

# Trucks will pay fee for polluting city air

₹100-₹1,500 Depending On Vehicle Size, But Buses And Diesel Cabs Exempted

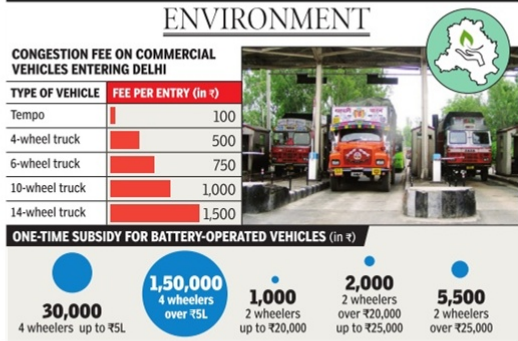
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TEAM TOI

**New Delhi:** Diesel heavy vehicles plying in Delhi at night will have to pay for polluting the city's air. In its first budget, the AAP government has proposed congestion fees of Rs 100 to Rs 1,500 on different classes of goods vehicles in the form of a tax. More than 50,000 heavy vehicles enter the city every day. However, there will be no charge on buses and diesel taxis.

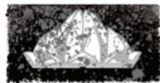
The money thus collected will be used to improve public transport facilities, install weighbridges that can check the weight of moving vehicles, and for other initiatives to improve air quality, deputy CM Manish Sisodia said while presenting the budget.

Environmentalists welcomed the step but said more can be done to discourage use of personal vehicles by residents of the city as well as visitors. "It's good that the government has come up with tax measures to control air pollution and that they are going to use the fund to improve the public transport network, but they should also have fiscal measures to discourage use of personal cars," said Anumita Roychowdhury,



head of Centre for Science and Environment's (CSE) Clean Air campaign. She added that personal cars should also be taxed.

Among other environment-related measures, more than Rs 3,500 crore has been earmarked for procurements related to public transport. Delhi government will provide subsidies on battery-operated vehicles in addition to



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the 30% subsidy from the Centre. An electric four-wheeler costing more than Rs 5 lakh, for instance, will get a subsidy of Rs 1.5 lakh from the state.

The government will modernize the pollution under control (PUC) system by making PUC monitoring centres run online from July. This will reduce manual interference and tampering with data.

Yamuna will be a priority for the government. "We will clean Yamuna so effectively that people can have picnics on its banks and enjoy boating," Sisodia said while an-

nouncing that a project worth Rs 3,656 crore had been prepared to "provide sewerage services in uncovered areas and to prevent flow of wastewater in Najafgarh and supplementary drains. The project will involve setting up 15 new sewage treatment plants, three new sewage pumping stations and peripheral sewer network."

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) had recently directed the government to implement this project based on recommendations by an expert body of scientists. "As these drains contribute 70% of the pollution in Yamuna, this project will significantly reduce pollution. It will be completed in two years," the budget said.

Sisodia also announced that Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) would construct 4,000 toilet seats in 53 slum clusters.

Based on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Management Centre's rooftop solar policy, the government plans to increase solar power generation capacity from 7MW currently to 14MW this year. The plan outlay for renewable energy is about Rs 10 crore.