

● Good ● Satisfactory ● Moderate ● Poor



# CREA

Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air

## NCAP FY 2025-2026 progress and monthly ambient air quality snapshot for India

*March 2026*

# Key highlights

## National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) progress during FY 2025-26:

- Out of 130 cities under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), a total of 96 cities have PM10 data with more than 80% of days from the available 107 cities with CAAQMS that was analysed for the period April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026 (FY 25-26).
- Ghaziabad recorded the highest annual (FY 25-26) PM10 concentration at 215  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  among NCAP cities, followed by Delhi at 201  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , and Noida at 195  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  – each over three times higher than the national standard of 60  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .
- Compared to the previous year (FY 24-25) with the available similar 93 cities, PM10 levels decreased in 60 NCAP cities while 30 cities saw an increase and three cities remained unchanged during FY 25-26.
- Compared to the NCAP baseline year of 2017-18, PM10 levels increased in 14 cities and remained unchanged in three cities. The remaining cities showed varying degrees of improvement: a 1-10% decrease in 12 cities, 10-20% decrease in 13 cities, 20-30% decrease in 15 cities, 30-39% decrease in 12 cities, and a decrease of 40% or more in 27 cities.
  - Nine cities in Uttar Pradesh recorded an over 40% reduction in PM10 levels compared to the baseline year, followed by three cities in Maharashtra, and two cities each in Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal . One city each from Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Nagaland, and Tamil Nadu also achieved an over 40% reduction.
  - Odisha had the highest number of cities (5) with increased PM10 levels. Both Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh reported two such cities, while Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu had each one city where PM10 levels increased.
  - Dehradun in Uttarakhand recorded the highest reduction in PM10 levels since the baseline year at 75%. In contrast, Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh recorded the highest increase at 73%. Delhi had a 17% reduction in PM10 levels.
- Despite these improvements, 89 out of the 96 NCAP cities with CAAQMS data more than 80% of days still exceeded the PM10 national standard in FY 25-26.

## March Monthly Snapshot:

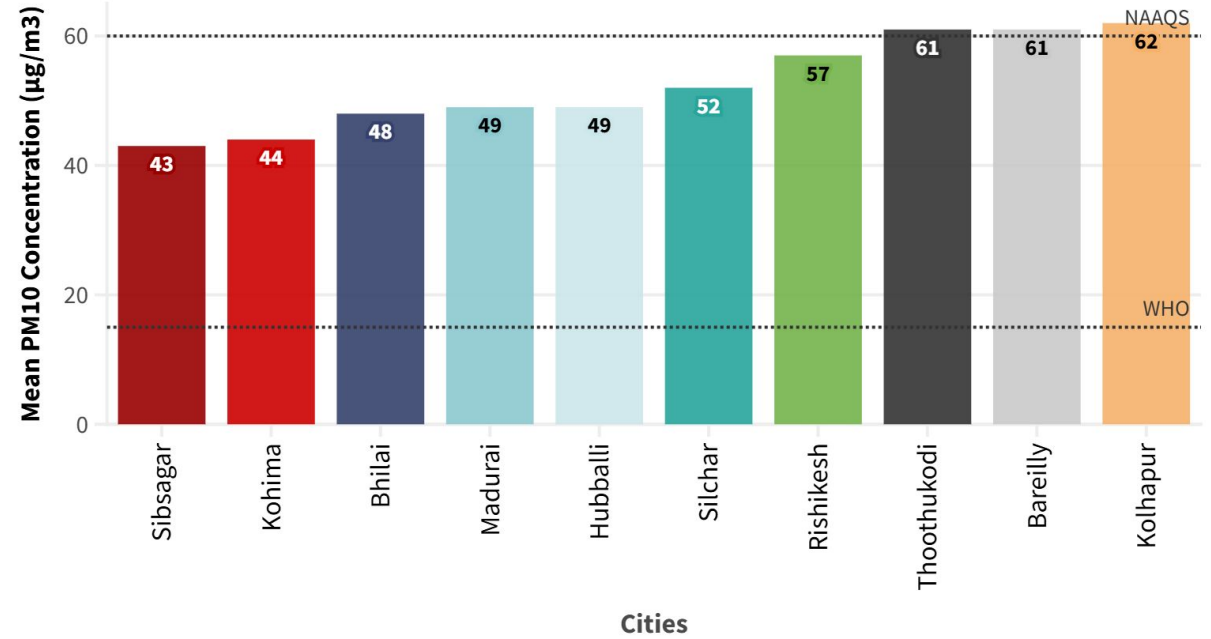
- **Compliance:** In March 2026, 251 out of 268 cities with more than 80% of days with continuous ambient air quality monitoring stations (CAAQMS) data available recorded PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations below India's National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) of 60 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. Only three cities complied with the World Health Organization's (WHO) daily safe guideline concentration of 15 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.
  - **NCAP cities:** The monthly average PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels in six National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) cities (out of 96 cities with more than 80% of days with data) surpassed India's daily NAAQS for PM<sub>2.5</sub>, while a total of 94 cities exceeded the WHO's daily guideline.
  - **Non-NCAP cities:** Among the 155 non-NCAP cities with over 80% of days with CAAQMS data, 154 cities reported monthly average PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels above the WHO daily guideline. 25 cities exceeded the daily NAAQS.
- **Most polluted city:** **Gurgaon ranked as the most polluted city in India in March 2026**, recording a monthly average PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration of 116 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, surpassing the daily NAAQS limit of 60 µg/m<sup>3</sup> for 30 days in the month. Gurgaon recorded 12 days in 'Very Poor', 13 days in 'Poor', five days in 'Moderate', and one day in the 'Satisfactory' category.
  - Bahadurgarh, Faridabad, Singrauli, Mandideep, Ghaziabad, Manesar, Bhiwadi, Noida, and Nandesari were in the top 10 cities, with Bahadurgarh and Nandesari in second and tenth place, respectively.
  - **Haryana accounted for four of India's top 10 most polluted cities, followed by two cities each from Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh, and one each from Rajasthan and Gujarat.**
- **State with most polluted cities:** Among all Indian states, Haryana had the highest number of cities exceeding NAAQS, with nine out of 24 recording PM<sub>2.5</sub> higher than NAAQS, followed by Uttar Pradesh with eight out of 21 cities exceeding NAAQS.

# Ranking of NCAP Cities: Most polluted and cleanest in FY 2025-26

Top 10 most polluted NCAP cities in India by PM10 concentrations ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) during FY 25-26



Top 10 cleanest NCAP cities in India by PM10 concentrations ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) during FY 25-26



