

Delhi's Madame Tussauds shuts down for good

A Monitor Report

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New Delhi: The Delhi arm of London's famous wax museum Madame Tussauds has been permanently shut down following the temporary closure during the coronavirus lockdown starting from March 20.

Now, the attraction, located at Connaught Place's Regal Building, will not reopen at all, announced its holding company Merlin Entertainments India. "Merlin Entertainments can confirm it will permanently close Madame Tussauds Delhi in Connaught Place," said Anshul Jain, General Manager, and Director, Merlin Entertainments India.

Even though the company had announced an investment of EUR 10 million in India when it launched [Madame Tussauds Delhi](#) in November 2017, it had received a tepid response from visitors. Many thought the ticket price of Rs 760 was a dampener, and the outlet kept on piling losses.

The premises have now been vacated and the 120-odd wax models packed off.

"Even though it was a prime location, we realized in due course that there were a lot of issues - encroachment by illegal street vendors, hawkers, parking issues, CP's Outer Circle being a no-stoppage zone, and the place being overcrowded and unsafe for visiting families with small children," Jain mentioned.

The company had invested a substantial sum in designing the CP outlet and worked out a unique 60:40 model, where in 60 percent of figures were based on local personalities and the rest were selected from among the museum's international

galleries. "Generally, we work on a 40:60 model, but the Indian market is different," Jain said.

The opening gallery had Bollywood actor Salman Khan pulling a cycle rickshaw, wherein visitors could perch on the vehicle and get photographed. There was actor Ranbir Kapoor standing shoulder to shoulder with grandfather Raj Kapoor, who was in his iconic Awara hoon style.

Also featured among 50 Indian and international celebrities were comedian Kapil Sharma, actors Hrithik Roshan, Kareena Kapoor, and Nicole Kidman, musicians Zakir Hussain and Asha Bhonsle, pop stars Beyonce and Lady Gaga, and sportspersons Usain Bolt, Milkha Singh, and Sachin Tendulkar. It also brought Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mahatma Gandhi, and Sardar Patel under one roof, along with freedom fighter Bhagat Singh and former President APJ Abdul Kalam.

Jain further added they are "certainly looking to explore other options in the NCR" for the attraction to reopen. "Public behaviour will change after the pandemic. People would like to visit places that are more ventilated and where all safety hygiene protocols could be followed," he said, adding that they are currently exploring options at high-end malls in Noida or Gurgaon.