

# Another worker dies cleaning Delhi drains; 10th death in 35 days

TNN | Aug 21, 2017, 05.53 AM IST



*Another worker dies cleaning Delhi drains; 10th death in 35 days*

enquiry into the incident. Police said they received a PCR call from a hospital staffer at 1pm, soon after which teams were rushed to the site. Cops found that labourers were working without any safety equipment.

NEW DELHI: Sanitation worker Rishi Pal, 50, became the tenth person to die cleaning the city's drains in the past 35 days after he, along with three coworkers, entered a toxic gasfilled PWD sewer line in central Delhi's Lok Nayak hospital on Sunday afternoon without any safety equipment. In a grim repeat of three such incidents since July 16 claiming nine lives, the labourers followed each other into the clogged, 15-foot-deep line after the previous person had stopped responding. Witnesses said Pal was the first to go inside the tank and was knocked unconscious within a few seconds. Two others are battling for life after being rescued in the nick of time.

Police said two sewage lines near Gate 2 of the hospital were clogged and a private contractor had been asked to clear it. PWD has ordered an

Cases under culpable homicide not amounting to murder (section 304) and attempt to commit culpable homicide (308) under IPC has been registered against the contractor, who is on the run. Teams have been formed to nab him, said Mandeep Singh Randhawa, deputy commissioner of police (central).

[Read this story in Bengali](#)

While ordering an inquiry, PWD said prima facie the tragedy appeared to be a lapse on the part of officials in allowing the

workers to enter the drain without any protective gear."There are standing instructions for anyone who enters drains for cleaning. We are trying to determine why these workers went in without any gear," said an official.

Witnesses said Pal stopped responding to questions barely moments after lowering himself into the drain. Assuming that Pal could not hear them as the drain was deep, another worker, Bhisham descended into the tank.

The other two, Kiran and Sumit, waited outside. Sumit kept talking to Bhisham, but a few seconds later, stopped getting responses from him as well. Kiran then went inside, hoping to bring the other two out. But in no time, he too stopped responding.

Police said Sumit, the only worker not to go in, alerted everyone outside and went to fetch a rope. After successfully getting the others out, Sumit too fell unconscious. Another survivor, Kiran, told TOI: "I have been working with the same contractor for the last two years and have faced perils in my job at every step. Since I am the sole earning member of the family, I had no option but to stick to it," he said.

The three men were pulled out of the drain about half-an-hour after they went inside. They were admitted in the emergency ward of the same hospital. Pal was declared brought dead, while Bhisham, Kiran and Sumit were given treatment. Sumit was later discharged.