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## COVER STORY

**Focus on MAN at the Bus-world Europe 2017**

## FEATURE STORY

**Innovative Businessman Turns Old Tour Buses into RVs**

## INNOVATIONS

**Bus Uncle Informs and Entertains**

## NEWS & NOTES

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<sup>2</sup>Compared with the Volvo VDS-4 limit, as measured in the Mack T12 300 h engine test.

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# Out of the Bus, Into the Business



I like to deal with commercial vehicles, as they are B2B items. So far, in my entire career, I have not worked once for a consumer goods brand. What makes working in B2B exciting is that there are many facets to any product or service. If you took a consumer good, there is only so much you can talk about. Take for instance an isotonic drink: it is very clear what it does and how it is used. Drink it and your body will be refreshed. The reason why we use an investment good is different. Take for instance the discussion about the High Speed Railway from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore. Naturally, I would expect that there are more business travellers on it than vacationers. And with the HSR comes a lot of business that will be generated.

In this issue we step out of South East Asia to bring you the latest from the Busworld in Belgium. Also, we cover material from events closer to home. Singapore, Thailand and East Malaysia were destinations that had some good stories for us. While I met many interesting people on my travels, I would say that Dr Deena and her crew in the mobile clinic have left me inspired. Considering the nature of their work, it was a marvel to see such delightful and dedicated people. As they are in need of support, I am more than happy to shout out here: Dr Deena needs a set of new bus tyres for her mobile clinic, please donate a set! As we step out of the bus, there is a lot more to this industry than just the vehicle itself. The discussion about electric buses clearly shows that having a bus alone is not

going to be enough. We need infrastructure. Outside the bus. If you count all the items that we would need to address for the use of electric buses, perhaps there is more outside it than in. With the rise of Apps (of which I use none as I am pen and paper person), we see a myriad of things we can do to improve bus services. There are Apps that can tell you where your bus is or what the cheapest ticket would be. In this current issue of Asian Buses, we feature some of these modern tools.

Besides that, there are many ways how business owners can improve their efficiency and with it their profitability. The use of new technology or the help of the OEMs will surely be the way to improve performance. However, this may require business owners to detach themselves from their brand and look beyond. Personally, I like to attend events that have absolutely nothing to do with publishing, writing or even commercial vehicles. It is at such events that I sometimes find new ways to do things, see what is happening in other businesses and how this can be applied to my own work.

Going abroad does the same for me. When I travel, I see things that might be done differently. When you arrive in South East Asia, you quickly realise that tissue paper is not just used to wipe your nose but has more than just the obvious use (Chope that!). Many a times I think that what people are doing here is smarter than the ways we have in Europe. For instance, I find it much easier to deal with a bus time table that says a bus will come every 20 minutes on average, rather than a bus arriving at exactly 7:39 am. That said, when it comes to business travel, or meetings in general, I am stickler for punctuality.

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Stefan Pertz  
Editor, Asian Buses Malaysia



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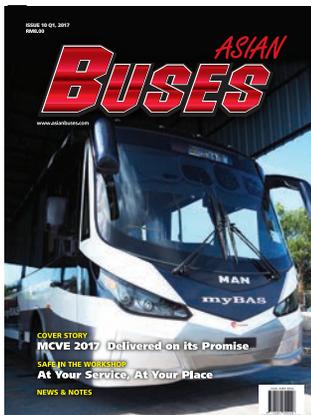
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## Sustainable Bus Award 2018: VDL, Iveco and Setra are the Winners

Electric buses in the cities, CNG for intercity services and diesel on long distance. This is the result of Sustainable Bus Award 2018, that was delivered at Busworld Europe (Kortrijk). The prize, created and promoted by the Italian specialized magazine *Autobus*, is the first and only European award that acknowledges sustainability in the field of buses. The international jury was coordinated by Fabio Zammaretti (Vado e Torno Edizioni) and composed by *Autobus* magazine (Roberto Sommariva), by French magazine *Mobilités Magazine* (Jean-Philippe Pastre), by the German editorial office *Ntt* (Wolfgang Tschakaert, also organiser of *International Bus & Coach* competition) and by Austrian magazine *1BUS* (Ernst Müller). The prize aims to play a role in promoting a new mobility culture, not only encouraging the use of the most advanced technologies in terms of low environmental impact but also taking into account safety of vehicles, i.e. the capability of the vehicle to reduce the danger for passengers, pedestrians and the driver. Sustainability also means establishing a positive image of the vehicle to the eyes of the general public. Hence, several aspects can come into play, such as noise, recyclability of components and the general environmental commitment of the manufacturer. Below the winners with motivations.

**Sustainable Bus Award Urban:** Vdl Citea Sifa-181 Electric  
 Future urban mobility will be electric. It's the shared opinion of Europe and Uitp. Vdl is the first manufacturer with a strict modular electric driveline for all models. Vdl Citea Electric range embraces 9 to 18,75 meters models. In particular, 18 meters buses are powered by Siemens electric engine capable of delivering 210 kilowatts for a peak torque of 3.800 Nm. Thanks to the lighter body now on market, Vdl Citea Sifa-181 Electric can board up to 145 passengers, a number of passenger very close to a similar diesel bus. Citea Electric can meet every operational and infrastructural need thanks to an offer that covers both pantograph and plug-in charging systems.

**Sustainable Bus Award Intercity:** Iveco Crossway Le Natural Power  
 It's the first time a manufacturer proposes an intercity low entry bus with gas engine. Iveco accepts the challenge with an innovative product. Four gas tanks (over than 1.200 liter of capacity) are positioned on the front part of the roof so as not to affect the maximum height of the bus, which remains the same as diesel versions. Iveco has opted for brand new Cursor 9 Cng engine (360 hp and 1.650 Nm) and automatic transmission in order to meet different kind of needs. Thanks to the tank's big capacity, Crossway Le Natural Power promises an autonomy of more than 600 km, the same as a similar diesel bus, but with significantly reduced emissions of polluting substances. In 2017 Cnh Industrial, to whom belongs Iveco Bus, has been confirmed from seven years in a row as Industry Leader in Dow Jones Sustainability World and Europe indexes, with a score of 89/100. Furthermore, for the second time, it has been nominated Industry Group Leader among Capital Goods companies.

**Sustainable Bus Award Coach:** Setra ComfortClass S516 Hd/2  
 The 13-metre two axles coach represents the new standard for touristic services. Setra, with its ComfortClass S 516 Hd/2, proposes to the market a coach with high technical features. The Om 470 Euro Vlc engine coupled with Mercedes Powershift (6 or 8 gears) creates a balance between comfort and low consumption. This last result relies also on Ppc (Predictive Powertrain Control) and Edf (Eco Drive Feedback) systems. About safety, Setra comes with Fcg (Front Collision Guard) and with Aba 3 (Active Brake Assist 3).

"Sustainable Bus Award" could be considered the outcome of Mobility Revolution Bus, the sustainability index that has been used for all vehicles presented and tested by *Autobus* magazine since the beginning of 2016. It is the result of a partnership between LifeGate and *Autobus*. The award also takes advantage of Giulio Ceppi, Professor at Politecnico university in Milan, contribution.

# ZAwheel Next Generation



*Electric wheel hub drive for public service buses now even more powerful and with twin tyres.*

*“We have taken on board the suggestions from local transport companies and bus operators and implemented these in the new version of ZAwheel”, says Peter Fenkl, Chairman of Ziehl-Abegg’s Board of Directors. The company was presenting the second generation of the electric wheel hub drive for city buses at the world’s largest bus fair in Kortrijk (Belgium).*

The next generation ZAwheel incorporates many new features. As a result, Ziehl-Abegg has fulfilled the wishes of the bus operators for a twin tyre version. “We have developed ZAwheel from the aspect of minimal energy consumption and therefore clearly opted for the Super Single tyre”, explained Ralf Arnold, Managing Director of Ziehl-Abegg Automotive. The reason for this is that the Super Single tyre is more efficient as only two tyre edges need to be smoothed when rolling – on the twin tyres it’s four tyre edges. However, many operators traditionally rely on twin tyres throughout their fleet so they only have to hold stocks of one type of tyre in the warehouse. “That’s why we now offer both types of tyres”, says Arnold.

Ziehl-Abegg has also improved the performance of the wheel hub motors. So, the ZAwheel drive module is now available in two power settings: one with a maximum torque of 17 500 nm and one with 9 000 nm. In the past there was only one single power setting of 12 000 nm. “This means we can meet the bus operators’ individual topographical requirements – whether it’s for flat terrain or mountainous regions.” In addition, because of the increase in the maximum torque to 17 500 nm the motors can now be fitted to articulated buses with just one drive axle. The ultra-powerful drive is now available for immediate delivery, the lower power setting will follow in a second stage. “As part of this process of offering motors on a two-stage basis, we have also developed totally new wheel electronics”, underlines Arnold.

Ziehl-Abegg has also taken a step forward into the future with the control technology: the ZAwheel control unit has been added to the product portfolio of wheel hub drive, wheel rim and axle. Upon request, the company offers drive shafts and control technology from one single source. “This makes us a full-service provider for the entire

power train” explains Arnold. During the course of the long-standing collaboration with bus manufacturers and public service operators, one complaint was repeatedly heard: there were too many component manufacturers involved in the drive train. “This gave us the impetus to develop our own control unit,” explains Arnold. There is of course still the option for customers just to order the axle drive module.

## About Ziehl-Abegg

Ziehl-Abegg (Kuenzelsau, Baden-Württemberg, Germany) is one of the leading global companies in the field of ventilation, control and drive technology. Back in the Fifties, Ziehl-Abegg established the basis for modern fan drives: external rotor motors which even today are still seen as state-of-the-art worldwide. Another area of business is electric motors which provide the power, for example, for elevators, medical applications (computer tomography equipment) or deep-sea underwater vehicles. The theme of electro-mobility for motor vehicles was established as part of the Ziehl-Abegg Automotive Team in 2012.

The high-tech company has an impressive innovative capability. Ziehl-Abegg employs more than ,000 personnel in its production plants in Southern Germany. The company has a global workforce of 3 700 spread between 16 production plants, 27 companies and 97 sales locations. The products, approx. 30 000 in all, are sold in more than 100 countries. Turnover in 2016 totalled 484 million euros, with exports accounting for three quarters of the figure.

Emil Ziehl founded the company in Berlin in 1910 as a manufacturer of electric motors. After the Second World War the company’s headquarters were relocated to Southern Germany. Ziehl-Abegg SE is not a listed company but instead is family-owned. ■

# Shell's Partnership to Lower TCO

*Shell Rimula steps up efforts to raise awareness on the dangers of underestimating the importance of lubricants on total cost of ownership (TCO) that are costing fleet owners millions of ringgit.*



Shell Lubricants GM  
Baljit Singh

It was a day of learning and networking when Shell's distributors came together in Sibiu. At a one-day technology conference held in conjunction with the 2017 Shell Rimula Night, insights from the results of an international survey conducted among decision makers in the fleet sector in eight major countries all over the world were presented to more than 500 participants. This survey, commissioned by Shell Lubricants and

conducted by independent research firm Edelman Intelligence, polled 395 decision makers in the Fleet sector in 8 countries (Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, India, Russia, UK, US) from November to December 2015. The survey revealed that many companies underestimate the potential savings from effective vehicle and equipment lubrication. Instead, lubricants are often the first to be affected when cutting costs.

More than half the respondents admitted errors in lubrication had led to costly breakdowns. One in three believed that unplanned downtime has cost them more than RM435 000, while one in five said that they lost more than RM1 million over the last three years.

Damon Chan, Shell Rimula Brand Manager, Shell Malaysia Trading Sdn Bhd, who was present at the event said that the Shell Night had been a success for many years running. "This is about celebrating our partners. We also see that distributors want to take an active role in contributing to our success and as a result, we have incorporated much more information sharing into the program." Chan further said, with understandable pride, that Shell has been the world's largest lubricant supplier for 11 years in a row now. The theme for the day was "Together, anything is possible".

During the presentations, Sng Miah Thye, Technical Manager Malaysia / Singapore, discussed the current trends in truck design affecting the development of lubricants. In his presentation he showed that drastic changes to the fuel injection systems, turbo chargers and the fast improvement of after treatment systems require lubricants to be formulated differently. For instance, the use of Urea as well as down-speeding of modern engines have an impact on how lubricants behave inside the engine. Furthermore, new, cleaner fuels like LNG, Hybridization and reduced Sulfur contents are other aspects that need to be considered when



Shell Lubricants GM Baljit Singh with the big winners of the 2017 Shell Rimula Night



lubricants are being made. Participants learned about the challenges faced when developing new formulations, fit to meet requirements of modern engines. For example, a thinner oil will result in less wear-protection, while more dispersant will result in more sludge. "The trick is to find the right balance and to adopt our products to many various applications, Sng said. In his summary he stated that lubricants are best developed in partnerships. Even for the latest engines requiring low viscosity ratings, Shell will be able to provide the right product.

With fuel costs amounting to as much as 39 percent of total fleet operating costs, most fleet operators tend to turn to cheaper lubricants as a short-term solution. Lucas Wong, Lubricants Technical Advisor, explained in detail, what contributes to the fuel consumption of trucks. While only two percent of overall cost in a fleet operation can be attributed to lubricants, significant changes can be achieved using the right oils. For instance, fuel consumption can be reduced using the right lubes, whereby fuel cost typically contributes around 37 percent to the overall cost of running a commercial vehicle fleet. Using high quality lubricants also reduces the risk of costly breakdowns and downtime. "These are all good reasons to opt for Shell products," Wong said.

According to Shell Lubricants General Manager – Malaysia & Singapore, Baljit Singh, as the most preferred HDDEO brand in Malaysia, the onus was on Shell Rimula to repay the trust of its customers by closely working with them to make better decisions on lubricants.

Singh stressed that while higher quality lubricants comparably cost more, in the long run, it would be more cost efficient by reducing breakdowns and downtimes. "It is all about making smart decisions. Firstly, always choose the right lubricant or grease. Secondly, implement effective lubrication management as even the best lubricants cannot perform if they are not managed properly. This means right storage and handling. Always ensure the right place, time, amount, monitoring and training for staff," he added.

Attending the event was a representative of the Sarawak Oil Palm Group. He said that "The seminar was easy to follow, yet highly insightful. This is my first time here and I hope to be invited again."

At the 2017 Shell Rimula Night, eight lucky customers were announced as winners of this year's Shell Rimula Global Promotion. They were Han Fatt Yen, Ngu Tien Ching and Tie Teck Ngiet from Miri, Sarawak; Ko Ing Kong and Simon Ling from Sibu, Sarawak; Matthew Chai from Kuala Lumpur; Tan Kui Min from Sandakan, Sabah; and Teh Kar Chun from Subang Jaya, Selangor. They won an exclusive all-expense paid VIP trip to Shanghai, with the highlight being a special discovery session at the Shell Shanghai Technology Centre (STC).

