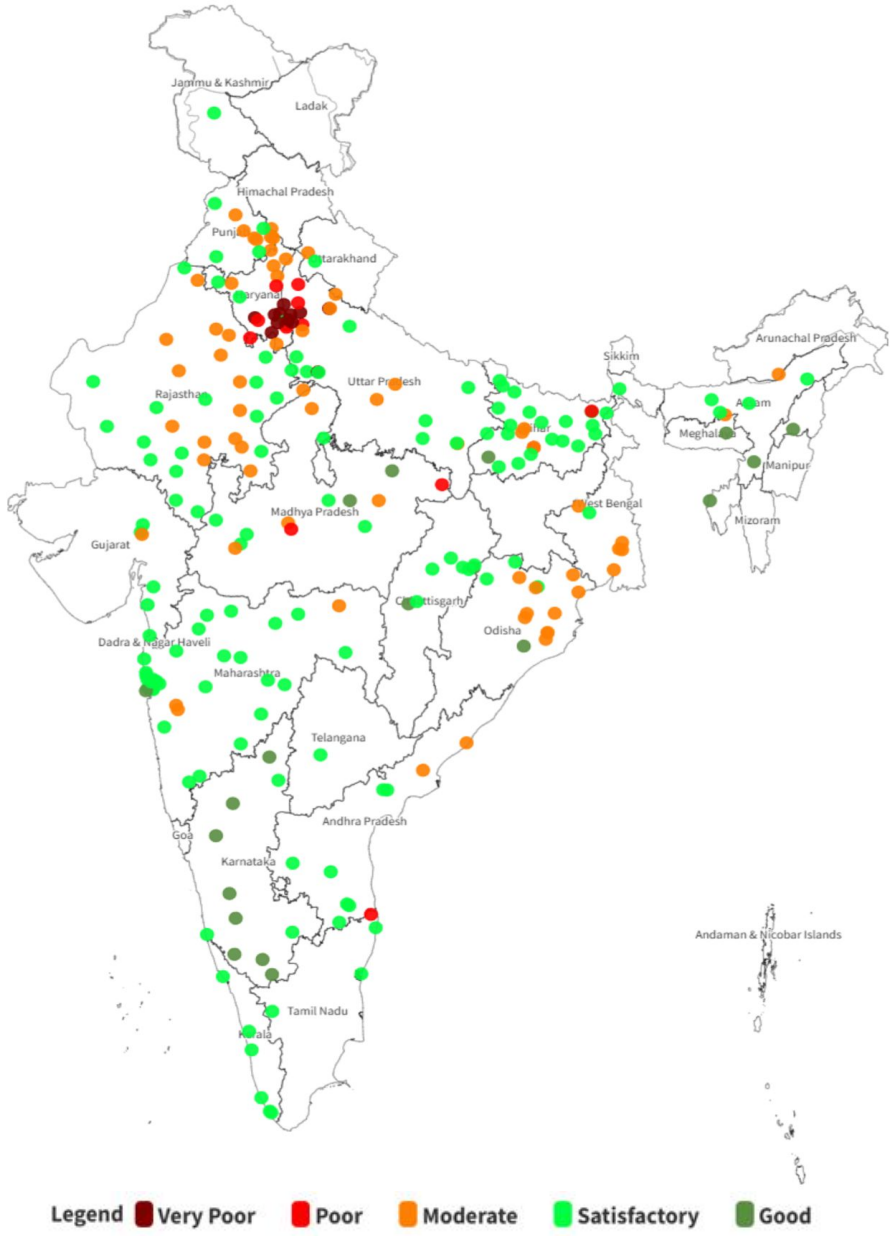

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Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air

Winter ambient air quality snapshot for India

Winter 2025-26

October 2025 - February 2026

Summary

- Data: Continuous ambient air quality monitoring stations (CAAQMS) data from the Central Pollution Control Board has been analyzed for the winter period from 1 October 2025 to 28 February 2026 (winter 2025-26). Only cities with at least 80% data availability during this period have been considered for the analysis.
- Compliance: In winter 2025-26, 204 out of 238 cities with more than 80% of the days with CAAQMS data recorded $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations above India's National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) of 40 µg/m^3. None of the 238 cities complied with the World Health Organization's (WHO) safe guideline concentration of 5 µg/m^3.
    - NCAP cities: The winter 2025-26 average $PM_{2.5}$ levels in 84 National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) cities out of 96 cities surpassed India's NAAQS for $PM_{2.5}$, while all 96 cities exceeded the WHO guidelines.
    - Non-NCAP cities: Among the 142 non-NCAP cities data, 120 cities reported winter 2025-26 average $PM_{2.5}$ levels above the NAAQS. All 142 cities exceeded the WHO guideline.
    - IGP Region: Out of 89 cities considered in the Indo-Gangetic Plains, 79 cities recorded data for more than 80% of the days during winter 2025-26. Among those, 75 cities exceeded the average national standards, and only four cities compiled within the limits.
    - NCR Region: The national capital region comprises 29 cities under observation, and 28 of them have data recorded for more than 80% of the days during winter 2025-26. Average $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations denote that none of the cities lies within the NAAQS standards, and most days the AQI was recorded were between 'Poor' and 'Moderate' during winter 2025-26.
- $PM_{2.5}$ Air Quality Index (AQI) category: In winter 2025-26, the number of cities with 'Good' (0-30 µg/m^3) air quality stood at 19. Meanwhile, cities experiencing 'Satisfactory' (31-60 µg/m^3) air quality were recorded at 129. The number of cities with 'Moderate' (61-90 µg/m^3) air quality reached 65. Additionally, 13 cities reported 'Poor' (91-120 µg/m^3) air quality, while 12 cities fell under the 'Very Poor' (121-250 µg/m^3) category.

