THE DAILY ACCOUNTABILITY RECORD OF DELHI'S AIR

270

AQI at Chandni Chowk, 24 hours to 4 PM, 22 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, 22 September 2026, 24 hours to 4 PM: Delhi's air today is 57 points worse than on this date last year, which is 44.8 per cent higher, and 12.4 points worse than yesterday, on the Central Pollution Control Board's own readings. Delhi's AQI was 180.4, Moderate, calculated with CPCB's documented formula as the mean of 45 stations' AQIs (CPCB's note "How is AQI calculated?" and its AQI Calculator; page 24 sets out the formula). Above AQI 200 today: 11 stations, Chandni Chowk 270, Wazirpur 250, Anand Vihar 233, Vivek Vihar 217, and 7 more in the station table. The highest reading anywhere in Delhi today was 289 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 92.2 lakh people within 4 km of their monitor today, 44.0 per cent of Delhi.

The year so far, 1 January to 22 September: 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 88.5 on the same dates of 2025.

180.4

TODAY

Delhi's AQI calculated with CPCB's documented formula, the mean of 45 stations.

1.80 crore

NEAR MODERATE OR WORSE

Within 4 km of 44 Moderate-or-worse monitors: 86.2 per cent of Delhi, every pollutant counted.

5.0x

THE WHO 24-HOUR LINE

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

Source: CPCB's hourly station readings for 22 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 WHO line from WHO's Global Air Quality Guidelines, 2021.

The air record

22 September 2026 · Delhi, as measured, on CPCB's data and its documented formula

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

The negatives, the demands, the danger

FOR THE RECORD, 22 SEPTEMBER 2026, 24 HOURS TO 4 PM. Chandni Chowk read 270, Poor, set by PM2.5; 13.2 lakh people live within 4 km of it. The monitors gave Delhi 180.4, calculated with CPCB's documented formula (CPCB's note "How is AQI calculated?" and its AQI Calculator; page 24).

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 22 September since 2019, when it was 114.2; the middle day rose from 139.5 to 152.8.
- Against last year the observed index reads 57 points worse, 44.8 per cent above it.
- Chandni Chowk read 270, 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 289 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 75.6 µg/m³ over the 24 hours to 4 PM as measured, 5.0 times the WHO 24-hour guideline of 15 µg/m³; all 45 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 22 September, 10 of the 45 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 22 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; WHO's Global Air Quality Guidelines, 2021; CPCB's 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
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20	Every station, contd.	the full network table
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24	How this record calculates the AQI	CPCB's documented formula, with CPCB's links
25	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. People, reference, method

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

Pages 15 onward.

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.

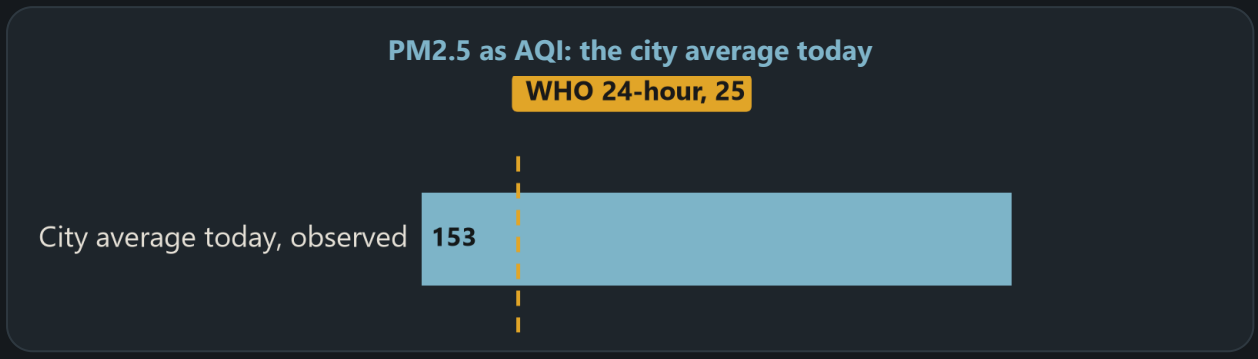
The tab
It names the data and the exact window.

