

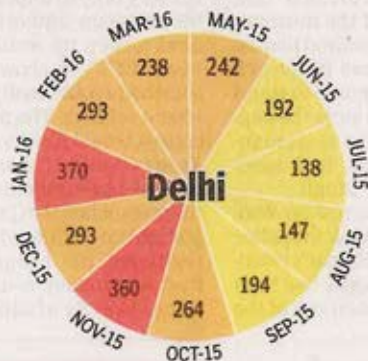
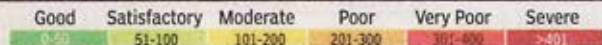
Delhi's air most foul among metros

New Delhi: The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) on Thursday released national air quality index (AQI) status for 24 cities in 10 states.

The report provided daily AQI values for 11 months for most major cities and for 4-6 months for others that CPCB started monitoring later. Data showed that Delhi, Varanasi, Lucknow and Kanpur had a large number of days with very poor and severe air quality whereas the coastal and southern states fared better. But there is a huge disparity in the number of monitoring stations in each city. Here, we compare the air quality in Delhi with Mumbai, Bangalore and Chennai. Delhi has nine monitoring stations. Mumbai had just one station functioning on Thursday, Bangalore had 5, and these differences will have to be factored in.

Delhi had two months of "very poor" air and five months of "poor" air (see graph). Mumbai had no months in the "poor" or "very poor" categories, nor did Bengaluru or Chennai. Experts said meteorological factors play a crucial role in this —while coastal cities have better dispersal of pollutants, Delhi, Kanpur, Varanasi and others in the Indo-Gangetic plains are worse off because of higher emission sources such as industries, brick kilns and others. The CPCB's report also indicates that the monitoring is very weak in certain parts with many cities showing "no data" for several days. Gurgaon, for instance, had AQI only for a day in all of January. This indicates the report gives a skewed picture in these cities.

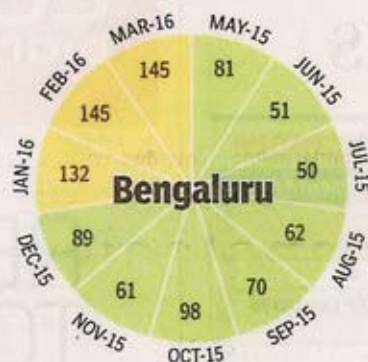
RED ALERT: CPCB DATA SHOW IT'S NOT LOOKING GOOD FOR DELHI



Nov and Jan had "very poor" air; Oct, Dec, Feb, Mar and May had "poor" air



In none of the months did Mumbai have "poor" or "very poor" air



Bengaluru too didn't have "poor" or "very poor" air in any of the months



Like Mumbai and Bengaluru, Chennai too fared far better than Delhi