

Museum champions visit for challenged

Ashok Pradhan | TNN

Bhubaneswar: The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) museum in New Delhi is among the most disabled-friendly ones in the country, DMRC chief public relations officer Anuj Dayal said here on Saturday.

Dayal, who is in city to make a presentation on the disabled-friendly aspect of the Metro museum during the All-India Museums Conference here, told TOI that exhibits and the approach path to the museum have been designed keeping in mind convenience of the physically challenged persons.

The theme of the three-day all-India conference this year is "museums, accessibility and differently-abled visitors".

Dayal said there are tactile strips to guide a visually challenged visitor to the museum and exhibits have sound describing about themselves. A tunnel boring machine (TBM) has sound element to speak about itself so that a visually challenged person knows about it, he said. Similarly, the two-year-old museum, established on December 31, 2008, is planning to have instructors for hearing and speech impaired persons using sign language, he said.

While sufficient numbers of wheelchairs have been kept on



Naveen Patnaik at the conference in Bhubaneswar on Saturday

stand-by, elevators and escalators make the approach to the museum at Patel Chowk, a hassle-free task for the physically challenged, he said.

The Metro museum, South Asia's first modern metro museum, showcases the genesis, history and journey of DMRC. Founded in 1995, DMRC started commercial operations on December 25, 2002. Metro museums can be found in only a few European, US

and Japanese cities, but the one at Delhi Metro is the only of its kind in an operational Metro station, Dayal said.

The museum has an extensive section on the construction of the Metro and problems encountered during the process, including the story behind the construction of technological marvels such as the Chawri Bazaar Metro station, which is the second deepest Metro station in the world. A model of TBM, a "tooth" taken from a TBM, soil samples collected from around the city and helmets of different colours used at construction sites form part of the museum.

The museum has two touch screen computers that play the DMRC corporate movie and animation, describing the way TBMs and launching girders used in elevated construction work.

B Venugopal, the director of National Museum of Natural History, New Delhi, said efforts are on to make all museums disabled-friendly.

Earlier, inaugurating the conference, chief minister Naveen Patnaik said museums must have special provisions for differently-abled persons. The state government has made mandatory provisions for barrier-free access for differently-abled persons to all public buildings, including government offices, he said.

Sanjib Das