

## **Auto sales slump continues at slower pace**

Local automobile sales last month fell by 27.4% year-on-year to 39,713 units, the 11th straight month of declines, but the contraction was becoming smaller, according to industry figures released yesterday by Toyota Motor Thailand.

Vutigorn Suriyachantanont, Toyota's vice president, said the figures reflected the slow economy and poor consumer confidence in the wake of political unrest and violence in April.

Sales of passenger cars rose 4.2% year-on-year to 15,981 units, the first growth for the segment in four months. Commercial vehicle sales fell for the 12th month, by 39.7% to 23,732 units. Sales of one-ton pickup trucks, part of the segment, fell 38.7% to 21,039 units.

Mr Vutigorn said this month should be better, as May is typically the best month in the second quarter, and consumer confidence is improving, though higher oil prices are a concern.

Toyota's total sales fell by 30.2% to 15,824 units. Second-ranked Isuzu shed 33.4% to 8,477 units. Third-ranked Honda showed 28.1% growth to 6,666 units.

Honda passed Toyota in passenger cars, selling 6,473 units, up 51% from a year earlier, against Toyota's 6,066 units. Toyota retained the lead in pickup trucks with 8,912 units, a 36.2% decrease.

**Source: Bangkok Post**