

SA's new vehicle sales on track to surpass pre-pandemic levels in 2025

South Africa's domestic new vehicle sales are on track to exceed pre-pandemic levels for the first time in five years, driven by consumer demand for affordable cars, the president of the auto industry group Naamsa said on Wednesday, 1 October.

By Nqobile Dlodla ^{2 Oct 2025}



A traffic congestion is pictured during the morning peak hour as motorists drive towards the city of Johannesburg, in South Africa, on 16 July 2024. *Reuters/Siphwe Sibeko*

Speaking at the organisation's annual auto conference, Billy Tom told delegates that the industry's performance in the first half of 2025 demonstrated resilience, with strong consumer appetite driving growth despite global and local headwinds.

Domestic new vehicle sales in the first six months of the year increased by 14% compared to the same period last year, with imports rising 30.2%, Tom said. He pointed to "an influx of very affordable models," largely from China.

The South African market for new vehicles "is likely to exceed" 2019 levels for the first time in five years, Tom said. Pre-pandemic sales were at 536,612 units, while new vehicle sales in 2024 were 515,850 units.

The domestic new vehicle market has seen a notable consumer preference shift, with various new entrants to the domestic market, in particular Chinese and more recently Indian car brands, offering options at the more affordable end of the pricing spectrum, said Thato Magasa, Naamsa's vice president for retailing car manufacturers.

"South African consumers used to be very badge-conscious, but with rising costs of living, many consumers have become more interested in value than in the badge," he said.

Since 2024, interest rates in South Africa have been reduced by 125 basis points, while easing inflation and a better economic growth rate have supported the new vehicle market to date, Magasa said.

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