

China car sales growth slows

CHINA'S auto sales growth decelerated further in May amid signs of weakness in its economic recovery, with Japanese automakers suffering more declines, an industry group reported Sunday. Sales growth decelerated to 9 percent over the same time last year from April's 13 percent, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers. China is the biggest auto market by number of vehicles sold and competition is intensifying as global and Chinese manufacturers roll out models targeting its increasingly prosperous drivers. Sales growth has slowed amid mixed signals about whether China's shaky economic recovery is gaining traction. May sales of cars, SUVs and minivans totalled 1.4 million, according to the CAAM. Total vehicle sales including trucks and buses rose 9.8 percent to 1.8 million units. Sales of Japanese brands plunged last year as Beijing and Tokyo argued over ownership of a group of uninhabited islands in the East China Sea. Total sales by Japanese brands suffered another decline, the CAAM said, but it gave no details. Toyota Motor Co. reported earlier that sales for the month were flat while Nissan Motor Co. reported a 2 percent gain. The two companies and smaller Japanese brands suffered double-digit sales declines last year but they say demand is recovering. Total sales by German brands also declined, while Korean and French manufacturers saw gains, CAAM said without giving details. For the first five months of the year, sales of autos, SUVs and minivans rose 14.7 percent to 7.3 million. Total vehicle sales rose 12.6 percent theaustralian.com.au