

## Rats! Pied Piper needed in Sector 45 market

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*Representative image*

CHANDIGARH: Showrooms in Sector 45 are losing ground! Literally. Rodents are tunnelling beneath shops, removing the soil providing a stable foundation to the structures, complain shop owners.

The Sector 45 C market has around 2,000 shops. The damage varies from shop to shop. Traders say floors in their showrooms have started sinking from several places, forcing them to fill the gaps on a daily basis. Since many have constructed residential floors above their shops, they fear major damage to the structures.

Manjeet Singh, a hardware shop owner, says, "Rodents have weakened the foundation of my shop. I had to spend a good amount of money to get it fixed. New pillars and a beam have been constructed to protect the structure from any further damage."

In the absence of any action to stop the increase in the number of rodents, the reconstruction work may not turn out to be a permanent solution. "Every morning when I open the shop, a stink emanates from inside, indicating that some rat has died inside the shop. It takes more than 72 hours for the smell to fade away," says Mukesh Sharma, a businessman in Sector 45 market.

Bharat Bhushan Kapila, a businessman and president of Sector 45 Market Association, accuses the municipal corporation (MC) of ignoring their problem. "The rat menace has grown alarmingly and is damaging our properties now. Whenever we approach the civic body officials, they refuse to take any action. They have not even offered tablets to kill rats for spilling around the affected areas."

Satish Bajwa, another shopkeeper, complains, "We are not trained to spill rat kill tablets. Who will take responsibility if someone accidentally consumes the tablets? The MC must wake up to our problem and offer a serious solution."

Locals also blame a huge landfill opposite the market for the rodents. The trash from households gets collected around the place, which has rats all around it.

Trees and street light pillars are a major proof that rodents have severely damaged buildings in the area. Some trees and a lamp post have mud all around it, while there is a void below them. Vimal Kumar, a trader, says, "A few days back, a water tank installed in the market had collapsed after the rodents had dug up the mud below it."

## GRAVE THREAT

"This is a grave threat to buildings. If rodents just dig up to six inches, a major harm can be caused to any building,"

Vinod Joshi, an architect and chairman of Chandigarh Beopar Mandal Building By-laws Committee.