THE DAILY ACCOUNTABILITY RECORD OF DELHI'S AIR

223

AQI at Chandni Chowk, 24 hours to 4 PM, 23 September 2026, Poor on CPCB's documented formula, and PM2.5 set that figure. 13.2 lakh people live within 4 km of it.

Today, 23 September 2026, 24 hours to 4 PM: worse than last year on the observed index, +31.7 points; with the weather removed, still 2.9 points worse on the model's count. 2 of 3 pollutants, PM2.5, PM10, show no real improvement. Delhi's AQI was 154, Moderate, calculated with CPCB's documented formula as the mean of 44 stations' AQIs (CPCB's note "How is AQI calculated?" and its AQI Calculator; page 34 sets out the formula). Above AQI 200 today: 4 stations, Chandni Chowk 223, Nehru Nagar 207, Bawana 206, CRRI Mathura Road 201. The highest reading anywhere in Delhi today was 248 at IGI Airport (T3), and ozone set that figure. The figure at the head of this page is lower, because this record does not anchor its headline on IGI Airport (T3), whose nitrogen oxide readings fail this record's consistency check; the count below includes every pollutant. Poor or worse air reached 30.7 lakh people within 4 km of their monitor today, 14.7 per cent of Delhi.

The year so far, 1 January to 23 September: the cleaner days of 2026 have been the dirtiest for these dates since 2019, because three days in four read above 106.8 on the particle AQI, against 88.8 on the same dates of 2025.

154

TODAY, AS MEASURED

Measured on CPCB's documented formula; with the weather removed, the model's 44 stations read 97, against 159 measured.

1.80 crore

NEAR MODERATE OR WORSE

Within 4 km of 43 Moderate-or-worse monitors: 86.2 per cent of Delhi, every pollutant counted.

4.3x

THE WHO 24-HOUR LINE

Delhi's PM2.5 today, as measured, against the WHO 24-hour guideline.

The weather-removed figures are on the pages marked WEATHER REMOVED or BOTH.

Source: CPCB's hourly station readings for 23 September 2026, 24 hours to 4 PM, compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by CREA, on CPCB's documented formula; people within 4 km from the Election Commission's 2025 Delhi roll, scaled to the Registrar General's 2025 projection and placed on the WorldPop 2020 grid; the year so far from the CREA compilation of CPCB's hourly record since 2019; the weather-removed figures from this office's weather-removal model, computed 23 September 2026; the WHO line from WHO's Global Air Quality Guidelines, 2021.

The air record

23 September 2026 · Delhi, in both manners: actual observed, on CPCB's data and its documented formula, and weather impact removed

Published by Shri Ajay Maken, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha

The negatives, the demands, the danger

FOR THE RECORD, 23 SEPTEMBER 2026, 24 HOURS TO 4 PM. Chandni Chowk read 223, Poor, set by PM2.5; 13.2 lakh people live within 4 km of it. The monitors gave Delhi 154, calculated with CPCB's documented formula (CPCB's note "How is AQI calculated?" and its AQI Calculator; page 34). Against the same dates last year, on the weather model's own 38 matched stations: +39.2 as measured and +2.9 points, worse, with the weather removed, on the model's count. The headline's own year-on-year change is on page 12.

What this record finds today

- Three of every four days of 2026 so far read above 106.8 on the particle AQI, the highest that line has stood for 1 January to 23 September since 2019, when it was 113.4; the middle day rose from 138.8 to 153.3.
- With the weather removed, PM10 sat above last year on 168 of 266 measured days of 2026 (63.1 per cent), and PM2.5 on 99 of 266 (37.2 per cent).
- 2 of 3 pollutants, PM2.5, PM10, show no real improvement on last year once the weather is removed.
- The year is worse on the observed index itself, +31.7 points, and stays 2.9 points worse once the weather is removed, on the model's count.
- Chandni Chowk read 223, Poor, set by PM2.5, while the city average read Moderate, and 13.2 lakh people live within 4 km of it. An average is not an experience.
- The highest reading of the day was 248 at IGI Airport (T3), and ozone set that figure; the station tables at the back carry every reading, each with the pollutant that set it.
- PM2.5 averaged 65.6 µg/m³ over the 24 hours to 4 PM as measured, 4.3 times the WHO 24-hour guideline of 15 µg/m³; all 44 monitors with a PM2.5 figure sat above that guideline.

What we ask of the Government

- Fix the worst stations daily; a city average must never bury a neighbourhood.
- Keep the full monitoring network up: every gas channel, every hour; a meter that cannot measure is not a clean-air policy. On 23 September, 9 of the 44 monitors that reported gave no reading for at least one of the six pollutants.

The health hazard

- Today's category, Moderate, in CPCB's own words, Table 3.12 of its National AQI report: "May cause breathing discomfort to the people with lung disease such as asthma and discomfort to people with heart disease, children and older adults"
- WHO's 2021 guidelines say the evidence points to no level of PM2.5 below which harm stops, and that even the annual guideline of 5 µg/m³ is not a level of no effect.
- The fine particles pass from the lungs into the blood; the burden falls first on children, the elderly, and those who work outdoors and cannot choose their air.

Shri Ajay Maken
Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha

Source: CPCB's hourly station readings for 23 September 2026, 24 hours to 4 PM, compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by CREA, on CPCB's documented formula; the weather-removed figures from this office's weather-removal model, computed 23 September 2026; people within 4 km from the Election Commission's 2025 Delhi roll, scaled to the Registrar General's 2025 projection and placed on the WorldPop 2020 grid; the year so far from the CREA compilation of CPCB's hourly record since 2019; WHO's Global Air Quality Guidelines, 2021; CPCB's National AQI report, Table 3.12.

What this record holds, page by page

CONTENTS

Part A. The verdict, both rulers side by side the paired pages; read these and stop if you must

05	The verdict, both rulers	observed and weather removed, on one count
06	PM2.5 against the WHO	the 24-hour guideline
07	PM10 against the WHO	the 24-hour guideline
08	The pollutant board	all tracked species, with how each is used

Part B. Observed: what the monitors said checkable against CPCB, weather and all

09	The day at the stations	the spread the average hides
10	The 30-day path	the index, day by day
11	Against yesterday	the one-day move
12	Against last year, observed	before the weather is removed
13	The station this record leads on	one neighbourhood's day
14	The year so far	the distribution a count and a mean both hide
15	The city over the line	the share of monitors above 200, by year

Part C. Weather Impact Removed the year with the weather's effect removed, its margins, and the weather evidence

16	The weather's hand	six drivers, and the fairness gate
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19	PM10, month by month	each month against last year, with its margin
20	The weather evidence	climatology, envelope and verdicts

Part D. People, reference and method reach, the full tables, and how it is all made

21	Who the network reaches	coverage at 500 m, 2 km and 4 km
22	Where the people are	the grid, and the Voronoi method in full
23	What each monitor speaks for	people within 4 km, and today's exposure
24	Every station	the full network table
25	Every station, contd.	the full network table
26	Every station, contd.	the full network table
27	Levels: PM2.5 and PM10	thirty days, both lines on one axis
28	Levels: NO2 and NOx	thirty days, both lines on one axis
29	Levels: SO2 and CO	thirty days, both lines on one axis
30	Levels: Ozone	thirty days, both lines on one axis
31	The published context	what pollutes it, what delay costs, and the year
32	The method	plain English, on two pages
34	How this record calculates the AQI	CPCB's documented formula, with CPCB's links
35	Sources	every source, dated

One fact per page, provable at a glance

Four ways in, depending on the minute you are in



01 Part A. The verdict, both rulers

The summary, then the paired pages: observed and weather removed, side by side.

Pages 01, 02, then 05 onward.

02 Part B. Observed

What the monitors said: the stations, the 30 days, last year, the year so far.

Pages 09 onward.

03 Part C. Weather Impact Removed

The year with the weather's effect removed: the days above and below last year, each month, and the weather evidence.

Pages 16 onward.

04 Part D. People, reference, method

Who the network reaches, the full tables, and how every number is made.

Pages 21 onward.

What weather removed means. Rain and wind wash or carry pollution away; calm weather traps it. A model removes that effect from the numbers. What remains is the pollution that Delhi's and the region's emissions produce in a typical spell of weather for the season. The two rulers work like this: the first is what the monitors measured, and the second is what the model estimates the air would have been in the usual weather for these dates. Every data page is tagged OBSERVED, WEATHER REMOVED or BOTH, in the same pale and red the charts use.

What a residual is. One day's level minus the same days of last year. Above zero means worse than last year. It is a difference, never a level.

What the margin is. The band inside which a figure is too close to call. Where a change sits inside its margin, this record says so and rests no claim on it.

The tab
It names the data and the exact window.

The banner
It states the finding, ready to be read out.

The three zones
Reading, caution and a dated source under every chart.

The point
The dark band restates the page's sharpest fact.

The verdict, both rulers

+39.2

points on last year, observed, on the weather model's own count

On the weather model's own count of 38 matched stations, the observed year reads +39.2 points; with the weather removed it is still +2.9 points worse, on the model's count across 36 of 38 stations. 2 of 3 pollutants, PM2.5, PM10, show no real improvement. With the weather removed, 36 of the model's 38 matched stations read higher than last year.

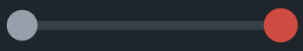
No real improvement on last year: PM2.5, PM10



Last year to today, both ways of counting

Last year (grey) to today (colour).

Observed: 124 last year, 159 today



Weather removed: 95 last year, 97 today

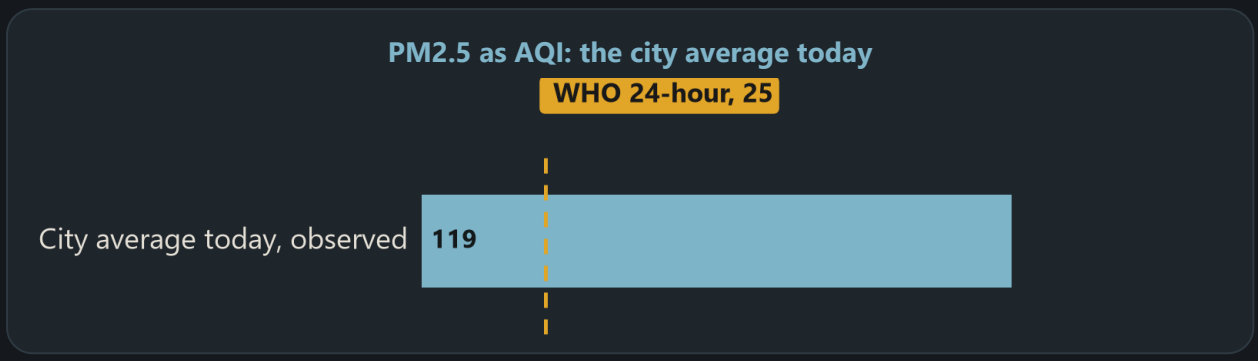


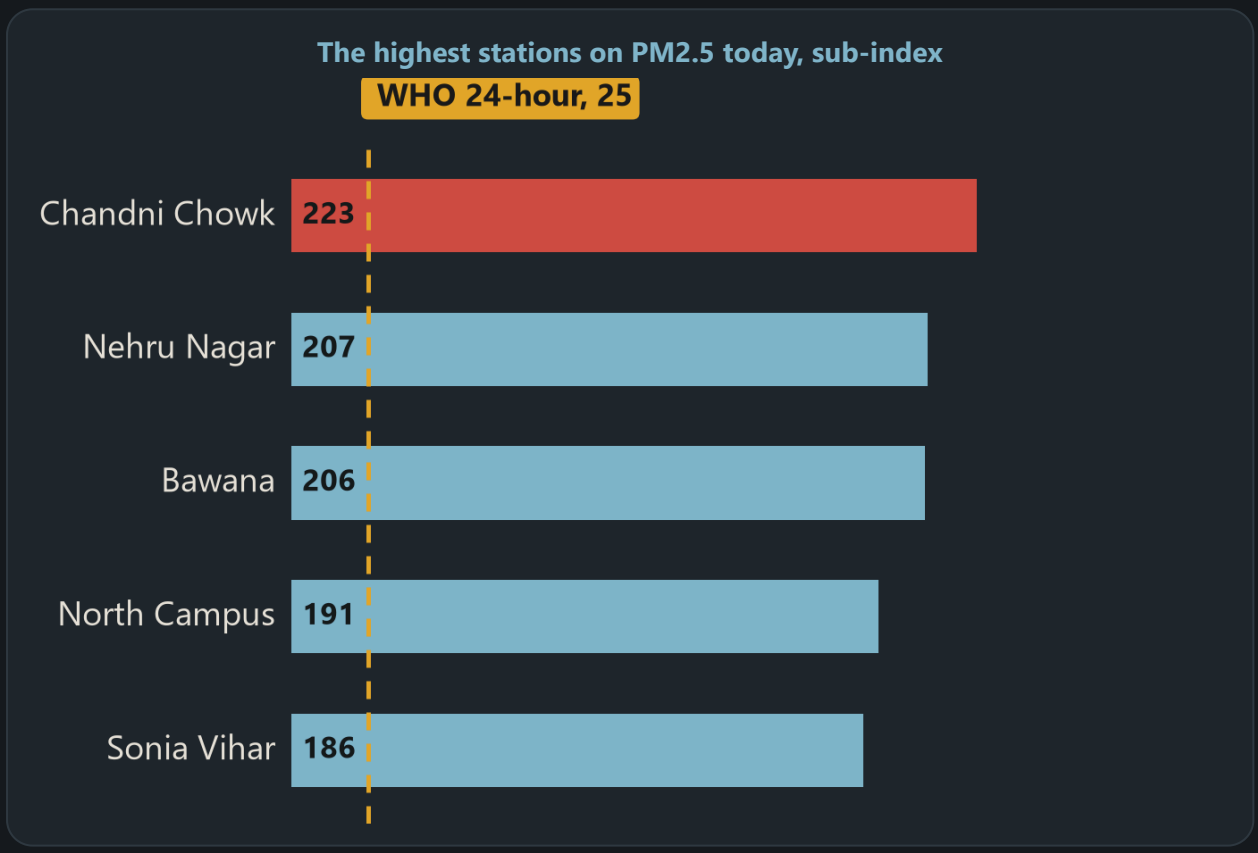
READING	Reading: the top row is the raw index, and the bottom row is the same comparison after the model removes the weather's effect. The weather flag is down today: the observed and weather-removed figures are close enough that neither claims the other's story.
CAUTION	Caution: the observed figure on this page (159) is counted by the weather model on its own stations and its own figures for last year, so it can differ from the headline of 154, calculated with CPCB's documented formula (CPCB's note "How is AQI calculated?" and its AQI Calculator). The weather-removed figure is compared only with this count, never with the headline.
SOURCE	This office's weather-removal model, computed 23 September 2026, trained on ERA5 and Open-Meteo weather data [2].

