

Tesla serious about India production base: MoS IT

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Tesla is “serious” about its plans to establish a manufacturing base in India, Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar told *Reuters* in an interview on Friday, a day after meeting senior executives of the electric vehicle maker.

The Elon Musk-led US automaker held talks with Indian officials this week on various topics including incentives for car and battery manufacturing, *Reuters* reported on Thursday, as Tesla looks anew at entering the Indian market.

“They are very seriously looking at India as a production and innovation base,” Chandrasekhar said in the first public comment by a government official on the talks.

“We have signalled to them that the government of India is working together (and) will certainly make whatever ambitions they have or investment objective they have in India a success,” said Chandrasekhar, who is one of the highest-ranking officials in Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s administration.

Tesla proposed setting up a factory in India to build electric vehicles (EVs) and is also looking at manufacturing EV batteries, *Reuters* reported.

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RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR
MoS for Electronics and Information Technology



Asked if talks with Tesla included more than just making vehicles, Chandrasekhar said “you don’t talk about cars alone” when such discussions take place.

“You talk about cars, you talk about energy, you talk about manufacturing technology. So all of that figures in the conversation. What they will want to do in India, it’s too far for me (to tell) and it’s not for me to say,” he added.

Tesla did not immediately respond to request for comment.

The discussions represent a shift in stance for Tesla, which said late last year it was focused on seeking lower import

taxes on cars, which can be as much as 100 per cent. Talks became deadlocked as the government is keen for Tesla to make cars locally, while the carmaker said it wanted to export to India first so that it could test demand.

Meanwhile, Chandrasekhar said Apple and Samsung were among companies interested in increasing electronics production in India. “We’ve had considerable success and tailwinds in the smartphone segment and we have increased interest from the likes of Apple and Samsung in expanding and growing here,” Chandrasekhar said.