



# Will give free safety kits to sewer workers: Kejri

## CM attends sewer safety workshop; govt move comes after spate of sewer workers' deaths

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**D**elhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today announced that his government will provide safety kit for free to every sanitation worker engaged in cleaning of sewers in the national capital.

Kejriwal was addressing a workshop on sewer safety and awareness of field-level sewer workers, which was organised by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) at Talkatora Stadium here.

"When someone dies in a sewer it makes everyone sad. The Delhi government and the Delhi Jal Board are making

solid arrangements for your safety. This workshop and training is being done to ensure that no one dies in the manner in which we have seen people die after getting into sewers to clean them," the CM said.

The AAP government's move to give free safety kits to sanitation workers came in the wake of a spate of deaths of sanitation workers while cleaning drains and tanks in Delhi over the last several months.

The Delhi government had flagged off 200 sewer cleaning machines on 28 February this year but the workers are yet to receive those machines. It is a different matter that

their large size would not allow them to enter narrow lanes.

Interacting with sanitation workers involved in sewer-cleaning, the CM, who is also the DJB chairman, said, "The kits will be given to everyone so that even if the contractor doesn't provide you with the gear, you use your own gear to stay safe and no untoward incident takes place."

Kejriwal also administered an oath of safety and security to the sanitation staff present at the workshop. The oath said that no worker would enter any sewer without proper safety gear and would take proper care with regard to his safety.

The workshop was also attended by the DJB vice chairman Dinesh Mohaniya and the Delhi chief secretary apart from other officials and workers.

"We have organised one-day workshop to enhance the skills of sanitation workers and make them aware about the use of safety kits. There are around 12,000 sanitation workers with DJB and around 4,000 joined the workshop," the DJB vice chairman reportedly said.

The BJP's Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly, Vijender Gupta, however, said

that this workshop on sewer safety awareness, organised by the Delhi govern-

ment, was a "political stunt".

He charged that the DJB was trying to escape from the responsibility of providing safe and secure environment to sewage workers by diverting attention from the main issues. The Delhi government has not taken any concrete action under the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (PEMSR) so far, he alleged.

Gupta urged the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to take strong action against the Delhi government over its "criminal negligence" in implementation of laws aimed at preventing death of labourers while cleaning septic tanks.