

# Minimum wage hike likely next week: CM

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**N**EW DELHI: Making a pitch for the city's poor, CM Arvind Kejriwal announced on Saturday that his government was preparing to enhance the minimum wages for the working class. The decision is likely to be taken next week. The increase, he said, would be significant. According to the CM, while the move is an attempt to improve the quality of life of the skilled and unskilled labourers, it may also make way for in-situ rehabilitation of slum-dwellers and creation of shelters for the homeless.

"We are planning a significant hike in minimum wages as a measure to improve the quality of life of the labourers. This will be a major step and we will make this happen next week," the Kejriwal said while speaking at a

book launch function in the city.

Sharing his thoughts on the policy changes required for mainstreaming the marginalised, Kejriwal cited the example of the people living in JJ clusters without whom the life in the city would come to a standstill. These are the people who do critical jobs as domestic help, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, among others. "Today getting a jhuggi on rent is an expensive affair for a poor daily wager. While our in-situ rehabilitation policy for slum-dwellers has already been approved and is under implementation, enhancing minimum wages significantly is another way to empower the low-income groups," Kejriwal added.

On August 5, labour minister Gopal Rai had announced that the government was gearing up to make way for a revision in minimum wages. He hinted at the possibility of a 30% to 40% hike. The last wage revision happened in 1994, said government

sources.

Rai further said that a 13-member advisory committee, which was constituted by the labour department in April to revise minimum wages in Delhi would submit its report in the next few days and subsequently, the Delhi cabinet would take decision on fixing minimum wages for the working class—unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled labourers. The current minimum wage for an unskilled person is Rs 9,568 followed by Rs 10,582 for a semi-skilled labourer and Rs 11,622 for a skilled person.

"Government has taken this decision to hike the existing wages after reviewing the average cost incurred per family on food, accommodation, electricity, clothing and education," Rai had told reporters.