

# Study history of wheels in vintage class

**VROOM** HT gets an exclusive preview of the country's first transport museum that is opening next month near Manesar

metro@weekend

Manoj Sharma  
manoj.sharma@hindustantimes.com

The ochre and white building looks like one of the new corporate offices in Gurgaon. But step a little closer and then you start seeing the difference — two giant bullock-cart wheels greet you at the entrance. And inside the building, the four floors are propped up on each other on heavy, grey iron girders and columns, giving it an industrial look. Cars and aircraft hang from the ceiling, besides the buses, trains, horse carriages, boats and scooters are arranged theme-wise on the floors.

Welcome to Heritage Transport Museum, the country's first transport museum spread across 90,000 sq feet. The museum, in the making for the past three years, is currently in the final stages of completion and is slated to open next month.

Located off National Highway-8 in Taoru, near Manesar, the museum is the brainchild of vintage car collector Tarun Thakral. Gurgaon-based architect Jyothi Rath designed the building that cost ₹14 crore — ₹6 crore came as a grant from the Union government — collected from private donors and sponsorships.

The disabled-friendly museum is divided into over a dozen galleries that display myriad modes of transport used in India and over a thousand other

**THE COUNTRY'S FIRST TRANSPORT MUSEUM SPREAD ACROSS 90,000 SQ FEET WILL BE A DELIGHT FOR LOVERS OF VINTAGE CARS AND OTHER ENTHUSIASTS ALIKE**

transport-related objects from the 19th century to the 1970s. On display are horse carriages, bullock carts, camel carts and palanquins sitting pretty along with vintage cars including a 1924 Ford, a 1932 Chevrolet, a 1935 Buick Limousine, vintage scooters, jugad vehicles from rural India such as chakda and phatphat. There is also a 1946 Piper aircraft, models of aircraft used by various airlines in India from the 1930s, old boats that were used in inland waterways in the country and transport toys from the 1920s to 1970s.

Vintage lovers will also find a petrol pump with petrol dispensing machines from the 1940s and petrol cans from 1920s. Among the interesting collections are thousands of enamel advertising signages from 1910 onwards.

For those hungry after a tour of the humongous museum, there's a restaurant apart from a library, a convention centre and a mini-auditorium to show transport-related movies.

"The city has several private car collections and there are separate museums devoted to one particular mode of transport. This is the first museum in the country which traces the evolution of all modes of transport in India. Its industrial look is deliberate," says Thakral, who confesses to dreaming of "starting a transport museum after I visited transport museum in London in 2004".

The museum — to be run by Heritage Transportation Trust set up by him — will be displaying private collections from across the country on rotation basis. "We want to make museum a place for learning, recreation, research, seminars on transportation. We will have activities for children throughout the year," says Thakral, adding, "The cost of ticket will be ₹300 for adult and ₹150 for a child. We hope to attract a lot of foreigners too."



Among the exhibits is a 1946 Piper aircraft, models of aircraft used by various airlines in India from the 1930s, their original advertising posters, timetables, old boarding passes, etc.

The museum's basement has a period street look with shops and advertising signages from 1920s onwards. Parked in front of them are several vintage cars.



The pre-mechanised era gallery has earliest modes of transport such as horse carriages, bullock and camel carts, etc. Here, Tarun Thakral, the man behind the museum, with an old carriage.



The 90,000 sq feet museum has an industrial look. It has a petrol pump area with 1940s petrol dispensing machines, engine oil and petrol cans from the 1920s.