

Rat bite cases continue to spike in Peshawar

By Hidayat Khan, May 18, 2016, Peshawar, Pakistan



PESHAWAR: Huge piles of unattended waste that are being dumped in the streets and drains of the city are believed to be one of the major reasons behind the increasing number of rats.

The subsequent failure of civic bodies in disposing it of in a proper manner has led to the rats feeding on waste and ultimately becoming a threat to the city and its people.

The filthy streets of the “second most polluted city in the world” have become a safe haven for the rats that started attacking people. As per data released from Lady Reading Hospital, around 380 cases were reported only in first half of May.



Peshawar announces rat-killing bounty after infestation

The number is much higher than what it was in April when in the entire month 376 cases were

reported.

“The number is increasing day by day,” an official of LRH said, requesting anonymity as he was not authorised to speak to the media. The chief minister has reportedly prohibited health officials from speaking about the rat infestation in the city.

“The rats are getting bolder due to the extra food available to them in the city,” said Karm Bakhsh, a resident of Nothia. He was visiting Lady Reading Hospital after he was bitten by a rat.

Bakhsh added, “I have been living in Nothia for 35 years, but never saw rats in such a large number and so bold. We have tried to poison them but [our efforts] have been in vain.”

Locals and more

Residents of the city are not the only ones who have to grapple with the large number of rats in the city. The rodents have become a threat to chickens as well now.

“The rats are everywhere now, I saw them running after chickens,” 35-year-old Muhammad Umar, a poultry farm owner, told *The Express Tribune*. He showed his right toe that was bitten by a rat when he was giving chicken feed to his poultry at night.

Killer’ rats rattle rural Peshawar

Umar has been in the city for the last 12 years, but he has never witnessed such a large quantity of rats.

Growing on waste

Government officials have no evidence to explain why rats have suddenly become a nuisance for locals, as they were present in the city in the past as well. Unplanned and unregulated development is believed to be one of the reasons.

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after chickens
Poultry farm owner, Muhammad Umar

“The increasing number of municipal waste [that is being] dumped in drains has become a fodder for rats to feed on,” a wildlife department official told *The Express Tribune*. He requested anonymity as he was not authorised to speak to the media. “It is a domestic issue which cannot be solved until the municipal waste is disposed of properly,” he added.

Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar Media Manager Taimur Shah said it was difficult to eradicate the rodents, but they were doing their best to address the matter.

He added the rats have a lot of food in the form of waste.

“We kill at least 500 rats daily.” He said it was impossible for them to eradicate their existence as a single dam (parent female rat) can give birth to “12 new rats in 24 days”.

Abode in waste

There were reportedly heaps of garbage in 756 spots in the city– as it was picked up recently. The places used to be sanctuaries for rats.

The garbage, which includes remains of chickens and other animals, is directly thrown in drains due to which these places become sanctuaries for the pests. As per data provided by WSSP, 902 tonnes of waste is generated in Peshawar on a daily basis. Out of the quantity, they collect 683 tonnes every day.

“Since the inception of WSSP in 2014, we have cleared 340,810 tonnes of waste,” Shah said. “People have to play their role in cleaning the city, if they want to get rid of the menace of rats.”