Data Source: CCR

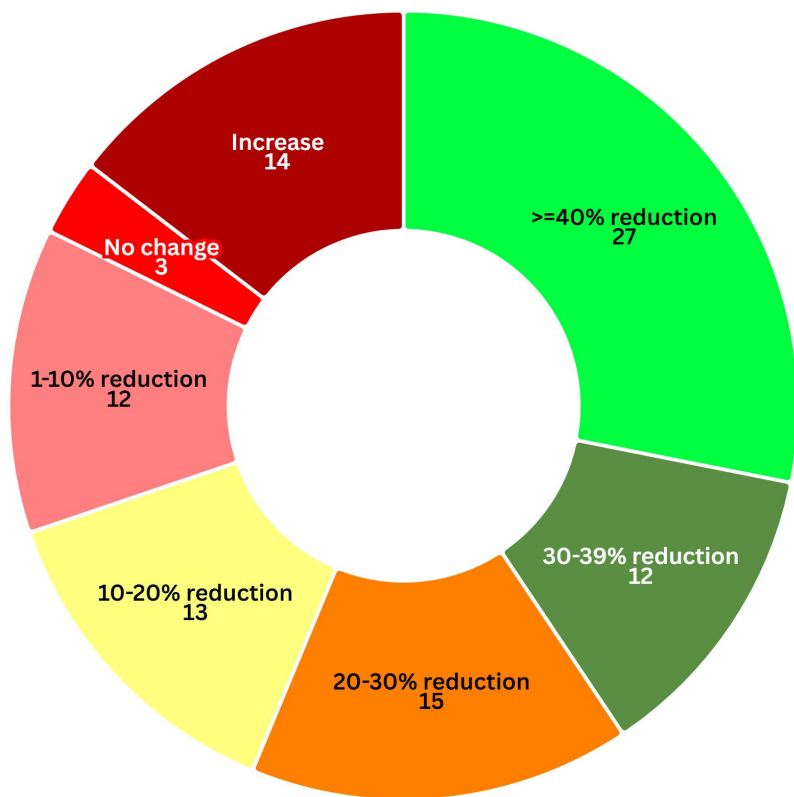


Data Source: CCR

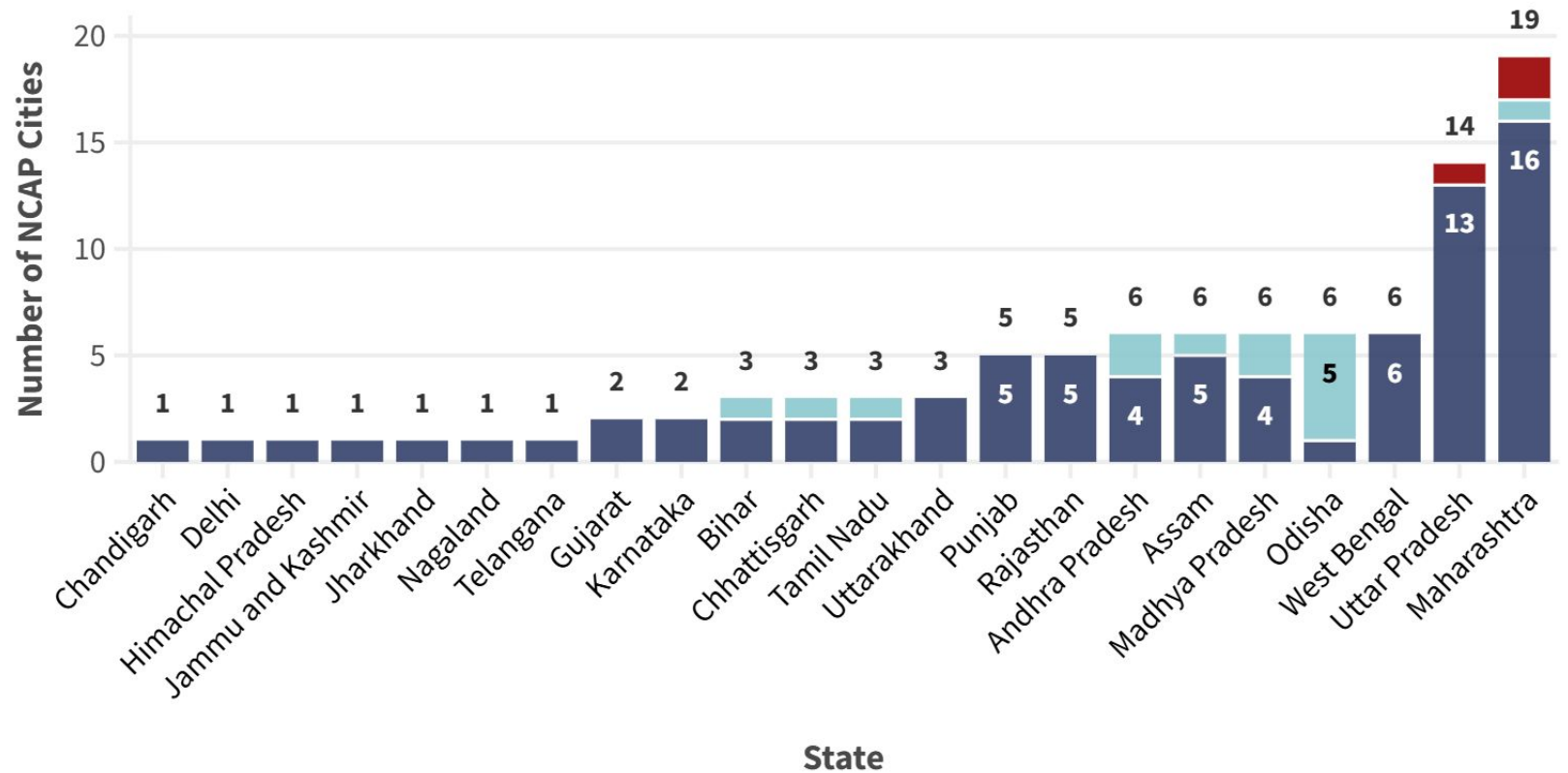


# Changes in PM10 levels compared to baseline year (FY 17-18)

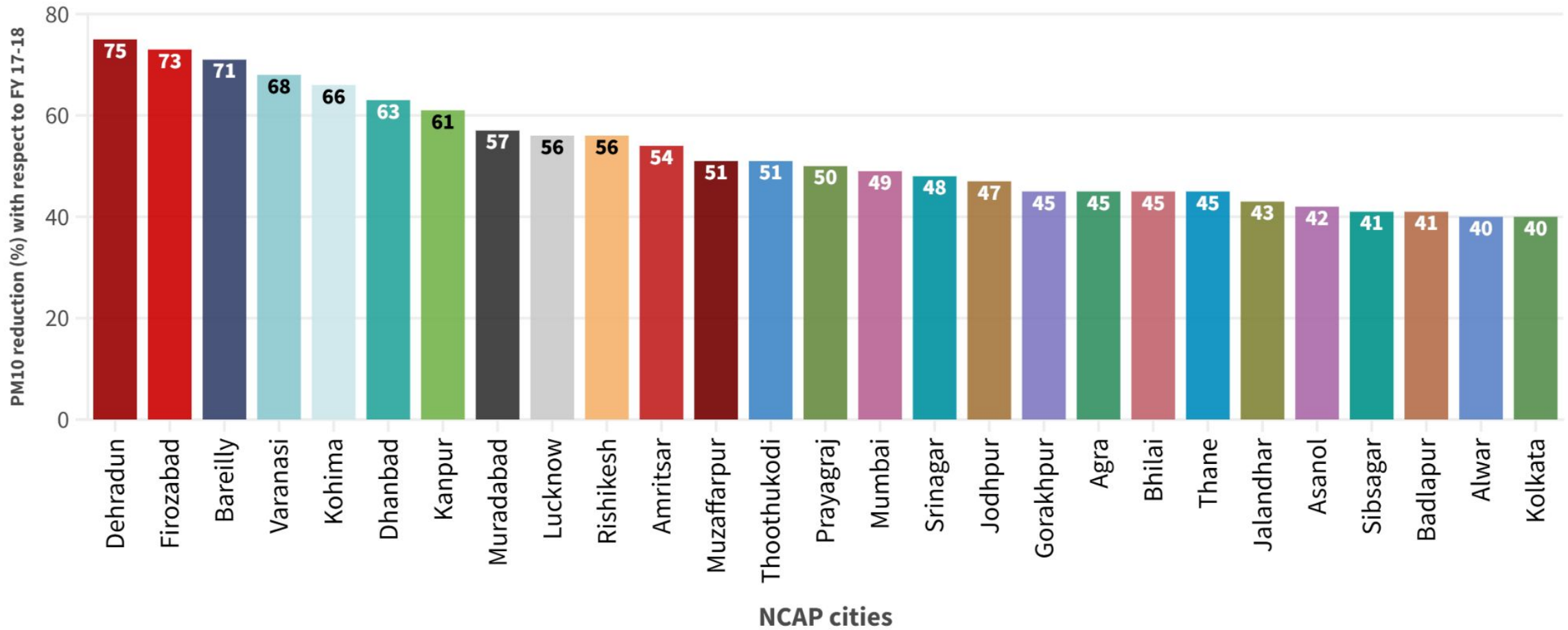
**Distribution of PM10 Level Changes in NCAP Cities**



