Investment / Manufacture

**Fasching contemplating production in India**

Austria - Safety seat belt manufacturing specialist for the commercial vehicle industry worldwide, Fasching Salzburg GmbH of Salzburg, Austria has announced plans to set up a production facility in India.

At **Busworld India** 2016 in Bangalore, Harald Pessl, sales director and authorized officer for Fasching said that Fasching had been active on the Indian market for more than six years and during that time it had been monitoring closely the rules and regulations governing safety belts in the commercial vehicle industry. Pessl said it was now time to take a step forward and set up a production facility in India. This would enable the company to manufacture its safety belts to its high standards but at a more competitive price for the Indian commercial vehicle and military markets. “Our production facility should be implemented and completed by mid-2018, so allowing full production to start in the second half of 2018”, said Pessl.

Fasching aims to achieve its goals by partnering with an already identified but unnamed experienced local company and plans to form a joint venture to achieve its goals over the next 12 to 18 months.

Production / Management

**Daimler assumes management control of bus build operations to accelerate production**

**Oragadam** - To ramp up bus production in order to meet growing demand for its products in India, **Daimler India Commercial Vehicles Pvt Ltd (DICV)** in August assumed management control of the **Wrightbus** bus body production operations and supply chain in Oragadam, according to Jitesh Jain for DICV at **Busworld India** last month. While Wrightbus continues in its role in bus design, as Daimler has already a substantial supply chain in India, it seemed a logical step for Daimler to assume a closer management role, Jain explained.

2016 has been the bus operation’s ramp up year, explained Shina Satyapal, manager corporate communications at DICV. The company started with truck production in 2012 and recently passed the 50,000 total output mark (earlier this year it launched the next generation Bharat-Stage IV compliant 9t and 12t trucks), while output at its bus plant began with concept vehicles in 2015. Ms Satyapal said DICV has invested a substantial sum in its bus operations totalling INR 425 Crone (approx. EUR58m). The DICV bus division has a twofold strategy, Satyapal continued, with volume production under the BharatBenz name and top of the range products under the Mercedes-Benz name. Currently, it has three products - three vehicles at 9t gvw (school, staff and tourism). In the pipeline for 2017 introduction are 12t and 16t variants, announced Satyapal. Under the Mercedes-Benz logo it is offering its 2436SHD 16t variants, announced Satyapal. The highly visible yellow school bus uses the Wrightbus Aluminique body structure with R66 rollover strength and meets a 42 degree tilt angle in the tilt test, which more than complies with ARAI’s recommended tilt test angle of 28 degrees. In addition to the ABS, an electronic pressure sensor is used to monitor the air pressure in the brake chambers and the VOSS connectors minimise the leaking of air, thus leading to highly effective braking. Safety is further enhanced in the chassis design, which as a wide frame width, tubeless radial tyres, and front and rear anti-roll bars for improved cornering, stability and better handling. Additional safety features in include individual seat (lap) belts on the two person bench seats, the interior is made from fire retardant fabric and plastics, anti-slip vinyl floor and access is facilitated via a retractable lower step. There is an emergency exit rear door on the driver’s side as well as all windows offer an exit with the life hammer mounted on the vertical stranchons on each side. The driver’s area is fitted with a guard to prevent children accessing the driver’s area; a fire extinguisher and passenger announcement system.

On display at **Busworld India** 2016 in Bengaluru were two 9t gvw, 9.78m front-engine standard floor bus models – the Bharat-Benz School Bus and the Bharat-Benz Staff Bus. With previews of these models in June 2015 and sales having started in January, the company has already exceeded its targeted sales volume for the year, Satyapal stated.

Both models share the same drivetrain of a locally produced 4-cylinder 4-litre in-line inter-cooled and turbocharged engine (4D34) meeting either BS III or BS IV emission standards and rated at 170hp for the school variant and 140hp for the staff bus. Both models are fitted with ABS as standard.

