

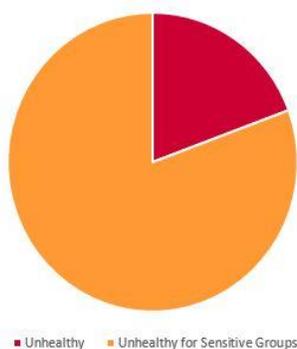
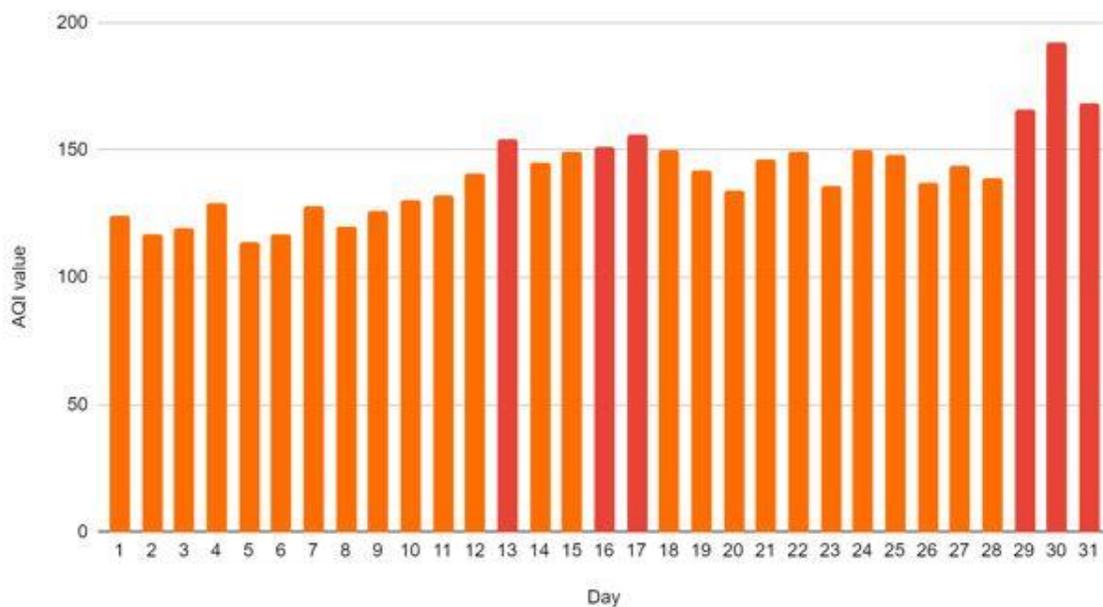
Our Concern



E-Newsletter December 2022

Our Concern, a monthly e-newsletter, is a compilation of news and views from local, and international, media coverage as an attempt to keep our readers abreast on the recent happenings on clean air, energy, and urban mobility and climate change issues.

Kathmandu Valley Air Quality overview (PM 2.5)



- None of the days in December were satisfactory with AQI values from 0 to 50 where air pollution poses little or no risk.
- Most of the days i.e. 25 days in December were unhealthy for sensitive group with AQI values reaching 101 to 150. Active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion during such period.
- There were 6 days where AQI values reached 151 to 200 where everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.

News and Views

Government to impose fine on vehicles failing emission test

The Environment Department under the Ministry of Environment and Forest issued a public notice that says that during random checks on Kathmandu's roads, most of the vehicles operating in the Capital failed emission tests. The department also blamed the open burning of waste as a major cause of air pollution in the Valley. The notice warns effective from January 1, vehicles failing pollution test will be fined up to NPR 100,000. The move comes amid rising air pollution in the Kathmandu Valley. In its attempt to reduce air pollution, the Kathmandu Metropolitan City had also issued a notice last month banning open burning of waste and anyone found violating the rule will face action as per the City's Environment and Natural Protection Act.

The moves are highly appreciable but how long they can give continuity to the rule is important. Five years ago, in December 2017, the department had made a similar announcement to control air pollution. A joint team from the Department of Environment, the Department of Transport, and the Metropolitan Traffic Police Division (MTPD) had started an air pollution reduction campaign and intensified random tests of vehicles, but the campaign was later discontinued.

Published on: 9th December 2022

Source: <https://kathmandupost.com/valley/2022/12/09/government-to-fine-vehicles-failing-emission-tests-up-to-rs100-000>

From words to action: 22 polluting vehicles booked

A joint team of the Department of Environment and the Department of Transport Management of Kathmandu Valley Traffic Police has detained 22 high-polluting vehicles. Emission test was conducted in Sorhakhutte area on the basis of random sampling. The vehicles included both private and public ones. Of the 40 vehicles checked by the authorities, 22 failed to go through the emission test. However, as per the vehicle emission standards implemented by government, the permissible level are different for vehicles registered before and after 1980.

