

● Good ● Satisfactory ● Moderate ● Poor



# CREA

Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air

## Monthly ambient air quality snapshot for India

*May 2026*

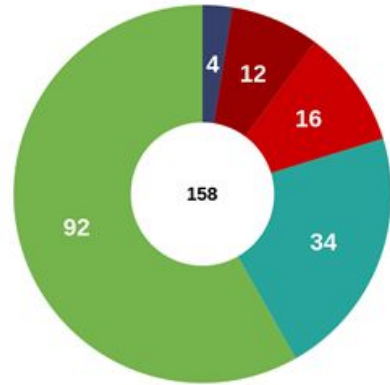
## Key highlights

- **Compliance:** In May 2026, 229 out of 252 cities with 80% and above days with continuous ambient air quality monitoring stations (CAAQMS) available data recorded PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations below India's National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) of 60 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. Ten 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 five National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) cities (out of 94 cities with more than 80% of days with data) surpassed India's daily NAAQS for PM<sub>2.5</sub>, while 92 of 94 NCAP cities exceeded the WHO's daily guideline.
  - **Non-NCAP cities:** Among the 158 non-NCAP cities with over 80% of days with CAAQMS data, 150 cities reported monthly average PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels above the WHO daily guideline. Eighteen cities exceeded the daily NAAQS.
- **Most polluted city: Charkhi Dadri in Haryana ranked as the most polluted city in India in May 2026**, recording a monthly average PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration of 99 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, surpassing the daily NAAQS limit of 60 µg/m<sup>3</sup> for 21 days in the month.
  - Charkhi Dadri recorded nine days in the 'Very Poor' category, four days in the 'Poor' category, nine days in 'Moderate' category, eight days in 'Satisfactory', and one day in 'Good' category.
  - **Khora in Uttar Pradesh was the second most polluted city in India during May 2026, with monthly average PM<sub>2.5</sub> of 94 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.**
  - Throughout May 2026, Khora recorded eight days in the 'Very Poor' category, nine days in the 'Poor' category, nine days in the 'Moderate' category, four days in the 'Satisfactory' category and one day in 'Good' category.

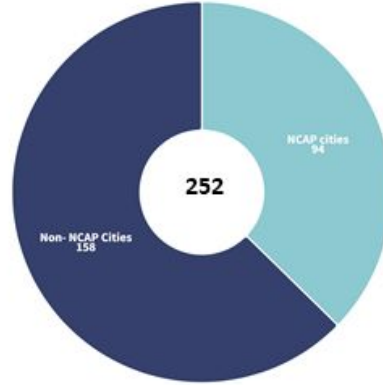
- Panchgaon, Modinagar, Byrnihat, Jind, Faridabad, Mandideep, Bahadurgarh, and Meerut were in the top 10 cities, with Panchgaon and Meerut in third and tenth places, respectively.
- **Haryana accounted for five of the ten most polluted cities in May 2026, followed by Uttar Pradesh with three cities, then each one in Assam and Madhya Pradesh.**
- State with most polluted cities: Among all Indian states, Haryana had the highest number of cities exceeding NAAQS, with 13 out of 23 recording  $PM_{2.5}$  higher than the standards. Of these cities, two were in the ‘Good’ category, eight in the ‘Satisfactory’ category, 12 cities were in the ‘Moderate’ category, and one in ‘Poor’ category. Uttar Pradesh had the second highest number with five out of 22 cities exceeding NAAQS.
- Cleanest city: **Aizawl in Mizoram was recorded as the cleanest city in India during May 2026**, with a monthly average  $PM_{2.5}$  of  $3 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , followed by Dombivli with a monthly average  $PM_{2.5}$  of  $10 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . The top 10 cleanest cities comprise of Maharashtra with three cities, followed by Karnataka with two cities and one each from Assam, Bihar, Kerala, Mizoram, and Odisha.
- Frequency in top 10 polluted cities: **A total of 61 cities were featured in the daily top 10 most polluted cities list in May 2026**, topped by Khora (23 days), followed by Charkhi Dadri (18 days), Panchgaon (16 days) , Modinagar (15 days), Byrnihat and Jind each (14 days), Mandideep (11 days) and Panipat (10 days).
- Megacities: Delhi ( $53 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ), Bangalore ( $27 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ), Mumbai ( $17 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ), Kolkata ( $23 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) and Chennai ( $21 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) all recorded monthly average  $PM_{2.5}$  levels below the daily standard.

# Number of cities vs. frequency of days with PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration above NAAQS and WHO guidelines – May 2026

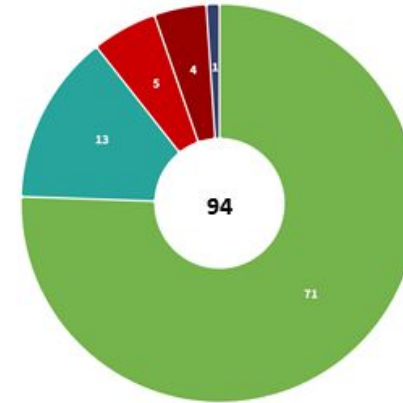
Categorisation of non-NCAP cities against compliance to NAAQS guidelines



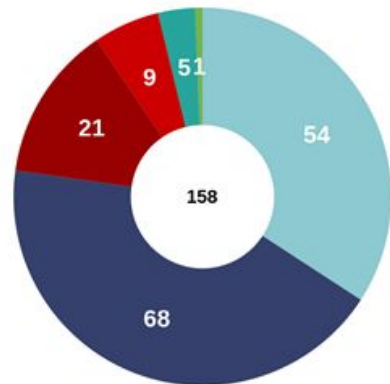
Total # of cities with >80% of the days with CAAQMS data



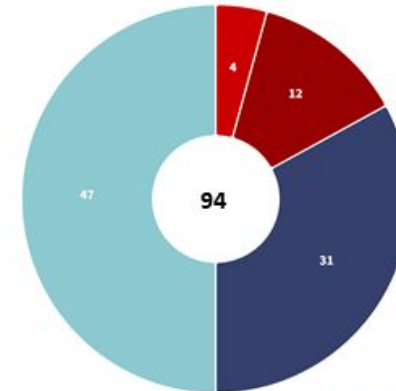
Categorisation of NCAP cities against compliance to NAAQS guidelines



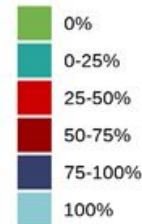
Categorisation of non-NCAP cities against compliance to WHO guidelines



