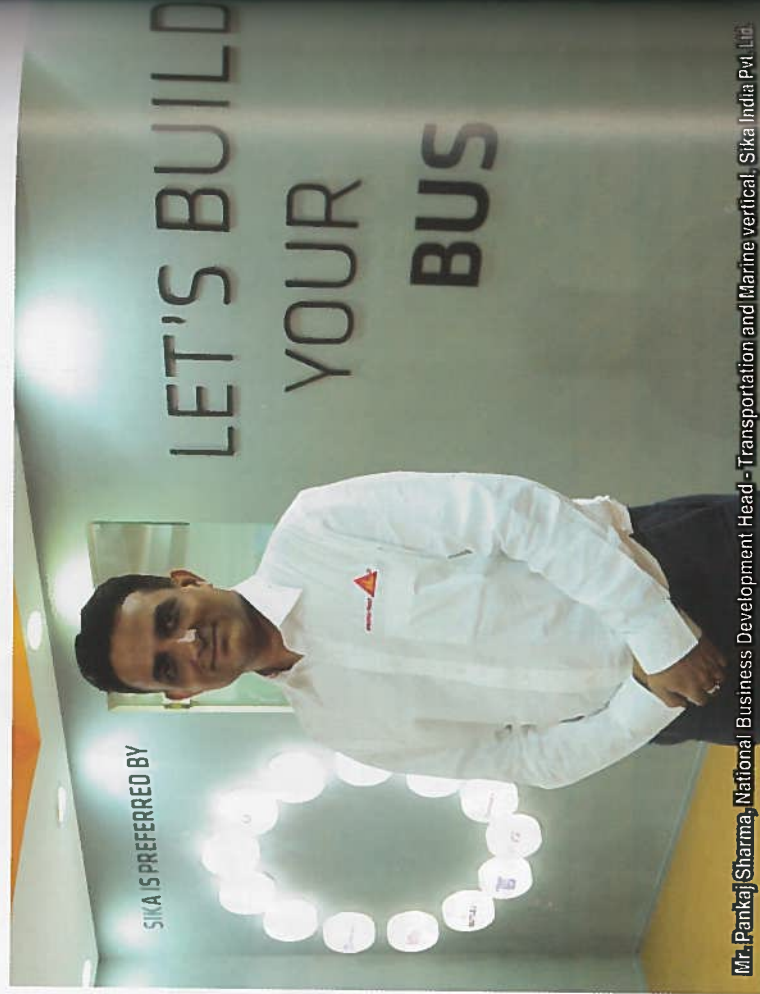


SIKA launches low-density adhesives and sealants for significant weight reduction

By Preetham Sri Krishna Vignesh

Sika AG, a speciality chemical company headquartered in Baar, Switzerland, is the market leader in Adhesives & Sealants Technology for the global bus markets, manufacturing and supplying products for bonding, sealing, damping, reinforcing and protecting in buses and coaches, apart from other applications. Sika has developed numerous products, specifically for the bus industry.



Mr. Pankaj Sharma, National Business Development Head - Transportation and Marine vertical, Sika India Pvt. Ltd.

We spoke to Mr. Pankaj Sharma, National Business Development Head - Transportation and Marine vertical, Sika India Pvt. Ltd., to learn about the company's new products and innovations presented at Busworld India.

