

Nehru Children's Museum to shut 'indefinitely'

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Calcutta: Nehru Children's Museum, a landmark in the heart of the city, will shut indefinitely from August 16.

"Nehru Children's Museum will remain closed with effect from August 16, 2026. The committee has requested chief minister Suwendu Adhikari to take over the museum or hand it over to a reputed NGO that can continue its activities," director Sudip Srimal said.

The museum said it had been advised this month to upgrade the premises to comply with revised fire safety norms. "The fire upgrade will require an expenditure of ₹50 lakh, which is not possible for the museum to bear. We have approached the chief minister and other ministers," museum secretary Indrani Sengupta told **Metro**.

In-person classes have been suspended since July 18.

"For so many years we did not know that the museum required a fire upgrade. We still don't have anything from the fire department in writing, but since we now know about it, we cannot put the safety of our children or visitors at risk. There are some pre-scheduled programmes, which will be conducted before the full shutdown," Sengupta said.

Srimal has written to Suwendu, BJP state president Samik Bhattacharya, finance minister Swapan Dasgupta and urban development and municipal affairs minister Agnimitra Paul, seeking intervention.

In a July 16 letter to Paul, the director said the museum had been advised to close immediately and implement the revised fire safety measures.

"We request you to kindly take up the decision with the Govt of West Bengal chief minister Suwendu Adhikari and take over Nehru Children's Museum as per our request or allow us to continue but I am sure that if the



The entrance to Nehru Children's Museum on Tuesday. (Sanat Kr Sinha)

Government of West Bengal takes over Nehru Children's Museum there will be no fund shortage and the children can be given better and improved training," the letter said.

The museum is run by the National Cultural Association, which has a 21-member core committee and 15 additional members.

Built on land leased by the Bengal government for 99 years from December 22, 1966, the museum opened on November 14, 1972. It was inaugurated by then chief minister Siddhartha Shankar Ray.

The museum houses miniature clay models depicting the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, more than 1,100 dolls from 96 countries, and a Ganesha gallery with around 300 idols. It has attracted about 1.9 crore visitors over the years.

Srimal told **Metro**: "My father, Jugal Srimal, had an exhibition of the two epics in the Indian Museum and (former chief minister) Bidhan Chandra Roy had told him they should be a permanent display... Bidhan Roy had suggested the name Nehru if ever such a place came up."

The collection has continued to grow. In November last year, Finland's ambassador gifted toys from the country's popular Moomin stories for display. Many schools include visits to the museum in their annual winter calendar.

The museum runs classes in dance, painting, drama, singing and recitation for around 900 children. It also provides annual financial assistance of ₹2,400 each to 265 children with disabilities.