THE POINT

On the weather model's own stations the year reads +39.2 points observed and, with the weather removed, still +2.9 on the model's count.

PM2.5 against the WHO 24-hour guideline





READING Reading: every bar is a CPCB sub-index for PM2.5, the conversion of µg/m³ onto CPCB's index scale through CPCB's published breakpoints. The dashed line is the WHO 24-hour guideline of 15 µg/m³, which sits at sub-index 25 on the first, linear segment of that scale.

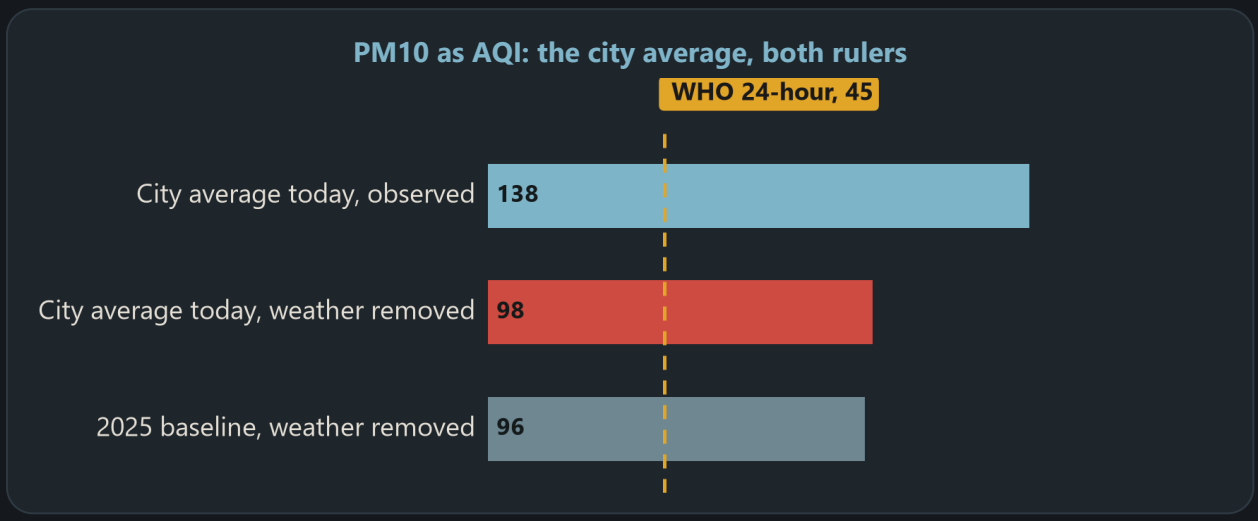
CAUTION Caution: every sub-index on this page is the observed one, on CPCB's documented formula, and one station's figure describes one neighbourhood.

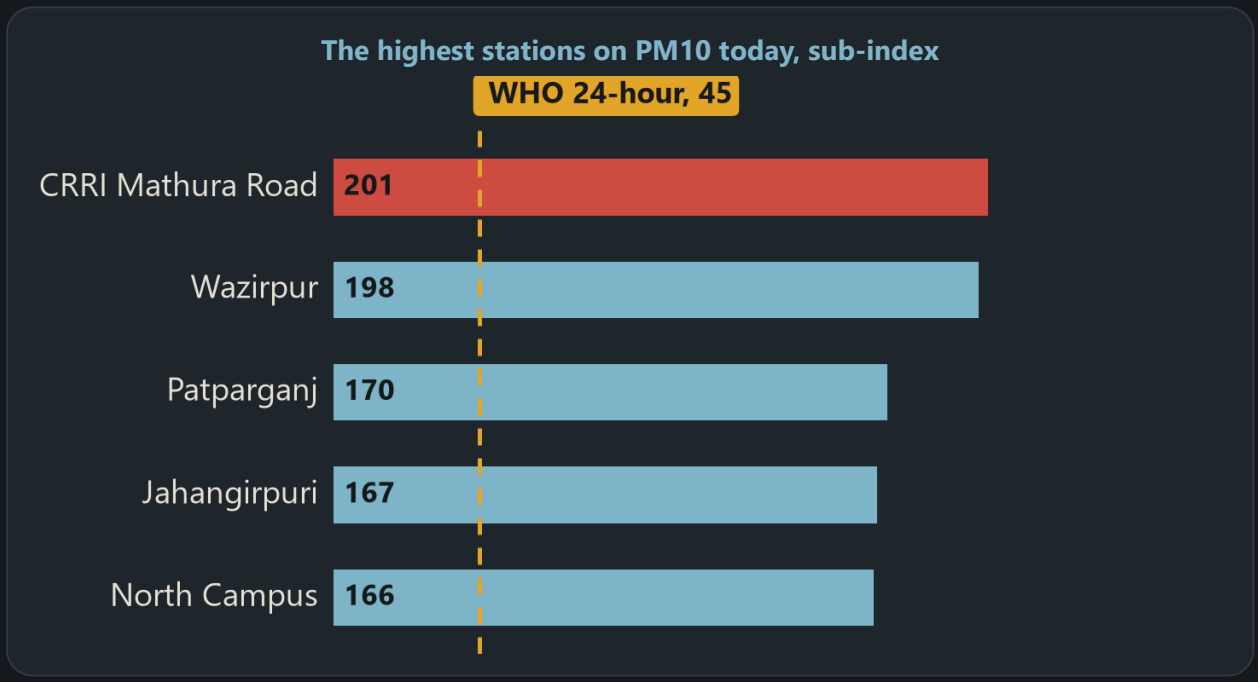
SOURCE CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 23 September 2026, compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). The figures are on CPCB's documented formula (CPCB, "How is AQI calculated?"; CPCB AQI Calculator), and the city figure is the mean of station AQIs [1].

THE POINT

Delhi's PM2.5 averaged 65.6 µg/m³ today, 4.3 times the WHO 24-hour guideline of 15 µg/m³, and Chandni Chowk averaged 95.2 µg/m³, 6.3 times it.

PM10 against the WHO 24-hour guideline





READING Reading: every bar is a CPCB sub-index for PM10, the conversion of µg/m³ onto CPCB's index scale through CPCB's published breakpoints. The dashed line is the WHO 24-hour guideline of 45 µg/m³, which sits at sub-index 45 on the first, linear segment of that scale.

CAUTION Caution: weather-removed figures are model estimates, and how well the model performs is set out in the method annexure. A station's sub-index on these pages is the observed one. The weather model also estimates each station, and page 08 counts how many stations stay above the WHO guideline once the weather is removed.

SOURCE This office's weather-removal model, computed 23 September 2026, trained on ERA5 and Open-Meteo weather data [2].

THE POINT

Delhi's PM10 averaged 156.1 µg/m³ today, 3.4 times the WHO 24-hour guideline of 45 µg/m³, and CRRI Mathura Road averaged 251.1 µg/m³, 5.5 times it.

Every pollutant, observed and weather removed

Pollutant	Today obs	Weather removed	Obs YoY	YoY, weather removed [spread across stations]	Skill	How this record uses it
PM2.5	65.6		+56%		39%	Used for findings
PM10	156.1	97.8	+28.4%	**+2.8%** [1.4 to 3.8]	38%	Used for findings
NO2	33		+4.5%		24%	Used for findings
NOx (ppb)	27.2		+2.9%		36%	Shown for context, observed only
SO2	12.8	13	+21.4%	+17.3% [7.3 to 29.2] (not used)	9%	Shown for context, observed only
CO (mg/m³)	1.45	1.18	+19%	+9.3% [1.1 to 22.4] (not used)	28%	Shown for context, observed only
Ozone	61.3		+20.1%		34%	Observed reading used; weather-removed figure not used

44 of 44
PM2.5 above the WHO 24-hour guideline of 15 µg/m³, as measured.

43 of 43
PM10 above the WHO 24-hour guideline of 45 µg/m³, weather removed; 43 of 43 as measured.

2.1x
Delhi's PM10 with the weather removed, against the same WHO 24-hour guideline.

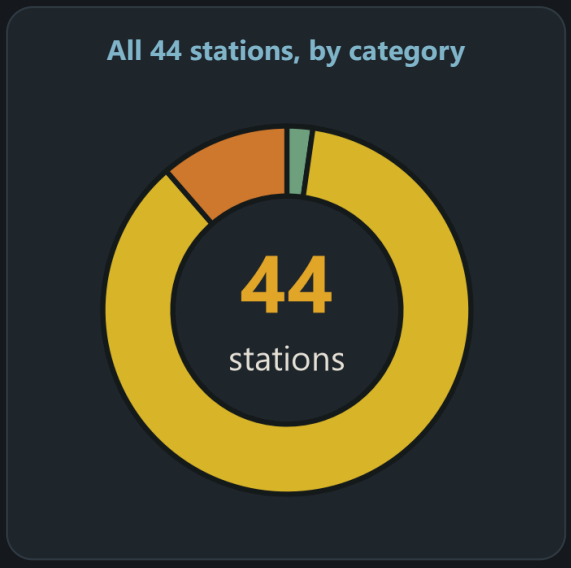
READING Reading: every pollutant this record tracks, observed and weather removed. Concentrations are µg/m³, except carbon monoxide in mg/m³ and NOx, which the monitors report in ppb; one ppb of NO2 is 1.88 µg/m³. A range spanning zero is too close to call.

CAUTION Caution: skill is the share of the day-to-day variation the model explains on days it has not seen, and the bracket shows only how far a figure moves across the stations, not the model's own error, so the true uncertainty is wider. The weather-removed ozone figure is never the basis of a finding, because ozone forms in sunlight from other pollutants and nitric oxide from traffic consumes it near roads, so it does not follow emissions simply; the observed reading is reported up to CPCB's Poor ceiling, AQI 300. This year the monitors' ozone readings differ from their own of a year ago by more than any real change.

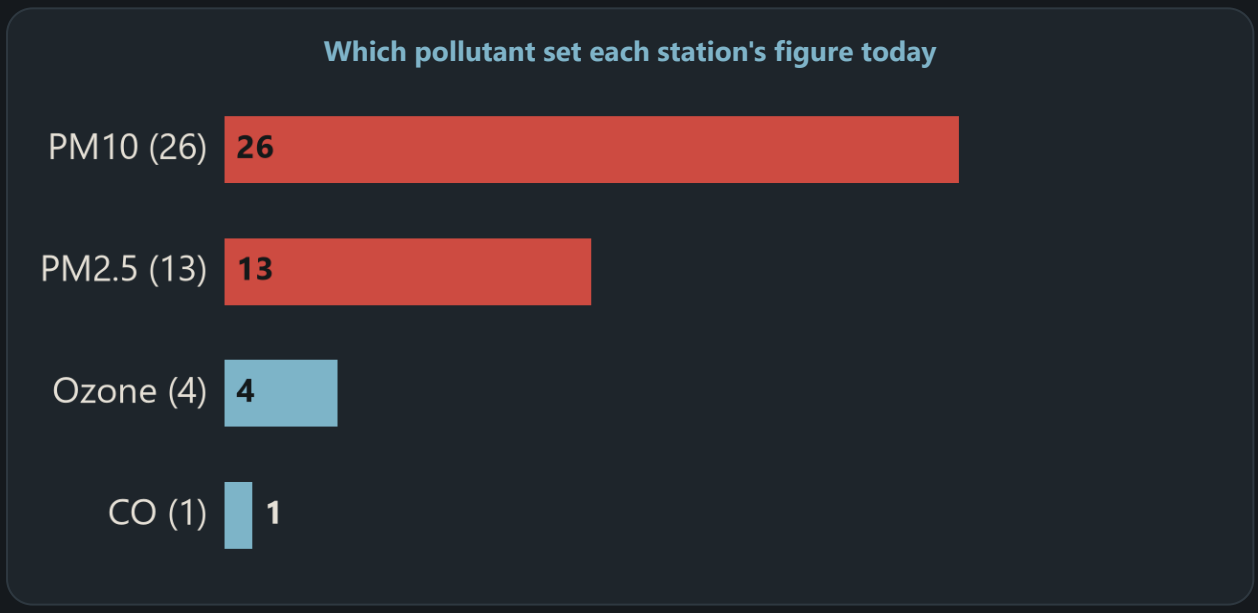
SOURCE This office's weather-removal model, computed 23 September 2026, trained on ERA5 and Open-Meteo weather data [2].

THE POINT
2 of 3 pollutants, PM2.5, PM10, show no real improvement on last year once the weather is removed.

One average, and the spread it hides







READING Reading: each station reports its own AQI; the wheel and the bars are the same 44 stations counted by category. The lower panel counts the same stations by the pollutant that set each one's figure. Zero counts are printed as zeros.

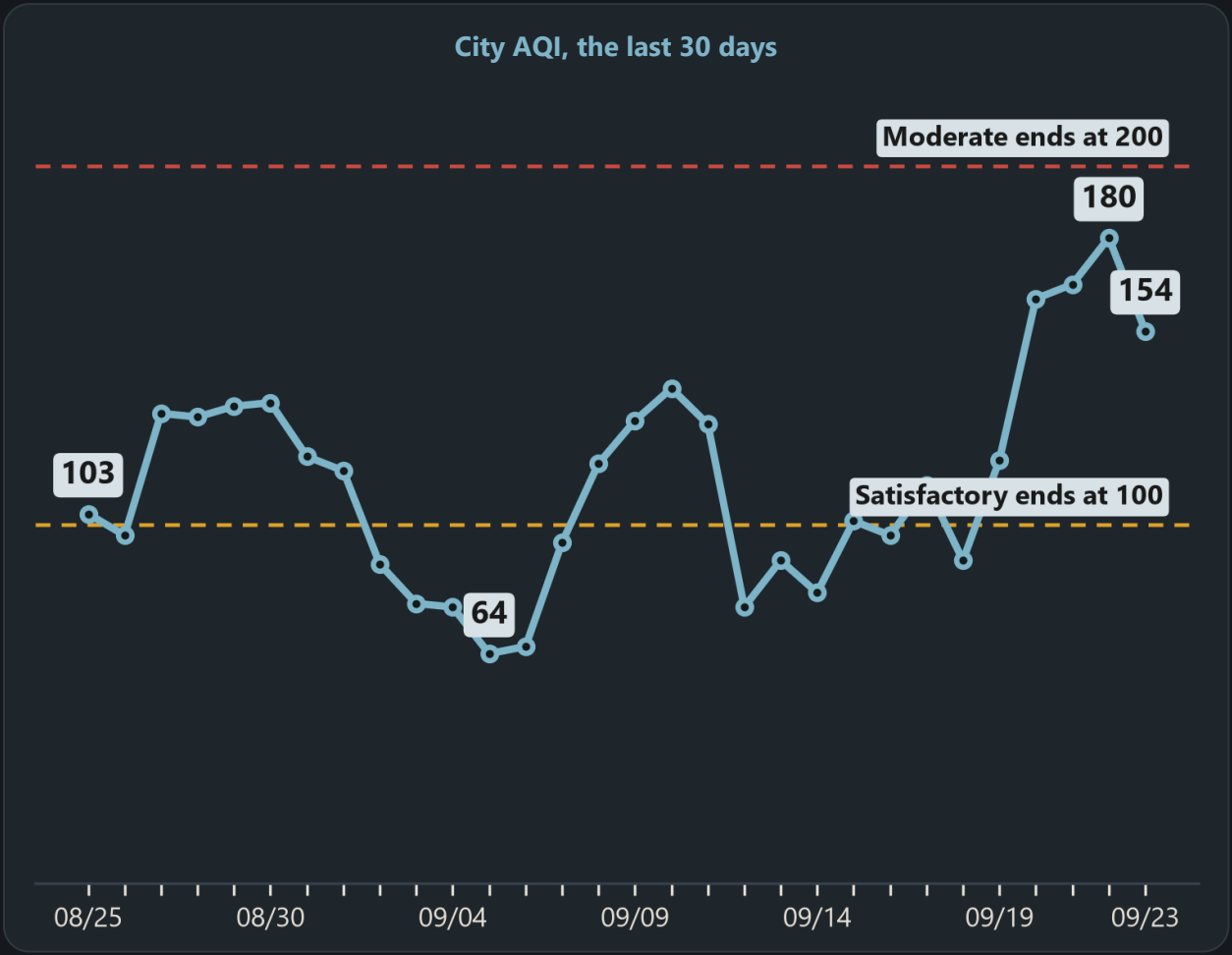
CAUTION Caution: the city headline is the mean of station AQIs, so one bad station can sit inside a Satisfactory average. A station's leading pollutant is the worst of its own sub-indices, not a ranking of how much of each was in the air.