The highly visible yellow school bus uses the Wrightbus Aluminique body structure with R66 rollover strength and meets a 42 degree tilt angle in the tilt test, which more than complies with ARAI’s recommended tilt test angle of 28 degrees. In addition to the ABS, an electronic pressure sensor is used to monitor the air pressure in the brake chambers and the VOSS connectors minimise the leaking of air, thus leading to highly effective braking. Safety is further enhanced in the chassis design, which as a wide frame width, tubeless radial tyres, and front and rear anti-roll bars for improved cornering, stability and better handling. Additional safety features in include individual seat (lap) belts on the two person bench seats, the interior is made from fire retardant fabric and plastics, anti-slip vinyl floor and access is facilitated via a retractable lower step. There is an emergency exit rear door on the driver’s side as well as all windows offer an exit with the life hammer mounted on the vertical stranchons on each side. The driver’s area is fitted with a guard to prevent children accessing the driver’s area; a fire extinguisher and passenger announcement system.

**Product**

**MG launches domestic versions of Mammoth**

**Zaheerabad** - The **MG Group** used **Busworld India** 2016 in Bangalore last month to announce derivations of its Mammoth coach for the domestic market.

The Mammoth premium luxury coach, which is built on a front-engine MAN CLA bus chassis supplied from the truck and bus chassis plant of **MAN Trucks India Pvt Ltd** in Pune, was on display in two versions for the domestic market; a double bunk sleeper (30 places with aisle offset and 1+2 configuration) and a tourism coach with reclining seats (44 seats in 2+2 configuration). Each seat comes with USB charging port and above in the luggage rack there is fitted a reading lamp and air conditioning control. The MG Group reminded its audience at the show that Mammoth had been designed with the biggest focus on safety and features no fewer than eight emergency exits, including the ‘EM – Secure’ Rear Emergency Exit, which is patented by MG: This offers an escape route through the rear of the coach via a top-hinged rear panel that opens upwards and using steps that fold down.

The company said that it had managed to export 12 units since its launch at **Busworld India** 2015 held in Mumbai in March of that year with the majority being delivered to customers in Ethiopia.

Anil Kamat, managing director, MG Group, explained the company’s plans for the Indian market, he said: “Celebrating our journey of 20 years in the bus building industry, the launch...
India - The whole of India is moving to BS IV (Euro 4) in April 2017 and in just three years’ time, India is proposing to by-pass or skip adopting BS V (Euro 5). The government regulations and move directly to BS VI (Euro 6) by April 2020, stated Chandramoorthy Kailasam, head of global commercial vehicles research for Frost & Sullivan in a presentation at Busworld India in Bengaluru last month. Kailasam said that the Indian government was taking huge steps towards enforcing cleaner emissions by introducing such low emission norms.

He said that the Nitin Jayaram Gadkari, Minister for Road Transport and Highways and Shipping had already instructed all state transport undertakings to make their fleets, comprising some 1 lakh (1,700,000) buses, either Euro VI or bio-fuel compliant by April 1, 2020. Kailasam has also stated that Euro VI fuel would be made available in metro cities much earlier than the deadline. By adopted the Bus Body (fabrication) Code and from trucks and buses would, he said drop by 50% and 89%, respectively from BS IV norms – the latter comes into effect across the whole of India on April 1, 2017. A concern constains remains that fuel prices will increase due to the effective operation of BS VI vehicles, but Kailasam stated that oil marketing companies were to compensate the industry in moving to BS VI. This will, however, said Kailasam, have a profound and costly impact, not just on Indian manufacturers, but also on international manufacturers setting up plants in India.

Kailasam stated that in addition to legislation there were a number of key trends driving the bus market in India, namely Smart cities, rising income levels, safety and low cost manufacturing. He said there were 100 Smart cities in India, where action plans were being undertaken to address key issues for modern city dwelling and the three necessary, adequate water supply, sanitation and electricity, while the fourth is efficient and sustainable mass mobility.

Kailasam stated that the Indian customer was becoming a little more sophisticated because of higher levels of disposable income and as such became more open to paying for safety features as well as comfort. The average Indian bus customer has started to ask for more safety features, he stated, especially in the luxury intercity bus segment where there have been some well publicized incidents involving fires resulting in fatalities. In addition to customer expectations, new legislation to improve safety standards has and will be introduced in the coming years to improve safety standards; this started with the Bus Body (fabrication) Code and compulsory ABS’ implementation from April, 2016. The Bus Body Code has seen the bus body building industry, which accounts for more than 90% of all buses and coaches built using this method (i.e. body on chassis), become reshaped, said Kailasam. 20% of new buses are now ABS fitted, however, the regulation has led to a fourfold (4X) increase in fully built vehicles, he added.