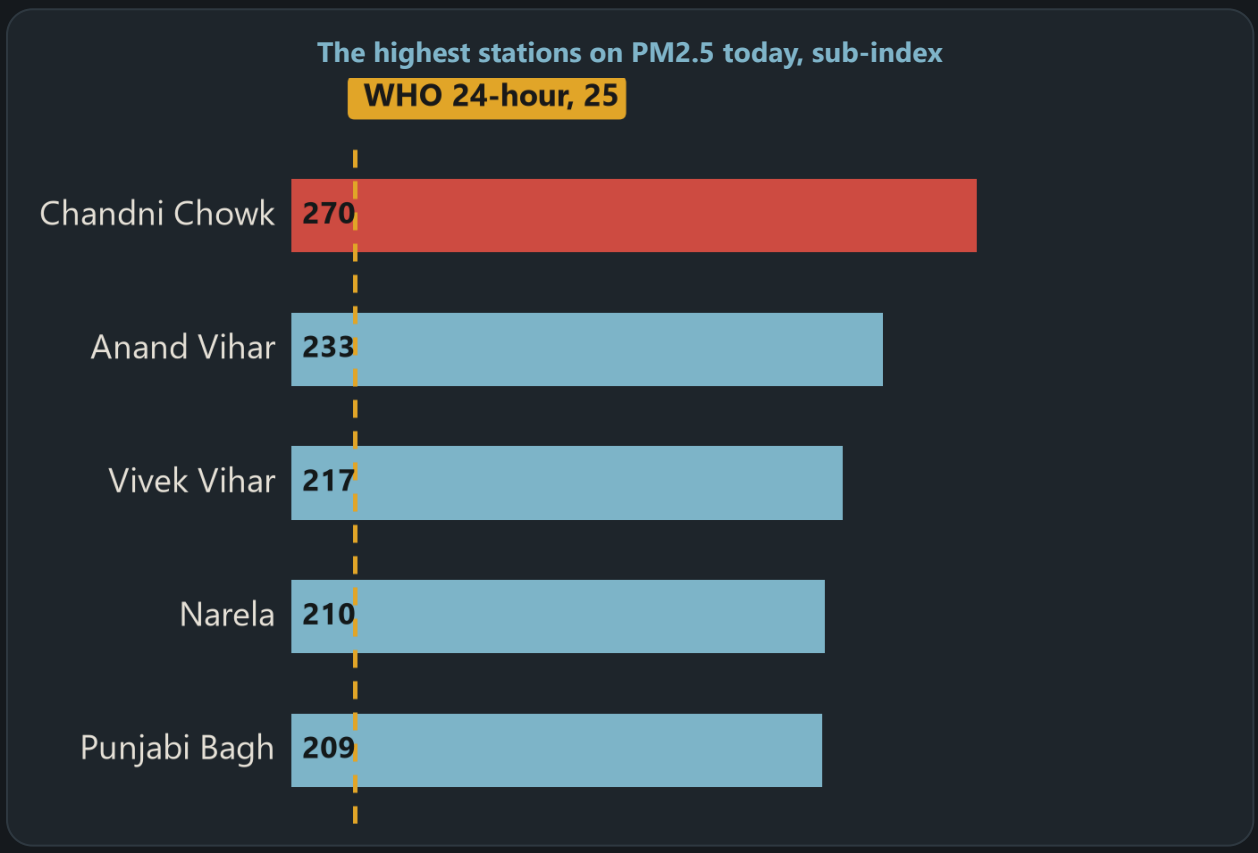
The banner
It states the finding, ready to be read out.

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.

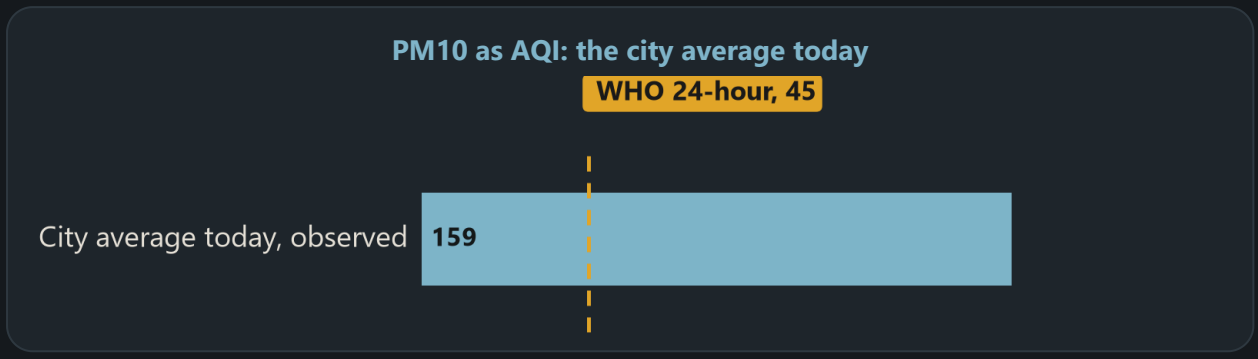
CAUTION Caution: every sub-index on this page is the observed one, on CPCB's documented formula, and one station's figure describes one neighbourhood.

