THE DAILY ACCOUNTABILITY RECORD OF DELHI'S AIR

362

AQI at Pusa (IITM), 24 hours to 4 PM, 21 October 2026, the worst monitor in Delhi today, Very Poor on CPCB's documented formula, and PM2.5 set that figure. 11.5 lakh people live within 4 km of it. The second monitor at Pusa, Pusa (DPCC), read 315.

Today, 21 October 2026, 24 hours to 4 PM: Delhi's AQI was 264.3, Poor, calculated with CPCB's documented formula as the mean of 57 stations' AQIs (CPCB's note "How is AQI calculated?" and its AQI Calculator; page 34 sets out the formula). As measured, 44 of the 44 monitors reading PM2.5 were above the WHO 24-hour guideline of 15 µg/m³. Above AQI 200 today: 42 stations, Pusa (IITM) 362, Chandni Chowk 360, Punjabi Bagh 356, Jahangirpuri 340, and 38 more in the station table. Poor or worse air reached 1.91 crore people within 4 km of their monitor today, 84.5 per cent of Delhi.

The year so far, 1 January to 20 October: the cleaner days of 2026 have been the dirtiest for these dates since 2019, because three days in four read above 106.7 on the particle AQI, against 91.6 on the same dates of 2025. The middle day reads 152.8 against 139.5 on the same dates last year. On an average day, 26.7 per cent of Delhi's reporting monitors, about 11 of 44, sat above 200 on the particle AQI.

264.3

TODAY

Delhi's AQI calculated with CPCB's documented formula, the mean of 57 stations.

1.91 crore

NEAR POOR OR WORSE

Within 4 km of 42 Poor-or-worse monitors: 84.5 per cent of Delhi, every pollutant counted.

8.3x

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.

Source: CPCB hourly station data, 24 hours to 4 PM on 21 October 2026 (CREA compilation); 2025 electoral shares; official 1 July 2026 Delhi NCT projection; WorldPop 2026 grid; CREA's compilation of CPCB data since 2019; WHO guidelines, 2021.

The air record

21 October 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, 21 OCTOBER 2026, 24 HOURS TO 4 PM. Pusa (IITM) read 362, Very Poor, set by PM2.5; 11.5 lakh people live within 4 km of it. The monitors gave Delhi 264.3, calculated with CPCB's documented formula (CPCB's note "How is AQI calculated?" and its AQI Calculator; page 34).

What this record finds today

- Three of every four days of 2026 so far read above 106.7 on the particle AQI, the highest that line has stood for 1 January to 20 October since 2019, when it was 110.0; the middle day rose from 139.5 to 152.8.
- With the weather removed, PM10 sat above last year on 177 of 293 measured days of 2026 (60.4 per cent), and PM2.5 on 89 of 293 (30.3 per cent).
- Pusa (IITM) read 362, Very Poor, set by PM2.5, while the city average read Poor, and 11.5 lakh people live within 4 km of it; the second monitor at Pusa, Pusa (DPCC), read 315. An average is not an experience.
- PM2.5 averaged 124.6 µg/m³ over the 24 hours to 4 PM as measured, 8.3 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 21 October, 16 of the 57 monitors that reported gave no reading for at least one of the six pollutants.

The health hazard

- Today's category, Poor, in CPCB's own words, Table 3.12 of its National AQI report: "May cause breathing discomfort to people on prolonged exposure and discomfort to people with heart disease with short exposure"
- 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 hourly station data, 24 hours to 4 PM on 21 October 2026 (CREA compilation); this office's weather-removal model, run 21 October 2026; 2025 electoral shares; official 1 July 2026 Delhi NCT projection; WorldPop 2026 grid; CREA's compilation of CPCB data since 2019; WHO guidelines, 2021; CPCB National AQI report, Table 3.12.

What this record holds, page by page

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Part A. The day against the WHO PM2.5 and PM10 against the WHO 24-hour guideline, and every pollutant

05	PM2.5 against the WHO	the 24-hour guideline
06	PM10 against the WHO	the 24-hour guideline
07	The pollutant board	all tracked species, with how each is used

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08	The day at the stations	the spread the average hides
09	The 30-day path	the index, day by day
10	Against yesterday	the one-day move
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12	The worst station	one neighbourhood's day
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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. Against the WHO

The summary, then PM2.5 and PM10 against the WHO 24-hour guideline, and every pollutant.

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 08 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 15 onward.

04 Part D. People, reference, method

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

Pages 20 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.

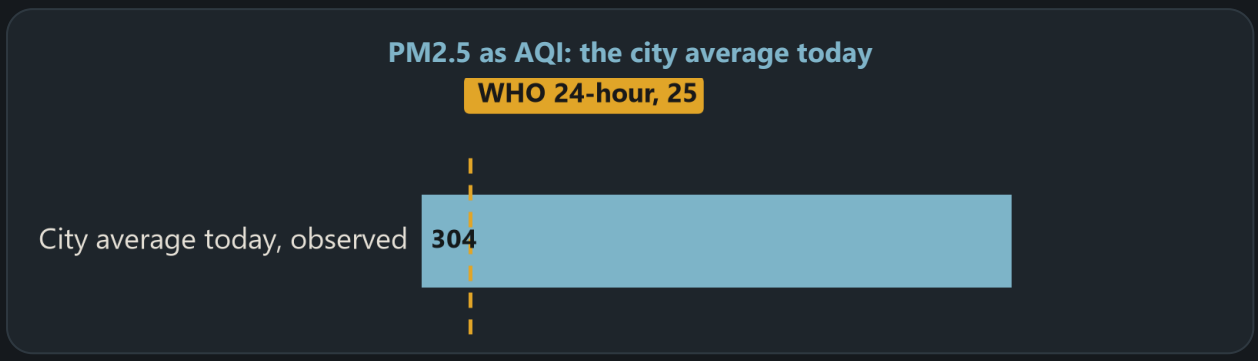
The tab
It names the data and the exact window.

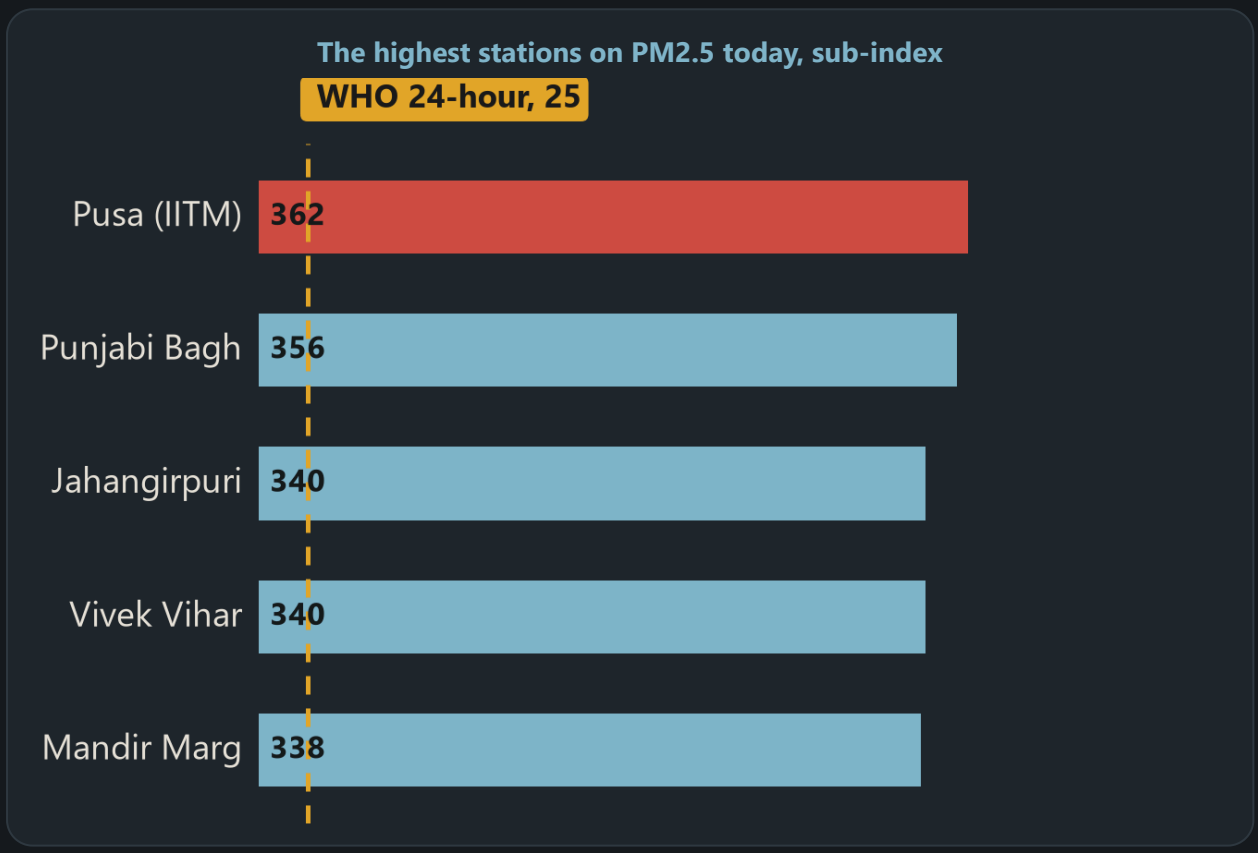
The banner
It states the finding, ready to be read out.

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

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

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.

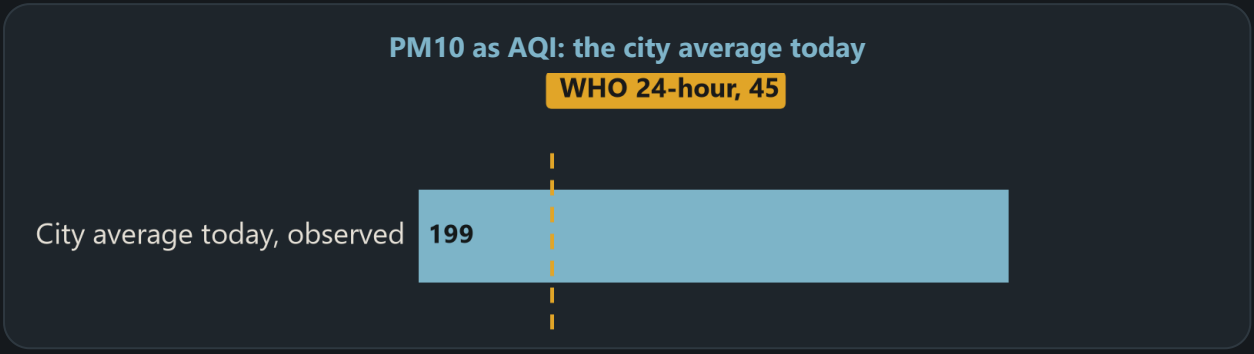
CAUTION Caution: every sub-index on this page is the observed one, on CPCB's documented formula, and one station's figure describes one neighbourhood.