Categorisation of NCAP cities against compliance to WHO guidelines



% of days above standard



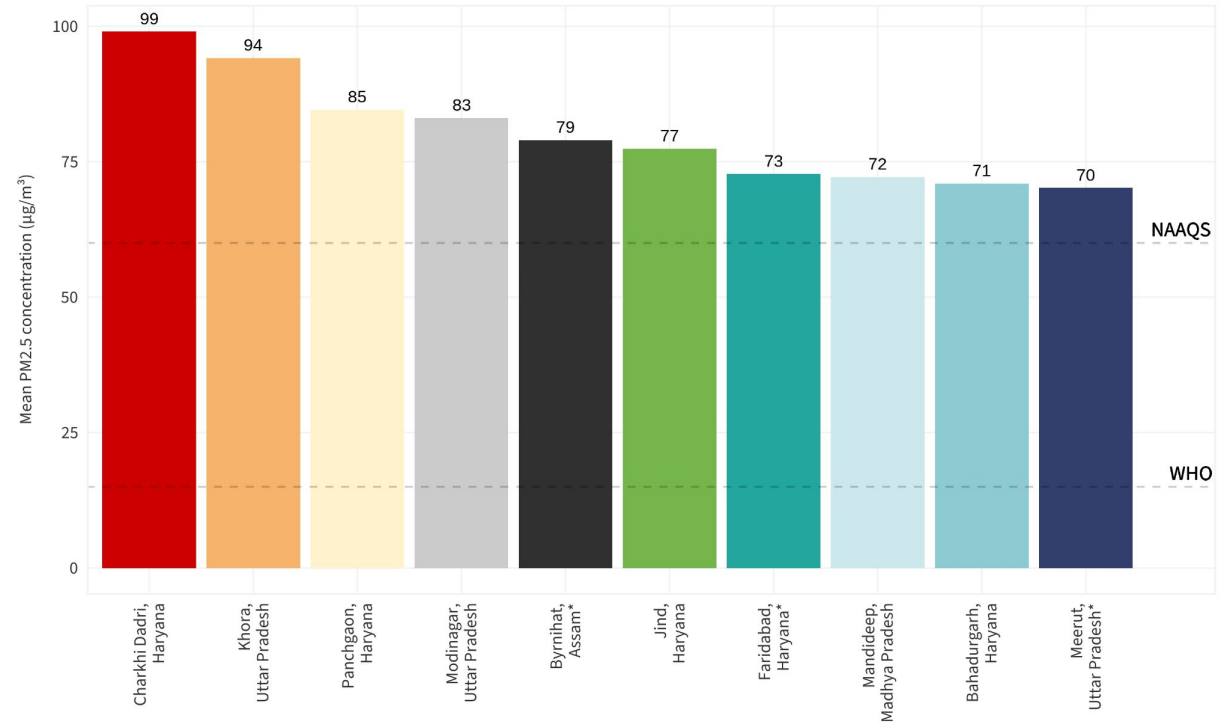
# Top 10 most polluted cities in India by PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration – May 2026

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

City	Good (0-30)	Satisfactory (31-60)	Moderate (61-90)	Poor (91-120)	Very poor (121-250)	Severe (>250)
Charkhi Dadri	1	8	9	4	9	0
Khora	1	4	9	9	8	0
Panchgaon	1	9	6	10	5	0
Modinagar	1	6	10	6	3	0
Byrnihat	0	1	28	2	0	0
Jind	0	7	16	5	2	0
Faridabad	0	8	20	3	0	0
Mandideep	0	6	23	1	1	0
Bahadurgarh	0	5	23	3	0	0
Meerut	2	7	18	4	0	0

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

\* indicates NCAP cities



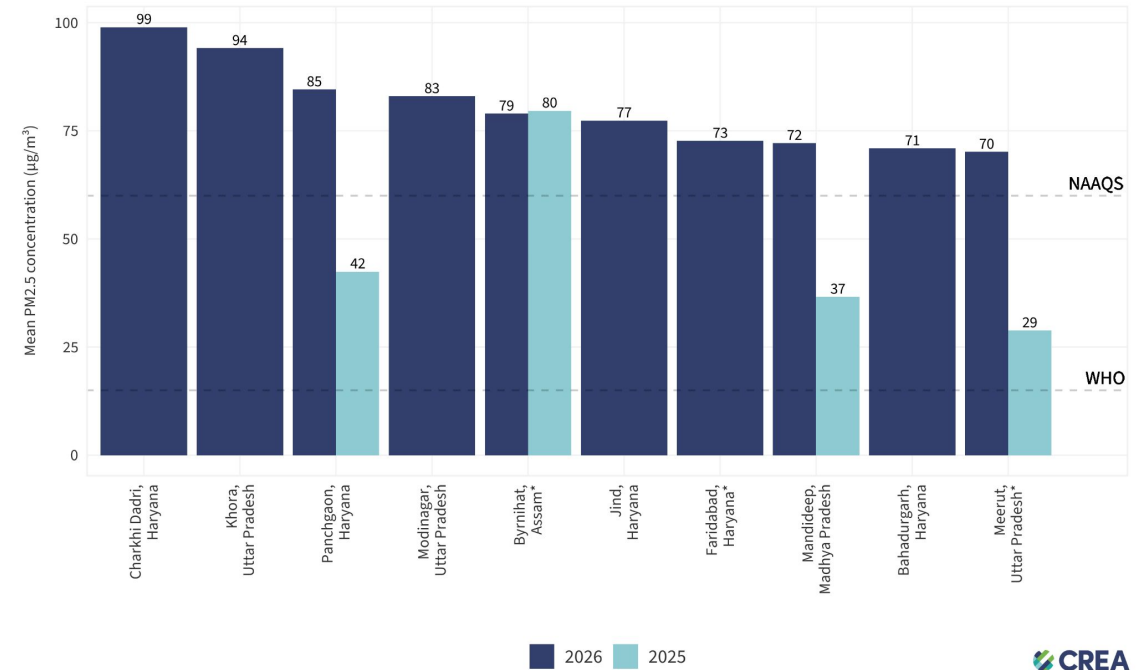
# Status of PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration in May 2025 for top 10 most polluted cities in May 2026 across India

Days in respective AQI categories based on PM<sub>2.5</sub> (µg/m<sup>3</sup>) – May 2025