Published on: 23th December 2022

Source: <https://thehimalayantimes.com/kathmandu/22-polluting-vehicles-booked>

Nepal's forests vulnerable to increasingly fierce fires

For weeks, a thick layer of toxic smog blanketed much of Nepal. It blocked the sun and elevated air pollution levels so severely that indoor air quality worsened. The source of this unusual air pollution that ranked the world's worst for days was Nepal's forests, which were going up in smoke as a record number of fierce wildfires following an unusually dry winter spread uncontrolled throughout the country, including in conservation areas, national parks and hunting reserves along the northern border.

The winter season is usually dry and it has worsened over the years. It's hotter than before with a decreasing trend of precipitation rate. A hot and dry winter sets ideal conditions for smog and a high probability of massive wildfires in the spring. While there's a dearth of study to confirm the climate crisis-driven trend of worsening wildfires in Nepal, the preceding conditions during the fall and winter seasons for the years which saw increased frequency and fierce wildfires indicate that hotter and drier climate post-monsoon season creates conditions that are conducive to the spread of wildfires, including in high altitude regions. But worse could be yet to come as the winter season in Nepal becomes hotter and drier.

Published on: 8th December 2022

Source: <https://kathmandupost.com/climate-environment/2022/12/09/nepal-s-forests-vulnerable-to-increasingly-fierce-fires>

Dirtier coal for brick kilns could worsen winter air

Brick industry is one of the largest coal consuming sectors in Nepal, whose annual consumption is estimated at 504,000 tonnes of coal and hundreds of tons of biomass. There are 1,349 brick factories in Nepal, churning out 5.14 billion bricks a year. Brick factories in the Kathmandu Valley are the third largest source of suspended particulate matter (SPM) and PM10 emissions.

Brick kiln operators admitted that they may resort to using low quality coal if they don't have other options either due to unavailability or price hikes. Experts warn that the low grade coal contains high levels of sulphur which, when burned, can be hazardous to human health and suggest authorities to take account of the current coal shortage while encouraging brick factories to opt for cleaner options. Environmentalists suggest use of briquette as kiln fuel and production of hollow bricks as possible way outs.

Published on: 1st December 2022

Source: <https://kathmandupost.com/climate-environment/2022/12/01/dirtier-coal-for-brick-kilns-could-worsen-winter-air?fbclid=IwAR0ZEg5pwQkLJWqyDtd7h - MqFBf7bBOxQ6FHhVhuAe0Mmo2pnSl1nurNAw>

Air quality plummets in Indian capital as temperature falls

The air quality in New Delhi; the city of 20 million was “very poor” overall and sank to “severe” in some areas, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board. The air quality index hit 457 in the Anand Vihar locality - nine times the “good” level. Air pollution worsened with the lowered temperatures and calmer winds trapping pollutants.

Measures such as occasional suspension of construction activities, sprinkling water on roads, and enforcing restrictions on diesel vehicles have only partly helped address Delhi’s pollution problem. Pollution from the burning of crop residues in the neighbouring states of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, however, has come down this year.

Published on: 19th December 2022

Source: <https://kathmandupost.com/world/2022/12/19/air-quality-plummets-in-indian-capital-as-temperature-falls>

Leading Indian EVs manufacturer is looking to expand their market to Nepal

Omega Seiki Mobility, leading Indian electric vehicles (EVs) manufacturer, has launched its battery-operated commercial goods vehicles in Nepal. The company plans to set up charging stations in different locations and provide training to technicians with regard to the repair and maintenance of their vehicles in Nepal.

Company targets Nepali market to harness the energy surplus conditions that possess the future of EVs expansion. The running cost of EVs comes to about one-tenth, as compared to diesel-consuming vehicles.

Published on: 5th December 2022

Source: <https://kathmandupost.com/money/2022/12/05/we-are-looking-to-expand-our-evs-market-to-nepal>

Sri Lanka shuts schools as extreme weather brings pollution

Schools across Sri Lanka were closed as the air quality in most parts of the island nation was unhealthy due to the heavy rains and winds across Sri Lanka triggered by storm in the Bay of Bengal.

A haze hung over the capital, Colombo, and other parts of the country, with the level of fine particles in the air reaching unhealthy levels. National Building Research Organization, a state agency involved in environmental monitoring and risk management claims the current pollution in all part of Sri Lanka has arisen due to the combination of local air pollutants and transboundary air pollution (polluted air from the neighboring country India) while posing a tendency to cause health problems.

Published on: 9th December 2022

Source: <https://thehimalayantimes.com/world/sri-lanka-shuts-schools-as-extreme-weather-brings-pollution/>

Climate change will fuel humanitarian crises in 2023

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) flagged that the number of people in humanitarian need has skyrocketed in the last decade, approaching 339.2 million versus the 81 million seen in 2014. The report further says Climate change will accelerate humanitarian crises around the world in 2023, adding to the issues created by armed conflict and economic downturns. The gap between humanitarian needs and its financing has already grown to a global deficit of \$27 billion as of November 2022. Donors are failing to respond proportionately leading the communities affected by the crisis unable to access the services they need to survive, recover and rebuild.