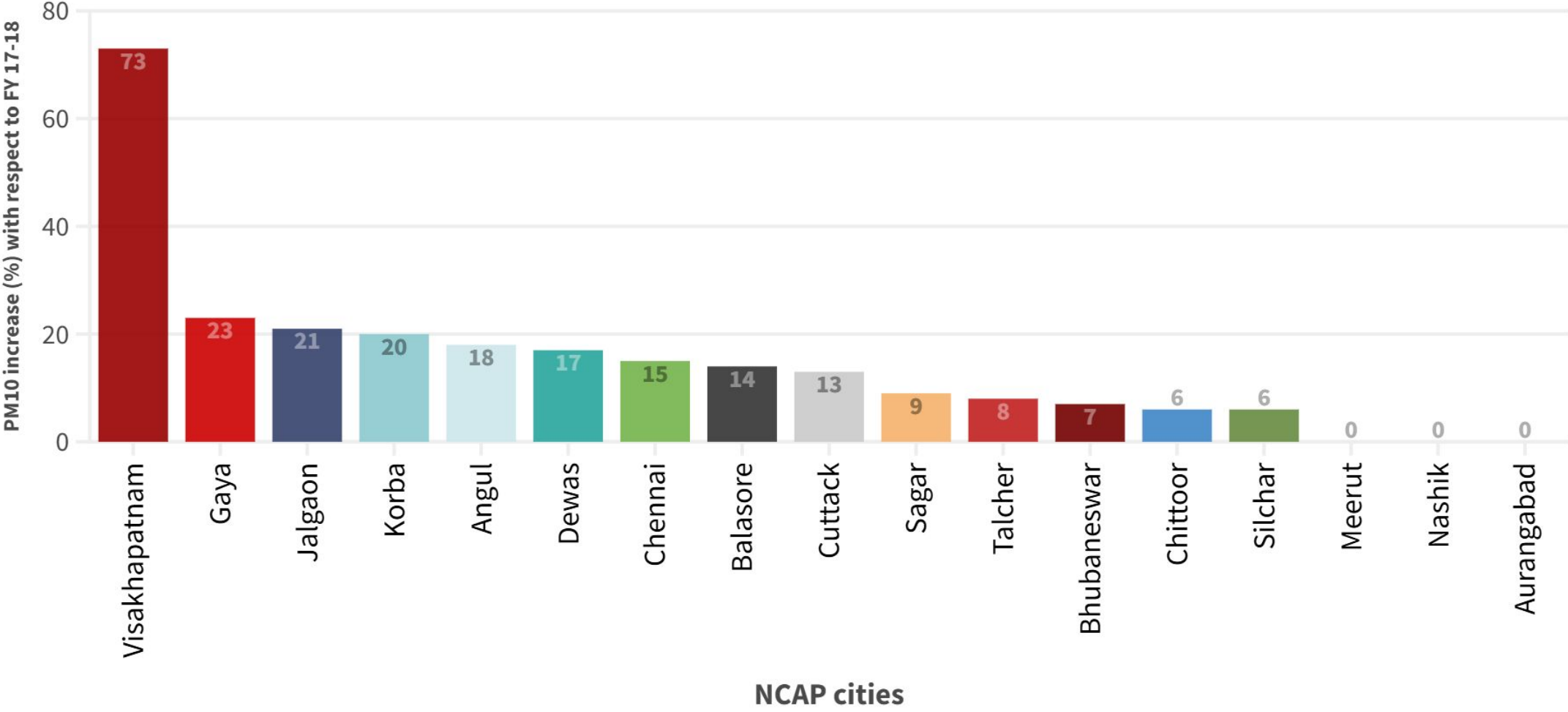
■ Decrease ■ Increase ■ No change



# NCAP Cities with a 40% or more reduction in PM10 levels when compared to baseline year (FY 17-18)



# NCAP Cities with no change or increased PM10 levels when compared to baseline year (FY 17-18)



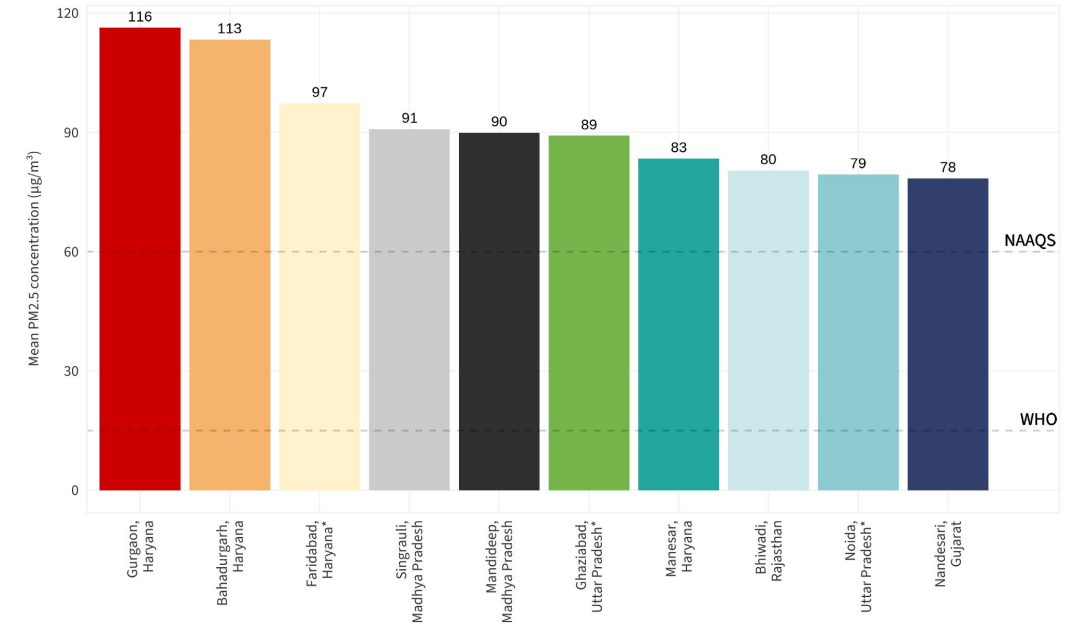
# Top 10 most polluted cities in India by PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration - March 2026

Days in respective AQI categories based on PM<sub>2.5</sub> (µg/m<sup>3</sup>) - March 2026

City	Monitored days	%Days > NAAQS	Good (0-30)	Satisfactory (31-60)	Moderate (61-90)	Poor (91-120)	Very poor (121-250)	Severe (>250)
Gurgaon	31	97	0	1	5	13	12	0
Bahadurgarh	25	85	0	4	3	16	2	1
Faridabad	31	100	0	0	12	15	4	0
Singrauli	31	84	0	5	13	9	4	0
Mandideep	31	71	0	9	9	7	6	0
Ghaziabad	31	90	0	3	17	7	4	0
Manesar	31	84	0	5	13	9	4	0
Bhiwadi	31	68	0	10	10	6	5	0
Noida	31	81	0	6	18	4	3	0
Nandesari	26	85	0	4	15	5	2	0

Top 10 most polluted cities in India by PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration - March 2026