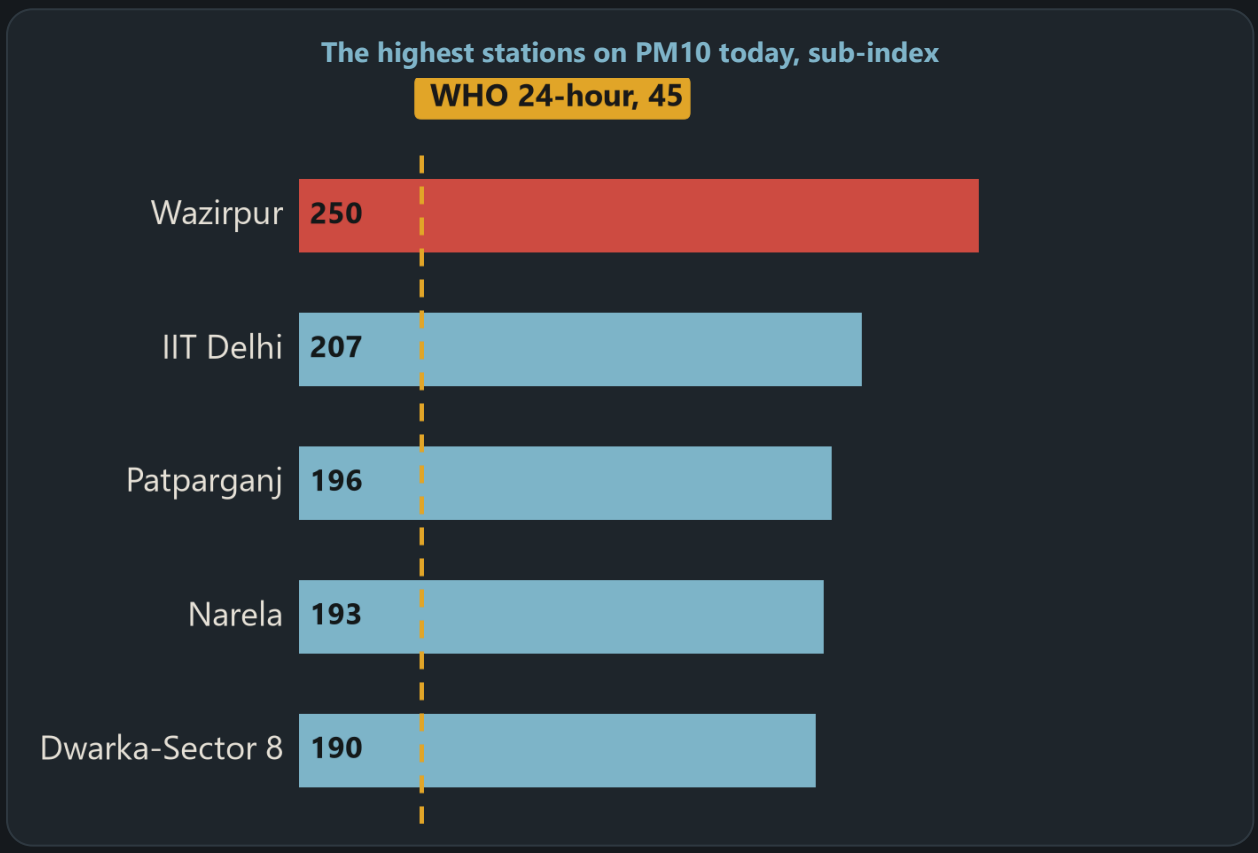
SOURCE CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 22 September 2026, compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). The figures are on CPCB's documented formula (CPCB, "How is AQI calculated?"; CPCB AQI Calculator), and the city figure is the mean of station AQIs [1].

THE POINT

Delhi's PM2.5 averaged 75.6 µg/m³ today, 5.0 times the WHO 24-hour guideline of 15 µg/m³, and Chandni Chowk averaged 111.7 µg/m³, 7.4 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 22 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 PM10 averaged 188.1 µg/m³ today, 4.1 times the WHO 24-hour guideline of 45 µg/m³, and Wazirpur averaged 296.9 µg/m³, 6.5 times it.

Every pollutant, as measured

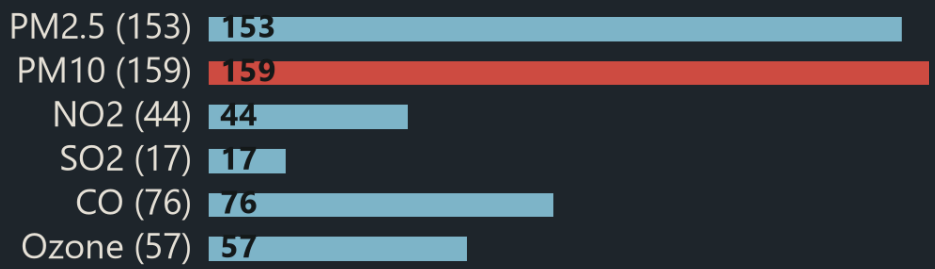
Pollutant	Today obs	Obs YoY	How this record uses it
PM2.5	75.6	+83.1%	Used for findings
PM10	188.1	+52.2%	Used for findings
NO2	35	+12.1%	Used for findings
NOx (ppb)	27.4	+3.3%	Shown for context, observed only
SO2	13.3	+26.9%	Shown for context, observed only
CO (mg/m³)	1.52	+26.4%	Shown for context, observed only
Ozone	55.6	+7.4%	Observed reading used.

45 of 45
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, as measured.

4.1x
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.

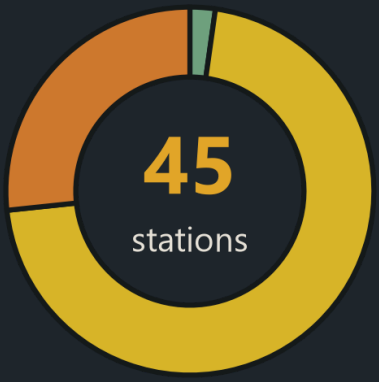
CAUTION The observed ozone reading is reported up to CPCB's Poor ceiling, AQI 300, and this year the monitors' ozone readings differ from their own of a year ago by more than any real change.

SOURCE CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 22 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
As measured, all 45 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 45 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 45 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.

