

## **Delhi govt declares 10 Nov as public holiday on account of Chhath Puja**

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The Delhi government has decided to designate 10 November this year as a 'public holiday' due to Chhath Puja, as per a new order issued on Friday.

"Chhath Puja is an important festival for the people of NCT of Delhi. Accordingly, Government of Delhi has decided to declared 10th November 2021 as public holiday on account of Chhath Puja," the order reads.

The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) had earlier given permission to celebrate Chhath at determined places in Delhi in compliance with all Covid-19 norms.

"The celebration of Chhath Puja during the month of November shall be allowed only at designated sites outside containment zones with requisite permission from the district magistrate. No site shall be designated on the bank of river Yamuna," the DDMA order read.

It further stated that puja material offered by devotees should be collected by the municipal authorities concerned and other relevant agencies for immediate and proper disposal in a scientific manner.

"All devotees shall be strictly prohibited from throwing puja material like food grain, oil etc into river Yamuna. "It shall be ensured that no such material is permitted to join the main stream of river at any point," said the order.

The DDMA also asked all organisers of Chhath Puja to submit an undertaking to the district magistrate of the area in respect of strict adherence of the guidelines of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) and the Yamuna Monitoring Committee.

The authority further said that the sites shall be managed by the respective district magistrate in coordination with departments and agencies concerned.

Earlier, in an order issued on 30 September, the DDMA had prohibited Chhath celebrations at public places, including at riverbanks, water bodies and temples, in view of the threat posed by Covid-19.

Following this, the BJP staged a protest at the residence of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and demanded that Chhath celebrations should be allowed.

Later on 14 October, Kejriwal wrote a letter to Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal to allow Chhath Puja in Delhi.

Chhath, celebrated after Diwali by people belonging to Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh, involves offering of 'Arghya' by fasting women to the Sun god in knee-deep water.