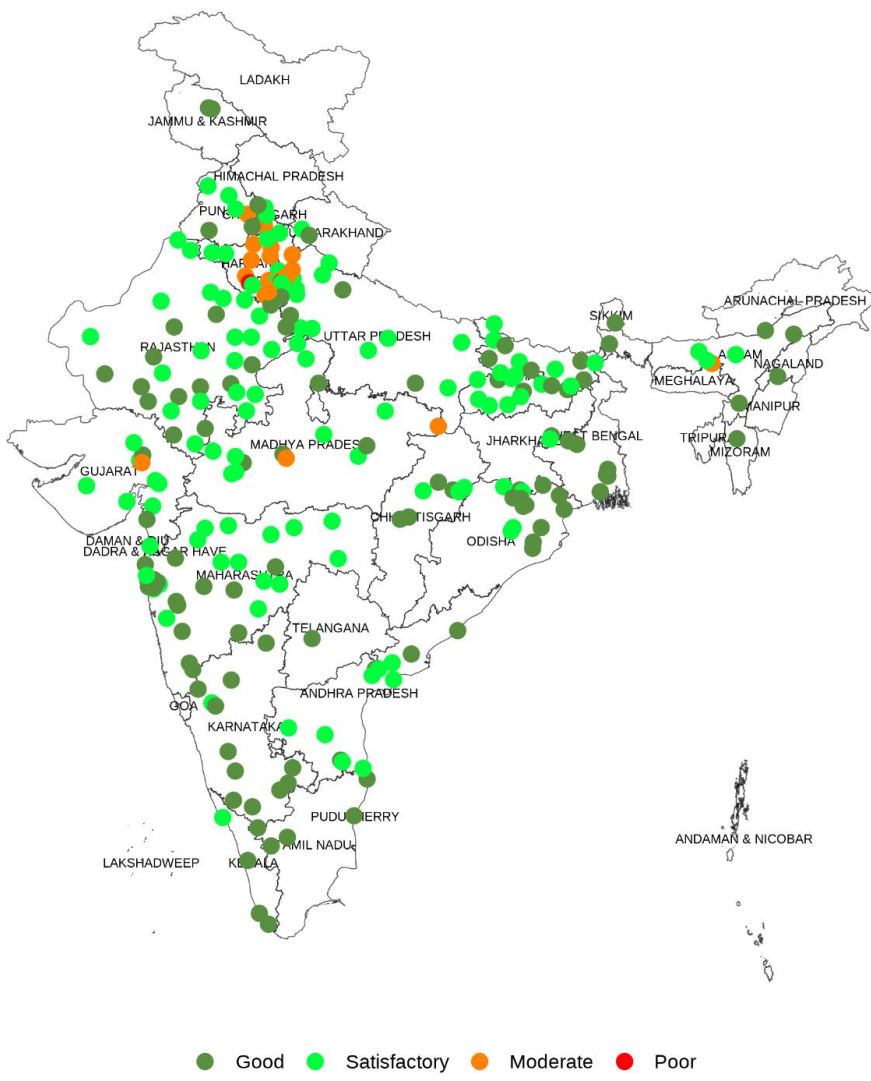
City	Good (0-30)	Satisfactory (31-60)	Moderate (61-90)	Poor (91-120)	Very poor (121-250)	Severe (>250)
Byrnihat	0	10	10	5	4	0
Mandideep	7	23	1	0	0	0
Meerut	22	8	0	1	0	0
Panchgaon	8	18	4	1	0	0

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

\* indicates NCAQ cities



# Distribution of cities by PM<sub>2.5</sub> air quality index (AQI) based on monthly average PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations – May 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	4	7	0	0	0
Arunachal Pradesh	1	0	0	0	0
Assam	2	3	1	0	0
Bihar	9	15	0	0	0
Chandigarh	1	0	0	0	0
Chhattisgarh	5	3	0	0	0
Gujarat	2	8	1	0	0
Haryana	2	8	12	1	0
Himachal Pradesh	0	1	0	0	0
Jammu and Kashmir	2	0	0	0	0
Jharkhand	1	1	0	0	0
Karnataka	12	1	0	0	0
Kerala	3	1	0	0	0
Madhya Pradesh	3	8	2	0	0
Maharashtra	19	16	0	0	0
Mizoram	1	0	0	0	0
NCT of Delhi	0	1	0	0	0
Nagaland	1	0	0	0	0
Odisha	11	4	0	0	0
Puducherry	1	0	0	0	0
Punjab	3	3	1	0	0
Rajasthan	13	21	0	0	0
Sikkim	1	0	0	0	0
Tamil Nadu	3	1	0	0	0
Telangana	1	0	0	0	0
Uttar Pradesh	4	13	4	1	0
Uttarakhand	1	2	0	0	0
West Bengal	7	0	0	0	0

# Top 10 cleanest cities in India by PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration – May 2026

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

City	Good (0-30)	Satisfactory (31-60)	Moderate (61-90)	Poor (91-120)	Very poor (121-250)	Severe (>250)
Aizawl	28	0	0	0	0	0
Dombivli	31	0	0	0	0	0
Katihar	30	0	0	0	0	0
Ambarnath	30	0	0	0	0	0
Mysuru	31	0	0	0	0	0
Cuttack	31	0	0	0	0	0
Chikkamagaluru	27	1	0	0	0	0
Thiruvananthapuram	31	0	0	0	0	0
Sivasagar	31	0	0	0	0	0
Mira-Bhayandar	31	0	0	0	0	0

