India
Has ambitious plans

In little more than a month, the sixth edition of Busworld India will open its doors at the Bombay Convention & Exhibition Centre in Mumbai. It will be held from 28 to 30 April and is being organised by Busworld and its local partners in India, HK Fairs.

India’s Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi, came to power in May 2014. The new Government has already started taking measures to stimulate the economy by introducing reforms and repealing many obsolete laws. Current forecasts are that GDP will grow by 6.5% this year. It is quite possible that India could grow faster than China. The recent steep fall in oil prices has been an unexpected bonus helping to reduce inflation.

The new Government wants to reduce congestion and pollution by making cities more clean and green. Its ambitious plans include the creation of 100 smart cities which will provide reliable utility services, sanitation, drainage, energy efficiency and comfortable transport systems.

Because the smart cities will be built from scratch, they are likely to have much wider main roads that will lend themselves ideally to Bus Rapid Transit systems. These are much less expensive to install, mile for mile, than metro and other rail-based transport.

Currently, there are only a few BRT systems in India. They have not been wholly successful, partly because they are compromises and have proved highly unpopular with other road users. BRT systems work best when they have sufficient space, as proved by the leading systems in Europe and South America.

One recent development has been the introduction of South American style Bus Rapid Transit vehicles, which have high floors and serve high platforms, so that passengers can quickly and easily enter and depart on the level. It also makes BRT systems easily accessible for passengers in wheelchairs or with disabilities.

At the end of 2013, there were estimated to be around 1,750,000 buses and coaches in circulation in India. For a population estimated at almost 1.25 billion, that works out at less than one bus for every 700 people. The numbers of cars in circulation have been rising but are estimated to be around only 20 per 1,000 inhabitants. Therefore logic suggests that there must be a substantial increase in demand for public transport.

In the last fifteen years or so, Indian manufacturers have made great strides in the design and development of more attractive city buses. They are almost wholly diesel powered, and, while floor heights have come down, there are very few vehicles where a large part of the floor is only one step above the ground. In many cases, the infrastructure is not suitable for low floor vehicles, though that should not be an excuse when planning the new smart cities.
Despite the need to move large numbers of people, high-capacity articulated buses are few and far between. Generally, in India, they are known as banana buses or bendy buses. The largest manufacturer of articulation systems, including turntables and bellows, is Germany’s Hübner. Their Indian subsidiary will be participating in Busworld India, and that is encouraging. It indicates that there is a greater place for articulated buses in the sub-continent.

Hybrid buses have not really progressed beyond the prototype and pre-production stage. They are much more expensive than standard diesel buses, and the payback period has become longer, because of the falling price of oil.

There are a small number of all-electric buses, but, again, initial price is a major obstacle. The Government would like to see at least six million electric vehicles, of all kinds, on India’s roads by 2020. That is highly ambitious and will only happen if there are Government incentives and subsidies for makers and buyers of electric vehicles, and, for that matter, hybrid buses.

Commuter and inter-city coach traffic has benefitted from the construction of new and improved highways. The technical specifications of coaches have advanced, with higher engine power, air suspension systems, power steering, and other features that enhance the ride and handling. Passenger comforts include reclining seats, air conditioning, better insulation, and, in some cases infotainment systems.

The poor relation is usually the country bus that connects villages to the nearest sizeable town. These vehicles invariably have high floors and full length luggage racks on the roof. They are quite frequently re-bodied to extend their working lives and often have the oldest and most polluting engines.

There is also a growing sector for specialised vehicles dedicated to school transport. This is a more recent, but very welcome, development in India. Most of these vehicles are small to medium size with simple front-engine layouts. Many are painted bright yellow with prominent school bus signage.

The Indian bus industry, both manufacturing and operating, have come a long way in the last few years, but still has further to travel. The industry still needs much of the latest Western technology, so Busworld India is an excellent opportunity to study the market and meet the players in it.

Three subsidiaries of the MG Group will be present at Busworld India. The Group was established in 1980 by Mr Mohan Kamat and is nowadays engaged in a wide range of activities. It first started manufacturing bus bodywork in 1996 and has become well established with a range of small and medium size bodies for a wide variety of applications. MG Automotives started in 1996, while ALMA Motors was established in 2004. Bodies are built in tubular steel with composite front and rear end assemblies. A wide range of standard and optional equipment is available including reclining seats, roof mounted luggage racks, and school bus packages.

MG Grey Engine is a specialised producer of automotive electronic equipment, including LED lighting, infotainment, intelligent transport systems and in-vehicle networking. The company sees increasing demand for these products in the Indian market, but also has global ambitions.
Busworld Academy Seminars

During Busworld India, Busworld Academy and its partner, IRU, (the International Road Transport Union), supported by the European Business and Technology Centre, will host one half day and one full day seminar.