\* indicates NCAP cities

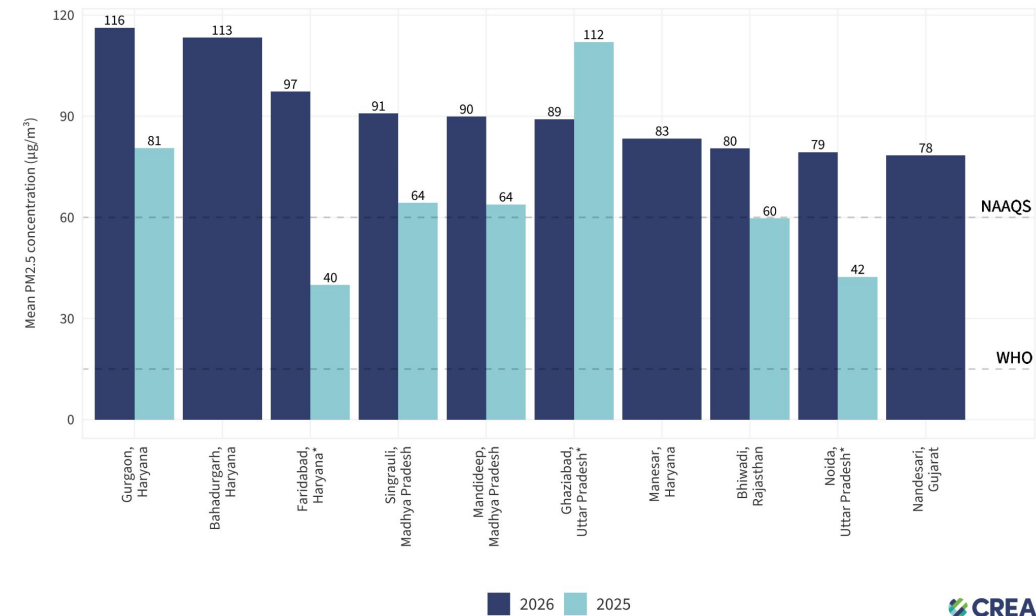


# Status of PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration in March 2025 for top 10 most polluted cities in March 2026 across India

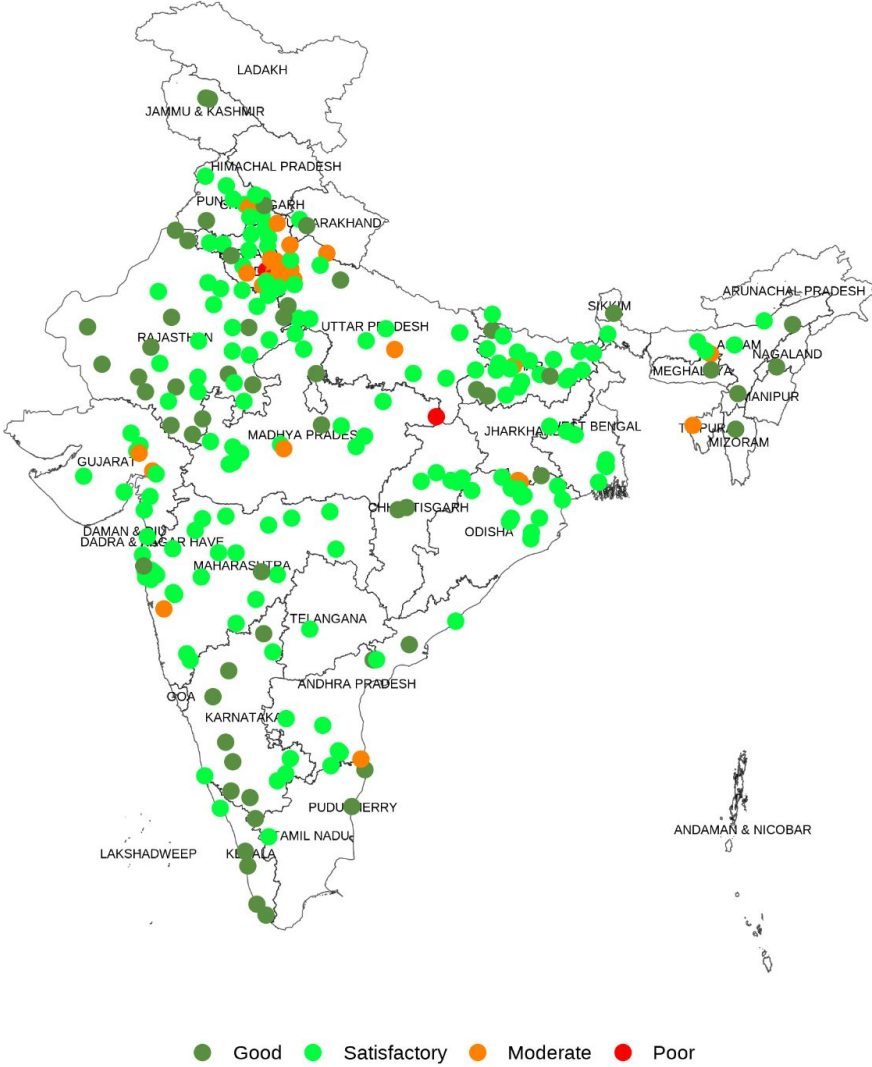
Days in respective AQI categories based on PM <sub>2.5</sub> (µg/m <sup>3</sup> ) - March 2025								
City	Monitored days	Days > NAAQS	Good (0-30)	Satisfactory (31-60)	Moderate (61-90)	Poor (91-120)	Very poor (121-250)	Severe (>250)
Bhiwadi	31	45	2	15	12	2	0	0
Faridabad	31	10	9	19	3	0	0	0
Ghaziabad	31	94	0	2	10	6	13	0
Gurgaon	31	68	1	9	8	10	3	0
Mandideep	31	55	0	14	12	5	0	0
Noida	31	19	6	19	6	0	0	0
Singrauli	31	61	0	12	17	2	0	0

Year-on-year change of top 10 most polluted cities in India by PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration - March 2026

