

MG GROUP turns show-stopper again at Busworld

Unveils 'Columbus' tarmac and 'Mammoth' sleeper coaches

By Preetham Sri Krishna Vignesh



Mr. R.V. Deshpande, Minister for Large and Medium Scale Industries, Infrastructure Development, Government of Karnataka, inaugurating the MG Group pavilion in the presence of Mr. Mohan V. Kamat, Founder & Chairman, Mr. Anil M. Kamat, Managing Director, Mr. Prakash Kalbag, Executive Director, MG Group, and Mr. Joerg Mommeritz, Chairman & MD, MAN Trucks India Pvt. Ltd., and other dignitaries

The MG Group, a prominent show-stopper at the past few editions of Busworld India, struck again with its Made-in-India 'Columbus' airport tarmac coach and a stunning sleeper version of the Mammoth at this year's show. The products were unveiled by Mr. R. V. Deshpande, Minister for Large and Medium Scale Industries, Infrastructure Development, Government of Karnataka, in the presence of Mr. Mohan V. Kamat, Founder & Chairman, Mr. Anil M. Kamat, Managing Director, Mr. Prakash Kalbag, Executive Director, MG Group, and Mr. Joerg Mommeritz, Chairman & MD, MAN Trucks India Pvt. Ltd. The company also marked its 20 years of bus manufacturing and a major milestone of crossing 100,000 buses, making it one of the largest bus builders in India.

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Mr. Anil M. Kamat and Mr. Gurish Prabhu, DGM - Product Development, MG Group, with the Columbus tarmac coach

approximately 20 per cent year-on-year and hence the demand for tarmac coaches is also expanding. The total park volume is currently 800 coaches, being a highly niche segment, but that didn't stop MG from making a dedicated coach for the segment, a classy effort in itself.

On the unveiling of Columbus, Mr. Anil Kamat said: "Over the past two decades, we at the 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 & coach industry. The coach will be initially introduced for export markets and we will use the Busworld 2016 platform to take critical feedback from prospective Indian customers with a goal to introduce it in the domestic market in the near future."

The Indian market currently demands about 50 tarmac coaches annually, which is expected to grow as aged tarmac coach fleets are also due for replacement. Leading airlines have also placed record orders for aircrafts, which in turn, will increase the demand for tarmac coaches, while Tier-2 city airports under focus will also boost the demand for these vehicles. Keeping in mind the need for spacious & high technology coaches by the airline industry, the Columbus has been positioned as a revolutionizing product and a technology demonstrator.

Body and vehicle integration

With its smartly designed cabin space, the coach offered a great working experience for drivers as well as passengers. With a passenger entry floor



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height at as low as 290 mm (after kneeling), it makes the coach a step-less entry or a walk-away bus. The coach offers swift passenger entry and exit by having five passenger doors in the saloon, three on the left and two on the right hand side. With the tightening bus body code and emission norms, the *Columbus* has been designed and developed keeping all the upcoming norms in place, including the Airport Regulations Manual.

MG never settles for anything less than the best available when it comes to sourcing the right components. The driveline is sourced from top aggregate makers Cummins and ZF, while the vehicle integration has been entirely done in-house at MG. The roof is a fully composite single piece structure making it light and completely leak-proof and interiors are nothing less than top notch, with the beautifully-lit LEDs making it a product of global standard. The 12 metre-long coach can accommodate 70 passengers (8 seated and 62 standees). Equipped with the latest technologies such as electronically-control air suspension, anti-lock brake system and CAN bus systems, the coach fully complies with the Airport Handling Manual regulations.

The best part is that the '*Columbus*', currently diesel-powered, is proposed to be offered in CNG as well as electric versions in the short term. It would be truly outstanding if MG could pull it off because each powertrain is totally different involving a host of complexities and would require a very high degree of understanding and know-how.

Marmoth – the star attraction

MG had premiered the *Marmoth* premium front-engine luxury coach at last year's Busworld in Mumbai, mainly for export mar-

kets and this time around, the company launched its flagship premium luxury coach for the Indian market in its seater and sleeper variants.

Commenting on the launch of the *Marmoth*, Mr. Ka-mat stated: "Celebrating our journey of 20 years in the bus building industry, the launch of '*Marmoth*' will enhance our position in the market. We are launching the '*Marmoth*' in the domestic market in both seater and sleeper variants. With this new future-ready product, the MG Group is set to redefine luxury travel in India, and I am convinced that we're setting new benchmarks for the entire industry."

Built on the state-of-the-art MAN chassis, and certified by



MAN Germany, the *Marmoth* has been fully designed and developed by the MG Group. The vehicle has been built with its focus as being one of the safest and most comfortable premium luxury coaches in India and is not just 'Made in India' but also 'built to international standards'.

Sleeper buses are running in India for more than a decade and given their demand, there are companies who have been manufacturing sleepers for quite a long time. That said, looking at the meticulous effort and the attention to detail given by MG in its *Marmoth* sleeper, one could say it surpasses the quality, look and finish of the sleepers available in the market by quite a distance.

"We always try and look for places where things can go wrong, especially in the sealant joints and body panel joints, but looking at the feedback received here at the show, we are very happy with the result. Even the interior

fabrics are top-notch and have been chosen to match the exterior paint shades. With a total of eight emergency exits, the bus also has various safety measures such as no sharp corners, seat belts for every passenger and the 'EM – Secure' Rear Emergency Exit, which is patented by MG as a world's first", he added.

Just a walk through around and inside the sleeper indicates they have been designed and manufactured with utmost caution. Couple of cases to elaborate the point – the AC ducting is a very tricky aspect when it comes to sleepers. The AC air flow is not quite uniform across the bus and in order to have better flow, the duct size needs to be bigger which further reduces the headroom leading to a compromised on convenience. But in the *Marmoth*, the ducts



are nicely tucked inside the berths and only flow controls are visible on the outside, without compromising on space and passenger comfort. The same could be said about the style and placing of the interior lights, where no sharp edges or corners could be seen and felt, reflecting the way the product has been crafted to perfection.

"Our *Marmoth* coaches will be available in four variants in the market and will be priced between Rs. 60 lakhs and Rs. 65 lakhs depending on the variant and technical specifications", revealed the MD.

MAN CLA 16.280 chassis

The chassis from MAN, Europe's leading OEM commercial vehicle manufacturer, is rugged and robust, catering aptly to the Indian operating conditions with increased driving safety, while significantly reducing body movements for best ride comforts. The chassis has been upgraded to a power of 280 hp and 1100 Nm torque from the earlier 220 hp and 800 Nm torque levels,



making the *Marmoth* the highest-powered front engine coach in India. The chassis is suspended pneumatically all around in both the seater and sleeper versions of the coach.

With its new path-breaking products, MG Group continues to march towards its vision to be the largest bus builder in the country. The company has evolved over the years to become one of the largest and most vertically integrated bus builders in India, right from design and development to manufacturing. With its Group companies, namely, West & Deccan providing complete design & engineering services, MG Composites manufacturing fibre glass parts, MG Grey Engine making bus wiring harnesses, LED destination boards and its patented products such as backlit destination boards and public address systems and Alcom Products which produces seats and various sub-assemblies, MG Group can be comfortably referred to as a true bus and coach manufacturer, having matured in a big way from being just a body builder to a complete vehicle integrator.