



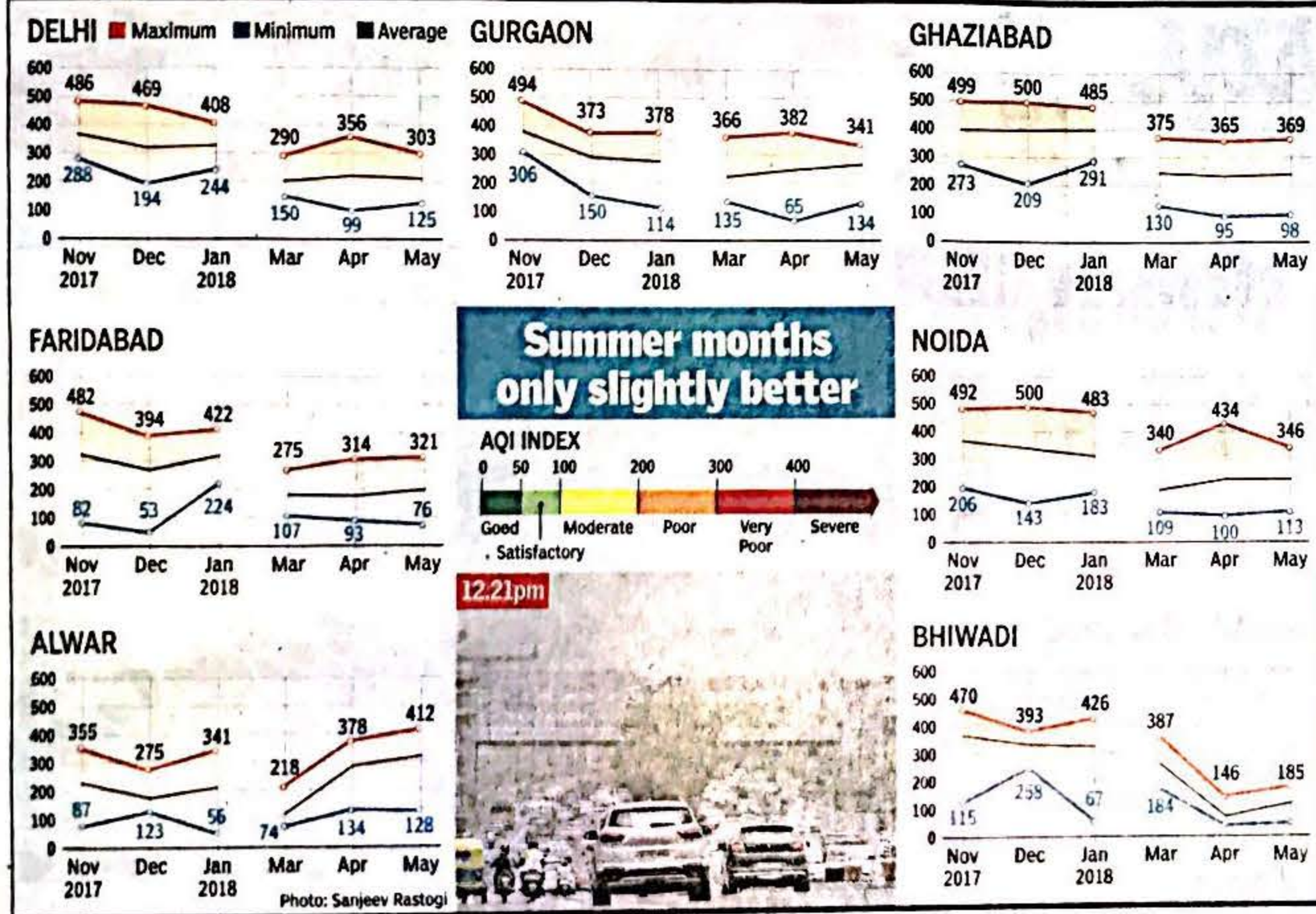
**KEJRIWAL WRITES TO PM MODI SEEKING HIS INTERVENTION TO END IAS OFFICERS' 'STRIKE' | 4**

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# Why pollution may not have a season anymore

