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News: World Air Quality Report 2023

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World Air Quality Index

- World Air Quality Index is published by IQ Air, a Swiss air quality technology company specializing in protection against air borne pollutants.
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Key Highlights of the World Air Quality Report 2023

India's Air Quality Ranking

- Ranked as the world's third most polluted country, with an average annual PM2.5 concentration of 54.4 micrograms per cubic meter.
- Bangladesh and Pakistan surpassed India in pollution levels, becoming the most and second most polluted countries, respectively.
- 9 out of the top 10 most polluted cities in the world are from India.

- India's air quality deteriorated compared to the previous year, with Delhi emerging as the world's most polluted capital city for the fourth consecutive time.
- Begusarai in Bihar is labelled as the world's most polluted metropolitan area, with an average PM2.5 concentration of 118.9 micrograms per cubic meter.

Health Impacts and WHO Guidelines

- Around 136 million Indians (96% of the Indian population) face PM2.5 concentrations (seven times) higher than the World Health Organization's recommended levels of 5 micrograms per cubic meter.
- Over 66% of Indian cities have reported annual averages higher than 35 micrograms per cubic metre ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$).
- PM2.5 pollution, primarily from burning fossil fuels, is linked to increased rates of heart attack, stroke, and oxidative stress, with severe health implications.

Global Air Quality

- Seven countries that met the WHO annual PM2.5 guideline (annual average of 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ or less) included Australia, Estonia, Finland, Grenada, Iceland, Mauritius, and New Zealand.

- The report states that Africa continues to be the most underrepresented continent, with a third of its population lacking access to air quality data.
- Some countries, including China and Chile, reported decreases in PM2.5 pollution levels, indicating progress in combating air pollution.
- Pollution does not stay confined to its source, with prevailing winds distributing it across regions, emphasising the need for international cooperation in addressing air quality issues.