we had high demand, but could not satisfy it.

Generally, Malaysia is a very strong domestic market and the demand for commercial vehicles has always been high. To support the owners, we have also initiated a number of activities. HINO believes that one cannot just sell the vehicles without having supportive activities to accompany the sales.

AT: Hino is upgrading dealers across Malaysia to 3S outlets. What is the rationale behind this move?

AU: There are only three or four 1S dealers left in our network. There is a good reason to upgrade to being a 3S outlet: margins on vehicle sales alone will not be enough to sustain a business and it is the follow up jobs will make money for the 3S outlets. Upgrading from 1S to 3S is allowing dealers to forge long term relationships with clients and this way have a more sustainable business. While we encourage our dealers to upgrade to become 3S outlets, we will not force them. From our data, we can tell that it is a beneficial move, however some are happy just selling the vehicles. And it is those dealers that we also have to thank for as they have put all these vehicles on the road that I mentioned before, those that we now serviced during the pandemic.

AT: Your tenure here is an interesting timing: you have seen Malaysia pre-pandemic and all through it, then the recovery. How has the market changed in your view?

AU: What we see is that customers are much more conscious about cost. This is in two parts: firstly the vehicle itself. Many companies are under pressure to drive down cost. A lower price for a bus is one way to achieve that. Beyond that, they are looking for ways to reduce cost in the operation of the trucks. Here we see that our customers are becoming more sophisticated in pinpointing where there are opportunities to find extra money. This is not just a Malaysian issue, but a global one.

For instance, customers are looking for ways to reduce the money spend on maintenance. An easy way is to buy non-genuine products. However, we know that this is a fallacy as such parts are typically not as good as the original parts we sell. Our customer will find that the uptime is much better with genuine parts than with counterfeit parts for instance and that they make more money using our services.

We realise that we need to do more than just sell vehicles. For instance, we might be dealing with the buyer, the owner of the bus, but we may not have had any contact with the user, the driver. Hino Malaysia wants to change that by having on-boarding processes in place for drivers, and also organising more professional handovers. This will go hand in hand with a standardisation of our service delivery across all network partners. We acknowledge that this is a huge undertaking, but it will be beneficial for our customers.



AT: What is your view on the implementation of e-mobility in Malaysia?

AU: The Malaysian government has made it clear that the approach is to first introduce and promote the introduction of electric buses first. It is generally acknowledged that the charging infrastructure would have to be implemented first. What we can expect is that Klang Valley will be the first area to be equipped with charging stations and then it will expand into other business centres.

In Japan Hino has introduced an e-truck for last mile deliveries last year. It is our home market and we will need to learn about electric trucks and how they can best be used first at our doorstep before we start offering them in other markets. Hino needs to gain experience first before we can confidently offer such vehicles here for instance. Currently, we have clients that want to experience this kind of new vehicles, but we have to ask for patience.

In the meantime, Daimler Truck, Mitsubishi Fuso, Hino and Toyota Motor Corporation concluded an MoU on accelerating development of Advanced Technologies and merged Mitsubishi Fuso and Hino Motors. 🚐



Battery Safety Through Quality

Webasto's latest CV Standard Battery and other additions showcase the company's willingness to go the extra mile to keep electric buses as safe as possible.

There's no denying that electric buses hold a critical piece of the sustainable transport puzzle when it comes to urban areas. Its popularity in these regions has made battery electric buses an exciting way forward.

Yet with this new technology comes its own discussion around safety concerns. To address this, global top 100 automotive supplier Webasto has designed its own range of innovative solutions to ensure safety is at the forefront for its e-mobility partners and customers. "As a major supplier to the global automotive industry, Webasto's products not only meet the applicable standards, but are designed to exceed the industry requirements regarding reliability and safety," Webasto CS sales and service director in APAC David Byrne advises.

"Unique testing and validation ensuring the highest quality and safety levels are part of Webasto's automotive DNA. With an in-house design, prototyping and comprehensive range of facilities, Webasto tests and validates all components from cells to full systems."

This complete package of internal testing includes functional, thermal, environmental, mechanical shock, vibration and electrical testing. These assessments have resulted in the Webasto CV Standard Battery. Produced in a state-of-the-art German facility, the CV Standard Battery is part of a homologated system designed specifically for the world's commercial vehicles like buses and coaches.

Webasto says its robust design and housing result in the battery being used on buses as well as in off-road construction machinery. "This modular scalable battery system offers a range of safety features that are essential for the safe operation of electric vehicles," Byrne says.

"With its integrated BMS, the system is constantly monitoring key performance and safety critical factors such as voltage, current, temperatures, state of health and charge at a cell, pack and module level."

Also included in every Webasto CV Standard Battery pack is insulation measurement, high voltage interlock and contactor monitoring. It all results in safe operations for buses and coaches within its designed parameters. Webasto says the CV Standard Battery System has also been designed to feature integrated thermal runaway detection.

In the event of a fault or malfunction, the system will automatically detect any abnormal changes in temperature, voltage, current and other critical values to shut down the system long before it can reach any state in which harm can be possibly caused to human life and the customer's property.

If the risk ever spirals into an unlikely thermal event, the highly sensitive system will automatically detect any sharp increase in temperature and carbon dioxide levels to give the driver time to safely evacuate the vehicle. Byrne says specially designed degassing units on each layer of the system provide pressure relief in a controlled manner.