- Most polluted city: **Ghaziabad ranked as the most polluted city in India in winter 2025-26**, recording average $PM_{2.5}$ concentration of 172 µg/m^3.
    - Noida was the second most polluted city in India during winter 2025-26, with average $PM_{2.5}$ of 166 µg/m^3.
    - Delhi, the national capital, ranked as the third most polluted city during winter 2025-26, recorded average $PM_{2.5}$ concentration of 163 µg/m3 and experienced 18 days in 'Severe' category, 87 days in 'Very Poor' category, 24 days in 'Poor' category, 15 days in 'Moderate', six days in 'Satisfactory' and only one day in 'Good' category.
    - Greater Noida, Bahadurgarh, Dharuhera, Gurgaon, Bhiwadi, Charkhi Dadri and Baghpat were in the top 10 cities, with Greater Noida and Baghpat in fourth and tenth place, respectively.
    - Uttar Pradesh and Haryana accounted for four cities each India's top 10 most polluted cities along with one each in Delhi and Rajasthan.
- States with most polluted cities: Haryana (24 cities), Andhra Pradesh (9 cities), Punjab (eight cities), West Bengal (seven cities) and Gujarat (six cities) are the states where all the monitored cities exceeded NAAQS. Rajasthan (33 out of 34 cities), Maharashtra (30 out of 31 cities), Bihar (23 out of 24 cities), Uttar Pradesh (17 out of 20 cities), Odisha (13 out of 14 cities), and Madhya Pradesh (11 out of 13 cities) states also had a high proportion of polluted cities that exceeds the standards.
- Cleanest city: **Chamarajanagar, in the state of Karnataka, was the cleanest city in India during winter 2025-26**, with a average $PM_{2.5}$ of 19 µg/m^3. The top 10 cleanest cities comprise eight cities from Karnataka, and one each from Madhya Pradesh and Meghalaya.
- Megacities: During the winter 2025-26, Delhi (163 µg/m^3), Kolkata (78 µg/m^3), Mumbai (48 µg/m^3), and Chennai (44 µg/m^3) exceeded the NAAQS. whereas, Bengaluru (39 µg/m^3) recorded $PM_{2.5}$ levels slightly below the permissible limit.
- Winter Data Gaps: During winter 2025-26, no data was available for even a single day from the CAAQMS stations in Bidar, Darbhanga, Ernakulam, Imphal, Kochi, Kozhikode, Kolar, Pathardih, Raichur, and Thoothukudi.
    - A total of 50 cities had less than 80% data coverage, with Tamil Nadu alone accounting for 21 such cities. Followed by Karnataka with 11 cities. Remaining cities were located in Odisha, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Mizoram,Madhya Pradesh, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

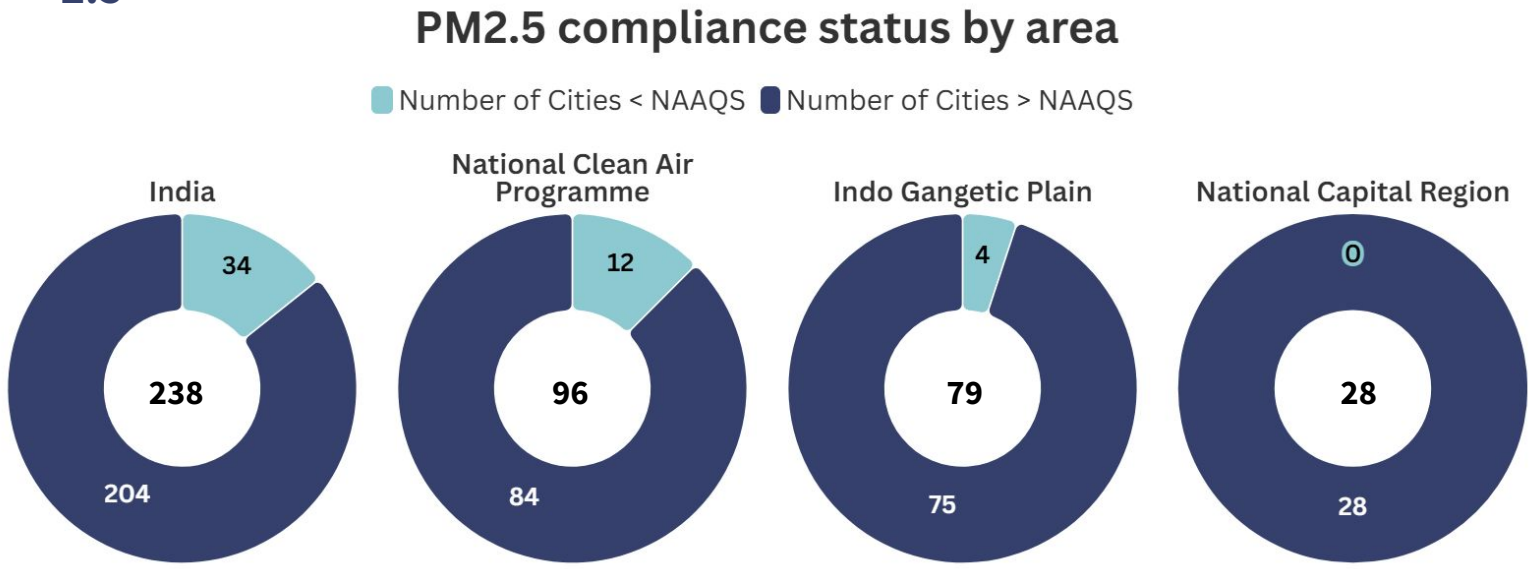
Data coverage and compliance with standards

