Mask mandates return in New Delhi as COVID-19 cases rise

August 11 2022

People wearing masks as a precaution against the coronavirus walk through a market in New Delhi, India, Thursday, Aug. 11, 2022. The Indian capital reintroduced public mask mandates on Thursday as COVID-19 cases continue to rise across the country. Credit: AP Photo/Altaf Qadri

The Indian capital reintroduced public mask mandates on Thursday as

COVID-19 cases continue to rise across the country.

The New Delhi government reinstituted a fine of 500 rupees ($6) for anyone caught not wearing a mask or face covering in public.

India's Health Ministry said 16,299 new cases were recorded in the past 24 hours nationwide, with a positivity rate of 4.58%. Nearly 2,150 infections were reported in New Delhi.

On Wednesday, New Delhi reported eight deaths due to the coronavirus, the highest in nearly six months. People in most parts of the country began discarding face masks as infections dropped following two devastating earlier waves of COVID-19.

New Delhi's top elected official, Arvind Kejriwal, said that COVID-19 cases were on the rise but there was no need to panic because most of the new cases were mild.

India started vaccinating people in January 2021 and has administered over 2.04 billion doses, including first, second and booster doses. More than 94% of the eligible population (12 years and older) has received at least one shot, and 86% are fully vaccinated.

Most experts believe India's official death toll of more than 414,000 is a vast undercount, but the government has dismissed those concerns as exaggerated and misleading.

A woman wearing masks as a precaution against coronavirus shops for artificial jewelry from a roadside vendor in New Delhi, India, Thursday, Aug. 11, 2022. The Indian capital reintroduced public mask mandates on Thursday as COVID-19 cases continue to rise across the country. Credit: AP Photo/Altaf Qadri

Women wearing masks as a precaution against the coronavirus buy apples from a roadside vendor in New Delhi, India, Thursday, Aug. 11, 2022. The Indian capital reintroduced public mask mandates on Thursday as COVID-19 cases continue to rise across the country. Credit: AP Photo/Altaf Qadri

Two boys, one wearing a mask as a precaution against coronavirus walks through a market in New Delhi, India, Thursday, Aug. 11, 2022. The Indian capital reintroduced public mask mandates on Thursday as COVID-19 cases continue to rise across the country. Credit: AP Photo/Altaf Qadri

A woman wearing a mask as a precaution against coronavirus gets her hands decorated with henna on the eve of the Hindu festival of Raksha Bandhan in New Delhi, India, Thursday, Aug. 11, 2022. The Indian capital reintroduced public mask mandates on Thursday as COVID-19 cases continue to rise across the country. Credit: AP Photo/Altaf Qadri

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Citation: Mask mandates return in New Delhi as COVID-19 cases rise (2022, August 11) retrieved 23 April 2024 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-08-mask-mandates-delhi-covid-cases.html

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