

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 855
ANSWERED ON 27/07/2026**

DEFICIENCIES IN URBAN PLANNING AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE

855. SHRI CONSTANDINE RAVINDRAN:

Will the Minister of *Housing and Urban Affairs* be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the government has taken note of reports attributing recurring fires, building collapses, stampedes and other urban disasters to congestion, unsafe construction and weak enforcement of planning regulations;
- (b) the findings of Government regarding deficiencies in urban planning and municipal governance;
- (c) whether a nationwide review of compliance with the National Building Code and fire safety norms has been conducted;
- (d) whether mandatory periodic safety audits of public buildings are under consideration; and
- (e) the measures proposed to decongest cities, strengthen disaster preparedness and ensure accountability for preventable urban disasters?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOUSING & URBAN AFFAIRS
(SHRI TOKHAN SAHU)**

(a) to (e): As per 12th Schedule of the Constitution of India, municipal governance, urban planning including building plan approvals and enforcement of building byelaws relating to construction and firefighting are the function of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and Urban Development Authorities (UDAs).

The Government of India supplements the efforts of States and Union Territories through model regulations, technical standards, guidelines and advisories such as the Model Building Bye-Laws (MBBL), 2016, and the Urban and Regional Development Plans Formulation and Implementation (URDPFI) Guidelines, 2014. The Government further supports them through various Missions including the Smart Cities Mission, Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM).

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has issued Model Building Byelaws (MBBL)– 2016 (<https://www.mohua.gov.in/static/uploads/2026/07/0e33558a9326c8a89f945cae00cc3647.pdf>) in which Chapter 6 lays down provisions for structural safety and specifies standards for enhancing the structural resilience of buildings against urban disasters. Further, Chapter 11 of MBBL – 2016 deals with the Fire Protection and Fire Safety Requirements in an advisory capacity; ensuring implementation and compliance with these fire safety measures rests with the concerned ULB or UDA.

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In addition, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), has issued the National Disaster Management Guidelines on Management of Earthquakes, which provide guidance on earthquake risk reduction, including safer construction provisions, structural strengthening and retrofitting of buildings, particularly for lifeline and critical infrastructure.

(<https://ndma.gov.in/sites/default/files/PDF/Guidelines/earthquakes.pdf>).

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), under the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, publishes the National Building Code (NBC), which has been revised as the National Construction Standards 2026 (NBCS 2026), effective from 30th April 2026; these indigenous Indian Standards, including NBCS 2026 are available for download from the BIS e-sale portal. NBCS 2026 is a model code without independent legal force and becomes enforceable only when adopted by a state government or Urban Local Body (Municipal corporation/ Development Authority) through building bye-laws or regulations, with primary responsibility for compliance lying with the concerned ULB/UDA. Under Part F, 'Fire and Life Safety', NBCS 2026 sets out provisions relating to fire prevention, line safety in relation to fire, and fire protection of buildings, with key updates including mandatory fire and line safety audits for high-rise buildings, performance-based fire safety design, and enhanced fire detection and suppression requirements tailored to the type and intensity of industrial hazards.

At the Central Government level, the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) undertakes periodic safety inspections of public buildings under its maintenance in accordance with the provisions and applicable fire safety norms and ensures that building constructed by CPWD comply with NBCS 2026 as well as the relevant fire safety requirements of the local bodies of the respective State Governments.
