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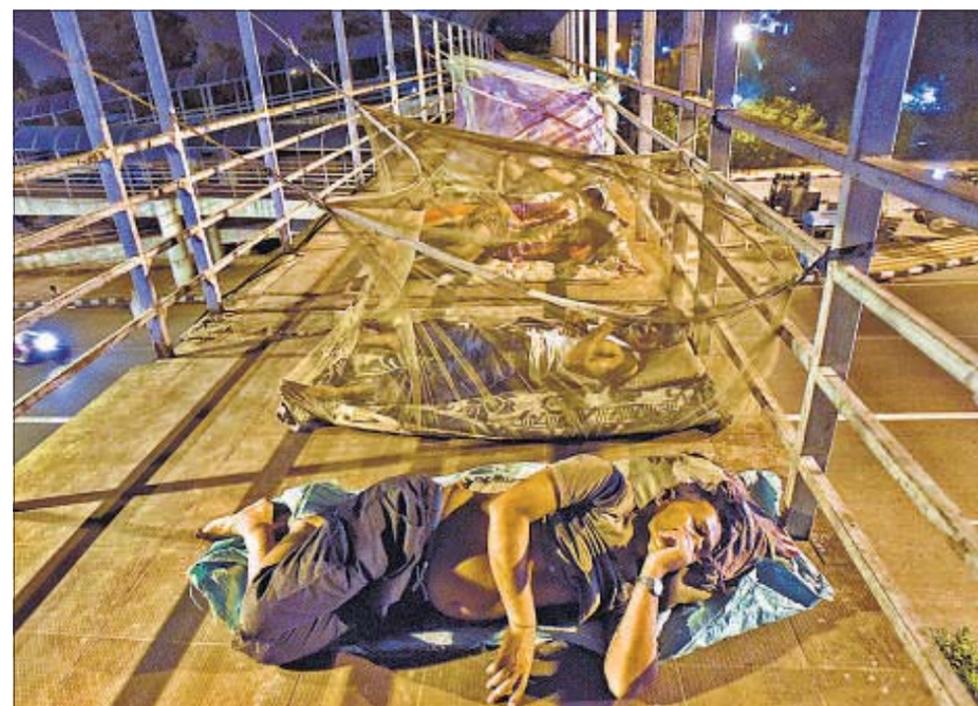
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# Nameless, forsaken even in their death

**FROM GROUND ZERO** Prawesh Lama and Ananya Bhardwaj spent 20 nights with the homeless, interviewing them on roads, below flyovers, in parks - everywhere



Over 400 homeless died in Delhi this summer, mostly in Old and North Delhi.

SONU MEHTA/HT PHOTO

**NEW DELHI:** They are everywhere. Outside temples, at traffic signals, on pavements, dividers and under yellow halogen street lights. Nameless and homeless in this city of 20 million, they remain unidentified when they die. On Sunday, police found the body of a man in his 30s. Without a name, he became a serial number in police records: UND16CL0047 (serial no. given to his body).

In Delhi, where no census or government body can put a number on the homeless population, HT's reporters visited the homeless on roads, below flyovers, in parks, atop parked cycle rickshaws and in night shelters.

Delhi's homeless are of many types. Some live alone, some work and return to shelters only to spend the night. Many are jobless and depend on Samaritans who visit shelters every day to distribute food.

Many men lie to their families about having their own home in Delhi. Some families have lived in shelters for more than 10 years. Not all homeless are beggars, drug addicts or criminals. Not all beggars are homeless either: Every homeless had a story to share.

Last month, a 35-year-old woman living on the street for over two decades was allegedly molested and robbed by a cop in the heart of Delhi.

A 45-year-old who has lost all his friends to AIDS and drug addiction knows his end is near but he won't stop injecting himself.

A woman, begging outside a city temple, said she's a farmer's wife who comes to Delhi to beg twice a week hoping to pay off a debt she has owed a villager for 20 years. In the five-part series, HT will highlight the problems of the homeless and give a sense of how they live.