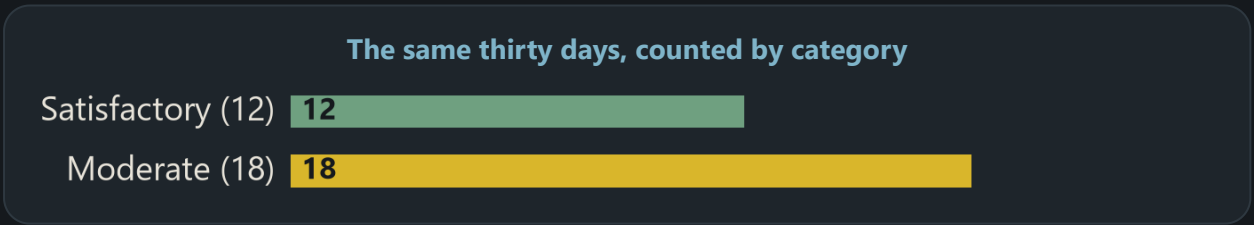
SOURCE CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 23 September 2026, compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). The figures are on CPCB's documented formula (CPCB, "How is AQI calculated?"; CPCB AQI Calculator), and the city figure is the mean of station AQIs [1].

THE POINT

Chandni Chowk read 223, Poor, set by PM2.5, on a day the city average read Moderate.

Thirty days of the index





READING Reading: the line is the city mean of station AQIs, one point per day. The dashed lines are the CPCB category boundaries. The lower panel counts the same thirty days by the category each one fell in.

CAUTION Caution: each day is the 24 hours ending 4 PM, and not the calendar day, so this line and a midnight series will differ.

SOURCE CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 23 September 2026, compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). The figures are on CPCB's documented formula (CPCB, "How is AQI calculated?"; CPCB AQI Calculator), and the city figure is the mean of station AQIs [1].

THE POINT

Thirty days ago the city read 103, on 44 reporting stations, and today it reads 154, on 44; in between it stood as high as 180, on 22 September.

Against yesterday: the one-day move

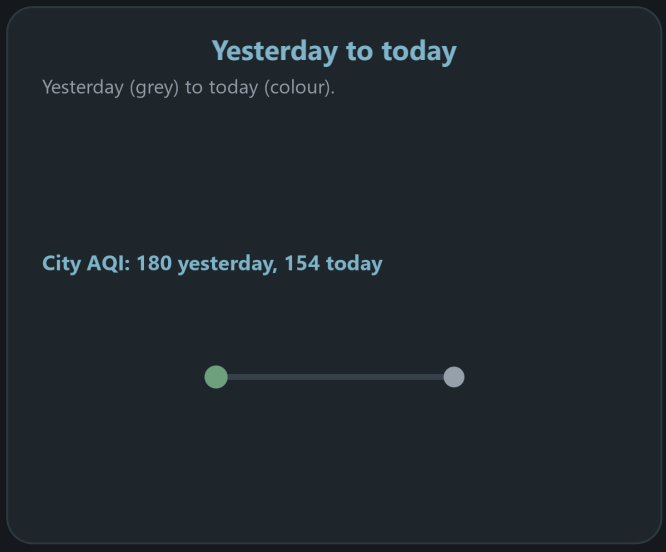
-25.8

points on yesterday

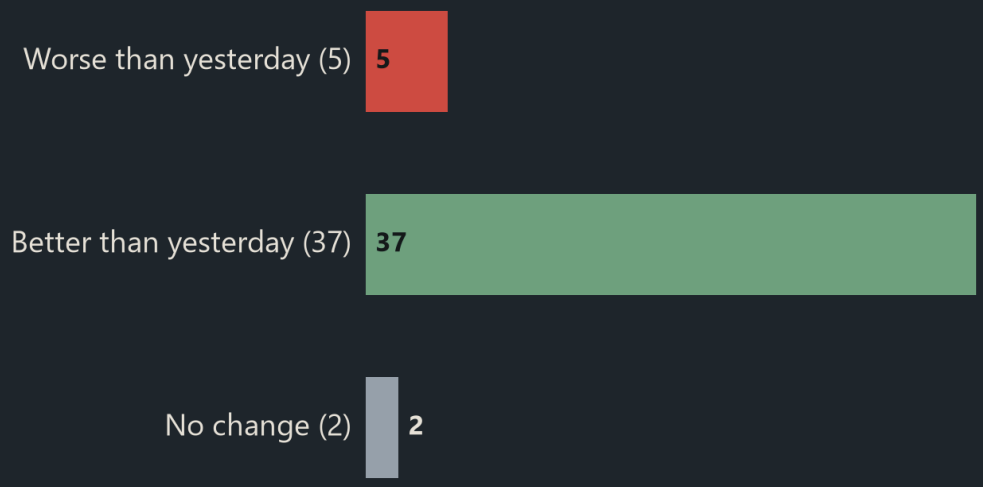
From 180 to 154. On the 44 stations that reported on both days, the 95 per cent interval runs -32.2 to -19.3 points.

Yesterday to today

Yesterday (grey) to today (colour).



Which way each matched station moved since yesterday



READING Reading: the grey dot is yesterday, the coloured dot today; green marks an improvement. The lower panel splits the same matched stations by which way each one moved.

CAUTION Caution: a change from one day to the next can come from the weather alone, so this record rests its argument on the year pages.

SOURCE CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 23 September 2026, compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). The figures are on CPCB's documented formula (CPCB, "How is AQI calculated?"; CPCB AQI Calculator), and the city figure is the mean of station AQIs [1].

THE POINT

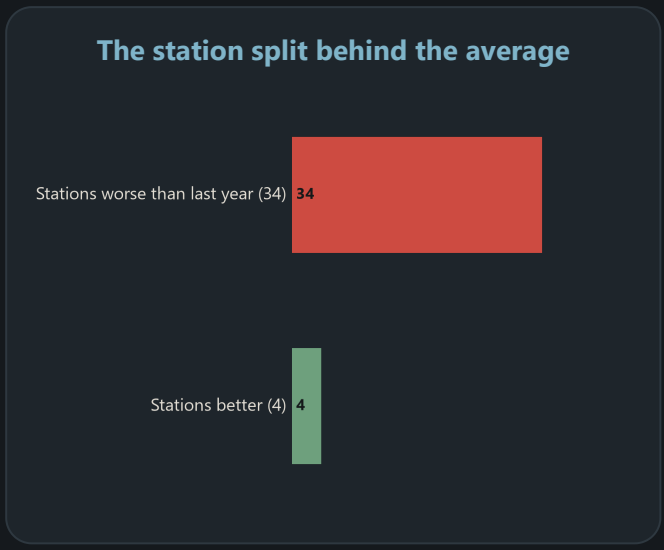
One day proves nothing on its own; the year-on-year and weather-removed pages carry the argument.

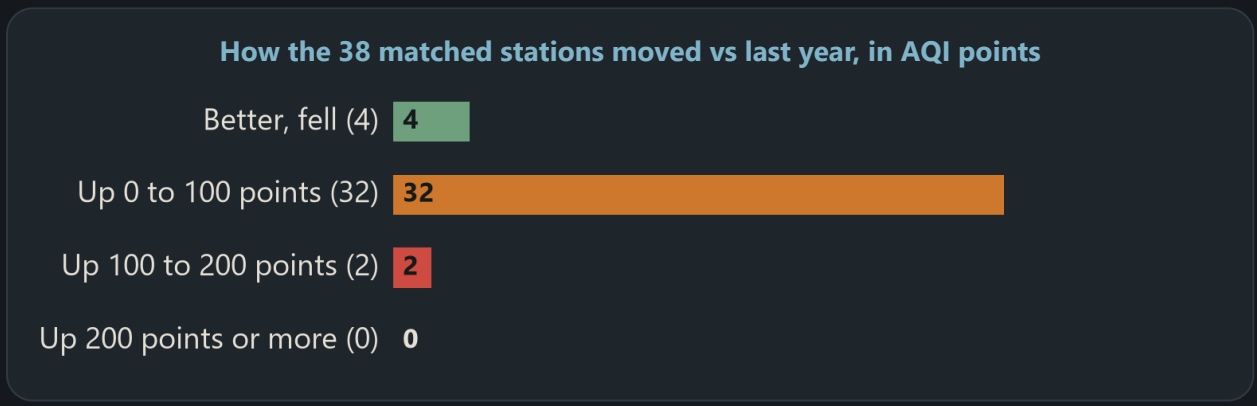
Against last year: the observed reading

31.7

points on last year, observed

Today 154 across 44 stations. The year is judged on the 38 matched stations: 159 today against 127, the mean of the same date ±7 days of 2025 at those stations. The interval runs 21.2 to 42.6 points.





READING Reading: the observed year-on-year change, on the feed's own canonical figure. The lower panel sizes the moves behind that one number, station by station.

CAUTION Caution: 34 of the 38 matched stations read higher than last year, by a median of 31 points: IGI Airport (T3), 248 against 125, set today by ozone; the feed does not record which pollutant set its figure last year, and today's reading is one this record does not lead on; Chandni Chowk, 223 against 119, set today by PM2.5; the feed does not record which pollutant set its figure last year; Nehru Nagar, 207 against 121, set today by PM2.5; the feed does not record which pollutant set its figure last year; Sonia Vihar, 186 against 107, set today by PM2.5; the feed does not record which pollutant set its figure last year. The other 4 read lower, by a median of 23.5 points, so the average hides both. Weighted by population, today reads 155 across all 44 stations; on the 38 stations matched with last year it reads 158 against 125, a change of 33.4 points.

SOURCE CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 23 September 2026, compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). The figures are on CPCB's documented formula (CPCB, "How is AQI calculated?"; CPCB AQI Calculator), and the city figure is the mean of station AQIs [1].

THE POINT

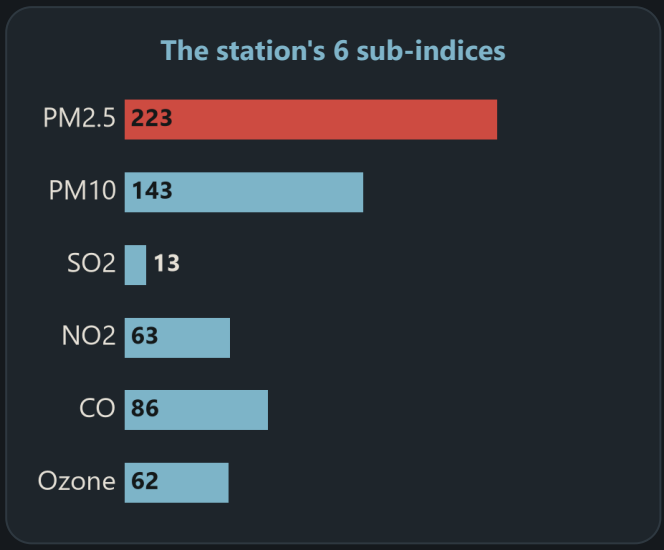
The observed year reads worse before any correction. The verdict pair is on page 05: observed +39.2 and weather removed +2.9 points, on the weather model's count, the higher positive figure mentioned first.

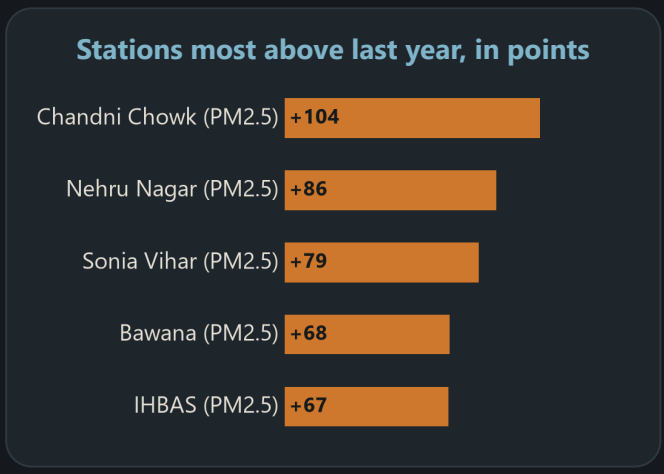
The highest particle reading in the city today

223

Chandni Chowk, Delhi - IITM

Poor, set by PM2.5. Its PM2.5 averaged 95.2 µg/m³ over the 24 hours to 4 PM, 6.3 times the WHO 24-hour guideline of 15 µg/m³. Last year this station read 119 on the mean of the same date ±7 days, so the change is +104.2 points. 13.2 lakh people live within 4 km of this monitor. The highest reading of the day was 248 at IGI Airport (T3), set by ozone. Within 500 m of the monitor, 89% of the land is built up and 10% is under vegetation, so this reading describes a densely built neighbourhood.





READING Reading: a station's AQI is its worst pollutant's sub-index; the red bar set today's figure. The lower panel lists the stations most above last year, in points, each with the pollutant that sets its figure today.

