



**ŠKODA**  
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## ŠKODA in India – 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of long-distance trip to Calcutta in the ŠKODA POPULAR

- › Seven participants, four ŠKODA POPULARs, 15,000 km route
- › This year marks the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the challenging expedition from Prague to Calcutta
- › The trip raised awareness of ŠKODA AUTO in the Indian market
- › 'INDIA 2.0': The importance of the market for ŠKODA AUTO remains high to this day: The car manufacturer is responsible for the Volkswagen Group's activities in India

**Mladá Boleslav, 13 May 2019 – The 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of four POPULAR vehicles' long-distance journey from Prague to Calcutta commemorates ŠKODA's impressive tradition in India. The country soon became the seventh largest export market of the automobile manufacturer from Mladá Boleslav. In 2001, ŠKODA became the second European manufacturer to enter the Indian market and since then has steadily strengthened its position in the region. Under the 'INDIA 2.0' project, the company has been responsible for the Volkswagen Group's model campaign on the Indian market since 2018.**

In 1925 the engineering and defence company Škoda joined forces with the automobile manufacturer Laurin & Klement from the Bohemian town of Mladá Boleslav. The Pilsen-based company was already active in India at the time, and so the high-quality commercial and passenger vehicles with the winged arrow quickly gained acceptance on the roads of the subcontinent. Long-distance trips, especially in the 1930s, were among the most successful types of advertising at that time.

Eighty-five years ago, on Saturday, 12 May 1934, a group of four ŠKODA POPULARs set out on a trip from the Prague Automobile Club to India. The semi-convertibles had one-litre four-cylinder engines with an output of 15 kW (20 hp). ŠKODA's new entry-level model, weighing in at 700 kg, carried a total load of 800 kg, including passengers. Led by Zbislav Peters, a lawyer and Czechoslovak ice hockey player, the seven participants embarked on a journey to India via the Balkans, Turkey, today's Syria and Iraq. One crew even made a detour via Afghanistan. After arriving in Calcutta the ŠKODA POPULARs went on to Mumbai, and from there by ship to Trieste. From the northern Italian port, the vehicles headed back to the Czech Republic. By the time they arrived in Prague on 10 September 1934, they had covered nearly 15,000 kilometres, often over rough terrain and in harsh climatic conditions. On this long-distance journey, the new generation of ŠKODA vehicles proved their outstanding quality and reliability just as impressively as their high technical standards – the cars featured central tube frames and independent all-round suspension.

In the summer of 1936, Czech globetrotters Břetislav Jan Procházka and Jindřich Kubias circumnavigated the world in 97 days in a slightly modified open-top ŠKODA RAPID with an output of 23 kW (31 hp) and powerful hydraulic brakes. The journey also took the vehicle through India. Because of the ship's early departure to Japan, the Quetta-New Delhi-Mumbai stage resembled a car chase: the fast and reliable RAPID made it in just three days.

Not least thanks to the advertising effects of these expeditions, the number of ŠKODA vehicles exported to what was then British India totalled 90 units per year in the second half of the 1930s. In 1938, India ranked seventh among the Czech automobile manufacturer's 39 export markets. In light



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of the global social and economic change after the Second World War, only 150 ŠKODA vehicles were exported to India between 1947 and 1955, followed by ad hoc deliveries from the 1950s to the 70s. The brand, however, had no permanent representation.

The next chapter in ŠKODA's success story in India began in 2001 when the company from Mladá Boleslav became the second European carmaker to operate in the local market with introduction of the OCTAVIA 2001, followed by flagship ŠKODA SUPERB (2001) and models LAURA (2006), FABIA (2008), YETI (2010) and RAPID (2011). Currently, Indian customers can choose from four model series: the RAPID, which is manufactured locally in Pune, and the OCTAVIA, the SUPERB and the KODIAQ, which are manufactured at the Aurangabad plant.

Over the past 18 years, ŠKODA has steadily consolidated its position in the Indian market, both in terms of the number of vehicles delivered and in brand awareness among Indian customers. The potential of the Indian market is immense: with currently more than 1.3 billion inhabitants, the country has the second highest population in the world, and GDP is growing at an annual rate of around seven per cent.

This makes the Indian market an important pillar of ŠKODA AUTO's strategy. As part of the 'INDIA 2.0' project, the car manufacturer has been responsible for the Volkswagen Group's model campaign on the Indian market since 2018. In January 2019, the technology centre was opened in Pune where vehicles that are tailored to the needs of customers on the subcontinent are being developed. These are to be manufactured 95 per cent locally based on the localised MQB A0-IN platform. This means that almost all vehicle components will be made in India. The car manufacturer will be presenting its first design study next year at the Delhi Motor Show. In the next phase of the project, the Volkswagen Group will examine the possibility of exporting the vehicles manufactured in India.

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## Media images:



### ŠKODA in India – From pre-war long-distance travel to local production

From 12 May to 10 September 1934, four 15 kW (20 hp) ŠKODA POPULAR vehicles successfully drove more than 15,000 km from Prague to Calcutta and back.

[Download](#)

Source: ŠKODA AUTO



### ŠKODA in India – From pre-war long-distance travel to local production

Since 2001, ŠKODA AUTO has managed to consolidate its position in the Indian market and raise awareness of the Czech brand's vehicles. Local production takes place at the factories in Pune and Aurangabad.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

## ŠKODA AUTO

- › was founded during the pioneering days of the automobile in 1895, making it one of the longest-established automobile companies in the world.
- › currently offers its customers nine passenger-car series: the CITIGO, FABIA, RAPID, SCALA, OCTAVIA, KAROQ, KODIAQ, as well as the KAMIQ and the SUPERB.
- › delivered more than 1.25 million vehicles to customers around the world in 2018.
- › has belonged to Volkswagen Group since 1991. The Volkswagen Group is one of the most successful vehicle manufacturers in the world. In association with the Group, ŠKODA AUTO independently develops and manufactures vehicles, as well as components such as engines and transmissions.
- › operates at three locations in the Czech Republic; manufactures in China, Russia, Slovakia, Algeria and India mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan with local partners.
- › employs over 39,000 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.
- › is pressing ahead with the transformation from a traditional car manufacturer to the 'Simply Clever company for the best mobility solutions' as part of the ŠKODA 2025 Strategy.