

## Press release

# Delhi among India's top 10 most polluted cities for fourth consecutive month

**New Delhi, 7 February 2025** – The January India Monthly Ambient Air Quality Snapshot published by the [Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air \(CREA\)](https://energyandcleanair.org) found that January had 105 cities (out of 240 cities) breaching PM<sub>2.5</sub> National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) of 60 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. Among these, 71 cities recorded 'Moderate' PM<sub>2.5</sub> Air Quality Index (61-90 µg/m<sup>3</sup>) category, while 31 cities fell under the 'Poor' category (91-120 µg/m<sup>3</sup>). The remaining three cities experienced 'Very Poor' category conditions (121-250 µg/m<sup>3</sup>).

Byrnihat emerged as India's most polluted city in January 2025, recording an average PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration of 214 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. Delhi followed as the second most polluted city, with a monthly average of 165 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. This marks the fourth consecutive month that Delhi has ranked among India's top 10 most polluted cities. Throughout January, Delhi experienced 23 days in the 'Very Poor' category, three days fell into the 'Severe' category (>250 µg/m<sup>3</sup>), three days in poor category, and two days in moderate category.

Manoj Kumar, Analyst at CREA, noted that *'While Delhi's PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration in January 2025 was lower than the 206 µg/m<sup>3</sup> recorded in January 2023, it still remains 2.5 times above the NAAQS and 11 times higher than the World Health Organization (WHO) standard. Several GRAP measures were imposed during the month, but attributing the improvement to GRAP requires a clearer understanding of the actual actions implemented on the ground. Transparency in GRAP execution is essential to ensure accountability, assess its impact, and refine future air pollution control strategies.'*

Other cities that ranked among India's top 10 most polluted in January included Hajipur, Talcher, Patna, Chandigarh, Guwahati, Barrackpore, Muzaffarpur, and Howrah. Bihar stood out as the state with the highest number of polluted cities, accounting for three of the top 10 most polluted urban areas. Assam and West Bengal each had two cities in the top 10, while Odisha, Chandigarh, and Delhi contributed one city each.

Alarmingly, none of the top 10 most polluted cities recorded even a single day within the safe daily NAAQS threshold throughout January. Several other cities, including Aurangabad (Bihar), Durgapur, Nagaon, and Rourkela, also recorded daily PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels exceeding the NAAQS every single day of the month.

Among all Indian states, Bihar had the highest number of cities exceeding NAAQS, with 21 out of 24 recording PM<sub>2.5</sub> higher than NAAQS. Of these, 13 cities were in the 'Moderate' category, seven in the 'Poor' category, and one in the 'Very Poor' category. West Bengal also had a high proportion of



polluted cities, with six out of seven exceeding NAAQS. Similarly, Rajasthan had 17 out of 33 cities breaching NAAQS limits, while Odisha had 14 out of 16 cities exceeding NAAQS levels.

Aizawl in Mizoram was India's cleanest city in January, with an average  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  concentration of just  $9 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . The list of the 10 cleanest cities included six from Karnataka, two from Uttar Pradesh, one from Mizoram, and one from Jammu and Kashmir.

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Note: All cities included in this snapshot are those with more than 80% of the days in January 2025 with recorded  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  data available.

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## Notes to editors

- The January Monthly Air Quality Snapshot can be found [here](#).
- Previous India monthly air quality snapshots can be found [here](#).
- Daily Winter Air Quality Dashboard: <https://ncap.energyandcleanair.org/>

## About CREA

The Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) is an independent research organisation focused on revealing the trends, causes, and health impacts, as well as the solutions, to air pollution. CREA was founded in December 2019 in Helsinki and has staff in several Asian and European countries. The organisation's work is funded through philanthropic grants and revenue from commissioned research. [www.energyandcleanair.org](http://www.energyandcleanair.org).