# New Buses, New Business Models

*The 14th instalment of the Bus & Truck Expo in BITEC, Bangkok, saw not only winning bus chassis, but also new business models that could revolutionise the way tourists are moved.*



**H**eld again in the Bangkok International Trade Exhibition Centre, the show hosted a good mix of trucks and buses from 2nd to 4th November. As in the past year, the Bus Builder Award for the best-build bus was given to three companies in recognition for their exemplary work. This time, a Volvo chassis dethroned the Swedish competition that took the crown in 2016.

Arriving in a new country, the trip from the airport to a hotel or meeting can be crucial to build a perception of a country. Loxley Public Company Limited realised this when looking at the way tourists are being ferried around on Phuket, Thailand. At the event we spoke to Pratya Indranupakorn, Vice President, Automotive Industry Division. He told us that "Electric vehicles are clearly the future. However, before the technology is truly reliable and feasible, we wanted to add services that improve public transport. This was to be done using Diesel-powered vehicles." Building upon Mercedes chassis are 10 buses that carry up to 23 passengers. "What we wanted is to create a bus, using the best that there is." With this in mind, the ten buses that will be running from the Phuket International Airport all over the island, are built with enough luggage space, free WiFi on board, E-Ticketing service as well as USB ports at each seat and three doors. One of the doors is fully equipped with a hoist to allow wheelchair bound passengers to board. "Naturally, the seats are also top-notch." One of the observations that

Loxley Public Company Limited made was, that currently buses only leave when they are full. This means passengers may have to wait a long time before getting on the move. The new service will have fixed time tables and buses are expected to leave every 20 minutes.

To ensure safety of the passengers, these buses have no capacity for standing passengers and all seats on board feature a seat belt. "We are planning to launch this service in January 2018. This is possible, thanks to the great support from Mercedes." Indranupakorn expects that the ten buses will not be enough and that there will be an increase of vehicles servicing the routes will rapidly increase.

Also on display were the highly successful Iveco Daily and a 12-meter version of a MAN bus, as distributed by K-Man Autoservice.

Lighting up the night sky under a full moon were some 40 "Crazy-Buses", rolling nightclubs that shook the ground with pounding bass. The gathering of these highly customised tour buses was organised and witnessed by enthusiasts that organise an annual light and sound show in connection with the exhibition. Asked about the most favourite chassis for such buses, we were told that Scania is in the lead. This is evident when looking at the huge logos emboldened on the chassis for everyone to see the pride of the owner and driver. 

# HINO Celebrates its Big 40

*Standing proud, HINO celebrates 40 years of operation in Malaysia, having pioneered the market as the first Japanese truck maker to be present as assembler of Japanese-built Diesel engine trucks.*



Held on 10th November, the Grand Hyatt served as a backdrop for the celebration of this joyous occasion. Following the success of the company since 1917 in the home market, Japan, Hino replicates the ambition of the founders here in Malaysia. With its appointment as franchise holder of Hino products in Malaysia in 1973, Sarawak Motors Industries the foundation was laid. Located in Petaling Jaya, the Malaysian headquarters has occupied the same building since 1982.

Ken Iwamoto, Managing Director of Hino Motors Sales (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, highlighted that he was wearing two hats. "In my daily work I am the Managing Director of Hino Malaysia. Tonight, however, I am part of a big family that includes dealers, staff, clients and other business partners that support the brand in the country and beyond." In his speech he highlighted important milestones of the company, such as the establishment of Hino Malaysia Sdn. Bhd. as joint venture between Sarawak Motors Industries Sdn Bhd, Hino Motor Ltd. Japan and Toyo Menka Kaisha Ltd. Japan in 1977. Further crucial achievements were the sales of the 10 000th unit in 1985 and the numerous awards won over the years. The company changed its name to Hino Motors Sales (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd in 2012, a year in which the brand won the "Best Truck of the Year" award by The Star for three consecutive years.

In 2014, the company began operation in the newly built manufacturing plant in Sendayan, Negeri Sembilan. Following this, the Hino Total Support Customer Centre has gained a lot of attention since its opening in 2015. It is noteworthy that this is the only such Hino facility outside of the home market Japan. What makes the facility truly remarkable is the fact that it boasts a driving test track, on which Hino drivers are being trained when they receive their new vehicles or as refresher course to improve road safety.



**Yoshio Shimo, President and CEO of Hino Motors Ltd, Japan (l) and Ken Iwamoto, Managing Director of Hino Motors Sales (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd exchanging gifts at the dinner**

Also present at the event was Yoshio Shimo, President and CEO of Hino Motors Ltd, Japan. He praised the Malaysian branch for having faced difficult times over the years head-on and having found ways to deal with the hardships posed by the economy and other global influences. "I would like to evolve and deepen the concept of "Total Support" for the Hino brand to be loved and trusted for the next 25 years when we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of Hino," he pledged to the audience.

Part of the celebrations during the night was an award ceremony during which outstanding personnel was honoured. Having been with the company since day one, Mr Mohamunny bin P Mohamed, Head of Parts Sales, also celebrated his 40 years with the company. Humbled to be on stage, he recounted that there have been many memorable events. Other awards were given to staff that had served 20 years with the company. ■

# Stamford Tyres add More Goodyear Tyres to its Offering

*Two iconic brands in Singapore, Stamford Tyre and Goodyear have come together to offer more products to the commercial vehicle industry.*

Stamford Tyres and Goodyear, both with long histories of serving the trucking industry in Singapore, are working together to make new Goodyear tires available in the Lion City.

## Launch Event

On October 25, 2017, Stamford Tyres held a launch event at their facilities at Lok Yang Way, in Jurong. Goodyear was represented by Mr Allan Loi of Goodyear Indonesia Tbk and Mr Hans Ong of Goodyear Singapore. Mr Ivan Reijan, Vice President (Fleet) introduced them to the customers who had been invited to the afternoon event. Mr Ivan Reijan explained that the tires being introduced have been on the market for a while, but today's event was to kick off Stamford Tyres rights to distribution in Singapore.

Mr Allan Loi gave a history of Goodyear beginning with its inception in Akron, Ohio in 1898. It now has 57 plants in 23 countries as well as three innovation centres. The company has been in Singapore since December 1917 when they established an office for rubber purchasing for worldwide operations. In 1964 Goodyear opened a sales office in Singapore to supply tires to the local market and to support the regional aviation business.

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## Facilities Tour

When the presentations were complete the guests were given a tour of Stamford Tyres facilities that began at the Jurong Retail store where a wide variety of automotive products, in addition to tyres, are sold. They moved on to the Jurong Truck Centre and then to the Retread Factory, an important part of the Stamford Tyres operation. A walk through the warehouse could not fail to impress with the rows and rows of tires stacked to the high ceilings.

The day was not yet over as everyone returned to the offices of the Jurong Truck Centre where a buffet lunch was served. All those who attended the launch event were given special prices on any tires they bought that day. 🚗

# Events & Exhibitions

## ENERGY STORAGE INDIA

Date : 10 January 2018 – 12 January 2018  
 Venue : India Habitat Centre, New Delhi  
 Contact Info: +91 (0) 11 4855 0054 / sharmaj@md-india.com  
 Details : Energy Storage India is an incomparable platform that has attracted industry front-runners from leading energy storage and emerging technology companies all together at a common platform. We are building opportunities in the Indian market about the technologies & applications for storage. Energy Storage is now the integral part of renewable energy management practice & is going to play a major supporting role in this remarkable growth.

## DHAKA MOTOR SHOW 2018

Date : 22 March 2018 – 24 March 2018  
 Venue : International Convention City Bashundhara, Dhaka  
 Contact Info: +880 – 2 – 55040848 ~ 65 / contact@dhakamotorshow.com  
 Details : As always, the 'Dhaka Motor Show' will reveal to the country the rapid developments in the industry and will also be a launching-pad for many new vehicles as well as new technology components. The neat layouts of the show provide ample opportunity to the consumers of vehicles to see the latest offerings in the market as well as to the business visitor to carry out networking in a highly enabled environment.

## THE 9TH GUANGZHOU INTERNATIONAL NEW ENERGY AUTOMOBILES INDUSTRY EXPO 2018

Date : 13 April 2018 – 15 April 2018  
 Venue : Pazhou International Sourcing Centre, Guangzhou  
 Contact Info: +86 – 20 – 2919 8999 / info@zhongqiexpo.com  
 Details : Adhering to the exhibition purpose of "Brand Emphasis, Exploration and Innovation, Results Orientation, Service Enhancing", the organizers intend to provide a display and exchange platform for Chinese and foreign exhibitors, offer more cooperation opportunities whilst promoting China's own new energy vehicle and supporting industry so as to achieve coordination and cooperation, mutual benefit and win-win results in the long run.

## BUSWORLD TURKEY

Date : 19 April 2018 – 21 April 2018  
 Venue : Fuar Izmir, Turkey  
 Contact Info: +90 212 216 40 10 / info@hkf-fairs.com  
 Details : First organized in 1971 at Belgium, BUSWORLD has achieved international recognition by the European bus industry as being the oldest and most respected trade show for the bus industry. BUSWORLD TURKEY 2018 will bring the international bus and coach industry and sub-industry sectors together for the 7th time in Turkey. This will be a great opportunity to generate new businesses and build up existing relationships particularly for Turkey and its neighbouring countries.

## TYREXPO AFRICA 2018

Date : 10 April 2018 – 12 April 2018  
 Venue : Gallagher Convention Centre Hall 2, Johannesburg  
 Contact Info: +65 6403 2544 /angela.huang@singex.com  
 Details : Tyrexpo Africa 2018 is the only dedicated trade exhibition for Africa's Tyre, Automotive Repair & Maintenance, and Tyre Accessories market, where over 3,000 industry players from Africa and the surrounding regions will converge on a single platform, to exchange ideas, expertise, products and innovations within the ecosystem



# THE MARK OF THE LION

## Focus on MAN at the Busworld Europe 2017

*The 24th, and last event to be held in Kortrijk before moving to Brussels, of the biannual professional bus and coach exhibition Busworld Europe, welcomed 376 exhibitors from 36 countries and received 37 241 visitors from 118 countries. Asian Trucker got the inside scoop from MAN, which won big this year.*

Anyone involved in buses would have been present at this year's instalment of the Busworld, making it the most successful ever. The exhibition took place from 18 to 23 October in Kortrijk, Belgium. During a marathon of 34 press conferences numerous premièrès were announced with amazing shows and presentations. Meanwhile, all around the Kortrijk Xpo premises, demonstration vehicles were parked, ready to welcome passengers for test rides. The roads around Kortrijk were filled with lots of new buses and coaches.

The different side events turned out to be very successful too. There were many attendees for the 'IRU & Busworld Academy International Coach Conference', the 'India Day' networking event and the 'Hungarian VIP event'. The 'UITP – Busworld International Bus Conference' was even completely sold out counting 450 delegates.

Peter Hinssen's key note presentation during the opening ceremony on the 19th of October, turned out to be impressing the audience. He amazed them with his presentation about 'The Day of Tomorrow' for the bus and coach industry.

At the Busworld Awards Night, three different juries announced their winners.

For the Sustainable Bus Awards 2018 VDL Citea SLfa Electric wins the Sustainable Urban Bus 2018, Iveco Crossway LE Natural Power wins the Sustainable Intercity Bus 2018 and Setra S 516 HD/2 wins the Sustainable Coach 2018.

The Coach of the Year 2018 goes to the Irizar i8.

The two Grand Awards in the Busworld Awards competition go to the MAN Lion's Coach in the category coach and the Mercedes-Benz Citaro hybrid of Daimler Buses in the category bus. Next to the main Grand Awards, ten Labels of Excellence are awarded by the jury: a Comfort Label for the Crealis of Iveco Bus and the MAN Lion's Coach; a Design Label for the Mercedes-Benz Tourismo M/2 of Daimler Buses, BMC's Neocity and the MAN Lion's Coach; A Safety Label for Daimler Buses' Tourismo M/2 and Citaro hybrid; an Ecology Label for VDL's Citea SLF-120 Electric and the E12 of Yutong and last but not least an Innovation Label for the Aptis of Alstom/NTL.



**Mr Stephan Schoenherr,**  
Vice President Design  
Bus/ Engineering Vehicle  
Styling Bus

Winning awards for their buses and coaches has MAN staff clearly walking on clouds. However, before one can celebrate, some hard work has to be injected first. Creating a new bus takes a lot of thinking and planning, especially in the rapidly changing environment we operate in these days. At the Busworld, Asian Buses had the opportunity to speak to Mr. Stephan Schoenherr, Vice President Design Bus/ Engineering Vehicle Styling Bus. From him we learned what it takes to create a MAN bus and how the latest trends will influence the shapes of things to come.

Stephan Schoenherr, Vice President Design Bus/  
Engineering Vehicle Styling Bus

Schoenherr is responsible for styling for both brands, MAN and Neoplan. This includes the exterior, interior, colour trim as well as the carpet selections available for customers when they configure their vehicles.

**AB:** What is the difference between Design and Styling?  
**SS:** In English, design is more of an engineering discipline, while styling is more concerned with colours, appearances and how surfaces feel like. One task of my department is to ensure that our buses and coaches adhere to the corporate identity, too. We work very close with the engineering department when developing a bus.



**AB:** What are the special considerations you have to look out for when developing a bus?

**SS:** Most importantly, the customer demands in terms of functionality. Then there is the vast area of laws, regulations and specific requirements that are often different from country to country. It is crucial that a bus or coach fulfils all the requirements of any country. Brand styling is also subject of trends, which may be yet to be fully visible. Fashion and design language need to be considered as well as design criteria that each brand within the VW Group has to follow. All this needs to be bundled into one package that is not only looking good, but is also highly user-friendly for humans travelling in it. This includes passengers and of course the driver. Lastly, there are expectations from customers that we need to consider.

**AB:** How do you approach the design of a new Bus? At what point do you involve customers to give feedback on the design of a new bus?

**SS:** When we start working on a new bus design, everything will be kept secret. Prior to any work done, we will carry out a market research project. Here I would like to point out that we, as a European manufacturer, don't want to copy others. The purpose of the study is to find out if any of our competitors already has a similar concept. This is what we try to avoid. Our starting point is a set of design sketches, which will be presented to the management board, which will decide which direction we are going.

Certain projects will see the involvement of key customers to give feedback at such an early stage. These are customers we have worked with for many years and that are as secretive as we are when it comes to new designs we are developing. These customers will see both, the technical innovations as well as the styling. The feedback we receive is highly important as it may help us to avoid mistakes later on.