The seminars are aimed at public and private transport providers; city, regional and national government authorities; knowledge centres, manufacturers and suppliers.

Entry to the seminars is free of charge and they will be held in Hall 2C of the Bombay Convention & Exhibition Centre. Delegates to the seminars will easily be able to visit Busworld India and the exhibitors.

The first seminar will start on 28 April at 14.00. The theme is Smart Policy and a Smart Technology for Smart City Mobility.

The seminar will be introduced by Mr Umberto De Pretto, Secretary General of IRU and Mr Vinod Dasari, President, ARAI (tbc). The moderator will be Mr Yves Mannaerts, President of the Passenger Transport Council of IRU.

The first paper will be presented by Dr Kulwant Singh of UN-HABITAT on sustainable urban mobility for smart cities. Mr Ahmit Bhatt of Embarq India will discuss urban mobility in urban India and Bus Rapid Transit. Mr Suni Kumar, President of the Travel Agents Association of India, will discuss technology innovation and private sector initiative to better serve customers and tourist destinations in India. Mr Oleg Kamberski of IRU will discuss a public-private partnership in policy making for safer and affordable mobility for all. These presentations will be followed by questions and conclusions.

The second seminar will start on 29 April at 10.00. The theme is “In the Footsteps of Prime Minister Mr Modi: Increasing mobility via cleaner, safer and effective bus and coach services”. With the Government seeking to pursue its goal of environmental protection, the CSE (Centre for Science and Environment) advised the Government to put one million buses on the roads in India. This initiative would reduce air pollution.

Following an introduction by Mr Jan Deman of the Busworld Academy, Mrs Anumita Roy Chowdhury, Executive Director of CSE, will discuss the need for one million buses. She will be followed by Mr Kartik Gopal of Mahindra, who will talk about the implementation of electro-mobility in India today. Mr Raf Ponnette of VITO will look at the "needs and consequences for the electricity supply in case of plug-in electro-mobility."

"The needs and added value of fuel cell buses, the hydrogen situation" will be presented by Mr Alok Goel of Ballard Power Systems. Mr François Barbier of TISSEO will present "The vision of the European network of cities and regions today." That will be followed by a panel discussion on modern combustion engines and alternative fuels, including electricity, hydrogen, CNG and LNG.

After lunch, the seminar will focus on safety and efficiency. Mr A A Badusha, a Deputy Director of ARAI, will present the "Bus Code and Bus Technologies for the Future". He will be followed by Mr Frederik Rösen, an expert on bus safety from the SP Technical Research Institute of Sweden. His paper is "Building and Design of Buses and Coaches, Keeping Fire Safety in Mind". That theme will be continued by Mr Kasturirangan Kannah, Chairman of FRAI who will talk about "Fire Prevention for Bus Interiors".

Mr Jelle Van Winckel, CEO of DTS, a Belgian consultancy, will talk about "How to Keep Drivers Alert on the Road". The final paper will be by Mr Dibyendu Sengupta, a transport sector specialist of EBTC. His subject will be "India–EU Collaboration on Clean Technologies".

The presentations will be followed by questions and answers and thereafter by conclusions.

For further information and to attend the seminar please go to the Busworld Academy website: http://academy.busworld.org/seminars

Japan joins Smart Move

At the beginning of February, the Japanese Government, through the Ministry of Environment, and the Nihon Bus Association, IRU’s Smart Move partner, launched the Smart Move campaign in Japan, making the doubling of the use of buses and coaches a formal policy objective.

Japanese bus and coach operators are showing their support by displaying posters promoting the campaign’s safe and green values to customers and the wider public. The IRU welcomed the Japanese Government’s milestone initiative to make the Smart Move and called on Governments worldwide, city authorities and the European Commission to follow the example given by Japan and to make doubling a formal policy objective which recognises the benefits of bus and coach travel.
Scania making rapid progress

It was as recently as July 2012 when Scania laid the foundation stone for a factory in Narasapura, near Bangalore, to assemble trucks and coaches for the Indian market. The company planned to build 1,000 intercity coaches per year within five years, including a facility to build coachwork.

The factory was inaugurated in November 2013. At that time, Martin Lundstedt, President and CEO of Scania, said: “Today marks the beginning of a new era for us in India, and it is our largest industrial footprint in Asia so far. We have also seen here the engineering and IT skills and we will make very good use of it in our products and production portfolio”.