"In normal operation, these units also act as pressure equalisation devices and ensure the battery is always maintained at the correct pressure if there's an altitude change for the vehicle," Byrne says.

Byrne says one of the key safety features of the CV Standard Battery System is its physical separation between high voltage and cooling connectors. On top of this, the system also includes desiccant cartridges to avoid condensation over the lifetime of the battery pack, preventing moisture from damaging the battery.

If growing operators want to use multiple battery packs in their buses or coaches, they can be connected via Webasto's vehicle interface box (VIB). As well as acting as a master BMS, the VIB allows for power distribution and a two-way communication interface with the vehicle, including receipts of critical safety messages like crash detection that would then lead to the automatic shutdown of the battery systems.

"Complementing the intelligent thermal management within the battery system is the development of Webasto's eBTM 2.0," Byrne says.

"This is a stand-alone battery thermal management unit that aims to regulate the temperature of the battery pack and maintain it within a safe operation range.

It does this by combining heating and cooling elements with sensors and control systems that monitor and adjust the temperature as needed."

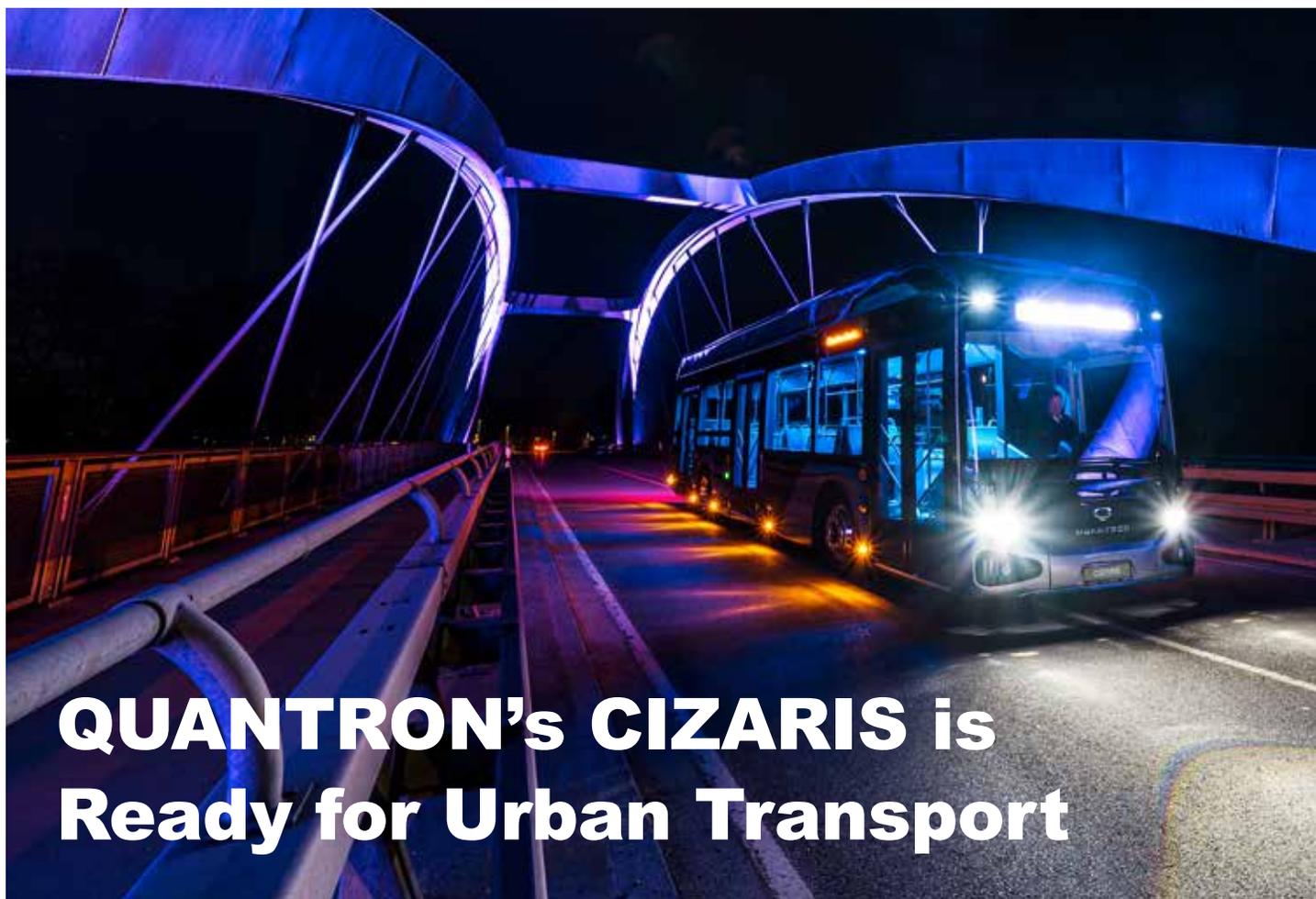
Webasto's eBTM 2.0 is especially designed to allow for optimal functioning of its water-cooled battery packs that are used in electric commercial vehicles. Its compact design includes all components needed for heating and cooling such as pumps, heaters, compressors and DC/DC converters.

Byrne elaborates this underlines the simple 'Plug & Play' principle and allows for flexible installation of the system onto a bus's roof or within its chassis. This provides a wide range of benefits that makes Webasto's new battery packs safer and more innovative than ever before.

"One of the key benefits of a properly functioning thermal management system is improved battery life," he added.