In the next two to five years, Frost & Sullivan believes that the domestic bus market will be vast improving safety both active and passive, of which will be market driven and some will result from legislation such as seat belts, airbags and video safety devices.

The government currently does not have a fully implemented policy for transportation, stated Kailasam; instead it has one for review. This includes a proposed policy for the scrapping of old vehicles, which, if and when implemented, is expected to increase demand across all bus segments - but more so for light buses because they tend to be much older (20 years sometimes) rather than the medium and heavy duty, which tend to be much newer.

India, Kailasam continued, is forming a big manufacturing hub for buses: “All manufacturers will become part of the ‘Make in India’ programme for export. Apart from Ashok Leyland and Tata Motors, there are other manufacturers in India, like Volvo, in the high end coach and bus segment but also now entering the volume / value segment with its UD brand. All overseas bus producers are looking at India as a production hub for export to regions such as Asia Pacific, Africa, Latin America and Middle East and the US and the OEMs customer needs and road conditions as in India.”

**Bus and coach market forecast to grow steadily over next five years**

The bus and coach market has fluctuated considerably over the last few years, but over the next four to five years, it is expected to see steady growth, stated Kailasam. The year 2015/2016 saw steady growth due to the stronger economy, new bus norms that have been introduced and fleet operators looking to buy new technology buses with low fuel costs. In 2015/2016, the market for medium and heavy-duty bus and coach to grow from 49,400 units in 2015/16 to 56,000 in 2016-17, this increase is largely due to the pre-buying before mandated BS IV in April 2017. As a consequence, the market for BS VI (Euro 6), however, is estimated to be up to 51,500 units, before regaining momentum for continuous growth over the following three years. In 2018-19, fleet expansion, vehicle scrappage incentives, and a move to vehicles offering better passenger comfort and access to luxury will drive the market to around 59,000 units. In the next two years, the bus and coach market is forecast to grow to 70,000 in 2019/20 and 67,500 units in 2020/21 as a result of improved road infrastructure and rising demand for more reliable products with good fuel efficiency. Production is also expected to grow due to rising exports over the next five years.
MG Group plans entry into the low floor airport bus sector

Telangana - The MG Group of Telangana, India used Busworld India 2016 to announce its move into a new market segment with the unveiling of a 12m low floor integral airport bus.

Called Columbus, the bus it built to a monocoque design with front and rear chassis modules. The front module features a ZF front portal axle, while the rear module included a ZF standard drive axle with ZF’s fully-automatic EcoLife transmission and Cummins 5.9-litre ISC engine. Lailt Waankhede, consultant – vehicle integration at the MG Group, explained that the use of front and rear modules, in the event of damage, allows them to be replaced if necessary without affecting the structural integrity of the whole vehicle. The vehicle has a long wheelbase of more than six metres (6m) enabling a low floor virtually throughout the bus with a small step over the rear axle. The passenger area has been designed to offer swift entry and exit with just eight seats around the wheel arches, with five passenger doors – three on the driver’s off side consisting of a side plug door at the front, and two double doors between the wheelbase and then two more double swing-out doors opposite on the driver’s side. The interior layout permits it to accommodate up to 70 passengers (ie 8 seated on the driver’s side. The interior layout permits it to accommodate up to 70 passengers (ie 8 seated

In addition it has a new driver binnacle with digital display, developed and supplied by the MG Group’s bus electronics solutions, MG Grey Engine LLP.

Anil Karnat, managing director of MG Group, said: “Over the past two decades, we at MG Group have played a significant role in the Indian bus building landscape, recognizing customer needs and introducing game-changing and innovative products and solutions for the bus and coach industry. The Columbus, currently diesel powered, is envisioned to be offered with CNG as well as electric drive lines in the short term. In India, the air passenger traffic has been increasing at approximately 20% year-on-year and hence the demand for tarmac coaches (apron transfer buses) is also increasing. The total park volume is currently 800 units, being a highly niche segment.”

The MG Group said: “A good tarmac coach further enhances the image of the airline. The Indian market currently demands about 50 coaches per year, which is expected to grow as aged tarmac coach fleets are also due for replacement. Leading airlines have also placed record order sizes for aircrafts, which in turn, will increase the demand for tarmac coaches. Tier-2 City Airports under focus will also boost the demand of tarmac coaches.