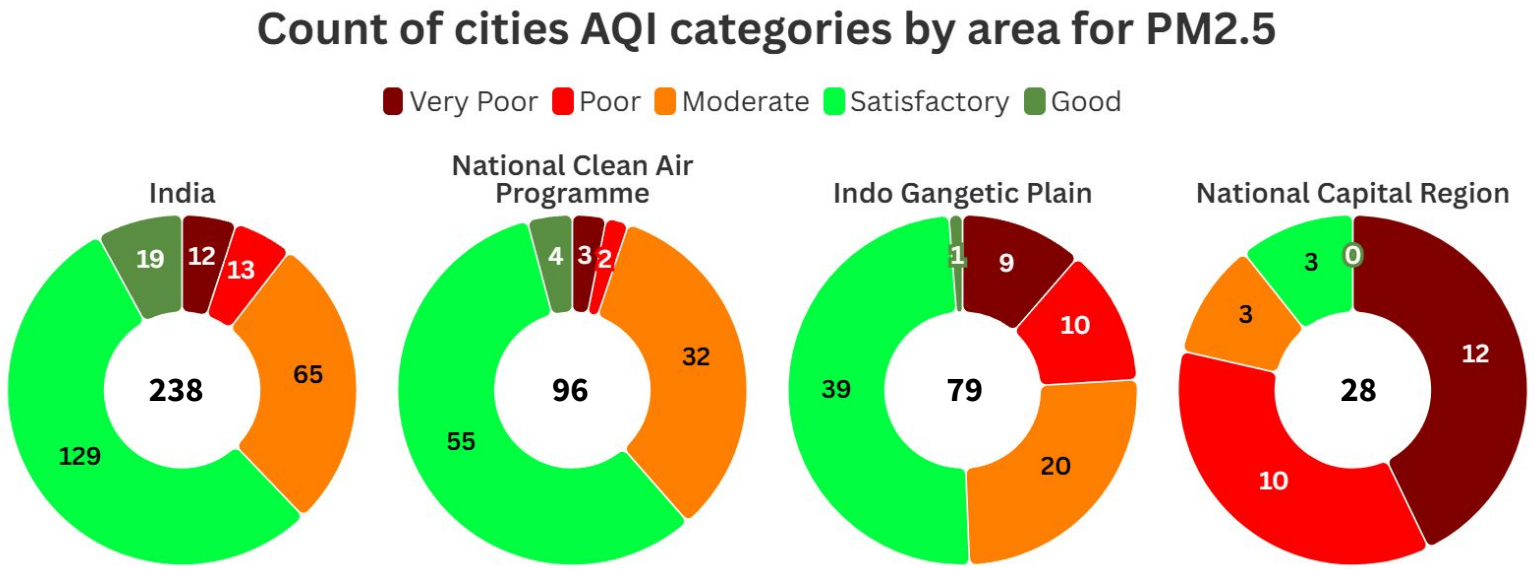
Total number (#) of cities covered by Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Station (CAAQMS)	# of cities with >80% of the days with CAAQMS data	# of cities with <80% but >1% of the days with CAAQMS data	# of cities with CAAQMS installed but no available data
299	238	51	10

National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) cities with CAAQMS			non-NCAP cities with CAAQMS		
102			197		
# of NCAP cities with >80% of the days with CAAQMS data	# of NCAP cities with <80% of the days with CAAQMS	# of NCAP cities with CAAQMS installed but no available data	# of non-NCAP cities with >80% of the days with CAAQMS data	# of non-NCAP cities with <80% of the days with CAAQMS	# of non-NCAP cities with CAAQMS installed but no available data
96	5	1	142	46	9