\* indicates NCAQ cities

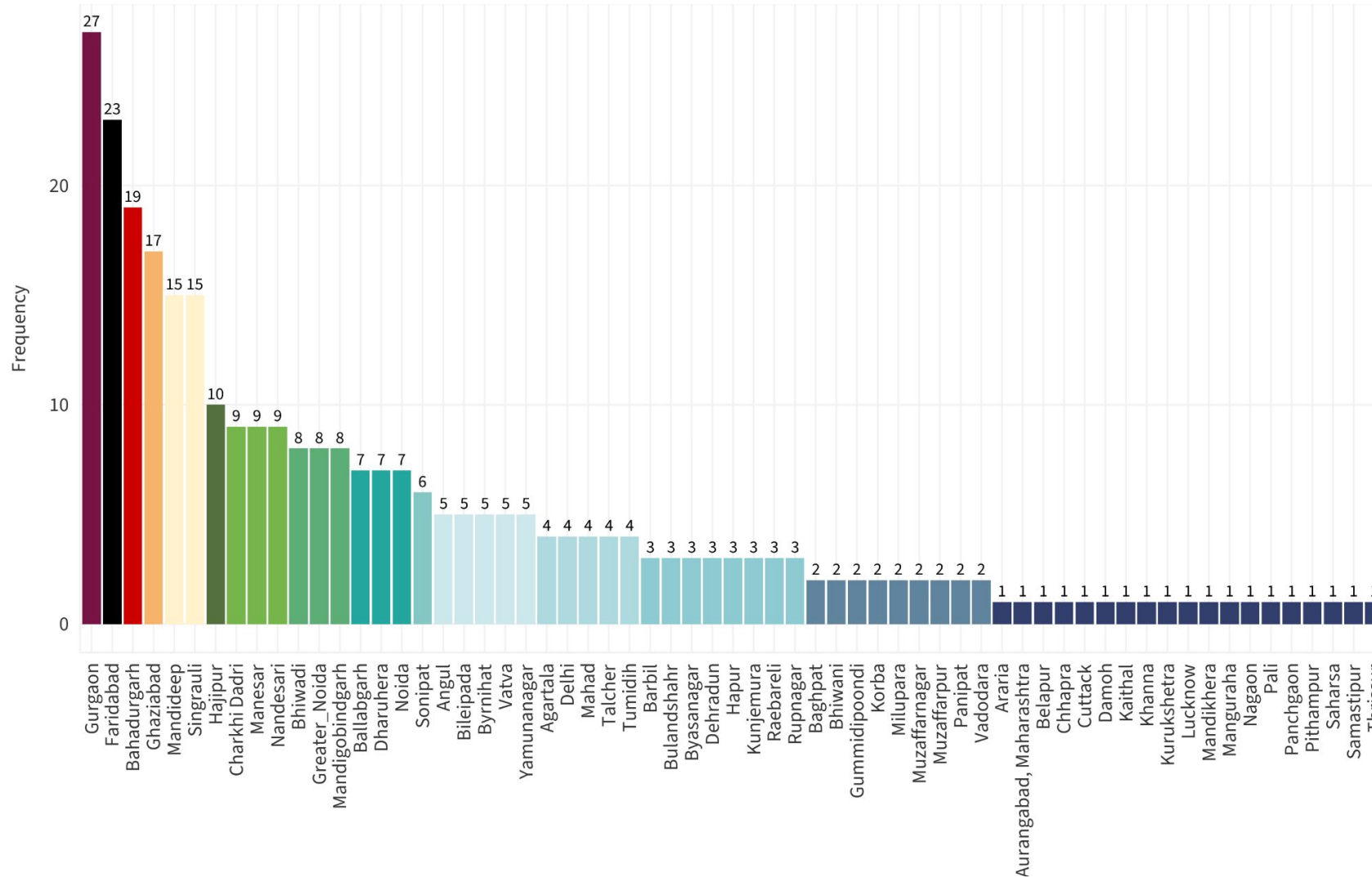


# Distribution of cities by PM<sub>2.5</sub> Air quality Index based on monthly average PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations - March 2026

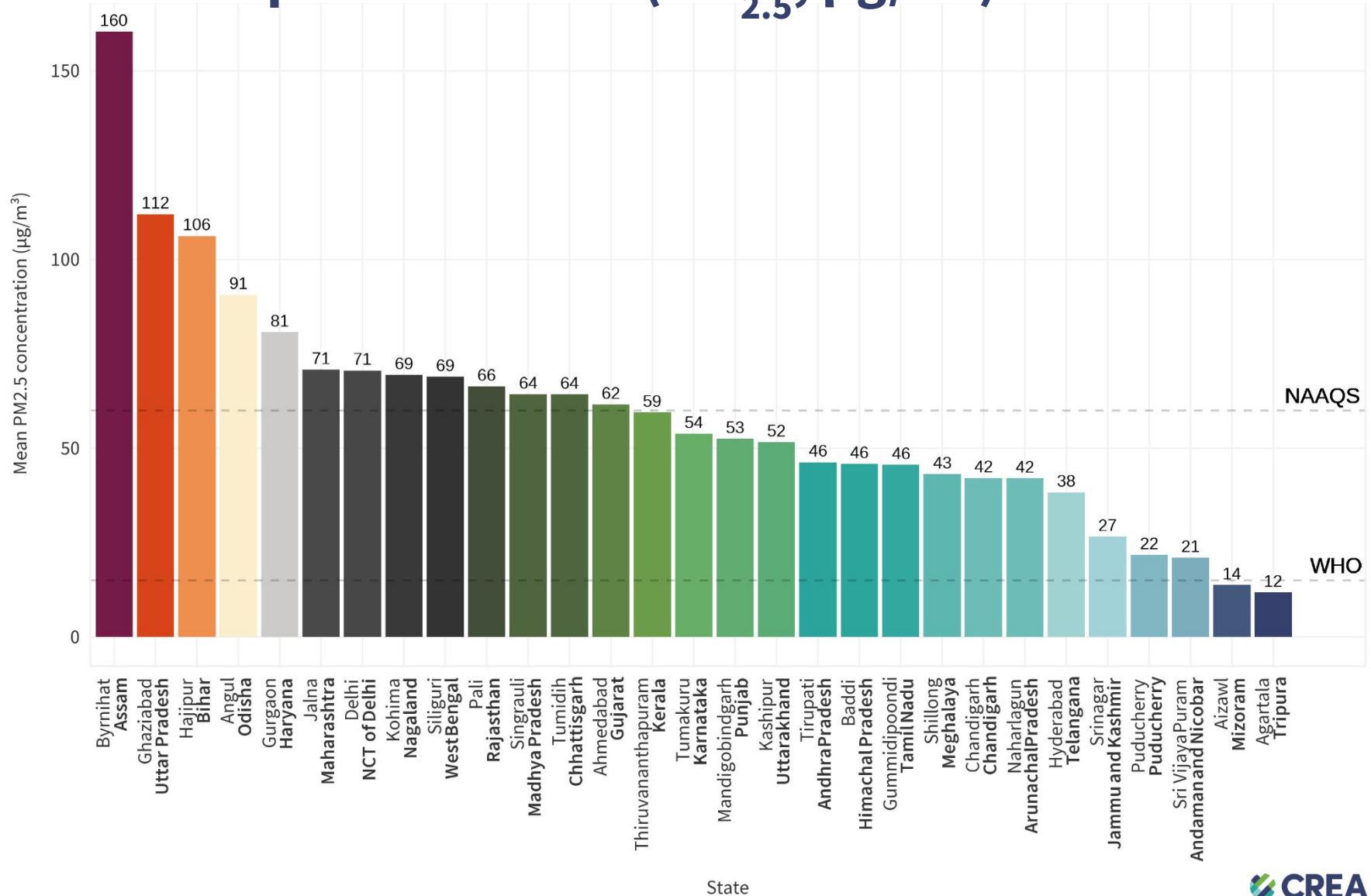


State/UT	Number of cities in AQI category (PM <sub>2.5</sub> µg/m <sup>3</sup> )				
	Good (0-30)	Satisfactory (31-60)	Moderate (61-90)	Poor (91-120)	Very Poor (121-250)
Andhra Pradesh	2	7	0	0	0
Arunachal Pradesh	0	1	0	0	0
Assam	2	3	1	0	0
Bihar	4	19	1	0	0
Chandigarh	0	1	0	0	0
Chhattisgarh	2	6	0	0	0
Gujarat	0	9	2	0	0
Haryana	2	13	6	3	0
Himachal Pradesh	0	1	0	0	0
Jammu and Kashmir	2	0	0	0	0
Jharkhand	0	1	0	0	0
Karnataka	8	5	0	0	0
Kerala	4	1	0	0	0
Madhya Pradesh	1	11	1	1	0
Maharashtra	2	28	1	0	0
Meghalaya	1	0	0	0	0
Mizoram	1	0	0	0	0
NCT of Delhi	0	0	1	0	0
Nagaland	1	0	0	0	0
Odisha	1	13	2	0	0
Puducherry	1	0	0	0	0
Punjab	1	6	1	0	0
Rajasthan	16	17	1	0	0
Sikkim	1	0	0	0	0
Tamil Nadu	1	1	1	0	0
Telangana	0	1	0	0	0
Tripura	0	0	1	0	0
Uttar Pradesh	3	10	8	0	0
Uttarakhand	1	1	1	0	0
West Bengal	0	7	0	0	0