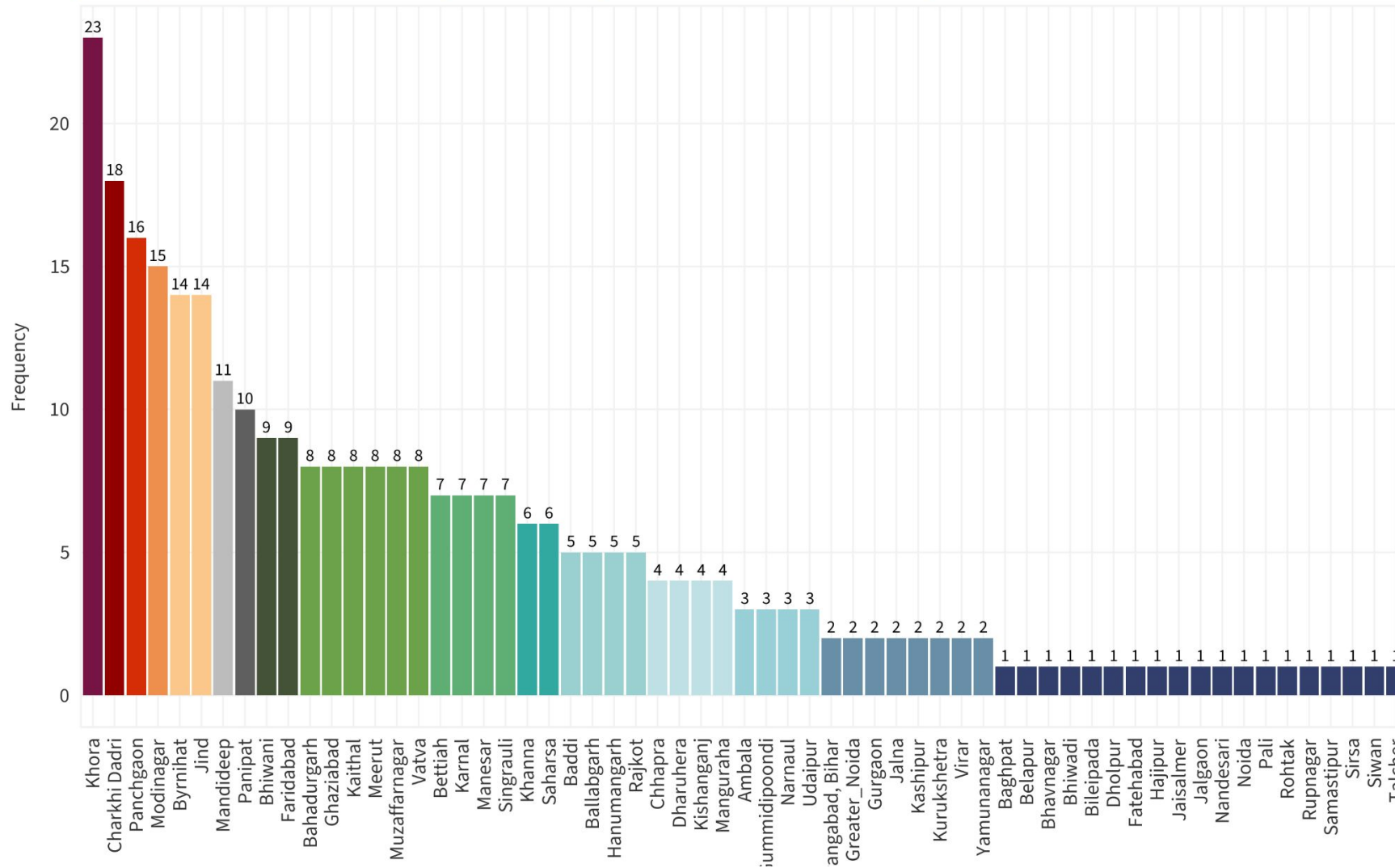
Top 10 cleanest cities in India by PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration - May 2026



Source: CCR

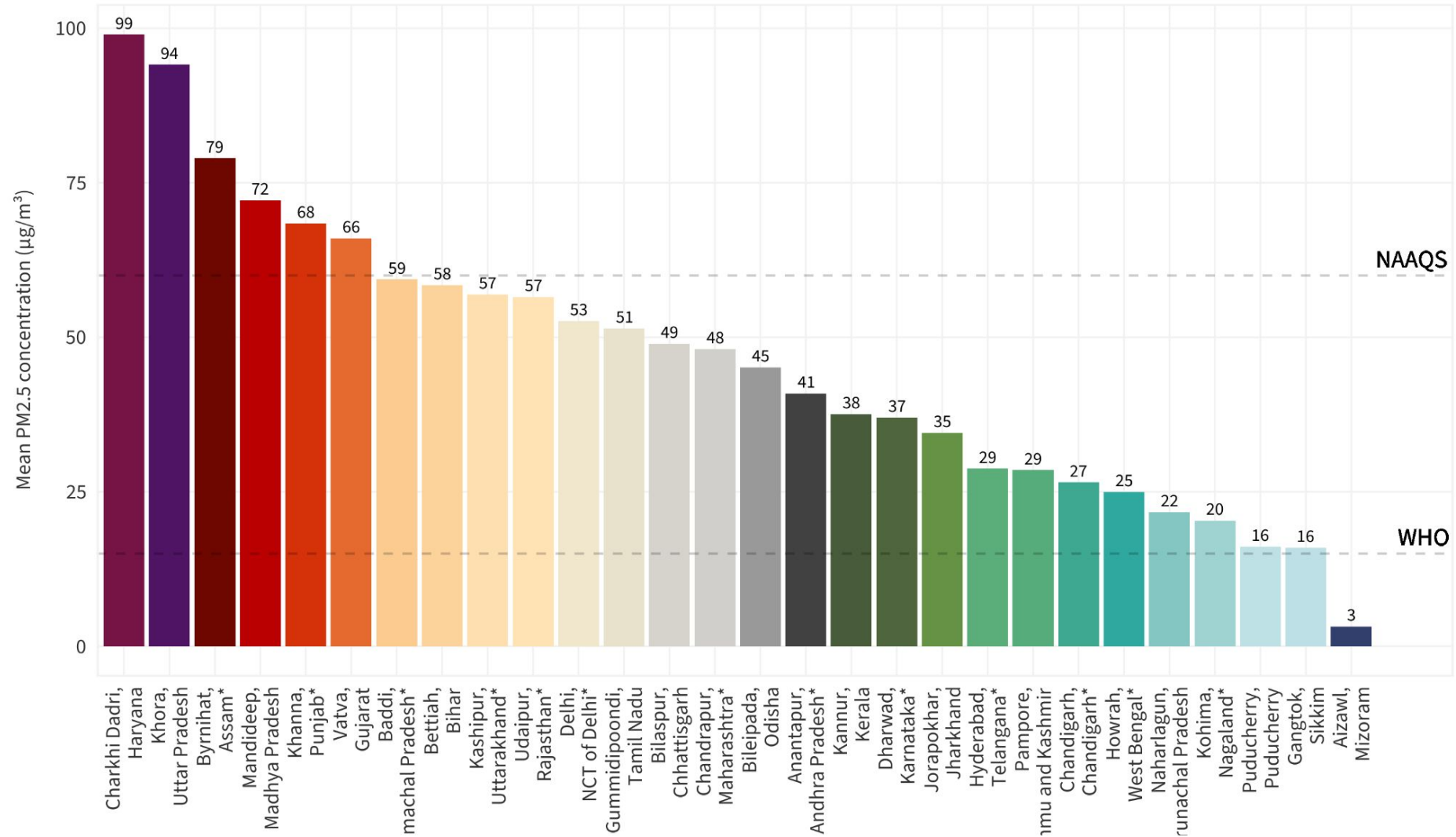


# Frequency of appearance of respective cities in top 10 most polluted cities in India by PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration – May 2026