## SPACE FOR 16,174 HOMELESS

The government's 197 night shelters have a capacity of only 16,174 people. Only 86 shelters are permanent structures (buildings). The rest are portable cabins. Since 2000, nine surveys - including one by the Commissioners of the Supreme Court - put the number of homeless between 52,000 and 2,46,000. Around 22,000 check into shelters each night and the rest sleep on road sides and in parks.

This summer, the number of unidentified homeless who died in old and north Delhi - where most homeless reside - is over 400. Police say most are addicts, who died of drug overdose or dehydration.

"The problem of homeless can be solved only when the government is serious," says Sunil Aledia, from the Centre for Holistic Development, an NGO working for the homeless.

Sunil says the government and the press talk about homeless only during the winters when they die of cold. "Do you know the government has no summer action plan for the homeless? We filed an RTI seeking details about their summer action plan and were surprised when they replied that no plan exists. Even the press remembers the homeless only in winter and come to night

shelters for a photo shoot. The rest of the time, they are forgotten."

## SHELTER PROBLEM

In 10 years, the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board, under the state government's social welfare department, spent ₹10.90 crore on NGOs running the 197 shelters. Every month, at least ₹45,000 is released per shelter. But in 2016, no audit or inspection has been carried by the government, says a RTI reply from DUSIB to a city NGO.

DUSIB CEO VK Jain said the RTI reply pertained to one division while the shelters are divided into 12. "Recently we had cancelled the contract of NGOs at 70 night shelters, who were not working properly. Regular inspection is carried by senior officers and a report is submitted," Jain. In most shelters, residents say they are at the mercy of NGOs and have no grievance mechanism.

"The government should inspect and see how we are living," a woman at the Bangla Saheb shelter compound said. As she pointed at two large holes on the doors of the two women's shelters near her: A week later, when HT visited the shelter, men stood outside while inside women slept and a few women changed clothes. The cardboard that had covered the holes was torn off giving the men a view of the women. Outside the shelter, the mobile toilets had no latch. Two cases of rape were reported here three months ago. Among the homeless, women are the most vulnerable as HT found out.

## NO ROOF OVER THEIR HEADS

Hundreds of homeless die on the city streets as they are left to the mercy of the elements in the Capital's torrid summer and freezing winter. Compared to the homeless population, city has negligible night shelters

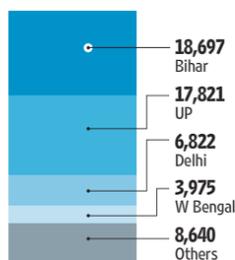
## POPULATION

No definitive survey has been undertaken till date to find out how many homeless live in Delhi. Different surveys quote varying figures

2010  
**55,955**  
As per Delhi government and UNDP

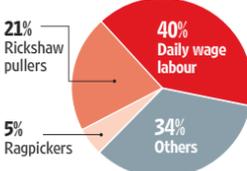
## NATIVE STATE

(As per the 2010 estimates)



