

## Train carrying automobiles flagged off

Our Bureau



DV Sadananda Gowda, Railway Minister, flagging off AutoLinx, the rail carrier of automobiles at Melpakkam near Chennai on Friday. DP Pandey (right), Member (Traffic), Railway Board, and Bill Garrett (left), CEO, APL Logistics Vascor Automotive Ltd, look on. - C VENKATACHALAPATHY

Chennai, November 7:

Railway Minister DV Sadananda Gowda on Friday flagged off AutoLinxSM, a train designed to carry automobiles.

Developed by Delhi-based APL Logistics Vascor Automotive, a joint venture between APL Logistics and Vascor, AutoLinxSM completed trial runs in October. It was launched at Melpakkam near Chennai, according to a press release from Southern Railway.

APL Logistics Vascor is the first third-party logistics provider to offer rail-based services under the Automobile Freight Train Operator license administered by Indian Railways.

Carrying around 280 finished vehicles, the train left Melpakkam and is expected to arrive at the multi-modal logistics park of Container Corporation of India at Khatuwas near Delhi next week. AutoLinxSM will run fortnightly between Chennai and New Delhi. Service frequency will be increased and more destinations added to the network in the coming months.

Trial runs were conducted in close collaboration with four automotive OEMs: Ford, Honda, Hyundai, and Renault-Nissan.

The trials, which began in September, focused on the service corridor between Chennai and Delhi, and involved the handling, movement, and delivery of more than 1,100 finished vehicles, according to a company press release.

The SR release quoting DP Pandey, Member Traffic, Railway Board, said that Indian Railways have been running automobile rakes either through Railway's investment or by disjointed private investment.

However, after the announcement of the new policy by the Ministry of Railways, interest has arisen in acquiring rakes and registering as an Auto Freight Transport Operator.

This is the first rake to be run in South India through private investment by a firm of international repute in supply chain management in auto sector and has market expertise in finished vehicle logistics.

(This article was published on November 7, 2014)