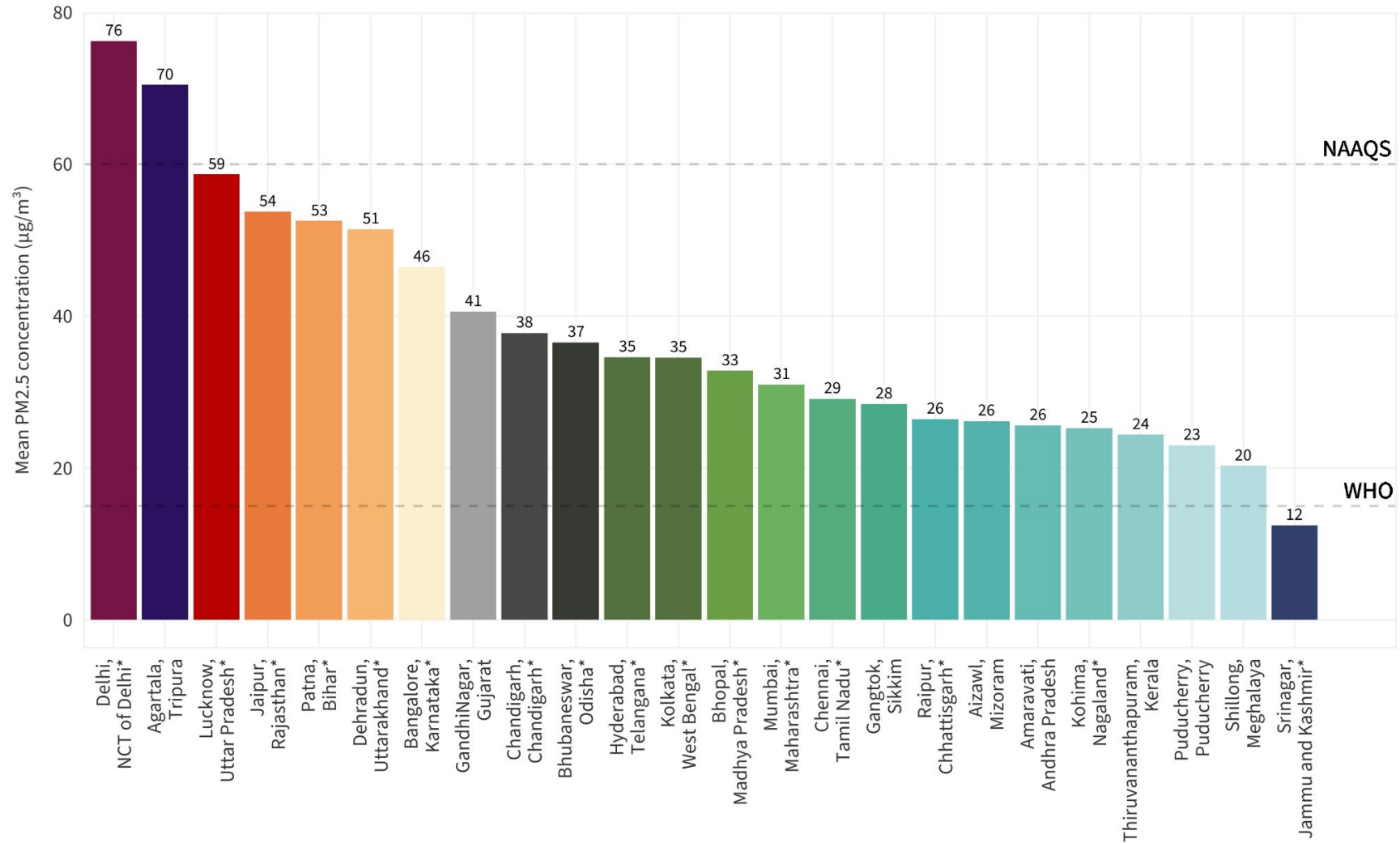
# Frequency of appearance of respective cities in top 10 most polluted cities in India list by PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration - March 2026



# State-wise most polluted cities (PM<sub>2.5</sub>, µg/m<sup>3</sup>) in India - March 2026

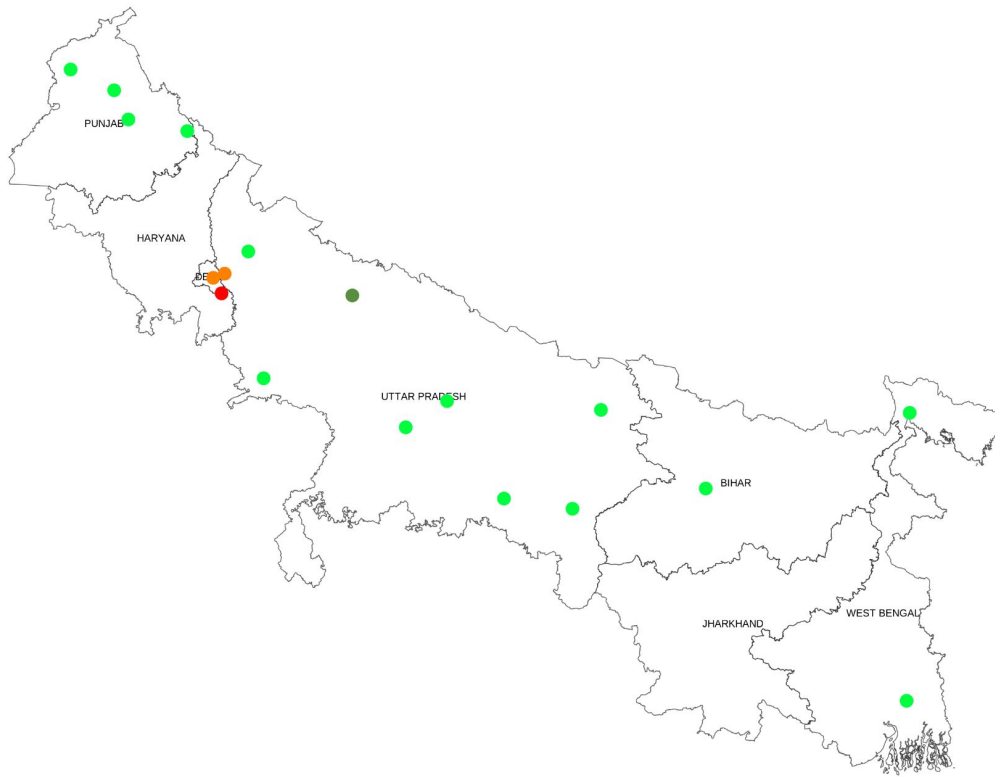


# PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations across state/provincial capital cities in India - March 2026



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

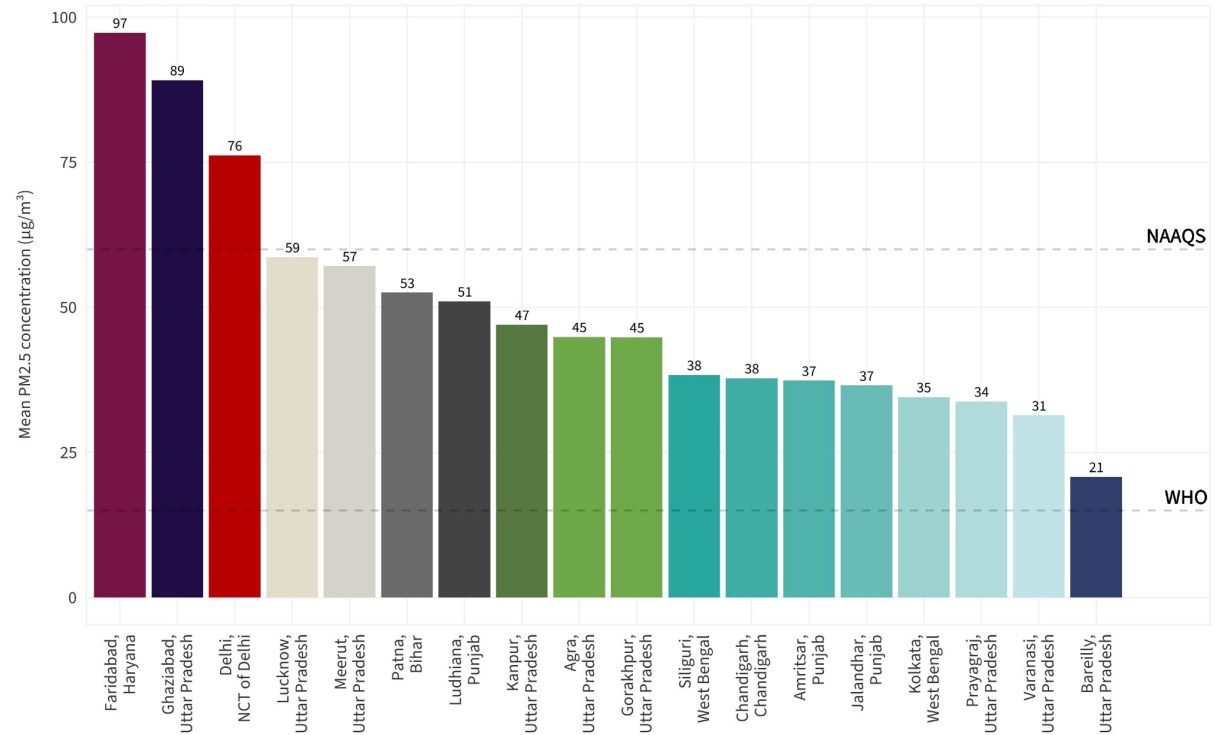
# PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations across million plus cities in Indo-Gangetic Plain in India (with CAAQMS) - March 2026



