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## 'We've learnt our lesson, others can learn from us'

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**Mumbai:** Sadaf Manzil collapsed in monsoon 2005, killing 11 people, three days after Mhada engineers declared it safe. Laxmi Chhaya, another building at another corner of Mumbai, crumbled in monsoon 2007 because of different reasons but with similarly tragic results. Residents of these two buildings have never met each other but their common tragedy has made them realise the importance of taking building repairs and audits seriously.

Sadaf Manzil tenants suggest that Mumbaikars, staying in the 19,000-odd dilapidated buildings of the city, should alert the authorities whenever they see danger signs and be proactive in getting them repaired; and, if that does not happen, they should not waste time in vacating the building.

"It is again raining heavily in the city; gutters are flooded and water stagnates around the foundation of buildings. Conditions very similar to the present led to the collapse of our building," Abdul Lateef, a Sadaf Manzil tenant, said on Tuesday.

Lateef, now staying in Nalasopara, suggests residents of old buildings approach multiple agencies (BMC, Mhada or the repair board). "At least one of them will take interest," he explained.

Borivli's Laxmi Chhaya crumbled because of different reasons last July; a probe revealed that owners of a ground-floor jewellery shop had done up the interiors of their unit and that might have affected the building's stability.

They had allegedly reduced the width of a pillar, damaging the foundations of the building.

Survivors of the crash now say residents of every Mumbai building should go in for structural audits regularly.

"The recommendations should also be implemented," Moolchand Chheda, one of the survivors, said on Tuesday.

"Permission for repair and renovation should always follow a strict inquiry," Durgesh Kothari, who lost his parents, sister and grandmother, added.

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