

NEW DELHI

Crisis looms as sanitation staff go on strike



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East Delhi residents could have a messy weekend on their hands, with municipal sanitation workers launching a strike on Friday over delay in payment of salaries.

The indefinite strike by the sanitation staff of the East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) could lead to garbage piling up on the streets and spilling out of *dhalaos*.

The EDMC, which has been plagued by a financial crisis for two years now, has been unable to pay staff, including 17,000 sanitation workers, their salaries for November and December.

The sanitation workers, who have gone on similar strikes several times over the past two years, held a protest outside Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia's office as well as the

EDMC headquarters in Patparganj. The workers said that they would not end their strike till the salaries are paid.

The EDMC has said that it will not be able to pay the workers till funds from the Delhi government are disbursed.

‘Services at a standstill’

EDMC Standing Committee chairperson Jitendra Choudhary said that sanitation services had come to a standstill.

“The removal of 2,500 metric tonnes of garbage a day from *dhalaos* has stopped, as well as sweeping of streets. This is an emergency. We have been trying to reach out to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Mr. Sisodia, but they are occupied with the Punjab elections,” said the chairperson.

Mr. Choudhary added that BJP councillors of the EDMC may have to “join the protest”. He said the EDMC had asked the Delhi Government to expedite the disbursement of the last instalment of grants for this financial year.

Release of funds

Sources said that the government may release funds for the civic bodies within a week. However, workers said that they would not end their strike on promises alone.

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