

# Homelessness is every city's silent emergency

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Urbanisation, often celebrated as the hallmark of progress, carries within it a paradox that modern societies are struggling to resolve. As cities grow into centres of economic power, cultural vibrancy, and technological innovation, they simultaneously become landscapes where inequality is etched into everyday life. Amid the towering apartments, gleaming malls, and illuminated flyovers lives a population that has no roof to call its own. Urban homelessness—once viewed as a marginal issue—has now transformed into a silent emergency that shadows the march of development. It is not simply a logistical failure; it is a moral challenge that questions the very soul of our cities.

The roots of this crisis lie in the deep and persistent imbalance between the dream of urban prosperity and the reality of urban planning. Every year, millions leave their villages and small towns, drawn by the promise of jobs, education, and opportunity. But the cities they arrive in suffer from a different crisis: an acute shortage of af-

fordable housing. While high-rise apartments multiply and real-estate prices soar beyond imagination, the poor often find no legal or safe space to live. The mismatch is stark—the engines of the urban economy depend heavily on migrant labourers, domestic workers, street vendors, construction workers, delivery personnel, and security staff, yet these very contributors cannot afford even the most basic shelter.

Real-estate speculation only worsens the problem. Housing stock is increasingly locked up as investment rather than lived-in spaces. Property prices rise far beyond the real income levels of ordinary citizens. Middle-class families stretch their finances to breaking point to secure small apartments, while the urban poor slide further into precarity. Gentrification, now a common urban phenomenon, transforms old, affordable neighbourhoods into glossy enclaves for the wealthy. As buildings are demolished and land is acquired for commercial use, generations-old communities are uprooted. Cultural memory and social cohe-



sion suffer irreparable damage, and the displaced join the swelling ranks of the homeless.

Homelessness, however, is not merely the absence of four walls. It is the erosion of dignity, identity, and agency. Without an address, a person becomes invisible in the administrative map of a city. Identity documents cannot be obtained or renewed. Children are unable to access schooling. Healthcare systems remain out of reach. Welfare schemes, no matter how well de-

signed, exclude those who cannot prove their residence. A homeless person lives at the crossroads of multiple vulnerabilities—economic, social, psychological, and health-related. Each day becomes a struggle for survival, not just existence.

The tragedy is that homelessness is often a preventable condition. A sudden job loss, medical emergency, family breakdown, or natural disaster can push an already vulnerable person below the line of stability.

Without social security measures—rental support, emergency shelters, counselling, and food assistance—people who were once self-sufficient can quickly slip into chronic homelessness. This is not a failure of individuals; it is a structural failure of the system meant to protect them.

Addressing the crisis demands a compassionate and multi-layered response. Governments must recognise affordable housing not as a charitable act but as a fundamental human right. Urban planners need to shift from a market-driven approach to a people-centred one. Cities must invest in large-scale rental housing specifically designed for low-income and migrant populations. Inclusionary zoning laws can ensure that private developers allocate a portion of every housing project to economically weaker sections. Slum redevelopment should focus on in-situ upgrading—improving water, sanitation, and electricity—rather than displacing residents to far-off resettlement colonies where livelihoods are lost.

Additionally, cities must establish a network of dignified

night shelters, community kitchens, mobile healthcare units, and employment-matching centres. Technological tools can be used to identify homeless populations, track their needs, and connect them to government schemes. Civil society organisations and volunteers can help bridge the trust deficit that often keeps the homeless away from institutional support.

Ultimately, the measure of a city's greatness lies not in its architecture or GDP but in its compassion toward its most vulnerable residents. A truly developed city is one where the poorest citizen can sleep without fear, where no one is forced to call a pavement home, and where the promise of urban life includes dignity, safety, and shelter for all.

Urban homelessness is a reminder that progress without inclusion is merely an illusion. As we build smarter, cleaner, and technologically advanced cities, we must also build kinder ones—cities where every individual, irrespective of class or income, has the basic right to a place to call home.