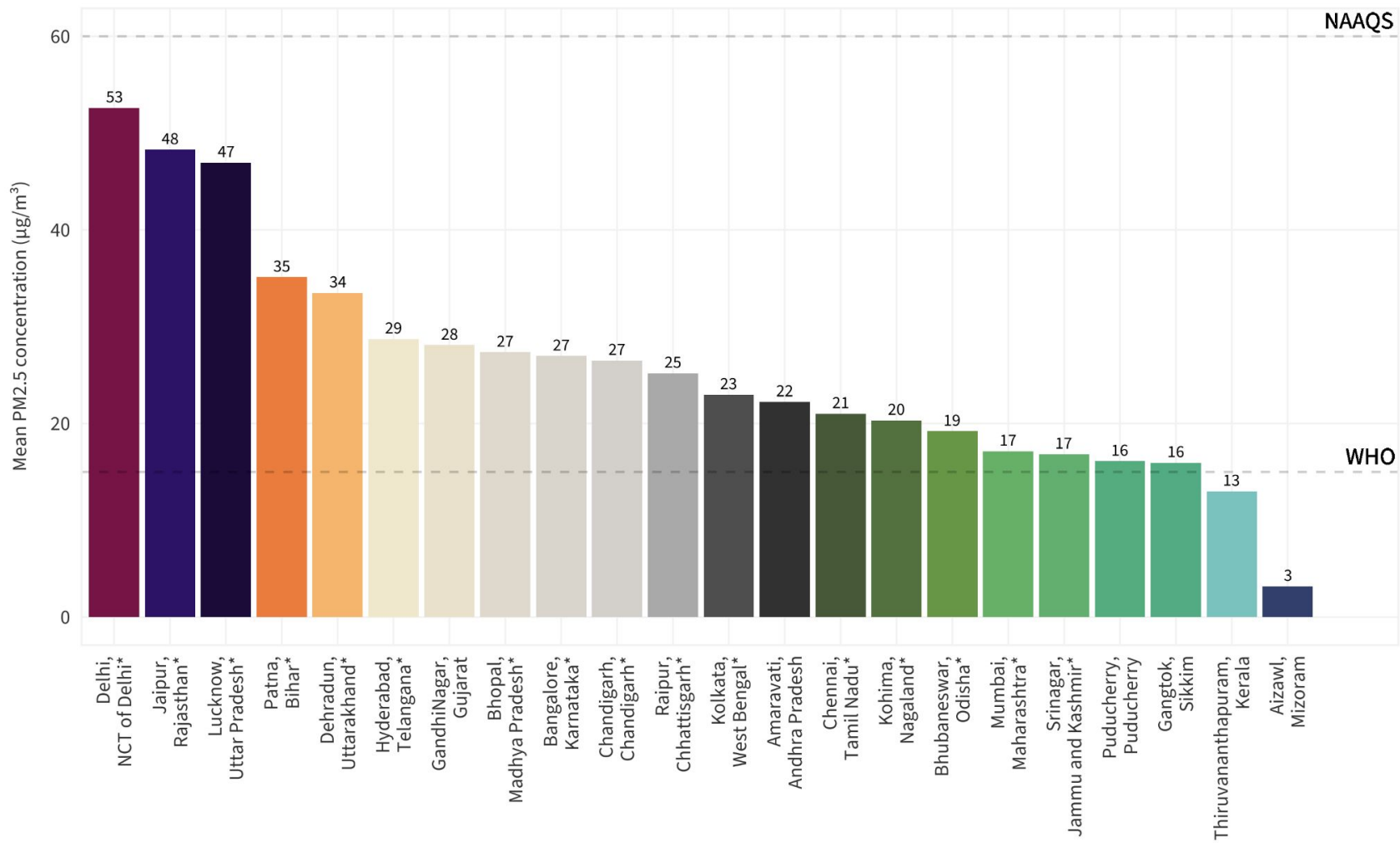
# State-wise most polluted cities (PM<sub>2.5</sub>, µg/m<sup>3</sup>) in India - May 2026

\* indicates NCAP cities



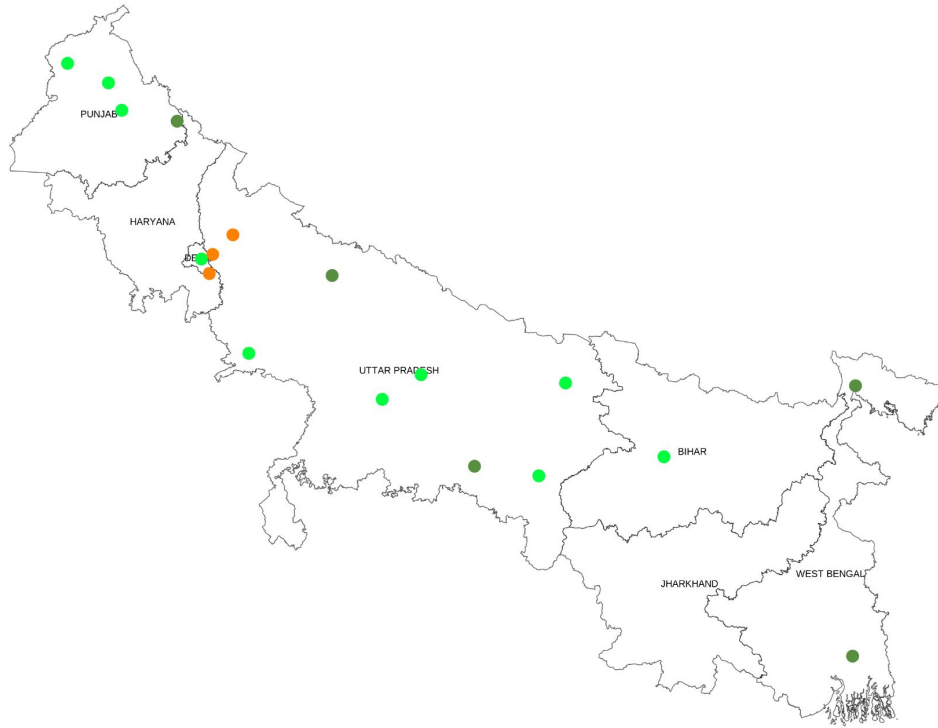
# PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations across state capital cities in India - May 2026

