



World Air Quality Report 2019

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Why in News

India was the **fifth most polluted country in 2019** and accounts for almost two-thirds of the world's most polluted cities according to the **World Air Quality Report 2019**.

- The report was released by the **pollution tracker IQAir and Greenpeace**.
- The ranking is based on a **comparison of PM 2.5 levels**.

PM 2.5

- It is an **atmospheric particulate matter** of **diameter of fewer than 2.5 micrometres**, which is around 3% the diameter of a human hair.
- It **causes respiratory problems** and also reduces visibility. It is an endocrine disruptor that can affect insulin secretion and insulin sensitivity, thus contributing to diabetes.
- It is very small and can only be detected with the help of an electron microscope.

MOST POLLUTED CITIES IN 2019

Rank City PM2.5
(micrograms/cu. m)

1	Ghaziabad (India)	110.2
2	Hotan (China)	110.1
3	Gujranwala (Pak)	105.3
4	Faisalabad (Pak)	104.6
5	Delhi (India)	98.6
6	Noida (India)	97.7
7	Gurgaon (India)	93.1
8	Raiwind (Pak)	92.2
9	Greater Noida (India)	91.3
10	Bandhwari (India)	90.5

Key Points

- **Bangladesh emerged as the most polluted country** for PM 2.5 exposure followed by **Pakistan, Mongolia, Afghanistan and India**.
- **21 of the 30 most polluted cities** in the world are located in **India** with **Ghaziabad** in the National Capital Region ranked the **world's most polluted**.
- Indian cities, on average, exceed the **World Health Organisation (WHO) target for annual PM 2.5 exposure by 500%**.
 - For example, Mumbai's annual PM 2.5 concentration is 45.3 micrograms/cubic metre, when it **should be 10 micrograms/cubic metre** according to the WHO.
- However, **national air pollution decreased by 20%** from 2018 to 2019, with 98% of cities experiencing improvements.
 - India launched a **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)** in 2019 that commits to reducing air pollution in 102 most polluted cities **by a maximum of 30% by 2024**.
 - The report, however, noted that the reduction in pollution in 2019 couldn't be attributed to the NCAP but to the slowing of the marketplace.
 - According to the **Economic Survey 2019-20**, the economic growth rate in India is expected to slow down to 5% in 2019-20 from 6.1% in 2018-19 and 7% in 2017-18.
- The Report highlights **elevated air pollution levels** as a **result of climate change events**, such as **sandstorms, wildfires and pollution gains from the rapid urbanization** of cities in regions such as Southeast Asia.
 - While some achievements have been made in air quality monitoring infrastructure globally, there are still huge gaps in access to data around the world.

- It is to be noted that the World Air Quality Report is different from the **State Of Global Air Report** which is produced by the **Boston-based Health Effects Institute (HEI)**.

Source: TH