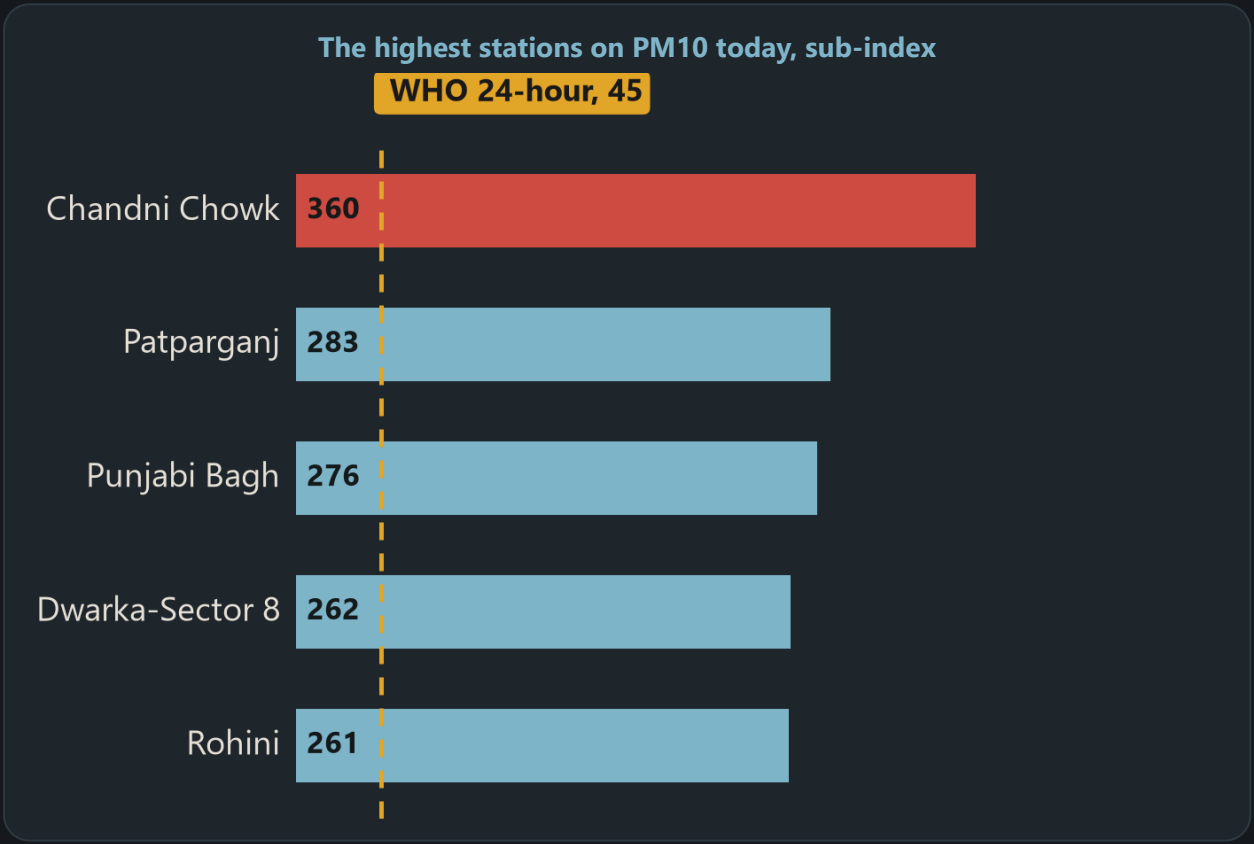
SOURCE CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 21 October 2026, compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). The figures are on CPCB's documented formula (CPCB, "How is AQI calculated?"; CPCB AQI Calculator), and the city figure is the mean of station AQIs [1].

THE POINT

Delhi's PM2.5 averaged 124.6 µg/m³ today, 8.3 times the WHO 24-hour guideline of 15 µg/m³, and Pusa (IITM) averaged 200.5 µg/m³, 13.3 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: 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 21 October 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 PM10 averaged 248.2 µg/m³ today, 5.5 times the WHO 24-hour guideline of 45 µg/m³, and Chandni Chowk averaged 398.1 µg/m³, 8.8 times it.

Every pollutant, as measured

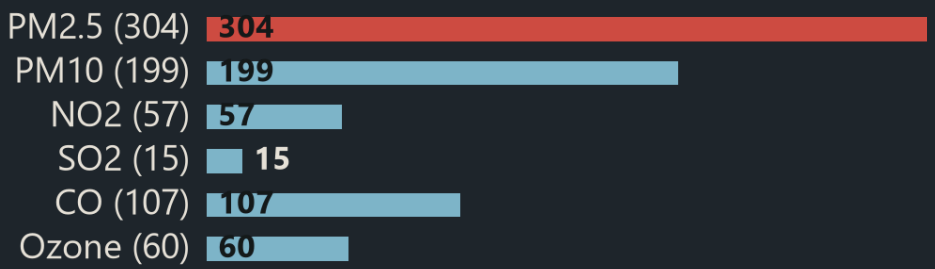
Pollutant	Today obs	Obs YoY	How this record uses it
PM2.5	124.5	-11.8%	Used for findings
PM10	248.2	-10.6%	Used for findings
NO2	44.9	-14%	Used for findings
NOx (ppb)	51.1	-13.9%	Shown for context, observed only
SO2	12.4	-17.7%	Shown for context, observed only
CO (mg/m³)	2.51	+13.2%	Shown for context, observed only
Ozone	59	-33.6%	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.

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

5.5x
Delhi's PM10 as measured, against the same WHO 24-hour guideline.

Each pollutant's city sub-index today, as measured



READING

Reading: every pollutant this record tracks, as measured today and against the same days of last year. 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. The bars draw each pollutant's city sub-index today on CPCB's scale, the red bar the highest.

CAUTION

Caution: the change against last year is counted on the stations in the weather file that reported in both years, so it can differ from the headline's own change on page 11. The observed ozone reading is reported up to CPCB's Poor ceiling, AQI 300, and this year the monitors' ozone readings differ from their own of a year ago by more than any real change.

SOURCE

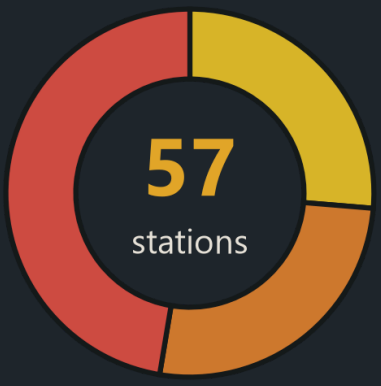
CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 21 October 2026, compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). The figures are on CPCB's documented formula (CPCB, "How is AQI calculated?"; CPCB AQI Calculator), and the city figure is the mean of station AQIs [1].

THE POINT

As measured, all 44 stations with a PM2.5 figure sit above the WHO 24-hour guideline of 15 µg/m³.

One average, and the spread it hides

All 57 stations, by category



The same count, category by category



Which pollutant set each station's figure today



READING Reading: each station reports its own AQI; the wheel and the bars are the same 57 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.

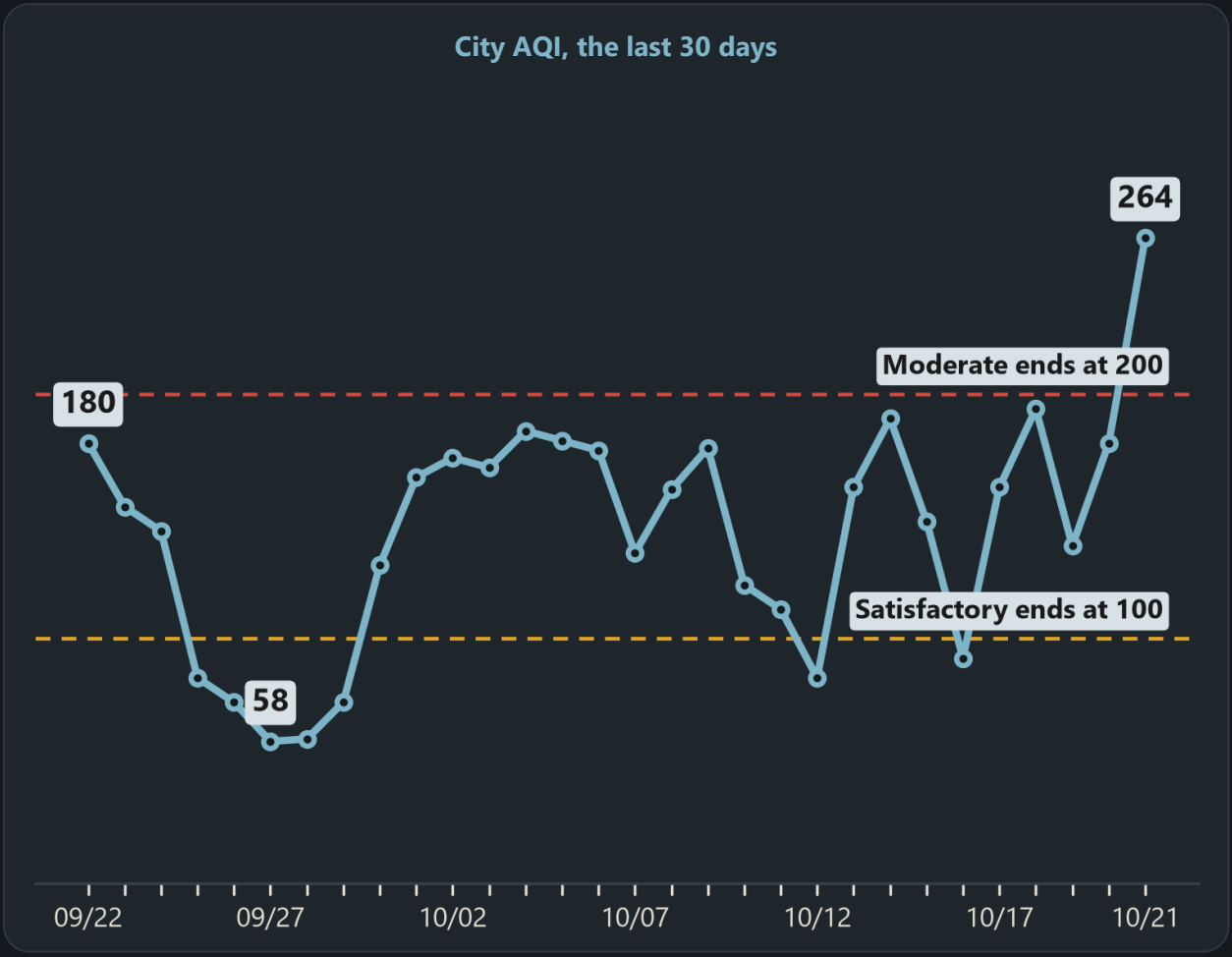
CAUTION Caution: the city headline is the mean of station AQIs, so one bad station can sit inside a Satisfactory average. A station's leading pollutant is the worst of its own sub-indices, not a ranking of how much of each was in the air.

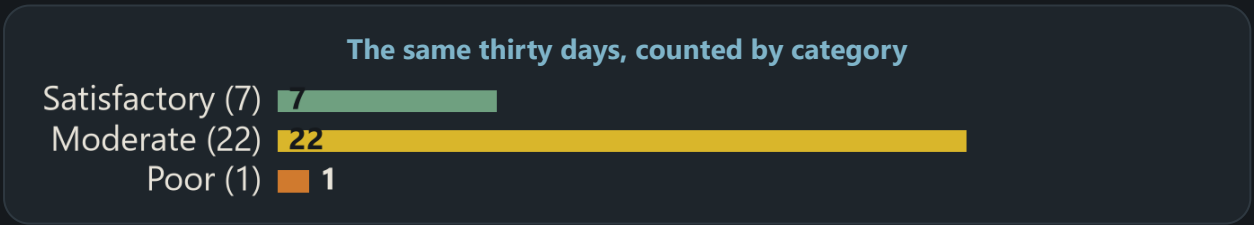
SOURCE CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 21 October 2026, compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). The figures are on CPCB's documented formula (CPCB, "How is AQI calculated?"; CPCB AQI Calculator), and the city figure is the mean of station AQIs [1].

