

RS MP, ex-secy culture red flags shifting of National Museum in Delhi - The Statesman

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Trinamul Congress Rajya Sabha MP and former bureaucrat Jawhar Sirkar has written letters to the ministry of urban and housing affairs and the ministry of culture, raising questions on the prudence of shifting the National Museum in Delhi.

The former Prasar Bharati chief earlier had raised questions in the House flagging the decision.

In the letter to Union culture minister Kishan Reddy, Mr Sirkar has reminded about the minister's assurance to his question in the House that no decision regarding demolition of National Museum had been taken.

“In the winter session of 2021, I had raised repeated questions about the culture ministry's expression of interest for the central storage facility of museum collections. I had raised several issues like discussion with stakeholders, need for different temperatures, light and other requirements for several special categories of artefacts, and whether the government is aware that moving around artefacts is fraught with dangers of pilfering and substitution of originals,” Mr Sirkar wrote.

The former culture secretary also cast doubts on “how nearly one lakh priceless artefacts of the National Museum are planned to be packaged, transported, stored, re-transported and relocated to the North/ South Block building for the next three years when primary documentation, digitization of records and clear photo documents and objects are yet to be done.”

In his letter to Hardeep Singh Puri, Union housing and urban affairs minister, the MP has also questioned why there is secrecy under the “guard of metal-sheet fences” on three common central secretariat buildings that lie north of Raj Path/ Kartavya Path.

He said that he fails to understand why Krishi Bhavan and Shastri Bhavan, which are earmarked for Central Vista for two CCS buildings, remain functional and there is no sign of any demolition.

Mr Sirkar said, “To shift a museum you need expertise, which you do not have. They will have to get it done with outsourced vendors, who cannot differentiate between priceless artefacts and Chandni Chowk material. Throughout the world switching off artefacts happen. My concern is, where do you have such people who will supervise the shifting?”