

Preparing for future truck technology

Malaysia truckers will not be ready for new technologies unless the accompanying infrastructure is in place

With the European markets looking to pilot electric-powered trucks by the year 2021, similar to how electric cars are becoming a mainstay in some economies, the Malaysian commercial vehicle industry needs to see its fundamental challenges resolved before new-age technologies can be introduced here.

Managing Director of MAN Truck & Bus (M) Sdn Bhd Hartmut Mueller said in an exclusive interview with *MALAYSIA SME*, "For electric trucks transporting heavy-duty carriage, they need to go very quickly from A to B. Heavy duty vehicles however need to stop in between long-haul destinations, such as Penang to Johor Bahru with an electric engine. This means that

they are a couple of ways of going about it, which are changing the batteries or changing the load size.

"The begs the question then that if an electric truck needs to charge for two to eight hours before going on again, it is not efficient. As long as we are unable to solve this problem here infrastructural, the electric truck technology is far behind. For sure there are efforts under development to shorten this time, but they are not in practice yet."

In addition, the surrounding ecosystem around trucks also needs to be considered, as with the coming of electric trucks marks the similar increase of public usage of electric cars, which will drive up demand for electricity.

"We cannot forget to discuss that if the industry switches to electric-

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— Mueller

ity on the truck side, in parallel, we will see they are more electric cars on the road. Suddenly, there is a high need for electricity. So where does this electricity to come from? We need power plants for example to sustain that. The energy also



date to what how MAN has been performing so far, and gave his thoughts about what the future for the trucking and logistic industry holds.

He commented, "Following our growth strategy for the last three to four years, our customers have been happy with the solutions we are offering so far. This is evident as they have kept coming to us to buy again. I can highly recommend to customers that quality should be the forefront of their mind, as the logistics industry in the future will be growing very much, similar to how Europe in the past had grown.

"From there, with the logistics industry growing so rapidly, the industry became for a while unregulated. Companies here should be prepared for this as one day, this industry will not be limited with permits and such. There will be a need for the industry to be a free market without any permits. The government will have to allow the market to flow. I hope for the industry that this will come soon, and companies in that space will be free to flex their entrepreneurial muscle." **MSME**

needs to be clean such as water energy or solar because it will be counter-productive to use coal or fuel.

"For a comparison, a study was conducted in Germany that in 2030, we need 50 new power plants in order to support this advancement, nearly doubling the amount Germany currently has. These are the questions we need to ask before considering new technology. How much of our infrastructure needs to be expanded to sustain this?" Mueller queried.

Mueller then provided an up-