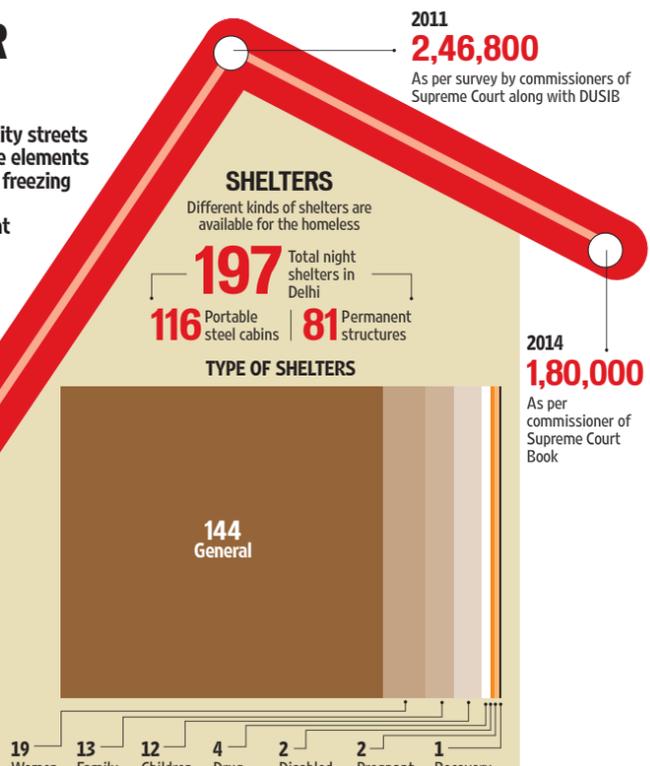
## EMPLOYMENT

(As per the 2010 estimates)



## WHAT GOVT SPENDS

- In 10 years, the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board, under the state government's social welfare department, spent ₹10.90 crore on NGOs running the 197 shelters
- Each month, at least ₹45,000 is released per shelter
- In 2016, no audit or inspection of the shelters has been done



**Woefully inadequate 16,174** Total capacity (197 shelters)

## PACKED IN WINTERS

The occupancy figures double during winter. Because 116 out of 197 shelters are portable steel cabins, a majority of the homeless prefer to sleep outside to escape the heat in portable cabins.

## FACILITIES

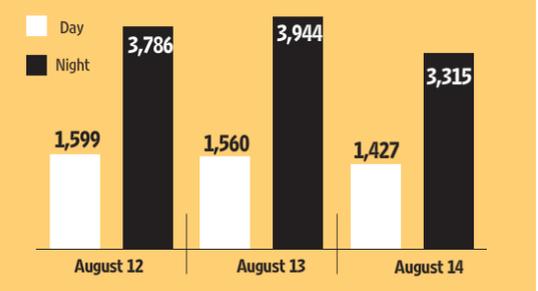
Anyone can check into a night shelter and spend as many nights as he/she wants. Most shelters are free while others charge a fee of ₹1. A few night shelters have television sets too.

**8.9%**

Of the homeless could be accommodated in the shelters. The rest sleep on the pavements, under the flyovers and bridges.

## LATEST OCCUPANCY REPORT

In most night shelters, inmates say, they are at the mercy of NGOs and have grievance mechanism. However, govt says it regularly inspects shelters.



GRAPHIC: PRANAB SAHA

## HTMETRO

# DDA to build three sub-cities in Dwarka, Narela and Rohini

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**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) is planning three new sub-cities on 631 hectares of land in Rohini, Dwarka and Narela.

A total of 259 hectares of land has been identified in Rohini, 218 hectares in Narela and 154 hectare in Dwarka.

DDA vice-chairman Arun Goel said, "The project has been approved by the ministries and departments concerned in a meeting held around a week ago."

The housing agency has invited consultants for preparing a detailed report for the project.

The new cities will be built on the concept of transit-oriented development (TOD). It means that the area will have accessibility to public transport such as Metro trains and DTC buses.

Secondly, markets will be built in a way that people do not have to depend upon personal vehicles to reach there.

There will also be space for office complexes.

A senior DDA official said



An apartment block in Dwarka. DDA says the new sub-cities will be built on the transit-oriented development concept.

HT FILE PHOTO

the newly-developed sub-cities will be a complete Wi-Fi zone. "Our focus is on ensuring that this area is developed like a green zone. There will be enough space for parks and plantation will be done along the roadside," he said.

According to a rough estimate, it will take around 4-5 years to complete the project. "A major problem that Delhi is facing is that our roads are designed in a way that they are car-friendly and not pedestrian-friendly. We want to reduce

people's dependency of personal vehicles, therefore, we will also explore the possibility of building a cycle track in these cities," he said.

Sources in DDA said that it is expected that the consultants will submit their report in the next three months.

DDA will first examine the report for Dwarka followed by Narela and Rohini. The process will take around three months.

