



From signals to new light: City maps new path for street kids | 3

36.6°

MAXIMUM

27.2°

MINIMUM

TEMP ON THURSDAY

FORECAST

Generally cloudy sky. Max & min temperatures on Friday would be around 34°C and 27°C

MOONSET 6.33PM (FRI)

SUNSET 6.31PM (FRI)

MOONRISE 7.03AM (SAT)

SUNRISE 6.05AM (SAT)

THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI | FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2026



Under 3% bicycle crashes in Delhi reported to police, finds IIT study | 5

134

AQI IN DELHI ON THURSDAY (MODERATE)

CAQM asks pollution boards of Delhi-NCR states to focus on local hotspots | 3



Why Delhi May Not Have To Wait For ‘Outside’ Help

CM Okays Proposal To Set Up State Disaster Response Force

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New Delhi: Delhi is set to get its own state disaster response force (SDRF), aimed at ensuring that trained rescue personnel can reach people faster during building collapses, fires, floods and other natural or man-made disasters. At present, Delhi depends on National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) for such tasks. The decision to raise a force of 1,100 personnel was taken at a meeting chaired by chief minister Rekha Gupta at the Delhi secretariat Thursday, where senior National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) officials briefed govt. The force will function under state govt and will be deployed during disasters on its instructions. A senior Delhi govt official said the key benefit will be that a specialised rescue force will be available within



“Every minute counts during a disaster. The need for a trained force of Delhi's own has been a longstanding requirement, particularly for a densely populated metropolitan city where the population and physical infrastructure are expanding rapidly”
—REKHA GUPTA | CHIEF MINISTER

Delhi, instead of having to depend entirely on assistance from outside the city. Faster deployment is important in emergencies where the first few hours are critical for rescuing people trapped under debris, he said. The proposed force will also be trained by NDRF and equipped with specialised equipment based on Delhi's

geographical conditions and local requirements. Govt will also provide training to Delhi Fire Services and civil defence volunteers. The move is aimed at creating a larger pool of trained local manpower that can work alongside the new force and other agencies. Gupta also directed officials to share details of disaster

management equipment and where it is stored with departments so that the equipment can be accessed quickly. “Every minute counts during a disaster,” the chief minister said, stressing the need for a trained force of Delhi's own. She said such a force had been a longstanding requirement, particularly for a densely populated metropolitan city where the population and physical infrastructure are expanding rapidly. The meeting also discussed improving the availability of NDRF personnel within the city. Delhi govt will provide land at different locations to enable the NDRF to station its personnel closer to central, north and south Delhi. NDRF officials said such locations would help the force reach disaster sites quickly. The chief minister directed officials to identify and provide suitable land and take immediate action on the proposal.

Satya Niketan: ‘Construction not in my portion,’ says absconding PG operator

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New Delhi: Four days after the building collapse in Satya Niketan, Shubham Tyagi, the absconding co-operator of a PG facility that used to run out of four of its floors, told a city court Wednesday that he was being falsely implicated in the case. He claimed that an alleged construction blamed for the collapse was not going on in his portion, adding that he had no knowledge of what was happening in other parts of the building. Additional sessions judge Saurabh Pratap Singh Laler heard submissions from Tyagi's counsel and the public prosecutor before reserving the order on his anticipatory bail plea. Tyagi, who is a lawyer and has his chambers at Patiala House Courts, ex-

Tyagi's counsel questioned whether any MCD official was arrested despite allegations of illegal construction

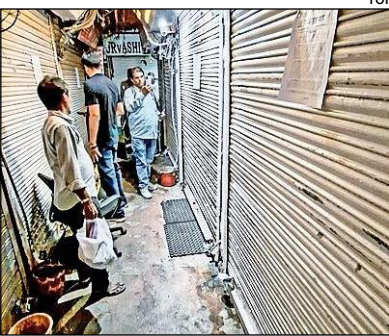
pressed readiness to cooperate fully with those probing the case. Tyagi's counsel submitted that the construction allegedly responsible for the collapse was taking place in a different part of the building. The counsel also questioned whether any Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) official was arrested despite allegations of illegal construction, and pointed to several dilapidated buildings in the area. Opposing Tyagi's bail plea, the prosecution submitted that his arrest was ne-

cessary for effective investigation. Delhi Police has sought to arrest him for interrogation in connection with the tragedy that left seven people dead. The defence contended that all relevant evidence had already been collected and the building owners, their son, the contractor and PG co-operator Shudhanshu Lovneesh had been arrested. According to the investigators, Lovneesh used to operate PG accommodations in Satya Niketan along with Tyagi under the name Hostel Daze since 2022. The two leased four floors of the collapsed building in Aug 2025 for just over Rs 1 lakh a month, notwithstanding its dilapidated condition. Police are looking for operators of other PG facilities that used to run out of the building as well as labour contractors to ascertain their roles in the tragedy.

