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## India to Contribute Major Part of Jeep's 2M Target by 2018: Fiat

### Co plans to launch Grand Cherokee and Wrangler Unlimited in both diesel and petrol versions

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**New Delhi:** First it was the currency movement, and then the global economic crisis. The India launch of the Jeep that has been postponed multiple time in the past, however, will not be further delayed by the uncertainties over the fate of diesel as an auto fuel in big cities.

Reacting quickly to the challenge on hand after the Supreme Court banned the registration of cars and SUVs fitted with large diesel engines for three months, parent Fiat Chrysler readied petrol variants for its marquee Grand Cherokee and Wrangler to roll out its India strategy.

"Petrol options weren't part of the overall plan, but we are responding quickly," Jim Morrison, director of the Jeep brand, told ET. "Both our powertrains are proven, and we will launch both Grand Cherokee and Wrangler with petrol and diesel options to tap into the full potential of this market."

According to the Canadian, the love for Jeep brand in India is very strong and awareness is not an issue. The company hopes India will play a key role in meeting its 2018

target of selling 2 million Jeep vehicles.

Despite the start-stop attempt of the past, Morrison said, the timing is good from two perspective: the industry and the SUV segment are growing in India and the Jeep brand too is on a growth path, posting a more than 22% expansion to close 2015 at a record 1.2 million units.

In India, the company has a two-phase strategy. Phase one is entering the market and establishing the brand with the Wrangler and Grand Cherokee. It will be

importing both SUVs as completely built up units. In the next phase, in 2017, it wants to have a locally manufactured product.

Once its plant goes operational, Fiat Chrysler is planning to produce about 50,000 Jeeps a year in India with more than half to be exported, said three

vendors in the know of company's plans.

Morrison was non-committal on the numbers, but said: "India is the fifth largest market in the world - lots of growth potential for future. We are 1.2 million units now. We have volume aspiration for Jeep alone at 2 million by 2018 and India will be a significant part of that growth."

Jeep will enter the market by middle of 2016, focussing initially on seven core markets — Mumbai, New Delhi, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Kochi and Hyderabad.

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