

busworld newsletter

Number 20 - march 2007

This Busworld newsletter appears in february, march, august, october and december (5/year) - Afgiftekantoor 8900 Ieper 1 - P409506
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SECOND BUSWORLD INDIA

The second edition of Busworld India was much larger than the first. It was held from 30 January to 1 February in the Bombay Exhibition Centre at Goregaon in the northern suburbs of the sprawling city of Mumbai.

The first edition had been held two years previously in New Delhi, but Mumbai is the financial and commercial capital of India and that probably helped to attract a much larger number of visitors, over 4,500 across the three day event. The warm, sunny, weather was most welcome to those who had travelled from Europe.

Although most of the visitors came from India, Busworld's local partner, Inter Ads, was delighted that people came from more than 25 other countries, as far afield as Australia, China, Hong Kong, Brazil, Nigeria, United States and several parts of Europe.

That is proof not only of the increasing strength of the Busworld brand in global markets, but also the rising importance of India. The economy is strong and transport has moved up the public agenda. Levels of car ownership are still low by Western standards, but there are many more people with disposable incomes. This is fuelling demand for commuter and inter-city travel. There is also the Indian custom of visiting one's home region at least once a year. The rapidly expanding new highway network is making that much more feasible for many people.

The timing of Busworld India was perfect, because one can feel all sorts of changes in the bus and coach industry. It is not before



The prominent sign at the entrance.

time, but there were many positive signs that India is on a roll and that manufacturers and suppliers are making up for the long period during which design and development stagnated. India is completely self-sufficient in the manufacture of buses and coaches, and all the

parts that go into them. Therefore, exhibitors could broadly be grouped into three categories, namely vehicle manufacturers, Indian suppliers of components and services, and suppliers from other countries who felt that it was time to be coming into the Indian market. As one



The high deck integral coach launched by Cerita.



One of many boards promoting Busworld India.

German exhibitor said: "We had to take a decision about India. If we had left it another two years, it might have been too late to come in."

There are all shapes and sizes of buses on the roads of India, and that was reflected in the exhibition. Volvo has taken a strong position in the intercity coach sector and unveiled the third generation of the B7R that has proved so popular with

Indian operators and passengers. The latest version has the D7E Euro 3 common rail direct injection engine, developing 290bhp. The well-equipped coach had air conditioning, air suspension, ABS, EBS, a facility to lift and lower the suspension, and a 600 litre fuel tank, because the price of fuel differs from state to state within India. Volvo has announced plans to enter into a joint venture with the Azad Group, taking

70%, and will push bodybuilding capacity up to 1,000 units per annum. These will be mainly for the Indian market, but the partners hope to export some of their output to neighbouring countries.

More than 99% of city buses in India have front-mounted engines, and most have their floor at least three steps above the ground. Volvo's second exhibit, a B7RLE city bus,



The low entry Volvo B7RLE, bodied in India.



A general view of the busy stands.

had the floor in the front part of the vehicle only one step above the ground, with space for a passenger in a wheelchair opposite the second door. It also had a large one-piece windscreen, bonded glazing and air conditioning, all to European standards. The very modern concept attracted a constant stream of visitors.

Volvo has already sold this type of bus to Bangalore and Pune and believes that there is a market for higher quality public transport for employees in India's emerging new industries and for commuters in cities. The show models had power points where passengers could plug in lap top computers. In January 2001, JCBL of Chandigarh and the Xiamen King Long United Automotive Co of China signed a joint venture to build luxury coaches in India. They were launched under the brand, Cerita, which, according to the new company means love and passion in Spanish. The JC12HD was a completely new integral coach with a rear-mounted Cummins engines. It looked quite a lot higher than the Volvo intercity coach, but, according to the designer, still complied with India's axle weight limits. There was a strong King Long influence internally and externally and production is due to start this year. The second exhibit was a lower height integral midcoach, with similar clean styling to its larger brother.

Cerita believes that there will be demand for CNG as a fuel in intercity



coaches on shorter interurban routes, because gas is much less expensive than diesel. The tanks can be accommodated under the floor, taking up some of the luggage area, but that should not be a problem on shorter routes.

Ruby Bus is one of the largest independent bodybuilders in India, making a wide range of products. Many of their city buses were to be seen outside on the streets of Mumbai. They have aluminium framing, to save weight, and for resistance to corrosion. Inside the exhibition there was a high floor country bus on a Tata chassis and a smaller body on a Swaraj Mazda for the large school and works transport sector of the market. They were steel framed.

Pankaj Kapashi, Managing Director of Ruby, said that his company was raising capacity from 3,000 to 5,000 bodies per annum to meet increased demand. He forecast that the expansion of the highway network would result in more orders for coaches. Force Motors showed minibuses and midibuses built to older designs with Mercedes-Benz running units. Recently, the company has entered into a joint venture with MAN to build medium weight trucks, and bus chassis derived from them. It is likely to be a few months before the first products hit India's roads.