MPD norm violations: MCD seals 54 basement shops in Old Delhi market

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New Delhi: Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) Thursday sealed 54 shops operating from basements of four building complexes at Old Delhi's Kucha Mahajani Market, citing violation of Master Plan norms. The action, which comes amid an intensified MCD enforcement drive against dangerous and illegal buildings following the Satya Niketan tragedy, was carried out at 11.30am, following which the civic body pasted sealing notices outside the shops. Its order stated that commercial activity was being carried out in the basements of these shops in violation of provisions of Master Plan of Delhi (MPD)-2021. Stating that it acted on the directions of a Supreme Court-appointed monitoring committee, MCD said the sealing is “aimed at preventing any untoward incident and for safeguarding public safety”. According to the order, a show-cause notice had been issued in Nov 2019 under Section 345A, directing the shops to stop the “misuse” and restore the premises to permitted use within 48 hours. Their owners and occupiers (tenants) had been directed to submit affidavits that they would stop commercial activities and were made liable to pay a penalty amounting to 10 times the annual conversion charges.



Officials seal shops in Kucha Mahajani market

While the occupiers did submit their replies, the file went missing. To complete the proceedings, the building department of City Sadar Paharganj zone asked for copies of the notices to be resent so that fresh replies could be submitted. “Thereafter, multiple opportunities were given in 2025 to the occupiers to reply. In Nov 2025, representatives from these shops attended MCD hearings and shared details of taxes submitted. But, according to Clause 15.6.1 of MPD, the use of basement is strictly subject to obtaining clearance from the fire department. Without this, there is complete infringement of planning norms and this poses safety risks,” the sealing order, signed by the de-

puty commissioner of the zone, stated. The traders, however, questioned whether any market in Old Delhi has fire no objection certificates (NOCs). “The action was totally biased. We have been running these shops for 40 years. So why has the fire NOC suddenly been demanded? They have pasted backdated orders and sealed the shops. If MCD is actually concerned about safety, it should declare the entire buildings unsafe because even the upper floors do not have fire NOCs,” said Yogesh Singhal, president of All India Bullion and Jewellers Association. “When we came to the market in the morning, we suddenly found the shops had been sealed. Our stock (jewellery and bullion) worth crores remains locked inside the premises. The action is not justified, especially when the authorities and govt have failed to implement any redevelopment plan for the area. Why should traders pay for years of govt inefficiency? The action has made us and several of our staffers jobless,” Singhal said, adding that following the Bhagirath Palace fire in 2022, govt has failed to develop the market till date. “Why was MCD collecting property tax, conversion charges and other payments if they think we were operating illegally? Councillors and MLAs are aware of the situation,” said a trader.

MCD suspends three more officials

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New Delhi: MCD Thursday suspended three more officials for dereliction of duty and negligence in discharge of their responsibilities related to unauthorised construction. All three — an assistant engineer and a junior engineer from South West Zone and a junior engineer from Outer Delhi Zone — work in MCD's building department. The move came three days after it suspended five South Zone officials, including deputy commissioner Rakesh Kumar, over the Satya Niketan building collapse. “Any negligence or dereliction of duty by officials in dealing with unauthorised constructions will not be tolerated. The corporation has directed its field-level of-

ficials to remain vigilant and ensure timely action against violations,” MCD said. Commissioner Sanjeev Khirwar said, “Strict accountability will be maintained at all levels. Officials failing to discharge their duties properly will be liable for action.” On Thursday, MCD continued its survey of PG facilities across the city for the third consecutive day. Officials said 1,355 PG facilities housing 26,917 people were covered till evening. Of them, 39 require minor repair work and nine major repairs, while three were classified as dangerous structures. Asked about the Sept 10 deadline fixed by MCD for completing the exercise, an official said, “The survey will continue in the coming days as well. We will also survey PGs running out of residential properties.”

As part of its ongoing action against unauthorised construction, MCD Thursday demolished 41 properties, sealed 61 and issued show-cause notices in 36 cases involving under-construction buildings. Its Standing Committee chairperson Satya Sharma held a high-level review meeting with deputy commissioners and executive engineers of all 12 zones and directed them to conduct a time-bound survey of unsafe and dilapidated buildings. “A report on such buildings should be submitted within a week. Action on a priority basis should be taken against unsafe buildings,” she said, and emphasised the need for MCD to have its own structural engineers so that it could assess the structural safety of buildings at its own level.

