

1116

India's heat has suddenly vanished  
pages 11 - 14

Porsche plans to double sales seen as realistic  
pages 6 - 7

More atmospheric Toyota's new Yaris  
pages 14 - 16

01.09.11

World

## Chill in the air

**Economy doubts and consumer confidence wobble slow output recovery to walking pace**

THE previously encouraging recovery in global car production appears to be running out of steam, suggesting that earlier upbeat predictions for a continuing strong rebound in this and next year's global passenger car production were too optimistic.

That's the sobering message from latest car production trends, which suggest that of late production has slowed from a trot to mere walking pace. These discouraging signs, fuelled no doubt by fears of a slowing economic recovery in many of the world's leading car markets, now threaten to throttle, or at least stall, the encouraging global car production recovery seen during these past eighteen months.

But then again, the intriguing question now taxing the minds of industry strategists is whether that's due at least partly to the inevitable widespread fallout from Japan's March earthquake, the near completion of an earlier witnessed build up of near normal vehicle stocks, or more ominously still, to strengthening signs that the strong-looking earlier global car sales recovery is fast running out of puff. While the likely true answer is probably somewhere in between, the overriding message on both the global car sales and



World car production stuttering

W-Europe	3, 5, 11, 14, 15
Argentina	3
Brazil	2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Canada	3
China	2, 3, 4, 6
Czech Republic	3
France	3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15
Germany	2, 3, 6, 7
India	2, 3, 4, 11, 12, 13, 14
Italy	3, 5
Mexico	3
Japan	3, 4, 6, 9, 10
Portugal	3
Romania	3, 7
South Korea	3, 9, 10
Spain	3
UK	3, 15, 16
USA	3, 4, 5, 6
World	1, 3

**Full circle**  
If US car sales stall, expect 'Cash-for Clunkers 2' . . . 4 - 5

**French confidence wobble**  
Third month of poor French car sales dampen second half prospects . . . 7 - 10

**Change in Japanese lead**  
In France Nissan edges ahead of struggling Toyota . . . 10

**Ford's 2nd Indian car plant**  
Is India destined to become the carmakers' global small car supply base? . . . 11 - 12

**Near Golf-class ride**  
Toyota's new Yaris - If not in styling, its ride quality matches Fiesta benchmark . . . 14 - 16

**Turbo-charged diesel scene**  
India's fuel price-shocked consumers now head for diesels in droves . . . 12 - 13

Alfa Romeo	9, 10
Audi	7, 8, 9, 13
Bernstein Reserch	5, 6
BMW	8, 9, 13, 16
Chevrolet	9, 10, 13, 14
Chrysler	9
Citroën	6, 7, 8, 9
Commerzbank	6, 7
Dacia	7, 9
Daihatsu	9
Daimler	9
Deutsche Bank	5, 7
Ferrari/Maserati	9
Fiat	5, 6, 9, 10, 13
Ford	9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16
GM	5, 7, 9
GM Opel-Vauxhall	7, 9, 10, 15
Hindustan	13
Honda	9, 10, 13, 14
Hyundai-Kia	3, 5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14
Jaguar	9
J.D Power	4
Lamborghini	7
Lancia	9
Land Rover	9
Lexus	9
Mahindra	14
Maruti-Suzuki	13, 14
Mazda	9, 10
Mercedes	2, 8, 9, 13
Mini	9, 16
Mitsubishi	9
Morgan Stanley	4, 5
Nissan	5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
Peugeot	5, 6, 7, 8, 9
Porsche	6, 7, 9
Renault	5, 7, 8, 9, 13, 15
Saab	9
SEAT	8, 9
Škoda	8, 9, 13
Smart	9
Subaru	9
Suzuki	9, 10, 14
UBS	6
Tata	9, 13, 14
Toyota	9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16
VW	5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15
Volvo	9



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