**AB:** What is the most important design aspect?  
**SS:** There are several. Perhaps most importantly, we need to create vehicles that have a timeless design. What I mean by that is that the bus will need to look good over the period of its lifespan, which can be many years. Therefore, we cannot come up with a styling that is too aggressive. We give warranties of up to 10 years or more here in Europe, so the style has to be valid for the entire period. In addition to that, all buses and coaches we develop need to look like they are part of the family. What we want we aim to achieve is that a MAN bus will always look like a MAN bus. With different design criteria for the various applications, it is also a bit like a human family: You would be able to tell that these are members of one family.

Design ideas and styles are being changed of course, but we want to ensure that the new models and older ones are still fulfilling the criteria of being identifiable as coming from the same family. Consequently, we don't change designs radically, but only gradually.

A lot of attention is given to the driver's space as well as the passenger areas. In a coach for instance, passengers would sit and travel for a long time. For city buses you would

need to allow for standing passengers with handrails and easy entry and access. Then we would have to address the look and feel inside the bus, things you would want to see, touch and have inside the bus. Lighting for instance is a key issue. One should feel welcome. While the interior needs to be comfortable and cozy, the outside needs to give the impression to the passengers that the vehicle is robust and sturdy.

**AB:** How do you integrate Apps like Fleet management systems into the design?

**SS:** We have to consider a few things here: for instance, if a tool is needed for the driver, then it has to be integrated into the instrument cluster. Fleetmanagement system for instance uses GPS. However, as it is also used to reduce theft, the actual system may need to be hidden somewhere inside the belly of the bus. What we don't want is that thieves could easily find and disable such systems, which could help with crime prevention, for example.

**AB:** What do you think the design for autonomous buses will look like?

**SS:** We do a lot of styling research and work with students in universities. This is refreshing to see as these youngsters come up with totally new ideas and demands, things we wouldn't think of. I think, when we have total

autonomous vehicles, the layout will change. The outside may not change that much, but the interior will. While there may not be a driver in the traditional sense, surely there needs to be an attendant of sorts. Just imagine someone on board has a problem or causes a problem? What happens if there is an issue with the vehicle? Then you need someone that is trained to rectify that. Also, on long distance coaches, the driver could be replaced by a role that is more of a guide that also ensures the comfort of passengers by serving food and drinks. Another aspect is the feeling of being safe. By now, we are used to having a person on board that handles issues arising. Without a reference in the shape of a person, passengers may not trust the vehicle.

**AB:** Which was the worst Design mistake you ever made in a MAN bus? How did you notice and rectify it?

**SS:** Typically we win prices with our buses, so this is a hard question. Typically it is tactical mistakes, whereby a new design is shown too early or too late. One issue we had was about colours though. My first design was the Lionstar, which we started to develop in 2001. From airplanes we learned that interiors should be bright and white. At that time, our buses were rather dull and dark. The idea was right, but maybe the transition was too fast and harsh and should have been done gentler. Naturally,





Mr Hartmut Mueller, Managing Director of MAN Truck & Bus Malaysia Sdn Bhd.

if the idea isn't well received, then you have problems. What could happen though is that a competitor follows and he may be then hitting the market at the right time.

At this year's expo, we also met again with Mr. Rudi Kuchta – Senior Vice President Product & Sales Bus. He was able to update us on the latest products that MAN was showing. Kuchta is happy to report that over the past three years, the sales of MAN buses has increased by 30 percent. This is in line with the growth strategy of the company, according to him. The plan, hatched some four years ago, is supported by two dedicated production plants, one in Turkey and the other one in Poland. The latter one is focused on city buses. "A cornerstone of the strategy is a close relationship between coach body builders and MAN," he said.

With the ability to supply chassis with right and left-hand drive, South Korea is the latest market the company has entered this year. In South East Asia, Prasarana remains a key customer and following the show, some tender results should be announced. MAN is hopeful to secure these contracts to further strengthen their market position.

At the Busworld, MAN was showing the new Lionscoach, which is now in production and available. The bus shown was boasting a new design as well as the latest EURO 6C engine. Through these changes, some 10 percent in fuel savings could be achieved. These results have already been confirmed by customers using the bus. Besides that, the Skyliner, a double-decker was on display. This also marks the 50th anniversary of double-deckers by MAN. Proudly showcased in the outside areal was the first generation of he double deck. "With the latest technology inside, this makes it the world's best double-decker bus." Kuchta hinted that the new city bus line will be officially launched during the IAA 2018 in Hannover.

When it comes to the actual offering, a bus or coach alone is not good enough any more. The actual hardware needs to be coupled with services that improve the business of customers. "We already introduced our own system, the RIO. However, data collection and analysis will continue to become more and more important." New buses will feature more technology to help analyse and streamline businesses. What is crucial now, in his view, is to make use of the data. As different users require different sets of

data, MAN is now working closely with RIO users to see how to best present the collected information. Overall, customers have been very open to the idea of using RIO as it would ultimately benefit them as well in optimizing their operations.

Stemming from the changing requirements of markets, MAN has created a new department, called "Transport Solutions". Here, MAN is concerned about the use of data for new systems, such as electric vehicles.

In terms of market importance, Europe, with Germany at the top, is still the most important region. In Spain for instance, MAN is market leader while overseas markets, such as Malaysia, Thailand and Hong Kong play vital roles. "Our growth strategy foresees a further expansion in Asia and surely, China is one of the possible next locations." Kuchta highlighted the sales of 240 buses for Rhiyad and an order from Morocco, whereby the client ordered complete buses instead of having a local body builder fabricating them. "This is due to the understanding of TOC (Total Cost of Ownership) and that a complete bus can be the better offer," he explained.

Mr. Heiko Haumer – Head of Sales Bus Regions is a veteran in the bus industry. He started in 1993 with Eberbus and has been with MAN since 2004. His first role at Neoplan was to be a Sales Manager. From 2009 to 2013 he was responsible for the entire sales of the region around Duesseldorf. Following that, he took over as the Head of Sales for Germany. Today, he is responsible for the sales of MAN buses globally

**AB:** Which are the strongest markets for your Bus sales? And why?

**HH:** There are a few. Right now, however, it is Europe with Germany with our strongest economies. Over the last few years we managed to increase our market share

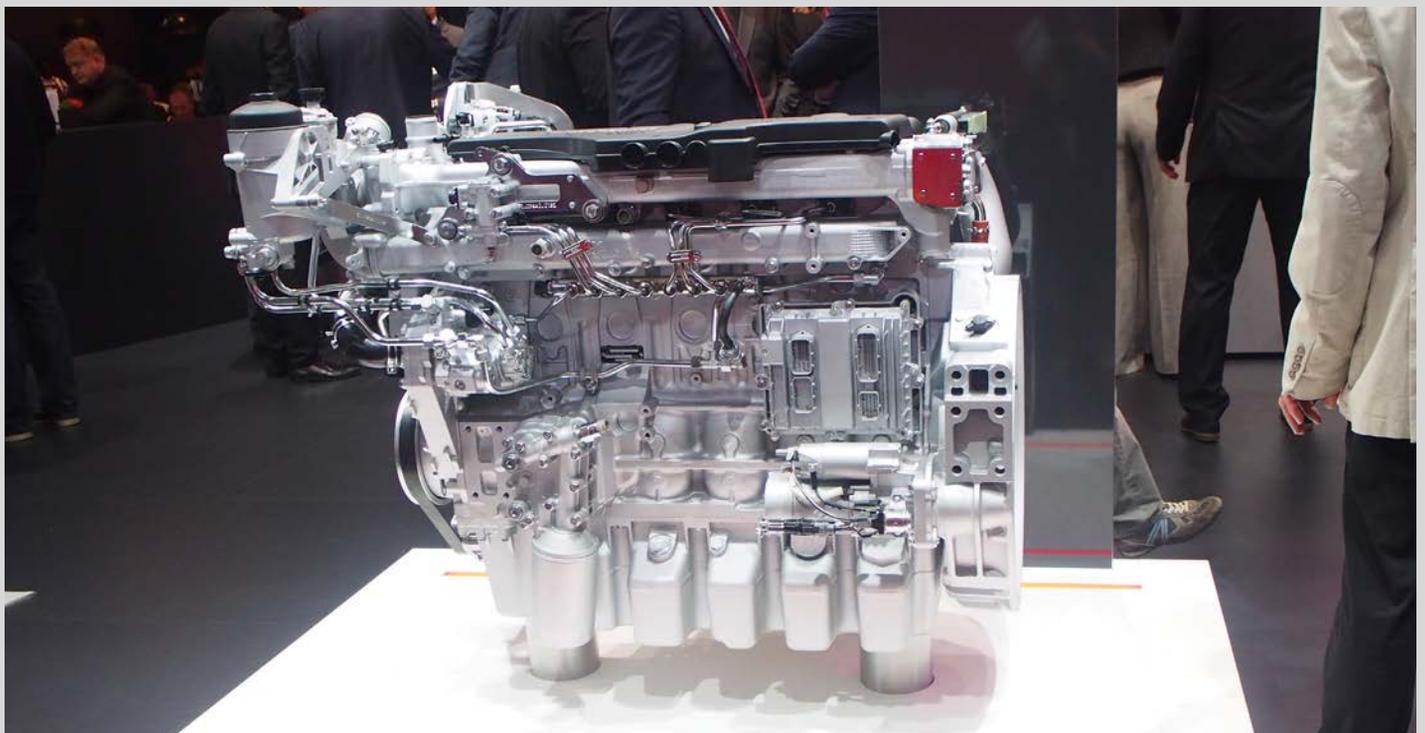
in Europe with our complete buses. At the same time, we can see that other parts of the world are also growing in the past years. The African market is one focus we are having. In Morocco and Tunisia we have seen the sales of our first complete buses while our chassis are still going strong. South Africa is very important for us as we are commanding a market share of nearly 40 percent and also produce our own bodies.

We are increasing our business activities in the Eastern European countries, which have been responding well. At the same time, MAN is looking further east, to Asia. In Singapore and Hong Kong we are very successful with our double-deckers. What we want to do is to enhance our presence in Indonesia and the Philippines. Malaysia, of course, plays an important role too. Having seen how successful we are in Hong Kong and Singapore with the double-decker, we hope that we could also supply them to cities like Kuala Lumpur.

Our chassis business is interesting for Africa, but also for South East Asia. Going further away, Australia and New Zealand are also on our radar. Russia is one of the next countries we are going to penetrate. First, we are going to launch complete buses there before we offer chassis to local body builders.

**AB:**How do you address the various needs of different markets? Does one product fit all needs?

**HH:** No, there is no way that you can just have one uniform product. We already need a diversified offering for the European market. It is impossible to survive with just one product. What is important is that parts are interchangeable among the different ranges. What we need is a spread of different sizes, heights and configurations. For a manufacturer like us, that means that we should keep the number of parts low, while offering a maximum number of variations and options.





This also comes with a certain degree of localisation. Typically, we would enter a market with a complete product, but the strategy is to then adapt to the local market and produce there. This is a must. With that, you already gain a number of variants, fit for each market.

**AB:** As we are focused on South East Asia: What can we expect from MAN for our region?

**HH:** Due to the localisation efforts we make, you can expect us to be a very strong partner that is able to bring new technology and knowledge to the market. This knowledge is most important for each country to benefit from. Without market intelligence and knowledge transfer, there will be no growth. Currently, we are very active in transferring expertise to Malaysia.

**AB:** What trends do you foresee for buses?

**HH:** That's easy: Electro-mobility. We expect some 60 percent of vehicles to be electrified by 2030 in Europe. We expect that Asian markets will be even faster. One needs to realise that our fossil fuels will run out sometime and with that, we have no choice but to increase our efforts to create green energy.

This goes hand in hand. First you need power derived from sources other than fossil fuels. We can generate electricity as solar or wind power and then we can think about electric drive trains.

Capacities are one thing we need to carefully think about. In the future, there will be very big buses, like articulated ones. We have seen increases of capacities from 80 passengers to over 100 when we moved from 12 to 18 meter buses. Intercity lines are becoming more and more important. Economically-wise, buses are more interesting than railways.

**AB:** Are you seeing budget airlines as strong competition to buses?

**HH:** Things are changing. Economies and the way we travel are changing. The old way to travel was to go by bus from Germany to Spain for example, because it was cheap. What we see now is that the buses are being re-purposed. The way buses are being used is changing, there are now more intercity lines. It is about efficiency. Going distances over 1 000 Kilometers are covered more efficient via plane. We are also working differently. Back in the days, we wouldn't meet. Today, we can pick and mix the

mode of transport and find the most economical one to allow for us to have interactions. We can expect an increase in vehicles, both buses as well as planes. It is a question of how best to use either.

At the Busworld we also met with Mr Hartmut Mueller, Managing Director of MAN Truck & Bus Malaysia Sdn Bhd. He summarised the experience: "The innovations shown here in Belgium are mostly focusing on low emissions, security and the story of electric buses. For Malaysia, as a CKD market, we see only a few of these innovations, as we are delivering the chassis disassembled."

In his view, people who decide to travel by bus have high expectations in terms of flexibility, speed, safety and comfort. "So we first of all keep the safety issues in our focus. Therefore I'm happy to say that all our chassis we deliver to Malaysia are fully equipped with the latest safety systems and comfort systems, like active cruise control (ACC), emergency electric brake assist (EBA) and the lane guard system (LGS)," he said further.

"But what I personally would like to see the most is higher emission standards such as EURO V, which would really help to save our environment in Malaysia. Chassis are available in these emission standards and the bus companies should start their own initiative." Diesel to suit the requirements of modern EURO V engines is already available.

In Malaysia, the High Speed Railway (HSR) and the East Coast Rail (ECR) as seen by some as a threat to the bus industry. Mueller however refutes this idea. "I highly appreciate these new transport systems. As in all developed nations it is of high importance to move people and goods in a very quick and safe and as well comfortable way from A to Z." He opined that the opportunity of taking a high-speed rail or a bus or the car really gives us the most and biggest flexibility which somebody who is traveling can get. With these two projects Malaysia is doing a very big step ahead into infrastructural excellence.

In connection with this, he also lamented the inertia when it comes to upgrading commercial vehicles in Malaysia. Having been in the country for some four years, he states that unfortunately there were no major changes in this period to be seen in Malaysia. The truck market is shrinking and despite a higher volume of transportation the fleet of old trucks is still existing - with all their emission problems and non-existing safety standards. Both are threats for everyone who is on the road. "Maybe in another four years we can see a real big change in the transportation industry in terms of emission standards and technical and safety standards of the buses and trucks."