**Air In NCR From March To May As Bad As In Winter Months**



## No construction work in Delhi till Sunday

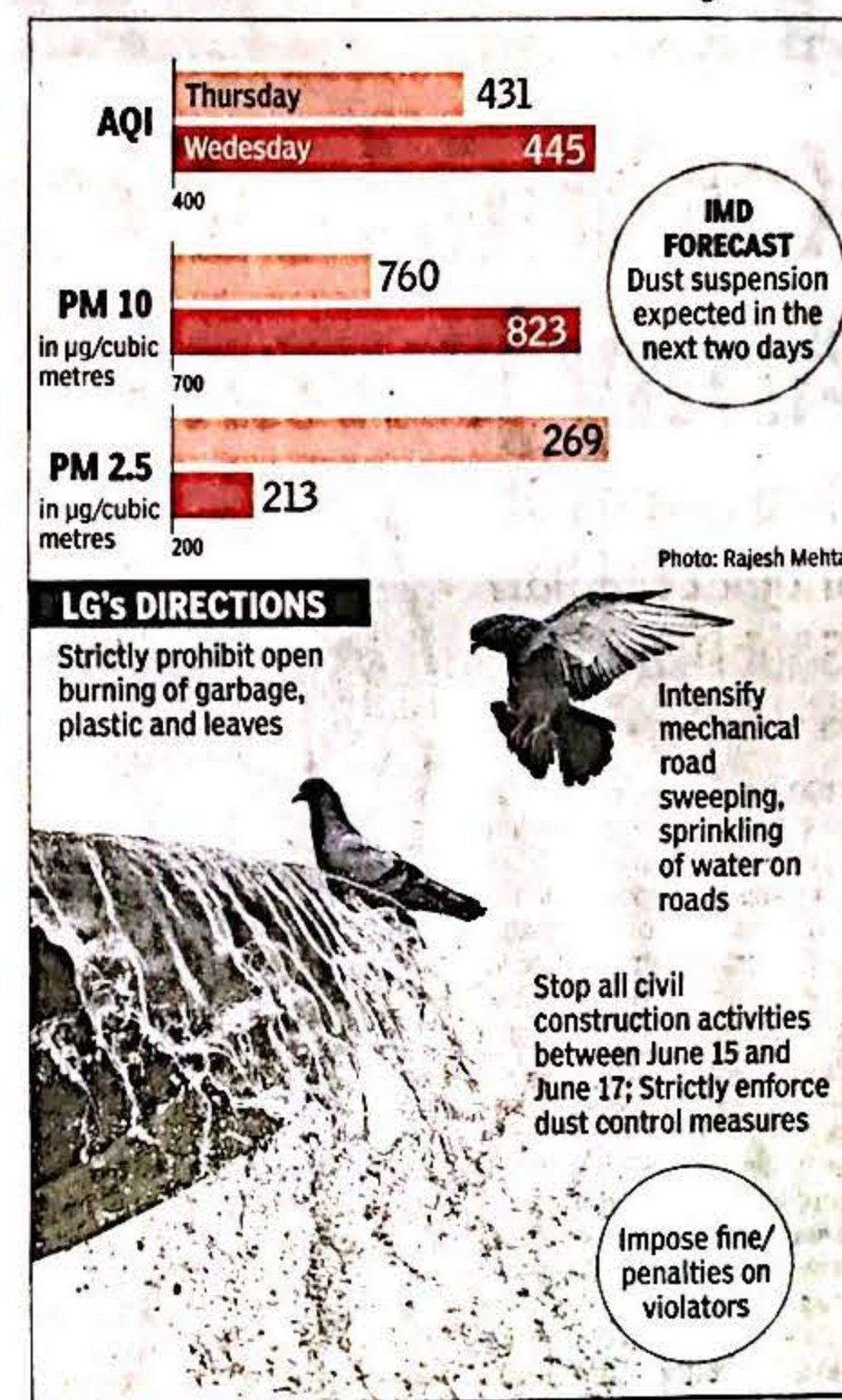
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According to the IMD, dust is likely to remain hanging in the air over the next two days though some improvement can be expected Friday onwards.

The emergency meeting was chaired by the LG and involved agencies like the PWD, DMRC, DPCC, forest department, and EPCA, along with environment minister Imran Hussain. "We are stopping all civil engineering construction activities in Delhi from 15th June 2018 to 17th June 2018. Municipal corporations, DPCC and all construction agencies will enforce this. In addition, agencies engaged in construction activities, like DMRC, NBCC, NHAI, MCDs and others, shall strictly enforce dust control measures at their respective construction sites as well," said a statement by Raj Niwas.

