

Govt Reverses Decision to Relocate National Museum Artefacts

The Wire Staff

National Museum, New Delhi. Photo: Wikipedia

New Delhi: The Ministry of Culture initially planned to move artefacts from the National Museum to a temporary location until a new complex was built under the Central Vista Redevelopment Project. However, they've reversed this decision. Instead, they'll directly shift the artefacts to the new museum complex, named Yuge Yugeen Bharat National Museum, once it's ready.

The new complex will occupy the buildings currently housing the North Block and the South Block, situated a few kilometers away.

This decision was taken at a review meeting held a few weeks ago, [reported the *Indian Express*](#).

On September 2 last year, in a meeting attended by Union Culture Secretary Govind Mohan, four other Ministry officials, and four officials of the National Museum, including its Director General B.R. Mani, it was decided that "a suitable space for storage and for the existing staff of National Museum needs to be identified for which a space consultant or a space assessment company should be appointed", the newspaper reported.

However, concerns were raised about the safety of the artefacts during the proposed relocation.

Many expressed apprehension that it may lead to pilferage and loss of the prehistoric and contemporary antiquities representing over 5,000 years of Indian art and craftsmanship, the daily said.

This prompted the ministry to reconsider its decision.

Trinamool Congress MP Jawhar Sircar and others highlighted risks associated with the move, emphasising the need for skilled professionals to handle the delicate process. During the Winter Session of Parliament in December last year, Congress MP Manish Tewari raised a question about "the manner in which the Ministry (of Culture) proposes to ensure safe package, storage and preservation of 2 lakh objects within the tight timeline to vacate the existing National Museum by the end of this year".

According to the *Indian Express*, as part of the Central Vista plan, the offices in the North Block and South Block, currently housing key ministries, will be relocated to the Common Central Secretariat buildings on Janpath by the end of this year. The artefacts from the National Museum are scheduled to be moved to the section of the new museum complex that replaces the North Block.

This portion is expected to be completed by early or mid-2025, with interiors retrofitted for museum functionality, including temperature-controlled storage.

The South Block, home to the Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of External Affairs, will be vacated and prepared accordingly.

Spanning an impressive 1.17 lakh square meters, the Yuge Yugeen Museum is poised to become the world's largest museum, the daily reported.