

# AAP Government Raises Wages To 'Historic' High. And Its Hopes

Delhi | Written by [Sonal Mehrotra Kapoor](#) | Updated: March 04, 2017 14:57 IST

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37% hike was much lower than the 50% raise that Arvind Kejriwal pushed for in August last year

**New Delhi:** Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday announced a 37 per cent hike in minimum wages in the national capital, pitching it as the biggest raise for workers. The move, cleared by Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal, is the third big-ticket announcement in 24 hours by the Aam Aadmi Party government that is gearing up for the high-stakes elections to the three municipal corporations in Delhi.

Already, Mr Kejriwal has announced that patients can go to designated private hospitals at public expense when public hospitals are too crowded. And his deputy Manish Sisodia has raised salaries of temporary teachers by 70 to 80 percent.

Friday's 37 percent hike was much lower than the 50 percent raise that Mr Kejriwal pushed for in August last year, before it was struck down by then Lt Governor Najeeb Jung because the decision didn't have his approval. But it didn't seem to matter on Friday. Once the orders are issued, an unskilled worker will earn at least Rs. 13,350 in a month, up from the existing Rs. 9,724. Mr Kejriwal said this was a "historic" hike, the "highest" in Independent India.

For the AAP government, Mr Baijal's nod couldn't have come at a better time.

Back in Delhi after extensively campaigning in Punjab, Mr Kejriwal is set to face the litmus test in Delhi; elections to the municipal corporations where the BJP has been in power for 15 long years.

This time, AAP has jumped in the corporation battle on all 272 wards; its campaign is going to center around asking people to vote for "seamless governance".

"The past two years are a classic example of how BJP made Delhi suffer with MCD being the tool. All sorts of problems have cropped up, now it is time the *jhaadu* (AAP's election symbol, broom) cleans the MCD mess", said Saurabh Bharadwaj, AAP legislator.

The BJP not only faces anti-incumbency, but also a divided flock under the new chief.

Manoj Tiwari, Delhi BJP president, concedes there have been issues. "But my message is clear all those bringing down the party name will be penalised," he said, suggesting that AAP too would have to face public anger. "I have spent nights in unauthorised colonies. People are very unhappy with AAP," he said, a reference to people living in colonies that make up for one-fifth of Delhi's population and are believed to have overwhelmingly supported AAP in the assembly elections.

All this when Congress is making desperate attempts to consolidate its traditional voters. Party vice president Rahul Gandhi is set to hold a large public rally next Tuesday at the Ramlila grounds.

But the AAP isn't the only one which is going to debut in municipal politics this time. Swaraj India, the party that its Yogendra Yadav founded after differences with Mr Kejriwal, too hopes it would make a splash in next month's election. "We are fighting all wards with one simple message Clean Delhi- sewage clean up, roads clean up and air clean up,"

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