

Our Concern

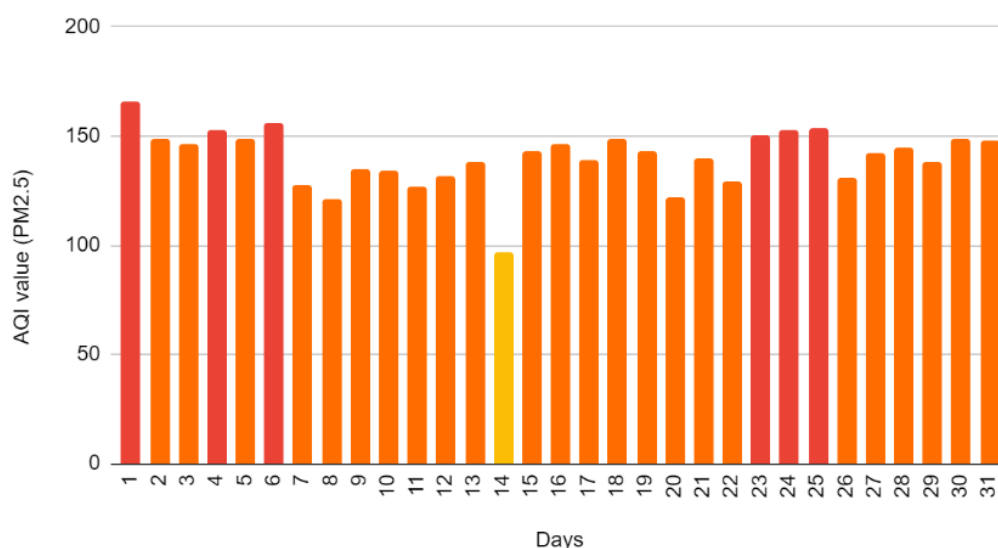


E-Newsletter January 2022

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, urban mobility and climate change issues.

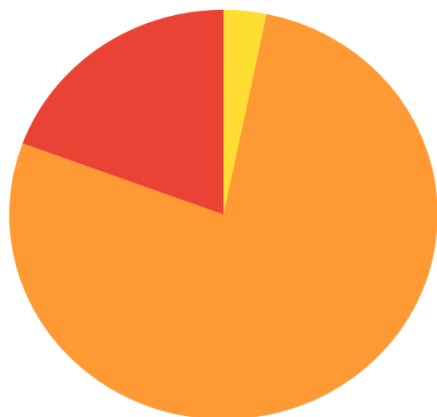
Kathmandu Valley Air Quality overview (PM 2.5)

January



Data retrieved from: <https://aqicn.org/city/nepal/kathmandu/us-embassy/>

● Moderate ● Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups ● Unhealthy



For January, not a single day remained satisfactory posing little or no risk, i.e. AQI value exceeded the range 0 to 50.

- 5 days were unhealthy with AQI values ranging from 151 to 200. During such period everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
- 24 days were unhealthy for sensitive groups with AQI values ranging from 101 to 150, wherein sensitive groups may experience health effects. During such period, active children and adults as

well as people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion to avoid health effects.

- One day was acceptable with AQI values ranging from 51 to 100. However, it possesses moderate health concern for a very small number of people who are unusually sensitive to air pollution. Active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion.

Source: <https://aqicn.org/city/nepal/kathmandu/us-embassy/>

News and Views

Air pollution: a silent killer

Kathmandu's air at this time of the year reaches levels that are hazardous to health. Further, hospitals are flooded with COPD patients. The increasing numbers of vehicles, being one of the major emitters of PM 2.5 including other pollutants, are to be blamed the most. Almost 21050 deaths (half of total 42,100 air pollution linked deaths) in Nepal in 2019 were due to breathing particles less than PM 2.5. Shifting to cleaner means of public transport (electric transportation) could be the best alternative as it would address the air pollution issues, support in meeting Nepal's net zero pledge and to reduce the country's burgeoning petroleum import bill. However, despite the increased awareness level, very less has been done to overcome pollution. Besides transport, garbage burning, and biomass fuels also have their share in making Kathmandu's air dirtier.

