

News

Why the Supreme Court mandated the collection of stray dogs in Delhi NCR: "In the interest of humans as well as dogs"



Citing an increase in attacks and concerns for public safety, the court had directed officials to collect stray dogs, establish shelters, and make sure none were returned.

A stray dog

On **August 13**, the Supreme Court posted its ruling in the suo motu case concerning the problem of stray dogs in Delhi NCR, ordering that they be taken out of all areas right away and placed in shelters without being allowed to return to the streets [In Re: "**City hounded by strays, kids pay the price**"].

The threat of dog bites directly violates persons' fundamental rights under Articles 19(1)(d) and 21 of the Constitution, according to a bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan.

According to the Court, sterilisation regulations have not been able to control the issue for the previous 20 years, and more than 25,000 dog bite instances were reported in Delhi in 2024, with over 3,000 occurring in January 2025 alone.

“The urgent problem we have taken on is not motivated by a passing whim... This is not the moment for complacent opposition or hesitancy. Now is the moment to face the facts of our society and take decisive, group action. The directive said, “If we don't take immediate action, we run the risk of letting another twenty years slide into the record of neglect, leaving future generations to face the same challenges and risk”

Number of dog bites reported in Delhi NCR and India between 2022 and 2025

The predicament of blind people, small children, the elderly, and those from low-income families who are bitten by stray dogs was a major concern for the Court.

Because dogs view their greatest support—canes—as threats, those with visual impairments are most vulnerable to dog bites. Due to the risk of dog bites, parents find it extremely challenging to let their young children walk the streets alone. We have received reports of rowdy dogs attacking elderly people. The situation is worse for those who are compelled to sleep on the streets, in particular.

In addition to encouraging people to adopt stray dogs, the Court disapproved of animal enthusiasts' "virtue signaling."

"A virtual barrier between "animal lovers" and others who don't care about animals is being tried to be established. However, for all practical reasons, the core of the issue is still unsolved. As a court, everyone's heart hurts equally. We condemn those who seek the warmth of self-congratulation under the pretext of "love and care" for the voiceless. As a court that works for the welfare of the people, we offer instructions that are beneficial to both people and dogs. It's not personal.

The Court has issued the following directives:

The government of Delhi, the Delhi Municipal Corporation, the New Delhi Municipal Council, and the authorities of NOIDA, Ghaziabad, Gurugram, and Faridabad must start collecting stray dogs from all locations, particularly the outskirts and vulnerable areas.

For this, a special "force" may be established.

Dogs that are captured must be sterile, vaccinated, and dewormed.

No street re-release:

Under no circumstances may stray dogs be returned to public areas.

Within eight weeks, dog shelters and pound locations must be constructed throughout the NCR.

A minimum of 5,000 canines should be accommodated at first, with the possibility of expansion in the future.

Shelters need staff, security cameras, enough food, and medical

Protections for animal welfare:

No brutality or mistreatment is allowed.

Vulnerable pets should be kept apart; overcrowding must be avoided.

Rules for adoption:

The Animal Welfare Board's 2022 protocol may allow adoption, with no return to the streets.

Rapid response and helpline:

A helpline number for reporting dog bites must be established within a week.

The dogs in question need to be apprehended within four hours of the complaint.

Data on vaccinations:

The Delhi government will release information on the supply, availability, and monthly treatment figures for the rabies vaccine.

Enforcement:

Contempt of court will be applied to any hindrance by people or organizations.

Transfer of a comparable case:

The Supreme Court will hear the Delhi High Court case Parthima Devi v. MCD, which concerns the establishment of a dog sanctuary.

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