

# Byrnihat, Meghalaya: India's Most Polluted City

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## Context

According to the Center for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), Byrnihat is the place with the highest levels of pollution in India for this month, near the border with Assam.

## Key Points

- A report on the level of air pollution in the green, urban Northeastern states found Byrnihat to be having one of the highest levels of PM2.5 in the region, higher than even Araria in Bihar.
- Other cities of the region, such as Nalbari, Agartala, Guwahati, and Nagaon, also find their way into the top 30 most-polluted cities in India for the month of February.
- This indicates a worrying trend of increasing pollution levels in the Northeast.
- Six out of eleven cities of the region recorded PM2.5 over the daily average set by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, flagging an important environmental challenge in those areas.

## Details on the Report

### Air Quality Index (AQI) Data

- Overview: Byrnihat has recorded Air Quality Index (AQI) readings that are alarming for all air pollutants.

- **Key Pollutants:** The city shows high concentrations of PM2.5, PM10, and other harmful gases, surpassing safe limits.

## Sources of Pollution

- **Industrial Emissions and Vehicular Exhaust:** These are primary contributors to Byrnihat's deteriorating air quality.
- **Local Factors:** Activities unique to Meghalaya, like mining, also significantly impact the air quality.

## Health Implications

- **Respiratory and Cardiac Risks:** High pollution levels pose serious health risks, including lung and heart diseases.
- **Vulnerable Groups:** The influence has more emphasis on the delicate people, such as young children, the elderly, and persons who are already ill.

## Environmental Impact

- **Ecosystem Distribution:** Pollution of all these involves disturbances not only in terms of human health but also to the local wildlife and vegetation, and in turn, the ecological balance.

## Government and Policy Response

- **Meant to take measures:** Steps taken by the government to control pollution may include stricter regulations and cleaning technologies for promotion.
- **Public Awareness:** Efforts to raise public awareness to the importance of air quality and individual responsibility.

## Comparative Analysis

- Compare pollution levels to nearby cities around India, and you really put the national crisis into perspective.

## Community and Societal Response

- **Local Actions:** The article highlights commendable local community and NGO initiatives in Byrnihat, which are committed to waging a concerted war on pollution and making their voice strong for cleaner air.

## About CREA

- CREA is a research organisation that aims to understand and address air pollution.
- Support governments, companies, and advocacy groups to transition to clean energy and clean air using scientific data and research. They are committed with the belief that research and communication provide an essential role toward fostering effective policy and well-grounded decisions. CREA is an independent, not-for-profit think tank

and research centre based in Finland.

## Conclusion

The situation in Byrnihat is a wake-up call for urgent action against air pollution. It emphasises the need for combined efforts from the government, community, and individuals to protect public health and the environment. While specific to Byrnihat, this issue mirrors a global challenge, underscoring the importance of sustainable practices and proactive environmental stewardship.

**Source:** [The Hindu](#)

### **UPSC Prelims Practice Question**

**Q. Which of the following measures is most effective for managing industrial pollution, as experienced in Byrnihat, Meghalaya?**

- a. Increasing green cover in urban areas
- b. Implementing stricter vehicle emission norms
- c. Enforcing regulations on industrial emissions
- d. Promoting the use of public transportation

Ans - "c"