THE POINT

Pusa (IITM) read 362, Very Poor, set by PM2.5, on a day the city average read Poor.

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 21 October 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

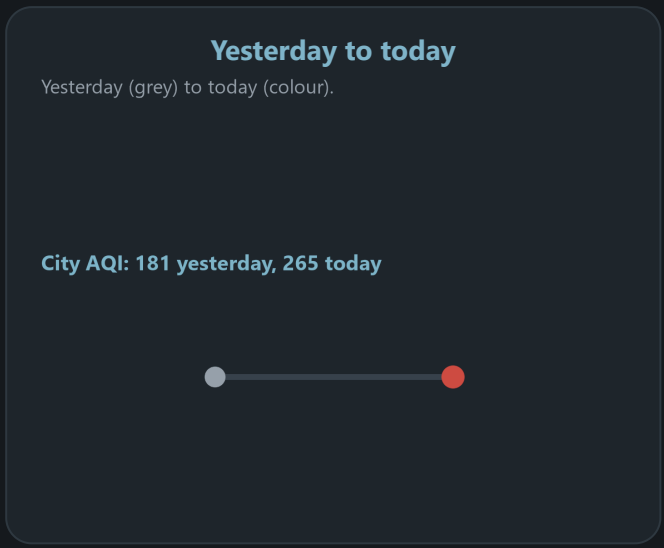
Thirty days ago the city read 180, on 45 reporting stations, and today it reads 264, on 57.

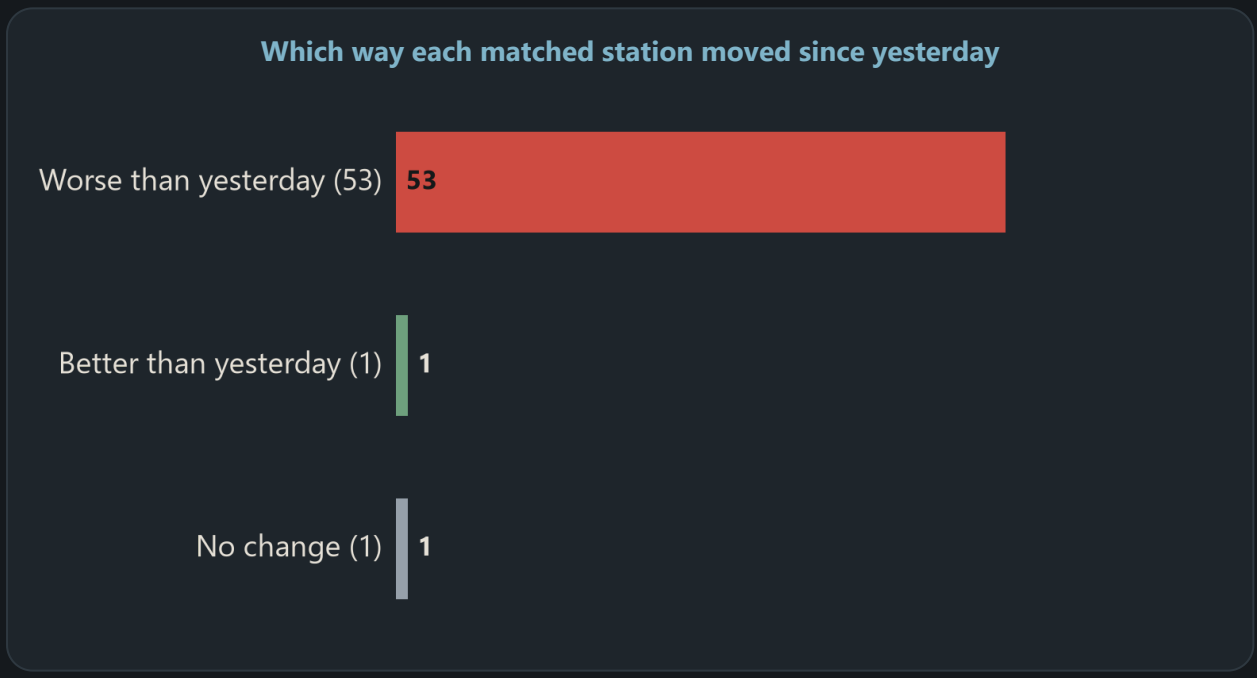
Against yesterday: the one-day move

84.4

points on yesterday

From 181 to 265. On the 55 stations that reported on both days, the 95 per cent interval runs 71.7 to 97.3 points.





READING Reading: the grey dot is yesterday, the coloured dot today; red marks a worsening. 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 21 October 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.

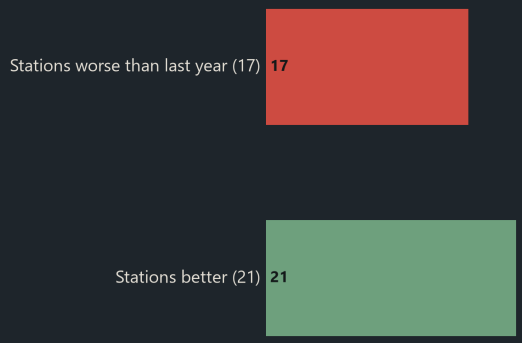
Against last year: the observed reading

−19.6

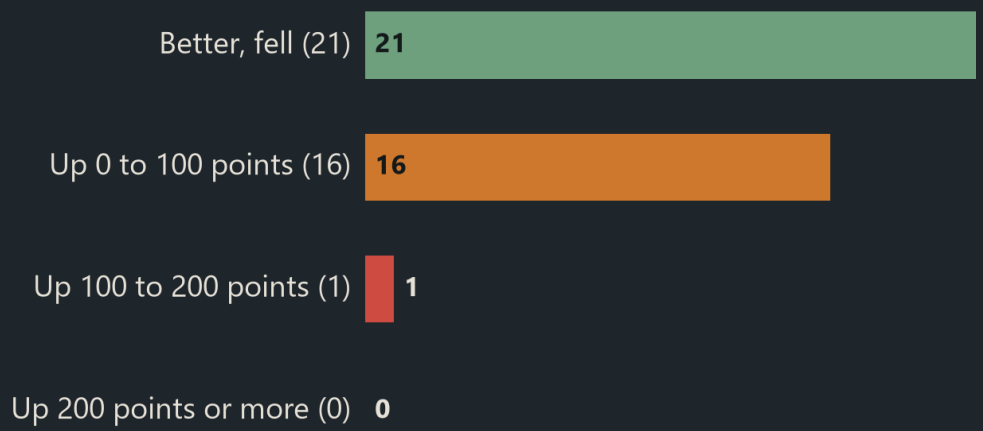
points on last year, observed

Today 264 across 57 stations. The year is judged on the 38 matched stations: 287 today against 306, the mean of the same date ±7 days of 2025 at those stations. The interval runs -39.8 to 1 points, so it leans better, but the interval spans zero and no claim is made.

The station split behind the average



How the 38 matched stations moved vs last year, in AQI 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: the stations that read higher than last year did so by a median of 19.9 points, and those that read lower by a median of 38.7 points, so the average hides both. Weighted by population, today reads 270 across the 54 stations with a mapped zone; on the 38 stations matched with last year it reads 285 against 314, a change of -29.1 points.

SOURCE CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 21 October 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

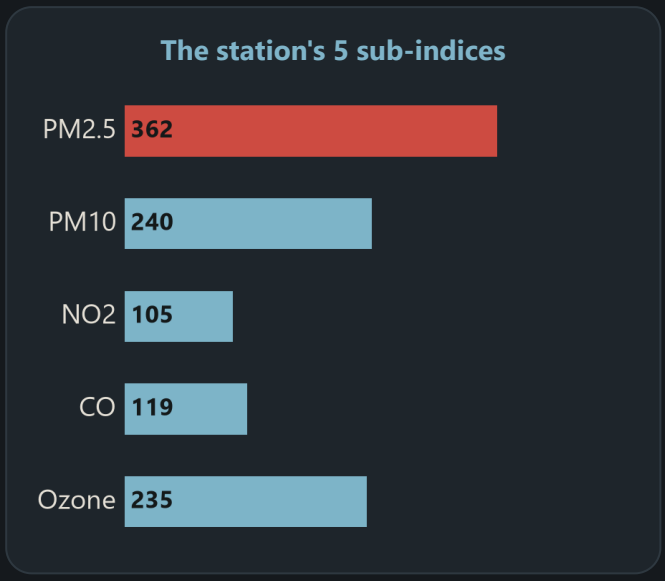
On the raw figures the year reads level inside its interval, so no claim is made either way.

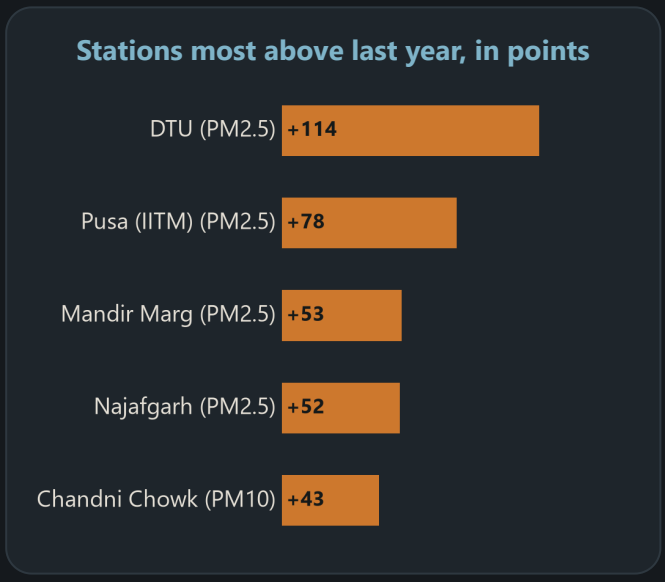
The worst station in the city today

362

Pusa, Delhi - IITM

Very Poor, set by PM2.5. Its PM2.5 averaged 200.5 µg/m³ over the 24 hours to 4 PM, 13.3 times the WHO 24-hour guideline of 15 µg/m³. Last year this station read 284 on the mean of the same date ±7 days, so the change is +77.7 points. It is one of the two monitors at Pusa; the second, Pusa (DPCC), read 315. 11.5 lakh people live within 4 km of this monitor. Within 500 m of the monitor, 54% of the land is built up and 46% is under vegetation, so this reading describes a mixed 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.

SOURCE CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 21 October 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

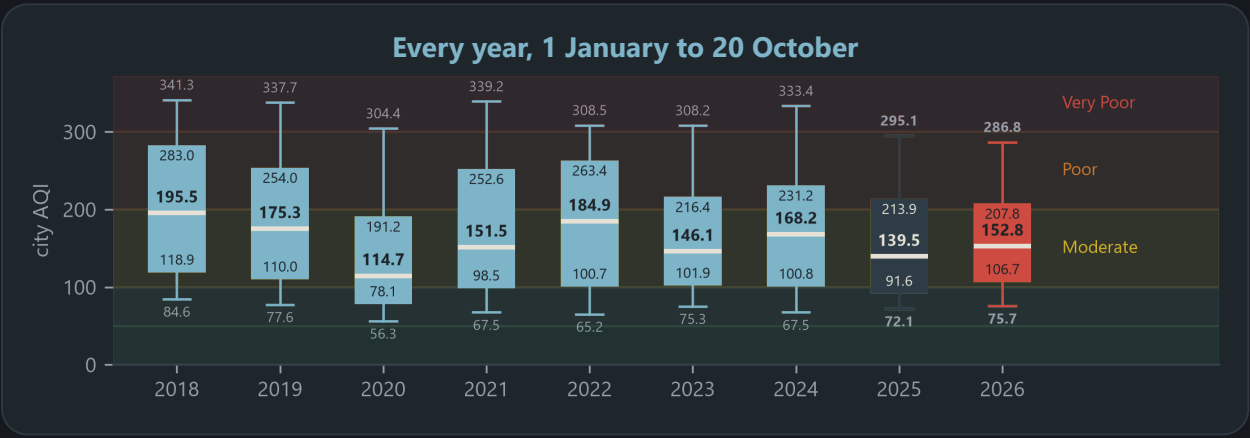
While the city averaged Poor, Pusa (IITM) sat at 362, Very Poor, and 11.5 lakh people live within 4 km of it. An average is not an experience.