## Growing a zodiac houseplant is a unique way to add a personal touch to your home



their upward spiraling habit and strong growth,' Julie adds.

Kentia palm care is incredibly low-maintenance. The most important thing to do is not to overwater your palm which could cause it to discolor. Try using this soil mois-



ture meter from Amazon to identify moisture levels in the soil and only water when the top couple of inches have dried out. The Sill offers this beautiful large Kentia palm, also known as a majesty palm.

Bird of Paradise flower, Strelitzia, of the family Strelitziaeae, growing as a house plant indoors

The bird of paradise plant is one of the most impressive flowering houseplants. It has showy, large foliage and bright orange blooms reminiscent of a bird, earning it its name. 'With its vibrant flowers, the bird of paradise is said to represent a joyful, free spirit,' Julie explains. This is why it is paired with the Aries zodiac sign—known for being passionate and full of energy.

Something to note with growing bird of paradise is it needs plenty of bright light in order to flower. It's also wise to use a method

sign are considered to be relaxed and easy going. To care for a peace lily, simply provide medium light, keep moisture at a consistent level, and remember to fertilize your peace lily (with this peace lily fertilizer from Amazon) during the warmer months to help encourage growth.



Kentia palms are one of the best tall indoor plants, bringing a jungle-feel to interiors with its soft-arching foliage.

Virgos are often thought to have traits of organization and reliability, much like the hardy Kentia palm that tolerates a range of growing conditions. It's even an indoor low-light plant, making it fuss-free. Kentia palm trees are also said to denote strength, with



to increase humidity for indoor plants for the bird of paradise, as it is native to the warmer climates of South Africa.

The cowboy cactus (Opuntia Rubescens Consolea) is actually not a cactus at all—it's rather a type of euphorbia with a cactus-like appearance. 'This plant is known to represent resilience and the ability to endure,' Julie explains. It's for this reason it's paired with Leo—a star sign associated with bold, leadership traits. Not only this, but cowboy cactus thrives in sunlight and Leo, of course, is a fire sign. If you find your cowboy cactus is turning brown, it's likely due to overwatering and houseplant root rot.

### Weekly Horoscope: Nov. 30th to 06th Dec. 2025

As you approach the final month of the year, transition is everywhere. The astrology of the week mirrors this with the entire arc of transition—beginning, experiencing, and ending. It's the kind of week when intuition speaks, knowing there is something within you that guides you toward a particular rhythm and unfolding. Your weekly horoscope helps you recognize the signs. Read for your rising sign.



Aries

It's a full moon in Aries on the 6th which means you're feeling lit up, energized, and likely totally overwhelmed. Progress is being made—especially in family matters and working through debts—but having all eyes on you while it happens adds an extra layer of stress. Sweetness can be found through leaning into routines and taking care of your body. Just try not to get obsessed with perfection. Trying is what matters.



Libra

The full moon in Aries on the 6th allows you to see your options clearly. The decision you have to make around a partnership or contract isn't easy. It might hurt. But you can't go on pretending everything is fine. Walking away isn't about giving up, it's about self-protection. If you're not ending something, but running into a connection headfirst this week, make sure you're going where you're held and valued.



Taurus

The full moon in Aries on the 6th gives you some much-needed space to hear yourself think. You're finding the flow at your new job and your kids are finally settled into their school year routine. This week, you have time to take a yoga class or at least put your phone on Do Not Disturb for an afternoon. The weekend brings another challenging task to get through but luckily you have good friends willing to lend a helping hand.



Scorpio

If you're feeling stagnant at work or having trouble with motivation to head to the gym, this week's full moon in Aries on the 6th is the spark that you need to get back on track. It's scary to break away from what's comfortable, but you're running out of excuses not to make a big change. Mercury also moves into your sign on the 6th bringing you a much-needed boost in confidence and self-expression.



Gemini

The last two years have brought a lot of dramatic change to your friend groups, and you've met so many new people. The full moon in Aries on the 6th is a chance for you to put all of those puzzle pieces together as you lead a community project. With your ruling planet Mercury now in Scorpio, you're also ready to get laser-focused on a work project or fitness routine for the rest of the fall.



