

Japan Automakers Boost Overseas Output

The Associated Press

TOKYO, March 29 (Kyodo) — The combined overseas vehicle production of eight leading Japanese automakers totaled 1,375,246 units in February, up 25.1 percent for the third straight month of year-on-year growth, reflecting stepped-up output to make up for falls caused by last year's flooding in Thailand, according to their data released Thursday.

Strong sales in the United States and China also contributed to the production increase.

Toyota Motor Corp. produced 465,095 units at overseas plants, up 32.3 percent over a year earlier for an all-time high for the month.

Nissan Motor Co. rolled out 338,388 vehicles, also a record monthly high and up 31.8 percent.

Overseas production by Fuji Heavy Industries Ltd. and Suzuki Motor Corp. also grew to all-time highs for February, while Honda Motor Co. reported the first output gain in five months.

The only automaker that posted a decline was Mazda Motor Corp., which logged a 1.2 percent fall to 32,334 units due largely to weak sales of commercial vehicles.

Combined domestic production by the eight carmakers in February increased for the fifth month in a row to a total of 906,673 units, up 19.2 percent from a year earlier, as the revival of subsidies for environmentally friendly vehicles stimulated demand.

With six of the eight makers marking output gains, Honda scored a 64.8 percent jump to 115,920 units, while Daihatsu Motor Co. booked a 30.8 percent increase to 74,189 units on robust sales of its Mira e:S minicar.

Mazda and Mitsubishi Motors Corp. assembled fewer vehicles.

The eight makers exported a total of 425,765 vehicles, up 4.4 percent. While Toyota, Nissan, Honda and Fuji boosted exports, those from the remaining four decreased. Suzuki, Mitsubishi and Daihatsu saw their exports decrease more than 20 percent.

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