\* indicates NCAP cities



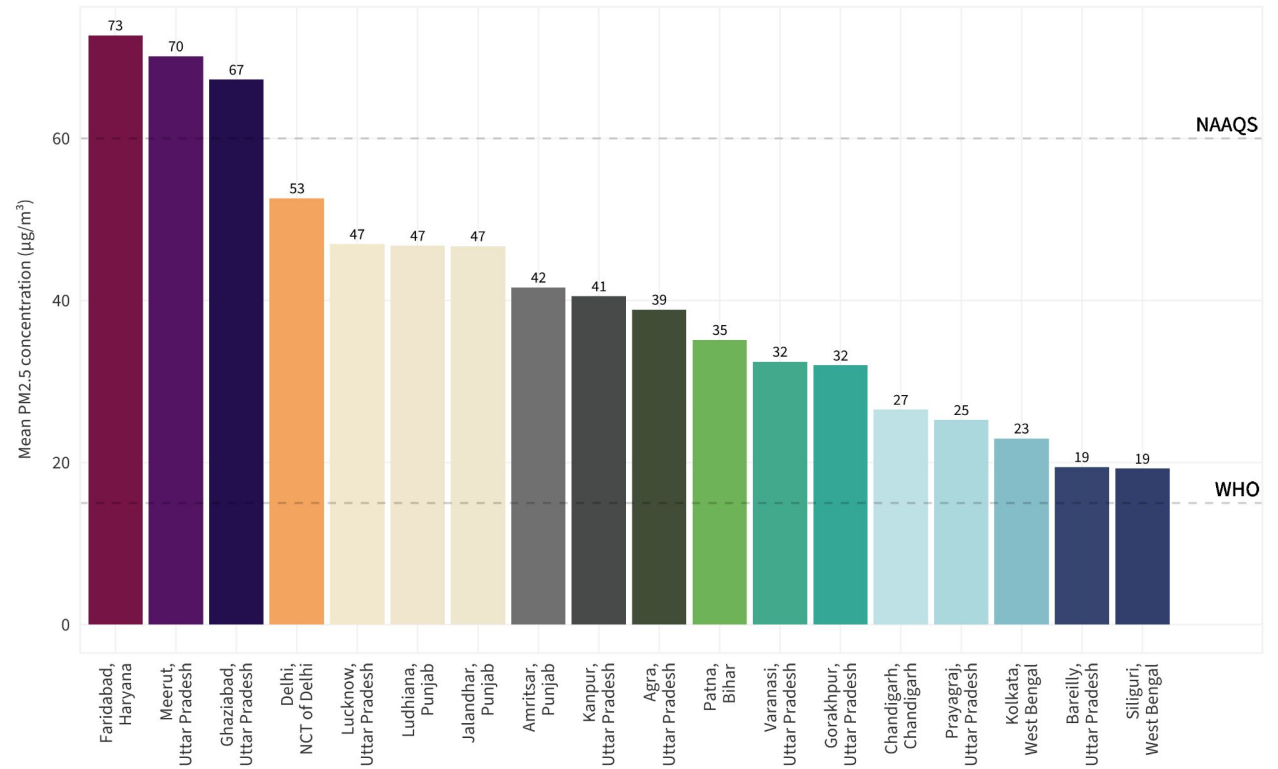
Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh); Dispur (Assam); Panaji (Goa); Shimla (Himachal Pradesh); Ranchi (Jharkhand); Port Blair (Andaman and Nicobar Islands); Daman (Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu); Leh (Ladakh); and Kavaratti (Lakshadweep) don't have an operational CAAQMS.

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



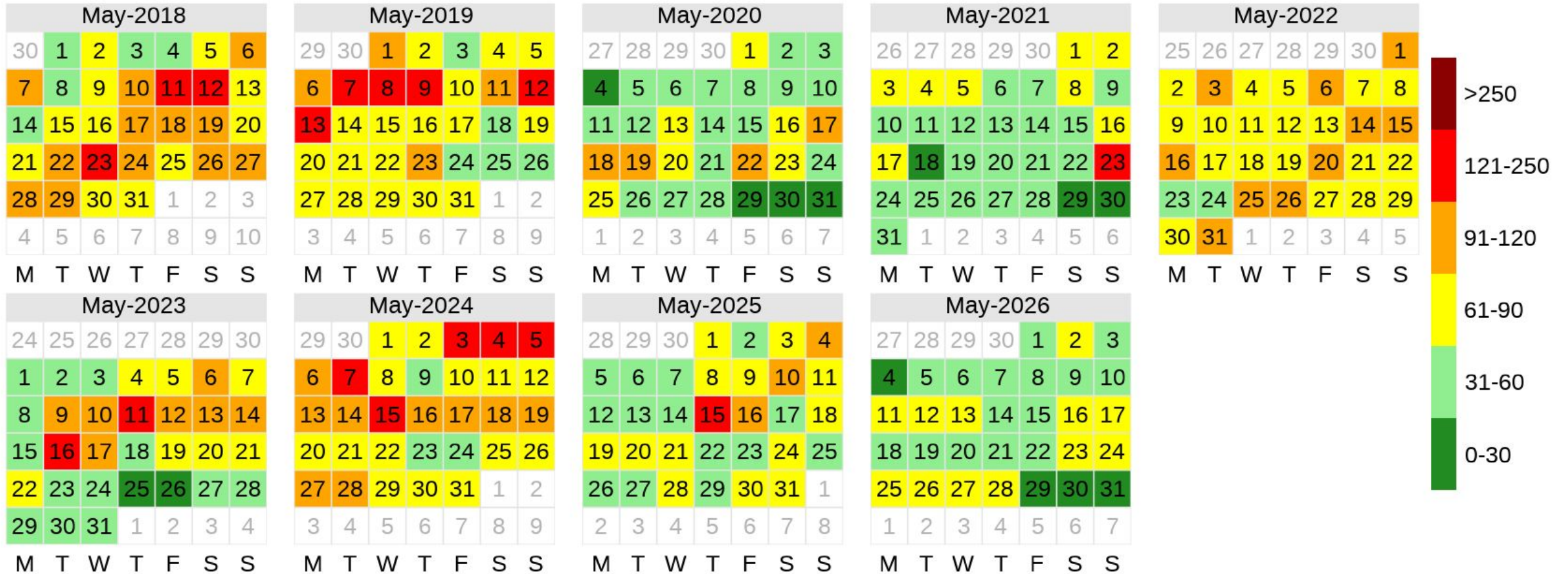
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PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations across million plus cities in Indo-Gangetic Plain in India (with CAAQMS) - May 2026

