

# India's first heritage transport museum opens near Gurgaon

**SLICE OF HISTORY** ₹15cr structure to showcase history of transportation in India; most artefacts displayed brought together by private collector with the help of donors

Siddhartha Rai

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**TAORU (MEWAT):** From a boat that used to carry passengers across the Yamuna to a stylish 1924 Ford — vehicles that have become a part of the history and heritage of India went on display at the country's first Heritage Transport Museum on Saturday.

The unique facility is spread across a massive area of 90,000 square feet and located off NH-8 in Taoru, around 35km from Gurgaon. It was inaugurated by Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda.

The museum, which has been inspired by similar structures in London in the United Kingdom and Los Angeles in the US, has been given shape by vintage car collector Tarun Thakral who went public with his collection of cars on Saturday to showcase the history of transportation in India.

The museum — which sprawls across four levels — was completed in three years at a cost of ₹15 crore, of which ₹6 crore was provided by the Union ministry of culture. Gurgaon-based architect Jyothi Rath has designed the building that houses artefacts collected mostly from private donors.

"When I was a child, I had driven some of the vehicles that have been put on display here now. It is very easy to appreciate, but very difficult to get this kind of collection at one place. This is the first of its kind in the country and I congratulate Tarun Thakral for it," said

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BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA,  
Haryana chief minister

Hooda, who found the tour of the museum "fascinating". The CM spent over an hour looking at the collection.

In turn a proud Thakral, chief operating officer of Le Meridien New Delhi, said, "I have just tried to give something back to the community. I hope this museum becomes a sustainable way for people to look at the past and draw a suitable vantage to look at the present. I chose this place, which is a bit removed from the hustle bustle of Delhi and Gurgaon, for two reasons: firstly, the place will become a getaway from the daily grind of the cities and secondly, the cost of land was prohibitive in Delhi and Gurgaon."

As of now the museum collection is a mix of pre-modern and the modern: one can find everything from howdahs, bullock carts, palanquins and a boat that used to ply in the Yamuna to motorized vehicles of different makes and kinds, including classics as a 1924 Ford, a 1932 Chevrolet, a 1935 Buick. Apart from them there are vintage scooters, and rural Indian contraptions such as chakda and phatphat.

"My fascination with vintage cars is quite old and I started with the 1932 Chevrolet that you can see on display here. I have collected a lot of cars, but many collectors too have contributed to make this dream come true. Interestingly, I got a number of items from the kabadiwallahs (scrap dealers)," said Thakral.

There is also a 1946 Piper aircraft, and transport toys from the 1920s to the 1970s displayed at the museum.

To make it into a complete place for families to visit, the museum also has a rich restaurant. The cost of entry ticket to the place has been priced at ₹300 for adults and ₹150 for children. "The rate will be flat for both Indians and foreigners and we hope to attract the latter in large numbers," Thakral added.



■ Tarun Thakral poses with a vintage beauty and (above) a scooter on display at the Heritage Transport Museum. PARVEEN KUMAR / HT

# Country's first transport museum open to public



■ Bhupinder Singh Hooda at the museum on Saturday.

HT PHOTO

**Siddhartha Rai**

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**MEWAT:** Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Saturday turned a new leaf in the state's tryst with history as he inaugurated India's first heritage transport museum in Taoru, about 35 km from the Millennium City.

Inspired by such museums in London and Los Angeles, vintage car collector Tarun Thakral decided to go public with his collection to showcase the history of transportation in India.

The museum is sprawled over 90,000 sq-foot across four levels and has been built at a cost of ₹15 crore of which ₹6 crore was given by the Union ministry of

culture. Gurgaon-based architect Jyothi Rath has designed the building that houses artifacts collected mostly from private donors.

"When I was a child, I had driven some of the vehicles now displayed here. It is very easy to appreciate, but very difficult to get this kind of collection at one place. This is the first of its kind in the country and I congratulate Tarun Thakral for this," said a mesmerised Hooda, who found the tour of the museum fascinating.

A proud Thakral said, "I have just tried to give to the community something over which all have a right. I hope this museum becomes a sustainable way for people to have a look at the past and draw a suitable vantage to

look at the present."

As of now, the museum is a mix of the pre-modern and the modern — from howdahs, bullock carts, palanquins, a boat that used to ply in the Yamuna and rural Indian contraptions such as chakda and phatphat to vintage scooters and motorised vehicles, including such classics as a 1924 Ford, a 1932 Chevrolet, a 1935 Buick. There is also a 1946 Piper aircraft, and transport toys from the 1920s to the 1970s.

To make it into a complete fun spot, the museum also has a restaurant. A visit would cost ₹300 for adults and ₹150 for children. "The rate will be flat for both Indians and foreigners and we hope to attract the latter in large numbers," said Thakral.