The year, from its best days to its worst

152.8

the middle day of 2026, against 139.5 in 2025

On the same 293 complete dates, 1 January to 20 October, the best tenth of days reads 75.7 against 72.1 and the worst tenth 286.8 against 295.1. The days at or below 200 went from 211 to 214.





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 293 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

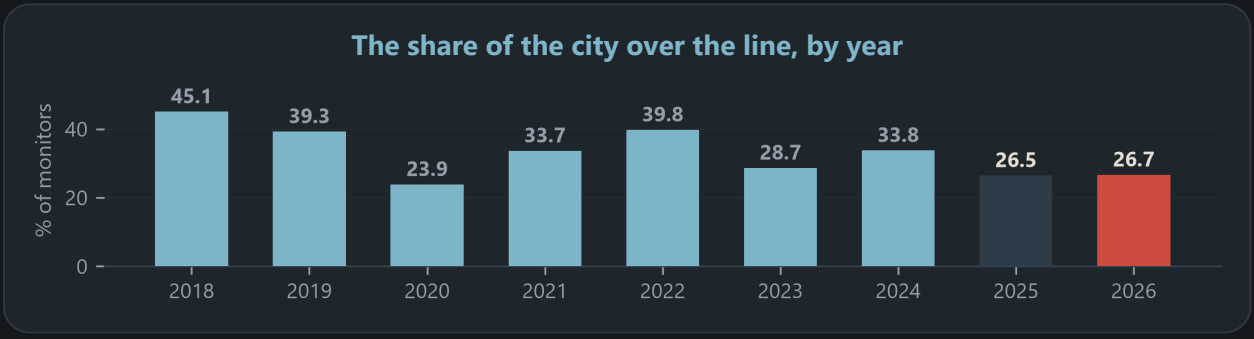
The cleaner days of 2026 have been the dirtiest for these dates since 2019: the lower quarter stands at 106.7, against 91.6 in 2025 and 110.0 in 2019.

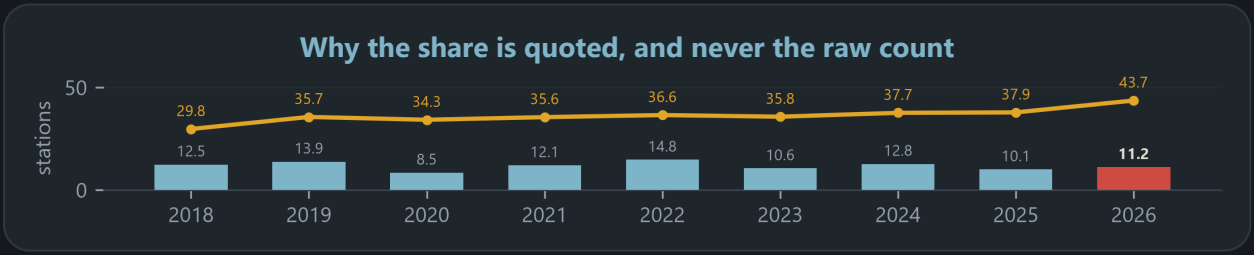
How much of the city was above AQI 200

26.7%

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

That is 11.2 of 43.7 reporting stations, against 26.5 per cent over the same dates last year, a change of +0.2 points on an interval of -5.7 to +5.7, 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 44 reporting monitors, 26.7 per cent, sat above 200 on the particle AQI.

The weather's hand, driver by driver

GATED OUT

4 km/h

Wind speed today; last year 5.6 km/h.

z = -2.25

0 mm

Rain today; last year 0 mm.

z = -0.59

392.3 m

Mixing height today; last year 376 m.

z = 0.14

25.3 °C

Temperature today; last year 24.8 °C.

z = -0.05

7.4 °C

Inversion today; last year 7.2 °C.

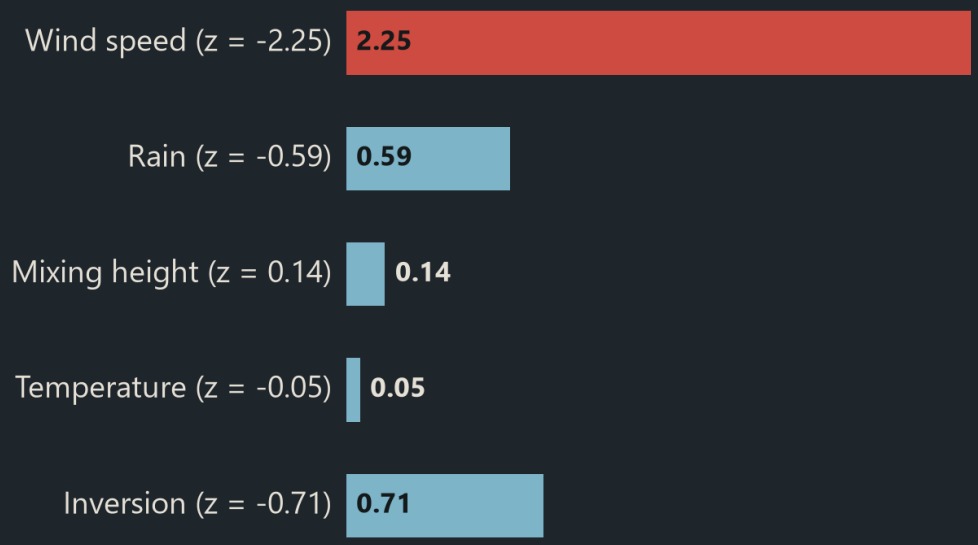
z = -0.71

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.

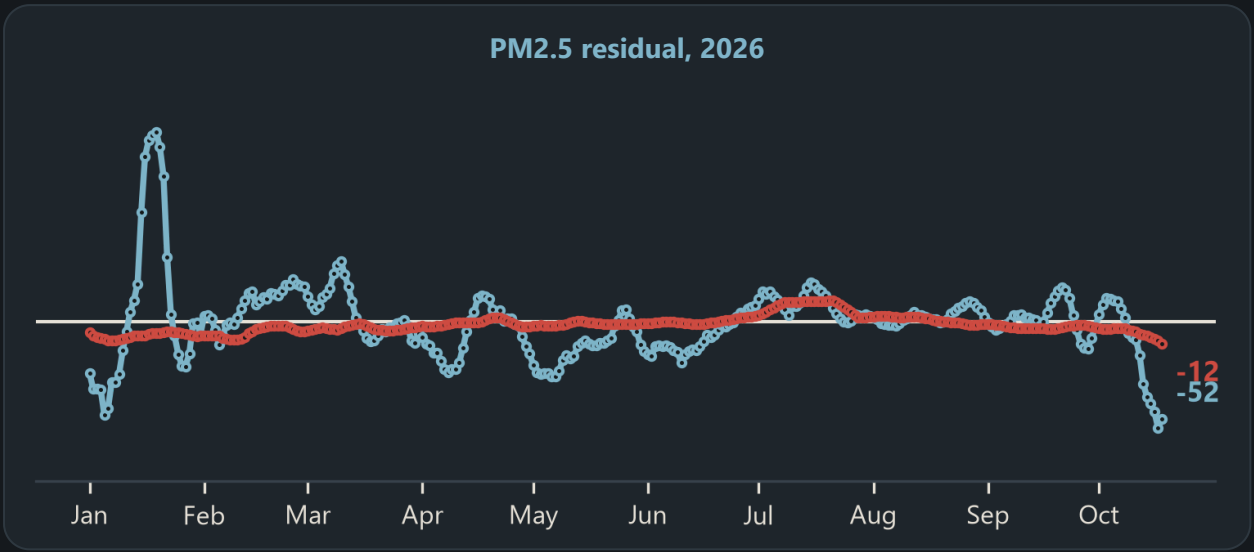
CAUTION Caution: a driver whose baseline was itself abnormal is greyed and marked. Last year's baseline was abnormal for wind speed, so no argument rests on it. The bars carry no threshold line, because each driver's verdict is printed on its own bar.

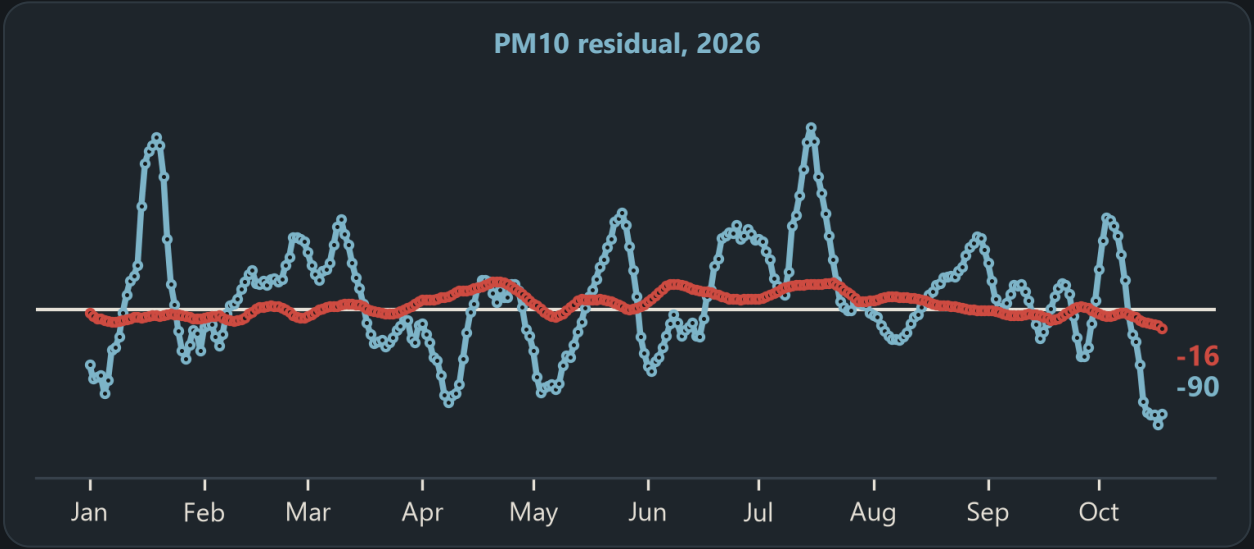
SOURCE Weather comparison from the daily weather file, read 21 October 2026: last year and 2021 to 2024 are ERA5; today's hours are provisional airport observation and forecast-model values until ERA5 arrives [3].

THE POINT

Before any weather driver is cited, last year's baseline is checked against the 2021 to 2024 history for the same days.

Weather removed, PM10 sat above last year on 177 of 293 days, PM2.5 on 89





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 293 usable days. The weather model is retrained every week, most recently on data to 17 October 2026. The day counts depend only on whether each day was above or below last year, and not on any margin.

