

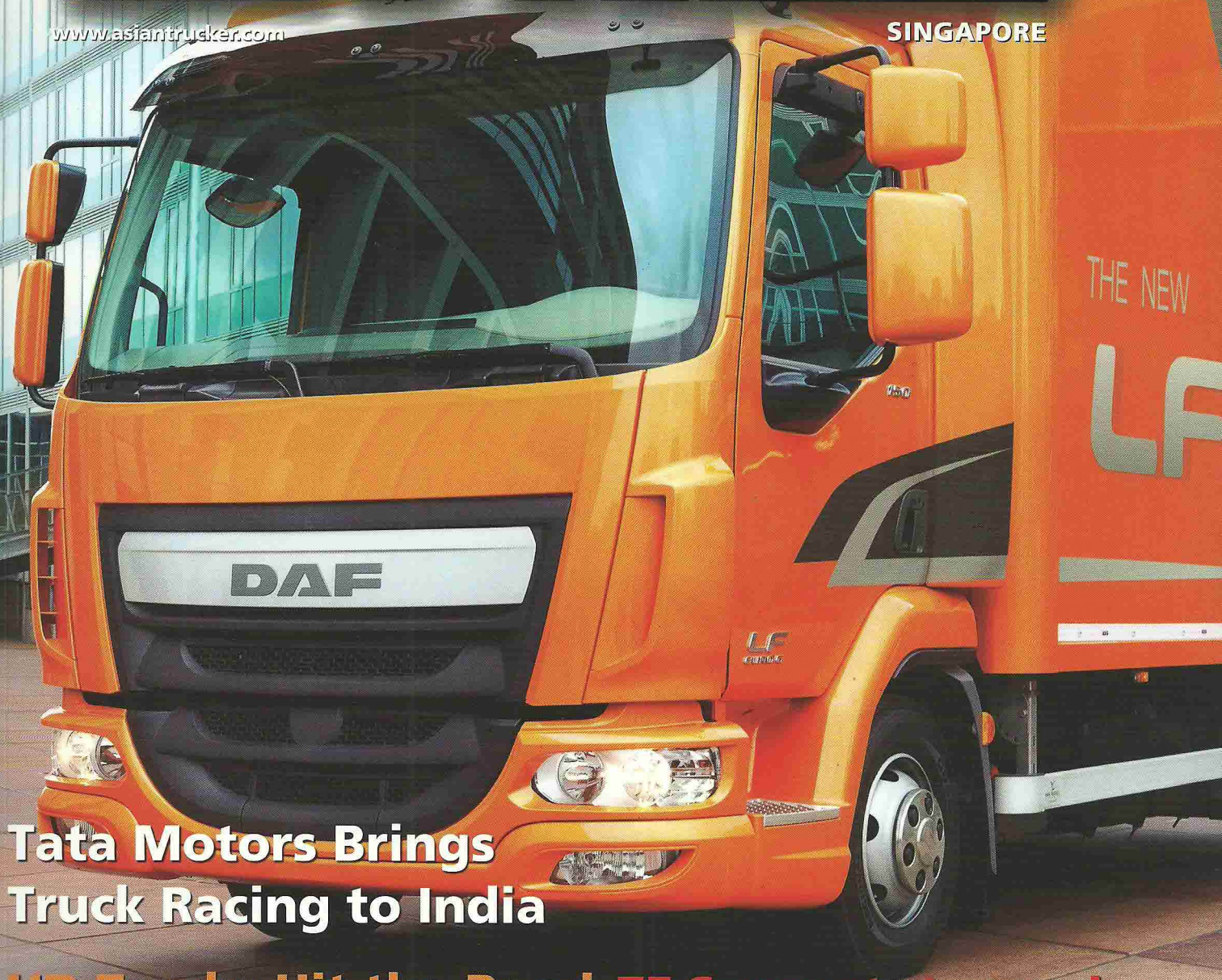
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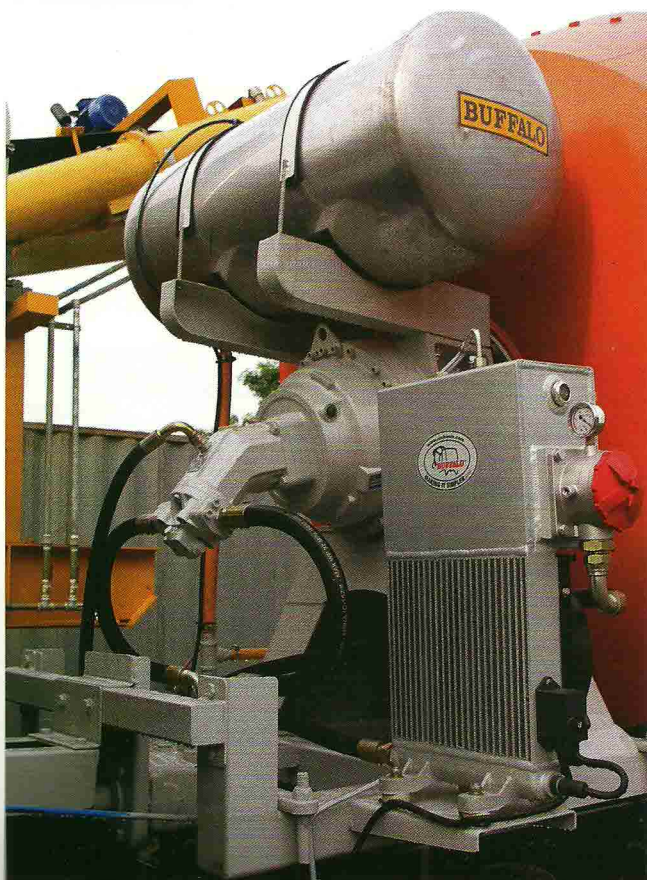
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Drum roll for Nichi Engineering Sdn. Bhd.



