

VinFast rolls out first EV car from Thoothukudi plant

TRADE TIES. The facility will boost bilateral relations between Vietnam and TN, says CM

TE Raja Simhan
Thoothukudi

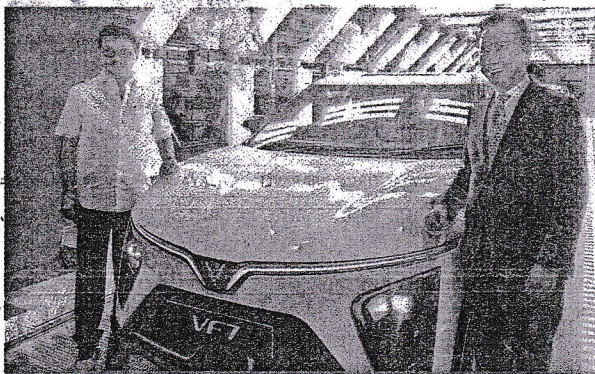
Within 15 months of breaking the ground for a new manufacturing plant at the port town of Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu, Vietnam's VinFast, on Monday, inaugurated its facility to produce electric vehicles (EVs) not only for India but also for global markets.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin inaugurated the plant in the presence of the CEO of VinFast Asia, Pham Sanh Chau, with the roll out of the premium VF7 car.

VinFast setting up its base in the State adds another feather in the cap for Tamil Nadu, which is called the Detroit of Asia. The State produces one out of every five cars made in India and contributes to nearly 40 per cent of India's automobile exports, according to the State Planning Commission.

BOOST TO PORT TOWN

For Thoothukudi, it is a major boost for industrial development, as the town is yet to



NEW BEGINNING. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin with VinFast Asia CEO Pham Sanh Chau during the inauguration of the company's EV manufacturing plant at Thoothukudi

recover from the closure of the Sterlite Copper smelter plant in 2018. The new factory has been set up in a 400-acre site at the industrial park of State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu (SIPCOT). It is expected to generate jobs for 3,000-3,500 people. The plant is the company's third operational plant and the first outside Vietnam.

Stalin said that the facility will boost bilateral relations between Vietnam and Tamil Nadu. "Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu saw the first car

manufacturing (Hyundai in 1998), while the EV car manufacturing plant is being inaugurated at Thoothukudi. This is a big boost to the industrial development for the region," he said. The plant will be the country's first full EV car manufacturing unit, which will provide employment to a large number of local people, he said. The company has so far invested ₹1,300 crore, he added.

VinFast Asia CEO Chau said that the company did a survey of 15 sites in six States across India looking at

infrastructure, government incentive and growth potential. Tamil Nadu stood out, and the company decided to set up the facility, he said. The first global customers were from Sri Lanka, Mauritius and Nepal, he said.

DREAM TO REALITY

Tamil Nadu Industries Minister TRB Rajaa said that 18 months ago, the MoU was signed with VinFast and today, "the dream has become a reality" with the new factory.

In the initial phase, VinFast Tamil Nadu will focus on assembling two premium electric SUV models — the VF7 and VF6. The plant's annual capacity is 50,000 cars, scalable up to 1.5 lakh cars to meet rising market demand.

VinFast, in a video, notes that the plant has 90 per cent automation and blends human craftsmanship with digital technologies such as use of robotics, immersive 3D vectrology systems and others. Assembly line spans 16,767 sq m, it adds.

The writer was in Thoothukudi at the company's invitation