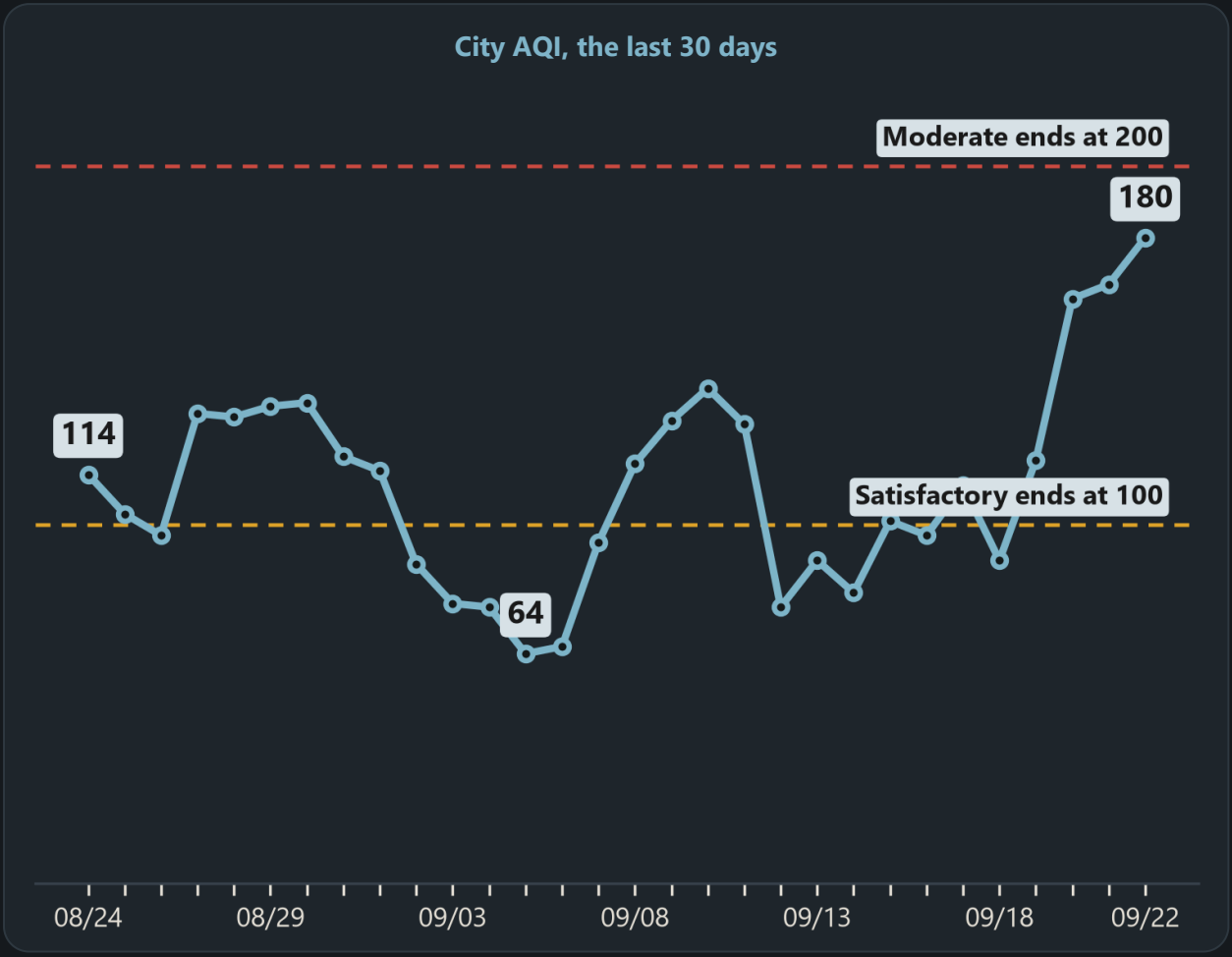
CAUTION Caution: the city headline is the mean of station AQIs, so one bad station can sit inside a Satisfactory average. A station's leading pollutant is the worst of its own sub-indices, not a ranking of how much of each was in the air.

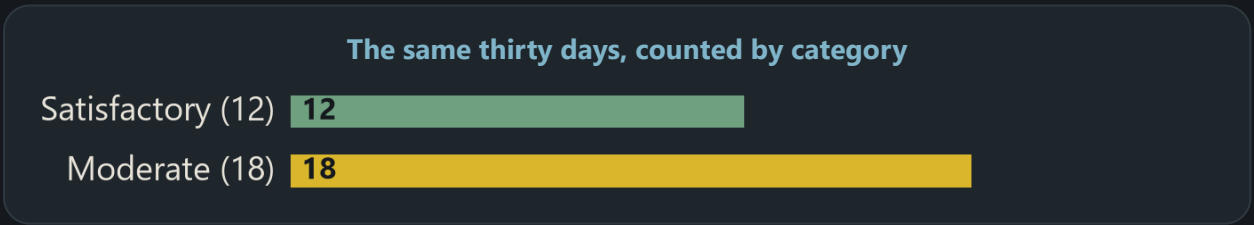
SOURCE CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 22 September 2026, compiled from CPCB's CCR portal by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA). The figures are on CPCB's documented formula (CPCB, "How is AQI calculated?"; CPCB AQI Calculator), and the city figure is the mean of station AQIs [1].

