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India to drive Jeep's global ambitions

NEW DELHI: Fiat Chrysler Automobiles' SUV brand Jeep closed its best year in history in 2015 (it sold 1.2 million units). To start off the next, it has launched two of its best-selling products — the Grand Cherokee and the Wrangler — in India.

"Jeep is targeting to sell two million units by 2018, and India will play an important role," said Jim Morrison, director of Jeep product marketing. Morrison, who has been with the company for 23 years, doesn't remember the last time the brand was launched in any country. For now, the company is importing completely built units, but once it starts manufacturing in India in 2017, it will build a completely new "Jeep" for the India market. "That will have a very accessible price point, which is where significant numbers will come from," he said.

When Jeep started manufacturing in Brazil, its volumes grew by 1,000%. However, Morrison did specify that certain features of the Jeep will remain unchanged — "those have been there since the company came out with its first Jeep in 1941". **SUNNY SEN/HT**