"Batteries, commonly used in electric buses, are sensitive to temperature fluctuations. If it's then exposed to high temperatures for long periods of time, it can cause accelerated aging and reduce its lifespan." By regulating the battery temperature, the system lowers the risk of performance reduction that could limit the bus's range and driving behaviour. ■





QUANTRON's CIZARIS is Ready for Urban Transport



As a high-tech spinoff of the family-owned company Haller GmbH & Co. KG, builds on over 140 years of commercial vehicle experience. The name "CIZARIS", a reference to the city goddess Ciza, shows the connection to the hometown of Augsburg, where

QUANTRON's vision is a greener world. With zero-emission commercial vehicles, we are making our contribution to reducing CO2 emissions and thus to achieving global climate targets. We want to change the future in a sustainable way.

The QUANTRON CIZARIS offers a reliable and environmentally friendly solution for inner-city passenger transport. At QUANTRON, the decision for an electric bus is no longer a question of price, but primarily a decision for a sustainable and low-noise alternative.





Driving Safety

Safety and reliability have top priority at QUANTRON. The CIZARIS therefore relies on vehicle technology that has already been proven thousands of times in continuous operation and on a high-quality standard for all installed elements. In combination with the robustly constructed chassis, the CIZARIS offers comprehensive protection for drivers and guests.

The integrated MirrorEye Camera Monitor System (CMS) provides an additional measure of safety for the vehicle occupants, but also for all other road users, in particular cyclists and pedestrians. This mirror replacement system uses external digital cameras in combination with usefully positioned monitors in the driver's cab to provide an enlarged field of vision and thus eliminates blind spots. As a result, even at night and in poor weather conditions, the driver retains an overview of his surroundings and the vehicle interior.

Interior Design

With its friendly and bright design, the passenger compartment provides a great sense of space. Indirect side lighting and additional transversely mounted LED lights with changeable colors create a pleasant atmosphere that can be adapted to day and night travel.

A special design feature is the elaborately perforated aluminum ceiling. On request, the equipment can be additionally individualized with flexibly positionable stop request

buttons and seat cover that can be variably designed with digital textile printing. Wide aisles allow free access to all seats with plenty of legroom. The CIZARIS thus offers a comfortable ride, especially for people with limited mobility. Particularly practical are the hop-on/hop-off seats in the rear of the vehicle, which offer short-haul drivers quick and easy access to seats. Modernity also comes into play when it comes to USBchargers: Available are sidewall-mounted USB-A plugs and USB-C plugs (optional) under the comfortable seats.

Dimensions

- Overall length 12180 mm
- Overall width 2550 mm
- Overall height 3450 mm
- Wheel base 5900 mm
- Overhang (front/rear) 2800/3480 mm
- Turning radius (outer front corner) 11461 mm
- Turning radius (outer front wheel) 9429 mm
- Angle of approach & departure 7°
- Permissible total weight 19000 kg
- Passenger seat capacity 25-36
- Passenger capacity 81 – 95

QUANTRON CIZARIS 12 EV wins German Sustainability Award Design 2023

The zero-emission QUANTRON CIZARIS 12 EV city bus has been awarded the German Sustainability Award Design 2023 ("Deutscher Nachhaltigkeitspreis Design 2023"). The prize was awarded for the third time this year to a total of 17 winners. It honors products, systems and services that represent particularly sustainable alternatives with an exemplary effect.

The QUANTRON CIZARIS 12 EV was selected as the winner by the jury from more than 100 entries. The decision was made in favor of the all-electric city bus due to its functional interior and exterior design, which allows easy access even for people with limited mobility, as well as QUANTRON's comprehensive sustainability concept. Thus, the company not only supplies its customers with the zero-emission vehicle, but with the Quantron-as-a-Service Ecosystem also addresses all other necessary areas for sustainable inner-city public transport, such as a sufficient charging infrastructure. 

it all began in 1882 with a horse-drawn carriage business. But "CIZARIS" also stands for the core values of the bus: the basic "CI" for the application area "City", the central "Z" for "Zero (emissions)" and the suffix "ARIS" derived from the Greek for "the noblest/the best".



Volvo Buses' Assessment of Malaysian Business

After the pandemic, the deck has been re-stacked for the Malaysian market. Volvo Buses is poised to offer the solutions the market needs now.



As a manifestation of the changing times, one will have heard about a tender being announced for the purchase of 100 + (exact numbers could not be obtained) electric buses by PRASARANA. The purchase of such buses would herald the beginning of a new era in public transport for Malaysia. Mak stated that Volvo is fully ready for this shifting of market requirements with the readiness of our various products. Volvo has a full range of products with the options of Diesel, Diesel Hybrid and fully electric bus. All these buses are already in operation in this region and with a good service record.

Therefore, these health checks, although requiring the buy-in from the operators, are crucial to ensure maximum uptime.

To support the re-opening of the economy, Volvo Buses offered health checks for buses and programmes to assist operators to re-activate their buses after sitting idle for the duration of the lockdowns. Now that Volvo's bus population is back on the roads. Observation has proven that this is the right approach as one can see an increase in breakdowns of vehicles after they have been idle for some time. Therefore, these health checks, although requiring the buy-in from the operators, are crucial to ensure maximum uptime.