PG tragedy: Probe finds plumber had warned about structural risk

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The investigation into the building collapse in south Delhi's Satya Niketan has revealed that one of the labourers had allegedly warned the accused against breaking a load-bearing wall, saying it could compromise the structure and cause it to collapse. Police sources said the claim emerged during the investigation and is being verified. According to preliminary findings, the warning was allegedly given hours before the building collapsed when the labourer noticed the work being done at the property. “During the investigation, we found out that one of the plumbers had warned the accused hours before the incident not to break the wall as it could lead to a collapse. However, the warning was allegedly ignored. We are verifying the testimony and other details related to the sequence of events,” a police source said. Sources said the load-bearing wall was allegedly removed during the construction, which may have weakened the building and contributed to its collapse. During questioning, one of the PG operators, Sudhanshu Lovneesh (31), allegedly told investigators that he had asked Mahesh, the son of the building owner, about the construction and why was it being done. However, police are yet to find anything that would validate Sudhanshu's claim. Investigators are questioning neighbours and others in the area to establish whether they had noticed the construction activity and whether any concerns were raised before the collapse. They are also reconstructing the sequence of the work carried out at the property and examining the roles of those involved. Asked about a letter purportedly sent by police to govt seeking an inspection of PGs in Satya Niketan over the alleged lack of fire safety measures a few months back, a senior police officer said he was not aware of the specific communication. The officer added that such letters could also be part of routine correspondence by police with other departments. Police are carrying out raids to nab the PG operator's associate.

ASHISH SOOD SAYS

We will explore unused buildings in Narela and set up bus connectivity to educational hubs, if it suits students

lity of using vacant or under-utilised DDA housing and other suitable govt properties as student accommodation, subject to applicable rules. It will also identify govt land and buildings that could be used to develop additional hostels or student residences. The panel will encourage universities and other institutions to develop safe, affordable and adequately regulated hostel facilities for their students. Another part of its mandate is to suggest measures for developing a centralised database of student accommodation facilities in Delhi. This would cover institutional hostels and, where legally and administratively feasible, registered paying guest accommodations. The committee has also been tasked with suggesting a mechanism through which students can report unsafe accommodation, overcrowding, fire hazards and other serious safety concerns and receive time-bound action. For this, it will examine the development of a centralised digital monitoring mechanism or dashboard. Safety protocols will form another major part of the exercise. The panel will prescribe standard emergency evacuation and disaster-response protocols for student accommodation and devise a mechanism to ensure periodic fire and disaster mock drills and safety-awareness programmes for students, hostel wardens, university officials and PG operators. At the Sept 7 meeting, LG had directed the education minister to lead a committee of senior officials to review institutional and PG guidelines, explore alternative student accommodation through universities, MCD and DDA, and assess the feasibility of using unutilised or vacant DDA, MCD and other govt buildings for student accommodation.

Discrepancies in land records and building plan of PG hostel linked to BJP MLA, alleges AAP

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: AAP Thursday alleged major discrepancies in the land records and sanctioned building plan of a PG hostel in Satya Niketan, which has been linked to BJP MLA Anil Sharma. “If this hostel, which belongs to Anil Sharma or his family, is legal, then its building sanction plan must have been approved by MCD,” an AAP functionary said. He alleged that the registry and land documents attached to the building plan were for 230 square yards, but the PG occupied 400-500 square yards. He also alleged that the sanctioned plan was for 193 square metres and only 75% coverage was permissible. “They have covered

all,” he said, alleging that the construction was in violation of the sanctioned building plan. The AAP functionary also claimed that the property was recorded as residential in the registry, questioning how it was being used for a commercial purpose such as a hostel. He demanded action against the architect who uploaded the map and those who constructed the building, besides recovery of rent collected from the occupants. “How did the registry for 230 square yards of land and PG for 400-500 square yards happen?” he asked, questioning why MCD did not take action when the sanctioned map was for 230 square yards but construction allegedly took place

over a much larger area. The AAP functionary also wondered when CM Rekha Gupta would order action against the “illegal” PG. Earlier, Sharma had said he had duly registered documents and other papers relating to the property, including the sale deed and a map clearly mentioning its address. He had said the land had not been encroached upon and had been in his family for generations. Sharma had said that allegations should not be made without verifying facts and demanded that properties of politicians making such allegations be inspected to check whether they conform to sanctioned plans. The rules, he said, should be the same for everyone.

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