Malaysia's own "Buffalo Mixers" are tough, yet sophisticated and leading the way in the region.

Reliability is important for anyone in transportation. Cement mixers may just have to be extra reliable as they are put to the test every day and any breakdown not only results in downtime, but may also mean a replacement drum is needed. Today, construction work is a 24/7 affair and concrete needs to be delivered on time all the time in order to avoid costly delays for the main contractor. Besides the non-stop operation of the trucks, the on / off-road use puts extra stress on the material. And if that wasn't enough, a breakdown could mean costly repairs as the concrete may cure inside the drum. In this case it is almost unavoidable that the drum needs to be replaced.

Nichi: cemented into South East Asia

Nichi Engineering (Malaysia) traces back its rich history in the concreting world when the Japanese first started introducing their agitators into the Malaysian market. During this era where the nation was rapidly developing, opportunity came knocking on the door; whereby one reputed individual in the industry shared a common interest with Nichi's founder, Mr. Jimmy Nichi. The idea was to make mixers and plants that are both ground-breaking in design and simply marketable to the world.



Concrete quality from Malaysia to the region

The company started in 1981. Nichi Engineering's operations have since expanded throughout South East Asia and the realm of the Pacific Region. Being the leading manufacturer and pioneer for the supply of concrete equipment, batch plants and transit mixers for the ready-mix industries has put the company on the map. This vast expansion can be attributed to the company's extensive effort in research and development. The R & D department adopts the motto "To relentlessly emphasize on innovative designs and steel fabrication technology that move ahead of time but are cost effective for our clients".

While the drum may be the most prominent part of the mixer, it is the little parts that determine the quality of the product. For example, the hydraulic system has to be highly durable and rugged. Here Nichi doesn't make any compromise and uses ZF components. According to Nichi, the only way to sustain in this business is to provide durable products that last and produce results. The design of the drum and the blades inside the drum are other key components that are crucial for the effectiveness of the mixer.

It is no wonder that the mixers are called "Buffalo" after the hard working animal as this name encompasses about everything about the mixers: reliability, steadiness and strength.





A numbers game

Mr. Barry Ng, Business Development Manager of Nichi Engineering Sdn Bhd knows it is a numbers game. "We see order intervals of five to six years. In this sub-segment of the trucking industry, clients buy in batches. They then put the trucks to the task. As these trucks run non-stop, they are really 10 - 15 years old at the end of their life-cycle in five years," he explains. Due to the heavy use, the trucks are subject to a lot of stress and it shows eventually. Nichi Engineering equips mixer trucks with drums between 2.2 tons capacity to 12 tons, depending on the legal limits in the respective country where the trucks are being deployed. Some 60 workers ensure a smooth production process which sees trucks being ready for delivery within a week of receiving the truck. "In our best year ever, we delivered 350 mixers, while our average is between 150 to 200" Barry says. Standard filling time for a mixer is four to six minutes and the time limit for the concrete to be on board is about two hours.





The right blade: Mixing or transporting

Trucks are pivotal for the construction industry and depending on the approach, different designs for the mixers are needed. Concrete mixers may either act as a transportation means or they can actually mix the concrete while en-route to the construction site. Depending on the use of the mixers, the blades inside the drum need to be designed differently. For dry mix, the mixer is actually filled with the aggregates and during transit, these compounds are mixed. At the destination, the concrete is ready for use. Wet mix is filled as ready concrete mixture into the drum and the mixer truck's purpose is to deliver the concrete, hence these are known as "Transit Mixers". The rotation of the drum will prevent the concrete from curing. The latter has less impact on the truck, however requires capital intensive investment elsewhere as the concrete needs to be mixed before loading. The Buffalo Mixers come equipped with heavy duty direct drive planetary gearbox, variable displacement hydraulic motor and integrated hydraulic oil cooler.

Looking into a bright future

With an impressive client portfolio that lists companies like Holcim, Tasek, Hanson, Shin Yang and other local top companies it is no wonder that Nichi is having a positive outlook for 2014. Barry puts it simple by saying "We are sure that 2014 will be a great year for us". As a trend he sees that more and more Chinese trucks are entering the market. Interestingly, for cement mixers, many companies seem to favour the oriental trucks over European trucks. Most of the mixers delivered by Nichi these days are based on Chinese and Japanese trucks. **T**