Indian component suppliers came to the exhibition not just to keep in contact with domestic customers, but to look for opportunities to sell abroad. Quite a number of buyers came from European countries to see what was available. Tech-Force Composites offers a comprehensive service, designing, developing and manufacturing re-enforced plastic products for all kinds of automotive applications. These included the complete front and rear end faces for coaches. They have also developed a technique for producing sheet moulded compound components that are completely smooth on both sides.

The industry is becoming increasingly global, but, nevertheless, it was still a surprise to find that Vectra Fainsa Seats was making the reclining seats for a fleet of 45 15 metre coaches that are currently entering service



A Volvo story-board promoting Bus Rapid Transit.

with Stagecoach on express services throughout the United Kingdom. The company's distinctive moquette was the clue, but it demonstrated that the Indian company can meet all the European regulations on seat strength and the use of fire retardant materials.

As mentioned earlier, some European suppliers had come to India to study the market. Daniel Fah of Gorba demonstrated his



Ruby built the bodywork on this little Swaraj Mazda.

company's extensive range of electronic destination signs. These can be made to work in a wide variety of scripts, including Arabic



Volvo launched the third generation of the B7R coach for the Indian market.

and Indian languages. Daniel had detected interest from India in more modern equipment for city buses. Similarly, Ron Hubner, Executive Chairman of the world's largest manufacturers of articulated turntables and bellow systems for city buses, had noted growing interest in India for Bus Rapid

Transit systems. The challenge for companies like these, who might want to enter the Indian market, is the need to find local partners who can supply components and/or build to their quality standards. It will not be easy, but India is too large a market to ignore. Busworld India is firmly off the

ground. The dates of the third edition, currently planned for Mumbai, have not been fixed but are likely to be in around two years time. By then, the products of more of the recent joint ventures will be coming available. Therefore Busworld India looks set for a course of strong growth.



There are many double deck buses on the streets of Mumbai.

**DATE FOR
YOUR DIARY**

Busworld Kortrijk
19-24 October 2007

The logo for Busworld Kortrijk is displayed on a red background. It features a network of white dots connected by lines, with dots labeled 'SHANGHAI', 'MUMBAI', 'ISTANBUL', and 'LAGOS'. Below the logo, the text 'busworld KORTRIJK' is written in white, with 'KORTRIJK' in a larger font. Underneath, the website 'WWW.BUSWORLD.ORG' and the dates '19-24.10.2007' are listed. At the bottom, there is a small image of a bus and the text 'busworld tv AT WWW.BUSWORLD.TV'.

TREMENDOUS TURKEY

The first Busworld Turkey, held in the Istanbul Expo Centre, close to the Ataturk International Airport from 8 to 10 February, was a resounding success. It was organised by Busworld in conjunction with HKF Trade Fairs of Istanbul and the International Road Union, (IRU), and was fully supported by the Ministry of Transport and TOFED, the Turkish Bus Federation.

The facilities in the Expo Centre were excellent, with two large halls, connected by a central foyer, where there were also some stands and where the opening ceremony was held. There were 89 exhibitors, including 20 from outside Turkey, exceeding all the expectations of the organisers. Busworld Turkey attracted more than 8,900 visitors,

the very modern plant at Hosdere, about 30 minutes west of Istanbul.

One of the stars of the show was the new Conecto, a city bus with a full low floor and three double width doors for entry and exit. Outwardly, it looked very similar to the German built Citaro, but it had a Euro 3 engine. Technically, Euro 1 is still permissible in Turkey, but most manufacturers fit Euro 2 or Euro 3 units. The country is taking a quantum leap to Euro 4, in 2009. The new Conecto will replace the previous model of the same name, but that had a floor 625mm above the ground. Jürgen Ziegler, President and CEO of the company, said he believed that the markets that took the previous Conecto are now wanting buses with greater

priced, Tourismo is starting to replace the previous model of the same name, after more than 13,000 were built. The factory can also offer lower height models for the interurban and multi-purpose sectors of the market.

Temsa had a large stand with a selection of seven models from its extensive range. Both medium and full size vehicles for the Turkish and neighbouring markets are generally built with Mitsubishi running units, while those for Western Europe



One of the large signs promoting Busworld Turkey.

including 835 who came from 51 countries outside Turkey. In addition, 40 journalists came from other countries to Busworld Turkey.

This very high level of attendance reflected the importance of the Turkish manufacturing industry. There were not only complete vehicles, including some real surprises, but many exhibitors producing a wide range of component parts. Most of these companies work to recognised international quality standards, such as ISO or the German TÜV.