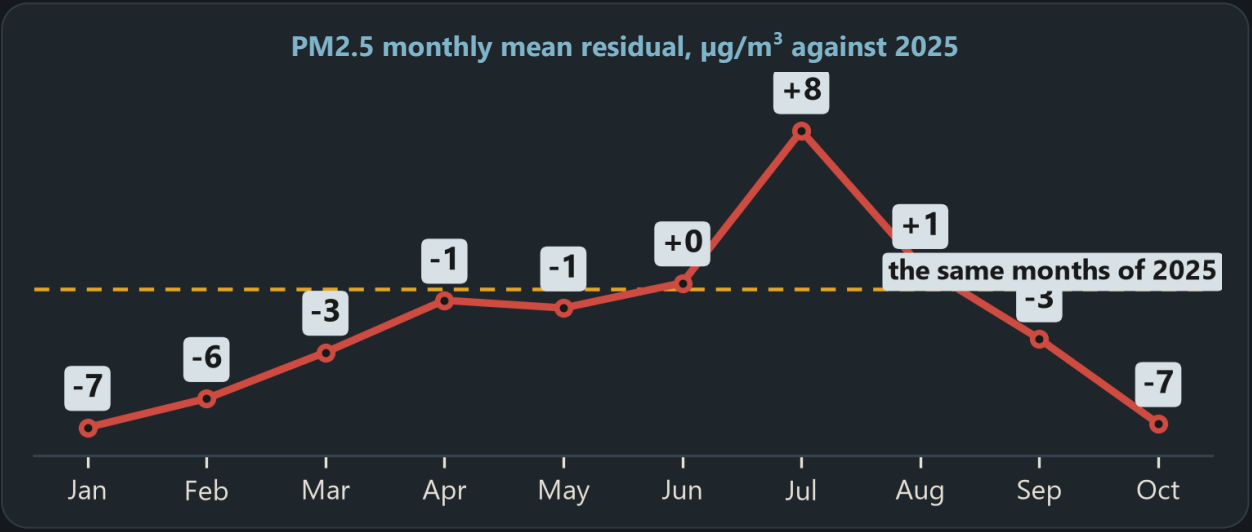
SOURCE This office's weather-removal model, computed 21 October 2026, trained on ERA5 and Open-Meteo weather data [2].

THE POINT

With the weather removed, PM10 was above last year on 177 of 293 days, 60.4 per cent of them, and PM2.5 on 89 of 293. Averaged over all 293 days, PM10 with the weather removed sat 3.6 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.	**+1** August: margin ±10, 31 days.
-3 September: margin ±10, 30 days.	**-7** October so far: margin ±10, 20 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 16 do not depend on it.

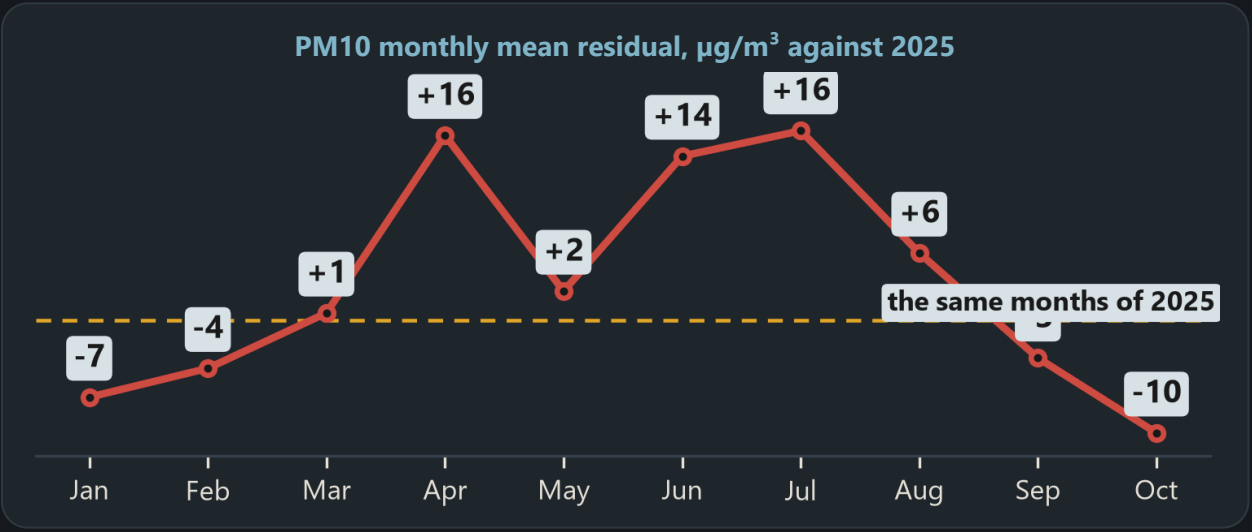
SOURCE This office's weather-removal model, computed 21 October 2026, trained on ERA5 and Open-Meteo weather data [2].

THE POINT

PM2.5: 3 of 10 months sat above last year on the weather-removed residual, 7 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.
-3 September: margin ±16, 30 days.	**-10** October so far: margin ±16, 20 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 16 do not depend on it.

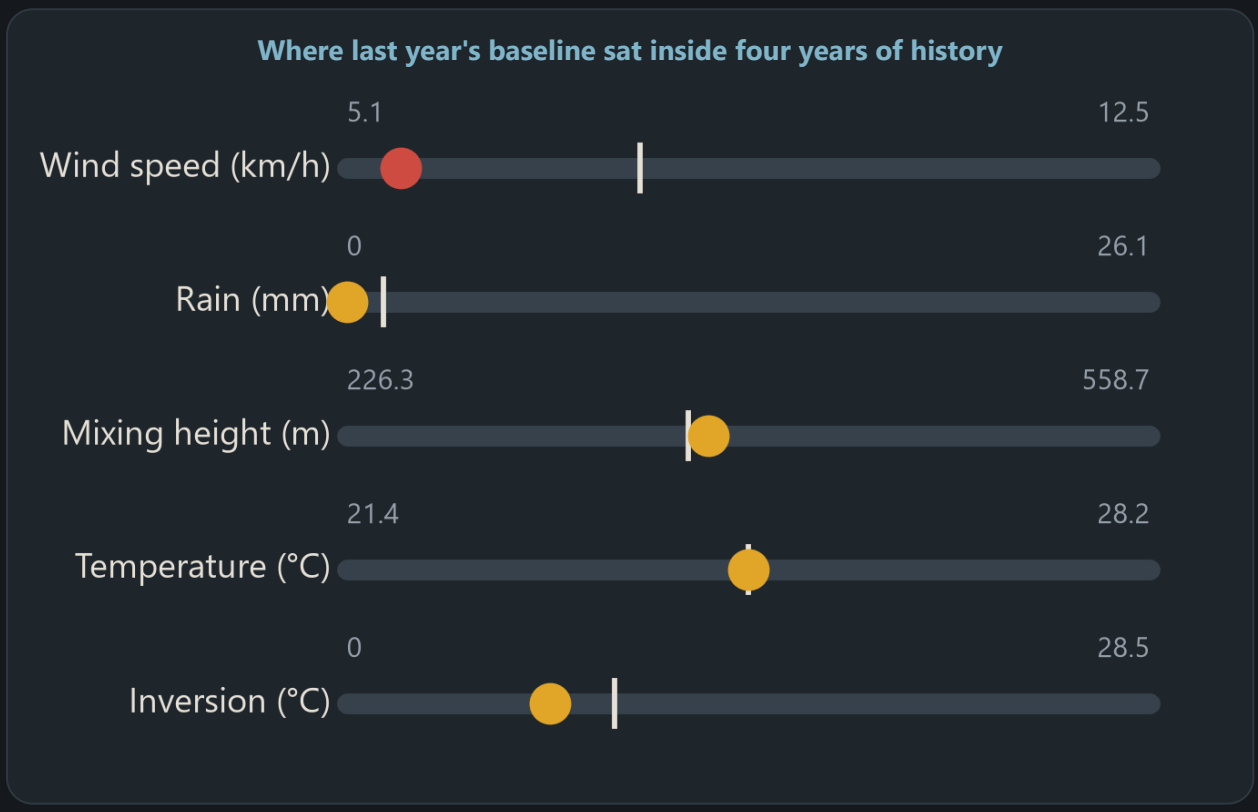
SOURCE This office's weather-removal model, computed 21 October 2026, trained on ERA5 and Open-Meteo weather data [2].

THE POINT

PM10: 6 of 10 months sat above last year on the weather-removed residual, 4 below.

The full weather evidence, with its climatology

Driver	Today	Last yr	Normal	SD	p1	p99	z	Verdict
Wind speed (km/h)	4	5.6	7.8	1	5.1	12.5	-2.25	abnormal, gated out
Rain (mm)	0	0	1.2	2	0	26.1	-0.59	normal
Mixing height (m)	392.3	376	367.7	60.1	226.3	558.7	0.14	normal
Temperature (°C)	25.3	24.8	24.8	1	21.4	28.2	-0.05	normal
Inversion (°C)	7.4	7.2	9.5	3.3	0	28.5	-0.71	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 21 October 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

2.2 km

from the typical resident to the nearest monitor

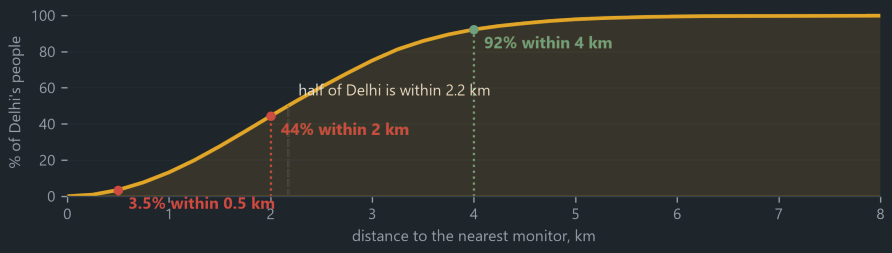
Within 4 km live 92 per cent of Delhi's people, within 2 km 44 per cent, and within 500 m only 3.5 per cent. The map holds 55 monitors in 53 zones; 57 monitors reported today. 33 of the 53 zones stretch past our chosen 4 km proximity threshold, informed by US EPA neighbourhood-scale guidance.

The network on the map

53 mapped zones, and their 2 km circles



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 measures proximity to the network, not 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: WorldPop India, constrained, 2026, R2025A v1, 100 m, CC BY 4.0. Per-constituency totals are conserved after clipping to Delhi. Constituency shares: 2025 Delhi electoral data, scaled to the official Delhi NCT projection of 2.2674 crore as at 1 July 2026 (Technical Group, July 2020, Table 11, p84). The 4 km proximity threshold is informed by US EPA guidance, 40 CFR 58 App D s1.2; it is not a representation limit. Method after Manoj Kumar, "604 air quality stations. But how well do they represent India?", India Air Quality & Energy Insights, 11 August 2026.

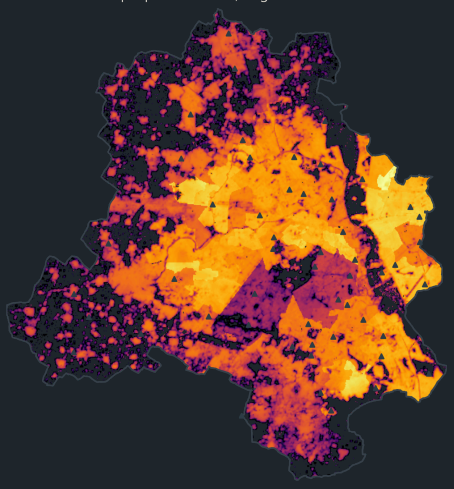
THE POINT

17.6 lakh Delhi residents live more than 4 km from any monitor, beyond our chosen proximity threshold.

