

Delhi: ₹2,000 fine for not wearing face mask, says Kejriwal amid Covid surge

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- He urged all the religious heads and other administrative officials to make sure that their workers and officers move out in the city wearing a mask.
- Delhi government will also urge the hospitals to stall non-emergency operations so that Covid-19 patients get the maximum care, Kejriwal said.

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal Thursday announced that the fine for not wearing a face mask has been increased to ₹2,000 from ₹500 earlier.

Kejriwal's announcement came at a time when the national capital is witnessing a high surge in novel coronavirus cases in the last past week.

Amid this, Kejriwal said, "A lot of people are wearing face mask but some are still not adhering to the rules. The fine has now been increased for ₹500 to ₹2,000."

He urged all the religious heads and other administrative officials to make sure that their workers and officers move out in the city wearing a mask.

During a press conference today, Kejriwal also highlighted that importance of the festive season and the heightened need to celebrate it outside. Addressing the issue, he said, "You can imagine that COVID-19 will be spread on a large scale. So, celebrations are not banned. What is banned is the entering of a large number of people in a pond or river at once. Let's celebrate at homes."

Delhi government will also urge the hospitals to stall non-emergency operations so that Covid-19 patients get the maximum care, Kejriwal said. "If you have a tonsils operation, you can schedule it next month too as it is not emergency. We will request the hospitals in this regard."

For the upcoming Chhath Puja, the AAP leader said, "We want our brothers and sisters to celebrate Chhath Puja very nicely. Please celebrate but if 200 people enter into a pond at a time, and even if just one of them has COVID-19, all of them will contract the infection. This is also the opinion of experts."

Meanwhile, the third wave of the coronavirus in Delhi is still going strong, and a significant dip in pollution levels after the post-Diwali rain does not appear to have helped. According to a Mint report, a coronavirus test in the national capital is still around 13% likely to turn positive. Despite high testing, this is among the highest positivity rates in the country.

The city has added 43,109 new cases (11% rise) since last week—nearly one in six of all cases reported in India. This has taken Delhi's total case-load past 500,000. With more and more patients under treatment, Delhi is now one of only eight states and Union territories with a recovery rate below 90%, the report added.