The study titled “Emergency Watchlist 2023” also highlighted that the number of people forced to flee their homes has risen to more than 100 million today, up from 60 million in 2014, with Venezuela among the biggest drivers.

Published on: 14th December 2022

Source: <https://kathmandupost.com/world/2022/12/14/climate-change-will-fuel-humanitarian-crises-in-2023-study>

What next after COP27 L&D fund?

Since the climate change conference at Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt, the media has been inundated with news of the ‘loss and damage fund’ set up to support developing countries as they face the impact of climate breakdown. Passing the fund by governments is an achievement in itself because the conversation around loss and damage funding for climate-induced harm has been stagnant for the past decades. The concept of loss and damage goes beyond just adapting to or mitigating climate change. It addresses the kind of destruction like massive floods, severe droughts, ocean expansion that countries and communities cannot adapt to. While adaptation deals with the projected risks of climate change, loss and damage tackles the aftermath once impact has already materialized.

Moreover, Nepal has a special role to play in the design of the loss and damage fund in the coming year as we are best positioned to amplify voices on the accelerated impacts of climate change in the highlands.

Published on: 17th December 2022

Source: <https://www.nepalitimes.com/opinion/what-next-after-cop27-ld-fund/?fbclid=IwAR06ldz9WgPpZA6CZUqOE6QR9ZkpFhtN849ERflfJhLi6AJQu6EWgmCVLCo>

Youths urge authorities to make climate justice-accountable policies

With a focus on identifying and implementing the climate change mitigation strategies by the decision-makers in Nepal, and to facilitate the interaction between the three tiers of government in Nepal, a national-level event titled 'SHIFT-Shifting Power to Young People' was organized in Kathmandu. Youth campaigners from various parts of Nepal raised their concerns regarding climate change and urged decision-makers to invest more in climate justice. They also demanded the establishment of environment departments at the local units, voices of Nepali youth be included in national documents and also presented in international forums.

Published on: 28th December 2022

Source: <https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/shift-for-our-planet-youths-urge-authorities-to-make-climate-justice-accountable-policies/>

A rare photo exhibition on the impact of climate change on the Himalayas

Tashi R Ghale, a nature and wildlife photographer honored with Disney Conservation Hero Award from Disney Conservation Fund, organized 'Melting Paradise' a photo exhibition to highlight the climate change's impact on Nepal's high Himalayas and the animals, including snow leopard, that call it home. Moreover, the exhibition is his attempt to draw the world's attention to the detrimental impact that the changing weather wreaks on the Himalayas and the animals there.

In the last two decades, Ghale, a native of Manang, has taken photos of his home region's cultural and religious life, Himalayas, and wildlife. His works have been featured on calendars, postcards, books, travel magazines, trekking maps, and brochures.

Published on: 14th December 2022

Source: <https://kathmandupost.com/art-culture/2022/12/14/a-rare-photo-exhibition-on-the-impact-of-climate-change-on-the-himalayas>

Good reads:

How Nepal blew a chance to voice its climate concerns

<https://kathmandupost.com/climate-environment/2022/12/10/how-nepal-blew-a-chance-to-voice-its-climate-concerns>

New electric vehicle models steal the EV show

<https://kathmandupost.com/money/2022/12/11/new-electric-vehicle-models-steal-the-ev-show>

Hydropower development doubts

<https://kathmandupost.com/columns/2022/12/26/hydropower-development-concerns>

Preparing better for future COPs

<https://kathmandupost.com/columns/2022/12/19/preparing-better-for-future-cops>

Way out of climate crisis

<https://kathmandupost.com/columns/2022/12/10/way-out-of-climate-crisis>

Why should you wear a mask in the morning in Kathmandu?

<https://www.himalkhabar.com/news/133727?fbclid=IwAR06ldz9WgPpZA6CZUgOE6QR9ZkpFhtN849ERfifJhLj6AJQu6EWgmCVLCo>

Editorial Team:

Barsha Parajuli - Program Coordinator, Clean Energy Nepal

Ronish Pandey- Campaign Coordinator at NYCA

Sonam Shrestha-Research and Knowledge Management Associate, Clean Energy Nepal

Layout:

Sonam Shrestha-Research and Knowledge Management Associate, Clean Energy Nepal



info@cen.org.np



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Clean Energy Nepal

Write to us:

info@cen.org.np

Our mailing address is

P.O: 24581

181 Moti Marga, Satdobato, Talchikhel, Lalitpur, Nepal

Contact us at:

977-1-5538660