This was the first such meeting where an AAP minister came face to face with the LG after the sit-in protest was started by CM Arvind Kejriwal and three other ministers demanding action from the LG against the IAS officers on strike. Shortly before the meeting, environment minister Imran Hussain tweeted, "I have also called a meeting on environment issue in Delhi in my office at 3:00 pm but hon'ble @LtGov-Delhi has also called a meeting on the same issue at same time i.e 3:00 PM in his office. I am going to attend the said meeting at LG office."

CPCB member secretary A Sudhakar, who also led a meeting of the CPCB task force on Thursday, said directions to take precautionary measures had been issued to all chief secretaries. "We are already seeing a drop in pollution levels and we expect



**Gurgaon sees most polluted day since November**

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Gurgaon: The Haryana State Pollution Control Board (HSPCB) issued a temporary ban on all construction activity in the city for the next 48 hours after Gurgaon saw its most polluted day since last November's haze triggered by stubble burning. The city also recorded the worst air quality index in Delhi-NCR.

The highest level of PM2.5 recorded was 617 micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m³), while air quality index (AQI) hit 485 (considered 'severe'). The AQI in Delhi, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Noida, in comparison, were 431 (severe), 317 (very poor), 384 (very poor) and 390 (very poor), respectively.

With climatic conditions not changing much over the past 48 hours, the city has resembled a dust bowl. Thursday's pollution level was more than twice the peak PM2.5 level recorded the day after Diwali last year.

According to HSPCB officials, this is an emergency situation and they have implemented the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). "Sudden increase in PM10 and PM2.5 has raised air pollution level to the 'severe plus' category in the past 24 hours, as has been observed by our monitoring network. It is learnt that this is an outcome of the dust storm and winds coming from regions of Rajasthan and beyond. We have, therefore, issued instructions to shut all construction activities in the city for the next 48 hours," said Shakti Singh, regional officer, HSPCB (south). HSPCB has also sent an advisory to the district administration, MCG and other civic authorities to implement GRAP measures.

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**New Delhi:** Winter pollution in the national capital region may be deadly, but summer doesn't give much respite either.

While dust storms from Rajasthan may have led to a sudden severe spike in particulate matter pollution in the capital on Wednesday, the Central Pollution Control Board recently released air-quality data for NCR cities, which showed only a marginal improvement over winter in the air quality index in summer months as they continued to record "very poor" and "poor" air quality even in March, April and May.

Gurgaon, Ghaziabad and Bhiwadi, besides Delhi, are suffering extremely high air pollution levels. None of the NCR cities, except Alwar, recorded a single "satisfactory"

air day in March; Delhi saw one satisfactory day, Gurgaon two, Ghaziabad one and Faridabad recorded three satisfactory air days in April.

In comparison, Gurgaon recorded as many as nine and Bhiwadi had 10 "very poor" days. Even in May, Bhiwadi had 11 "very poor" and one "severe" air day, and Gurgaon recorded 10 "very poor" days.

Delhi, Gurgaon, Noida and Bhiwadi had no satisfactory days in May. Experts believe NCR needs a consistent summer plan. Summer pollution may exacerbate in the coming years depending on meteorological trends. For example, this year was particularly dry with few western disturbances raising dust and loose soil. "In 2014, there were several dust storms and this year, too, we saw 7-8 episodes. It's difficult to say if it's a trend. But this

year dust was definitely high and conditions extremely dry," Kuldeep Shrivastava, scientist at regional meteorological centre of IMD, said.

The IIT-Kanpur's Comprehensive Study on Air Pollution and Greenhouse Gases in Delhi carried out between 2013 and 2014 did highlight that summer pollution in the capital is mainly a result of dust and fly ash. The average concentration of PM2.5 in summer season was around 300 micrograms per cubic metres against the acceptable level of 60 micrograms per cubic metres. The crustal component accounted for about 20% of total PM2.5. "This suggests soil and road dust and airborne fly ash are a significant source of PM2.5 pollution in summer."

But there are no such source apportionment studies for other NCR cities where ther-

mal plants, industries and massive construction activity before monsoon may be adding to the trouble.

Sachchida Nand Tripathi, head department of civil engineering, IIT Kanpur, said: "Prima facie, this summer it appears like dust is playing a major role in increasing air pollution levels. But we have to analyse PM10 levels in relation to PM2.5 levels and wind direction data to understand how much are anthropogenic sources like road dust contributing to the summer problem. It needs to be studied."

Anumita Roy Chowdhury, executive director, Centre for Science and Environment, said: "Windblown dust increases significantly in summer. IIT-Kanpur also flagged solid waste burning and emissions from fly ash dumps. The problem is similar in other NCR cities."