THE POINT

Chandni Chowk read 270, 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 22 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

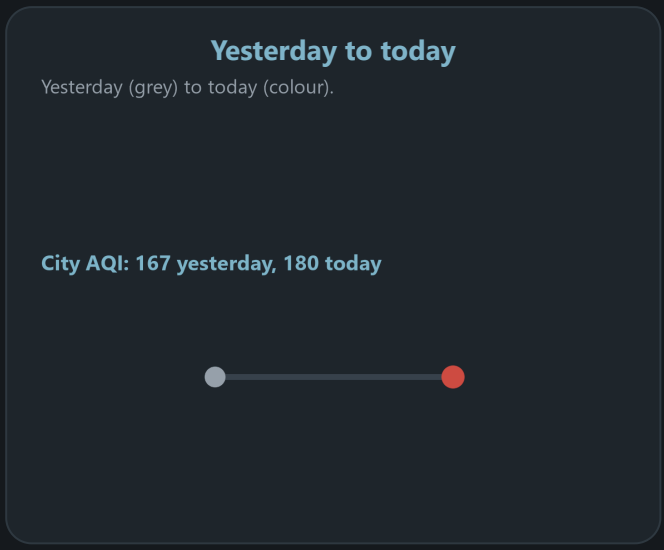
Thirty days ago the city read 114, on 44 reporting stations, and today it reads 180, on 45.

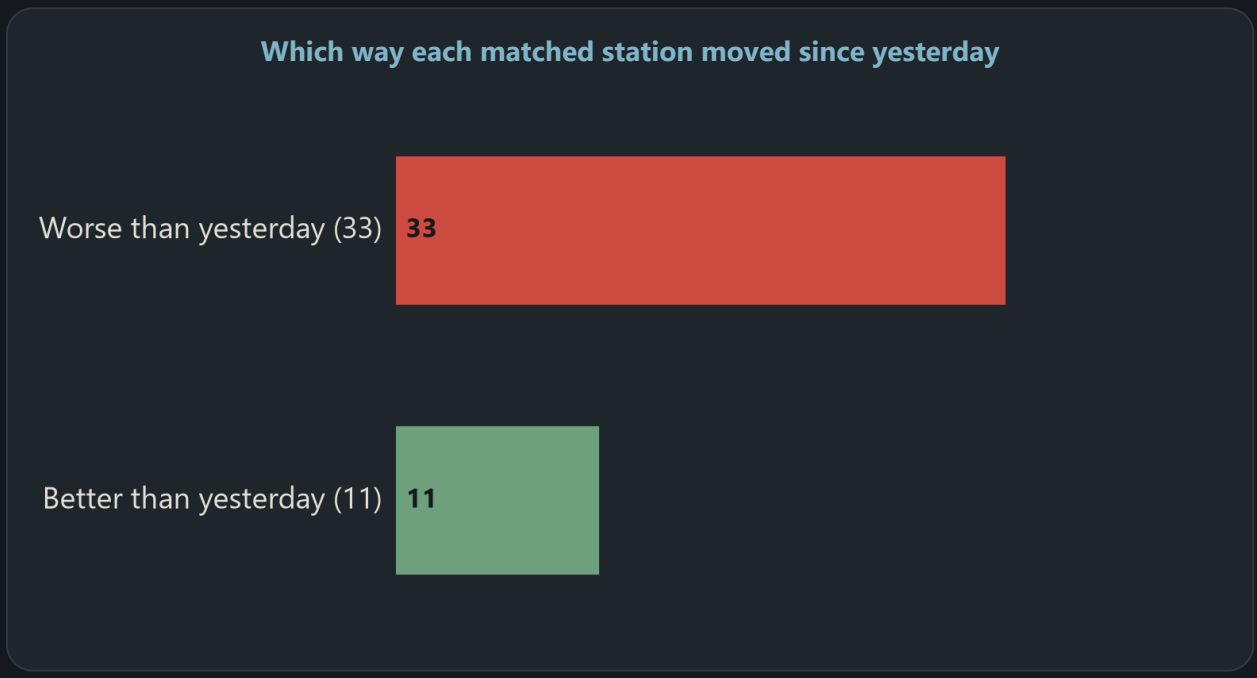
Against yesterday: the one-day move

12.4

points on yesterday

From 167 to 180. On the 44 stations that reported on both days, the 95 per cent interval runs 6 to 19.4 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

SOURCE CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 22 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

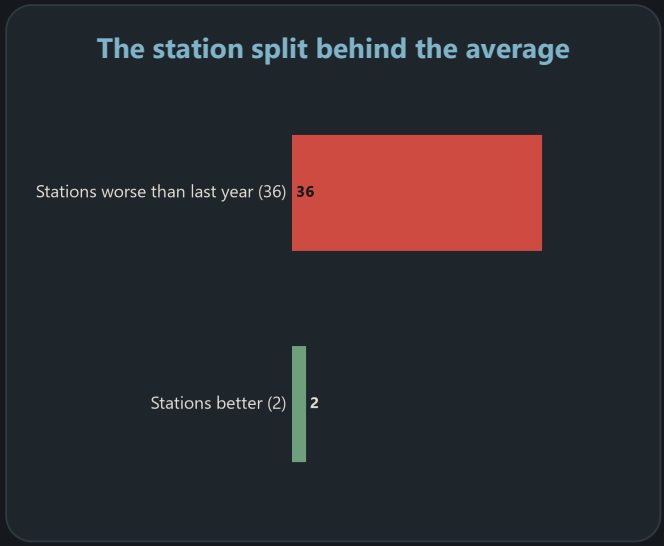
One day proves nothing on its own.

