

German MAN seeks to grow foothold

STRENGTHENING

NETWORK: Heavy vehicle maker plans launch of new RM20m flagship store in Shah Alam next year

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MAN Truck and Bus (M) Sdn Bhd managing director **Hartmut Mueller** says the company plans to open at least one branch each year in the country.

GERMANY'S MAN Truck & Bus AG is expanding its workshop and dealership network in a move to strengthen its foothold in the local market.

MAN Truck and Bus (M) Sdn Bhd (MTBM) managing director Hartmut Mueller said the company aimed to open its RM20 million flagship store in Shah Alam next year.

Mueller said the company was scouting for suitable land for the store, which will sell spare parts and other accessories for MAN vehicles and provide after sales service.

He said the heavy vehicle maker hopes to open at least one branch each year in the country to expand its network of four workshops and three dealership centres.

"In order to excel in the after sales service, the company is further strengthening the dealer network nationwide by furnishing service facilities and distributing original MAN spare parts," he added.

"Last year, we opened two new

workshops in Johor and Penang, while this year we opened one in Kelantan. We have dealers in Sabah, Sarawak and Kuantan," he said on the sidelines of the Malaysia International Bus, Trucks and Components Expo (MIBTC) 2015, here, recently.

Mueller said the company will either partner local firms or invest on its own to grow its network in the country.

He said MTBM is studying possibilities of making Malaysia its regional hub to distribute MAN commercial vehicles across the region, given the country's geographical position.

"If you look at the map, Malaysia is in the centre of the Southeast Asian region. This allows us to reach other parts of the region quickly.

"We have enough capacity to

build more than five times the number we are producing right now," he said, adding that MBTM's completely-knocked down plant in Rawang has a maximum production capacity of 1,500 units per year.

Mueller said the company is assessing the viability of the plan on all fronts, including the cost involved given that each country has different import duty and regulations.

MTBM is a joint venture between MAN Truck & Bus AG and MBf Holdings Bhd, and the former is a major shareholder of the company.

In 1991, MBf Holdings' unit MBf Commercial Vehicles Sdn Bhd was given the sole distributorship rights to market MAN trucks until 1999 and in 2001, MAN Group took the technical leadership and directly involved in MTBM.