CAUTION Caution: one station describes one neighbourhood. Its sub-indices are printed so that the reading can be checked, and the land around the monitor is stated below the figure because it decides how far the reading travels. Why this page does not lead on the higher readings: IGI Airport (T3): This monitor's ozone reading is set aside as a precaution, because its nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide readings are converted from parts per billion twice in the data feed this office reads, and its ozone reading is probably converted twice as well. The published reading stays in the station table.

SOURCE CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 23 September 2026, compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). The figures are on CPCB's documented formula (CPCB, "How is AQI calculated?"; CPCB AQI Calculator), and the city figure is the mean of station AQIs [1]. Land cover from ESA WorldCover 2021 v200, 10 m, CC BY 4.0.

THE POINT

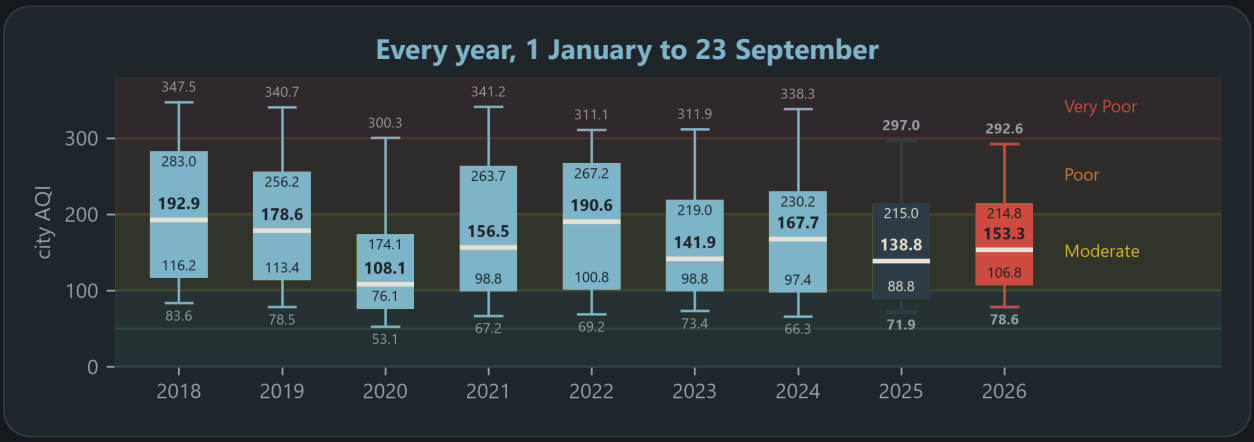
While the city averaged Moderate, Chandni Chowk sat at 223, Poor, and 13.2 lakh people live within 4 km of it. An average is not an experience.

The year, from its best days to its worst

153.3

the middle day of 2026, against 138.8 in 2025

On the same 266 complete dates, 1 January to 23 September, the best tenth of days reads 78.6 against 71.9 and the worst tenth 292.6 against 297.0. The days at or below 200 went from 190 to 188.





READING Reading: the box holds the middle half of that year's days, the white rule inside it is the middle day, and the whiskers reach its best and worst tenth. The bands behind are the CPCB categories, so a year that improved would slide the whole box down through them.

CAUTION Caution: the whiskers are the tenth and ninetieth percentiles, not the extremes, so each year's worst days lie above them. These are the 266 complete dates present in every year. Neighbouring days resemble each other, so the margins are computed by resampling runs of 14 consecutive dates; on that test none of the six measures, from the best tenth to the worst, has moved outside its margin since last year.

SOURCE Computed from the CREA compilation of the CPCB hourly record, CPCB 2014 sub-index, calendar day, city figure the mean of station AQIs; PM basis, the higher of the PM2.5 and PM10 sub-indices [1].

THE POINT

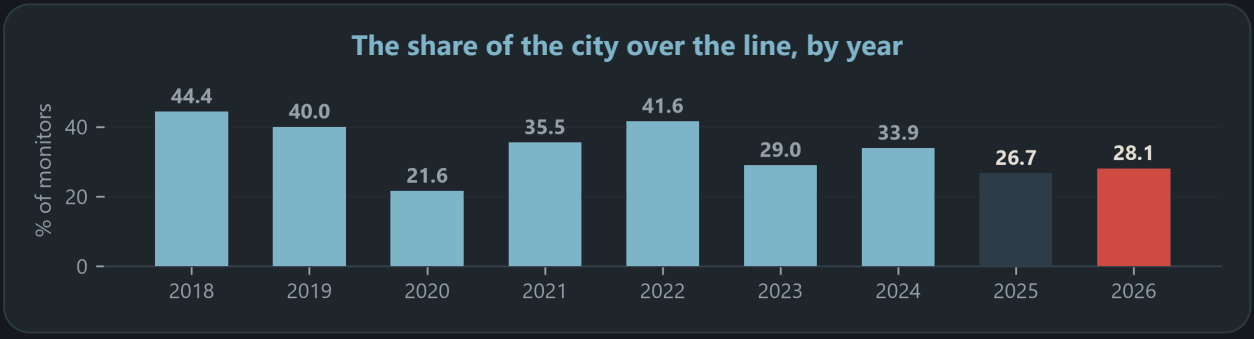
The cleaner days of 2026 have been the dirtiest for these dates since 2019: the lower quarter stands at 106.8, against 88.8 in 2025 and 113.4 in 2019.

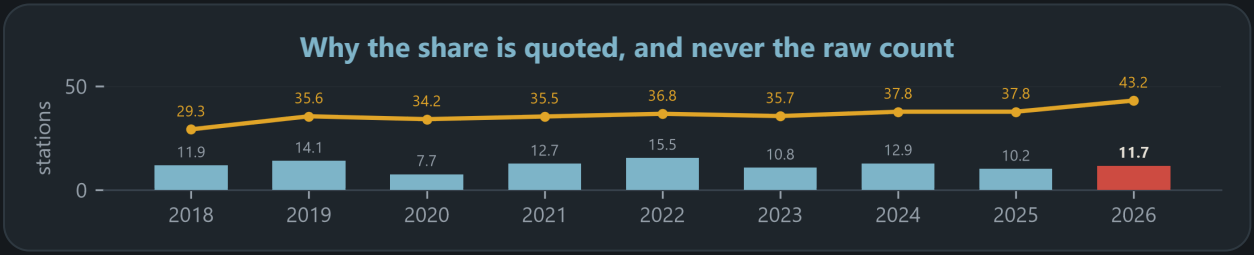
How much of the city was above AQI 200

28.1%

of Delhi's monitors above AQI 200 on an average day

That is 11.7 of 43.2 reporting stations, against 26.7 per cent over the same dates last year, a change of +1.5 points on an interval of -3.9 to +7.0, so it is unchanged inside its margin.





READING Reading: the upper bar is the share of Delhi's own reporting monitors that read above AQI 200 on an average day of that year, so it asks how much of the city was over the line rather than how the city average behaved. Beneath it the amber line counts the monitors reporting at all, and the bars count how many of those read above 200.

CAUTION Caution: the share is quoted and never the raw count, because the reporting network grew from 28 stations to 43 across this record, and a rising count of stations over 200 could mean nothing more than a growing network. It is measured on each day against that day's own reporting stations and then averaged, so it is not exactly the one line below divided by the other.

SOURCE Computed from the CREA compilation of the CPCB hourly record, CPCB 2014 sub-index, calendar day, city figure the mean of station AQIs; PM basis, the higher of the PM2.5 and PM10 sub-indices [1].

THE POINT

On an average day this year, about 11 of the 43 reporting monitors, 28.1 per cent, sat above 200 on the particle AQI.

The weather's hand, driver by driver

3.9 km/h
Wind speed today; last year 8.1 km/h.
z = -0.46

0 mm
Rain today; last year 0.5 mm.
z = -1.13

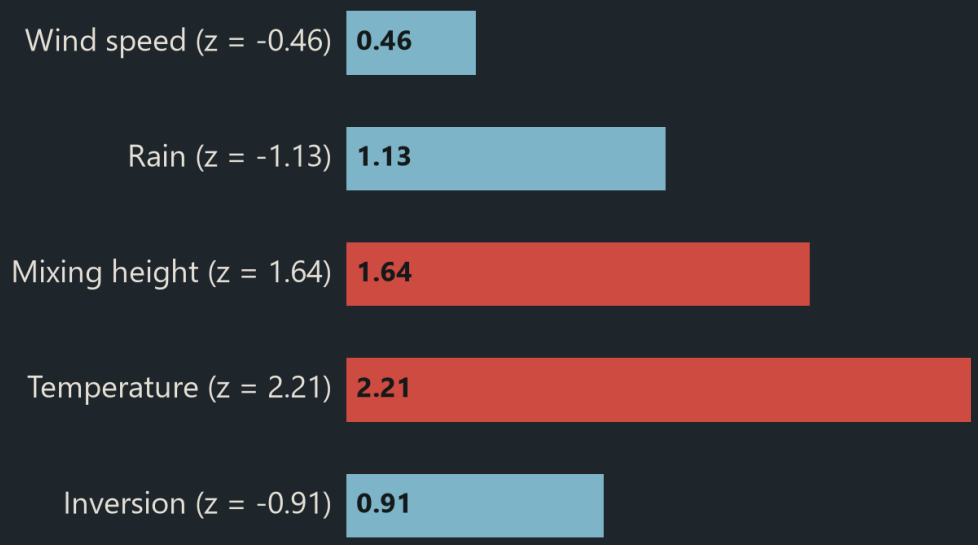
GATED OUT
378.3 m
Mixing height today; last year 443.1 m.
z = 1.64

GATED OUT
30 °C
Temperature today; last year 30.2 °C.
z = 2.21

4 °C
Inversion today; last year 4.3 °C.
z = -0.91

NW
Wind direction today; last year N.
compass points only

How far last year's baseline sat from normal, in standard deviations



READING Reading: each tile is one weather driver, today against the same date last year. The z value is how far last year's baseline sat from the 2021 to 2024 normal. The chart draws those same z values as distances, so the gated drivers can be seen rather than counted.

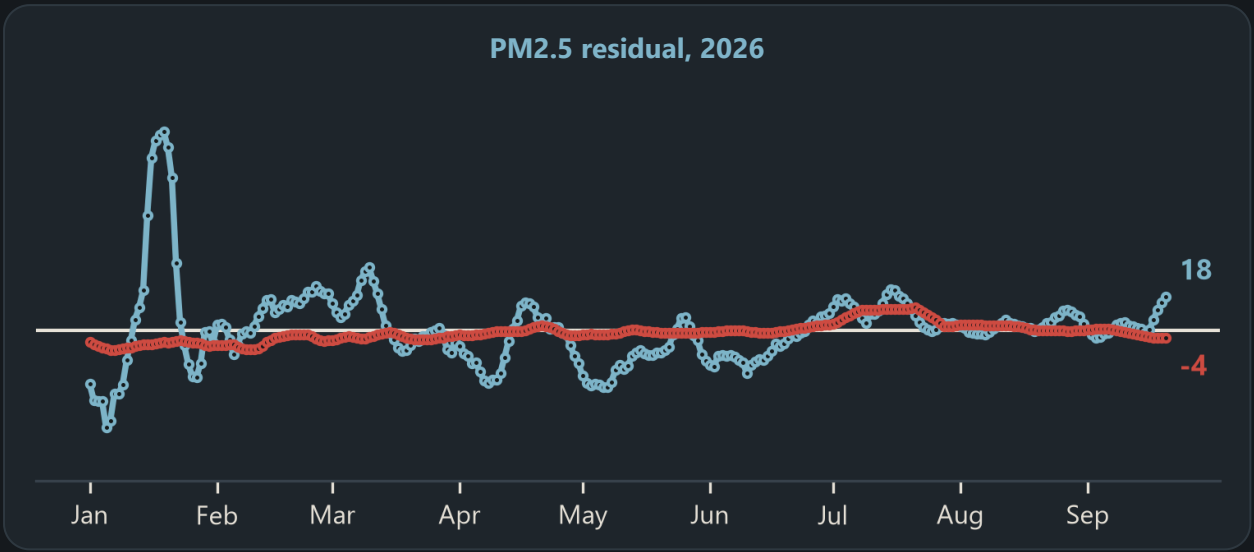
CAUTION Caution: a driver whose baseline was itself abnormal is greyed and marked. Last year's baseline was abnormal for mixing height, temperature, so no argument rests on them. The bars carry no threshold line, because each driver's verdict is printed on its own bar.

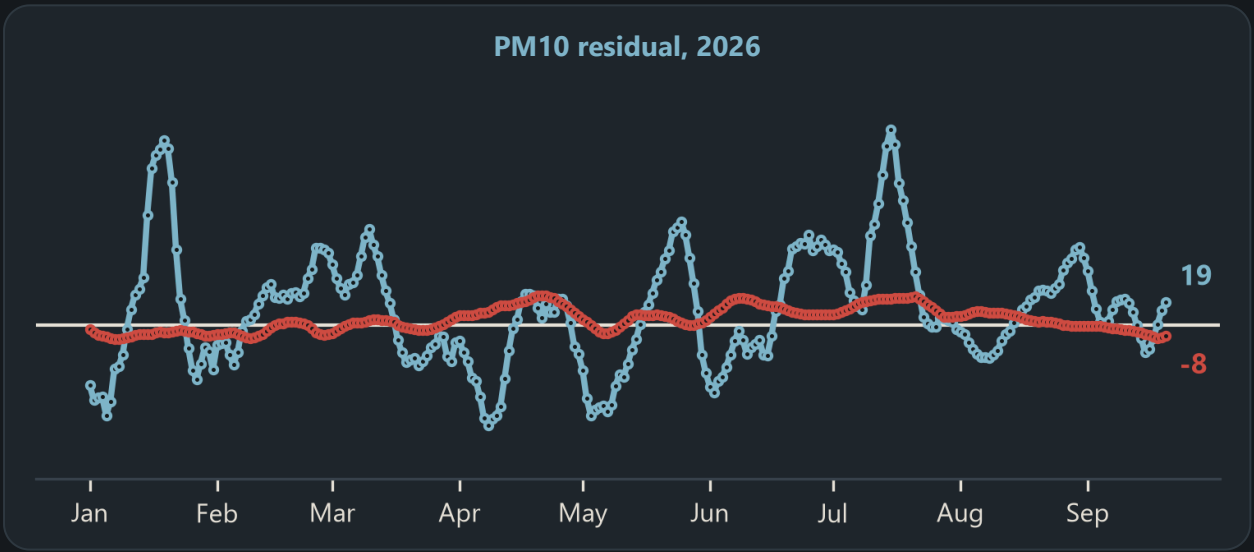
SOURCE Weather comparison from the daily weather file, read 23 September 2026: last year and 2021 to 2024 are ERA5; today's hours are provisional airport observation and forecast-model values until ERA5 arrives [3].

THE POINT

Weather removed, the year reads +2.9 points on the model's count, against +39.2 as measured.