Standard	Number of cities	NCAP Cities	Non-NCAP cities	Total Indian Cities
National Ambient Air Quality standards of India (40 µg/m3)	Exceeding	84	120	204
	Complying	12	22	34
World Health Organization standard (5 µg/m3)	Exceeding	96	142	238
	Complying	0	0	0

$PM_{2.5}$ compliance and AQI categories by city groups

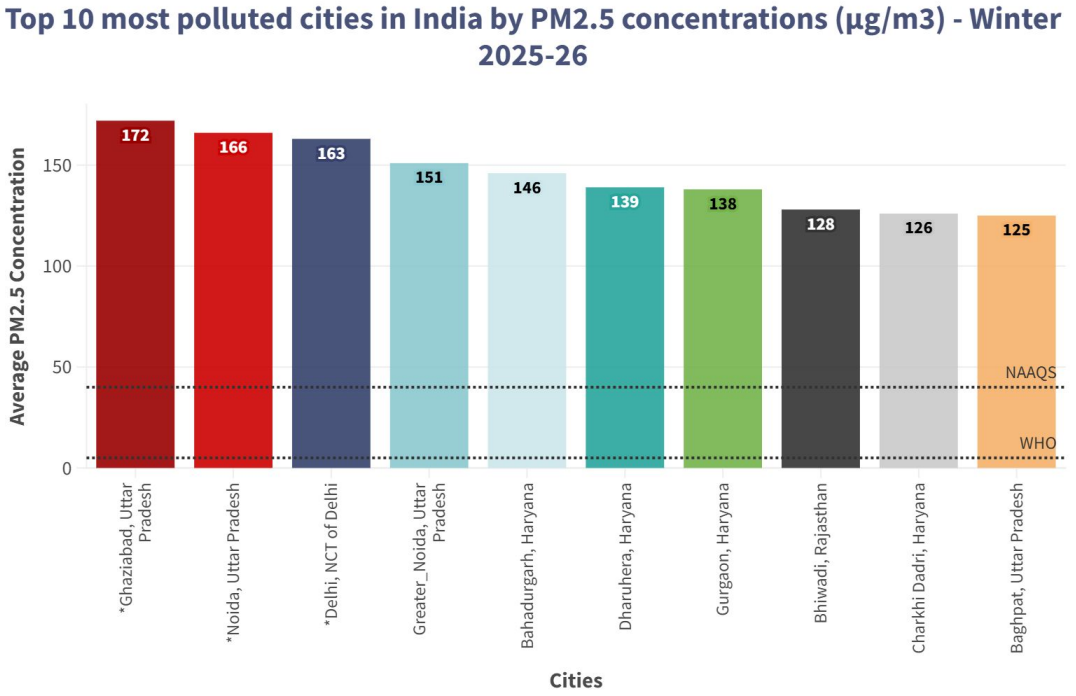




Note: Of 131 cities, 102 have CAAQMS, but only 96 meet the 80% data availability threshold. In IGP, 89 cities have CAAQMS, but only 79 meet this criterion, while in NCR, 28 of 29 do.

Top 10 most polluted cities in India by $PM_{2.5}$ concentration – winter 2025-26

Days in respective AQI categories based on $PM_{2.5}$ (µg/m^3) – Winter 2025-26								
City	Monitored days	Days > NAAQS	Good (0-30)	Satisfactory (31-60)	Moderate (61-90)	Poor (91-120)	Very poor (121-250)	Severe (>250)
Ghaziabad	151	144	1	6	8	22	95	19
Noida	151	145	1	5	17	24	74	30
Delhi	151	144	1	6	15	24	87	18
Greater Noida	151	143	1	7	23	25	80	15
Bahadurgarh	131	127	3	1	46	20	45	16
Dharuhera	146	138	2	6	21	29	82	6
Gurgaon	151	144	3	4	11	31	99	3
Bhiwadi	151	142	0	9	16	48	78	0
Charkhi Dadri	131	126	1	4	13	44	69	0
Baghpat	151	132	5	14	22	42	61	7