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

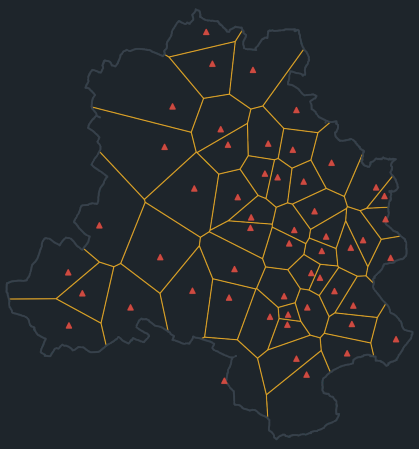
Where the people are

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. Constituency shares come from 2025 electoral data, scaled to the reporting year's official population projection. These are estimates of residents, not a new census.

SOURCE Population shape: WorldPop India, constrained, 2026, R2025A v1, 100 m, CC BY 4.0. Per-constituency totals are conserved after clipping to Delhi. Constituency shares: 2025 Delhi electoral data, scaled to the official Delhi NCT projection of 2.2674 crore as at 1 July 2026 (Technical Group, July 2020, Table 11, p84). The 4 km proximity threshold is informed by US EPA guidance, 40 CFR 58 App D s1.2; it is not a representation limit. 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

1.91 crore

live within 4 km of a monitor rated Poor or worse today

That is 84.5 per cent of Delhi, living around the 42 monitors that read Poor or worse. Pusa (IITM) was worst at 362, and 11.5 lakh people live within 4 km of it. This counts people near the monitors, not measured individual exposure.

Today, Poor or worse

Pusa (IITM)	362 · 11.5 lakh
Chandni Chowk	360 · 13.4 lakh
Punjabi Bagh	356 · 16.9 lakh
Jahangirpuri	340 · 12.5 lakh
Vivek Vihar	340 · 17.2 lakh

Also Poor or worse: Mandir Marg 338, and 34 more, every one named in the station table.

AQI, then people within 4 km. These circles overlap, so the figures do not add.

Station	Lakh within 4 km	Reach km	Avg km
IHBAS, Dilshad Garden	22.8	4.2	2.3
Mundka	19.5	6.4	2.6
Vivek Vihar	17.2	3.0	1.1
Punjabi Bagh	16.9	5.0	2.1
Shadipur	16.5	3.5	1.8
Sonia Vihar	15.8	5.0	2.6
Okhla Phase-2	15.8	3.8	1.7
Anand Vihar	15.3	3.7	1.9
Patparganj	15.1	4.2	1.9
Wazirpur	15.1	3.3	1.6
NSIT Dwarka	14.1	6.2	3.1
Ashok Vihar	14.1	3.5	1.8
Chandni Chowk	13.4	4.2	2.1
Mandir Marg	13.3	3.5	2.0
Rohini	13.2	4.0	2.1
CRRI Mathura Road	13.0	4.2	1.7
Jahangirpuri	12.5	4.7	1.9
Dr. Karni Singh Shooting	11.7	3.9	2.3
Commonwealth Sports Compl	11.7	3.8	1.3
Pusa	11.5	5.7	2.5
Nehru Nagar	10.4	3.3	1.4

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. The 4 km radius is a proximity threshold, not a representation limit. The large figure is today's, so it moves with the pollution and not with the map.

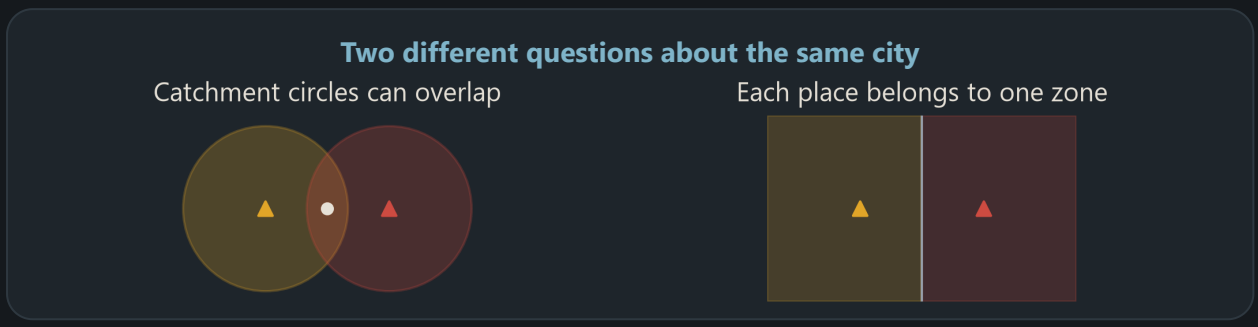
CAUTION Caution: these circles overlap, heavily at 4 km. Added up they return about twice Delhi's population, so read the column one monitor at a time. It has no valid total. Living within 4 km is not the same as breathing that exact reading. Ghoga, Lodhi Road and Tikri Kalan have no mapped location, so the people around them are not counted.

SOURCE Population shape: WorldPop India, constrained, 2026, R2025A v1, 100 m, CC BY 4.0. Per-constituency totals are conserved after clipping to Delhi. Constituency shares: 2025 Delhi electoral data, scaled to the official Delhi NCT projection of 2.2674 crore as at 1 July 2026 (Technical Group, July 2020, Table 11, p84). The 4 km proximity threshold is informed by US EPA guidance, 40 CFR 58 App D s1.2; it is not a representation limit. 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 Pusa (IITM) read 362, Very Poor, set by PM2.5, and 11.5 lakh people live within 4 km of it.

How the population estimates are made



WorldPop grid

The 2026 modelled population map (R2025A v1), with cells about 100 m wide. It distributes people within each constituency; it does not set Delhi's total.

Electoral anchor

Each constituency receives the official Delhi population total in proportion to its registered electors in 2025. The total uses the reporting year's 1 July projection.

Station zone and weight

Zones partition Delhi without overlap. A zone's share of mapped residents is its weight. In the weighted average, available monitors sharing a zone are averaged first.

4 km circle and coverage

A circle counts residents within 4 km of a monitor, clipped to Delhi. Circles overlap. Network coverage counts residents in their combined area once.

Reach km and Avg km

Reach is the farthest populated cell's distance to its nearest monitor. Avg is the population-weighted mean distance in that monitor's zone.

People near Poor or worse

Residents in the combined 4 km circles of monitors with screened AQI above 200. Each resident counts once. This estimates proximity, not individual exposure.

READING Reading: circles answer who lives near a monitor; zones assign the population weights. The diagram illustrates the difference and is not Delhi data.

CAUTION Caution: population, registration and settlement patterns can differ. The estimates assume one residents-per-elector ratio across constituencies. The same station weights are used on both sides of a pollution comparison.

SOURCE Population shape: WorldPop India, constrained, 2026, R2025A v1, 100 m, CC BY 4.0. Per-constituency totals are conserved after clipping to Delhi. Constituency shares: 2025 Delhi electoral data, scaled to the official Delhi NCT projection of 2.2674 crore as at 1 July 2026 (Technical Group, July 2020, Table 11, p84). The 4 km proximity threshold is informed by US EPA guidance, 40 CFR 58 App D s1.2; it is not a representation limit. 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

The projection sets the total, electoral data sets constituency shares, and the grid places people within them.

Every reporting station

#	Station	AQI	Category	Main pollutant
1	Pusa (IITM)	362	Very Poor	PM2.5
2	Chandni Chowk	360	Very Poor	PM10
3	Punjabi Bagh	356	Very Poor	PM2.5
4	Jahangirpuri	340	Very Poor	PM2.5
5	Vivek Vihar	340	Very Poor	PM2.5
6	Mandir Marg	338	Very Poor	PM2.5
7	Patparganj	337	Very Poor	PM2.5
8	Sonia Vihar	328	Very Poor	PM2.5
9	Rohini	327	Very Poor	PM2.5
10	North Campus	326	Very Poor	PM2.5
11	R K Puram	324	Very Poor	PM2.5
12	Dwarka-Sector 8	322	Very Poor	PM2.5
13	Okhla Phase-2	322	Very Poor	PM2.5
14	Shadipur	320	Very Poor	PM2.5
15	Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium	316	Very Poor	PM2.5
16	Talkatora Garden	316	Very Poor	PM2.5
17	Pusa (DPCC)	315	Very Poor	PM2.5
18	DTU	314	Very Poor	PM2.5
19	Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range	312	Very Poor	PM2.5

READING Reading: all 57 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 21 October 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 19 stations on this page was rated Good. The highest here is Pusa (IITM) at 362.

Every reporting station, continued

#	Station	AQI	Category	Main pollutant
20	Bawana	312	Very Poor	PM2.5
21	Sirifort	311	Very Poor	PM2.5
22	NSUT Jaffarpur	310	Very Poor	PM2.5
23	Commonwealth Sports Complex	310	Very Poor	PM2.5
24	Narela	308	Very Poor	PM2.5
25	Alipur	304	Very Poor	PM2.5
26	JNU	304	Very Poor	PM2.5
27	CRRI Mathura Road	303	Very Poor	PM2.5
28	Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium	295	Poor	PM2.5
29	Burari Crossing	294	Poor	PM2.5
30	Ashok Vihar	290	Poor	PM2.5
31	Najafgarh	275	Poor	PM2.5
32	Wazirpur	261	Poor	PM2.5
33	NIH Narela	260	Poor	PM2.5
34	Nehru Nagar	253	Poor	PM2.5
35	IIT Delhi	253	Poor	PM10
36	Aya Nagar	252	Poor	PM2.5
37	Vasundhara Enclave	244	Poor	PM2.5
38	Burari	242	Poor	PM2.5

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 21 October 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 19 stations on this page was rated Good.

Every reporting station, continued

#	Station	AQI	Category	Main pollutant
39	Mundka	235	Poor	PM10
40	IGI Airport (T3)	229	Poor	PM10
41	Nangloi	222	Poor	PM2.5
42	NSIT Dwarka	219	Poor	PM2.5
43	Anand Vihar	197	Moderate	PM10
44	Karala	188	Moderate	PM2.5
45	Jharoda Kalan	186	Moderate	PM2.5
46	Badarpur	184	Moderate	PM2.5
47	IGNOU Maidan Garhi	176	Moderate	PM10
48	Maidan Garhi	172	Moderate	PM2.5
49	Ghummanhera	171	Moderate	PM2.5
50	Chhawla	167	Moderate	PM2.5
51	Cantonment Area	166	Moderate	PM10
52	Lodhi Road	157	Moderate	PM10
53	IMD Lodhi Road	154	Moderate	PM10
54	Sri Aurobindo Marg	153	Moderate	PM10
55	Tikri Kalan	148	Moderate	Ozone, set aside
56	Ghoga	143	Moderate	PM2.5
57	IHBAS	141	Moderate	PM2.5

