Delhi's Good or Satisfactory days drop to 63 from 79; AQI 500 station-days climb to 68 from 37

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The finding

From 1 January to 3 November 2026, CPCB's 4 PM bulletin put Delhi in the Good or Satisfactory band on 63 days, against 79 days in the same window of 2025.[1] That is 16 fewer days in CPCB's two cleanest bands, a fall of 20.3 per cent.[1] Over the same window, Delhi's monitoring stations reached AQI 500, the top of CPCB's scale, on 68 station-days, against 37 in 2025.[2]

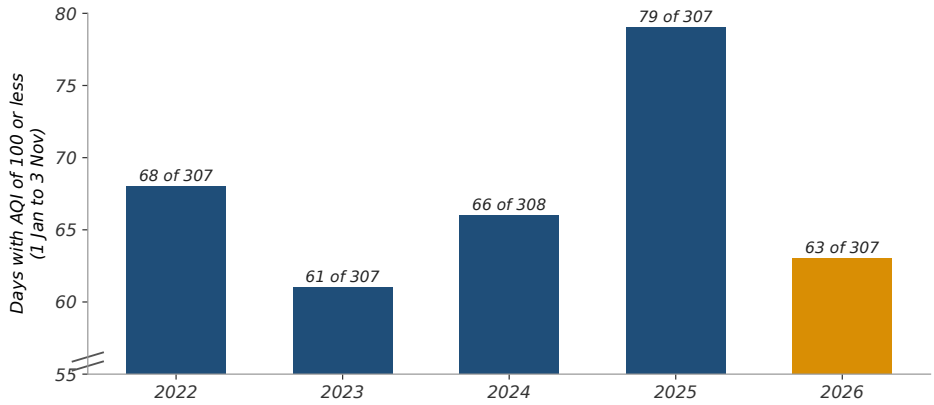
1. Source: counted on 3 November 2026; Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), daily AQI bulletin for Delhi at 4 PM, every day from 1 January to 3 November in each year from 2022 to 2026, with CPCB's yearly city AQI record for 1 January 2025. Counted 3 November 2026.

2. Source: counted on 3 November 2026; CPCB, hourly readings at each Delhi monitoring station, 1 January to 3 November 2025 and 2026, as archived by CREA; AQI worked out with CPCB's published AQI method over the 24 hours ending 4 PM. Counted 3 November 2026.

Good or Satisfactory days

A day counts here when CPCB's bulletin printed a Delhi AQI of 100 or less. Delhi had 63 such days in 2026, against 79 in 2025, 66 in 2024 and 68 in 2022, each over 1 January to 3 November.[1]

1. Source: counted on 3 November 2026; Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), daily AQI bulletin for Delhi at 4 PM, every day from 1 January to 3 November in each year from 2022 to 2026, with CPCB's yearly city AQI record for 1 January 2025. Counted 3 November 2026.



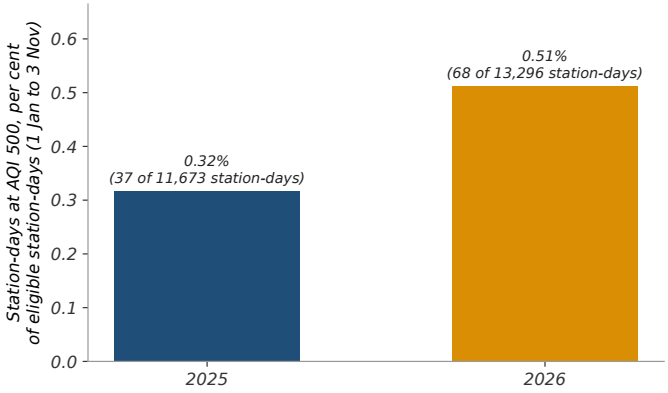
The vertical axis starts at 55 days, not at zero, so bar heights exaggerate the differences.

Each bar counts the days on which CPCB's bulletin put Delhi at AQI 100 or less, between 1 January and 3 November of that year.[1] The axis runs from 55 to 80 days, and the count is printed on every bar.[1]

Station-days at AQI 500

A station-day is one monitoring station on one date. Stations reached AQI 500 on 68 of 13,296 station-days in 2026, or 0.51 per cent, against 37 of 11,673 in 2025, or 0.32 per cent.[2] The 2026 share is 1.61 times the 2025 share.[2]

2. Source: counted on 3 November 2026; CPCB, hourly readings at each Delhi monitoring station, 1 January to 3 November 2025 and 2026, as archived by CREA; AQI worked out with CPCB's published AQI method over the 24 hours ending 4 PM. Counted 3 November 2026.



24 hours ending 4 PM, CPCB's documented AQI formula, CPCB hourly station data.

Each bar is the share of station-days, with enough data for an AQI, on which a Delhi station's AQI reached 500, from 1 January to 3 November.[2] The 2026 bar stands well above the 2025 bar.[2]

On the same 38 stations in both years, the count was 67 in 2026 against 36 in 2025, a share of 0.60 per cent against 0.32 per cent.[3] The PM2.5 sub-index, the part of the AQI set by PM2.5 alone, reached 500 on 31 station-days in 2026, against 11 in 2025.[4]

3. Source: counted on 3 November 2026; CPCB hourly station readings as in note 2, limited to the 38 stations with 200 or more days with an AQI in both the 2025 and the 2026 window. Counted 3 November 2026.

4. Source: counted on 3 November 2026; CPCB hourly station readings as in note 2. Station-days whose PM2.5 sub-index was 500 or more before rounding, 1 January to 3 November 2025 and 2026. Counted 3 November 2026.

How these figures were counted

The day counts use the Delhi city value in CPCB's 4 PM bulletin, read for every day of the window and checked against the bulletin's PDF.[1] The station-day counts use CPCB's hourly readings at each Delhi station, as archived by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), with CPCB's published AQI method over the 24 hours ending at 4 PM.[2] A station-day has enough data for an AQI when at least three pollutants, one of them PM2.5 or PM10, each have at least 16 valid hours. The PM2.5 count takes station-days whose PM2.5 sub-index was 500 or more before rounding.[4]

1. Source: counted on 3 November 2026; Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), daily AQI bulletin for Delhi at 4 PM, every day from 1 January to 3 November in each year from 2022 to 2026, with CPCB's yearly city AQI record for 1 January 2025. Counted 3 November 2026.

2. Source: counted on 3 November 2026; CPCB, hourly readings at each Delhi monitoring station, 1 January to 3 November 2025 and 2026, as archived by CREA; AQI worked out with CPCB's published AQI method over the 24 hours ending 4 PM. Counted 3 November 2026.

4. Source: counted on 3 November 2026; CPCB hourly station readings as in note 2. Station-days whose PM2.5 sub-index was 500 or more before rounding, 1 January to 3 November 2025 and 2026. Counted 3 November 2026.