Gummidipoondi air reported worse than Delhi's on 21 Nov (AQI 342)

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News

According to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data, the Air Quality Index (AQI) of Gummidipoondi, an industrial town near Chennai, was 342 on 21 November 2026, Daily Thanthi and Maalaimalar reported on 22 November. It rose to 346 at 5.05 pm that day, in the 'very poor' band (301–400); the papers put Delhi's AQI at 265 and Chennai's at 224 the same day. Gummidipoondi's AQI had climbed from 305 on 19 November to 321 on 20 November. Media reports said its air was worse than Delhi's that day; whether it was the highest reading in the country could not be confirmed from the CPCB bulletin. Dense industry, smoke from burning fuel, heavy goods traffic, road dust and construction were cited as causes. A senior Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board official said wind direction and atmospheric changes bring polluted air from other industrial and urban areas, and low wind speed keeps particles from dispersing. Doctors warned that fine PM2.5 particles go deep into the lungs and raise the risk of respiratory and heart disease.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Place	Gummidipoondi – industrial town near Chennai
AQI (21.11.2026)	342; 346 at 5.05 pm ('very poor')

Point	Details
Trend	19 Nov – 305; 20 Nov – 321; 21 Nov – 342
Comparison (21 Nov)	Delhi 265; Chennai 224
Causes	Industrial smoke, freight traffic, road dust, construction, low wind speed
Media report	Worse than Delhi's (265) on 21 Nov; not confirmed as the highest in the country

Background

- The National Air Quality Index was launched in October 2014 by then Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar as 'one number, one colour, one description'. It uses 8 pollutants and has six bands from Good (0–50) to Severe (401–500).
- Legal frame: under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, the Central and State Pollution Control Boards monitor and control air pollution. The National Green Tribunal was set up under a 2010 Act to hear environmental cases.
- Geography: Gummidipoondi is at Tamil Nadu's northern tip near the Andhra Pradesh border, close to the Pulicat brackish-water lagoon. The North Chennai–Ennore–Manali belt has thermal power stations, refineries and ports.

Tamil Nadu link: Gummidipoondi has a SIPCOT industrial estate. The episode shows that even the Chennai region, usually aired by sea breezes, sees pollution spikes on low-wind days of the north-east monsoon season. The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board runs continuous ambient air quality monitoring stations (CAAQMS).

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

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What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Place: Gummidipoondi – industrial town near Chennai; AQI (21.11.2026): 342; 346 at 5.05 pm ('very poor'); Trend: 19 Nov – 305; 20 Nov – 321; 21 Nov – 342; Comparison (21 Nov): Delhi 265; Chennai 224.

What is the background to this news?

The National Air Quality Index was launched in October 2014 by then Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar as 'one number, one colour, one description'.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. Gummidipoondi's AQI of 342 on 21 November 2026 falls in which category of India's National Air Quality Index?

A) Very poor

B) Poor

C) Severe

D) Moderate

Answer: A – Explanation: Very poor (301–400). The six bands: Good 0–50, Satisfactory 51–100, Moderate 101–200, Poor 201–300, Very poor 301–400, Severe 401–500.

2. Gummidipoondi, an industrial town near Chennai, is in which district?

A) Chengalpattu

B) Kancheepuram

C) Tiruvallur

D) Ranipet

Answer: C – Explanation: Tiruvallur – at Tamil Nadu's northern tip near the Andhra border; it has a SIPCOT industrial estate.

3. Pulicat, near Gummidipoondi, is India's second-largest brackish-water lagoon after which?

A) Vembanad

B) Ashtamudi

C) Kolleru

D) Chilika

Answer: D – Explanation: Chilika (Odisha). Sriharikota island separates Pulicat from the sea; it has a bird sanctuary.

4. Where is the Southern Zonal Bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT), which hears Tamil Nadu's cases?

A) Bhopal

B) Chennai

C) Pune

D) Kolkata

Answer: B – Explanation: Chennai. The Principal Bench is in New Delhi; Bhopal – Central, Pune – Western, Kolkata – Eastern zone. NGT Act, 2010.

5. Which gas, released mainly by coal-fired power plants, is a major cause of acid rain?

A) Methane

B) Nitrous oxide

C) Chlorofluorocarbon

D) Sulphur dioxide

Answer: D – Explanation: Sulphur dioxide – it forms sulphuric acid with water vapour; nitrogen dioxide (nitric acid) also contributes.