

Volkswagen design chief quits amid emissions scandal

BY JAN SCHWARTZ
AND BARBARA LEWIS
REUTERS

HAMBURG — Volkswagen design chief Walter Maria de Silva has quit, two sources familiar with the matter said Friday, adding to the list of top executives to leave the carmaker since it admitted in September to cheating diesel emissions tests.

The sources gave no reason for the resignation, which was first reported by Auto Motor und Sport magazine. Volkswagen declined to comment and de Silva could not immediately be reached for comment.

Italian-born de Silva, 64, has been chief designer at the German company since 2007, with responsibility for all the group's brands which include VW, Audi, Seat and Porsche.

Europe's biggest carmaker has already seen the resig-

nation of longtime CEO Martin Winterkorn and Winfried Vahland, whom it had lined up to lead its North American operations, since it admitted on Sept. 18 it had rigged U.S. tests for nitrogen oxide emissions.

The scandal has since deepened, with the firm saying Tuesday it also understated the fuel consumption and carbon dioxide emissions of about 800,000 vehicles.

That has heaped criticism on the company from lawmakers, regulators, investors and customers, who are frustrated at the time it is taking to get to the bottom of a crisis that has wiped nearly a third off VW's market value.

"Volkswagen is so far not handling the scandal correctly," Mary Nichols, the head of the California Air Resources Board which is investigating VW in the United States, said in an in-

terview with German weekly magazine WirtschaftsWoche.

"Every additional gram of nitrogen oxide increase the health risks for our citizens. Volkswagen has not acknowledged that in any way or made any effort to really solve the problem," she was quoted as saying.

The case is "the biggest direct breach of laws that I have ever uncovered. ... This is a serious issue, which will certainly lead to very high penalties," she added.

EU urged to act

Auto Motor und Sport magazine said de Silva, who won Germany's highest official design prize in 2010 for the Audi A5, would leave at the end of November and it was unclear who would replace him.

German business daily Handelsblatt earlier on Friday cited company sources as saying that VW planned

to cut costs in de Silva's department, which spends around \$108 million per year.

New CEO Matthias Mueler has said VW will have to make "massive cutbacks" to recover from its problems.

Some analysts have said it could face a bill as high as 35 billion euros for regulatory fines, lawsuits and vehicle refits.

The scandal has also piled pressure on European regulators, who have long been criticized by environmentalists because on-road tests have consistently shown vehicles emitting more pollutants than official laboratory tests.

In an open letter Friday, a group of leading investors urged the EU to toughen up vehicle testing.

But Brussels faces a battle, as carmakers have traditionally had a strong influence on policy in countries such as Germany, where



TAMI CHAPPELL | REUTERS

The Volkswagen Chattanooga Assembly Plant in Tennessee recently, Volkswagen said that it would recall about 92,000 vehicles, which are some 2015 and 2016 models of Jetta, Passat, Golf and Beetle, in the United States.

they are a major source of jobs and export income.

The Commission sent a letter to all 28 EU member countries Thursday urging them to widen their investigations into potential breaches of vehicle emissions.

Vehicle testing in the EU

is overseen by national authorities, so the Commission is reliant on each country to enforce rules.

"Public trust is at stake. We need all the facts on the table and rigorous enforcement of existing legislation," a Commission spokeswoman said.

Rockland convenience store to close

BY STEPHEN BETTS
BDN STAFF

ROCKLAND — One of the two Circle K convenience stores in the city will close Monday.

Three different employees confirmed that the store at the intersection of Camden and Front streets will close at 6 a.m. Monday. The employees did not want to be identified.

Elizabeth Smith, the human resources director for the Great Lakes division for the Circle K stores, said Tuesday she had no comment and would not say whether the store was closing.

The 2,400-square-foot store was built and opened in 1985. The property is owned by Spirit SPE Portfolio 2012-2, LLC and Cobalt Properties of Saint John, New Brunswick.

Cobalt Properties also owns the Circle K store at 136 Camden St.

Pipeline shut after oil spills in Oklahoma

REUTERS

Magellan Midstream Partners said on Friday about 1,000 barrels of crude oil were released from one of its pipelines in a rural area near Billings, Oklahoma, on Thursday evening.

The 6-inch diameter pipeline, which stretches from Enid to Ponca City, was quickly shut down and isolated and the spill was contained in the immediate area, the company said in an email. It did not state the capacity of the pipeline.

Magellan said a majority of the spilled crude oil has been safely recaptured and added that damage to the pipeline was related to third party excavation activities.

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