Echoing the comments from Coachbuilders Asian Buses has interviewed, Mak confirmed that Volvo Buses is seeing an increase in enquiries received. Express coaches are currently in higher demand as this segment of the industry is back in full swing and operators are looking to add new routes. Mak notes that operators previously active in Kota Baru only, are now considering adding routes all the way to Johor Baru and even Singapore. In addition, after a drastically reduced usage during the pandemic, many

While the pandemic may not have been officially declared as over in Malaysia, business is certainly rebounding, with measures to boost the transport sector on the cards. Volvo Buses Malaysia has readied itself and is now poised to respond to the changing market needs. Asian Buses spoke exclusively with Mr Marcus Mak, Country Manager, Volvo Buses Malaysia to find out what the brand has in store.



We are upskilling our talents to be ready for this pivot in the industry.

Electrification also calls for a re-alignment of talent within the organisation. Besides attracting new talent, ready to meet the changed demand from the market, Volvo Buses is also re-training existing staff. Technicians are being trained on the high-voltage systems found in battery electric buses. “We are upskilling our talents to be ready for this pivot in the industry.” As the company is getting ready to provide the services associated with electric vehicles, the key issues to be addressed are still the limitations in range and charging infrastructure. “One issue we have managed to resolve is the supply chain disruption during the pandemic and when it comes to order fulfilment, we are back to what it was before the Covid 19 crisis.”

While the implementation of electric vehicles is still in the phase of early adaptors, internal combustion engines (ICE) are still the main drivers of buses. For now. This however means that Volvo Buses also needs to upgrade the offer whereby the introduction of EURO V engine technology is imminent. In addition, Volvo Buses will be ready to offer electric buses shortly, with hybrid buses being an option that operators can also consider as a greener alternative to ICE-powered vehicles. Limitations in terms of financing and infrastructure are stumbling blocks Mak and his colleagues have identified. For instance, in Peninsular Malaysia, power is not produced in the most sustainable ways, hence the problem of pollution is merely shifted from the user to the producer of electricity.

Assessing the market in its entirety, Mak said that there are a lot of opportunities offered by the re-start following the pandemic. With some consolidation in the market, additional routes being in demand and new technology now becoming viable, the bus segment is highly dynamic. Going forward, the expectation is that the market is growing as the demand for bus transportation will increase. Mak himself hopes to be able to get on board of one of the newly launched Volvo low-entry double deck buses to travel from Johor to Kota Baru to fully experience the comfort and build quality of the vehicle. ■

buses are now reaching their end of life and will need to be replaced. “Typically, these buses are replaced after around seven years, however we are also seeing a number of customers that are opting to replace them earlier,” he said.

In view of the travel patterns of Malaysians, Mak opines that an increase in buses operating on long-distance routes will make a difference as congestion will be eased. During the 2023 Exodus from major cities during Aidilfitri, the government deployed additional buses to ease the traffic jams, however even these additional 256 buses the government has activated during the festive season may not have been sufficient. “We see an opportunity here as we can help build a better public transportation system. Unless there is a reliable and effective public transportation system in place, the general public will opt for cars for their daily commutes, and they will opt for personal vehicles by default for special trips.”

It can be observed that the electrification of transportation has allowed many new brands to enter the market. Malaysia is no stranger to emerging brands that would now compete against established players like Volvo. However, Mak points out that the creation of a new vehicle is the easy part: “It is the 15 years a vehicle is in operation that you need to support it and make sure that it is serviced properly and offers maximum uptime.” Without having the proper service support, the product life cycle of a bus will be cut short, and this will indirectly increase the total cost of ownership of the buses.



MAN Truck & Bus to make City Buses Autonomous with Mobileye

“Please get on board!” The potential for autonomous buses in urban areas is enormous in terms of total cost of ownership (TCO), personnel deployment and benefits for all city dwellers.



MAN Truck & Bus is therefore working intensively on the automation of its buses. To this end, the commercial vehicle manufacturer is taking off with the autonomous driving technology specialist Mobileye at its side: With one of the leading developers of technologies for autonomous driving solutions, MAN Truck & Bus is entering into a smart cooperation over several steps in order to consistently pursue its roadmap, at the end of which is highly automated driving in city buses that is ready for series production. The first joint goal of MAN and Mobileye: pilot operation of the first automated city bus with a safety driver is planned from 2025 as part of the MINGA research project in Munich.

“The fact that urban bus mobility in the future will not only be emission-free and connected, but also automated, is not a general question, but merely a question of time,” says Barbaros Oktay, Head of Bus at MAN Truck & Bus.

“MAN Truck & Bus has therefore strategically positioned itself through the cooperation with Mobileye in such a way that we can jointly set the decisive milestones on our further path to the automation of the city bus.” With the cooperation, MAN Truck & Bus is intensifying the automation of the city bus. Drivers for automated driving in the city bus sector are mainly high TCO savings and the shortage of driving personnel, which can be countered by this. At the same time, more and more smaller means of transport, starting with passenger cars, are starting to enter the market with highly automated driving. Highly automated driverless solutions in urban areas have a significantly improved economic efficiency compared to driver-assisted offers and provide safe and reliable mobility for its users. In addition, with largely automated, connected and emission-free urban transport, city dwellers benefit from better air quality, less congestion and noise, and the gain of living space that is no longer needed for parking.

Smart Cooperation with a Clear Roadmap

The cooperation between MAN Truck & Bus and Mobileye will decisively drive further development. With Mobileye Drive™, the expert for autonomous vehicles has developed a turnkey self-driving system that is ready for scalable commercial use and has a sophisticated sensor system. It also features “safety by design” and the use of highly scalable AV maps. Mobileye will provide the Mobileye Drive™ intelligent Automated Driving System (ADS) along the planned roadmap. Meanwhile, MAN will create the necessary vehicle architecture to meet bus automation requirements.