Weather removed, PM10 sat above last year on 168 of 266 days, PM2.5 on 99





READING Reading: a residual is this year's level minus the same ±7 days of 2025. The pale line is the observed residual, weather included. The red line is the weather-removed residual, the change that remains once the weather's effect is removed. Above the zero line means worse than last year.

CAUTION Caution: each line is a seven-day centred average, so the last three days are not yet shown. Days with fewer than 30 reporting stations, or fewer than 15 matched with last year, are left out, which leaves 266 usable days. The weather model is retrained every week, most recently on data to 11 October 2026. The day counts depend only on whether each day was above or below last year, and not on any margin.

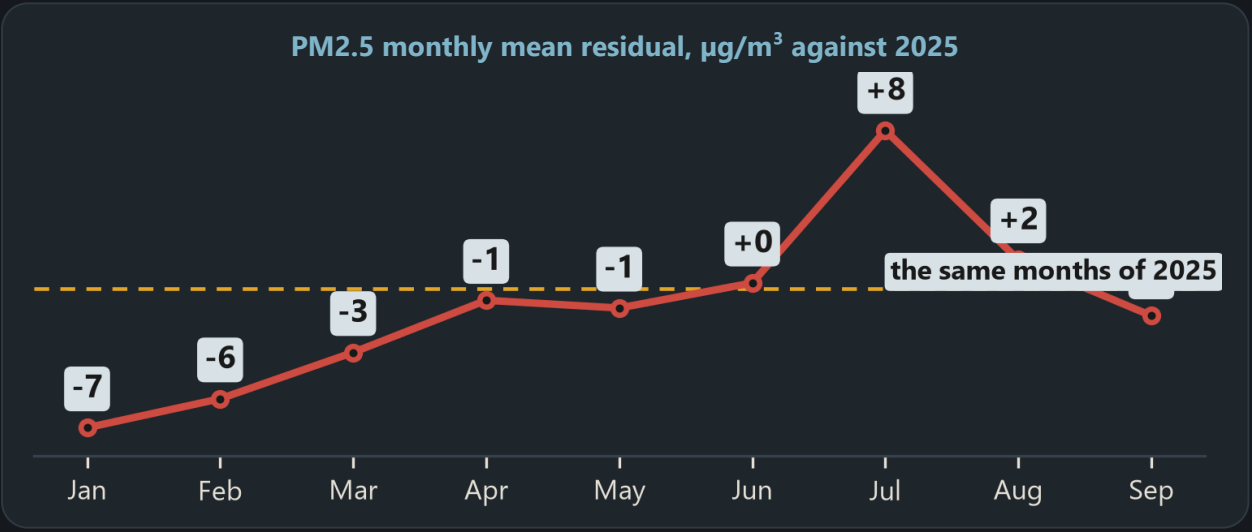
SOURCE This office's weather-removal model, computed 23 September 2026, trained on ERA5 and Open-Meteo weather data [2].

THE POINT

With the weather removed, PM10 was above last year on 168 of 266 days, 63.1 per cent of them, and PM2.5 on 99 of 266. Averaged over all 266 days, PM10 with the weather removed sat 4.7 µg/m³ above the same days of last year.

PM2.5, month by month, weather removed

-7 January: margin ±11, 31 days.	**-6** February: margin ±11, 28 days.	**-3** March: margin ±10, 31 days.	**-0.6** April: margin ±10, 30 days.
-1 May: margin ±10, 31 days.	**+0.3** June: margin ±10, 30 days.	**+8** July: margin ±10, 31 days.	**+2** August: margin ±10, 31 days.
-1 September so far: margin ±10, 23 days.			



READING Reading: each tile is one month's mean of the daily weather-removed residuals for PM2.5, in µg/m³ above or below the same days of 2025. Red is worse than last year and green better. The chart is the same figures in order, so the year's shape can be seen rather than assembled from tiles.

CAUTION Caution: the margin is a rough guide, worked out by dividing the model's hourly error by the number of stations, and it is not a formal confidence interval. No finding in this record rests on it, and the day counts on page 17 do not depend on it.

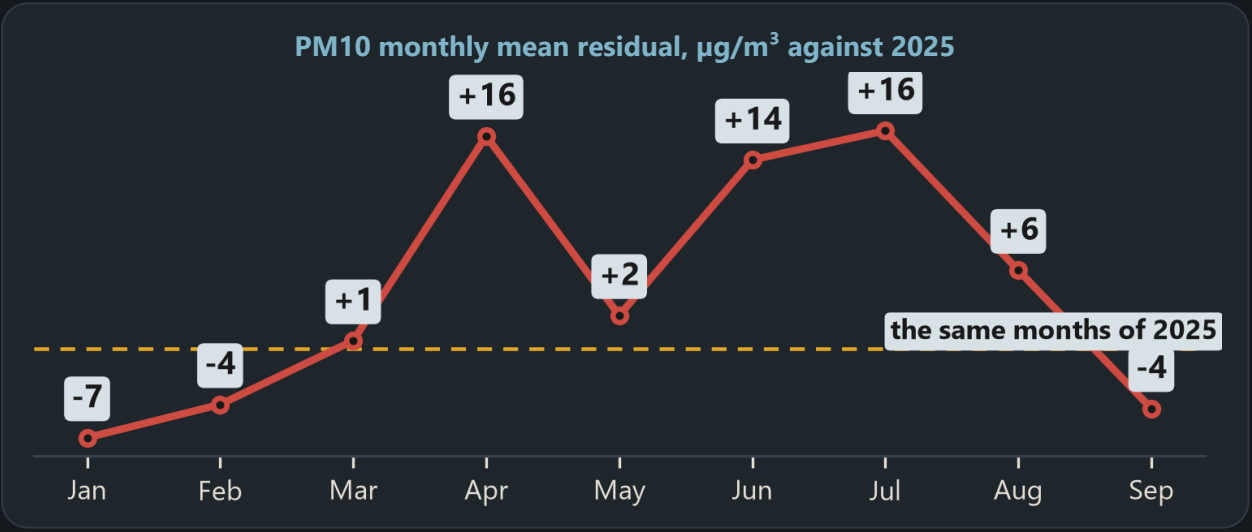
SOURCE This office's weather-removal model, computed 23 September 2026, trained on ERA5 and Open-Meteo weather data [2].

THE POINT

PM2.5: 3 of 9 months sat above last year on the weather-removed residual, 6 below.

PM10, month by month, weather removed

-7 January: margin ±17, 31 days.	**-4** February: margin ±17, 28 days.	**+0.6** March: margin ±16, 31 days.	**+16** April: margin ±16, 30 days.
+2 May: margin ±15, 31 days.	**+14** June: margin ±15, 30 days.	**+16** July: margin ±15, 31 days.	**+6** August: margin ±15, 31 days.
-4 September so far: margin ±15, 23 days.			



READING Reading: each tile is one month's mean of the daily weather-removed residuals for PM10, in µg/m³ above or below the same days of 2025. Red is worse than last year and green better. The chart is the same figures in order, so the year's shape can be seen rather than assembled from tiles.

CAUTION Caution: the margin is a rough guide, worked out by dividing the model's hourly error by the number of stations, and it is not a formal confidence interval. No finding in this record rests on it, and the day counts on page 17 do not depend on it.

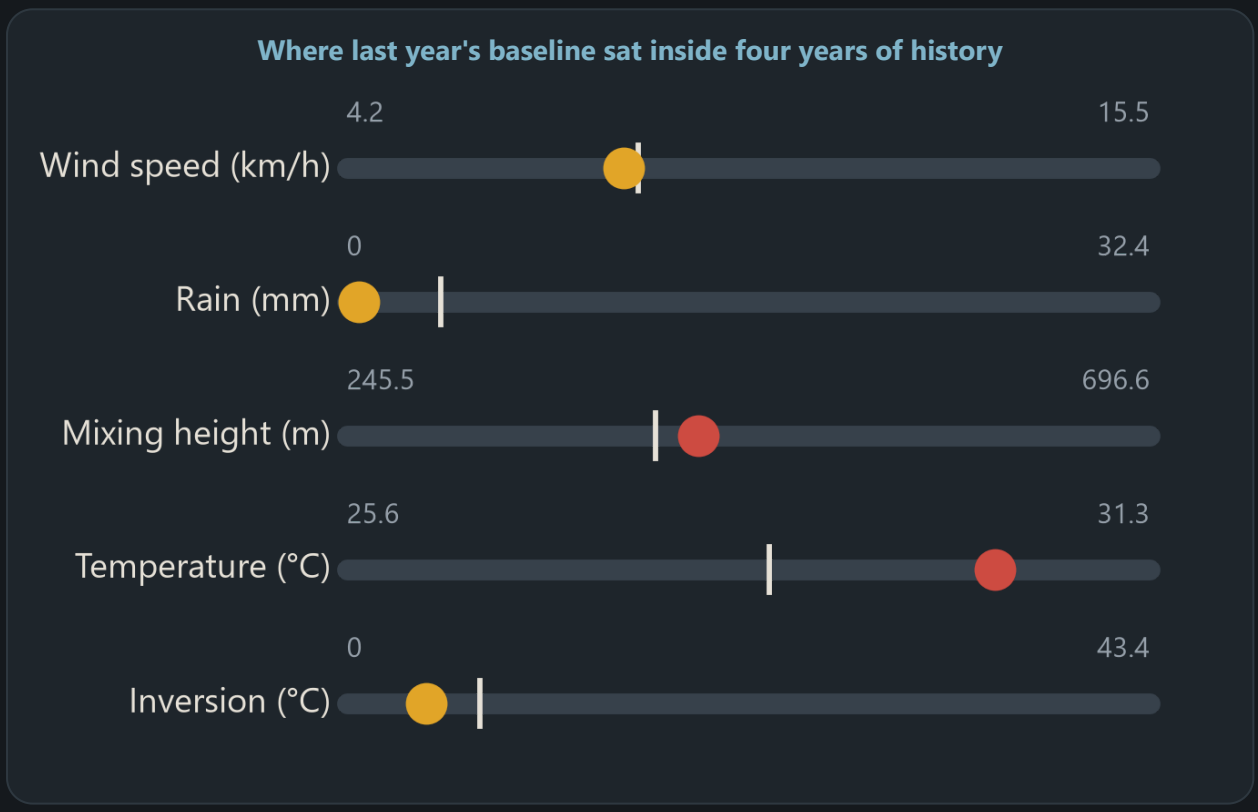
SOURCE This office's weather-removal model, computed 23 September 2026, trained on ERA5 and Open-Meteo weather data [2].

THE POINT

PM10: 6 of 9 months sat above last year on the weather-removed residual, 3 below.

The full weather evidence, with its climatology

Driver	Today	Last yr	Normal	SD	p1	p99	z	Verdict
Wind speed (km/h)	3.9	8.1	8.3	0.4	4.2	15.5	-0.46	normal
Rain (mm)	0	0.5	3.8	2.9	0	32.4	-1.13	normal
Mixing height (m)	378.3	443.1	418.7	14.9	245.5	696.6	1.64	abnormal, gated out
Temperature (°C)	30	30.2	28.6	0.7	25.6	31.3	2.21	abnormal, gated out
Inversion (°C)	4	4.3	7.2	3.2	0	43.4	-0.91	normal
Wind direction	NW	N	none	none	none	none	none	compass only



READING Reading: the full fairness evidence behind the driver tiles. Normal, SD and the p1 to p99 envelope come from the 2021 to 2024 history for these same calendar days. Each bar below is one driver's own envelope, from p1 at the left to p99 at the right, with a tick at the normal and a dot where last year's baseline sat. A red dot is a baseline the check ruled abnormal.

CAUTION Caution: the check runs in either direction. A driver ruled abnormal is gated out whether it would help our argument or hurt it. Each bar has its own scale and its own unit, so a dot's position compares a driver with its own history and never with another driver.

SOURCE Weather comparison from the daily weather file, read 23 September 2026: last year and 2021 to 2024 are ERA5; today's hours are provisional airport observation and forecast-model values until ERA5 arrives [3].

THE POINT

Before any weather driver is cited, last year's baseline is checked against the 2021 to 2024 history for the same days, and a baseline outside its normal range is not used.

Who the monitoring network reaches

2.1 km

from the typical resident to the nearest monitor

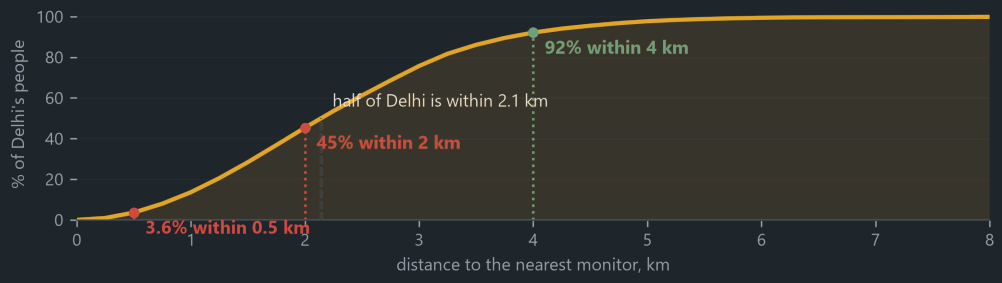
Within 4 km live 92 per cent of Delhi's people, within 2 km 45 per cent, and within 500 m only 3.6 per cent. Delhi has 55 monitors in 53 zones, of which 44 reported today, and 30 of the 53 zones stretch past 4 km, the distance that the US EPA's neighbourhood scale treats as the furthest a monitor speaks for.

The network on the map

53 monitors, and the 2 km around each



How far Delhi lives from its nearest monitor



READING Reading: the curve is the distance from a Delhi resident to their nearest monitor, counted over every person in the city. The three marked points are the shares within 500 m, 2 km and 4 km, so they are readings of one curve rather than three separate facts.

CAUTION Caution: living near a monitor is not protection. This says how far the network can speak, and nothing about the air itself. Monitors just outside Delhi are excluded here, and counting them would add about 0.3 points at 4 km.

SOURCE Population shape from WorldPop India, constrained and UN-adjusted, 2020, 100 m, CC BY 4.0. The level comes from the Election Commission 2025 Delhi roll, scaled to the Registrar General's 2025 projection of 2.094 crore. The radii are the US EPA neighborhood scale, set in 40 CFR 58 App D s1.2. Method after Manoj Kumar, "604 air quality stations. But how well do they represent India?", India Air Quality & Energy Insights, 11 August 2026.

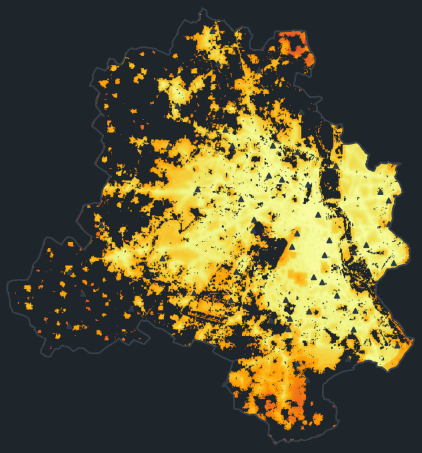
THE POINT

16.4 lakh Delhi residents live more than 4 km from any monitor, beyond the US EPA's neighbourhood scale.