Source: CCR
* NCAP cities

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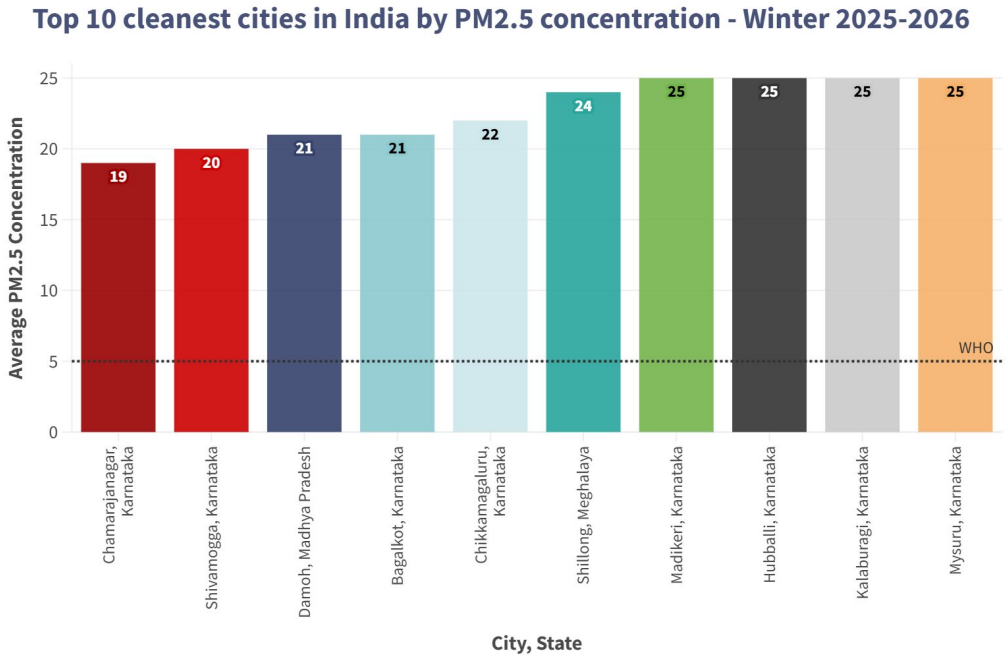
Top 10 cleanest cities in India by $PM_{2.5}$ concentration – Winter 2025-26

Days in respective AQI categories based on $PM_{2.5}$ (µg/m3) – Winter 2025-26								
City	Monitored days	Days > NAAQS	Good (0-30)	Satisfactory (31-60)	Moderate (61-90)	Poor (91-120)	Very poor (121-250)	Severe (>250)
Chamarajanagar	151	0	151	0	0	0	0	0
Shivamogga	145	0	144	1	0	0	0	0
Damoh	132	3	101	28	3	0	0	0
Bagalkot	121	0	120	1	0	0	0	0
Chikkamagaluru	149	0	117	32	0	0	0	0
Shillong	141	12	95	34	11	1	0	0
Madikeri	150	1	110	39	1	0	0	0
Hubballi	151	0	150	1	0	0	0	0
Kalaburagi	151	0	143	8	0	0	0	0
Mysuru	151	0	94	57	0	0	0	0



Source: CCR

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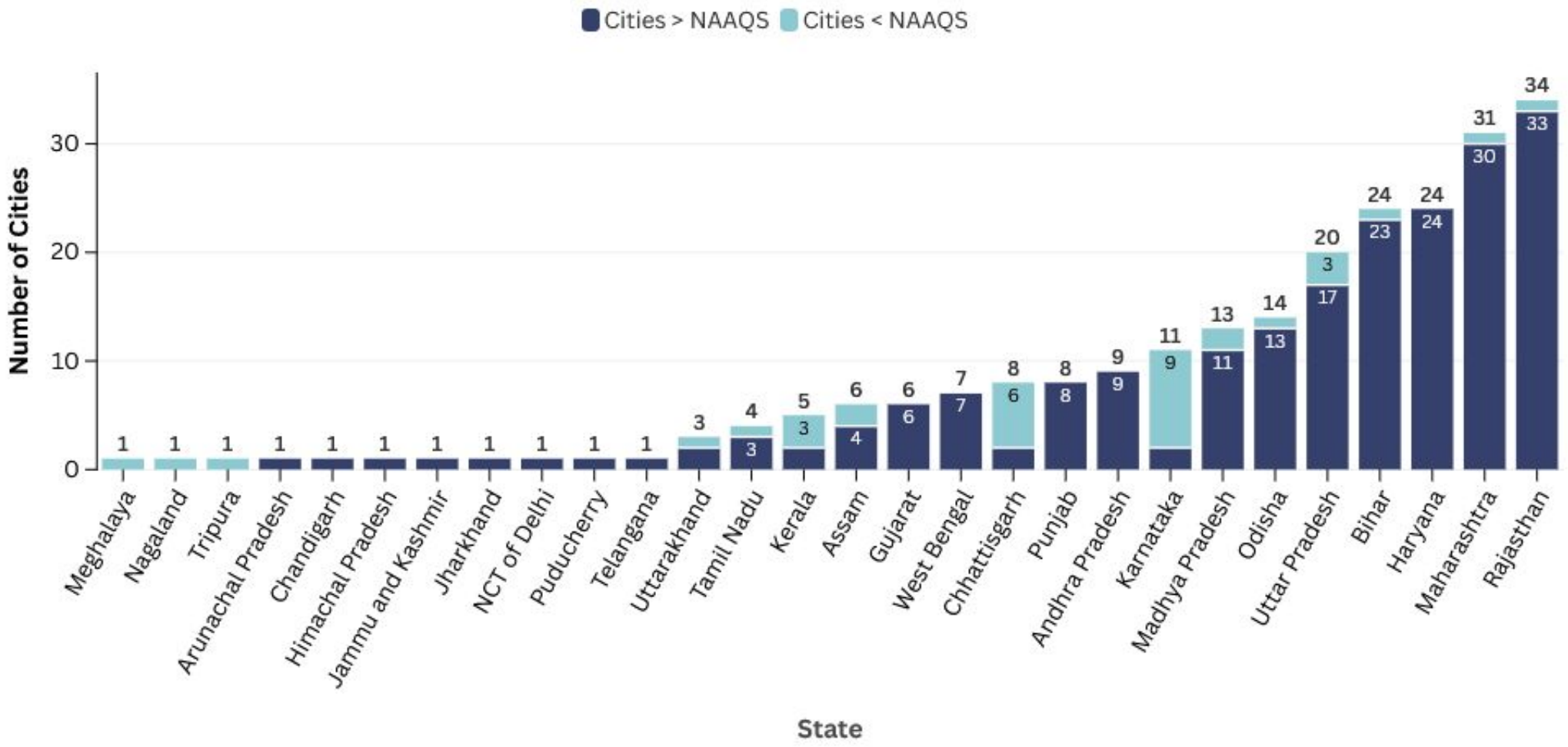
State-wise compliance and exceedance during winter 2025-26