“We are excited about the future collaboration with MAN Truck & Bus. We care about sustainable mobility solutions in both the private and public sectors and see autonomous vehicle technologies as an important contribution to making public transport safer, more efficient and more accessible. MAN Truck & Bus and Mobileye share a clear vision for autonomous mobility of the future, which is underlined by this cooperation,” says Johann Jungwirth, Senior Vice President, Autonomous Vehicles at Mobileye.

The first automated MAN bus of the type Lion’s City E is to prove itself in Munich’s city traffic from as early as 2025, accompanied by a safety driver. It is to be used on bus route 144 through the Olympic Park, which is characterised by tourism and leisure, as part of the MINGA research project. In the project, which is led by the Mobility Department (Mobilitätsreferat) of the City of Munich and funded by the Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport (BMDV), MAN and numerous other project partners from industry, science, administration and associations are working, among other things, on the integration of automated vehicles into the existing mobility ecosystem. 

Get on the Bus. Which Bus?

There should be no debating that we need to act now in order to reduce negative impacts on the environment from transportation. For the sake of this column we can also assume that in broad strokes, public transport is having a lesser impact than personal vehicles. Increasing bus capacity using is also generally seen as easier and more flexible than other means of transportation such as trains, for instance. So, we should all get onto buses more often to commute, and to visit sights while also incorporating them into our leisure activities. I am in! I like the idea of not having to worry about filling up the fuel tank before a trip or where to find a parking spot when I arrive.

But just how can this be done? I can see the mall from my sofa when I watch TV. It is so close that one could walk, if one were brave enough to cross the four-lane road that is in between. I have seen big shuttle buses that drive around my neighbourhood. I see them at 5:30 in the morning when I go for a run. I see them parked randomly, but never in a bus stop. Also, I never see them after 7:00am. It is a bit like bananas in the former East Germany: you know they exist, but you can't get them. What I do see thought is a lot of people driving all about town when they get their shopping done or on the way to restaurants. Just why aren't there more buses with clearly communicated schedules that service a township that even has a kind of ring road system?

This week, we also learned through official channels that only half of Rapid's buses are operating. That is about 900 for a city population of about nine million. Or one per 10 000 people. Cut to Singapore where we find some 5 800 buses serving 5.5 million people. Of these some are reserve or under maintenance, let's call it 5 000. That is one bus for 1 100 persons. In Singapore, you can travel to the most remote corner of the island in a bus. Phrased slightly different by the OEMs, the bottom line is that public transport needs to be available, convenient and predictable. I would need 4.5 hours to get from home to my office 18 Km away. However, I would not even know where to access buses if indeed they operate.

In some parts of the Klang Valley we can hop on free buses. However, the problem persists: it is not accessible or convenient. I learned this phrase here in Malaysia: 'free, also don't want'.

The idea of independence was also promoted in Europe where I grew up. We would go camping, driving our cars and trailers around the place to see different spots. In Malaysia, the idea of doing good for the economy by buying national cars is something that is still very prominently promoted. After decades of this narrative, it is of course very difficult to affect a mindset change. If we are honest, the voice for public transport is silenced by the deafening roar of promotions for cars, mainly the electric ones these days. When was the last time you passed a billboard that told you how cool it is to ride the bus?



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How could we rapidly ramp up the capacity for public transport using buses? Just being critical is not good enough, hence here is an idea or two. Singapore is planning to replace half their buses with electric ones by 2030, 100 percent by 2040. This means, that every month now, there will be used buses phased out. Malaysia could pick them up. Likely, some were built in Malaysia and repatriating them should be relatively easy. As a positive side effect, these buses already comply with higher emission standards, which would help improve air quality while working towards carbon neutrality. In addition, there are still bus operators that have yet to get back to full capacity as tourists have yet to flock back to our shores. These buses, small or large, could well be used to transport commuters around the city.

From what I observe, many people are fed up with the traffic jams and they would not mind switching to public transport. However, for now, the odds are stacked in favour of most to take their cars whenever they need to go somewhere. 🚗



This Mercedes-Benz Bus was in Service with the Austrian Post Until the 1970s



“Close-up” – the name of this series from the Mercedes-Benz Museum says it all. Each instalment tells a surprising, exciting or behind-the-scenes story. By shining a spotlight on details of a vehicle, an exhibit or an architectural or design feature. In the spotlight this time: the mobile Austrian post office based on the Mercedes-Benz O 10000 bus from 1938.

Post it: A letter box with a shiny polished metal flap, customer counters for buying stamps or sending parcels – and also the option of sending telegrams: this O 10000 Mercedes-Benz bus was in service with the Austrian Post until the 1970s. It was originally built in 1938 as a long-distance bus. In its subsequent use as a mobile post office, numerous individual solutions made it possible to offer the complete range of services of the state-owned Austrian post and communications service provider on a temporary basis, all in one place.

Stage: This impressive vehicle with its mighty radiator and three axles was used, for example, at cultural events such as the Salzburg Festival. With its fine paintwork and gleaming coat of arms, it almost became something of a performer itself at such events. Less glamorous was its use as a makeshift post office in some rather more mundane locations..