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

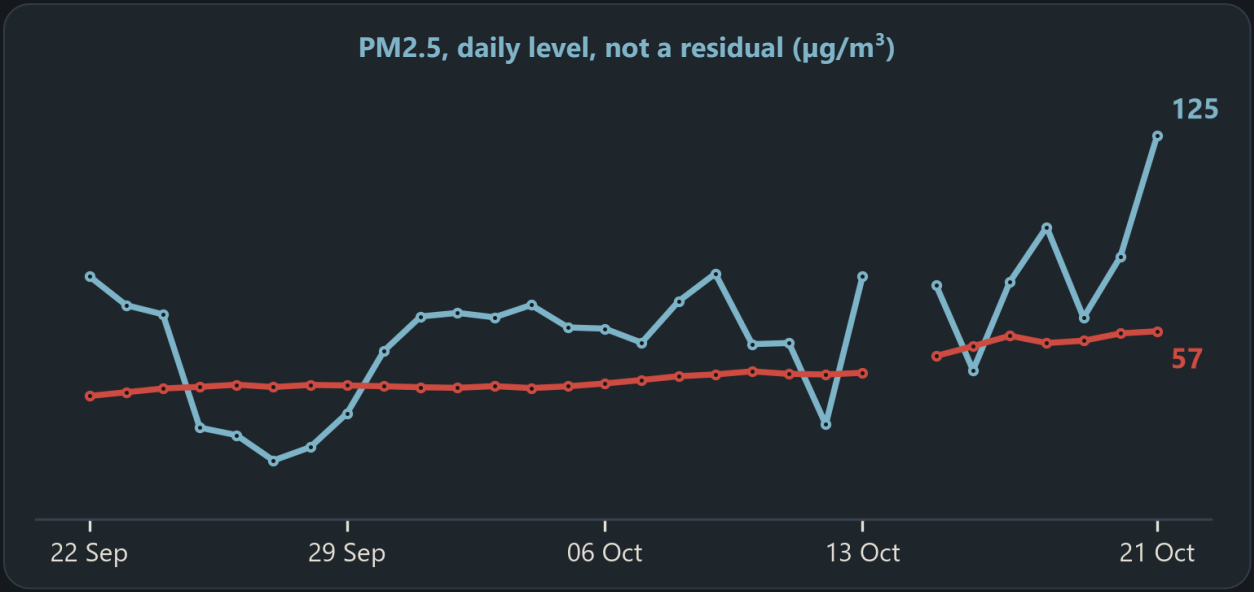
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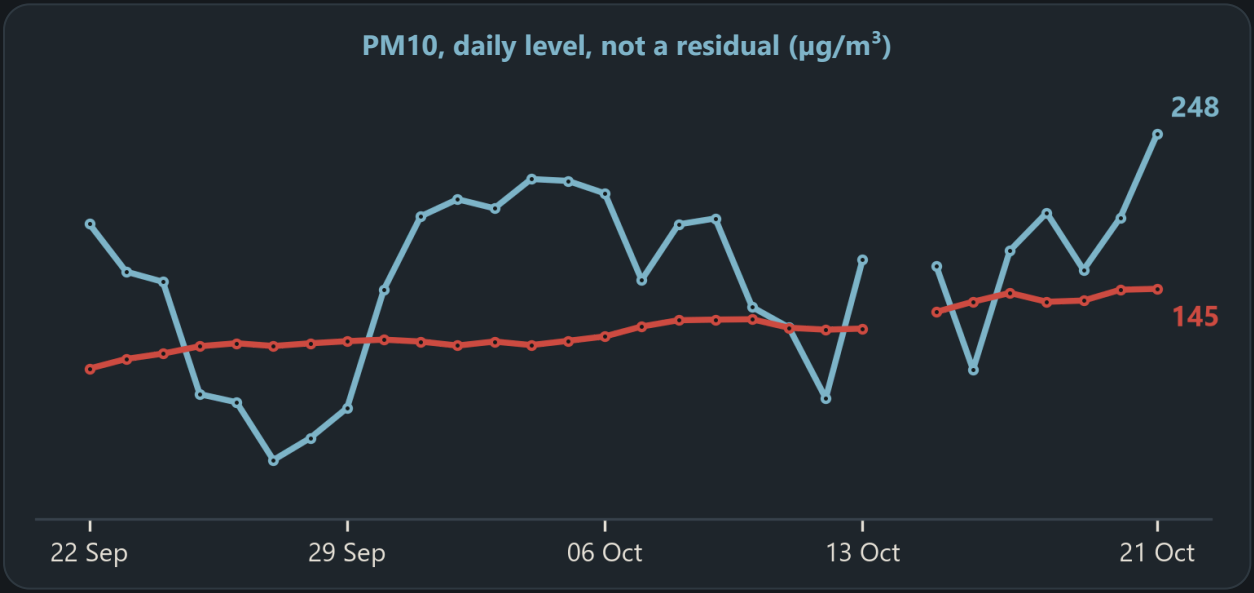
SOURCE CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 21 October 2026, compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). The figures are on CPCB's documented formula (CPCB, "How is AQI calculated?"; CPCB AQI Calculator), and the city figure is the mean of station AQIs [1].

THE POINT

Not one of the 19 stations on this page was rated Good.

Thirty days of levels: PM2.5 and PM10



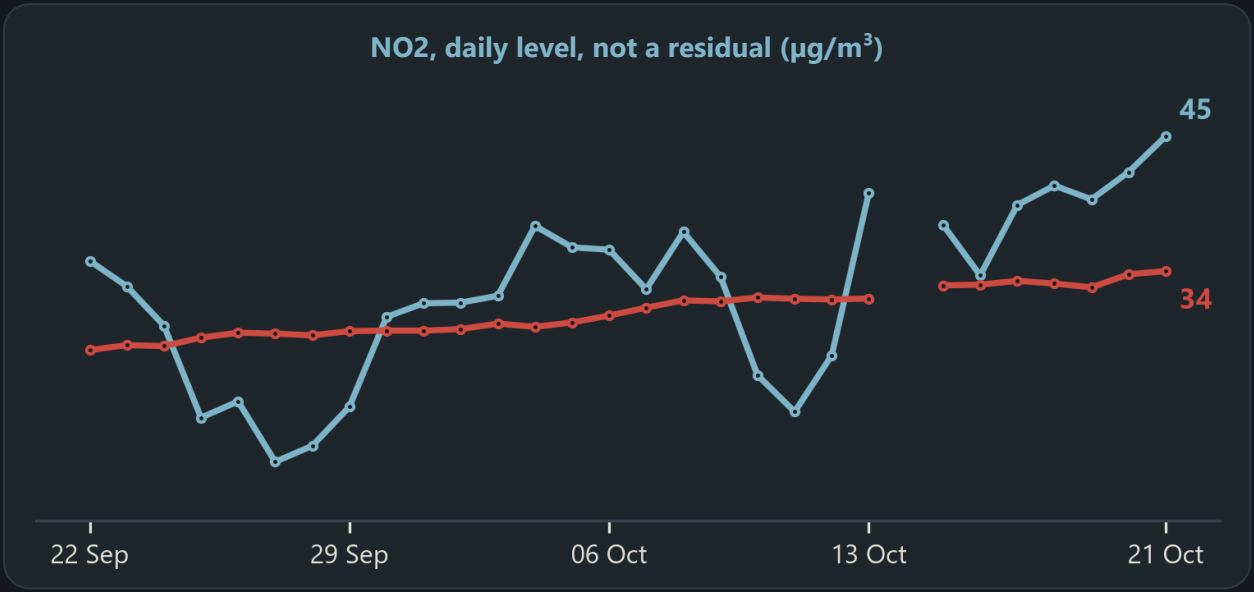


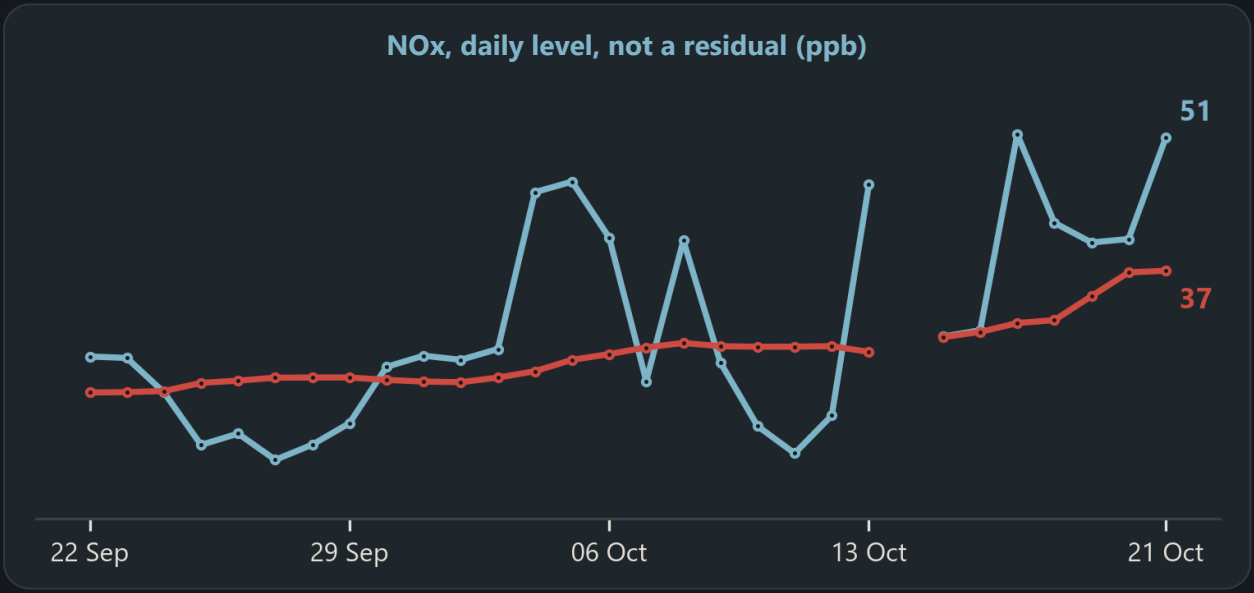
READING	Reading: these are LEVELS, not residuals; higher means more pollution that day. The pale line is the observed level, weather included. Red is the weather-removed level, the pollution that Delhi's and the region's emissions produce in a typical spell of weather for the season. Gaps are days without 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 21 October 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 7 of 29 days. On PM10 it did so on 7 of 29. On those days the weather was flattering the city.