As bus operators are venturing into electrification of their fleets, this is a topic that cannot be avoided. There's no doubt that this technology is the future for all countries as they navigate the pass from low emission to no emission. Transport authorities and fleet operators face a range of challenges that go beyond the vehicle itself and this is why it will take a long time to have this technology implemented all over in the cities and between countries. It's good to be seen that Malaysia has already started these projects and it keeps on going to extend the fleet of electric city buses every year. "We believe that by 2030 nearly 60 percent of public transport will be powered by electricity. It will be a long way for this technology to get implemented a hundred percent, because the cities need to adjust and upgrade their respective infrastructure. For example, it means there must be enough electricity available to charge the batteries during the peak times." Beyond ordering new buses, the process of replacing the batteries needs to be environment friendly, the infrastructure of the workshops and the education of the mechanics must be changed completely. Mueller summarised his view by saying that it will be a long way to "no emission" traffic, but it's the only way to save the quality of air in our cities and help to save the environment. ■







# Hop On or Hop Off – But always with Safety in Mind

*Writer Carol sets out to learn the safety protocols of Elang Wah, operator of a major tourist attraction here in the city of Kuala Lumpur.*



I met with Mr Amin Rahmat Abdul Rahman, Chief Operating Officer of Elang Wah Sdn Bhd, the company behind the Malaysian Hop On Hop Off Bus. Taking inspiration from the London Bus, Amin and his partner thought that it was a good idea to provide similar services in Kuala Lumpur some 11 years ago.

**Carol:** What are some of the safety features on board the bus?

**Amin:** Actually, the fact that the permit was granted is a safety feature in itself as passengers are not allowed to stand in a double-decker bus. As our buses can accommodate 60 passengers, we do not allow any more than 60 passengers to board the bus at any given time. Apart from that, the reliability of the vehicle itself plays a major role in the selection of chassis. We mostly run our fleet on Scania buses and in these 11 years, they fortunately have not given us any major hiccups.



**Carol:** How did the role of authorities play a part in ensuring safety on the roads?

**Amin:** The relevant bodies especially PUSPAKOM have been very encouraging towards ensuring safety of passengers on buses. We send all our buses on routine checkups at PUSPAKOM twice a year. This is an especially important core value of our organisation as we mostly interact with tourists who visit Malaysia and we do not want to give them any bad impression about Malaysian road transport.

**Carol:** What are the typical safety hazards on the bus?

**Amin:** The most common safety hazard would be passengers leaning on the rail on the upper deck.



Although we display many notices around the bus, some passengers do ignore the notices in an attempt to get a good picture. In these situations, the drivers and guides on board the bus will usually advise the passengers to refrain from doing so. This is also due to the fact that branches of trees will get in their way in the open deck area. Therefore, it is best to be seated when the bus is moving to prevent any unwanted injury.

**Carol:** What is the stand that Elang Wah takes on safety of passengers?

**Amin:** We are constantly reminded that we are the ambassadors of Malaysia. There is a lot of pressure on us to ensure the vehicles are run smoothly and most importantly, the safety of passengers is not being jeopardized. Inevitably, in providing a service that represents the tourism sector of Malaysia, the image of Malaysia is at stake. I feel like we have done a good job so far and we strive to continue doing so and hopefully be able to provide Hop Off Hop On buses in other states of Malaysia in the future. 🇲🇾





# Innovative Businessman Turns Old Tour Buses Into RVs

*Apart from giving old tour buses a new lease on life, Chua Poh Kok hopes to boost tourism with a new vacationing option.*

The law in Malaysia does not allow tour buses more than 12 years old to be used for that purpose (touring), resulting in many of such buses to be abandoned or illegally used for other purposes.

However, a visionary businessman from Johor had the idea of giving them a new lease of life by turning three of his tour buses into recreational vehicles (RV) where one could travel, sleep, shower and cook in. Primma Sierra Holidays Sdn Bhd owner Chua Poh Kok was inspired when he was appointed to drive Tunku Mahkota of Johor, Tunku Ismail Sultan Ibrahim's American RV bus for the Kembara Mahkota Johor in 2014.

"I drove all over Johor. It was unique, with a living room, bathroom, kitchen and even a canopy for a barbecue area. That was when and where I got the idea to convert my old tour buses. Although they had surpassed their permit limit, the buses were still in good condition because unlike express buses, tour buses do not move as much," he told Asian Buses recently.

However, he had to replace the entire interior, including the floor, until only the frame of the buses remained. It took him three months to refurbish one bus. Chua

currently has three RV buses. He said by converting them, he has given these buses a new lease on life.

Each RV bus weighs over 12 000kg and is 2.6m wide, 12m long and 3.6m tall. It can accommodate 12 people for a one-day excursion or eight people for overnight stay.

The 8 000cc bus is fitted with three engines, comprising a RK engine, a Nippon Denso engine for the air-conditioner and a 25-kilowatt generator for the electrical system. It has two air conditioning systems. When the bus stops, the quiet home air conditioning is turned on for the comfort of its occupants. All the electrical appliances in this bus are Sirim-approved. The bus can carry up to 1 000 litres of water that could last for up to three days.

Facilities include a king-sized bed, bathroom, toilet, kitchen with electrical cooker, and a living room. There is also a karaoke set included for in-journey entertainment. Eight people can sleep comfortably in the RV bus as apart from the bed, there are also pull-out sofa beds.

Customers need not worry about their safety and privacy while sleeping in the bus because of the security guard's presence



while the driver has his own sleeping quarters and toilet, separated from the guests'.

Although this provides for a new option in Malaysia's tourism sector, there is currently no category for the bus RV in the Land Public Transport Commission's vehicle permit system. At the moment, it could only be registered under a private vehicle permit.

"That makes the road tax for this RV quite costly at RM 6 750 per year, and this forces us to charge a high rental rate with a starting price of RM 2 000 per day, inclusive of personal driver, security guard, petrol, toll, parking fees and other facilities.

"If the permit is less costly, we can charge more affordable rates and help with the tourism industry which is also one of the country's sources of income. We are also helping bus drivers who are over the age of 50, who cannot drive long hours so, driving an RV bus allows them to get enough rest," Chua said.

He added that Malaysia has a great market opportunity for RV bus holidays because there are already existing rest areas with great scenery and suitable facilities that would enable these areas to be turned into cara-parks. Some of them may be abandoned or delapidated so some sprucing-up may be needed. There are currently three cara-parks in Johor and Chua said Malaysia needs more of them.

"This will greatly promote tourism within the country for Malaysians and the government can keep the money rolling in the country. When I was in Australia, there were at least 10 RV's at each cara-park and most of them were Australian vacationers. Being in the tourism industry, I asked them if they would be interested in visiting Malaysia and many said no, because their own country offers so much to see and do," he said.

Chua added that he planned to generate more income for the sector since the RV would be able to serve as an apartment for tourists interested in visiting remote areas or villages that may not provide accommodations.

Chua's RV buses had also served as an office space for one of the district councils in Johor. They rented the bus to head to a remote area for the villagers to be able to settle some bills and for land taxes payment. Police can use it during their roadside ops, where they have to be at their posts for hours. The RV can serve as a place for resting, freshening up and praying.

He hoped more tour companies will follow in his steps as it will be a great boost in the country's tourism sector. He said more participation from tour companies could also push the government into allocating a special permit for these RV buses. At the same time, he added, they could save their otherwise abandoned tour buses. ■





# Pretty in Pink

*Star Shuttle offers an enjoyable ride to and from the airport at an affordable price.*

Celebrating its' ten year anniversary this year, Star Shuttle was initially started by a couple who were interested in providing express bus services to the general public. Having been in the logistics business for some 30 years, this decision came naturally to the founders of Star Shuttle as a way to expand their business.

The company started with 10 buses and provided transfer services from Klang Valley to the airports in Kuala Lumpur. Seeing the potential of airport transfers, they extended the network to provide shuttle services from Perak to the Kuala Lumpur Airports.

Joining the business recently is their daughter, Yvonne Yap, Assistant Director, to help out with the family business. Yvonne brings with her some fresh ideas and contributions to rebrand the image of the company as a whole.

Initially, Star Shuttle mainly provided transport services from certain locations in Malaysia to the two Kuala Lumpur International Airports. One of the initiatives taken by Yvonne after she assumed her position was to introduce a new design on some of the airport buses to give them a more cheerful look. All decked out in pink, these buses proved to be popular with tourists and children alike. Judging from the success of the rebranded buses, the company is looking to transform the design of their other buses in the near future.

Sharing with us her story, Yvonne told Asian Buses that the designing of the new layout took her almost a month to perfect. Incorporating the designs of the iconic Kuala Lumpur



Yvonne Yap, Assistant Director

skyline, airport and planes, she wanted all passengers who were travelling on their bus to feel welcomed or to wrap up the trip on a cheerful note.

With a fleet of now 32 buses, Star Shuttle provides shuttle services to other locations such as Johor and Singapore amongst others. The route running from Ipoh to Singapore saw the company bringing in a new Scania bus to provide maximum comfort for its passengers travelling longer distances. The decision to utilise the new bus was pioneered by Yvonne as she wanted to provide a more comfortable and safer environment for the passengers.

Asking why the new Scania bus was used for the specific route, Yvonne explained that because the journey from Ipoh to Singapore takes a longer time, it is more viable for the company to use a more expensive bus for that route. "We would be making losses if we were to use the bus for our KL to KLIA/KLIA2 route as the journey takes 1 hour 30 minutes at most and we are only charging passengers 10 Ringgit per person per journey."

Other buses in the fleet comprise of Nissan and Hino buses, with the oldest bus having been used for 10 years. According to Yvonne, Star Shuttle is looking to purchase



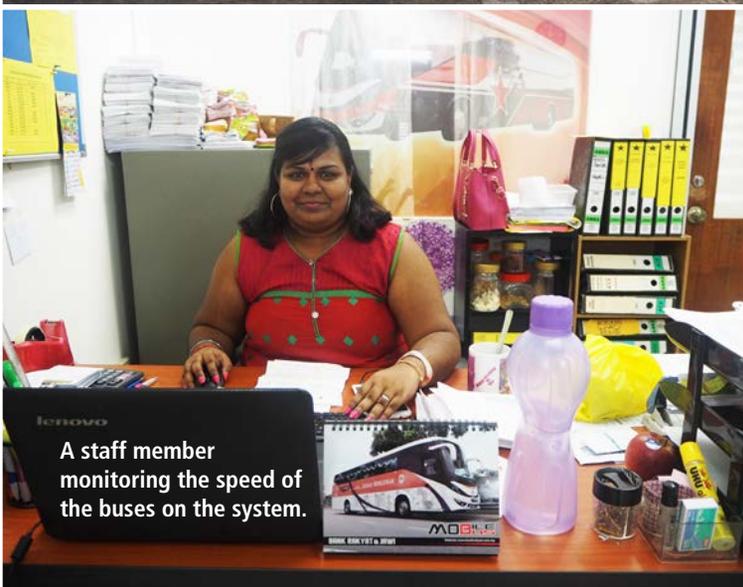
some 20 buses in the next couple years to expand into new routes and replace some of the older buses that have served them well for the past decade.

Commenting on what makes Star Shuttle stand out against other airport transfer companies, Yvonne shared that her company provides shuttle services from KLIA and KLIA2 to any hotel in Kuala Lumpur for the convenience of tourists especially. The passengers opting for this service will board the bus from the airport and arrive at Puduraya. Upon arrival at Puduraya, they will be transferred to a van that will bring them to whichever hotel they have booked. "This service is popular amongst tourists or out-of-state visitors whom are unfamiliar with the roads of KL and want a hassle-free transfer from airport to hotel."

Speaking of the future plans of the company, Yvonne is anticipating the expansion of shuttle services by Star Shuttle in the Southern Region of Peninsular Malaysia in the upcoming year. "We see a lot of potential in Malacca and Johor and are looking forward to expand our services in these States. As the core of our business is still providing airport transfers, I believe these services will bring many benefits to the people of Malacca and Johor who are looking to travel to the airports in Kuala Lumpur at a convenient and affordable price."

As an express bus operator with a sizeable fleet, Star Shuttle operates their own workshop located in the district of Jinjang nearby their headquarters. At the workshop, buses are scheduled for regular maintenance and technicians are constantly on standby to provide emergency services should a breakdown occur. "As we provide airport transfers, we understand that passengers might be pressed for time so we have a team of technicians who will be immediately deployed should an unexpected breakdown arise. The Operations Team would also arrange for a backup bus to arrive at the scene of breakdown to transfer the passengers as soon as possible."

Commenting on the future of the company, Yvonne is optimistic that Star Shuttle will be able to provide better services for their customers. "There are huge plans for the company. We are looking to provide tourism services as well. We have had a lot of tourists inquiring about tour services at our ticketing booth at the airport. We see this as an opportunity to expand into the tourism sector and we are currently working on applying for the licences and technical details. We are hoping that the application process can be completed by 2018."



A staff member monitoring the speed of the buses on the system.



## Mercedes-Benz Launches Line-up of EURO VI Vans

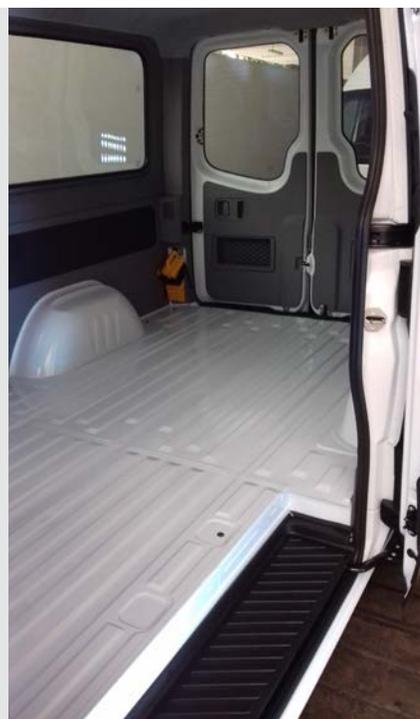
*Addressing the requirements of tomorrow, the new generation of vans was introduced to the Singaporean market in a dazzling event. Tested and proven under real work conditions, these vehicles are set to improve the performance of fleets.*



Customers and business partners came together on the 16th November to witness the launch of the latest generation of vans by Mercedes-Benz. On display were the Citan, Vito and the all-round workhorse Sprinter.

Compliant with the upcoming legislation, the latest versions of these vans are Euro VI compliant. This also means a further reduction in fuel and AdBlue consumption, which will help operators to further reduce operating cost. Compared to the previous range, the newly introduced line-up sees a reduction in AdBlue consumption by some several percent, while fuel consumption dropped too.