Journey: The O 10000 was the largest bus to be built by Mercedes-Benz in the 1930s. Mercedes-Benz presented its chassis at the International Automobile and Motorcycle Exhibition in Berlin (IAMA) from 15 February to 1 March 1936. Steel bodies – some also in a lightweight design – as city or long-distance buses were supplied by the Mercedes-Benz plants in Gaggenau and Sindelfingen.

Powered post: In Germany and Austria, the buses, which could reach speeds of up to 65 km/h and were around 14 metres long, were also used by the postal service for scheduled long-distance transport – the so-called “powered post”. After the Second World War, the Austrian Post converted the bus for the first time. The O 10000 then operated as a parcel carrier on the route between Vienna and Salzburg. A further conversion, probably in the 1960s, finally gave rise to the mobile post office. It opened its counters again and again at different locations until the end of the 1970s. Thus, the bus continued to be used in a very sustainable way and for three different functions over four decades.

Long-distance call: A quick call home to rave about your visit to the opera or this year’s performance of “Jedermann” in Salzburg? Today, you just whip out your smartphone. In contrast, 50 years ago, mobile telephony in everyday life was still a vision of the future. That’s where a service from the mobile post office came in handy: it offered three “telephone booths”.

Size: The O 10000 was suitable for subsequent use as a parcel carrier and later as a post office on wheels because of its generous dimensions. As a bus, it offered space for up to 60 passengers in the late 1930s. Its engine is also big. The OM 57 six-cylinder diesel engine delivers 110 kW (150 hp) from a mighty 11,197 cubic centimetres of displacement. The power unit is located

under the vehicle's elongated bonnet. On the front bumper there are two guide rods with round rear-view mirrors. These made it easier to manoeuvre the long and heavy bus – an important aspect, e.g. in case of narrow set-up locations for major events.

Eye level: The differing position of the high windows of the telephone booths and of the much lower windows of the post office counters is striking. This configuration made the latter more convenient to reach for post office customers, who were presumably standing on a platform. This is made possible by a trick in the interior design: the counter clerks who accepted letters, telegrams and parcels did not sit on conventional office furniture. Instead, sliding seats are attached to the floor of the interior, and there are recesses for the clerks' legs in front of them. The challenge of providing a writing facility for customers was also cleverly solved: a desk flap on one side wall can be folded outwards for this purpose. The integrated lighting with three small lamps was particularly convenient.

Comfort: For the staff on board there is a refrigerator and a hand basin, among other things. The post office did not have air conditioning. However, fresh air was supplied during operation in



warm weather through a screen door at the rear. This also secured the post office against unauthorised access.

Order: Incoming post was obviously pre-sorted immediately. A shelf in the interior with the corresponding compartments is a reminder of this. Post bags were available for further transport. They were attached to a pole with clamps and filled with post. Aids such as snow chains, tools and fire extinguishers were also stowed according to clear rules.

Tradition: The O 10000's livery in yellow and black refers to European postal history – these are Imperial colours. In the late 15th century, Maximilian I, a member of the Hapsburg dynasty, bestowed them on the House of Thurn und Taxis as its emblem. The Thurn and Taxis noble family were to take over the postal service in the Empire. In 1615, they were appointed Imperial Postmasters General. To this day, postal vehicles in various European countries are painted in shades of yellow – and often have a Mercedes star on the front. 🇩🇪



E-MOBILITY BATTERY SYSTEMS

With over 90 years of automotive expertise and a sustainable vision, Webasto has developed a modular, scalable battery system perfect for a wide variety of applications. Our high-quality, high-performance and high-safety battery products enable a secure and long-term investment into a green mobility.





By: David Bowden

Singapore by Bus

After taking nine hours door-to-door on his last flight from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur, David Bowden sets out on a Super Nice coach to road test the journey.



If I had driven by car within the speed limit, my door-to-door journey from Kuala Lumpur to the just-opened Pullman Orchard Singapore, would normally take just over five hours. However, I would have to download Singaporean e-traffic passes, endure the traffic on the North-South Highway, and arrive in desperate need of a drink or two to recover from the ordeal.

I could also fly, but my last flight was excruciatingly protracted due to flight delays, immigration queues, baggage scanning and sitting around waiting.

Had certain politicians had their way, I could also have been sitting on a high-speed train that would cover the distance in a little over two hours, but currently, the only rail possibility is the much-improved ERL to Johor Bahru, a commuter train

to Woodlands and then a Singaporean train into the city centre. Until the high-speed train becomes a reality, the current rail journey would still take six to seven hours, door-to-door.

Bussing It

However, the bus became a reality when I recently chose to take a Super Nice coach journey. The prospects were good as the coach departs from a central location (Berjaya Plaza) or from Selatan Bus Terminal to the south of the city. Coaches arrive at Grantral Mall Macpherson in Singapore (a short walk from Tai Seng MRT). The coach especially appeals because someone else drives while passengers rest or work.

Tickets can be purchased online in advance at various websites, including directly with Super Nice or from the kerb-side counter in front of Berjaya Plaza (below the monorail station and opposite Berjaya Times Square). Obviously, advanced booking guarantees a seat, although tickets are sold up until the bus departs.

Singapore immigration authorities require advanced registration for travellers to the island state. This must be done online within three days before departing Malaysia, and counter staff check this prior to the coach's departure. The registration is reasonably

straightforward except when it comes to listing the bus registration number, which, of course, you don't know. However, you can overcome this stumbling block by just entering 'bus'.