Published on: January 2, 2022

Source: <https://www.nepalitimes.com/banner/breathing-can-kill-you/>

Kathmandu air pollution: whom to blame

Kathmandu's air is not healthier year-round. The average AQI is about 170 in real-time and PM 2.5 concentrations 16.5 times above the WHO annual air quality guideline. However, air pollution increases significantly and reaches the peak during winter between Novembers to February. At the first place, geography of Kathmandu, being a valley, favors pollution build up. Secondly, with the dropping temperature during winter, inversion occurs brining the polluted air closer to the ground level. Vehicle emission and road dust is the biggest contributor (up to 60%) of Kathmandu's air pollution. Open waste burning, emissions from brick kilns or factories, and households further aggravate the pollution. Apart from this, the inactive civil society, lack of research, advocacy and lobbying, lack of mobilization of human resources, and lack of response from government, unclear guidelines and policies, as well as their implementation, have all contributed to the problem.

Published on: January 6, 2022

Source: https://english.onlinekhabar.com/air-pollution-kathmandu-faqs-winter.html?fbclid=IwAR2OZc7qweAqiKGqDc-qP5Y8DIBFYsc7I9djVURiXI1AGhGb_RQEqb5wZV/k

Air Pollution: a trans-boundary issue for South Asia

A grey tropospheric layer called the Atmospheric Brown Cloud (ABC) or haze, which acts as a blanket and influences temperature, exists along the Indo-Gangetic Plain region (IGP) of South Asia. IGP is the highly polluted and populated areas extending to northern and eastern India, the eastern parts of Pakistan, almost all of Bangladesh, and the southern plains of Nepal. Black carbon, dust, and fly ashes particles found in the area are scattered by the sun's radiation. The Global Chemical Transport Model also states that chemical pollutants from the heavily polluted Indian sub-continent have reached the mountains where they affect the sun's radiation, snow albedo and accelerate the snow's melting speed, limiting the process of sustainable and long-term water supply, declining snow's spatial coverage. However, scientific research is still insufficient to study and mitigate pollution reaching the Himalayas from South Asia through long-distance travel. Immediate attention of scientists and policymakers is essential to understand the exact amount of the transboundary and exogenous pollutants contributing to the total loading of atmospheric pollution over the Himalayas for its sustainable development and management.

Finally, mitigating measures and action plans based on empirical evidence against air pollution are required to fulfill the target of Sustainable Development Goals specially health (SDG 3), sustainable energy (SDG 7), and climate action (SDG 13).

Published on: January 17, 2022

Source: <https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/south-asian-air-pollution-a-pressing-concern-for-the-himalayas/>

Urban reforestation for pollution reduction

Mithila Wildlife Trust in Dhanusa district, Madesh province in south-eastern Nepal, has successfully implemented "Miyawaki method". The 'Miyawaki method', developed first 40 years ago by a Japanese botanist, reforesting allows densely packed carefully selected trees especially indigenous plants with 100% survival rates to grow in tiny plots of land in urban centers or even in household backyards. Member of the trust claims that the high-density forest acting as natural air conditioners can bring down ambient temperature by 2-3°C. Moreover, the high yield layered forest allows plants, insects, and birds to thrive as well as serve as oxygen generators for the cities with dirty/polluted air. The solution to air pollution, solid waste disposal and shrinking open spaces lies in urban reforestation, which in turn can beautify and clean up our cities.

Published on: January 12, 2022

Source: <https://www.nepalitimes.com/here-now/mini-forests-to-make-kathmandu-more-liveable/>

Kathmandu's notorious traffic jams: A few solutions

Kathmandu residents on an average travel just less than five kilometers a day. But the numbers of vehicles plying on the roads of Kathmandu are beyond carrying capacity and resulting heavy traffic jams. To address this, authorities have been widening roads. However, we need a planning for a sustainable transport system promoting clean. Solutions to the traffic jam lies here. If only the traffic lights were functional, traffic jams would be reduced by more than 40 %. Providing minibuses or other similar vehicles at fixed points and routes, reducing the number of private vehicles, and organized parking will take a large number of vehicles off the road. If a single underpass could reduce the traffic jam by 80 % (Kalanki), we need to plan on scaling it up.

