

Capital breathes 'satisfactory' air for 1st time since September '24

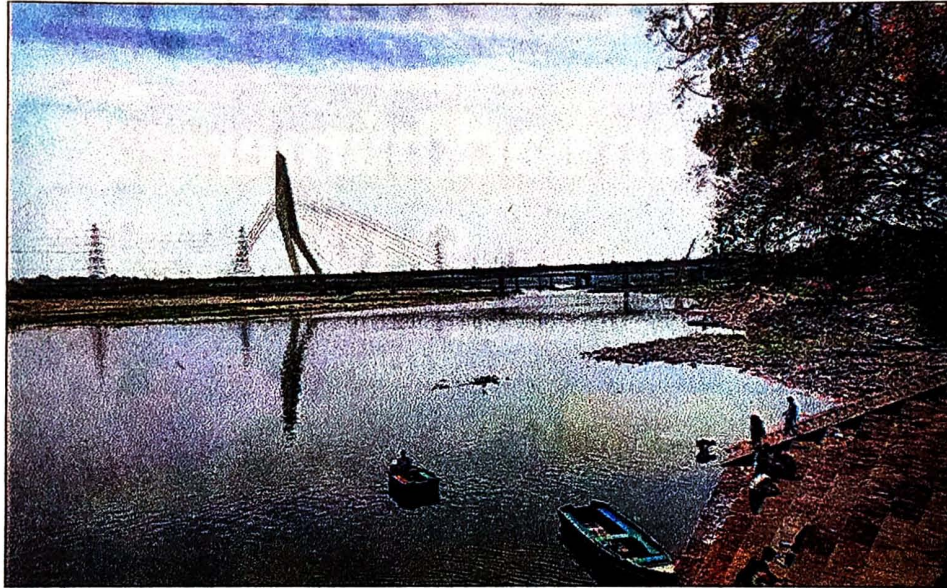
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NEW DELHI: Delhi's air quality improved to the "satisfactory" category on Saturday for the first time since September 29, 2024, aided by scattered rain and occasional gusty winds that impacted the region from Friday, prompting the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) to revoke Stage 1 of the Graded Response Action Plan.

Delhi's 24-hour average air quality index (AQI) was 85 (satisfactory) at 4pm on Saturday, according to the Central Pollution Control Board's daily national bulletin, a significant improvement from Friday's 198 (moderate). It was 179 (moderate) on Thursday and 228 (poor) on Wednesday. On September 29 last year, Delhi's AQI was 76 (satisfactory).

"There has been wide-spread rain in northwest India for the last two days and Delhi



A clear sky above Signature Bridge in Wazirabad on Saturday. The maximum temperature was 33°C.

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recorded some scattered rain on Friday evening. This was accompanied by moderate to strong surface winds of 40-50km/hour speed, which helped disperse pollutants. Wind speed on Saturday was moderate but it is likely to pick up again within the next two days," said Mahesh Palawat,

vice president at Skymet.

Measures under Grap 1 include strict implementation of construction and demolition waste rules, regular lifting of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW), mechanised sweeping and water sprinkling on roads, use of anti-smog guns, and strict action against non-compliant vehicles and illegal industrial units,

among others.

India Meteorological Department has forecast partly cloudy sky on Sunday, along with the possibility of light rain or drizzle in isolated parts of the city, accompanied by strong surface winds of 25-35km/hour speed, due to a western disturbance influencing north India.

According to the Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi, AQI is expected to be satisfactory on Sunday as well.

Delhi's maximum temperature, which had touched the highest so far this year on Friday at 36.2°C, dropped to 33°C on Saturday, 4.1 degrees above the normal.

The minimum temperature increased slightly to 18.7°C, 3.6 degrees above the normal, compared to 17.6°C the day before. This was largely due to cloudy skies which allow less heat to penetrate the surface in the day and retain surface heat at night, leading to a higher minimum and lower maximum.