

WHO Report on Polluted Cities

Why in news?

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The World Health Organisation (WHO) recently released a new global report on air pollution.

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What is the report on?

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- The WHO report compiled the air quality data for mega-cities with a population of 14 million or more.

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- The global urban air pollution database measured the levels of fine particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5).

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- The PM2.5 includes pollutants like sulfate, nitrate and black carbon, which pose the greatest risk to human health.

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What are the highlights?

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- **Cities** - Delhi and Varanasi are among the 14 Indian cities that figure in a list of 20 most polluted cities.

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- Kanpur, Faridabad, Gaya, Patna, Lucknow, Agra, Muzaffarpur, Srinagar, Gurgaon, Jaipur, Patiala and Jodhpur are the other Indian cities.

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- Ali Subah Al-Salem in Kuwait and a few cities in China and Mongolia are the other most polluted cities.

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- These are the cities that registered very high levels of PM2.5 pollutants in 2016.

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- In terms of PM10 levels, 13 cities in India figure among the 20 most polluted cities of the world in 2016.
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- **Impact** - 9 out of 10 people in the world breathe air containing high levels of pollutants.
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- More than 90% of air pollution-related deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries (including India).
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- These are concentrated mainly in Asia and Africa.
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- WHO recognises air pollution as a critical risk factor for non-communicable diseases (NCDs).
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What does WHO call for?

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- The WHO has specifically addressed the member-countries in its Southeast Asia region.
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- It has called upon these countries to aggressively address the double burden.
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- This includes the household and ambient (outdoor) air pollution, which together cause premature deaths.
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- WHO estimates that around 7 million people die every year from exposure to fine particles in polluted air.
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- South-east Asian region, which comprises India, accounts for 2.4 million of 7 million such deaths globally every year.
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Source: The Hindu

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