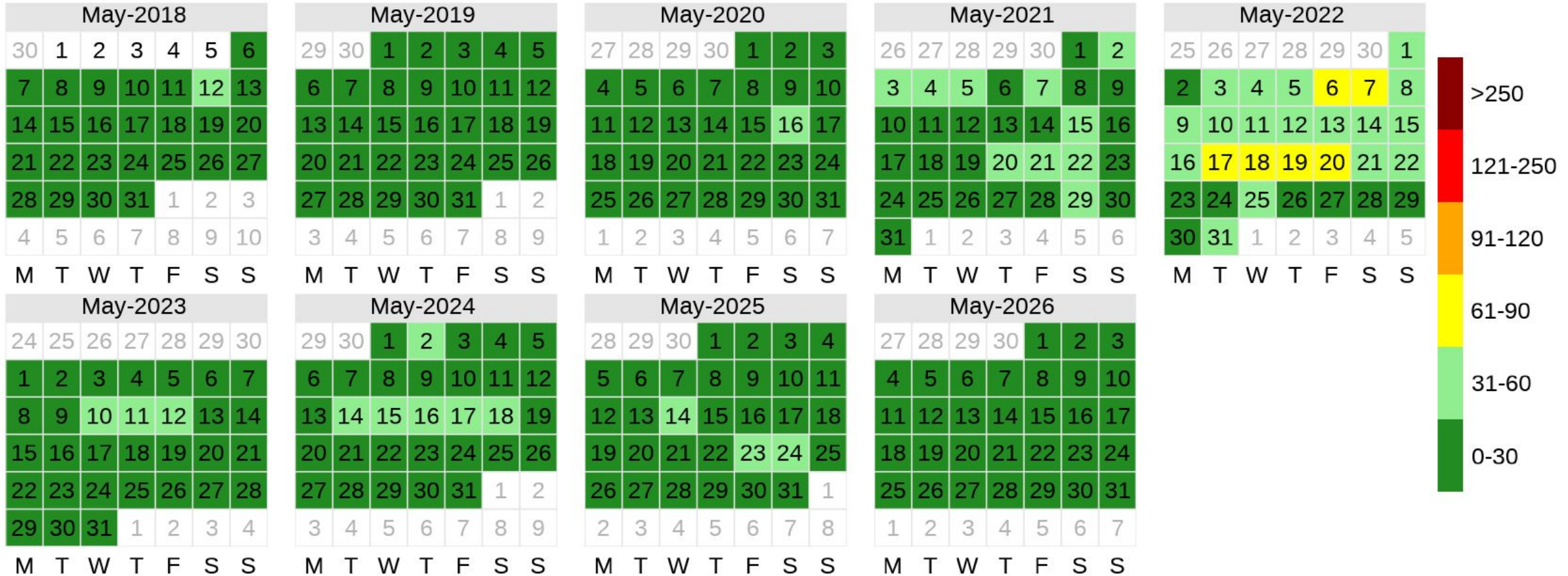


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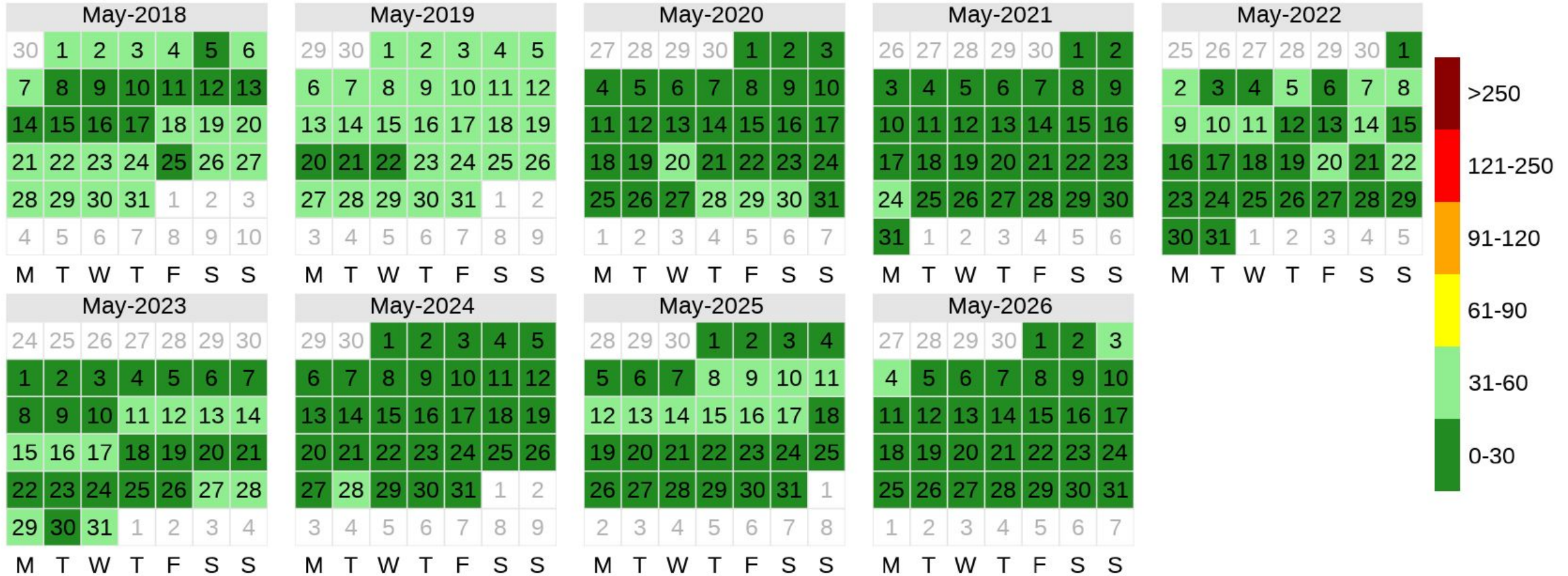
# Ambient air quality status in Delhi – May 2026 (PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration, µg/m<sup>3</sup>)



