

FIFTEEN OF THE 20 MOST POLLUTED CITIES IN THE WORLD ARE IN INDIA

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Pollution - Air, Water, Soil & E-waste

Fifteen of the top 20 most polluted cities in the world are located in India, according to an analysis of air quality in several cities around the world.

Gurugram, in Haryana, topped the list with an average annual particulate matter (PM 2.5) quality of 135 micrograms/cubic metre, in 2018. Delhi — a frequent fixture on global pollution hotspots — was only the 11th most noxious city behind Lahore, Pakistan (10th) and Hotan, China (8th). The other cities in India that made the list of 20 were Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Bhiwadi, Noida, Patna, Lucknow, Jodhpur, Muzaffarpur, Varanasi, Moradabad, Agra, Gaya and Jind.

When ranked by country, Bangladesh emerged as the most polluted followed by Pakistan and India respectively.

Of the cities analysed, 64% exceeded the WHO's annual exposure guideline (10 micrograms/cubic metre) for fine particulate matter, also known as PM2.5. India's annual guidelines range from 40-60 g/m³, depending on whether they are residential or industrial areas.

Every single one of measured cities with data in the Middle East and Africa exceeded the WHO guideline, while 99% of cities in South Asia, 95% of cities in Southeast Asia and 89% of cities in East Asia breached this level.

The ranking — a one of its kind study that relies on ground-based sensors located in 3,000 cities from 73 countries — was compiled by IQAir Group, a manufacturer of air-monitoring sensors as well as purifiers and environmentalist group Greenpeace.

Pollution hubs

Jakarta and Hanoi emerged as Southeast Asia's two most polluted cities and average concentrations in the cities in China fell by 12% from 2017 to 2018. Beijing ranks now as the 122nd most polluted city in the world in 2018 and China, the 12th most polluted country in the world. Of the countries analysed, Iceland emerged as the one with the cleanest air.

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