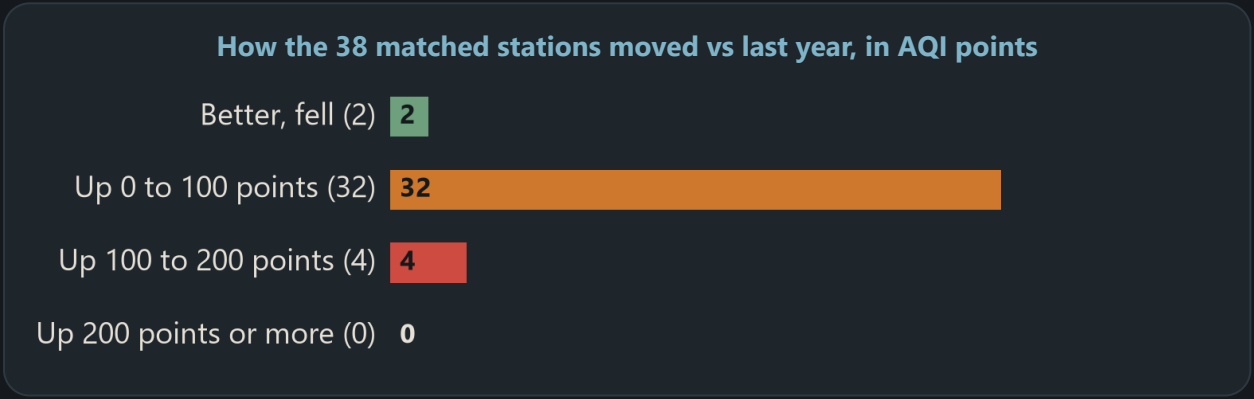
Against last year: the observed reading

57

points on last year, observed

Today 180 across 45 stations. The year is judged on the 38 matched stations: 184 today against 127, the mean of the same date ±7 days of 2025 at those stations. The interval runs 46.3 to 70.2 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: 36 of the 38 matched stations read higher than last year, by a median of 58.1 points: IGI Airport (T3), 289 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, 270 against 120, set today by PM2.5; the feed does not record which pollutant set its figure last year; IHBAS, 195 against 90, set today by PM2.5; the feed does not record which pollutant set its figure last year; Sonia Vihar, 208 against 106, set today by PM2.5; the feed does not record which pollutant set its figure last year. The other 2 read lower, by a median of 20.4 points, so the average hides both. Weighted by population, today reads 182 across all 45 stations; on the 38 stations matched with last year it reads 185 against 124, a change of 61.1 points.

SOURCE CPCB's hourly station readings for the 24 hours to 4 PM on 22 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

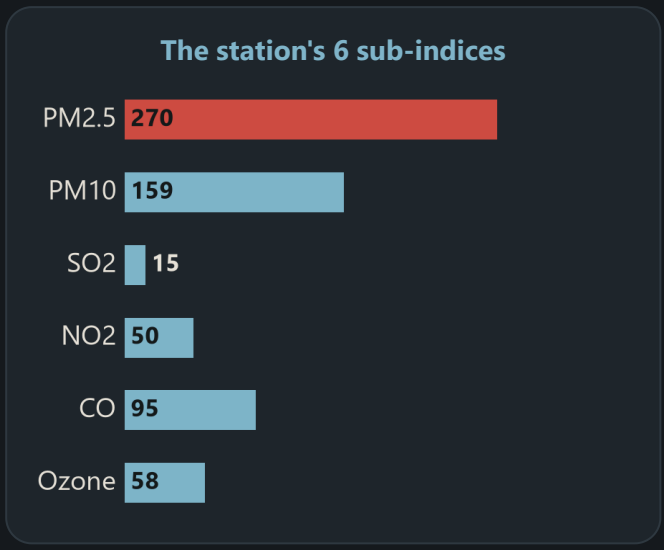
The observed year reads worse than the same days of last year, on CPCB's documented formula.

The highest particle reading in the city today

270

Chandni Chowk, Delhi - IITM

Poor, set by PM2.5. Its PM2.5 averaged 111.7 µg/m³ over the 24 hours to 4 PM, 7.4 times the WHO 24-hour guideline of 15 µg/m³. Last year this station read 120 on the mean of the same date ±7 days, so the change is +150.5 points. 13.2 lakh people live within 4 km of this monitor. The highest reading of the day was 289 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 22 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