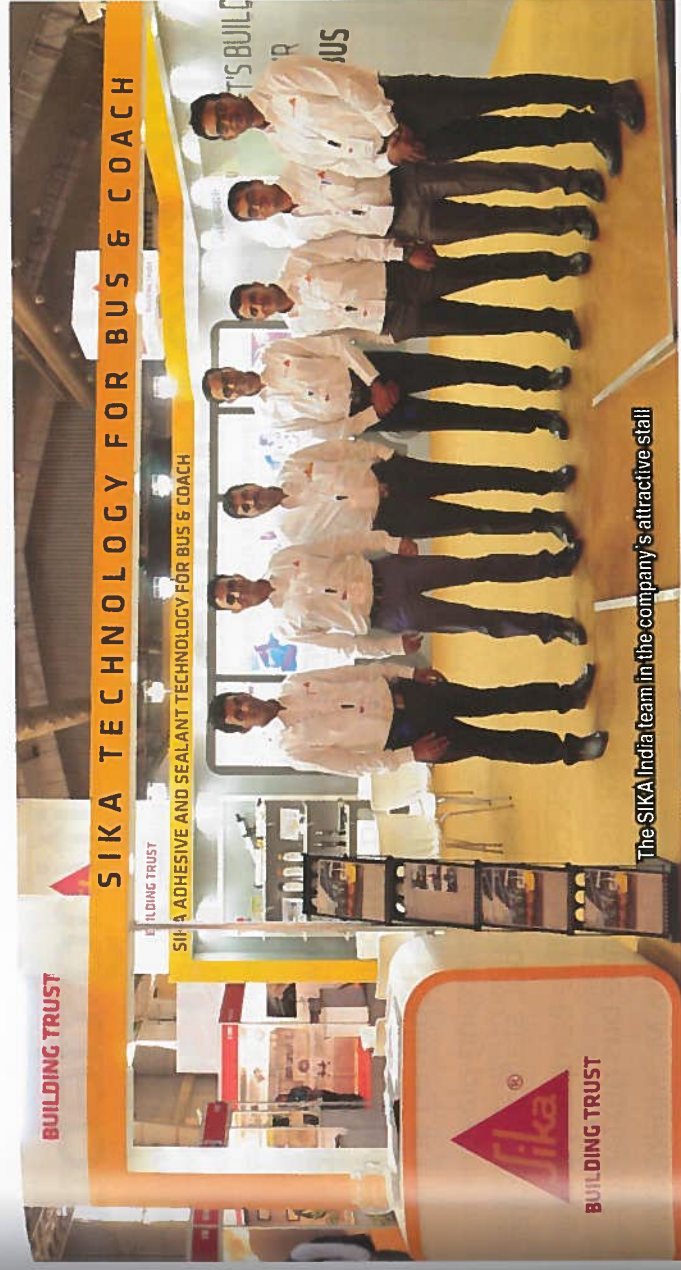
Excerpts:

What is Sika trying to communicate to customers at Busworld this year?

We at Sika, are the global leader in adhesive and sealants in the transportation sector and have been in this business for over 25 years. We partner with most of the leading bus and coach manufacturers throughout the globe and also in India. We have products for sealing, bonding, damping, reinforcing and protecting and offer customised solutions to all our customers specific to the bus industry. We also have tailor-made bonding solutions for substrates like engineered plastics, aluminium alloy, laminated & toughened glass, painted or primed metal, etc., which have been very



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The Sika India team in the company's attractive stall

specifically developed keeping in mind the end customers' application requirements.

Are you showcasing any new solutions here at the fair?

We see hybrid and electric buses being well accepted across the world and foresee these buses to see an exponential growth in sales in the near future. Weight reduction is critical for these buses and any amount of light-weighting will have a significant effect in improving their performance. Keeping in mind this specific application, we have developed low-density adhesives and sealants for such buses which could help save as much as 25 to 30 per cent in weight as compared to the other products available in the market.

How do you develop new compounds while working on customised solutions?

We work very closely with customers and ensure they get the right product for every application. Say, for example, direct glazing application where front laminated glass is to be bonded; we first understand customers' application area & check the adhesion on their actual substrates at our technical centre. Based on the adhesion test results suitable pre-treatment products along with adhesive from Sika's product range are recommended.

How important are your products for manufacturers and bus body builders to adhere to the Bus Body Code?

The implementation of bus code will provide safety and comfort to passengers. I will answer this question by relating it to the passenger car industry where safety guidelines are strictly implemented. We can hardly find a car with just rubber beading on the front windshield; all of them are bonded with adhesive because of strict safety regulations. Similarly, we have solutions for the bus windshield which are essential from a safety

perspective, making the bus a lot safer, in line with the requirements of the Bus Body Code. With Sika's elastic structural bonding product which is Sikaflex range the windshield becomes a part of the structure adding strength and integrity to the body.

We have new innovative products which are targeting fire standards in line with the new bus code.

But we see more of rubber beading even in high-end coaches nowadays? How do you plan to increase your market penetration?

The Indian conditions are very unique and are very challenging. Due to the varying weathering conditions & road conditions stresses generated on the bond line is accommodated by our adhesive. However, unorganised bus body builders tend to go for solutions like rubber beading as they are a cheaper option.

We have direct glazing products that can be applied with shortest SDAT (Safe Drive Away Time), which means in case of the bus front windshield is replaced than the bus can be driven to work in just 120 minutes. We are promoting these solutions and are also training customers on the same.

What are your future plans for the Indian market?

Sika believes in being a total solution provider. We study the different applications and work closely with our customers. We have a range of adhesives and sealants for interiors and exteriors sealing, direct glazing & panel bonding applications. We have 1 C PU fire-retardant sealants. We also offer solutions for the railway segment and are in touch with railway coach manufacturing units and metro rail manufacturers like Bombardier and Alstom where our products find specific application.