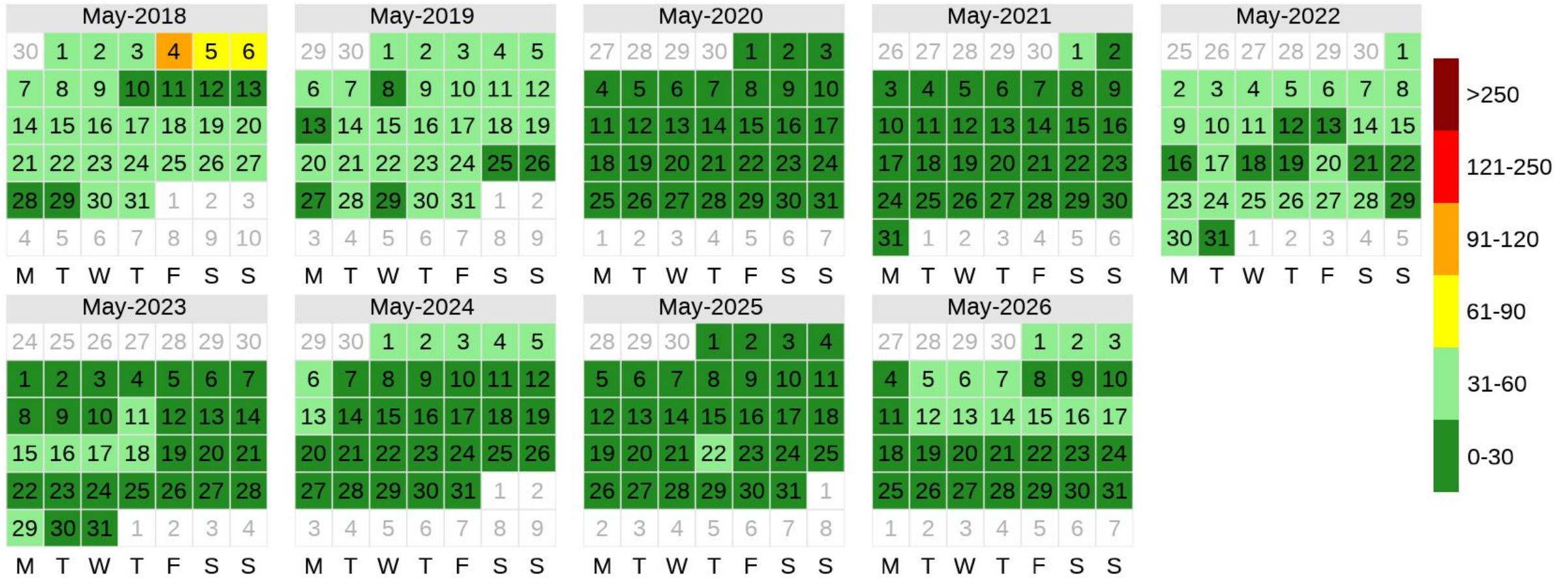
# Ambient air quality status in Mumbai – May 2026 (PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration, µg/m<sup>3</sup>)



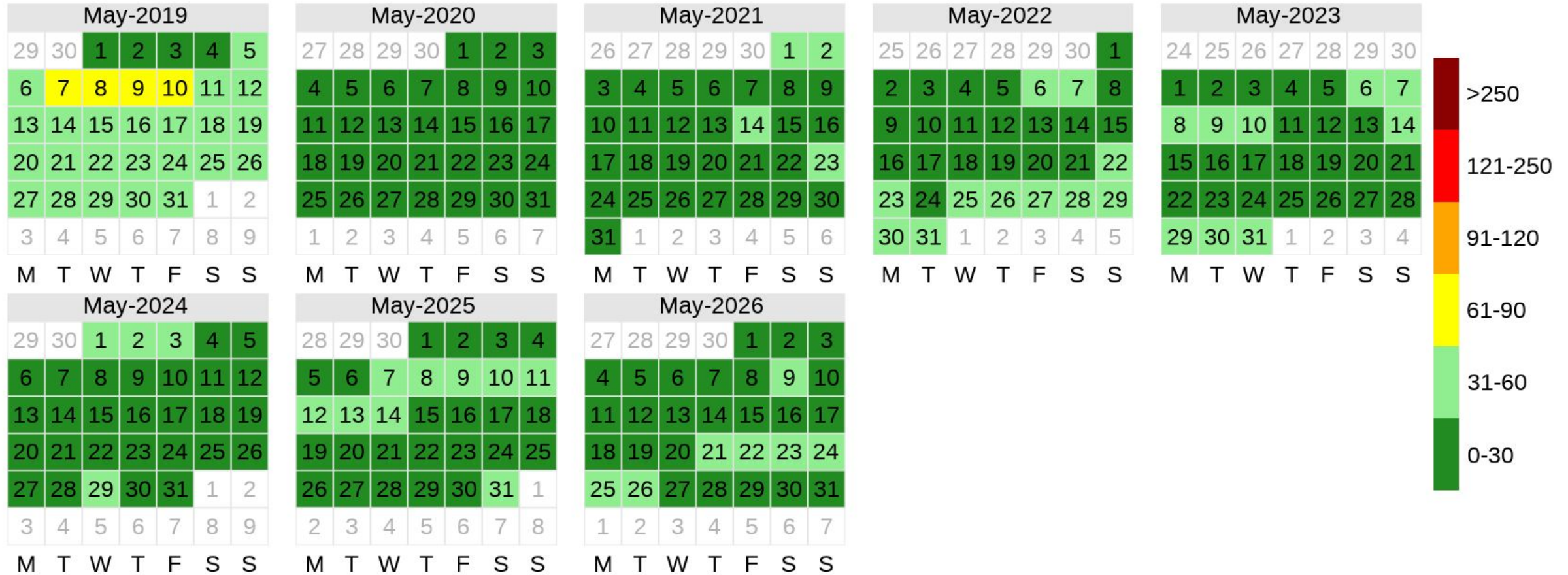
# Ambient air quality status in Chennai – May 2026 (PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentration, µg/m<sup>3</sup>)



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



# Ambient air quality status in Kolkata – May 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](#)