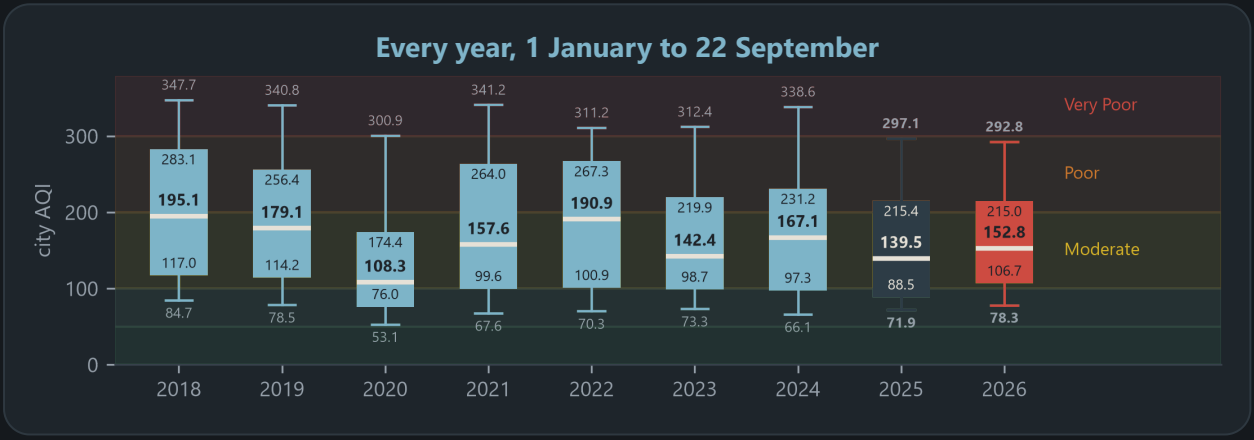
While the city averaged Moderate, Chandni Chowk sat at 270, Poor, and 13.2 lakh people live within 4 km of it. An average is not an experience.

The year, from its best days to its worst

152.8

the middle day of 2026, against 139.5 in 2025

On the same 265 complete dates, 1 January to 22 September, the best tenth of days reads 78.3 against 71.9 and the worst tenth 292.8 against 297.1. The days at or below 200 went from 189 to 187.





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 265 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

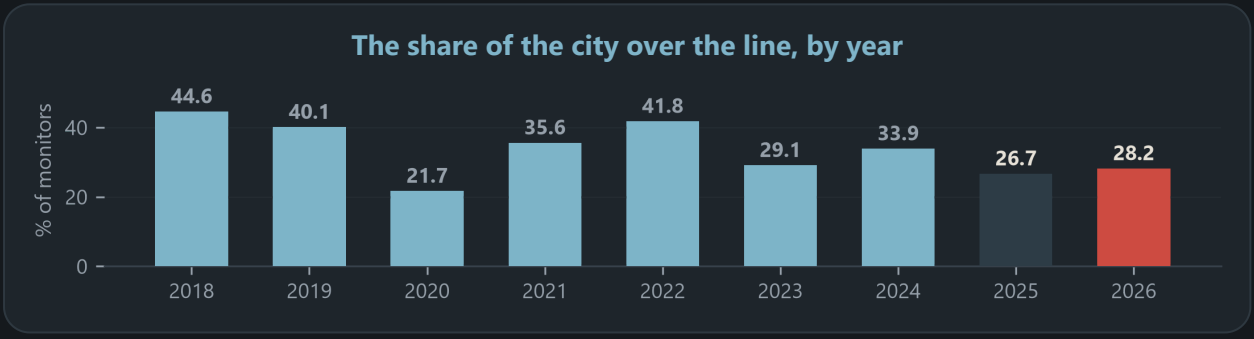
The cleaner days of 2026 have been the dirtiest for these dates since 2019: the lower quarter stands at 106.7, against 88.5 in 2025 and 114.2 in 2019.

How much of the city was above AQI 200

28.2%

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, 28.2 per cent, sat above 200 on the particle AQI.

Who the monitoring network reaches

2.1 km

from the typical resident to the nearest monitor

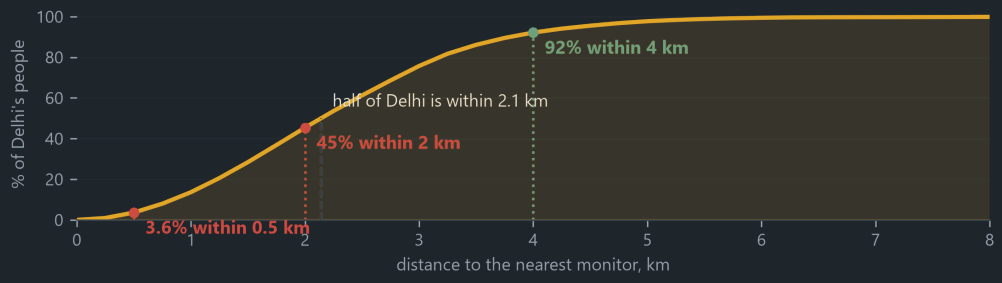
Within 4 km live 92 per cent of Delhi's people, within 2 km 45 per cent, and within 500 m only 3.6 per cent. Delhi has 55 monitors in 53 zones, of which 45 reported today, and 30 of the 53 zones stretch past 4 km, the distance that the US EPA's neighbourhood scale treats as the furthest a monitor speaks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