Where Delhi's people are, and how the zones are drawn

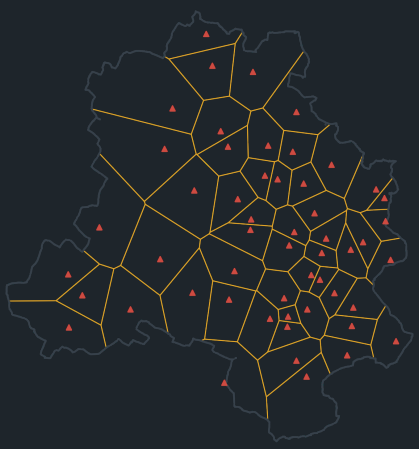
Where the people are

People per 100 m cell, brighter is denser



The zones those people fall in

The 53 zones, tiling Delhi exactly



The Voronoi method, in full

What a Voronoi zone is

Draw a line halfway between each pair of neighbouring monitors. Those lines cut the city into one patch per monitor. Every point in a patch sits nearest that monitor. The patches meet with no gaps and no overlaps, so together they cover Delhi exactly once.

Why the zones differ in size

A monitor in central Delhi has close neighbours on every side, so its zone comes out small. A monitor on the outskirts has few neighbours, so its zone is large. Zone size therefore measures how thinly the network is spread, and not how dirty the air is.

How a zone becomes a weight

The grid counts the people inside each zone. That share then becomes the monitor's weight. A monitor speaking for a tenth of Delhi counts for a tenth, where once it counted the same as one speaking for a fiftieth.

What the weighting allows for, and what it cannot

Monitors are not spread the way people are, and the weighting allows for that. It cannot allow for where a monitor sits inside its zone, nor for the weather that day. It weights a city average, so it is never an estimate of what one person breathed.

READING Reading: the left map is the population grid, one cell per 100 m, and brighter means denser. The right map cuts Delhi into one zone per monitor, so every point belongs to its nearest one.

CAUTION Caution: the grid is a model, not a census. It places people where satellites see buildings. How many it places comes from the Election Commission's 2025 electoral roll, because India's population has not been counted since the 2011 Census.

SOURCE Population shape from WorldPop India, constrained and UN-adjusted, 2020, 100 m, CC BY 4.0. The level comes from the Election Commission 2025 Delhi roll, scaled to the Registrar General's 2025 projection of 2.094 crore. The radii are the US EPA neighborhood scale, set in 40 CFR 58 App D s1.2. Method after Manoj Kumar, "604 air quality stations. But how well do they represent India?", India Air Quality & Energy Insights, 11 August 2026.

THE POINT

Weighting each monitor by the people in its zone gives a city average that follows where people live, and these zones are how each weight is worked out.

What each monitor's reading speaks for

30.7 lakh

live within 4 km of a Poor monitor today

That is 14.7 per cent of Delhi, living around the 4 monitors that read Poor or worse. The highest reading this record leads on is Chandni Chowk at 223, and 13.2 lakh people live within 4 km of it; the higher readings it sets aside are named below. On the wider count, 1.80 crore people, 86.2 per cent of Delhi, live within 4 km of a monitor at Moderate or worse.

Today, Poor or worse

Chandni Chowk	223 · 13.2 lakh
Nehru Nagar	207 · 9.3 lakh

Also Poor or worse: Bawana 206, CRRI Mathura Road 201.

IGI Airport (T3) read 248, set by ozone. Its nitrogen oxide readings are converted twice in the feed this office reads, so its nitrogen dioxide is set aside, and its ozone as a precaution. Without the readings set aside, it counts at 136, below Poor.

AQI, then people within 4 km. These circles overlap, so the figures do not add. Every reading stays in the station table.

Station	Lakh within 4 km	Reach km	Avg km
IHBAS, Dilshad Garden	20.7	4.2	2.2
Mundka	18.3	6.5	2.6
Punjabi Bagh	15.7	5.0	2.1
Vivek Vihar	15.7	2.9	1.1
Shadipur	15.1	3.5	1.8
Sonia Vihar	14.8	4.6	2.5
Okhla Phase-2	14.6	3.7	1.6
Patparganj	14.4	4.2	1.9
Wazirpur	14.0	3.3	1.6
Anand Vihar	13.6	3.7	1.9
NSIT Dwarka	13.2	6.2	3.0
Chandni Chowk	13.2	4.2	2.1
Ashok Vihar	13.2	3.5	1.8
Mandir Marg	12.5	3.5	1.9
Rohini	12.1	4.0	2.1
Jahangirpuri	11.9	4.7	1.7
CRRI Mathura Road	11.8	3.8	1.7
Commonwealth Sports Compl	11.5	3.9	1.4
Pusa	10.7	5.6	2.6
Dr. Karni Singh Shooting	10.6	3.9	2.3
ITO	9.6	3.9	1.4
North Campus, DU	9.4	3.4	1.5

READING Reading: each row gives the people living within 4 km of that monitor, then how far its zone reaches, then how far its average resident sits. US rules treat 4 km as the furthest a PM2.5 monitor can speak. The large figure is today's, so it moves with the pollution and not with the map.

CAUTION Caution: these circles overlap, heavily at 4 km. Added up they return about twice Delhi's population, so read the column one monitor at a time. It has no valid total. Living within 4 km is not the same as breathing that exact reading.

SOURCE Population shape from WorldPop India, constrained and UN-adjusted, 2020, 100 m, CC BY 4.0. The level comes from the Election Commission 2025 Delhi roll, scaled to the Registrar General's 2025 projection of 2.094 crore. The radii are the US EPA neighborhood scale, set in 40 CFR 58 App D s1.2. Method after Manoj Kumar, "604 air quality stations. But how well do they represent India?", India Air Quality & Energy Insights, 11 August 2026.

THE POINT

Today Chandni Chowk read 223, Poor, set by PM2.5, and 13.2 lakh people live within 4 km of it.

Every reporting station

#	Station	AQI	Category	Main pollutant
1	IGI Airport (T3)	248	Poor	Ozone, set aside
2	Chandni Chowk	223	Poor	PM2.5
3	Nehru Nagar	207	Poor	PM2.5
4	Bawana	206	Poor	PM2.5
5	CRRI Mathura Road	201	Poor	PM10
6	Wazirpur	198	Moderate	PM10
7	North Campus	191	Moderate	PM2.5
8	Sonia Vihar	186	Moderate	PM2.5
9	Burari Crossing	178	Moderate	Ozone, set aside
10	Anand Vihar	176	Moderate	PM2.5
11	IMD Lodhi Road	174	Moderate	Ozone
12	Patparganj	170	Moderate	PM10
13	Commonwealth Sports Complex	168	Moderate	Ozone
14	Jahangirpuri	167	Moderate	PM10
15	Pusa (IITM)	165	Moderate	PM2.5

READING Reading: all 44 stations that reported in today's window, worst first. Each station's AQI is on CPCB's documented formula: the worst of its pollutant sub-indices.

CAUTION Caution: a monitor speaks for its own neighbourhood, not for the city. The network is not identical from day to day, because stations report on different schedules. A main pollutant marked "set aside" comes from a monitor whose nitrogen oxide readings fail this record's consistency check; it is printed as reported, and this record does not lead on it.

SOURCE CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 23 September 2026, compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). The figures are on CPCB's documented formula (CPCB, "How is AQI calculated?"; CPCB AQI Calculator), and the city figure is the mean of station AQIs [1].

THE POINT

Not one of the 15 stations on this page was rated Good. The highest here is IGI Airport (T3) at 248.

Every reporting station, continued

#	Station	AQI	Category	Main pollutant
16	Dwarka-Sector 8	165	Moderate	PM10
17	Rohini	165	Moderate	PM2.5
18	IHBAS	162	Moderate	PM2.5
19	Sirifort	162	Moderate	PM10
20	Okhla Phase-2	156	Moderate	PM10
21	Punjabi Bagh	155	Moderate	PM2.5
22	R K Puram	152	Moderate	PM10
23	Narela	152	Moderate	PM10
24	Vivek Vihar	152	Moderate	PM10
25	Mundka	151	Moderate	PM10
26	NSUT Jaffarpur	149	Moderate	PM2.5
27	Alipur	145	Moderate	PM10
28	Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range	143	Moderate	PM10
29	DTU	141	Moderate	PM2.5
30	Pusa (DPCC)	136	Moderate	PM10

READING Reading: the table continues, same window, same method, worst first.

CAUTION Caution: a monitor speaks for its own neighbourhood, not for the city. The network is not identical from day to day, because stations report on different schedules. A main pollutant marked "set aside" comes from a monitor whose nitrogen oxide readings fail this record's consistency check; it is printed as reported, and this record does not lead on it.

SOURCE CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 23 September 2026, compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). The figures are on CPCB's documented formula (CPCB, "How is AQI calculated?"; CPCB AQI Calculator), and the city figure is the mean of station AQIs [1].

THE POINT

Not one of the 15 stations on this page was rated Good.

Every reporting station, continued

#	Station	AQI	Category	Main pollutant
31	Mandir Marg	132	Moderate	PM10
32	Ashok Vihar	131	Moderate	PM10
33	Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium	129	Moderate	PM2.5
34	Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium	125	Moderate	PM10
35	Shadipur	121	Moderate	PM10
36	Najafgarh	121	Moderate	PM10
37	IGNOU Maidan Garhi	121	Moderate	PM10
38	Sri Aurobindo Marg	120	Moderate	PM10
39	Aya Nagar	117	Moderate	PM10
40	ITO	117	Moderate	PM10
41	Talkatora Garden	106	Moderate	PM10
42	JNU	105	Moderate	PM10
43	NSIT Dwarka	102	Moderate	PM10
44	Cantonment Area	84	Satisfactory	CO

READING Reading: the table continues, same window, same method, worst first.

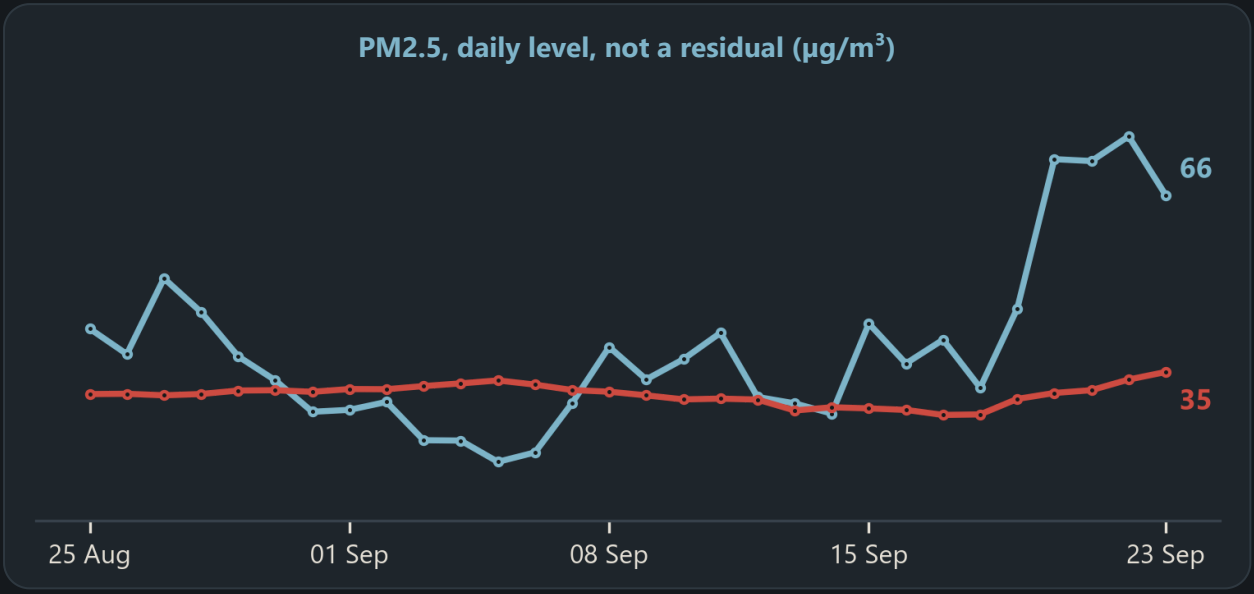
CAUTION Caution: a monitor speaks for its own neighbourhood, not for the city. The network is not identical from day to day, because stations report on different schedules. A main pollutant marked "set aside" comes from a monitor whose nitrogen oxide readings fail this record's consistency check; it is printed as reported, and this record does not lead on it.

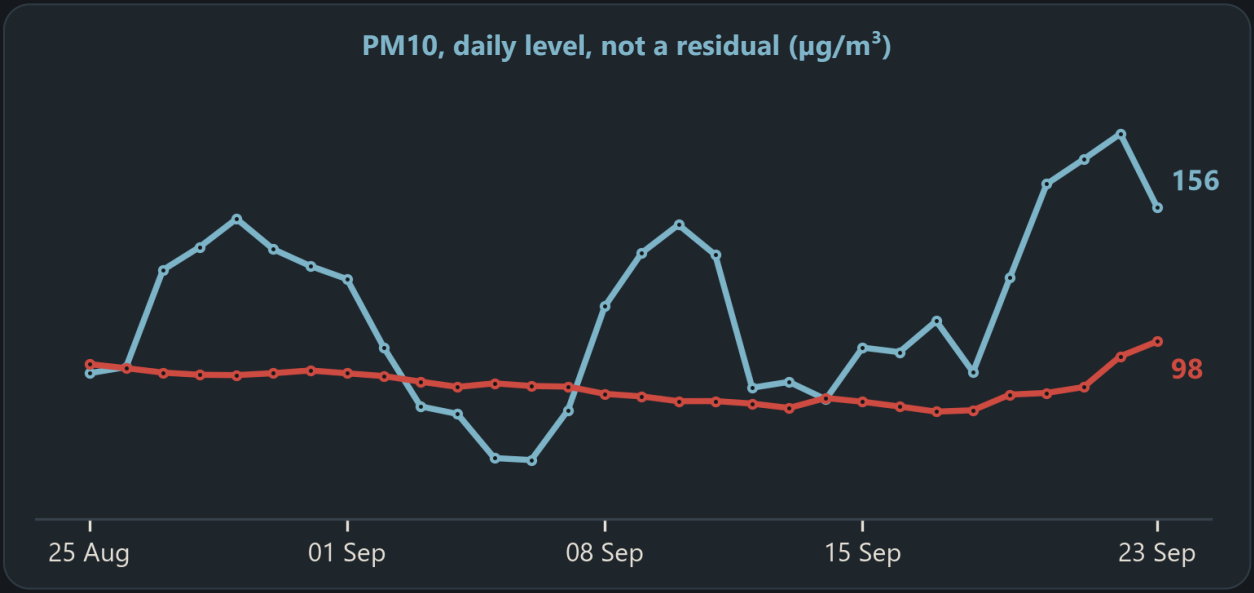
SOURCE CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 23 September 2026, compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). The figures are on CPCB's documented formula (CPCB, "How is AQI calculated?"; CPCB AQI Calculator), and the city figure is the mean of station AQIs [1].