The European Union has its own set of emissions standards that all new vehicles must meet. Currently,



standards are set for all road vehicles, trains, barges and 'nonroad mobile machinery' (such as tractors). No standards apply to seagoing ships or airplanes.

For light commercial vehicle, an emissions target of 175 g/km applies from 2017, and 147 g/km from 2020, a reduction of 16%.

The EU introduced Euro 4 effective January 1, 2008, Euro 5 effective January 1, 2010 and Euro 6 effective January 1, 2014. These dates had been postponed for two years to give oil refineries the opportunity to modernise their plants.

### Product Focus: Citan

The new Mercedes-Benz Citan sets urban transport in motion. Dynamic design and exceptionally dynamic handling combined with high reliability make it the ideal urban delivery vehicle and perfect for use in major cities.

The compact dimensions of the Citan and the design's typical, striking Mercedes-Benz lines give the urban delivery vehicle segment a new, characteristic face with an assertive, high-performance look. Both the form and the function have been refined down to the last detail, developed and proven for everyday usage. The Citan has been tested with passion and is unmistakably a Mercedes-Benz.

A variety of different designs and customised transport solutions enable the Citan to adapt to the diverse range of individual logistics requirements and easily handle every urban transport situation. Whether as panel van, crew bus or crew van: Easy loading and unloading, its convincing durability and the flexible cargo area make it an inspiring companion both at work and after work. An extensive range of standard features and optional extras as well as a vast selection of different applications and branches along with BlueEFFICIENCY measures to reduce fuel consumption round out the professional profile of the Citan.

Guests could also explore the Sprinter in two variations, as passenger van or as worker for cargo only. Available in five different variations, the Sprinter meets the needs of urban transport operators. Together with their big brothers, they cover the needs of every player in distribution and transportation.

Victor Jiang, Consultant with JK59 Transport Pte Ltd was excited about the new range of vans. "We operate a bus charter company. Comfort for our passengers and reliability are crucial for us. That is why we place our trust in quality vehicles from Mercedes-Benz. We cannot afford to disappoint our customers," he said. In his view, the high-end products offered by the German marque are well worth the extra expense as it will generate returns in the shape of satisfied and returning customers. 





## Kit Loong can Help Ease Your Tyre Troubles

***Backed by 85 years of extensive experience and direct involvement in virtually all aspects of the tyre industry, Kit Loong has amassed a wealth of know-how, which is constantly deployed to enhance their value chain for the benefit of their customers.***

**W**hen you have been in the industry for so many years, you will surely accumulate some know-how of to make things work better. This is the case for Kit Loong Commercial Tyres Group. Kit Loong Commercial Tyres Group is a professionally organised group of companies within the well-established Kit Loong Group.

Their accumulated know-how, encompassing technical knowledge, industrial expertise, commercial acumen, marketing insight and consumer understanding, is an invaluable source to their competitive edge, and provides the fundamental strength to facilitate their ability to deliver appropriate solutions to their customers.

Kit Loong Commercial Tyre Group has always been at the forefront of the industry, renown for being the

leading one-stop tyre management solution provider committed to deliver their key defined benefits in safety, competitiveness, cost effectiveness and control for the customer's fleet operation.

We reached out to Lim Hock Chuan, Sales and Marketing Manager – Group Fleet Sales to give us some tips on how to maintain tyres for maximum performance. Right off the bat, the question that stood out to us concerns the safety features on tyres. Lim replied that the decisive factor would be the tyre's air pressure as this relates to the tyre load index and speed index specification. Not to be forgotten is the constant check on tyre injuries as road hazards often could not be avoided. Maintenance records must always be in place and this is important for tracking the tyre's status.

When asked how frequently do tyres need to be changed, Lim replied that there are a few indications when tyres show signs of wearing down. An example of this situation would be when the tyre has reached the thread indicator as specified, which means the grip is no longer fit for road usage. Other instances where tyres need to be replaced include injured tyres or broken structures like ply separation which will result in the tyre being deemed unfit for use. An oxidised tyre will also need to be changed immediately as the tyre structure might not suit the speed and load index.

Talking about some of the common mistakes and misconceptions the general public have about tyres, Lim emphasised that the misconception has always been that cheap or low cost tyres are good because they are assumed to have low cost (lower CPK-Cost per kilometer) which is totally wrong as the sacrifice in safety and durability will increase the CPK in the long run. Another common mistake is choosing tyre pattern based on personal preference rather than the right pattern and compound formula based on specific applications.

"Kit Loong Commercial Tyre Group is well-resourced to provide a complete range of value-added services to deliver effective solutions and maximum benefits to their customers. Combining our ability to supply quality products with extensive know-how, Kit Loong perfectly understands the technical and operational factors affecting tyre performance which can be tracked, to develop and offer services that satisfy the needs of various market segments," he concluded. ■

# Shell Opens 430 Million-Litre Lubricants Plant in Singapore

*From the third largest integrated lubricants and grease production facility in the world Shell will ship products to more than 40 countries from Singapore.*



every year – enough to change the engine oil of over 12 000 cars, every hour, every day.

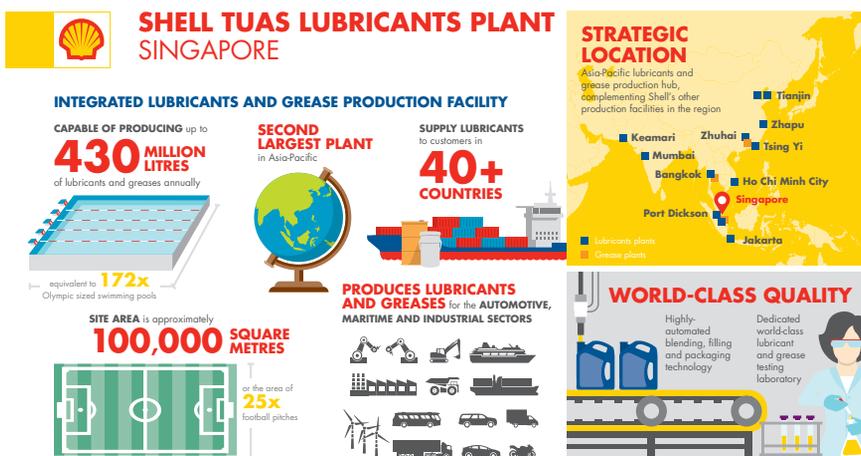
## State-of-the-Art

Speaking at the opening, Huibert Vigeveno, Shell Global Commercial, Executive Vice President (including Shell Lubricants) said: “This state-of-the-art, highly automated facility in Singapore was built to support our business ambitions here in the APAC region. It serves as a strategic production hub, and will be the centrepiece of our lubricants supply chain network to reliably supply our world-class lubricants to millions of customers in the region. Asia represents over 40 percent of the world’s lubricants demand, and is home to half of the world’s largest lubricants markets.

“This facility will also further strengthen our marine lubricant business’s presence here in Singapore, the world’s second busiest port.”

## Production Hub

Lim Kok Kiang, Assistant Managing Director of the Singapore Economic Development Board, commented, “We are heartened by Shell’s commitment to improving productivity through the adoption of innovative technologies, which is aligned with the strategies of the Energy & Chemicals Industry Transformation Map. With a 50 percent increase in capacity and six-fold improvement in productivity over its previous plant, the new plant will be yet another great showcase of an Advanced Manufacturing facility that provides Singaporeans with good jobs.”



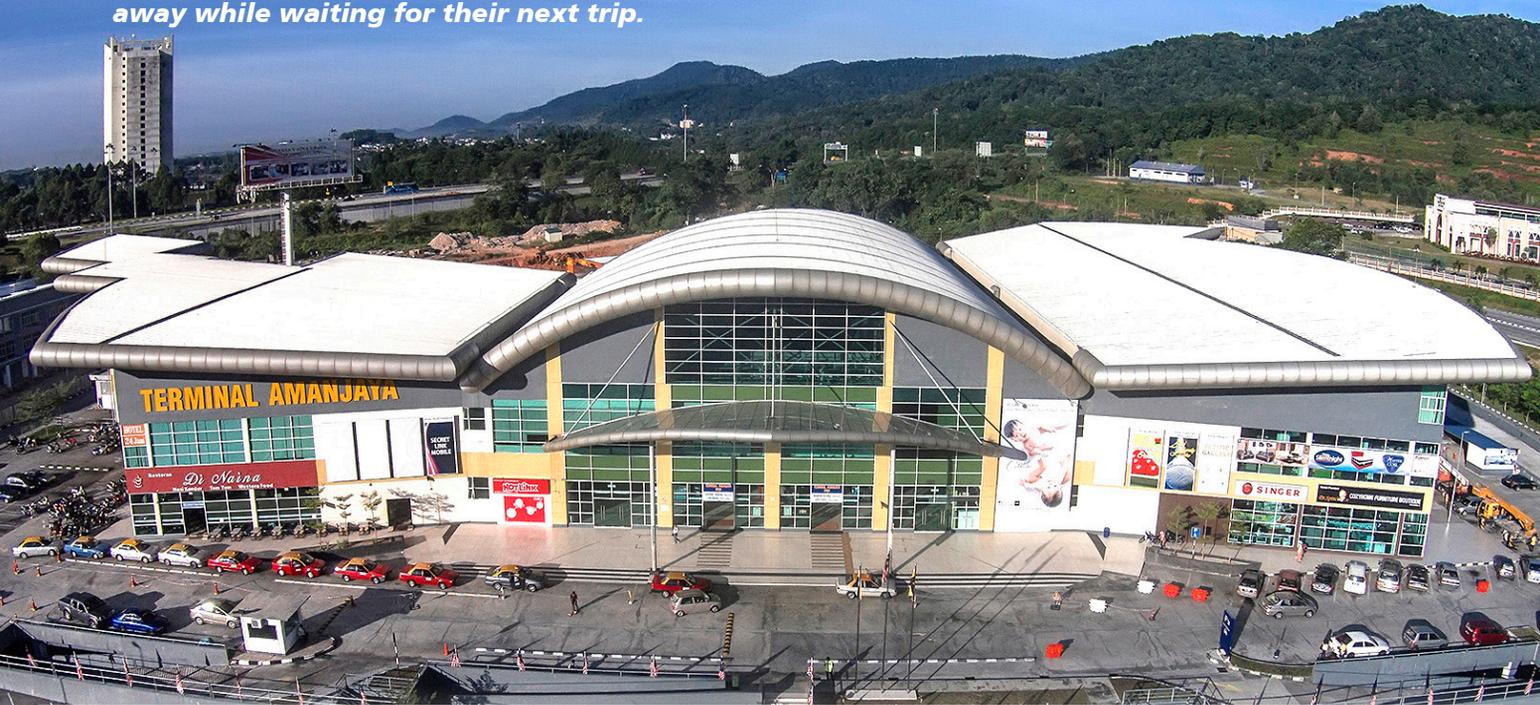
Shell has opened an integrated lubricants and grease production facility in Tuas, Singapore. At 10 hectares, the site size is equivalent to almost 25 football pitches. It is Shell’s

third largest lubricants plant in the world and second largest in Asia-Pacific, capable of producing up to 430 million litres (equivalent to 390 kilotonnes) of lubricants and greases

The new plant will be a production hub for products that will be shipped to more than 40 countries, mainly in the Asia-Pacific region. It will produce lubricants carrying Shell’s globally renowned brands, such as Shell Helix (passenger car motor oil), Shell Rimula (heavy duty engine oil), Shell Tellus (hydraulic oil), Shell Alexia (two-stroke marine engine oil) and Shell Gadus (greases). 🚀

# Do More At Terminal Aman Jaya

*Karaoke, snooker and library for passengers to while the time away while waiting for their next trip.*



The last time this writer went to a bus terminal was many years ago and it was crowded, smelly, noisy and stuffy. Assigned to check out the Terminal AmanJaya in Ipoh, she braced herself. Walking through the main entrance, the terminal was nothing like what she expected it to be.

There was hardly any noise except for about three ticket vendors calling out to potential customers. That said, it does not mean that business was slow, but it was just how Ipoh town is as a whole, just a relaxed and chilled place, so the bus terminal really just reflected the mood of the town.

"Is it always like this, or is this a particularly slow day?" I asked terminal manager M Narendran. "No, this is a normal business day but of course, the crowd grows during festive seasons," he said, adding that Ipoh's chilled reputation had actually attracted many foreign tourists and some were seen hanging around at the terminal, waiting for the bus that would take them to their next Malaysian adventure.

Strategically located in Meru Raya, the Terminal AmanJaya was built and began operating as an integrated public transportation terminal in September 2012, and in 2014 it became the only gazetted express bus terminal in Ipoh. It took over operations of the Medan Gopeng Terminal when bus operators agreed to move into the Terminal AmanJaya in April 2013.

Some 200 buses go through the terminal daily while during busy festive seasons, it could reach up to about 500 buses. As of October 2017, the month that saw the most express buses go through the terminal was March with 9 605 buses while June had the most tour buses with 71 buses. The buses from





the Terminal Amanjaya go to Kuala Lumpur, Cameron Highlands, Johor, Penang and Kuala Kangsar, among many others.

To avoid congestion, there are separate bays for arriving buses and departing buses. There are 17 departure bays on the ground floor, where buses are allowed a maximum of 30 minutes to pick up passengers and five arrival bays on the first floor. To ensure the buses do not exceed the limit, there are traffic controllers who will instruct them to leave the bays after their 30 minutes is up.

There are also 40 holding bays for drivers on break or for buses that need a quick repair. "There are buses that depart as early as 5am and some drivers prefer to be at the terminal from the night before," Narendran said.

The Terminal Amanjaya houses 46 ticketing counters. "We are still old school when it comes to ticket sales. Most of the new terminals use self-service kiosks or online transactions but we accommodate operators who still prefer to sell tickets over the counter. A few of the bigger operators even have their own waiting halls near their respective counters, for more comfort for their passengers," Narendran said.

Other facilities include massage chairs, luggage deposits, convenience stores and prayer rooms. For those on a quick transit and need a place to stay, there is a hotel inside the terminal. There are even a public library and a career centre there, the latter assists jobseekers with interview opportunities and such. "This is more of a hub than just a terminal where you catch a bus," Narendran said.

To while their time away before their bus arrives, travellers can have some fun at the karaoke and snooker centres, also located inside the terminal. They need not



worry about missing their bus, as long as they are alert of announcements made on the loudspeaker as well as the large LED screen in the middle of the lobby.

"We tried to make this into some sort of a mall, too, but there is already a hyper market just across the street, so most of the outlets here are occupied by the food and beverage businesses," the terminal manager said. Some popular names include Rotiboy, besides the mandatory mamak restaurant and other local delicacies.

