National Museum of Natural History, New Delhi

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| **National Museum of Natural History** | |
| [NMNH New Delhi logo.gif](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:NMNH_New_Delhi_logo.gif) | |
| [Delhi National Museum of Natural History.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Delhi_National_Museum_of_Natural_History.jpg)  Museum exterior, 2011 | |
| [Wikimedia](https://foundation.wikimedia.org/wiki/Maps_Terms_of_Use) | © [OpenStreetMap](https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright) | |
| **Established** | 1972 |
| **Dissolved** | 26 April 2016 (destroyed by fire) |
| **Location** | [Barakhamba Road](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barakhamba_Road), Tansen Marg, New Delhi, India |
| [**Coordinates**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographic_coordinate_system) | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/55/WMA_button2b.png/17px-WMA_button2b.png[28.626800°N 77.231560°E](https://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi&params=28.6268_N_77.23156_E_region:IN-DL_type:landmark)[Coordinates](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographic_coordinate_system): https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/55/WMA_button2b.png/17px-WMA_button2b.png[28.626800°N 77.231560°E](https://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi&params=28.6268_N_77.23156_E_region:IN-DL_type:landmark) |
| **Type** | [Natural history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_history_museum) |
| **Owner** | [Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry_of_Environment_and_Forests_(India)) |
| **Public transit access** | [Mandi House](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandi_House_metro_station), [Delhi Metro](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delhi_Metro) |
| **Website** | [nmnh.nic.in](http://nmnh.nic.in/) |

The **National Museum of Natural History** (**NMNH**) was a museum focusing on nature, located in New Delhi, India. Established in 1972 and opened in 1978, the museum functioned under the [Ministry of Environment and Forests](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry_of_Environment_and_Forests_(India)) of the [government of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_of_India).[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-about-1) The museum was situated on [Barakhamba Road](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barakhamba_Road" \o "Barakhamba Road) at Tansen Marg in central New Delhi,[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-zee-2) across from the Embassy of Nepal, near the [Connaught Place](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Connaught_Place,_New_Delhi) metro station.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-info-3) On 26 April 2016, the museum building and its entire collection were destroyed by a fire.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-fire_guts-4)

Mission[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi&action=edit&section=1" \o "Edit section: Mission)]

The NMNH's mission was to promote environmental education, both at NMNH in the capital and at Regional Museums of Natural History in other parts of the country; to provide resources such as school loan kits for schools to use in environmental education; to co-ordinate natural history projects with other agencies and organisations, both nationally and internationally; and to conduct natural history research.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-5) The NMNH's director, B Venugopal, also emphasised "[intangible natural heritage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masterpieces_of_the_Oral_and_Intangible_Heritage_of_Humanity)" (a concept invented by [UNESCO](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO)[[*citation needed*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)]) at the museum.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-hindu-6)

History[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi&action=edit&section=2" \o "Edit section: History)]

The NMNH was created in 1972 as part of the celebration of the 25th year of [India's independence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_independence_movement). [Indira Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indira_Gandhi), then Prime Minister of India, said that India needed such a museum "to promote environmental awareness".[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-about-1)[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-zee-2) After several years of development of its building and exhibits, the NMNH opened in 1978, on [World Environment Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Environment_Day) (5 June).[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-zee-2)

Following a negative government report in 2012 regarding the building's poor state of maintenance,[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-fire_guts-4) in July 2015, plans were made to relocate the museum to a [₹](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_rupee) 2.50 billion ($39.4M, €36.4M, or £25.3M as of July 2015) [green-certified](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_certified) building at [Bhairon Marg](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Bhairon_Marg&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Bhairon Marg (page does not exist)),[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-zee-2) where "The [zoological park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Zoological_Park_Delhi) is close by, [and] so are the [National Crafts Museum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Crafts_Museum), [Purana Qila](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purana_Qila" \o "Purana Qila) and [National Science Centre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Science_Centre,_Delhi)."[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-times-7) Regional Museums of Natural History are located in Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Gangtok, Mysuru, and Sawai Madhopur.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-hindu-6)

Destruction[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi&action=edit&section=3" \o "Edit section: Destruction)]

In the early morning of 26 April 2016, a fire broke out in the museum and destroyed the entire collection.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-fire_guts-4) The fire, which began around 01:30 on the sixth floor of the [Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federation_of_Indian_Chambers_of_Commerce_%26_Industry) (FICCI) building where the museum had been housed, eventually reached the second floor and destroyed all of the museum's exhibits before fire services were able to bring the flames under control. Around 200 firefighters and 35 fire engines were called; they took more than three and a half hours to extinguish the fire. Six people who became trapped in the building were later sent to a hospital suffering from smoke inhalation.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-IE-8)

The cause of the fire is still unknown, although the fire's spread was fuelled by museum specimens and the woodwork holding them.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-IE-8) Reports indicate that the devastating effect of the blaze was due to the building's sprinkler system being out of order.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-fire_guts-4)[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-9)

Exhibits[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi&action=edit&section=4)]

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Peacock-naional_M.jpg)

A [stuffed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taxidermy) peacock on display, representing animals of India

Exhibits at the NMNH were focused on India's plants, animals and mineral wealth, and were divided into four main exhibit galleries: "Cell: The Basic Unit of Life", "Conservation", "Introduction to Natural History", and "Nature's Network: Ecology". The museum had an extensive collection of films on wildlife, ecology, conservation and the environment in general, as well as rare biological specimens, including [herpetological](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herpetology) specimens, dinosaur fossils and mounted animals. There were also galleries on the origin and evolution of life, conservation of nature, the food chain and exhibits of flora and fauna.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-IT-10) A 160 million-year-old fossil of a [sauropod](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sauropod" \o "Sauropod) and stuffed animals by renowned [Mysuru](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mysuru" \o "Mysuru)-based [taxidermists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taxidermist) [Van Ingen & Van Ingen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Van_Ingen_%26_Van_Ingen) were part of the museum collection.[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-TOI-11)

The museum also featured a Discovery Room and Activity Room, specifically designed for children, where designated specimens could be handled by visitors. Guided tours, and specially designed resources for disabled visitors, were also available.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-info-3) Specific exhibits included a [sauropod](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sauropod" \o "Sauropod) fossil, "a collection of bird eggs including those of the [ostrich](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ostrich) and the [long-billed vulture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_vulture)", and "stuffed animals including various [big cats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_cats)".[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-times-7)

Plans for future exhibitions, as of 2015, had included "climate change, global warming, combating [desertification](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desertification), tsunami, [and] depletion of [the] [ozone layer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ozone_layer)" as well as "more digital displays ... [a]nd an [IMAX](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IMAX) theatre".[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_of_Natural_History,_New_Delhi#cite_note-times-7) The museum was also acquiring dinosaur egg fossils from [Narmada Valley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narmada_Valley), Gujarat.