

# New Delhi schools shut because of toxic smog

November 1 2019

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A bird flies past as Delhi's sky line is seen enveloped in smog and dust in New Delhi, India, Friday, Nov. 1, 2019. An expert panel in India's capital has declared a health emergency due to air pollution choking the city, with authorities ordering schools closed until Nov. 5. (AP Photo/Manish Swarup)

An expert panel in India's capital declared a health emergency Friday due to air pollution choking the city, with authorities ordering schools closed until Nov. 5.

The Supreme Court-appointed panel is also temporarily banning construction activity in the New Delhi region to control the dust in the air.

Air pollution in New Delhi generally peaks around Nov. 1 due to a combination of smog from fireworks set off during a Hindu festival and smoke from the burning of agricultural fields in the neighboring states.

The air quality index reading at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi for pollution particles in the air reached nine times the recommended WHO level on Friday. At such levels people are advised to avoid all outdoor exertion due to the health risks.

New Delhi's top elected official Arvind Kejriwal already has announced a plan to restrict the movement of private cars in the capital for nearly two weeks, beginning Monday.

Private cars running on petrol and diesel will be allowed in New Delhi only on alternate days from Nov. 4 to 15 depending on whether they have even or odd numbered plates.

Kejriwal said that similar restrictions in 2016 reduced air pollution up to 13%.

On Friday, he distributed free masks to groups of young children in the Indian capital.



Delhi's sky line is seen enveloped in smog and dust in New Delhi, India, Friday, Nov. 1, 2019. An expert panel in India's capital has declared a health emergency due to air pollution choking the city, with authorities ordering schools closed until Nov. 5. (AP Photo/Manish Swarup)



An Indian technician works atop a cellular tower in New Delhi, India, Friday, Nov. 1, 2019. An expert panel in India's capital declared a health emergency Friday due to air pollution choking the city, with authorities ordering schools closed until Nov. 5. (AP Photo/Altaf Qadri)

Last month Kejriwal announced plans to sweep roads mechanically, plant trees and control pollution at 12 hotspots in the city.

India is home to many of the world's most polluted cities.

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