For terminal operations to run smoothly throughout the day, there must be around 20 people on duty at a time. They are the security guards, administration staff, receptionists, the traffic controllers, technicians and cleaners. On busy days, Narendran said he too had to be down on the floor.

Sometimes the terminal would receive visits from the Health Department who go around advising smokers against the bad habit. "We are grateful of their involvement and hopefully it would make this terminal a healthier and cleaner place," Narendran said.

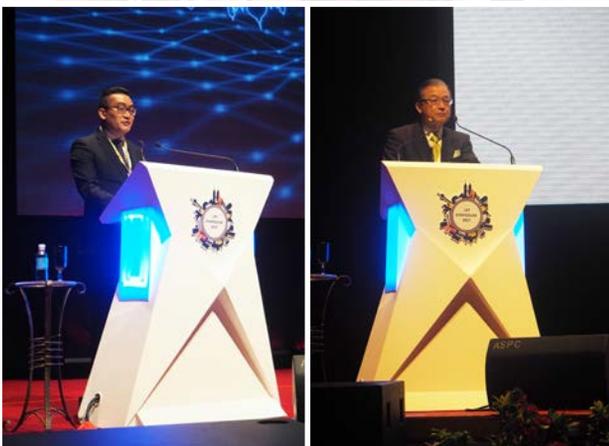
With the terminal's huge unfulfilled potential, Narendran hoped for more developments in the near future, that would benefit all parties namely the bus operators, passengers, the state of Ipoh and its people in general. 





## SPAD LPT Symposium 2017

*The symposium themed 'Reimagining Transportation: Sustainable Mobility' turned out to be a huge success. The SPAD-organized event saw the participation of experts, thought leaders and luminaries from China, South Korea, Japan, Germany, United States and the United Kingdom, just to name a few.*



**S**uruhanjaya Pengangkutan Awam Darat (Land Public Transport Commission) or more commonly known as SPAD saw a remarkable turnout at their Land Public Transport (LPT) Symposium 2017 held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. The event that took place on the 22nd and 23rd October 2017 saw participants and delegates alike interested to make a change for the future.

During the symposium, speakers from the local community and around the world shared their thoughts and expertise on matters related to land public transport.

Opening the event was YB Dato' Sri Hajah Nancy Binti Shukri, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department. In her speech, she emphasised that land public transport has been identified by the Government as a crucial socio-economic enabler, which is currently in a dynamic growth phrase.

"The Government remains committed to its mandate to drive transformation in this crucial public segment. Since SPAD's inception in 2010, the Commission has rolled out various initiatives aimed at establishing a more-user friendly, planned, integrated, affordable and sustainable land public transport system. Taking the example set by other developed countries, it is clear that world class land public transport truly empowers and improves the quality of life for citizens in urban and rural area.

While the spotlight at the symposium was on rail, improving the first-and-last mile connectivity to make travel seamless for commuters remain a top priority.



The Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak in his keynote speech shared the government's approach and visions for the bus industry in the coming years.

"Significant resources are being allocated to bridge first- and last-mile connectivity. Since 2012, the Government has invested RM766 million under the Interim Stage Bus Support Fund (ISBSF) to ensure that residents along social routes are still provided with bus services.

Although the ISBSF provides a much needed lifeline to keep social routes running, it is not designed to be a long-term initiative and must be replaced in phases with a more sustainable system. As a result, the Stage Bus Service Transformation (SBST) was introduced in 2015 to increase the viability of operators and service coverage.

Implemented as the myBAS initiative, this service migrates bus operators from a fare box revenue model to a system that holds them to higher standards of service. SPAD will plan the network and pay a 'per vehicle per kilometre rate'. In return the operators are required to deliver on the agreed service level performance to ensure commuters enjoy better service and connectivity.

The Government has invested RM143 million for the implementation of myBAS services by SPAD in Kangar since August 2015, in Seremban since January 2016 and in Ipoh since June 2016. To-date, myBAS has recorded more than 8.4 million passengers, (or averaging 324 000 passengers a month in these 3 capital states).

SBST is expected to be implemented in Kuala Terengganu and Johor Bahru by end of this year, and this will be

followed by a national roll-out in stages covering all capital cities by 2020. To support the efforts to reduce carbon emissions and promote cleaner environment, SPAD will also carry out a pilot project to introduce electric buses as part of the myBAS initiative, starting with Johor Bahru and Terengganu.

Meanwhile, the BRT will be the public transport infrastructure backbone of Iskandar Malaysia in the next two decades, by providing a reliable, comfortable and cost-effective

service. The BRT service is expected to be operational in 2021 covering 90 percent of Iskandar Malaysia, with a 51km route through 39 stations. In addition, the development of the BRT system will have smooth links to the Rail Transit System (RTS), High-Speed Rail, KTM Commuter and inter-town bus terminals.

"With the expectation of increases in population and economic growth to simultaneously boost job opportunities, I am confident that BRT will become a catalyst to spur Iskandar Malaysia to become more competitive on par with other economic growth centres."

In order to recognise selected land public transport operators for their outstanding performance in safety and customer service reliability, SPAD awarded the recipients with the Industry Award during the event. For special awards on industry, winners are recognised for innovations which have a significant impact on cost-savings and improvement in service quality. 🏆



## SPAD Industry Awards 2017 winners

### Best Express Bus Operators (joint winners)

1. Konsortium E-Mutiara Berhad
2. Tiara Persona Sdn Bhd (Ekspres Perdana)

### Best Customer Service for Express Bus

1. Tiara Persona Sdn Bhd (Ekspres Perdana)

### Best Stage Bus Operator

1. Syarikat Pengangkutan Maju Berhad

### Best Customer Service for Stage Bus Operator (joint winners)

1. Syarikat Pengangkutan Maju Berhad
2. Handal Indah Sdn Bhd (Causeway Link)

### Best Upcoming Bus Terminal Managed Privately

1. Melaka Sentral Sdn Bhd (Melaka Sentral)

### Best Upcoming Bus Terminal Managed by Local Council

1. Terminal Sentral Kuantan (Majlis Perbandaran Kuantan)

# Associations for Your Business

## Tyre Retreading Manufacturers Association of Malaysia (TRMAM)

Telephone Number : 019 – 355 1088  
 Email : chinhm699@yahoo.com  
 Person-in-charge : Mr Chin Hon Meng  
 About : AIMS AND OBJECTIVES  
 1. To promote environmentally friendly recycling activities such as the retreading of used tyre casings and the repair of used tyres.  
 2. To advance and safeguard the business interests of the tyre retreading manufacturers  
 3. To compile and disseminate information of common concerns and to provide facilities for consultation and upgrade the industry's technology  
 4. To improve products quality and standards  
 5. To promote the interests of the industry internationally  
 Website : -



## Malaysian Associate of Tyre Retreaders and Dealers Societies (MATRDS)

Telephone Number : 03 – 7845 5066  
 Email : heongthong@gmail.com  
 Person-in-charge : Mr Tan  
 About : MATRDS is the only national Tyre Dealers and Retreaders association in Malaysia. Our objective is to mainly coordinate and update members with latest policies and developments of local tyre manufacturers, importers as well as government. MATRDS also provides training funds to members especially on technical skills.  
 Website : -



## Commercial Vehicle Rebuilders Association Malaysia – Misc

Telephone Number : 03 – 7726 8286  
 Email : secretariat@cvrambuilt.com  
 Person-in-charge : En Suhaimi Mohamad  
 About : CVRAM's members consist of rebuilders who extends the lifespan of used commercial vehicles through the rebuilding process. Working closely with government like MITI and JPJ for approvals, all vehicles are restored in accordance to the original manufacturers specifications to ensure marketability and safety.  
 Website : <http://www.cvrambuilt.com>



## Express & Excursion Bus Association

Telephone Number : +65 6298 8425  
 Email : general@eeba.sg  
 Person-in-charge : Mr Foong Cheng Hon (Associate Manager)  
 About : Formerly known as Express Bus Agencies Association (EBAA), EEBA was established in 2003 by a group of express bus operators and is registered with the Registry of Societies (ROS). Currently the association comprises of mainly the tour & travel related agencies and express bus operators, EEBA was established with the primary objective of promoting goodwill and fostering cooperation and understanding amongst its members. It also serves as a platform for members to offer assistance and advice to any interested bodies in connection with express and excursion bus matters.  
 Website : [www.eeba.sg](http://www.eeba.sg)

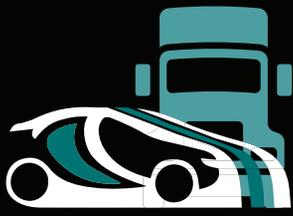


## Malaysian School Bus Association Alliance – School GabunganPengusaha Bas Sekolah Malaysia (GPBSM)

Telephone Number : 013 – 351 9171  
 Email : fauzi\_zeera@yahoo.com  
 Person-in-charge : En Ahmad Fauzi  
 About : GPBSM aims to assist members of associations in  
 1. Dealing with bus-related issues with SPAD, PUSPKOM and JPJ  
 2. Obtaining school bus permits  
 3. Buying school buses  
 4. Improving and promoting business within the school bus industry  
 Website : -

## Pan Malaysian Bus Operators Association

Telephone Number : 05 – 2549 421 / 2549 422  
 Email : pmboa1951@gmail.com  
 Person-in-charge : Datuk Mohamad Ashfar Ali  
 About : The main objectives of PMBOA are:  
 • To act as the representative and mouthpiece of the members  
 • To watch over and protect the general interests of organisations engaged or concerned or interested in the transport of passengers and to promote the consideration and discussion of all questions in relation thereto.  
 • To give the legislature, public authorities and other bodies facilities for conferring with and ascertaining the views of organisations engaged or concerned or interested in the transport of passengers as regards matters directly or indirectly affecting their interests  
 • To originate, promote and support improvements in the laws and regulations directly or indirectly affecting persons, firms or bodies engaged or concerned or interested in the transport of passengers  
 Website : -



# Autonomous Vehicles ASIA 2018

- **Pre-conference Workshops:**  
29 January 2018
- **Main Conference:**  
30-31 January 2018
- **Post-conference Workshops:**  
1 February 2018
- **Venue:**  
Equarius Hotel, Resorts World Sentosa, Singapore

## ACCELERATING ASIA'S TRANSITION TO SAFE, SUSTAINABLE AND INTELLIGENT AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE SYSTEMS



### FEATURED SPEAKERS:



**H.E. Dr Laszlo Palkovics**  
Minister of State for Higher Education  
and Government Commissioner  
(Responsible for Coordination of  
Research and Development of  
Autonomous and Electric Vehicle  
Systems)  
**Hungary**



**John Wall**  
Manager Road Safety Technology  
Centre for Road Safety  
**Transport for NSW**



**Roger Looney**  
Vice-President of Vehicle Engineering  
and Electric Propulsion  
**Goros Auto**



**Lars-Erik Forsbergh**  
Managing Director  
**Volvo Trucks Hub South East Asia**



**Pang Mei Yee**  
Vice President of Innovation,  
Solutions Delivery & Service  
Management – Asia Pacific  
**DHL**



**Alexander Mastrovito**  
Head of Sustainable Transport Solutions  
**Scania Asia & Ocenia**

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### KEY TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Legislation and regulatory roadmap for Asia autonomous vehicles (AVs)
- Ensuring risk management, safety and reliability for AVs
- Latest success case studies on AVs
- Enhancing public acceptance of AVs
- Evaluating infrastructure readiness to enable AV implementation on public roads

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# Bus Uncle Informs and Entertains

*Asian Buses writer Farezza Hanum Rashid was tickled by Bus Uncle’s lifelike characteristics, who entertained her even when being outside of Singapore. Bus Uncle creator, Abhilash Murthy, tells her how this chatbot came into fruition.*



Bus Uncle



Bus Auntie also sometimes makes an appearance

Waiting for the bus in Singapore is not dull when you have a sarcastic but friendly uncle who not only instantly tells you when your bus will arrive, but tells you jokes via text messages while you wait.

Inquiring about the earliest bus for the Johor Bahru Checkpoint bus stop, Bus Uncle told me: “Bus 950 arriving now... then 170X coming in 7 mins... The rest give you more time to play game.”

Feeling bored while you wait? “Why does Mr. Lee Hsien Loong go walking in the evening and not in the morning? Hello why you so blur he is the PM not AM.” “Why is the new President always rushing? Because she is always in a hali-mah,” Bus Uncle jokes, and he has more up his virtual sleeves. He has also won Singaporean hearts with his Singlish, an amalgamation of languages spoken in the country.

Bus Uncle is a Facebook Messenger chatbot. As a chatbot, he connects to a web server to handle states of a conversation. The web server is connected to the Singapore Land Transport Authority’s public bus information datasets (or API). He is also connected to an artificially intelligent natural language processing engine called Wit.ai, so that he can learn from speaking to his users.

It began as a side project in 2016. The creator, 25-year-old Abhilash Murthy, was waiting at a bus stop when he simply thought: “I wish I could ask someone how long I needed to wait for the next bus”.

“After that one thought, I decided to jump in and build a ‘person’ to answer it for me,” he told Asian Buses. Abhilash was at the Smart Cities Asia 2017 Conference at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre recently where he spoke about humanising chatbots with humour.

Abhilash studied in Information Systems Management at the Singapore Management University from 2010 to 2014. He has since worked as a web developer, data analyst, and software engineer the investment bank UBS and a start-up called TradeGecko.

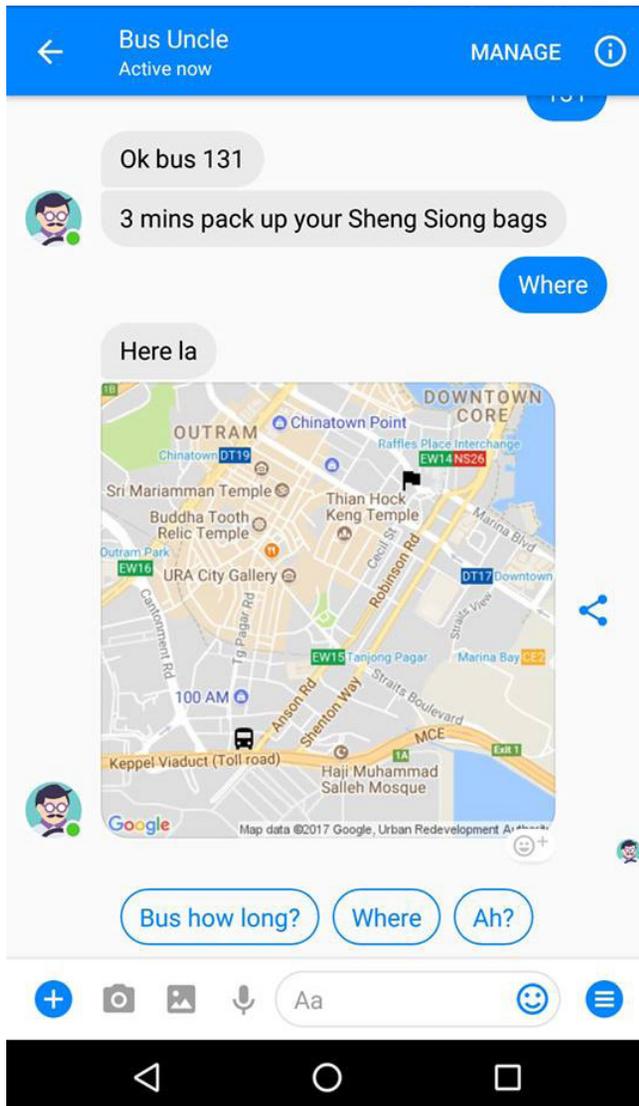
At the time this idea came about, there were already many bus arrival timing apps in Singapore however, Abhilash said, people only realised the need for it after their first experience in chatting with Bus Uncle on Facebook, because it was much easier than downloading and installing an app.

