

Engineered for tough conditions in the commuter bus sector

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Mercedes-Benz commercial vehicles has bolstered its commuter bus offering with the launch of its OF 1723 bus chassis.

The timing is perfect with a number of transport operators, particularly municipalities, looking at upgrading fleets in the coming years. Not that the offering is a big upgrade, at least not by international standards.



Image via *Infrastructure News*

We drove the chassis, yes the actual chassis, at the launch of the vehicle in Johannesburg and it is extremely easy to drive. Without a body on it, the chassis was surprisingly quick and demonstrated superb braking ability. We also drove a version with a bus body on it and that too proved to be nimble around a series of cones and traffic signs with easy gear changes through the manual box and a good turning circle.

The chassis is equipped with Mercedes' OM 906LA engine. It offers power of 175kW (235hp) and 850Nm pushed through a G85 six-speed manual transmission. The gearbox uses a cable-shift mechanism and includes an overdrive gear to reduce noise and consumption when travelling on highways.

"We listened to our customers who highlighted the tough conditions they are operating in, as well as the limited financial resources they are facing," says Shane Henry, brand manager for Mercedes-Benz Bus and Coach Southern Africa.

"We then developed and are now introducing an entry-level bus chassis that will assist in curbing the number of challenges our customers face."

More features

As a result the company has also included features such as a constant throttle valve engine brake and a high boost pressure turbocharger in a bid to improve fuel efficiency and longevity.

The chassis itself is powder coated and uses alligator-type cross members to provide strength for the 902mm wide frame. The frame has been designed and engineered to allow for a wide range of bodies to be fitted, but particularly those of entry-level buses.

"From the RS4 rear axles that aid highway driving and improve fuel efficiency, to the wider brakes and larger brake chambers, which mean a longer life for brake liners, we really have ensured that this product makes a tangible effect in our customers' businesses. We see ourselves as more than just manufacturers but rather as partners and mobility solutions providers," says Henry.

Source: Business Day

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