Bapu Museum comes of age

Modern technology and ancient artefacts will soon give visitors to the Bapu Museum an interactive and thrilling experience of the region's history.

P SUJATHA VARMA

Standing in Vijayawada, I have enjoyed visiting an ancient temple in Srikakulam district, explored its history, marvelled at its sculptures and studied its architecture. All I needed for this journey was a headset and an interactive technology to make my virtual temple tour possible.

The refurbished and restored Bapu Museum is bursting with pleasant surprises for its visitors who will soon be able to visit it. "The Augmented and Virtual Reality tools will enhance the museum experience to the visitors," promises Apurva Sinha, archaeologist from Development and Research Organisation for Nature, Arts and Heritage (DRONAH) in Gurgaon, that has been engaged by the State Department of Archaeology. DRONAH is in charge of the concept, design, curation of gallery spaces, visitor facilities and supervision of the work in progress. There are LED projec-

SWATHED IN HISTORY

In 1921, the All India Congress Committee met here and Pingali Venkayya of Munagala Samsthana presented the design of the tri-colour flag to Mahatma Gandhi in the presence of leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Lala Lajpat Rai, Babu Rajendra Prasad and Tanguturi Prakasam Pantulu. Gandhi added a chakra (wheel) symbol and declared it as the Indian National Congress flag and it was declared as one by the constituent Assembly on July 22 in 1947.

• Treasure Trove: (Clockwise) Sculptures at the museum; Apoorva and Sateesh demonstrating the new technologies. • RAVI

tors, augmented and virtual reality, graphic walls and CC cameras. International standard techniques are being used in terms of planning, display, lighting and fire safety.

K. Sateesh Kumar, Managing Director of Scintilla Creations, Hyderabad, lends his expertise to the Augmented and Virtual Reality, a graphic wall, an interactive touch panel and a separate immersive projection mapping room.

Museums so far have been static places. The whole exercise is to make this space interactive and participatory where along with information and education, there will also be entertainment," says Mallikarjun Rao, Deputy Director, Andhra Pradesh Department of Archaeology and Museums. The technology will enable a heightened storytelling experience for visitors where they will see, listen to and participate in the history of Andhradesa, from the Paleolithic times to the Nizam period. Artefacts from each period speak up with digital interactive and augmented and virtual reality tools. "Imagine the sculptures speaking to the visitors and telling their tales, about their journey and its significance," explains Sateesh. "Art will add life to the static objects with sounds, visuals and added information."

There are seven galleries over two floors, with Buddhist and Jaina sculptures, Brahmanical sculptures, Pre-Historic and Early Historic Relics, Numismatics and Epigraphy, Textile, Mid Century Perspectives and Arms and Weapons. Mallikarjun Rao says, "We are expecting to be done by September 25."