The character was inspired by Abhilash’s past experiences with bus captains in Singapore. “Many of them are strict and ‘kiasu’ about the schedule. Some of them are grumpy



Abhilash Murthy





and shout at passengers who are very slow or don't move to the back. Most of them however are very friendly and helpful. All these characteristics culminated into Bus Uncle's personality," Abhilash said.

Having close to 40 000 users so far, Bus Uncle covers all public routes in Singapore and if there are opportunities to develop it outside of Singapore, Abhilash said he would gladly do it.

"My users love Bus Uncle - they enjoy his sarcasm, wittiness, and humour, while at the same time getting valuable information to plan their day like bus arrival timings and public transport directions and itineraries."

Early feedbacks showed that Bus Uncle did not respond when users thanked him but now he says: "Ok ok welcome." Abhilash continues to develop Bus Uncle to respond to everyday conversation, as he found that his users would chat with Bus Uncle like an actual person on non-bus related things. If the chatbot did not understand or recognise the dialogue, Bus Uncle would repeat his lines or go back to asking about buses.

We gave it a go:

"How are you today, uncle?"

Bus Uncle: "I'm fine la." - Okay, a satisfactory answer.

"What did you have for lunch, uncle?"

Bus Uncle: "I try guess what you want to eat ok? You want briyani. Correct?" - This did not answer our question, but related.

"What about pizza?"

Bus Uncle: "Ok which of these bus stops?"

Bus Uncle however does give proper responses on his Facebook Page when his "passengers" had problems with the chatbot or his services. His answers are, of course, not without his funny mannerisms.

When a user complained of inaccurate location provided by Bus Uncle, he answered: "Let me check my map why give you wrong direction, pai seh sometimes I never lim enough kopi." When someone thought his jokes were insensitive, he politely responded: "Paiseh I only joking leh, no harm intend. No problem. Thank you for feedback ah, I try to be more considerate in future joke." Many also commended on Bus Uncle's accuracy as being better than most apps and even better that it is a Facebook Messenger chatbot, which means that they did not need to download more apps into their smart phones.

On making profits out of a chatbot, Abhilash is partnering with advertising agencies to carry out ad campaigns in the Bus Uncle chatbot and Facebook page for big brands like BBC and MasterCard.

His vision for the Bus Uncle Company is to create various different bots - both chatbots and voice assistants, that specialise in niche verticals, and eventually connect in a platform or network to collaborate and complement each other.

"My incredible team just won the Singapore Start-up Weekend 2017 with our second chatbot, Kecap - your local tour guide in Indonesia. There's many more coming," he said. 🇮🇩





# Where is the Fun?

*Stefan Pertz muses on the idea that there should be more fun in a bus driver's life.*

**W**e all need to work. Well, unless we have won the lotto that is. Most of us, however, have to pursue some gainful activity to ensure a steady flow of income to pay for rent and groceries as well as the ever more expensive education of our children. While most people are consistent in showing up for work, I would argue that most people don't particularly enjoy the idea of having to go to work.

Why is that so when we spend a third of our day at work? In the case of commercial vehicle drivers, it is probably even be more hours that one spends in the cab. What makes work such a chore these days? Is it the mounting pressure to perform better, to be more fuel efficient? Surely, one would want to be a good driver, but when the fun of trying to set new personal records becomes a company mantra, then it may lose its appeal. If you have to push your vehicle to the legal limit just to be able to manage schedules, then stress mounts. If the public sees you as nuisance, you may not really feel like you are doing a good job in the first place.

I remember my father's generation talking about the fun they had at work. Secretly welding someone to a T-Bar or sneaking aluminium foil into a co-worker's sandwich. Where has all that gone? Why is it that we cannot make some jokes at work anymore? Have we all become very bitter and disenchanted? There was a time when driving a bus was associated with romance and adventure. Bus captains in Europe would be away from home for a week, and back then there certainly wasn't any GPS signal that tracked how much weight difference there was in the bus after a toilet break.

Are drivers of commercial vehicles all completely serious? Don't they ever have fun? They have a lot of fun, but too rarely in my view. The work environment has become that of constraint while there are very few outlets to enjoy. At a recent trucker gathering I witnessed how hundreds of drivers just let their hair down and had a good time. What is interesting to

note is that drivers typically arrive early for events. They chat with each other, joke and exchange thoughts. We have also seen some really crazy buscreations recently in Thailand. Driving nightclubs really. As one can imagine, if a dozen of them come together in one place, they are not only having a great time together, but also put a smile of the faces of passers-by.

When looking at Facebook, one will find that many truckers are very active on social media. The posts that can be found are typically either very serious (reporting accidents) or downright silly. Apparently, truckers have taken up social media as a new way to poke others and have some fun. What puzzles me though, is that companies spend a fair amount of money on making office spaces fun to work in. Look at the headquarters of Google or Facebook and you may think you wandered into a gigantic amusement park. If letting your thoughts roam and giving you space for some entertainment at work is good for office workers, it surely is for truckers too, wouldn't you agree?

Perhaps we have lost our way in the pursuit of efficiency? The solution to our problems may not lie in the creation of better Apps, but more fun workplaces. Imagine, if drivers enjoyed starting up the engine to go on their long trips that take them away from home for a while. And maybe, if the job of truckies would be described as one that is enjoyable, younger people would think about taking that profession up instead of venturing into huge firms by default? ■

# Expanding Scale And Scope

Very important trade fairs and epoch making announcements on innovations make September very special for the automotive industry. International Automobile Exhibition (IAA) Frankfurt and the North American Commercial Vehicle Show (NACV) in Atlanta are among them. These became venues for the unfolding of many trailblazing trends that can change the future course of the automotive industry. Murrall Thalor, Editor of AutoPartsAsia has the inside scoops.

Two significant statements at the IAA show that impressed me epitomises these trends. One is by Dr Volkmar Denner, Chairman, Board of Management Robert Bosch GmbH, who said, "It's not just a case of making better cars. We need new conceptions of mobility." The second quote is by Continental AGs' CEO Dr Elmar Degenhart who said, "Vehicles will become our offices and front rooms – our living spaces on wheels."

Continental emphasised the importance of innovation in automation, electrification and connectivity. Cooperation between industry and politics is key since the big goals like zero road accidents, clean air, comfortable and affordable driving can be achieved only with political and administrative vision and will.

## Cockpit Vision, Over-the-air Updates

Entirely new cockpit designs are needed for automated driving and to reduce driver stress in the new environment. Continental AG showcased its vision of the cockpit of the future at the recent IAA Cars 2017 International Motor Show. The cockpit vision includes a variety of functions for comprehensive human-machine interaction that can dynamically and flexibly adapt the vehicle interior to the specific situation.

## Low-cost Corner LiDAR

Delphi Automotive has signed a commercial partnership agreement with LeddarTech, a Canadian company developing solid-state LiDAR technology. This partnership is to develop a low-cost, corner LiDAR solution. Delphi has extensive sensor, radar and systems engineering knowledge and experience to complement LeddarTech's unique, patented sensing technology.

## Lab1886

Business Innovation, the innovations factory of Daimler AG, is celebrating its tenth anniversary. Since 2007, this 'Think & Act Tank' has developed ideas and projects for new business models like the flexible car sharing service car2go, the mobility app moovel and Mercedes me, the digital access into the world of Mercedes-Benz. To mark the anniversary, Daimler is converting Business Innovation to Lab1886 which will act as a new innovation lab with its own incubator, latest hardware and software and team of experts.

## Innovative Catalysts

BASF presented its innovative catalysts, battery materials and plastics that will enable automotive manufacturers to



reduce emissions, save weight and improve safety, comfort and design of their vehicles. The company showcased sub-frame mounts made of a new, low stiffening and compact polyurethane that can help improve driving dynamics, comfort and safety.

## OnLaneASSIST

At NACV, WABCO introduced OnLaneASSIST, a safety technology for heavy- and medium-duty trucks and buses. The technology helps in improving commercial vehicle safety and driver comfort by avoiding collisions related to unintentional lane departures. It leverages unique active steering technology and a forward-looking camera to provide active lane correction functionality. It contributes to vehicle safety by detecting lane markings and continuously evaluating the vehicle's position relative to them. It also distinguishes between planned lane changes and lane drifting. In case of lane drifting, the system autonomously intervenes before the vehicle unintentionally leaves its lane by applying a correction torque to the steering wheel to return the vehicle towards the lane centre.

Lastly I would like to take up a major announcement – Ford Motor Company of the US and Mahindra & Mahindra of India have entered into a strategic alliance. It is designed to leverage the benefits of Ford's global reach and expertise and Mahindra's scale in India. The areas of potential cooperation include mobility programmes including e-mobility, connected vehicles among others. As both the partners have worked together in the past, the present alliance will be more productive as the differences of opinions would have faded away already.

See you soon with more Trailblazing Trends. . .



## Health-check for MAN's Buses in Kota Kinabalu

*We follow MAN's service crew to Kota Kinabalu not only see how service and maintenance is handled there, but also to have a look at some rather unusual vehicles.*

East Malaysia is different from peninsular Malaysia in many ways. Obviously, our readers know that. We went to explore just how different things are and how MAN as a maker of high quality bus chassis caters to this sub-section of the market. We met with MAN personnel in Kota Kinabalu to visit their customers. Our first stop took us out of the city and into the rural kampungs.

Sometimes, organisations, businesses and the government are required to re-think approaches. This is the case of the mobile clinic we saw a fair way out of the city of Kota Kinabalu. Parked in a small village, children playing in fields and streets, this MAN bus is the centre of attraction for the day. Stored in the "luggage compartment" is an air conditioner and a generator that provide comfort and electricity for the mobile clinic. Inside, Dr. Deena Khairiah Baharuddin is attending to patients.



### Short Distances

"What we do here" Dr Deena says "is to bring the clinic to the people that don't have the means or willingness to travel to a bigger city. In our mobile clinic, we screen rural folks for Tuberculosis, an important service." Staying in each town for a day or two, the doctor and her team screen villagers for the disease. In terms of operating hours, the bus is clocking in twelve hours per day, although the mileage is barely 10 000 Kilometres per year. As a base, used their 4.280, A80 chassis.

Although the mileage is low, compared to tour buses, dependability is crucial. Here, MAN has helped Dr Deena and her driver, Ardonis Awang Din, to use the vehicle in the best possible way. "I have received some excellent training from MAN when we received the vehicle," Din says. Among his tasks, besides moving the bus from one



MAN 18.350, A91 – A versatile chassis for the HAZMAT vehicle

Base Vehicle: SÜ xx3 F (A91)  
 For 2-door body, wheelbase 5940mm  
 Engine displacement: 10 518cm<sup>3</sup>  
 Performance: 257 kW (350hp) at 1700 rpm  
 Torque: 1750Nm at 1 000 to 1 400 rpm  
 ZF automatic gearbox, 6 AP 2000 EcoLife with integrated retarder. "Fully synthetic" automatic transmission for oil change interval of 180 000 Km



MAN 14.280, A80 – A Solid chassis for a mobile clinic

Base Vehicle: 14.xxx HOCL-CIB (A80)  
 For 2-door body, wheelbase  
 Engine displacement: 6 871 cm<sup>3</sup>  
 Performance: 206 kW/280 hp at 2 400 rpm  
 Torque: 1 100 Nm at 1 200 rpm  
 ZF 6 AP 1200 EcoLife automatic gearbox with integrated retarder Gearbox shifting D/N/R Axleratio i= 5.63 Driving programme onl yactivated when servicebrake is applied and sufficient vehicle supply pressures present, 80 km/h speed limit

location to the other, is to perform a daily check of the entire vehicle to ensure mission-readiness. "The training was very well done, I understood all and the importance of daily checks and simple maintenance was made clear."

## Vast Distances

As East Malaysia is a place of vast distances with little in between, reliability is crucial as a breakdown half-way between towns would cost a lot of time and cause a lot of inconvenience, while villagers will wait for their rolling clinic in vain. To this extend, MAN recommended rigorous engine maintenance to ensure that the crew is able to use the bus at all times.

## What Matters

"The ability to help is most important to me and my team. This vehicle allows us to care for our fellow countrymen. Besides that, we enjoy the facilities provided with the bus very much. It is a joy to use the mobile clinic and to see people appreciating our effort to bring this service to their door-step, which is made possible with the MAN bus," Dr Deena said. Currently, the bus is in need for a new set of tyres and the crew is looking for tyre makers that would be so kind to sponsor new pneus.

## HAZMAT Bus

Heading back to town, we stop at the Bomba station in Kota Kinabalu. Here we are met by Felix Dunung, Pen. Pengarah Bahagian Kejuruteraan Jentara, who shows off his highly specific MAN bus. It may not look like one, but underneath the body sits a MAN 18.350, A91. There are some nine firestations around Kota Kinabalu, while this is the only one with a HAZMAT bus. The vehicle has been in service for some four years by now and is required as there are a number of businesses in town producing fertilizer as well as a striving oil and gas industry.

## Ease of Maintenance

Dunung admits that the vehicle may need some getting used to by all three drivers when it comes to driving as the rear overhang is quite significant. This is necessary as the vehicle has to carry a lot of equipment and everything needs to be on board this one bus. However, in contrast, he says that "Maintenance is very easy. You see, we operate this bus every day for drills. Obviously, we are clocking in a number of kilometres as a result. We have our own workshop where we carry out simple repairs. Beyond that, we rely on the help of MAN.

