

## 14 of Indian cities figure in World's 20 most polluted cities list: WHO



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According to Global Urban Air Pollution database released by World Health Organisation (WHO), 14 Indian cities have figured in list of world's 20 most polluted cities in terms of particulate matter PM2.5 levels in 2016. These 14 cities include Delhi, Varanasi, Kanpur, Faridabad, Gaya, Patna, Agra, Muzaffarpur, Srinagar, Gurgaon, Jaipur, Patiala and Jodhpur. They were followed by Ali Subah Al-Salem (Kuwait) and few cities in China and Mongolia. In terms of PM10 levels, 13 cities in India figured among the 20 most-polluted cities.

## Background

The database measured levels of fine particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) from more than 4,300 cities in 108 countries. It estimates that around 7 million people die every year from exposure to fine particles in polluted air that penetrate deep into lungs and cardiovascular system. WHO recognises air pollution is critical risk factor for noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) as it causes diseases including stroke, heart disease, lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases and respiratory infections, including pneumonia. Since 2016, over 1,000 additional cities are being added to WHO's database, showing that more countries are measuring and taking action to reduce air pollution than ever before.

## Key Facts

**Pollution related Deaths:** According to WHO database, ambient air pollution alone caused some 4.2 million deaths in 2016 across the globe, while household air pollution from cooking with polluting fuels and technologies has caused 3.8 million deaths in same period. It shows that 9 out of 10 people in the world breathe air containing high levels of pollutants.

**Global Scenario:** More than 90% of air pollution-related deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries (including India), mainly in Asia and Africa. It is followed by low-and middle-income countries of Eastern Mediterranean region, Europe and Americas. More than 80% of people living in urban areas are exposed to air quality levels that exceed WHO limits. While all regions of world are affected, populations in low-income cities are most impacted.

**South Asia region:** It alone accounts for 1.5 million (40%) deaths by household air pollution and 1.3 million (30%) global deaths due to ambient air pollution. Member-countries in Southeast Asia Region need to aggressively address double burden of household and ambient (outdoor) air pollution.

**Lack of clean fuel:** Around 3 billion people (more than 40% of the world's population) still do not have access to clean cooking fuels and technologies in their homes, the main source of household air pollution.

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