

POLLUTANT LEVELS HIGHER THAN WHO LIMITS

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

South India has relatively better air quality. SUDHAKARA JAIN SUDHAKARA JAIN

Despite widespread air quality improvements during 2019 and 2020, air pollution continues to be dangerously high, the annual data 'World Air Quality Report, 2020' compiled by IQAir has revealed.

According to a press release, south Indian cities recorded relatively better air quality, though they remained above the daily WHO limit of 25 g/m³ for most parts of 2020.

Bengaluru, for instance, recorded an average 15.6% dip in PM 2.5 levels. However, the pollutant levels were above the WHO prescribed limit in 46.7% of the days. The IT city's annual average stands at 27.5 g/m³, nearly three times the prescribed limit. Also, Bengaluru's PM 2.5 levels in December 2020 surpassed the January 2020 levels, indicating that the 'better air quality' has already faded away.

The report showed that 22 of the top 30 most polluted cities globally are in India. None of the Indian cities met the prescribed annual limit of 10 g/m³. This is despite all Indian cities monitored recording improvement in air quality compared to 2018. As many as 63% of them saw improvements compared with 2019. Delhi ranked as the 10th most polluted city and the top polluted capital city in the world.

The report added that major sources of air pollution include transportation, biomass burning for cooking, power generation, industry, construction, waste burning, and episodic agricultural burning.

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