My Super Nice coach is configured with three seats, across with the single seat (row A) perfect for solo travellers. The air conditioning can be controlled from the seat and there is an overhead reading light. The footrest appears to be permanently down, and the seat can be reclined. There are pull-down blinds, a seatbelt and over-the-seat storage bins. The seating (27 seats in all) is very comfortable and similar to a business class seat on a plane, and has decent legroom. My bus to Singapore was equipped with wi-fi but, for unknown reasons, the return bus wasn't. Neither was equipped with charging ports.

The Journey

The coach on both legs of the journey departed exactly on time. Stops may be made for refuelling or to deviate into the Selatan Bus Terminal to pick up passengers, and this adds an additional 15 minutes. A 20-minute toilet and/or snack stop was also made at Yong Peng on the journey south and at a layover on the return journey. It is worth noting that there is no onboard toilet. The coach also deviated into Larkin Bus Terminal in Johor Bahru on the way south to drop off a passenger. The ride is smooth and the coach is driven at a consistent speed of about 80 km/hour.

Passengers have to complete immigration and customs procedures at the border and while this is mostly effortless, the pathways through both facilities are not so clear. I found it valuable to keep some of the other passengers in my sight and follow them. Immigration clearance into Singapore can be done electronically, but this facility into Malaysia is only for Malaysian citizens, and other nationalities have to queue up and be chopped in or out by an immigration officer.



While there were no border delays on my journeys, the coach leaves when all passengers are on board so if any passenger has an immigration problem, everyone must wait. Bags also need to be scanned when entering Singapore and Malaysia on the return journey.

The last section of the journey to Macpherson takes 40 minutes, with the coach pulling in at 3.30 pm, six hours after leaving Kuala Lumpur. The MRT journey from the new Super Nice terminal at Grantral Mall takes another 40 minutes to Orchard Road, where the brand new Pullman Orchard Singapore was a most welcome sight. Door-to-door (from my home to the Pullman) took eight hours, so it was cheaper, quicker and more comfortable than my last flight.

I have to admit, I'm surprised at how long it can take to travel between the two destinations. I'm sure some travellers will question my timings, but these are based upon actual experiences. What I enjoyed about the coach journey was that, once onboard, you remain in the one seat for the entire journey. There are no body and baggage checks and you can take your own snacks and beverages onboard. Working on the coach is easy and can be done in comfort.

My next journey between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore by train is being planned, and I look forward to reporting back on this soon.

Contacts: Super Nice (www.supernice.sg) and Singapore Immigration (www.ica.gov.sg/enter-transit-depart/entering-singapore/sg-arrival-card).

Brianza U.S.A. Corporation Grows Again



On the eve of the 10th anniversary of its operations in the United States, Brianza Plastica continues to structure and consolidate its presence in the country with further investments and significant personnel changes. In fact, effective June 26, 2023, James Witty (previously Vice President of Sales) will assume the role of President of Brianza USA Corporation, taking over from Filippo Milani, who has been leading the U.S. division since its establishment in 2014 until the present day.

Brianza Plastica is one of the most important European companies in the production of fibreglass laminates, with over 60 years of experience in the sector. On the strength of its success and consolidated presence in the European market as a preferred supplier of semi-finished products for the automotive market, specifically in the field of recreational, commercial and passenger vehicles, in 2014, Brianza Plastica established its own subsidiary in the United States, Brianza U.S.A. Corporation, located in Elkhart, Indiana. The choice of Elkhart as the location for the company's commercial outpost in America was not random: Elkhart is widely known as the "RV Capital of the World" because it is home to numerous major manufacturers of recreational vehicles.

Brianza USA was established as a service, storage and distribution facility to serve the American market directly and locally under the competent and hands-on guidance of Filippo Milani, an Italian manager with extensive experience in fibreglass laminates and a distinguished career within Brianza Plastica, holding the position of President of the U.S. office. The overseas subsidiary experienced rapid growth in terms of both the volume and size of its warehouse, which led to the relocation to larger premises. In a remarkably short period, Brianza USA was able to fulfil the effective and timely supply capacity of the U.S. market.

James Witty comes equipped with extensive sales and leadership experience, as well as in-depth understanding of RV manufacturing industry and processes. He joins Brianza U.S.A. after serving in the roles of Vice President of Sales, Brand Manager/Factory Direct Representative and as Director of Sales.

"Throughout my professional career, I have been involved in sales, forecasting, business strategy, training as well as general management of sales and technical support," Witty explains. "Previously, I led a team that had unprecedented success." He then continues: "I believe that the key to a company's success stems from the perfect combination of people, processes, products and services. And I was able to witness this synergy during my visit to Brianza Plastica in Italy."

Anadolu Isuzu's Autonomous Electric Bus Passes Tests

Anadolu Isuzu transformed the 8-meter fully-electric Novociti Volt bus into a driverless vehicle platform as part of its collaboration with Leo Drive, to develop scalable and reliable software, hardware and algorithm solutions specific to autonomous driving technologies. The Novociti Volt test vehicle equipped with numerous advanced technology LiDAR cameras, sensors, special processors and controllers as well as connected driving systems, was tested through a wide range of scenarios, with and without passengers.

