

VW recalls 384,181 vehicles in China

SHANGHAI, CHINA: Volkswagen said on Wednesday (20 March) that it will recall 384,181 vehicles in China because of gearbox defects, marking the German car manufacturer's biggest ever recall.



Volkswagen

The recall came after Chinese state television alleged in an annual corporate malpractice programme that Volkswagen had used sub-standard gearboxes in some models, causing acceleration problems and accidents.

In a company statement, Volkswagen said an electronic malfunction could cause its cars to lose power while being driven.

"In isolated cases, an electronic malfunction in the control unit or a lack of oil pressure inside the gearbox mechatronics may result in a power interruption," it said. "Steering and braking would not be affected," it added.

A spokesman for Volkswagen in China said the decision to recall was not initiated by the television programme, as the company had already been monitoring the issue.

"We monitored it and realised that certain models had to be modified," said Christoph Ludewig of Volkswagen (China) Investment Co. "It is the largest recall for Volkswagen in the country," he said.

Volkswagen, which is Europe's biggest car manufacturer, said last week it planned to open seven more factories in China. It currently has two passenger vehicle production joint ventures with China's SAIC Motor and FAW Group.

The vehicles affected include both imported models such as the Audi A3 and domestically-made ones, among them the Magotan and Passat, said the Chinese government's quality watchdog, which ordered the recall.

The move followed a year-long investigation, of various models manufactured between December 2008 and early this month.

Volkswagen said it would upgrade software and replace components in the gearbox of affected vehicles for free.

Last year China's car sales rose 4.3% to 19.31m vehicles.

Source: *AFP* via I-Net Bridge

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