

# **Nissan Rolls Out Chinese Brand's New Model**

Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Nissan Corp. has unveiled the second model from its new low-priced Chinese brand Venucia following what an executive said was a temporary dip in sales during anti-Japanese protests last month.

The compact R50 hatchback will sell for as little as 67,800 yuan (\$10,760), Nissan announced Saturday. It is part of a wave of new models by Japanese, U.S. and European automakers that are aimed at China's growing low-priced market outside major cities.

Venucia was created by Nissan and its Chinese joint venture partner, Dongfeng Motor Co. Its first model, the D50 sedan, debuted in April.

China overtook the United States as the world's biggest auto market by vehicles sold in 2009 but sales growth has slowed and some major cities are imposing restrictions on ownership to curb traffic and smog. That has prompted global automakers to look for new ways to tap the faster-growing low end of the Chinese market in smaller cities and the countryside.

General Motors Co. also has created a low-priced Chinese brand, Baojun, with a local partner. Germany's Daimler Benz is developing an electric car brand with Chinese automaker BYD.

China is a key part of Nissan's global strategy announced last year to focus on selling to faster-growing developing countries and reducing reliance on the sluggish U.S. market.

The R50 is aimed at first-time Chinese buyers outside more prosperous eastern cities, said Kimiyasu Nakamura, president of Dongfeng. He said that the car goes on sale in late September and that the company expects to sell 10,000 units per month.

Nakamura said Nissan held down the cost by designing the R50 in China and using mostly Chinese-manufactured components.

Nissan suffered a temporary dip in sales when protests erupted in China last month over a dispute between Beijing and Tokyo about ownership of an uninhabited group of islands in the East China Sea, Nakamura said. He said he had no details of how sales compared with normal periods.

"We did see some slowdown, but after that we see everything go back as usual," Nakamura said.

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