

Multi was his. No bull.

But, it wasn't because he was a rider at heart, or simply wanted to show off. No sir. He loved dismantling the whole thing, and putting it all back together, learning how it all worked first hand, and helping others learn as well.

That was his first and last motorcycle. Post that, he started collecting cars, which are what I've come to see today.

The Gedee 'museum' is actually a basement parking lot spread out over a sprawling 20,000 sq ft. A curved driveway (the walls of which detail the evolution of the wheel, and motoring in general) leads you to the display area, which is lit up in soft white and yellow lights.

I'm expecting to see some truly scintillating cars from the bygone era. And, I'm not disappointed. Leading the charge is the 1886 Benz Patent Motorwagen - a replica, not the real deal - followed by the 1926 Ford Model T Roadster, a '64 Beetle restyled to resemble *Herbie*, a '57 Fiat Nuova 500, an '84 Mini, a handful of Morrises, a couple of Austins, a 1923 Rolls-Royce Twenty, an adorable BMW Isetta 250 with a joyous yellow-and-cream interior, and the only Hispano-Suiza H6B in the country.

And then, I see the original Porsche Boxster. There's a Smart fortwo. What's a Cadillac Deville limousine doing in here? And that, if my vision serves me right, is a Citroen XM.

Wait a minute. What is this place?

A place designed to "ignite young minds", according to GD Charities managing trustee and GD Naidu's son, GD Gopal. Mr Naidu wanted the students of his institute to look at these engineering marvels and be spurred on to come up with engineering marvels of their own. He had always wanted to build a car museum for

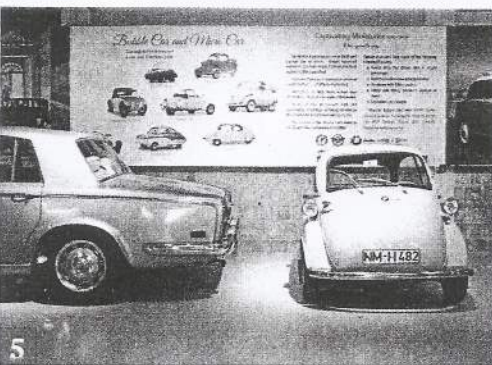
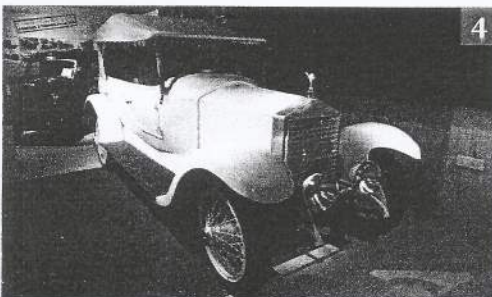


1 A beautifully-restored Hispano-Suiza H6B. You won't find another in our land



2 The 700, the car that saved BMW, now needs to be saved

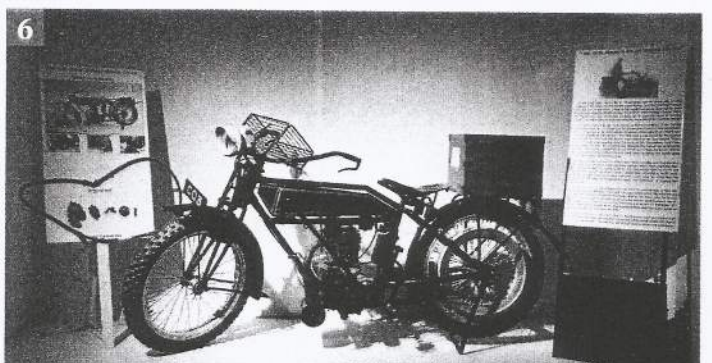
3 The Lloyd 250 could've been the first Maruti. Thankfully, it wasn't



4 The R-R that Naidu stripped bare for his students to see

5 BMW's Isetta is micro. About as wide as the R-R's rear overhang

6 The one that started it all: Naidu's 1912 Rudge Multi



the same, but he passed away in 1974, so Gopal took over, and finally, his father's dream is now alive and breathing.

Some of these cars have been donated to the museum, like the blue Ford Cortina Estate parked in the corner, while many of them were acquired by Gopal after his father's death. In one corner of the museum is a white Lloyd 250, one of three examples imported to India for testing purposes. It was, and you won't believe this, supposed to be branded a Maruti and sold here. That was until Suzuki walked in with the 800 and made the Lloyd look like a typewriter in the age of computers. The rest - and Lloyd, thankfully - is history. This is the only one that survives of the trio brought to India.

Also part of the collection are a Citroen Dyane, a Rolls Silver Shadow, Naidu's daily-runners, the Dodge Victory Six and an Oldsmobile Dynamic 60, and a Mercedes 170S gifted to Naidu by the family which owns the German firm Festo. There are 53 cars in the garage, some of which are in desperate need of restoration, like the Goggomobil micro sedan and the BMW 700, and the Peugeot 504 needs headlamps. There's a spot reserved for the Citroen 2CV, but it isn't here yet. It will come, though, I'm told, as will a Messerschmitt.

It is an eclectic collection, this. Not the most exotic, nor the most jaw-dropping, but surprisingly unique for certain. The last thing I expected to see was the XM, the last of the truly distinctive Citroens. It's taken years of planning and crores of rupees for the organisation to piece it all together, but if it inspires the youth to pick up where Karl Benz - or even GD Naidu, for that matter - left off, it'll have been worth the toil. **16**

**THERE'S THE MOTORWAGEN REPLICA, MODEL T, ROLLS-ROYCE TWENTY AND THE ONLY HISPANO-SUIZA H6B IN INDIA**