Source: CCR

Note: NAAQS- PM2.5 Annual National Ambient Air Quality Standards of India (40µg/m3)

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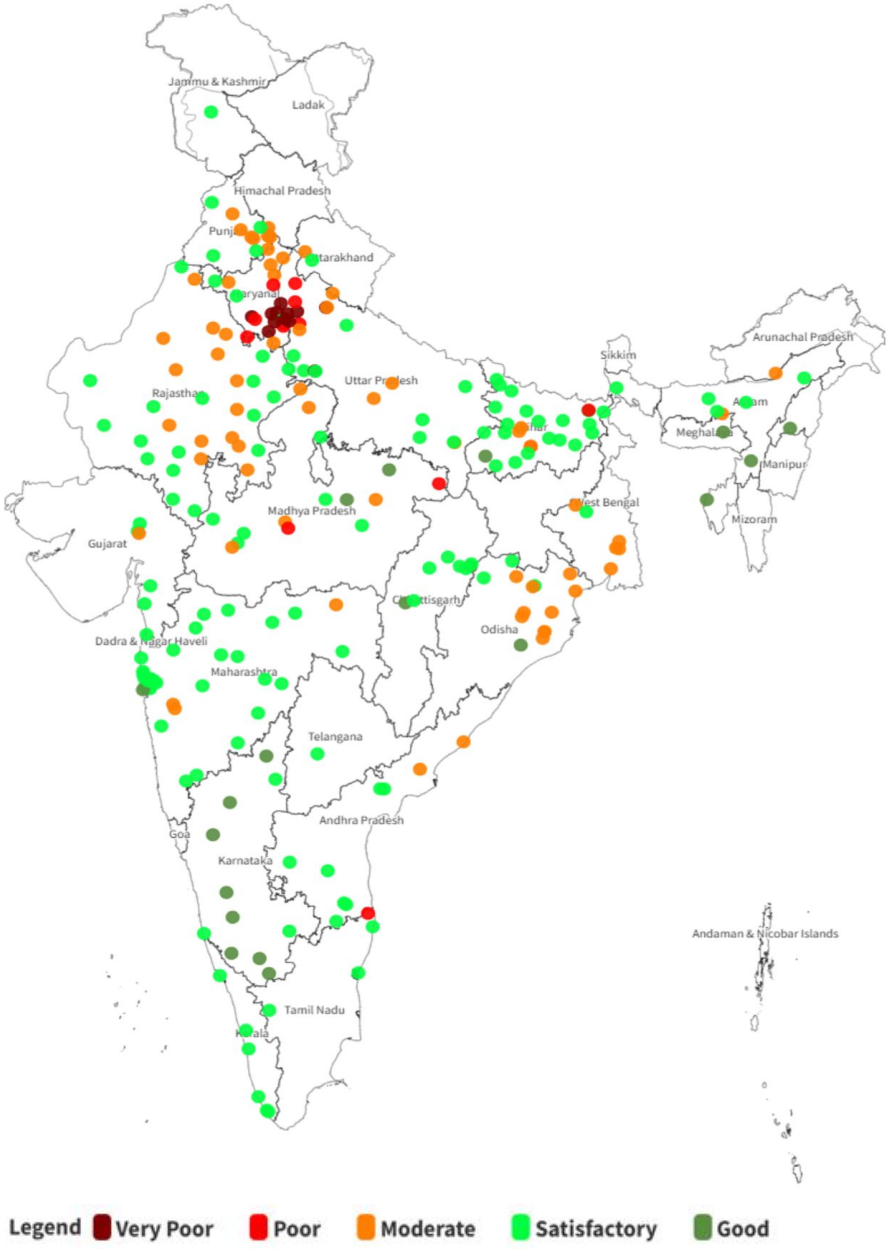
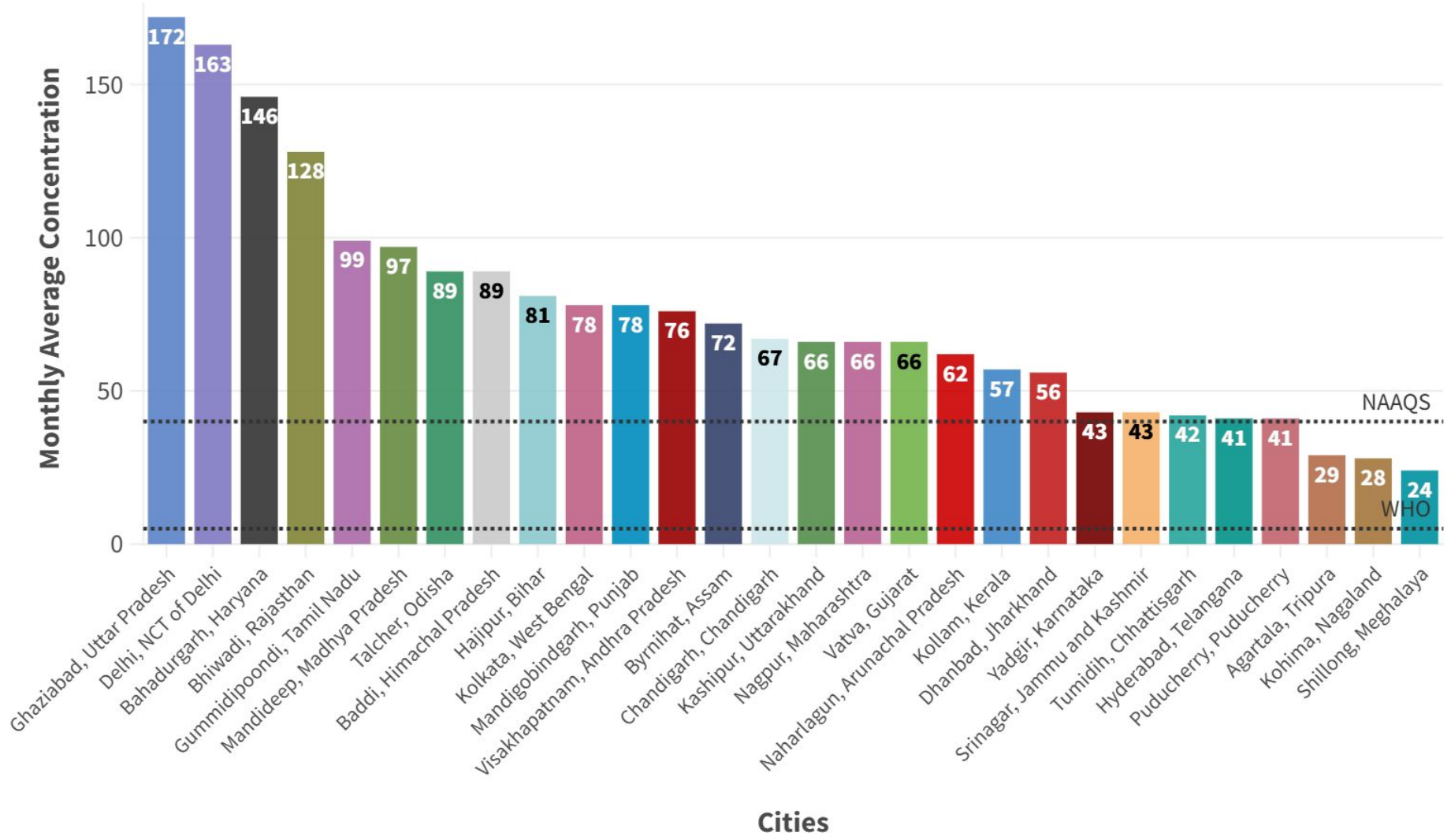
Distribution of cities by $PM_{2.5}$ air quality Index based on winter 2025-26 average $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations



State/UT	Number of cities in AQI category ($PM_{2.5}$ µg/m³)				
	Good (0-30)	Satisfactory (31-60)	Moderate (61-90)	Poor (91-120)	Very Poor (121-250)
Andhra Pradesh	0	7	2	0	0
Arunachal Pradesh	0	0	1	0	0
Assam	1	4	1	0	0
Bihar	1	20	3	0	0
Chandigarh	0	0	1	0	0
Chhattisgarh	2	6	0	0	0
Gujarat	0	5	1	0	0
Haryana	0	4	8	7	5
Himachal Pradesh	0	0	1	0	0
Jammu and Kashmir	0	1	0	0	0
Jharkhand	0	1	0	0	0
Karnataka	8	3	0	0	0
Kerala	0	5	0	0	0
Madhya Pradesh	2	5	4	2	0
Maharashtra	0	28	3	0	0
Meghalaya	1	0	0	0	0
Nagaland	1	0	0	0	0
NCT of Delhi	0	0	0	0	1
Odisha	1	3	10	0	0
Puducherry	0	1	0	0	0
Punjab	0	4	4	0	0
Rajasthan	0	18	15	0	1
Tamil Nadu	1	2	0	1	0
Telangana	0	1	0	0	0
Tripura	1	0	0	0	0
Uttar Pradesh	0	8	4	3	5
Uttarakhand	0	1	2	0	0
West Bengal	0	2	5	0	0