Keeping in mind the urgent need for spacious and high technology coaches by the airline industry, the Columbus has been positioned as a revolutionizing product and a technology demonstrator. The bus is to be initially introduced for the export markets and is to use the Busworld India 2016 platform to take critical feedback from Indian customers with a goal to introduce it in the domestic market in the near future.”

MAN India ready for BS IV emission regulations

Pune - With ten year anniversary celebrations of MAN’s presence in India at this month’s Bauma Conexpo India 2016 in Delhi, Joerg Mommertz, chairman and managing director of MAN Truck & Bus India Pvt Ltd of Pithampur, Pune, was upbeat about prospects and of increasing sales in India with new vehicle configurations to offer the markets:

Speaking with Truck & Bus Builder at Busworld India 2016 in Bengaluru, Mommertz said that MAN India’s plan was to replace its current off-road product for the mining sector in 6x4 and 8x4 configuration to offer lighter weight products in the form of a 6x2 model with lift-able axle and an 8x2 model with lift-able axle for the haulage business. Both would be offered in tractor and rigid truck specifications – Mommertz said that there were substantial volumes in both truck configurations and this presented a good opportunity on the Indian domestic market as well as abroad.

Output (all vehicles) this year would be around 3,200 units, said Mommertz, with an equal split in sales of its CLA truck to the domestic market and for export; although in a few years’ time, his aim was to match this total output with sales of some 3,000 units to the domestic market alone.

MAN India has made much progress in recent years: Four years ago, D0836 engine production was localized and today, local content exceeds 80%. As well as the engine, it makes axles and

The 6.7-litre D0836 common rail BS III engine is quieter but with more powerful outputs of 220hp to 280hp.

Another recent development is the introduction of common rail engine technology with its BS III engine in place of unit injectors. This 6 cylinder, 6.7-litre D0836 common rail BS III engine is quieter but with more powerful outputs of 220hp to 280hp.

In the future, Mommertz said that MAN India has plans to replace its current off-road product for the mining sector in 6x4 and 8x4 configuration to offer lighter weight products in the form of a 6x2 model with lift-able axle and an 8x2 model with lift-able axle for the haulage business. Both would be offered in tractor and rigid truck specifications – Mommertz said that there were substantial volumes in both truck configurations and this presented a good opportunity on the Indian domestic market as well as abroad.

Output (all vehicles) this year would be around 3,200 units, said Mommertz, with an equal split in sales of its CLA truck to the domestic market and for export; although in a few years’ time, his aim was to match this total output with sales of some 3,000 units to the domestic market alone.

MAN India has made much progress in recent years: Four years ago, D0836 engine production was localized and today, local content exceeds 80%. As well as the engine, it makes axles and
12m Volvo 9400 coach now ready for BS IV norms

Bangalore - Volvo Buses of Gothenburg, Sweden, used Busworld India 2016 in Bengaluru to unveil its new intercity coach range compliant with BS IV emission norms, which come into force in India in April 2017.

The new Volvo 9400 range, which is built in India at its modern facility in Hosakote, Bangalore, included the Volvo 9400 12m coach with the new BSIV 7.7-litre (D8C) 330hp engine, sourced from its global medium-duty engine plant in Pithampur, India, which is operated by Volvo Eicher Commercial Vehicle Pvt Ltd (VECV) - its joint venture company with Eicher Motors. The other model on the stand was the its best-selling Volvo 9400, 13.8m multi-axle or 3-axle coach now offered with a more powerful engine, being upgraded from 9-litres to 11-litres.

Volvo Bus also used the show to officially unveil its BS IV compliant 7.7-litre (D8C) 330hp electronically controlled engine, which is a 6-cylinder in-line unit with turbocharging. Volvo Buses has now been in India for 15 years said Akash Passey, senior vice president – Business Region International, Volvo Bus Corporation at the show. He said the bus transport business and the bus manufacturing industry had undergone a sea change since 2001, the year the company had started in India. He pointed out that Volvo has pursued a strategy of maximising its local content and that the bus body in all Volvo buses in India was now 100 per cent localised. In addition it was now building buses in India for the European market; he said that its low-entry city bus, the Volvo 8400 fitted with a Euro VI compliant driveline, built in India had been sold and delivered to operators in Spain and in France.

Volvo Bus said that the new coach is to be manufactured at Volvo Buses’ facility near Hosakote, Bangalore.

Volvo stated that it has sold more than 6000 buses in India, which includes 4,500 coaches and some 1,500 city buses.