## OEM Parts

While simple procedures are carried out in the in-house workshop, more complex issues will be resolved with the help of MAN expertise. "We are not in the business of running workshops, we safe people's lives. Therefore, we don't get involved too much in the maintenance and service of the vehicle," Dunung explained. He relies on the 24-hour assistance from MAN. When it comes to spare parts, Dunung swears by OEM delivered ones. "You simply cannot risk any part to fail because it is made cheap." Spare parts come directly from MAN's headquarters and are stored in a nearby warehouse so that access is easy and fast. ■



## Rapidly to the SEA Games

*From a white-collar worker to a bus captain, an intriguing transition that let us have a closer look at the job of a bus driver to discover why Adrian John Soosay embraced the change.*

**//** My name is Adrian John Soosay. It has been nearly 3 years since I took the plunge and became a bus driver. I was in an industry completely unrelated to buses. I worked in an office before this, where I gradually lost interest in my job and was restless by the end of the day. The thought of becoming a bus driver lingered in my mind. I then gathered some courage and jumped at the opportunity to be a bus captain with RapidKL when I heard that they were in need of bus drivers," said the friendly Adrian when we met at the Kompleks RapidBus Cheras Selatan. He seemed to be very laid-back and thoroughly enjoying his job as he chatters on.

"My day starts as early as 4.15AM where I am expected at the bus depot. My hours depend on the shift of that day. A typical shift will see me ending my day at approximately 3 or 4pm. A longer shift or a "direct shift" will see me ending my day at 9pm. I prefer to do a direct shift even though the hours are long," shared Adrian when asked about his daily routine as a bus driver with RapidKL. He associated this preference to his passion for his job and the ability to meet new passengers while on the job.

On his non-working days, Adrian said that being the only child, he treasures his time with his aging parents and loves to bring them out for dinners on his off days. With his father being a retiree and his mother a full-time housewife, Adrian enjoys having a good meal with both once a week. Even though bus drivers at RapidKL are given two days off in a week, Adrian only takes one day off in a week, entirely by choice, to be able to support his family. "This also helps to ease the burden of my colleagues as there are not enough bus drivers these days. We work in a close-knit environment so we try to play our part to help other drivers."

When asked what skills are necessary for this position, Adrian replied that patience is of utmost importance. Due to the nature of his job, Adrian meets hundreds of people every day while ferrying them to their intended destination along his route. He will have to tolerate the idiosyncrasies of his passengers and embrace them for whom they are. Apart from the necessary licence requirement, Adrian was of the thought that ability to obey traffic regulations and coexist on the road with other passenger vehicles of equal

importance. "As buses have bigger bodies, we have to gauge a bigger space when making a turn. The driving technique will be different from driving a passenger vehicle." Last but not least, Adrian mentioned being alert on the road to be an advantage to his job.

Driving the Bus Number 400, Adrian is usually seen on the roads of Cheras along the route from Damai Perdana to Mydin. He makes four to five trips a day. The trip takes longer during peak hours when people commute to and from work.

Recalling the event that happened a few months ago, Adrian said "I much prefer my current job compared to my previous one. I enjoy meeting people and being a bus driver allows me to do that. During the recent SEA Games in Kuala Lumpur, I was given the opportunity to ferry passengers from Times Square to the Bukit Jalil stadium and it was a different environment from my usual passengers. The event goers would cheer in anticipation and were decked out in their supporting team's merchandise and the bus was constantly in a joyful mood. My mood was also lifted as their energy bounced off to me. I also witnessed the harmony between the supporters as they cheered together regardless of age, gender and race. The ten-day event was an appreciated break from my usual routine. Now, I am all geared up to ferry my passengers to their intended destination."

"As every bus driver at RapidKL is assigned to his own bus, I am inevitably attached to my bus. I



ensure my bus is clean every morning after I arrive at the depot. Also, I will have to check the condition of my bus to ensure it is in perfect condition to carry passengers safely. If there are minor repairs to be done, I will send the bus to the workshop in the depot itself so that repair works can be done as soon as possible. The management team will arrange for PUSPAKOM inspection regularly to ensure the bus meets all regulations. This is because safety is highly prioritised at RapidKL, both for the passengers and bus drivers," shared Adrian.

"When the bus is due for servicing, the mechanics will inform the bus drivers to bring their bus over to the workshop. It is our duty to send the vehicle over to ensure the bus

is regularly maintained to bring breakdowns to a minimum," shared Adrian during the tour of the in-house workshop and petrol station on the grounds of Kompleks RapidBus Cheras Selatan. These facilities ensure bus drivers are able to focus on their task: to transport passengers safely and efficiently.

When buses are sent to the workshop, a replacement bus will be provided to ensure the commuters dependent on the bus to get around will not encounter any problems. RapidKL has a number of buses on standby to ensure no routes will be affected when maintenance or repair works are done.

Every RapidKL bus will be cleaned everyday by the workers after the bus returns to the depot at night. Cleaning services will be done throughout the night to ensure the buses are completely clean. The bus will be ready for passengers by the time the bus captain clocks in for work in the wee hours of the morning.

Talking about his plans for the future, Adrian sees himself operating a travel bus in five to ten years to come. Integrating his love for driving buses and travel, this is the dream job for Adrian. Even though he will have to bear more responsibilities as a bus owner and operator, Adrian believes his experience and time at RapidKL will teach him all he needs to know as a bus operator. 



# Foundation laid for further growth Diesel Technic AG is expanding its headquarters in Kirchdorf / Germany



**D**iesel Technic AG has started work on the major expansion of its headquarters. The aim is to improve its product and service provision to customers. The expansion supports Diesel Technic AG's ongoing growth strategy. With more than 36 000 branded products of guaranteed quality, a network of international subsidiaries and distribution partners in 150 countries, the company ranks as one of the largest suppliers of commercial vehicle spare parts in the independent aftermarket.

As part of the expansion, the existing high-bay warehouse at Wehrmannsdamm in Kirchdorf is being supplemented with a new logistics building. With a height of 18.5 m and covering an area of 6 600 m<sup>2</sup>, it is almost as big as a

football stadium. Around 4 500 m<sup>2</sup> of the new building is intended for the high-bay storage, with space for a total of 13 000 pallets. Another 1 150 m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace will be given over to state-of-the-art and fully automatic shuttle storage with a capacity of 40 000 boxes arranged over 37 levels. The new logistics building will particularly improve product availability, and automation will accelerate the logistics process according to the "goods-to-man" principle. A number of modern-equipped offices will also supplement existing capacity. As a result, the company is ensuring that new employees will continue to enjoy an optimum working environment well into the future. An additional car park with around 460 parking spaces is already complete. ■

## CAM New Luxury 20 Seater Coaster - Taller, Wider & More Comfortable

**C**hina Auto Manufacturers (M) Sdn Bhd (CAM), the sales & marketing arm of light commercial vehicles under Sendok Group brand under CAM has a complete range of commercial vehicles for consumers, the longest van in Malaysia - 18 Seater Vans, 10-15 seater passenger vans, Food Trucks, Caravans, 1-3 Ton Light Trucks, Medium and Heavy trucks, 40~70T Mining Trucks and now they are introducing their latest addition, 20 seater coaster. All vehicles are assembled locally at R&A Commercial Vehicles Sdn Bhd, the manufacturing and assembly plant under Sendok Group.

CAM vehicles come with 3 years/100,000km Warranty with more than 60 Service Centres nationwide to support CAM customer aftersales. CAM vehicles come with free towing service during warranty period & 24/7 breakdown support.

- The Co-Star utilises Isuzu 4JB1 Engine, with German Getrag Transmission Technology and BOSCH Fuel Supply System.
- It is equipped with 2.8L Turbocharged Common Rail EURO 4 Engine giving the vehicle more power for lower fuel consumption.
- The Luxury Interior and High-Ceiling Coaster has 20 seats including driver, it has 6 meters long, 2 meters wide, and 2.6 meters high. With high ceiling and plenty of leg room, the spacious interior and wide angle view give

the driver and passenger a more spacious and relaxing journey.

- Its Non-independent 4 Leaf Spring Suspension makes the Co-Star more comfortable to drive with. It also makes it suitable for carrying large amount of passengers while travelling on uneven road conditions.
- Its Anti-Lock Brake System (ABS) and Electronic Brake Force Distribution (EBD) assist the driver greatly while braking and driving around corners, making it safer to drive down long and curvy slopes.
- Its Strengthened Body Frame with Closed Loop Structure allows it to be very resistant to torsional forces and deformation when it is flipped over, effectively increasing the safety of passengers. Furthermore, it also has Cathodic Electrodeposition Coatings, giving it good corrosion resistance that can last for as long as 10 years.
- The Co-Star's spare parts are highly Interchangeable and accessible, especially for its key parts like the engine and gearbox, making its maintenance, servicing, and repairing costs relatively low and economic. CAM has over 60 service centers and stockists in Malaysia to cater for their customer needs.
- It is best suited to be a luxury tourist bus and business reception vehicle, and can be customized into a school bus, factory worker bus, or others. ■



## A rolling showroom: Danfoss launches inaugural “Danfoss Drives Southeast Asia Energy Efficiency Tour” to Support Malaysia’s Industry 4.0 Plans

**D**anfoss, a key player in the energy efficiency space today launched its inaugural “Danfoss Drives Southeast Asia Energy Efficiency Tour” in Malaysia to raise awareness on the importance of energy efficiency and empower businesses to adopt brand new innovations in energy efficient technology. The Tour will travel to more than 20 cities across Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

ASEAN is a major global hub of manufacturing and trade where the manufacturing, industry and services sectors are increasing demand for electricity in Malaysia. As the ASEAN region is well on track to be the world’s 4th-largest economy by 2050 and it is one of the

fastest-growing consumer markets in the world, this presents an opportunity for Danfoss to help customers in energy intensive industries including manufacturing, buildings, cement, food and beverage and industry sectors implement energy efficiency solutions to enhance process optimisation for sustainable, reliable and efficient operations.

The Danfoss Drives Southeast Asia Energy Efficiency Tour includes 20 cities across Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand in a span of three months. The Tour started in Malaysia and visited cities including Petaling Jaya, Bandar Sunway, Penang, Ipoh, Johor Bahru and Kuantan. 



## Linz, Double-Articulated Electric Bus with IMC

**T**he IMC bus for Linz is a 24 m long, fully electric trolleybus for urban public transport. Due to its length it is a real low-cost alternative to a tramcar. The drive has been equipped with two electric motors on two axles, which increases the operational reliability of the bus and ensures the traction, even in case of wintery conditions on the road. The charging of the traction battery is based on the IMC concept, i.e. it is fully charged during the operation at a high charging power. The bus can be operated up to 7 kilometres in the battery mode. 

## Smart Mobility, Connectivity and IOT – Solutions from Germany



Held on the 25th of October, the event, organised by the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany Kuala Lumpur and Malaysian-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry, saw industry leaders and government agencies come together to discuss the future of mobility in Malaysia and the region.

Talking about the effects of urbanisation, SPAD's representative highlighted the measures taken by the government to make public transport more accessible to everyone. Citing an urbanisation rate of about 75 percent and an estimated 10 million people living in the Klang Valley by 2020, the government's effort are to ensure that there is sufficient and easily accessible public transport. Among the many factors impacting the need for public transport is the rising cost of property in the city core, forcing many to live on the outskirts and commuting to work. To address these issues, the government agency is utilising modern technology.

One such tool is SPAD's Performance Monitoring Hub System (PMHS) aims to improve the public transportation's reliability, journey time, comfort, convenience, accessibility and connectivity. Part of the effort needed is to have the ability to monitor and track public transport performance beginning with stage bus routes in the Greater Kuala Lumpur / Klang Valley. The automated approach allows SPAD to have real time information for measurement, planning, (assisting) investigations, as well as introducing corrective and improvement actions. Furthermore, commuters can benefit from the availability of journey information and operators that lack their own system can view their fleet operations.

Apart from the reduction of local pollution, there are surprisingly few mobility e-concepts that look at our transport systems as a whole entity which are part of our life within society and space. In the framework of the ICT-EM III project funded by the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Energy, the ACM consortium is developing an emission-free e-mobility system for cities. The aim is to make electric mobility competitive and easy to implement. To this end, a small electrically powered lightweight category L7E vehicle equipped with intelligent software and hardware as well as a low-voltage battery swapping system are constructed and prepared for the pilot phase.

During a workshop, titled "Concepts for Smart Mobility Solutions – On the Look-out for Smart Solutions" conference participants were given the opportunity to become planners for the implementation of e-mobility solutions. Ranging from e-scooters to e-trucks, vehicles were assessed on the viability of implementation in Malaysia. Groups presented their views, whereby a common thread emerged: technology for e-mobility may be available and ready to be implemented, however, current legislation and mindset of users of transport systems may hinder a swift and effective deployment. Among the issues identified was the fact that infrastructure may not be suitable and a significant effort would have to be made to get ready for e-mobility. ■



Mitsubishi Fuso Truck and Bus Corporation, a leading commercial vehicle manufacturer under the umbrella of Daimler Trucks Asia (DTA), opens its new Quality Management Facility with a ceremony held at MFTBC's Kawasaki plant.

With an overall investment of 14 Oku JPY in the new DTA QM facility, new laboratories and systems that aim to increase overall customer satisfaction by reducing product downtime and ensuring product reliability have been introduced. The department now features an Integrated Command and

Control (ICCON) room, measurement lab, materials lab, and an integrated parts investigation center. With the new facility, DTA QM has consolidated all its functions previously located in different parts of the plant, boosting efficiency and communication within the department.

Marc Llistosella, President and CEO of MFTBC and Head of Daimler Trucks Asia: "To be a leader in our business; ensuring top-notch quality of our products at all times is indisputable. Our brand new Quality Management Facility is therefore not only a pledge to our customers to meet highest standards, but also brings forward our ambition to set a new benchmark in quality for the commercial vehicle industry to follow."

The ICCON room facilitates decision making by processing big data for advanced analytics that will allow early failure detection in production processes and products in the market. Additionally, MFTBC has started to interconnect all new Super Great trucks launched in May this year with its "Truckconnect" service, providing real-

time data of vehicles to customers and HQ. This allows DTA QM to monitor the vital stats of trucks at all times and to proactively advice on potential issues by using algorithms.

A material lab for examination of product-materials as well as a measurement lab for analyzing parts dimensions, feature state of the art instruments improving problem detection and solving speed. Ensuring a controlled environment for highest measurement precision, all labs are installed with temperature, humidity and vibration sensors that automatically factor in any deviations.

### The Measurement Lab

In addition, DTA QM has upgraded its entire office area, which is now based on a free-seating system that includes a live-feed indicating available seats, allowing employees to set up their workstation anywhere within the department depending on their daily business needs. The conducive work environment and innovative set-up is designed to boost motivation and encourages enhanced communication and interaction among employees. ■

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