

'VIP VISITORS' FLOCK TO PMS' MUSEUM

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the inauguration of the Pradhan Mantri Sangrahalaya in New Delhi on April 14. PTIPTI

The Prime Ministers' Museum has welcomed over 37,000 visitors since being opened to the public on April 21, with everyone from Union Ministers, Chief Ministers, the Chief Justice of India, and business leaders visiting, according to the company operating the museum.

Inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 14 and thrown open to the public a week later, the museum is located at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library complex on Teen Murti Estate.

From April 21 to June 17, the museum sold 37,245 tickets, according to Tagbin, the government's design, technology and project management consultant for the project. Most visitors chose to buy tickets offline (79%), though there is a discount of Rs. 10 for those who book online on the entry ticket of Rs. 110.

VIP visitors

Sources said Union Ministers and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MPs were encouraged to visit the new museum by the Prime Minister, and several of them have visited so far. President Ram Nath Kovind visited along with his family.

Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu and Ministers Nitin Gadkari, Nirmala Sitharaman and Kiren Rijiju have paid a visit. Chief Ministers of BJP-ruled Uttarakhand (Pushkar Singh Dhami) and Haryana (M.L. Khattar), as well as Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party chief Arvind Kejriwal, were among the VIP visitors, a source said.

Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana and other holders of Constitutional posts have visited. Author and chairperson of Infosys Foundation Sudha Murthy and author Amish Tripathi were among the visitors.

Speaking about the experience of the first three months, Tagbin founder and CEO Saurav Bhaik said the museum, which is about 90% digital, had maintained a "99.9% up time" with a control room constantly monitoring the functioning of the holograms and audiovisual exhibits. To keep the largely digital museum running, he said an operations and maintenance staff of 55 people were on the job, along with specially designed software.

For visitors, the audio guide has been designed with an indoor GPS to go along with the exhibits. Mr. Bhaik said that while GPS is used outdoors, an indoor navigation system using multiple sensors and WiFi was being used in a museum for the first time to his knowledge.

He said the idea was inspired by "high security offices, like nuclear plants", where sensors are located inside the helmets of workers. Mr. Bhaik said the guide was currently available in Hindi and English, but 22 Indian languages and six international languages would be added in the coming months.

Built at a cost of Rs. 306 crore over 18 months, the museum is located at the erstwhile residence of former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru that was converted into a memorial to him

after his death.

While the original heritage building where Nehru lived continues to be largely dedicated to his life, with a few additional galleries of gifts given to PMs and other topics, a new building was constructed behind it to house the galleries on all Prime Ministers after him. A gallery on Mr. Modi is being planned, sources said.

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