

VW remains upbeat on sales

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The company, now in its third year of operations here, sold 22 per cent more cars last year compared with 2007.

Managing director Andreas Prinz said the 2009 forecast was conservative but still positive when compared to the 12.4 per cent drop in total sales the industry was expected to experience this year.

The Malaysian Automotive Association had said total industry volume of motor vehicles could drop to 480,000 units in 2009.

For Volkswagen (VW), the biggest challenge this year will be the weakening vehicle market due to slower economic growth and unfavourable consumer sentiment, Prinz told reporters after a hand-over ceremony for the Le Tour de Langkawi (LTdL) in Petaling Jaya yesterday.

VW Cars Sdn Bhd, its master dealer, is the official event partner of the 14th edition of the LTdL. It will sponsor 120 Golf GTIs worth RM240 million for land transportation throughout the event from February 9 to February 15.

LTdL will feature 120 riders from 35 countries, competing over seven stages and covering a distance of 1,029.9km.

Prinz said for 2009, VW will launch the new Beetle Cabriolet, Scirocco, Passat CC and the Golf GTI Mark Six. The new models are expected to debut in the second half of this year.

The Golf GTI is still the company's hot-selling model, commanding 30 per cent of total sales, followed by the new Beetle at 25 per cent.

Volkswagen Group Malaysia has 10 dealers distributing its cars nationwide.

VW Cars, which accounts for 60 per cent of Volkswagen sales in the country, expects to sell about 600 units this year.

Its director of sales Helmi Ilyas said the target was to sell 10 per cent more cars this year than previously. He noted that in January 2009, VW Cars has sold 10 per cent more units compared to the same period last year.