



GLOBAL TREND: Late on Monday, Nasa released high-resolution satellite maps based on air pollution trends between 2005 and 2014 (above) in various regions and 195 cities around the globe. According to its findings, the US, Europe — though they are among the largest emitters of nitrogen dioxide — and Japan have improved air quality thanks to emission control regulations while China, India and West Asia, with their fast-growing economies and expanding industry, have seen more air pollution. The blue and green colours denote lower concentration and orange and red indicate higher concentration

India racing ahead of China when it comes to pollution

15 Of 17 Cities Under Pollution Watch Have Poor Air Quality: Data

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: An evaluation of the National Air Quality Index (NAQI) data maintained by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) released on Tuesday has revealed that as many as 15 out of 17 cities that are being monitored fail to meet the ambient air quality standard by a considerable margin. The evaluation, done by Greenpeace India, also found that infrastructure to monitor air pollution is abysmal in India despite such severe levels of pollution.

For instance, compared to an average of four real-time air quality monitoring stations in all big cities in the US, around five stations in major European cities and eight in major Chinese cities, India has an average of just 2.5 stations across the 17 cities that are being monitored.

The evaluation also found Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Jaipur and Faridabad among many others to be extremely polluted — between July and November for instance, Jaipur was below the desired air quality standard on 100% of days, Delhi on 93% of days, Faridabad on 69% Patna on 98% of days.

India started issuing AQI from March last year. Several pollutants like PM 2.5, CO, ozone, NO₂ and SO₂ are mon-

POLLUTION INDEX

City	Days with data	Violations of Air Quality standards (on the basis of average levels at all stations)	
		% of days exceeding standards	
		Apr-Jun	Jul-Nov
Mumbai	142	NA	33
Hyderabad	232	44	45
Navi Mumbai	217	57	46
Agra	211	50	51
Chandrapur	123	NA	54
Pune	141	NA	57
Ahmedabad	180	63	60
Faridabad	179	79	69
Bangalore	235	77	70
Varanasi	218	86	76
Chennai	233	99	71
Kanpur	220	89	81
Lucknow	232	99	83
Delhi	236	100	93
Patna	58	NA	98
Muzaffarpur	55	NA	100
Jaipur	11	NA	100

itored as part of the AQI.

"As the political capital, the bad air in Delhi gets the most attention. But, scratch

below the murky surface, and you will find concentrations of PM_{2.5} in several other cities — Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Muzaffarpur and Faridabad among others — that would justify the triggering of a 'red alert', like Beijing does. Even the government's own largely inadequate NAQI data reveals that 23 of the 32 stations across India are showing more than 70% exceedance of national standards," said Greenpeace India campaigner Sunil Dahiya.

He added, "The NAQI, in its present form, fails to acknowledge the scale of the problem. Data is only available in 17 cities, which is a shockingly low number considering the size of our country."

The evaluation, that also compares PM 2.5 concentrations between July to November 2015 among some Chinese cities and Indian cities monitored by AQI, showed most Indian cities to have exceeded China's levels.

CPCB officials said they haven't seen the evaluation by Greenpeace India yet but claimed that air pollution in Delhi is strongly influenced by meteorology. "For about 50 days in a year Delhi has good air quality and about 27% of the year the conditions are very calm and windless, accentuating pollution. This is true for entire northern India," he said.