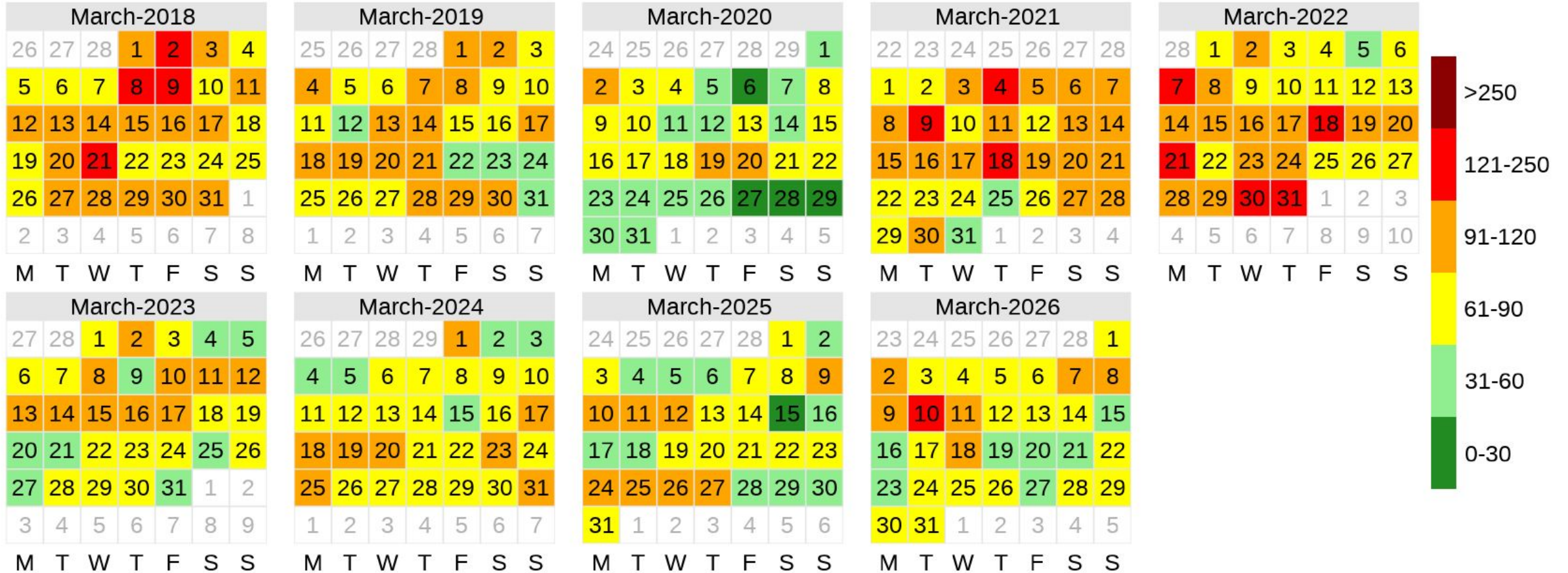
● Good ● Satisfactory ● Moderate ● Poor



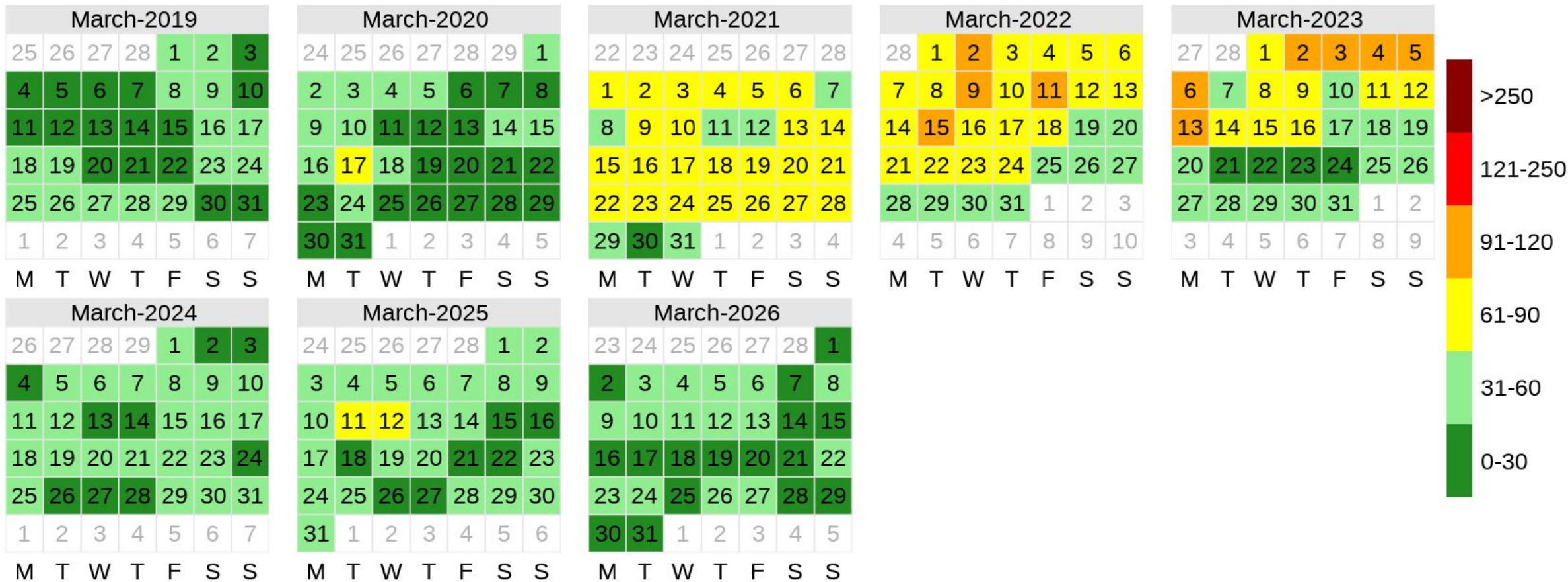
PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations across million plus cities in Indo-Gangetic Plain in India (with CAAQMS) - March 2026



