

1. Delhi's air worst among capitals, Byrnihat's the world's most foul, finds new report

World Air Quality Report

IQAir is a Swiss company that tracks global air quality. It releases an annual report called World Air Quality Report. For compiling data for World Air Quality Report 2024, IQAir examined data collected from 40,000 air quality monitoring stations in 138 countries.

Focus on Fine Particulate Matter

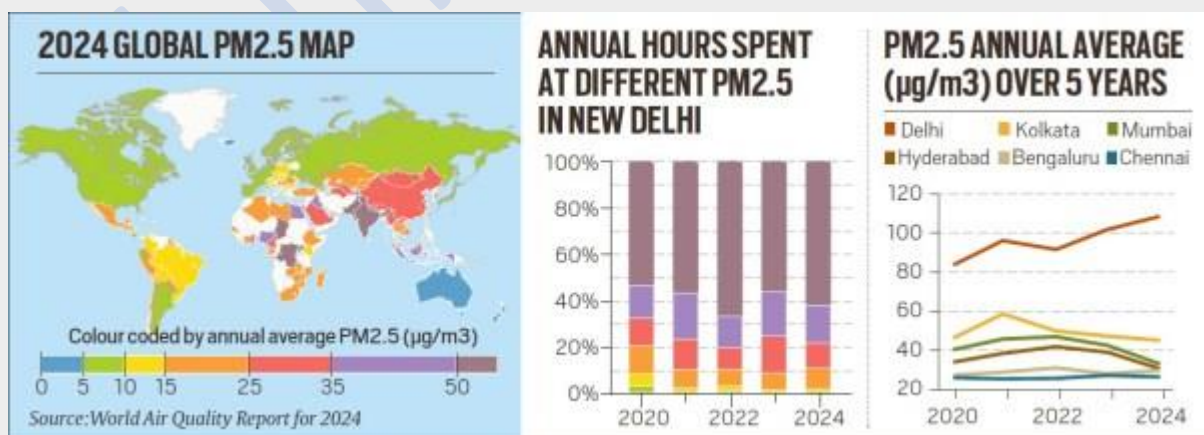
The report looked specifically at concentrations of fine particulate matter, or PM2.5, one of the smallest but most dangerous of pollutants.

PM2.5 comes from sources such as the combustion of fossil fuels, and can cause respiratory problems, chronic kidney disease, cancer, and stroke or heart attacks.

Main Findings of 2024 report

Polluted Cities in India

- 13 of the world's 20 most polluted cities are in India. 6 Indian cities made it to the list of the world's 10 most polluted.
- Delhi is the world's most polluted national capital for the sixth straight year.
- The most polluted city in the world is Byrnihat on the border of Assam and Meghalaya.
- Only 17% of the 8,954 cities around the world recorded air quality that met WHO PM2.5 guidelines. The 20 most polluted cities – located in India, Kazakhstan, Chad, Pakistan, and China – exceeded these guidelines by more than 10 times.



Country wise Findings

1. In 2024, most of the global population was breathing dirty air, the report shows.

2. Only 12 countries, regions, and territories recorded PM2.5 concentrations below the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommended average annual limit of 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

3. The five most polluted countries, according to the report, were Chad, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Congo, and India, with annual average PM2.5 concentrations of 91.8 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, 78 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, 73.7 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, 58.2 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, and 50.6 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ respectively.

4. India's average PM2.5 concentration was at 50.6 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2024, more than 10 times higher than WHO recommended 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

Byrnihat on Assam-Meghalaya border has 'world's worst air'



Byrnihat is located around 20 km from Guwahati and 65 km from Shillong, in Meghalaya's Ri-Bhoi district, where the hills of Meghalaya descend into Guwahati.

Over the years, Byrnihat has developed into a regional industrial hub. The residential town is in Meghalaya, and the industrial units surrounding it are in both Meghalaya and Assam.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Environment

2. Why former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte was arrested

Introduction

Former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte was arrested on a warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC), which was investigating allegations that "crimes against humanity" were committed during his so-called "war on drugs".



Allegations against Duterte

Duterte became President of Philippines in 2016. During his six-year term, which ended in 2022, more than 6,000 suspects were killed by police or unknown assailants as part of his "war on drugs" campaign. A UN report subsequently revealed that most of the victims were young, poor urban males, and that the police who do not need search or arrest warrants to conduct house raids, systematically forced suspects to make self-incriminating statements or risk facing lethal force.

The ICC

Headquartered in The Hague, Netherlands, the ICC was established on July 17, 1998, under the Rome Statute, an international treaty, and came into force in July 2002. The international court aims to help “end impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community.”

ICC is composed of 18 judges who are elected by the member states and serve 9-year, non-renewable terms.

As of January 2025, 125 countries are party to the Rome Statute, including Britain, Japan, Afghanistan, and Germany. India, China, and the United States are not members.

Crimes that ICC focuses on

The ICC has international jurisdiction over four types of crimes: crimes against humanity, genocide, crimes of aggression, and war crimes. It can step in when countries are unwilling or unable to prosecute suspects for these crimes.

Notably, the court, which prosecutes only individuals, does not have its own policing body and relies on other countries for support in making arrests, transferring arrested persons to the ICC detention centre in The Hague, freezing suspects’ assets, and enforcing sentences.

Additionally, the offences should be committed either in a country that ratified the Roman Statute or by a national of a ratifying country. The ICC can also practise its jurisdiction over cases referred by the UN Security Council to it.

Relevance: GS Prelims; International Organisations

Source: Indian Express

3. Mark Carney: Canada’s New Prime Minister and Liberal Party Leader

Who is Mark Carney?

Mark Carney, a former central banker, has been elected as the leader of Canada’s Liberal Party with 86% of the vote. He now takes over as Prime Minister, following Justin Trudeau’s resignation in January.

Challenges Facing Canada

Carney steps into leadership during a tough time for Canada. The country is dealing with a major trade war with the United States. Under President Donald Trump, the US has imposed tariffs on Canada and even made threats to absorb it as the “51st state.”

Why Did Trudeau Step Down?

After leading for 10 years (2 consecutive terms), Justin Trudeau faced declining popularity due to rising unemployment, inflation, and a housing crisis. Internal pressure within the party also mounted, with party members calling for his resignation. The situation worsened when the New Democratic Party (NDP) withdrew from the minority coalition government.

Upcoming Elections

Canada's next parliamentary election is officially due by October 2025, but it may be called earlier.

Impact on Politics

Before Carney's victory, the Conservative Party, led by Pierre Poilievre, was expected to win easily. However, Carney's leadership could change the game, potentially securing an unprecedented third term for the Liberals.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Source: The Hindu

'Sharing is Caring'

If you have friends preparing for Civil Services, tell them that they can also receive Updates through WhatsApp from Shubham's IAS by sending 'Name' and 'State' on 75979-00000

Shubham's IAS