THE POINT

Not one of the 14 stations on this page was rated Good.

Thirty days of levels: PM2.5 and PM10



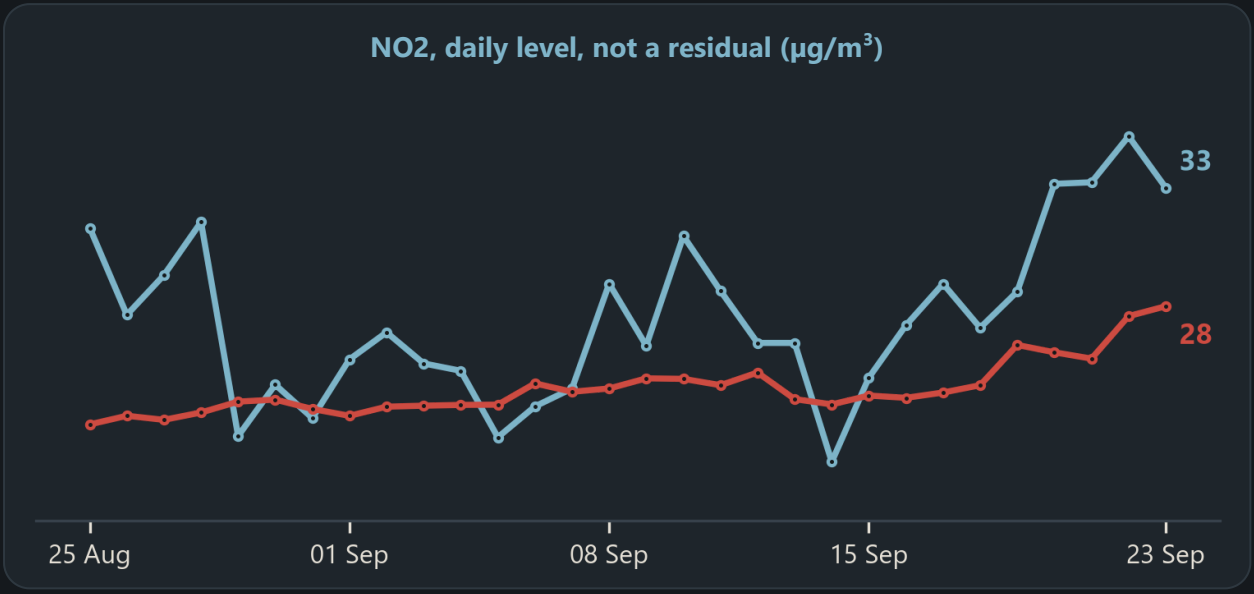


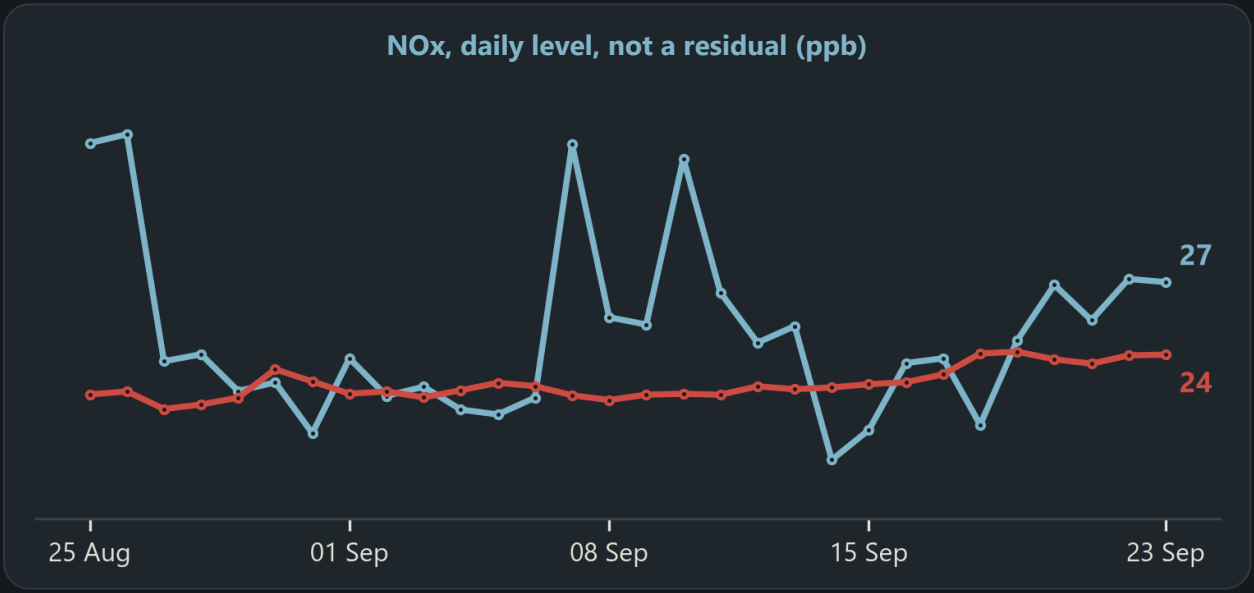
READING	Reading: these are LEVELS, not residuals; higher means more pollution that day. The pale line is the observed level, weather included. Red is the weather-removed level, the pollution that Delhi's and the region's emissions produce in a typical spell of weather for the season. Gaps are days without a model run.
CAUTION	Caution: 24-hour city means to 4 PM, except CO and Ozone, which are 8-hour maxima; NOx is in ppb.
SOURCE	This office's weather-removal model, computed 23 September 2026, trained on ERA5 and Open-Meteo weather data [2].

THE POINT

The weather-removed line sat above the measured line on PM2.5 for 9 of 30 days. On PM10 it did so on 7 of 30. On those days the weather was flattering the city.

Thirty days of levels: NO2 and NOx



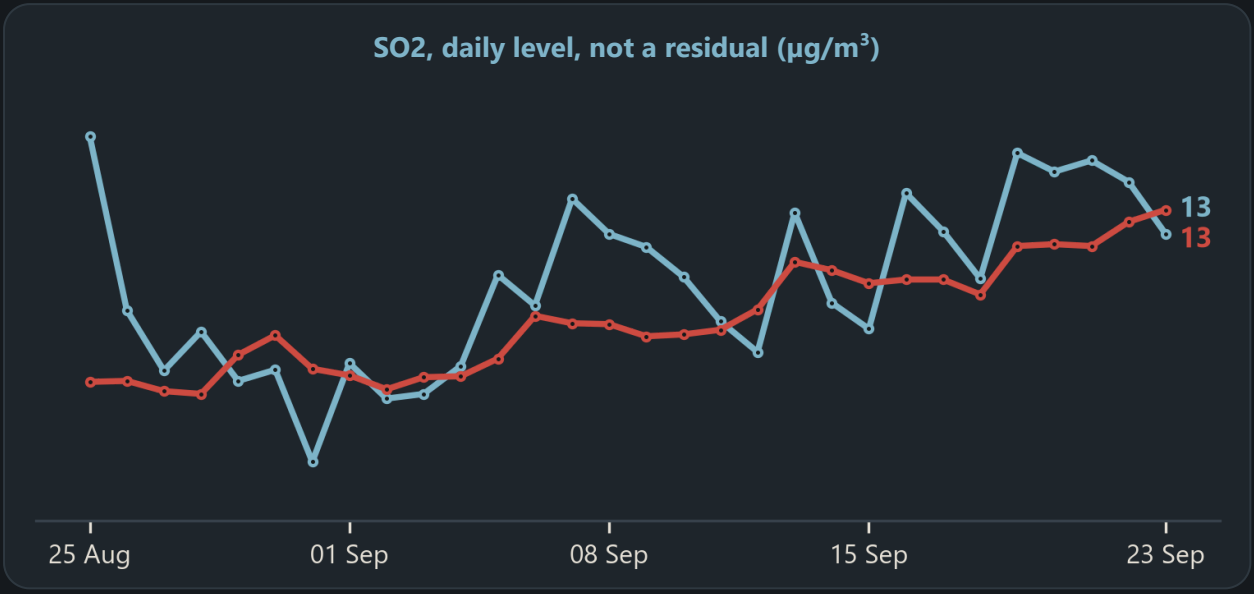


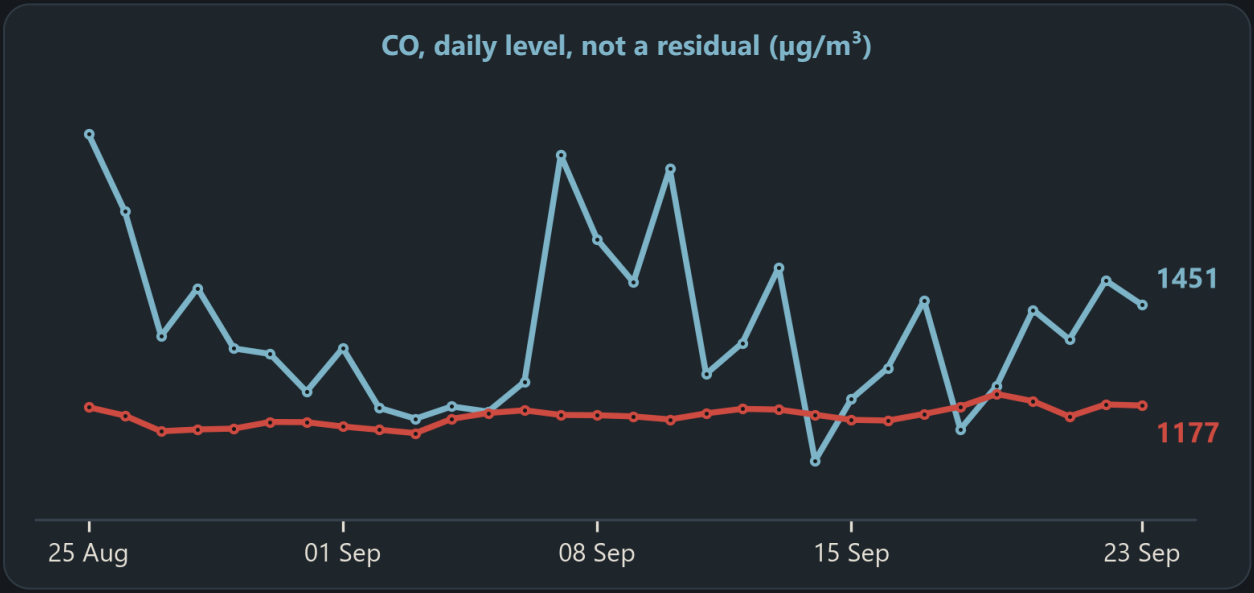
READING	Reading: these are LEVELS, not residuals; higher means more pollution that day. The pale line is the observed level, weather included. Red is the weather-removed level, the pollution that Delhi's and the region's emissions produce in a typical spell of weather for the season. Gaps are days without a model run.
CAUTION	Caution: 24-hour city means to 4 PM, except CO and Ozone, which are 8-hour maxima; NOx is in ppb.
SOURCE	This office's weather-removal model, computed 23 September 2026, trained on ERA5 and Open-Meteo weather data [2].

THE POINT

The weather-removed line sat above the measured line on NO2 for 5 of 30 days. On those days the weather was flattering the city. On the latest day, as measured, the city's NOx read 27.2 ppb.

Thirty days of levels: SO2 and CO



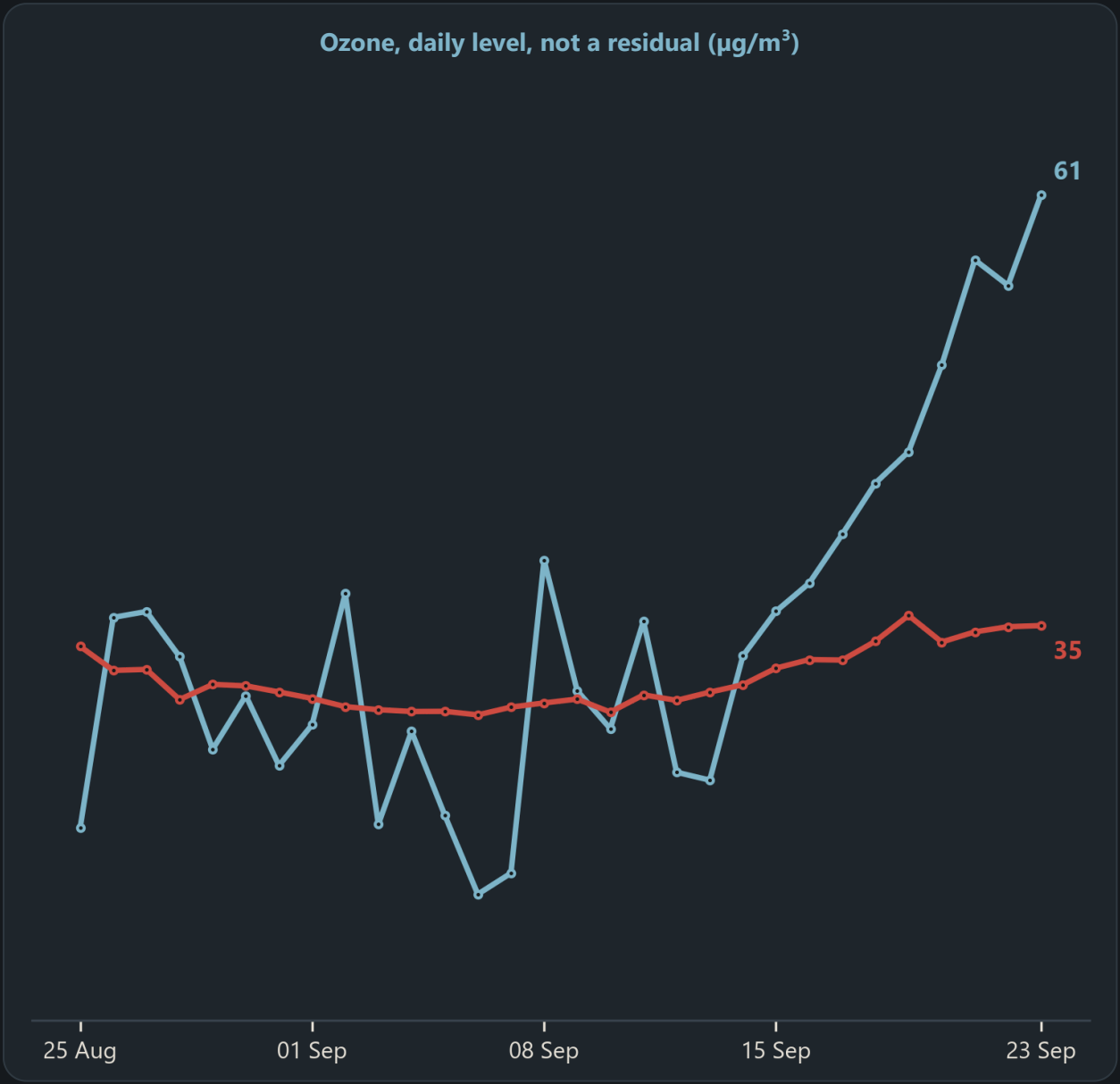


READING	Reading: these are LEVELS, not residuals; higher means more pollution that day. The pale line is the observed level, weather included. Red is the weather-removed level, the pollution that Delhi's and the region's emissions produce in a typical spell of weather for the season. Gaps are days without a model run.
CAUTION	Caution: 24-hour city means to 4 PM, except CO and Ozone, which are 8-hour maxima; NOx is in ppb.
SOURCE	This office's weather-removal model, computed 23 September 2026, trained on ERA5 and Open-Meteo weather data [2].