Two years ago, at Busworld India, Scania launched the Metrolink coach range. The shortest was a 12-metre model on two axles, using a 9-litre engine. Two longer tri-axle models, at 13.7-metres and 14.5-metres used a larger 13-litre engine. The coachwork was designed by Scania and built by Gemilang in Malaysia, but volume production soon moved to the Bangalore factory.

Scania coaches are designed for the premium segment of the intercity coach market. Many vehicles are fitted with luxury features, including toilets, and are aimed at attracting business travellers.

Busworld Times

Busworld in Beijing in 2015

After several successful Busworld exhibitions in Shanghai, Busworld International found that the bus and coach exhibition market in China was becoming saturated.

After a thorough investigation of the Chinese bus and coach market, Busworld International came to the conclusion that the Busworld brand was still very strong and well respected in China. Since it is Busworld International’s goal to be the worldwide promoter of the bus and coach sector and sharing the industry’s knowledge internationally, the Board was determined not to leave the largest bus and coach market in the world.

After several visits to China, the solution became obvious. It was collaboration between exhibitions with each party playing a different role and having complementary strengths. Therefore Busworld International and Bus & Truck Expo are pleased to announce that Busworld China will partner Bus & Truck Expo during 11-13 May 2015 at the China National Convention Center in Beijing. This is a fabulous facility which was first used for the Olympics in 2008.

Bus & Truck Expo’s strengths are its strong roots in the Chinese exhibition industry, being supported by the Government and gathering all the important Chinese bus and coach manufacturers. They were also looking out for a partner to reinforce the bus and coach section of their exhibition.

Busworld International has a very strong international network of potential exhibitors, visitors and press relations. There is also Busworld Academy, with its worldwide knowledge platform dedicated to sustainability, safety and comfort aspects of the bus and coach industry. It will organise interesting seminars to give Bus & Truck Expo an extra dimension.

In joining their forces, the Boards of Busworld International and Bus & Truck Expo will take on the challenge of optimising the bus and coach industry in the world’s largest bus and coach country, China.

For more information about the exhibition, visit the Busworld website: www.busworld.org.
busworld

16–21 OCT 2015
KORTRIJK EUROPE
www.busworld.org
ACGL turn around

Once again, we welcome the Automobile Corporation of Goa Ltd to Busworld India. The company is one of the largest bus and coach bodybuilders in India, making a full range from small buses to full size city buses and coaches.

The company was originally founded in 1980 in Goa, a very small and picturesque state of India, with Tata Motors taking a substantial minority shareholding. Bodywork can be built in steel or aluminium. Although the latter is more expensive, it is totally resistant to corrosion and has a higher residual value.

Two years ago, at Busworld India, the Managing Director of ACGL said that the company had been turned round. It no longer held large stocks of chassis, but pre-built bodywork, ready to drop on to chassis in a just-in-time operation. Final connection of all the systems and preparation for delivery took only a few days. This proved very popular with customers who benefitted from rapid deliveries.

Millbrook visits Busworld

Around 40 miles north of London, in open countryside, there is the famous and very well equipped Millbrook Test Centre for cars, commercial and defence vehicles.

The facility covers an area of 285 hectares and includes more than 70km of test tracks, such as high speed circuits, various steep gradients, and different road surfaces to test suspensions and structures.

The most severe has 3,500 tonnes of hand laid granite blocks, at random heights, and is 1.5km long. A few hundred kilometres on this bone-jarring surface will quickly show up any defect in a vehicle’s design, and is equivalent to several years of normal on-road operation.

Millbrook was established more than 40 years ago and has been continuously and regularly updated and expanded.

It employs more than 400 skilled people and offers secure 24/7 operations for time-critical projects.

In addition to the test tracks, there are many indoor test facilities and rigs to measure all kinds of performance. There is strong current focus on emission measurement systems.

Transport for London uses Millbrook to test new buses on a circuit that simulates one of London’s busiest routes, measuring ride, handling, fuel economy and emissions.

Millbrook has worked on many projects in the bus and coach industry and is able to offer its unrivalled knowledge in the Indian market.

Maxion wheels into Busworld

Maxion Wheels, headquartered in the United States, is a truly global company which has been supplying high quality steel and aluminium wheels to vehicle manufacturers throughout the world. It owns many well known brands, including Kalyani Hayes Lemmerz in India who will be exhibiting at Busworld.

The company is a major supplier to the Indian commercial vehicle industry and benefits from Maxion’s global design, technology and production capabilities.

Check your VISA

If you are intending to visit Busworld India, please be sure to check as soon as you can whether you need to obtain a visa for your visit. They are normally valid from the date of issue by or on behalf of the Indian authorities which may be some time ahead of your planned visit.

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