Mercedes-Benz Türk claimed 64% of the heavy coach sector and 50% of the full size city bus sector in Turkey in 2006. Later this year, production of some sub-structures and components will cease as the old Davutpasa factory in Istanbul and all activities will be concentrated in

accessibility. It is a confident move and one that clearly rattled some competitors who have no low floor vehicles in their own ranges.

Mercedes-Benz Türk is also building a full range of coaches. The new Travego sits at the top of the range and is built in Turkey for all markets. A new, well-appointed, competitively



Purplast showed this complete front dash and driver's unit for a right hand drive Neoplan coach that will be built in Turkey.

can have Cummins, DAF or MAN engines. The newest model was a 9.6 metre version of their Metropol, fitted out with 43 seats as a multi-purpose coach. Temsa have identified demand for this size of vehicle for company transport in Turkey and a number of other countries.

Mehmet Buldurgan, President of Temsa, said six or seven years ago that his aim was to take 10% of the Western European market for coaches within a ten year period. There were some who laughed at the thought, but they are not



Crowds wait for the unveiling of new models by Anadolu Isuzu.



The Diamond is the top coach in the Temsa range.

laughing any longer. Temsa is well on its way to reaching that target. Furthermore, the President revealed that a low floor city bus will be unveiled next year.

VDL Bus sprung two surprises. On their stand was one of 52 double deck city buses for IETT, the principal operator in Istanbul. These were bodied by Magyar Jarmutechnikai zrt of Debrecem in Hungary and had been painted in a largely red scheme, to look like London buses.

VDL also announced that IETT had ordered 50 of its advanced Phileas Bus Rapid Transit vehicles. Istanbul has already started preparing the dedicated roadway for these ultra-modern vehicles. There is strong demand in Turkey and neighbouring countries for midibuses and midicoaches, seating around 25-30 passengers. One of their manufacturers is Otoyol, in which Iveco has a 27% shareholding. Their stand had five vehicles, with the smallest pair based on the Daily. A city bus, multi-purpose coach and full luxury coach completed the line up.

Anadolu Isuzu is another of the midibus and midicoach builders. They showed five vehicles, ranging from a low-cost bus with a high floor, to the Turquoise coach. The company is promoting its products in Western Europe, where they are sold under the Harmony brand.

Otokar has been selling the Navigo midicoach for a number of years, but used the occasion of Busworld Turkey to launch three versions of its larger and longer Doruk family, built to an overall length of 9 metres. The Doruk 190H was a three door bus for 25 seated and 45 standing passengers. The Doruk 190S was a two door suburban bus with a wheelchair lift mounted at the second, centre, door. The

more stylish Doruk 190T coach had seating for 35.

Turkcar is quite a small company, building around 60 integral buses and coaches a year at its factory in Bursa. Their exhibits included the Thunder ED coach, built to 10.9 metres, the longest produced by the company. There was also an Angel midicoach and a City Angel midibus.

A surprise exhibit on this stand was a 10 metre low floor bus built by Solaris in Poland. Busworld is a great place to do business. It appears that the two companies are looking at some kind of collaboration where they might promote each other's products in their respective markets. Tezeller is one of the survivors of the once large bodybuilding industry in Turkey. They showed a Tiger Lux 35 seat coach and a Leopard bus, both fitted with MAN running units. Tezeller also offers a full size coach body on various chassis.

It has become impossible to go to any Busworld exhibition without seeing at least one Chinese exhibitor. King Long and its importer from Bulgaria had an 11 metre coach that was unusual in having twin seats on one side of the gangway and single on the other.

At the very top end of the Turkish intercity market, some passengers are prepared to pay a premium price for the very highest standards of travel. Setra sells around 70 units per annum to a small number of regular customers. Even though the well-equipped ComfortClass was making its debut in Turkey, Setra reported much stronger interest in the TopClass because it was seen as the most luxurious and expensive model in the Setra range.

There were numerous exhibitors offering a wide range of seats, also complete dashboard assemblies, roof lining and rack systems, air conditioning, doors, windows, luggage compartment doors, and wheel arches. Turkey has a long tradition of hand crafting, with components available in a wide variety of materials, such as steel, stainless steel, aluminium, polypropylene, sheet moulded compound and fibreglass.

Busworld Turkey was very busy, with approximately equal numbers of visitors each day. All the stands had a regular stream of visitors, and many exhibitors said that they were delighted with the quantity and quality of people who came to see them.

It is intended that the next edition of Busworld Turkey will be held in Istanbul in May 2008, coinciding with a major IRU Conference in the city. Thereafter, it is planned to hold Busworld Turkey every two years, alternating with Kortrijk. If the first Busworld Turkey was any indication, this will become another regular and very popular event in the Busworld calendar.



Inside Temsa's modern plant in Adana.



The suburban version of the three new Doruk models launched by Otokar.



VDL Bus is supplying 52 of these double deck buses with Hungarian bodywork to IETT, Istanbul