Thirty days of levels: NO2 and NOx



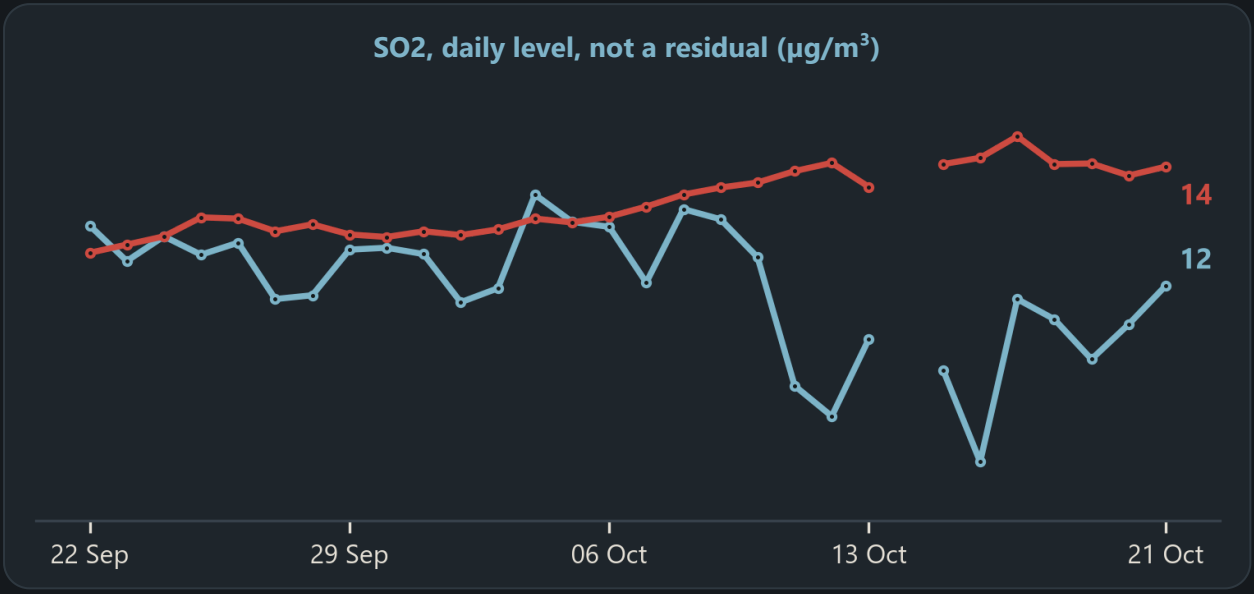


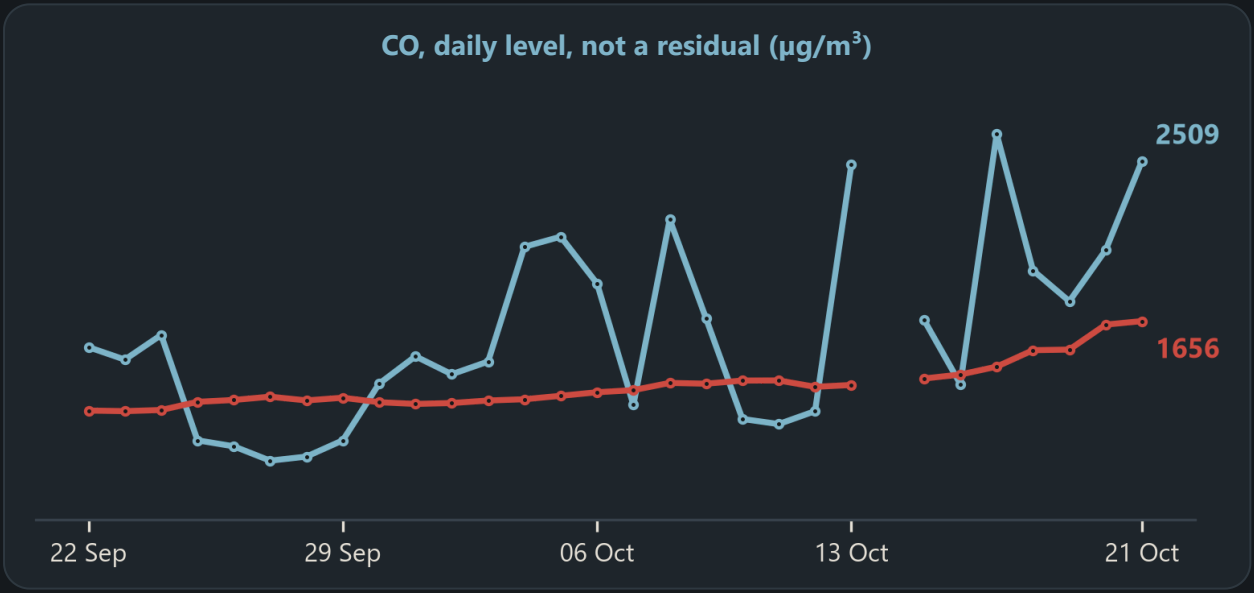
READING	Reading: these are LEVELS, not residuals; higher means more pollution that day. The pale line is the observed level, weather included. Red is the weather-removed level, the pollution that Delhi's and the region's emissions produce in a typical spell of weather for the season. Gaps are days without 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 21 October 2026, trained on ERA5 and Open-Meteo weather data [2].

THE POINT

The weather-removed line sat above the measured line on NO2 for 8 of 29 days. On those days the weather was flattering the city. On the latest day, as measured, the city's NOx read 51.1 ppb.

Thirty days of levels: SO2 and CO



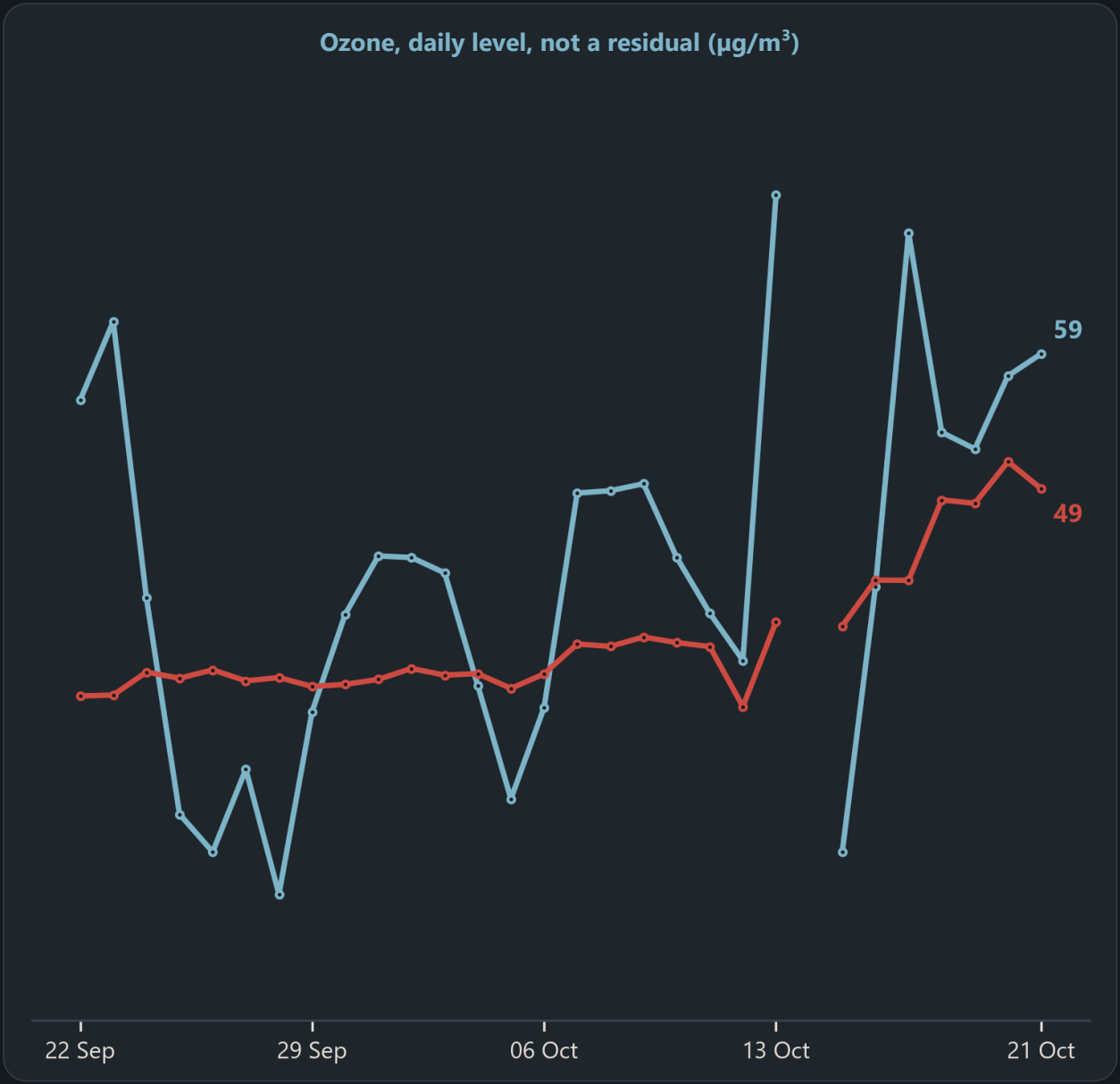


READING	Reading: these are LEVELS, not residuals; higher means more pollution that day. The pale line is the observed level, weather included. Red is the weather-removed level, the pollution that Delhi's and the region's emissions produce in a typical spell of weather for the season. Gaps are days without 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 21 October 2026, trained on ERA5 and Open-Meteo weather data [2].

THE POINT

On the latest day, as measured, the city's sulphur dioxide read 12.4 µg/m³ and carbon monoxide 2508.7 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 21 October 2026, trained on ERA5 and Open-Meteo weather data [2].

THE POINT

On the latest day, as measured, the city's ozone read 59 µg/m³ on its 8-hour maximum.

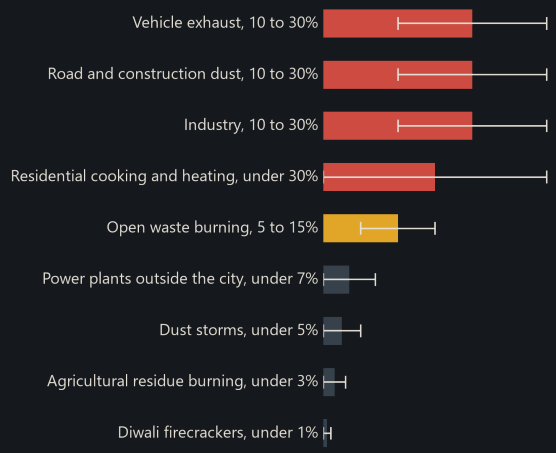
What the daily figures cannot say alone

The year behind today

Over the twelve months to 21 October 2026, Delhi's mean PM2.5 was 93.0 micrograms per cubic metre, which is 18.6 times the WHO annual guideline and 2.3 times India's annual standard, computed over 15,485 complete station-days at 60 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 93.1 micrograms per cubic metre instead of reaching the 40 target by 2040 costs Delhi about 31 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: 57 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 shares, scaled to the official Delhi NCT projection of 2.2674 crore as at 1 July 2026 (Technical Group, July 2020, Table 11, p84), and where people live inside each constituency comes from the WorldPop 2026 constrained grid at 100 m, R2025A v1. Cells use the raster's native alignment and are clipped to Delhi. Boundary-gap cells take the nearest constituency; each constituency's allocation is preserved. A station's weight is its zone's share of the people, re-scaled each day over the stations that reported. One residents-per-elector ratio may misallocate population where age or registration coverage differs. Both years in a pollution comparison use the same weights. 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 17 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 23 per cent, NOx 36 per cent, SO2 9 per cent, carbon monoxide 28 per cent and ozone 33 per cent. Its outputs are estimates, and this record never claims more precision than the model has.

Source: CPCB hourly station data, 24 hours to 4 PM on 21 October 2026 (CREA compilation); 2025 Delhi electoral shares, the official Delhi NCT projection of 2.2674 crore as at 1 July 2026 (Technical Group, July 2020, Table 11, p84), and the WorldPop 2026 grid; this office's weather-removal model, computed 21 October 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 hourly station data, 24 hours to 4 PM on 21 October 2026 (CREA compilation); 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	264.3
CPCB's category	Poor
Stations in the mean	57
Highest station	Pusa (IITM), 362

The window is the 24 hours ending 4 PM on 21 October 2026. The city figure is the mean of the AQIs of the 57 stations that reported enough hours in that window; the highest station's figure was set by PM2.5.

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 21 October 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 21 October 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 21 October 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 21 October 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 21 October 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 uses the 2025 Delhi electoral shares, from about 15.61 million registered electors in Election Commission turnout data. The total is the official Delhi NCT projection of 2.2674 crore as at 1 July 2026 (Technical Group, July 2020, Table 11, p84). Where they sit inside a constituency comes from the WorldPop 2026 constrained population grid at 100 m, R2025A v1, adopted 18 October 2026 in place of the previous 2020 grid. This modelled alpha release is frozen by file hash; it is not a new census. Each constituency's allocated total is preserved. 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 16 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 17 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.