THE POINT

On the latest day, as measured, the city's sulphur dioxide read 12.8 µg/m³ and carbon monoxide 1451.3 µg/m³ on its 8-hour maximum.

Thirty days of levels: Ozone



READING	Reading: these are LEVELS, not residuals; higher means more pollution that day. The pale line is the observed level, weather included. Red is the weather-removed level, the pollution that Delhi's and the region's emissions produce in a typical spell of weather for the season. Gaps are days without a model run.
CAUTION	Caution: 24-hour city means to 4 PM, except CO and Ozone, which are 8-hour maxima; NOx is in ppb.
SOURCE	This office's weather-removal model, computed 23 September 2026, trained on ERA5 and Open-Meteo weather data [2].

THE POINT

On the latest day, as measured, the city's ozone read 61.3 µg/m³ on its 8-hour maximum.

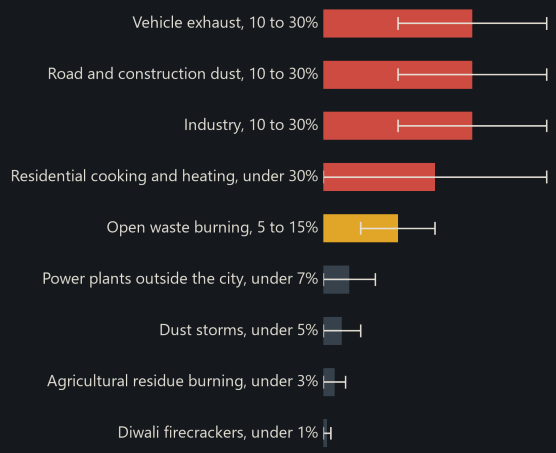
What the daily figures cannot say alone

The year behind today

Over the twelve months to 23 September 2026, Delhi's mean PM2.5 was 94.9 micrograms per cubic metre, which is 18.9 times the WHO annual guideline and 2.3 times India's annual standard, computed over 15,226 complete station-days at 47 reference stations. This is this office's own computation: the mean PM2.5 concentration over complete station-days at reference-grade monitors. The daily headline is an AQI figure, the mean of the station AQIs, so the two measure different things and are not interchangeable. The published calendar-year means, 106 in 2021, 100 in 2022, 103 in 2023 and 102 in 2024 micrograms per cubic metre, come from UrbanEmissions.Info, What Is Polluting Delhi's Air, 2023-24 update, from a 40 station network; they cover a different network and a different period from the figure above, so the two cannot be read as a trend. A single day is the wrong unit for a policy verdict, which is why this page carries the year beside it.

What is actually polluting this air

Across studies from 1990 to 2022, vehicle exhaust, road and construction dust and industry, including power plants each account for 10 to 30 per cent of Delhi's annual PM2.5, so no single sector explains the level and no single remedy can fix it. Agricultural residue burning is under 3 per cent of Delhi's ANNUAL average PM2.5, though its share in a smoke episode is far higher. Diwali firecrackers are under 1 per cent of the annual average, as a two day extreme event. These are annual shares. In winter the residential heating share rises sharply, and the seasonal sources rise with it. Source: Guttikunda and colleagues, What Is Polluting Delhi's Air? A Review from 1990 to 2022, Sustainability, 2023, Table 5.



Each bar is the midpoint and the whisker is the published range, so the width of a whisker is how much the studies disagree. The top three overlap completely, which is the finding: no one sector can be named the villain.

What the delay costs

Holding at 95.0 micrograms per cubic metre instead of reaching the 40 target by 2040 costs Delhi about 32 per cent more exposure and estimated mortality, and the delay since 2019 has already added about 23 per cent. The cost of delay has at least doubled since the National Clean Air Programme began, with little to no change in concentrations between 2019 and 2025. Reaching 40 micrograms per cubic metre by 2040 needs at least 10 to 15 years of systematic implementation across every sector at regional scale. These are increases in exposure and estimated mortality against reaching the target, not sums of money. Source: Guttikunda and colleagues, 40 by 2040: Cost of inaction and delays in reaching Delhi's air quality target, SIM-air working paper 63-2025, Tables 3 and 4.

The source shares and the cost of delay on this page are published work, cited so the reader can check them; the year's mean is this office's own, as its paragraph says.

The method, in plain English

How CPCB's AQI is formed

The air-quality index, or AQI, turns the reading of each pollutant into a sub-index on one scale from 0 to 500, through breakpoints that the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) publishes. A station's AQI is the highest of its pollutant sub-indices, and the pollutant that sets it is named beside it. This record follows CPCB's documented formula, quoted from both of CPCB's documents on page 34. It computes six pollutants; CPCB's note counts eight, and ammonia and lead are not included here. The day is the 24 hours ending 4 PM. This record moved to that window on 13 October 2026; the daily figures first published for 7 June to 12 October 2026 used the 24 hours ending 10 AM. The city figure is the mean of the station AQIs, on the stations that report enough hours in the window: 44 today.

How today is compared with last year

Last year is never a single day. It is the average of the same date and the seven days either side of it in 2025, using only the stations that reported in both years, which is 38 stations today. Delhi's air is driven by weather systems that come and go every three to seven days, so a 15-day window spans two or three of them, and no single storm or calm night can set the comparison. Neighbouring days are alike, so the 15 days act like about seven independent readings. A wider window would blur the arrival of the monsoon and the crop-burning season. Festival emissions are real pollution and stay in, so a festival such as Diwali that falls in one year's window and not the other's carries that caveat in October and November.

What population-weighted means

Delhi's monitors are not spread evenly over its people, so the weighted figure divides the city into zones, one per monitor, with every point belonging to its nearest monitor. The people in each Assembly Constituency come from the 2025 Delhi electoral rolls, about 15.61 million electors, scaled to the Registrar General of India's 2025 projection of 20.94 million, and where they live inside each constituency comes from the WorldPop 2020 grid at 100 m. A station's weight is its zone's share of the people, re-scaled each day over the stations that reported. Residents without voter registration are under-counted, and no weighting corrects a monitor's siting or calibration.

What weather removed means

Rain and wind wash or carry pollution away, and calm weather traps it. A random-forest model, trained on hourly data from 2021 to 11 October 2026, learns how wind, rain, temperature and mixing height move each pollutant. It then estimates what each day would have read in the usual weather for that time of year, which still includes the pollution the usual winds carry in from the region around Delhi. The model is retrained every week on ERA5 and Open-Meteo weather data. On days it has not seen, it explains this share of the day-to-day variation: PM2.5 39 per cent, PM10 38 per cent, NO2 24 per cent, NOx 36 per cent, SO2 9 per cent, carbon monoxide 28 per cent and ozone 34 per cent. Its outputs are estimates, and this record never claims more precision than the model has.

Source: CPCB's hourly station readings for 23 September 2026, 24 hours to 4 PM, compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by CREA, on CPCB's documented formula; the Election Commission's 2025 Delhi roll, the Registrar General's 2025 projection and the WorldPop 2020 grid; this office's weather-removal model, computed 23 September 2026.

The method, in plain English

Which pollutants carry a finding

Weather-removed findings are made on PM2.5, PM10 and NO2. For NOx, SO2 and carbon monoxide, which the model explains less well, only the observed figures are used. The weather-removed ozone figure is never the basis of a finding, because ozone forms in sunlight from other pollutants and nitric oxide from traffic consumes it near roads, so its level does not follow emissions in a simple way; the observed ozone reading is reported like any other pollutant, up to CPCB's Poor ceiling of AQI 300. A single gas reading at one monitor can be raised by a fault in the analyser or by a source beside the monitor, and one day's data cannot tell which, so this record does not lead on a reading that carbon monoxide set, and it sets aside a channel whose monitor fails its nitrogen oxide consistency check.

Which figure leads

Where a level exists both as measured and with the weather removed, this record leads with the higher of the two and prints the other beside it. Where a change exists in both forms, the one showing the larger rise or the smaller fall is mentioned first.

The fairness check

Before any weather driver is cited, last year's weather on the same days is compared with the 2021 to 2024 history for those calendar days. Where last year was unusual for a driver, no argument is built on that driver, whichever way it would point.

How a change is judged

Every observed change is given a range by resampling the stations or the days, and a change whose range spans zero is counted as unchanged, never as better or worse. The range beside a weather-removed figure shows only how much the stations differ and leaves out the model's own error, so no weather-removed finding rests on its size. The monthly margins are a rough guide from the model's hourly error, and no finding rests on them.

The WHO guidelines

A day's concentration is set against the WHO 24-hour guideline: 15 µg/m³ for PM2.5 and 45 µg/m³ for PM10. WHO defines each 24-hour level as the 99th percentile of a year's days, which allows three or four days a year above it, and sets annual levels of 5 and 15 µg/m³ (WHO Global Air Quality Guidelines 2021, Table 0.1).

Words used

AQI: the air-quality index, 0 to 500, higher is worse: 0 to 50 Good, 51 to 100 Satisfactory, 101 to 200 Moderate, 201 to 300 Poor, 301 to 400 Very Poor, over 400 Severe. µg/m³: micrograms of a pollutant in a cubic metre of air. Particle AQI: the higher of the PM2.5 and PM10 sub-indices, used for the year pages. Range: how far a figure moves when the set of reporting stations is resampled; it leaves out the weather model's own error, so the true uncertainty is wider than the printed range. Residual: one day's level minus the same days of last year.

Source: CPCB's hourly station readings for 23 September 2026, 24 hours to 4 PM, compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by CREA, on CPCB's documented formula; WHO's Global Air Quality Guidelines, 2021, Table 0.1.

CPCB's documented formula, in plain words

The formula

This record calculates Delhi's AQI with CPCB's documented formula. CPCB's AQI Calculator asks for the 24-hour average of PM2.5, PM10, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide and the "max 8-hr" value of carbon monoxide and ozone, and converts each through CPCB's published breakpoints; CPCB's note "How is AQI calculated?" says the sub-index uses the "24-hourly average concentration value (8-hourly in case of CO and O3)". A station's AQI is its worst pollutant's sub-index, and the city figure is the mean of the station AQIs. This record computes six pollutants, without ammonia and lead, which the note also counts.

The 8-hour rule, in plain words

Carbon monoxide and ozone are averaged over 8 hours rather than 24. The day's 24 hours, ending at 4 PM, hold several 8-hour blocks that lie wholly inside them, and this record takes the highest 8-hour average among those blocks. It does so because the calculator asks for the maximum 8-hour value and the note's fourth point says the index takes in data from the previous 24 hours only, so no hour from before the day's window is used.

Today, on this formula

	On CPCB's documented formula
Delhi's AQI today	154
CPCB's category	Moderate
Stations in the mean	44
Highest station	IGI Airport (T3), 248

The window is the 24 hours ending 4 PM on 23 September 2026. The city figure is the mean of the AQIs of the 44 stations that reported enough hours in that window; the highest station's figure was set by ozone.

CPCB's six categories

AQI	CPCB's category
0 to 50	Good
51 to 100	Satisfactory
101 to 200	Moderate
201 to 300	Poor
301 to 400	Very Poor
401 to 500	Severe

A higher AQI is worse air. The category of a station, and of the city, is the band its AQI falls in.

CPCB's own documents

CPCB's note, "How is AQI calculated?": https://airquality.cpcb.gov.in/ccr_docs/How_AQI_Calculated.pdf. CPCB's AQI Calculator: https://cpcb.nic.in/upload/national-air-quality-index/AQI-Calculator.xls.

Source: CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 23 September 2026, compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA); CPCB's note and calculator as linked on this page.

Every figure traces to a dated feed

Sources: the six feeds behind the record of 23 September 2026, each with its own date below.

01 CPCB's hourly station readings, as compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), read on 23 September 2026. The window is the 24 hours ending 4 PM. The city figure is the mean of station AQIs, and each station's AQI is its worst sub-index on CPCB's documented formula.

02 Weather-removed figures, computed by this office on 23 September 2026 with a random-forest weather model on ERA5 and Open-Meteo hourly data. How well the model performs on days it has not seen is set out in the method annexure. This office's own computation.

03 Weather comparison, read 23 September 2026: last year's days and the 2021 to 2024 normal from the ERA5 reanalysis; today's hours from the Palam airport weather report and the Open-Meteo forecast model until ERA5 is available; each aggregated over the same 24 hours to 4 PM as the AQI.

04 Population weighting: how many people each constituency holds comes from the 2025 Delhi electoral rolls, about 15.61 million electors in Election Commission of India turnout data, scaled to the Registrar General of India's 2025 projection for the National Capital Territory of 20.94 million. Where they sit inside a constituency comes from the WorldPop 2020 population grid at 100 m, adopted 12 August 2026 in place of an even spread over area, because that spread credited outer monitors with the residents of surrounding farmland. Station zones are a Voronoi map of the active monitors. Tier 1 as data, all series dated.

05 The year's weather-removed series on page 17 and the two pages after it: every day of 2026 recomputed with one version of the weather model, and where a recomputed day is missing, the figure published on that day is used. The model is retrained every week, most recently on data to 11 October 2026, and uses the same definitions as the daily figures on hawakahisab.in. This office's own computation.

06 Health characterisation: the CPCB category health descriptors as published with the index, and the WHO Global Air Quality Guidelines, 2021, for the PM2.5 and PM10 guidelines. Tier 1.

THE POINT

Every figure in this record is computed from the data before the report is written, and the report never edits a figure. Where a figure is not available, the page says so.