Thereafter, it will go for scrutiny by the higher officials of the authority. Once

A major problem that Delhi is facing is that our roads are car-friendly and not pedestrian-friendly. We want to reduce people's dependency of personal vehicles, therefore, we will also explore the possibility of building a cycle track in these cities.

ARUN GOEL, vice-chairman, DDA

approved, DDA will invite tenders for starting construction of the project.

"It is expected that in six-months time, DDA will be in a position to start the construction," he said.

DDA claims that it will provide 24-hours electricity in the new sub-cities.

The agency will also rope in specialists to prepare a plan so that streets are designed in a way that there are no traffic jams in the inner lanes of the locality.

## Mini-truck crushes ragpicker in Palam, driver arrested

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**NEW DELHI:** A 13-year-old ragpicker was crushed to death by a mini-truck in southwest Delhi's Palam area on Monday.

According to the police, the driver, Mangal, 33, was reversing the vehicle and did not see the teenager sitting behind. Rajiv, a resident of the JJ cluster in Kailashpuri, was crushed under the rear wheel of the mini-truck. He was rushed to the hospital by the local residents and was declared dead on arrival by the doctors.

"The locals caught the driver and called the police," a senior police officer said.

The police have registered a case of rash and negligent driving. Mangal told the police that he did not realise that Rajiv was sitting behind his vehicle. "He said he checked the rear view mirrors before reversing the mini-truck and honked. He said it was not deliberate as he didn't see Rajiv," a senior police officer said.

The police have sent Rajiv's body for a post-mortem examination. "We have recorded the statement of the driver and the eyewitnesses. Mangal has been placed under arrest and his vehicle seized," a police officer said.

## Govt hiring young engineers for building toilets in Delhi

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**NEW DELHI:** The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government has decided to hire young engineers to help them in implementing its ambitious plan to make the Capital open defecation free.

The Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB), the agency that implements development programmes at slums, plans to construct two lakh public toilets across Delhi in the next five years. As many as 1.5 lakh of these toilets will be in the slum clusters.

Sources said over 250 engineers from IIT, Delhi Technological University and other prestigious engineering colleges have applied for 50 posts that the Delhi government seeks to fill. Many others working with some multi-national companies have also applied for the post which offers a pay of ₹25,000 per month.

The government has also hired post graduates to conduct a survey for its slum-free city plan. They will work with Delhi government for six months. Later, their contract may get extended.

"We have a shortage of engineers and recruiting them is a

## JOB OPENING

- 250 engineers from IIT, Delhi Technological University and other engineering colleges have applied for 50 posts
- The engineers will be hired on contract basis and paid ₹25,000 per month
- 5 lakh in Delhi are forced to defecate in the open

long process. The government decided to hire engineers on contract basis to expedite the development work. They will help us in building toilets and also in maintaining them," said a DUSIB official.

According to the government, over five lakh residents in the national Capital defecate in the open. Lack of public toilets is not the only reason behind people going to relieve themselves in the open. Improper maintenance of the public loos and restrictive timings also forces those without a permanent toilet at their premises to defecate in the open.

There are around 100 slum clusters in Delhi that lack toilet facilities. Women residents

have to walk long distances to relieve themselves.

In June, the Hindustan Times reported how children were going missing from a slum in outer Delhi's Shahbad Dairy where residents use a nearby forest for relieving themselves. Women and children who defecate in the open are prone to fall prey to sex offenders.

A survey found out that there are 259 open defecation spots in Delhi. It also said that there is a need for 24,036 toilet seats across 70 assembly constituencies. The DUSIB has proposed to construct 17,846 toilet seats before March 2017.

"We recently submitted a representation to chief minister Arvind Kejriwal proposing to construct toilets in the next 7-8 months. We asked MLAs to identify areas where toilets are required. A constituency-wise plan has been prepared," said a DUSIB official.

The government has decided to repair the existing toilets and penalise agencies for their poor upkeep. There are three types of toilets in the city - individual, constructed by different agencies; community, which are in the slums and maintained by the DUSIB; and public toilets, which are managed by the civic bodies.