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“Chennai air pollution 5 times higher than WHO standards”

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‘Chennai air pollution 5 times higher than WHO standards’

Identifying The Exact Sources Is Key: NGO

Onjanvin.MD @timesgroup.com

Chennai: The city’s air quality levels for 2021 exceeded the World Health Organisation’s permissible limits by five times, making it one of the most polluted cities in the country, a report by NGO Greenpeace International, released in January said.

While WHO annual limits for PM 2.5 (fine particulate matter) levels is 5 microgram/m³, the city’s annual average, calculated from November 2020 to November 2021, was 27 microgram/m³. Manali and Kodungalyur TNPCB stations recorded six times higher PM 2.5 levels than WHO standards, with 30 microgram/m³, while stations at Perungudi, Royapuram and Velachery recorded

three to four times more.

“Chennai is part of the Centre’s ‘million-plus city’ plan that has about 30 cities in it. The plan, however, has a serious problem identifying sources of pollution. It generally classifies sources of pollution as vehicular, construction or road dust. Identifying the exact source of pollution

would help better enforce pollution norms,” said Pooja Kumar, coordinator of coastal resource centre, adding that in north Chennai, industries and thermal plants are the sources of pollution. The Chennai-based centre is engaged in environmental research. Moreover, she said, the city isn’t adding monitor-

ing systems in proportion to growth in population and area. “More monitoring systems will help to get reliable data,” added Pooja.

Satyarupa Shekhar, Asia Pacific Coordinator for Break Free From Plastic movement, said the overall air quality is determined by waste and plastic. “First, burning waste can be avoided by ensuring source segregation and composting biodegradable waste. Secondly, it should not approve incineration, be it ‘waste-to-energy’, ‘pyrolysis’, or burning in cement kilns. Such enterprises burn waste and dump ash and sludge into air, water and land. These, however, are end-of-pipeline actions. What we need is for the TNPCB and the government to reduce petrochemical production and arrest the manufacture and use of single-use plastics,” she said.

Avinash Chanchal, Campaign Manager, Greenpeace India, said making urban transportation accessible and sustainable can combat air pollution.

NUMBERS SPEAK

- Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board
- Central Pollution Control Board

Monitoring stations	PM 2.5 levels (annual average)
Kodungalyur	31 ug/m ³
Manali	31
Velachery	20
Perungudi	22
Arumbakkam	27
Royapuram	22
Alandur bus depot	30
Manali	27

Data period: Nov 2020 to Nov 2021

PM 2.5: Particulate Matter 2.5 are tiny particles in the air that are 2.5 microns or less in width. Higher concentrations of it affects breathing and visibility

Source: Green Peace International Report Jan, 2022

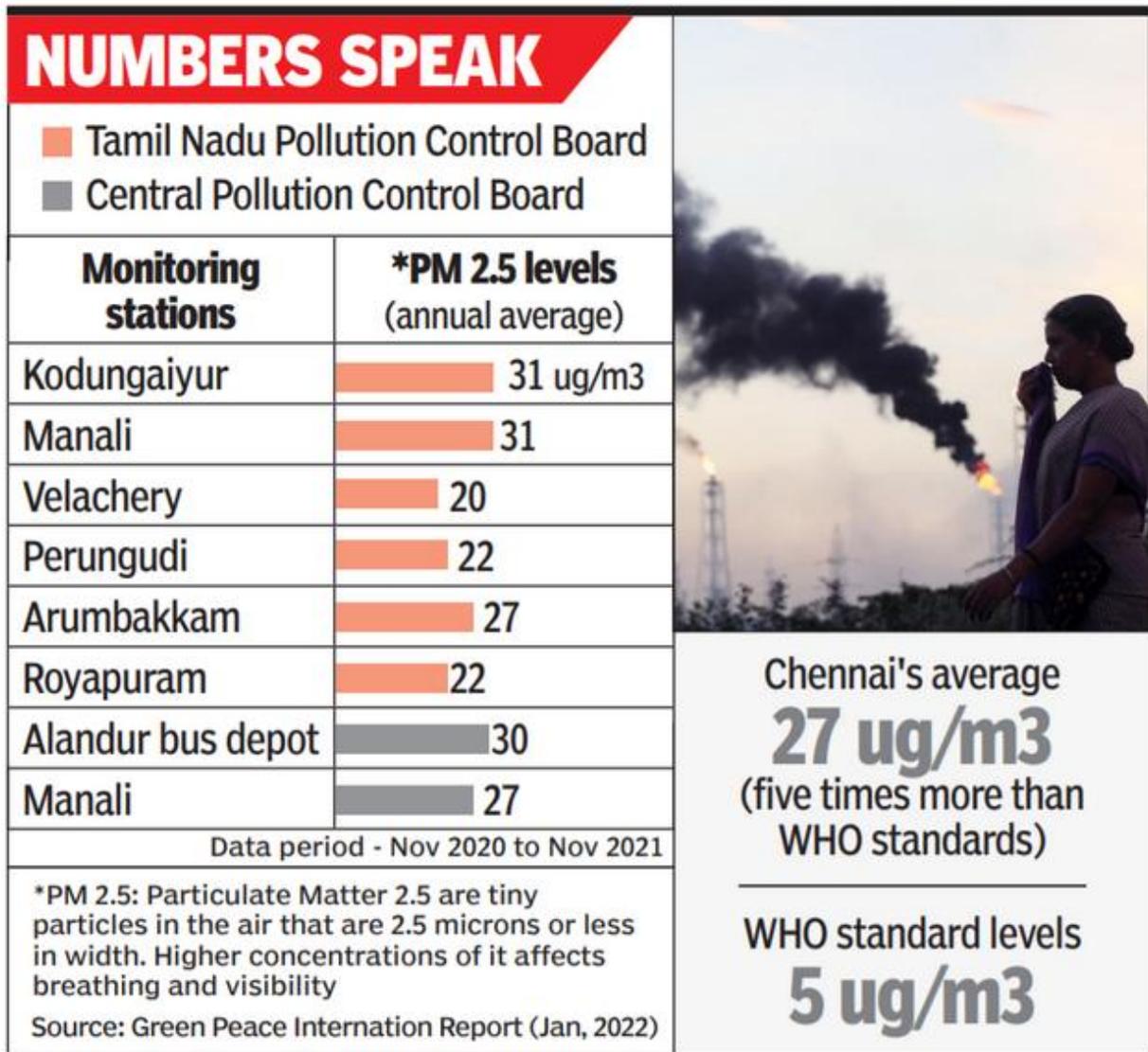


Chennai's average
27 ug/m³
(five times more than WHO standards)

WHO standard levels
5 ug/m³

News Item in The Times of India newspaper, Chennai Edition dated 03rd February 2022

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