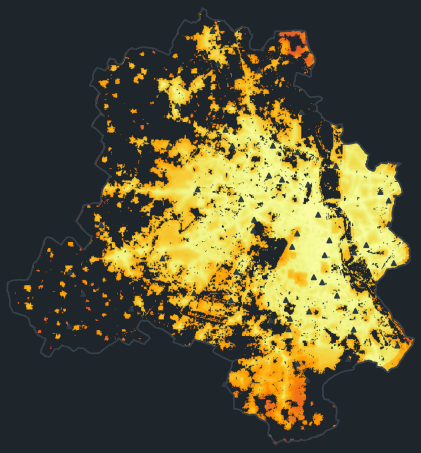
THE POINT

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

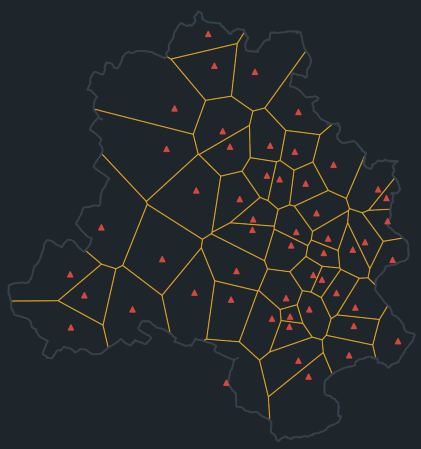
Where the people are

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 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

92.2 lakh

live within 4 km of a Poor monitor today

That is 44.0 per cent of Delhi, living around the 11 monitors that read Poor or worse. The highest reading this record leads on is Chandni Chowk at 270, 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	270 · 13.2 lakh
Wazirpur	250 · 14.0 lakh

Also Poor or worse: Anand Vihar 233, and 8 more, every one named in the station table.

IGI Airport (T3) read 289, 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 161, 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 270, 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)	289	Poor	Ozone, set aside
2	Chandni Chowk	270	Poor	PM2.5
3	Wazirpur	250	Poor	PM10
4	Anand Vihar	233	Poor	PM2.5
5	Vivek Vihar	217	Poor	PM2.5
6	Narela	210	Poor	PM2.5
7	Punjabi Bagh	209	Poor	PM2.5
8	Sonia Vihar	208	Poor	PM2.5
9	Jahangirpuri	207	Poor	PM2.5
10	IIT Delhi	207	Poor	PM10
11	Bawana	206	Poor	PM2.5
12	Alipur	206	Poor	PM2.5
13	Sirifort	199	Moderate	PM2.5
14	Pusa (IITM)	197	Moderate	PM2.5
15	Patparganj	196	Moderate	PM10

READING Reading: all 45 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 22 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 289.

Every reporting station, continued

#	Station	AQI	Category	Main pollutant
16	IHBAS	195	Moderate	PM2.5
17	Rohini	195	Moderate	PM2.5
18	Nehru Nagar	193	Moderate	PM2.5
19	Dwarka-Sector 8	190	Moderate	PM10
20	NSUT Jaffarpur	188	Moderate	PM2.5
21	CRRI Mathura Road	184	Moderate	PM10
22	R K Puram	184	Moderate	PM10
23	Mundka	184	Moderate	PM2.5
24	DTU	176	Moderate	PM2.5
25	Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium	169	Moderate	PM2.5
26	Commonwealth Sports Complex	168	Moderate	PM2.5
27	Burari Crossing	167	Moderate	PM2.5
28	Pusa (DPCC)	166	Moderate	PM2.5
29	Ashok Vihar	164	Moderate	PM2.5
30	Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range	164	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 22 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	Okhla Phase-2	164	Moderate	PM2.5
32	North Campus	159	Moderate	PM10
33	IMD Lodhi Road	155	Moderate	PM10
34	JNU	153	Moderate	PM2.5
35	Shadipur	151	Moderate	PM10
36	Mandir Marg	149	Moderate	PM10
37	IGNOU Maidan Garhi	149	Moderate	PM10
38	Talkatora Garden	146	Moderate	PM2.5
39	Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium	141	Moderate	PM10
40	Sri Aurobindo Marg	141	Moderate	PM10
41	ITO	133	Moderate	PM10
42	Najafgarh	133	Moderate	PM10
43	Aya Nagar	131	Moderate	PM2.5
44	NSIT Dwarka	120	Moderate	PM10
45	Cantonment Area	100	Satisfactory	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 22 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.

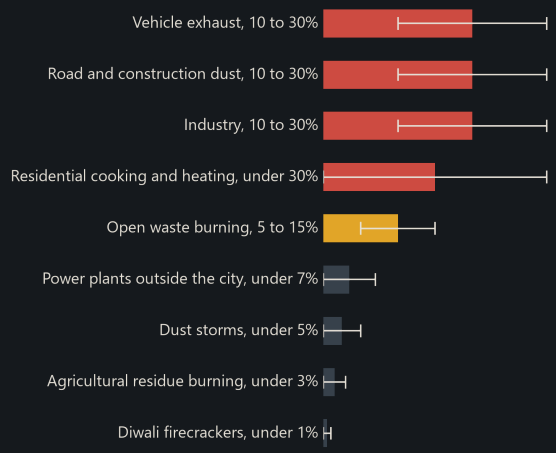
What the daily figures cannot say alone

The year behind today

Over the twelve months to 22 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 15,218 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 94.9 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 24. 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: 45 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. Neighbouring days are alike, so the 15 days act like about seven independent readings. 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.

Source: CPCB's hourly station readings for 22 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.

The method, in plain English

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.

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 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; Residual: one day's level minus the same days of last year.

Source: CPCB's hourly station readings for 22 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	180.4
CPCB's category	Moderate
Stations in the mean	45
Highest station	IGI Airport (T3), 289

The window is the 24 hours ending 4 PM on 22 September 2026. The city figure is the mean of the AQIs of the 45 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 22 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 22 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 22 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 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.

03 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.