

India 3rd Most Polluted Country In World IQAir

Why In News

- India was declared as the **third-most polluted country** in 2023, after Bangladesh and Pakistan, according to a report released by Swiss air quality monitoring body, IQAir.



What Does Report Says

- According to the **'World Air Quality Report 2023'**, with an average annual PM2.5 concentration of 54.4 micrograms per cubic metre, India had the third worst air quality out of 134 countries in 2023 after Bangladesh (79.9 micrograms per cubic metre) and Pakistan (73.7 micrograms per cubic metre).

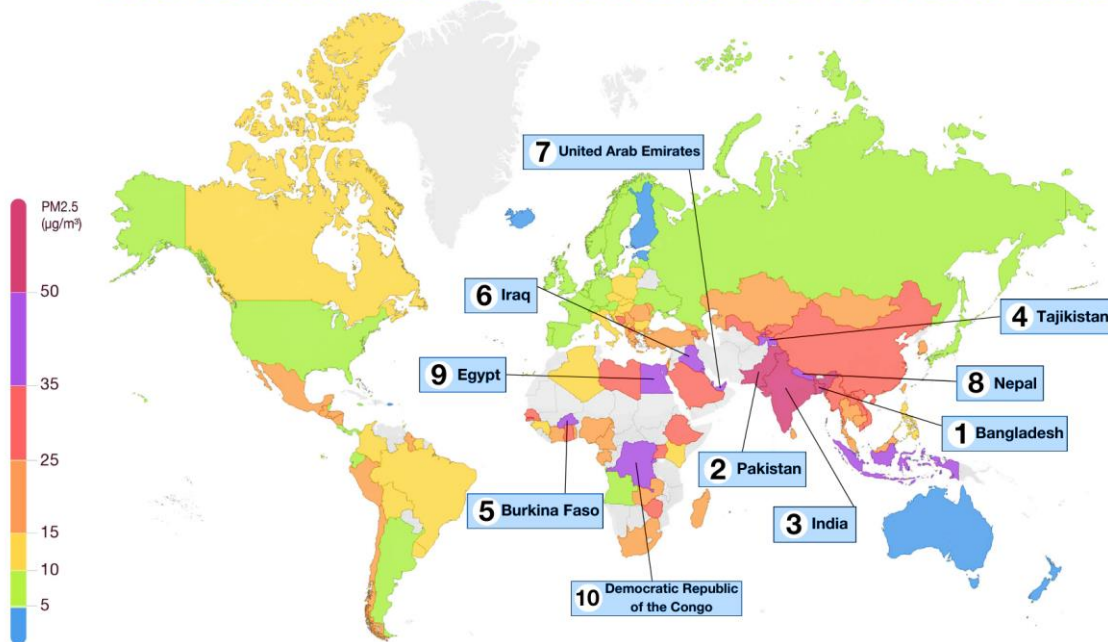


- In **2022, India was ranked as the eighth** most polluted country with an average PM2.5 concentration of 53.3 micrograms per cubic metre.
- Meanwhile, in the report's list of the **top 50 most polluted cities** in the world, 42 cities were in India. Begusarai was the most polluted metropolitan area of 2023, followed by Guwahati and then Delhi.

		0-3 Meets WHO guideline	5.1-10 Exceeds by 1 to 2 times	10.1-15 Exceeds by 2 to 3 times	15.1-25 Exceeds by 3 to 5 times	25.1-35 Exceeds by 5 to 7 times	35.1-50 Exceeds by 7 to 10 times	>50.1 Exceeds by over 10 times	
Rank	Country/Region	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	Population	
1	Bangladesh	79.9	65.8	76.9	77.1	83.3	97.1	169,356,251	
2	Pakistan	73.7	70.9	66.8	59	65.8	74.3	231,402,117	
3	India	54.4	53.3	58.1	51.9	58.1	72.5	1,407,563,842	
4	Tajikistan	49	46	59.4	30.9	--	--	9,750,064	
5	Burkina Faso	46.8	63	--	--	--	--	22,100,683	
6	Iraq	43.8	80.1	49.7	--	39.6	--	43,533,592	
7	United Arab Emirates	43	45.9	36	29.2	38.9	49.9	9,365,145	
8	Nepal	42.4	40.1	46	39.2	44.5	54.1	30,034,989	
9	Egypt	42.4	46.5	29.1	--	18	--	109,262,178	
10	Democratic Republic of the Congo	40.8	15.5	--	--	32.1	--	95,894,118	

- **Located in Bihar, Begusarai** had an average PM 2.5 concentration of 118.9 micrograms per cubic metre last year, marking a huge jump from an average of 19.7 micrograms per cubic metre in 2022. The city did not even figure in the 2022 rankings.
- **Guwahati's PM2.5 concentration** doubled from 51 to 105.4 micrograms per cubic meter between 2022 and 2023. Mullanpur (100.4µg/m³) in Punjab and Pakistan's Lahore (99.5µg/m³) were the fourth and fifth most polluted places.
- The report said **seven of the 134 countries**—Australia, Estonia, Finland, Grenada, Iceland, Mauritius, and New Zealand—met the World Health Organization annual PM 2.5 average of 5µg/m³ or less.
- **Delhi, which consistently struggles with air pollution**, saw an increase in PM2.5 concentration from 89.1 to 92.7 micrograms per cubic meter over the same period. Other Indian cities featuring in the top 50 most polluted cities of the world list included Greater Noida (11), Muzzafarnagar (16), Gurgaon (17), Arrah (18), Dadri (19), Patna (20), Faridabad (25), Noida (26), Meerut (28), Ghaziabad (35) and Rohtak (47).

10 Most Polluted Countries in the World in 2023



- According to IQAir, the data in its report was gathered from more than 30,000 air quality monitoring stations across 7,812 locations in 134 countries, territories, and regions.

Other Findings

- **Top 5 most polluted countries** in the world in 2023 included: Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Tajikistan and Burkina Faso.
- **Seven countries** which met the WHO annual PM2.5 guideline (annual average of 5 µg/m³ or less) included Australia, Estonia, Finland, Grenada, Iceland, Mauritius, and New Zealand.



- Africa remains the most underrepresented continent, with a third of the population still lacking access to air quality data.
- Of the top ten most polluted cities in the world, 9 belong to India.
- China also **saw PM2.5 rise 6.3% to 32.5 micrograms** last year, after five consecutive annual declines.
- For the first time in the history of this report, Canada was the most polluted country in Northern America, with the region's 13 most polluted cities located within its borders.

Conclusion

- **Greenpeace International senior air quality** scientist Aidan Farrow said the report illustrates the international nature and inequitable consequences of the enduring air pollution crisis. "Local, national, and international effort is urgently needed to monitor air quality in under-resourced places, manage the causes of transboundary haze, and cut our reliance on combustion as an energy source," he said.
- "In 2023, air pollution remained a global health catastrophe. IQAir's global data set provides an important reminder of the resulting injustices and the need to implement the many solutions that exist to this problem."