The data obtained from the test drives carried out on the Gebze Technical University campus were used to optimize the developed autonomous driving solution. Considered

as a level 3 autonomous vehicle, Anadolu Isuzu states the Novociti Volt autonomous test vehicle demonstrated a safe driving ability in compliance with road signs and traffic lights in various traffic conditions, as well as with crossing pedestrians and vehicles in motion or stopping. The project is run in collaboration with the Autware Foundation, a non-profit organization that aims to provide autonomous driving technology for everyone and supports open source-based solutions for it. Solutions developed with open-source technologies make the new generation medium size coaches and buses produced by Anadolu Isuzu ready for fully autonomous driving.

ABB E-mobility Unveils HVC360



Slightly fewer than 66 000 electric buses were sold worldwide in 2022, around 4.5 percent of total bus sales. The electrified share of the bus market is rising quickly, however, by 20 percent in Europe and 27 percent in the US, with India accounting for more demand than the US and Europe combined, and the Chinese market acquiring 98 percent of all e-busses globally.

Offering ultimate flexibility for any site layout or use case, each HVC360 power cabinet enables the connection of up to four charging stations as far as 100m from the power cabinet itself, while its proven, compact design allows installation back-to-back, side-to-side, or along a wall.

Dynamic charging capability allows the HVC360 to allocate differing levels of power to each charging station, based on the number of vehicles plugged in or their charging requirements, while the unit also supports all charging interfaces simultaneously, from CCS to pantograph. 

ABB E-mobility announced details of its new HVC360 fleet charging solution, putting the power to drive change in the hands of fleet managers everywhere.

With the decarbonization of road transport taking center stage in many nations' climate policies, recent years have seen huge strides made towards the provision of electric mobility solutions. But while the growing number of public charging points is excellent news for EV drivers, these alone do not meet the needs of electric fleets. Despite comprising just 4% of vehicles, buses and trucks contribute a staggering 40 percent of global transport emissions, making their rapid electrification a vital step in the decarbonization process.

Seoul City to Replace Public Buses with Hydrogen Vehicles by 2026



The objective is to replace approximately 1 300 buses currently operating in Seoul with hydrogen fuel-cell electric buses by 2026.

As part of this project, Seoul aims to replace about 300 airport limousines bound for the city, which accounts for around 70 percent of the existing 451 airport buses, with hydrogen buses by 2026. The city's ultimate goal is to achieve a complete replacement by 2030.

Additionally, the city plans to replace around 1 000 city and commuter buses with hydrogen buses by 2026, while establishing dedicated refilling stations in public garages.

Since 2020, Hyundai Motor has been supplying hydrogen buses to Seoul and has further plans to introduce high-floor hydrogen airport limousines this year. 

The public and private sectors will collaborate to replace city buses, airport limousines, and commuter buses in Seoul with hydrogen-powered buses.

Hyundai Motor Co. said Wednesday it has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Seoul Metropolitan Government, the Ministry of Environment, SK E&S Co., and T Map Mobility Co.

COBUS Vega Electric Airport Bus Wins Red Dot Design Award

The COBUS Vega electric airport bus was designed for emission-free and low-noise operation. The vehicle is characterised by a number of features, including a modular battery system with fast charging function, an integrated air-conditioning system and easily accessible maintenance flaps. Three extra-wide doors on both sides and a fourth door on the right side ensure convenient entry and exit. The jury was impressed by the COBUS Vega's environmental friendliness, as well as its design language, which breaks with visual norms and sets an unusual stylistic accent. 



Weichai Shines in 2023 World Conference on Hydrogen Technology

The 2023 World Conference on Hydrogen Technology was held in Foshan, Guangdong on May 23, 2023. Weichai brought its fuel cell engines, core components and vehicles to the Conference to show its layout of the whole fuel cell industry chain.

At the conference site, Weichai exhibited a number of core fuel cell technologies. Among them, the 200kW fuel cell engine is developed for heavy-duty truck highway transportation scenario, and has passed the test of -34c cold area, with the highest efficiency of more than 60%, featuring high integration, high economy and high reliability.

Two vehicles equipped with Weichai hydrogen fuel cells also were displayed, which have fully realized commercialization, highlighting Weichai's frontier presence and core strength in the new energy field.

Global industry experts and scholars gathered here to discuss the industry difficulties and solutions. The head of related business of Weichai introduced the achievements of the "Hydrogen for Every Household" science and technology demonstration project, creating a blueprint for global hydrogen transportation in the next decade.

Relying on the National Fuel cell Technology Innovation Center, Weichai has seized the major opportunity of the "Hydrogen into Every Household" science and technology demonstration project of the Ministry of Science and Technology and Shandong Province, accelerated the breakthrough of key core fuel cell technologies, promoted the development of the whole industry chain of hydrogen energy, and contributed strength of Weichai to the realization of the "two carbon goals". 



Automechanika Ho Chi Minh City 2023 a Success After the Pandemic

Participants at Automechanika Ho Chi Minh City expressed great confidence in the Vietnamese automotive industry as many begin to lay down foundations for the upcoming technology-driven era. The trade fair took place from 23 to 25 June 2023 at the Saigon Exhibition and Convention Center.

Ms Fiona Chiew, General Manager of Messe Frankfurt (HK) Ltd, remarked: "I am delighted to see an increase in participation amongst local and overseas exhibitors and visitors. It shows that players are recognising opportunities in the automotive supply chain and are using our platform

as a gateway for trade and exchange. The engagement from the local players in our fringe programme was also very encouraging; it demonstrates an eagerness to advance the local automotive industry."

Once again, the trade fair offered an ideal occasion for domestic and overseas automotive markets to come together. Buyers visited from 37 countries and regions, including Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the US, and Vietnam, to name a few 

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