State-wise most polluted cities ($PM_{2.5}$, $\mu g/m^3$) in India during winter 2025-26



Source: CCR

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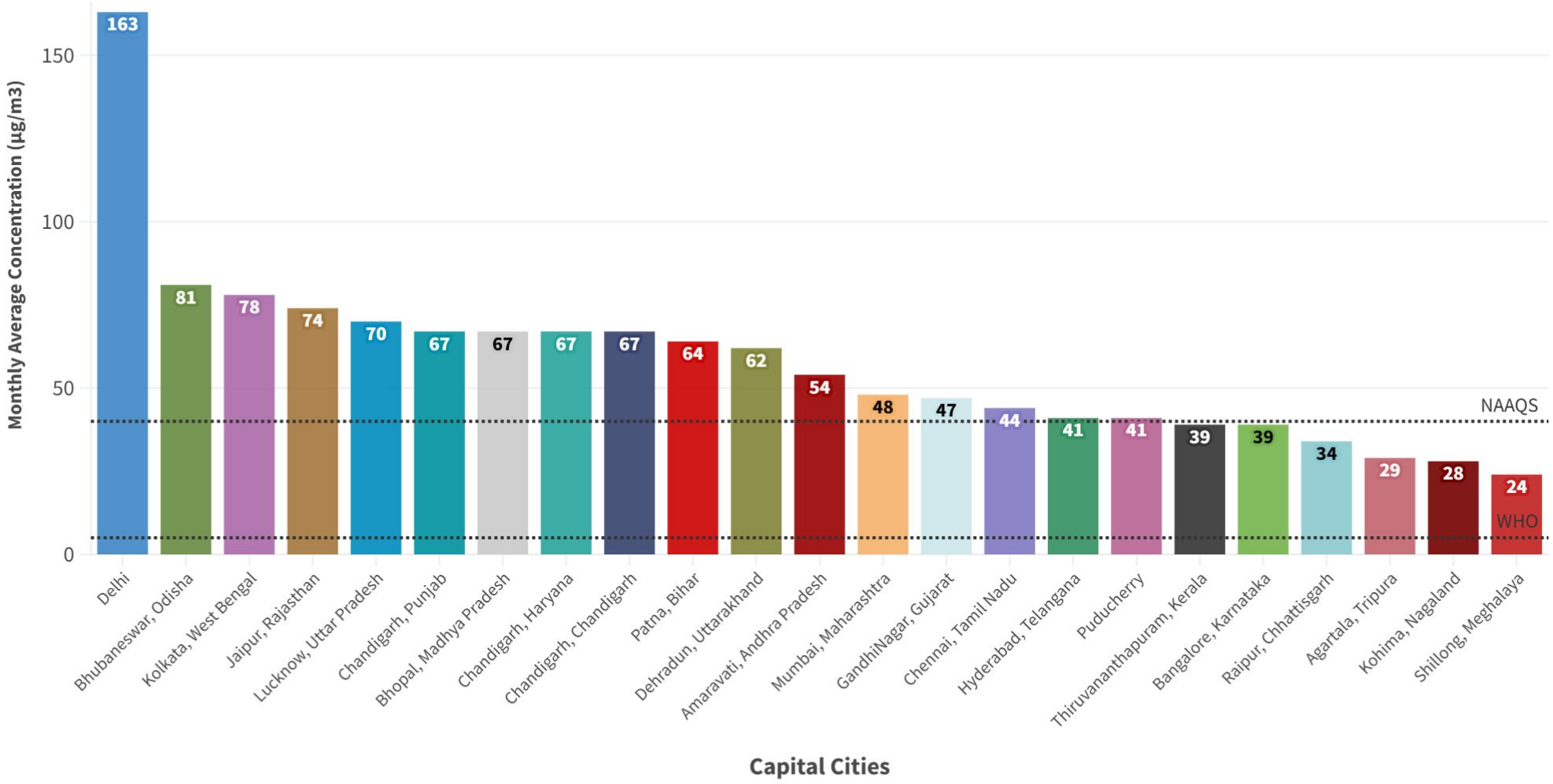
$PM_{2.5}$ concentrations across state/provincial capital cities in India during winter 2025-26



Source: CCR

Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh); Dispur (Assam); Panaji (Goa); Shimla (Himachal Pradesh); Ranchi (Jharkhand); Port Blair (Andaman and Nicobar Islands); Daman (Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu); Leh (Ladakh); and Kavaratti (Lakshadweep) don't have an operational CAAQMS.

Data sources

Ambient air quality data recorded by Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations (CAAQMS) is downloaded from the 'Central Control Room for Air Quality Management - All India' dashboard operated by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

Resources

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