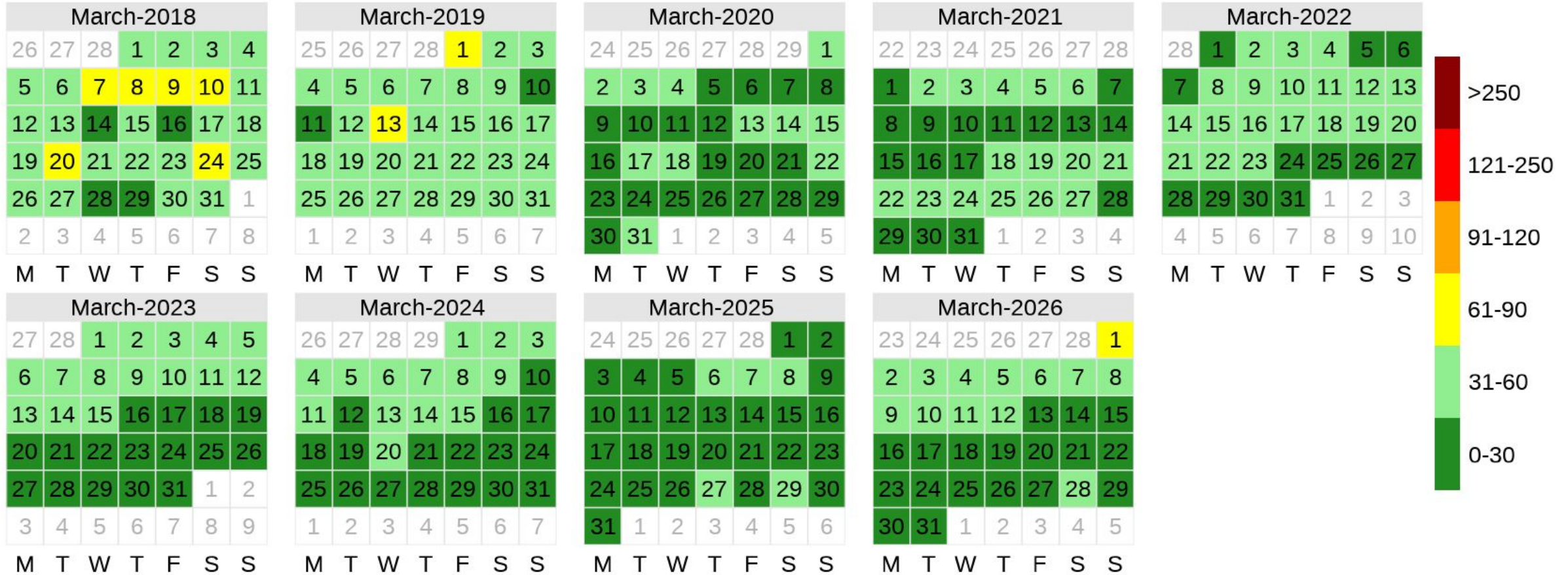
# Ambient air quality status in Delhi – March 2026 (PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration, µg/m<sup>3</sup>)



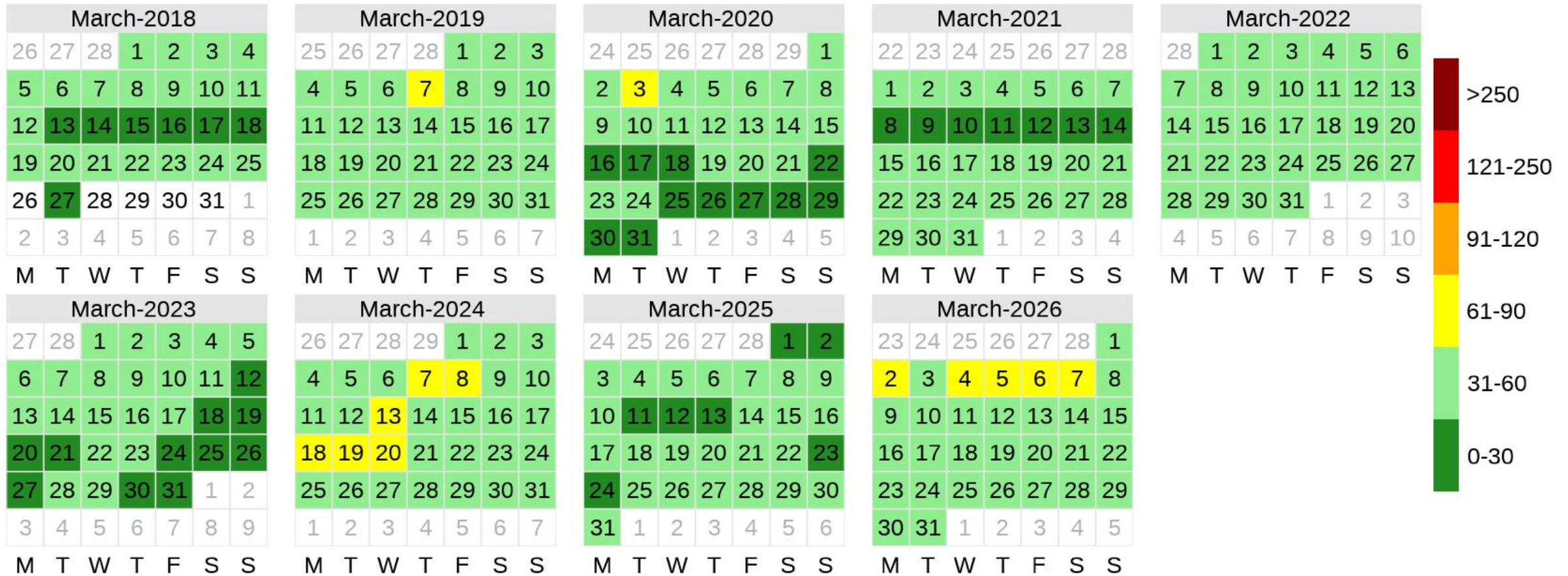
# Ambient air quality status in Mumbai – March 2026 (PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration, µg/m<sup>3</sup>)



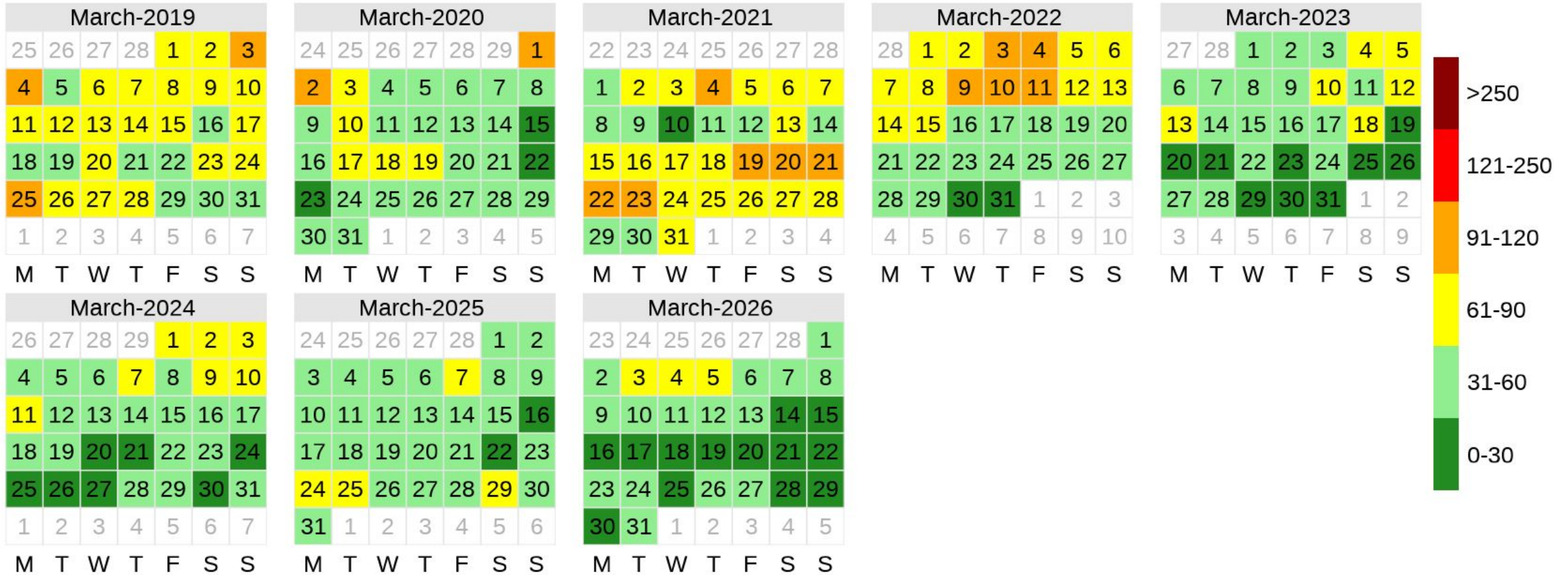
# Ambient air quality status in Chennai – March 2026 (PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration, µg/m<sup>3</sup>)



# Ambient air quality status in Bangalore – March 2026 (PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration, µg/m<sup>3</sup>)



# Ambient air quality status in Kolkata – March 2026 (PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration, µg/m<sup>3</sup>)



## 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

To subscribe to these monthly air quality snapshots and to access the graphs and web version of this snapshot on our website here- [India monthly ambient air quality snapshot](#)