Sagittarius

The full moon in Aries on the 6th finds you on a hot date or reaching a creative peak. You've experienced a lot of ups and downs when it comes to your love life and artistic motivation over the last few years, and this week's astrology gives you some free time to focus only on what you desire. Over the weekend, you're back to work and family problems but give yourself at least one night of fun.



Cancer

This week's full moon in Aries on the 6th reveals some important information about the next steps you need to take in your career. After many ups and downs over the last two years, you're finally able to see, with clarity, what's working and what isn't. This full moon could bring an opportunity for leadership or a project that gives you more creative freedom. Take some time to delegate the things you no longer want on your plate.



Capricorn

If you thought you were getting away with a "chill" visit to see family this week, think again. The full moon in Aries on the 6th turns your sister's birthday party into The Family Stone. Hiding in the bathroom to text a friend while your siblings fight will absolutely bring some relief. But also make sure you stick around for the cathartic and healing revelations at the dinner table.



Leo

The full moon in Aries on the 6th lights the way to your next adventure. Over the last few years, you've expanded your worldview, started school and gone on many incredible vacations. But what's being revealed now feels grounded and purposeful and not overwhelming. A heart to heart with a family member or close friend will make the decision clear.



Aquarius

After weeks of dealing with debts and stressing about the "big picture," the full moon in Aries on the 6th brings a much-needed night at the local bar or cozy evening with friends. Your friend group has changed dramatically over the last two years, but you're finally settling in with the new squad. Details are also coming together for a big work project or leadership opportunity, but it's not ready to be shared with the public yet.



Virgo

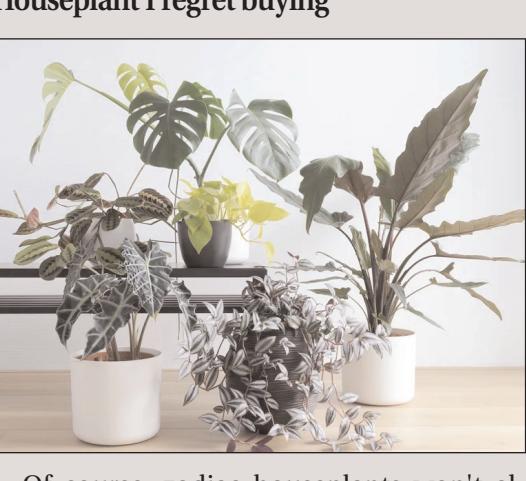
This week's full moon in Aries on the 6th reveals an opportunity to invest. The last few years have brought many ups and downs in your financial and emotional life—the highest highs and lowest lows—and as you reach another turning point, you're feeling ready to pool resources and make an important joint investment. Try not to get too caught up in the details and psych yourself out. Either go all in or move on.



Pisces

Your financial life has been a rollercoaster over the last two years, and with this week's full moon in Aries, you're finally able to see the situation for what it is. Though your bank balance is finally stabilized, this whole process was a major hit to your self-esteem, and that's what you need to work on now. Opportunities to teach and share your wisdom will help build your confidence.

### Houseplant I regret buying



Of course, zodiac houseplants won't always suit every individual of a certain star sign. It's always best to research the requirements of a houseplant to see if you can meet them, as well as make choices based on which plants bring you joy. Here, one houseplant expert shares why zodiac houseplants might be a good pick for you.

Peace lilies are classic indoor flowering plants, loved for their elegant blooms. They are synonymous with a number of occasions in life. 'This plant symbolizes peace, as its name suggests, as well as hope and tranquility,' explains Julie Bawden-Davis, indoor plant expert at Healthy Houseplants.

The reason the peace lily is associated with Libras is it also makes the list of easy indoor plants and individuals with this star



to increase humidity for indoor plants for the bird of paradise, as it is native to the warmer climates of South Africa.

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