Published on: January 6, 2022

Source: <https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/kathmandus-notorious-traffic-jams-a-few-solutions>

Will electric vehicles Solve Kathmandu's traffic congestion

Government of Nepal's plan to switch to light electric vehicles by 2031 has been reflected in the budgets for the fiscal year 2021-22. When we have private vehicles as major means of transport, only the shift from fossil-fueled to electric vehicles may not help in curbing the ongoing pollution or traffic problems. Experts urge we need to look at more efficient modes of transport including investments/promotion of clean public transport and charging stations.

Published on: January

Source: <https://kathmandupost.com/money/2022/01/23/are-electric-vehicles-solution-to-kathmandu-s-traffic-congestion>

Scraping old diesel vehicles: a must to curb rapidly worsening air quality

A comprehensive diesel vehicle emission inventory has been developed for Nepal covering the period of 1989 to 2018 i.e., 29 years. The researchers found most diesel-powered buses and other public transport vehicles deployed in Kathmandu are old and poorly maintained. Further, fuel quality tests showed that 80% of the diesel sampled exceeded the sulphur limits. Previous studies had also shown that poor quality fuel, high traffic congestion, old and poorly maintained diesel vehicles were responsible for a large increase in transport-related emissions in recent years. Moreover, timely servicing and maintenance of diesel vehicles could lower black carbon emission by 1.4 times and PM 2.5 by almost three times. The researchers suggest that the highly polluting and obsolete diesel transport vehicles be phased out through scrappage policies involving compensations or other schemes with incentives for vehicle owners.

Published on: January 9, 2022

Source: https://www.nepalitimes.com/latest/nepal-must-scrap-old-diesel-vehicles/?fbclid=IwAR2Ny11Rx0brTJ8FEZyDd_BtbNnrnm0AfejhQw8xx5_6769n0XdMIzlopeus

Fossil fuels: Economic and Environmental burden for Nepal

Fossil fuel driven vehicles are not just polluting our air. Rather they have imposed huge economic burdens with the ballooning trade deficit. Nepal imported petroleum products worth NPR 106.10 billion in the first five months of the current fiscal year, a jump of 115.9 percent compared to the same period in the last fiscal year. Moreover, with global fuel price hikes, we are left helpless and have no other choices than opting for price adjustment which further results to the inflations ticking up.

Published on: January 22, 2022

Source: <https://kathmandupost.com/money/2022/01/22/nepal-oil-says-it-is-bankrupt-further-price-rises-foreseen>

A drive to boost domestic consumption of surplus hydro-electricity

Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) with an aim to boost the domestic hydro-electric consumption will allow the electric car owners to install a separate household meter. Further, the vehicle owners may even opt for a larger capacity meters if the approved load for domestic use is insufficient. Moreover, NEA is also increasing the load limit for industries and offering additional meters for tenants on multi-storey apartments. It has also reduced electricity leakage to about 2% down to that of last year.

Published on: January 27, 2022

Source: <https://www.nepalitimes.com/business/promoting-evs/>

Battling climate change: Soil protection is the key

Soil is considered to be the largest store of terrestrial carbon on earth, and its ability to store carbon could have a big impact on climate change. Nepal, where changes in the temperature and precipitation are already experienced at a faster rate than the global average, soil's vulnerability to erosion, desertification and other degradation processes is heightened. Protecting soil is key to mitigating climate change, Soil study and research programs are urgently needed to inform people about the origin, properties, types and capabilities of soil, Overgrazing and clearing grasslands and rangelands for cultivating crops should be stopped. Adopting practices such as conservation tillage, residue management and multiple cropping by framers and other stakeholders can reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the soil.

Published on: Jan19, 2022

Source: <https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/battling-climate-change-soil-protection-is-the-key>

Climate Change or Crisis?

Flood, Landslide, drought, soil erosion, forest fire and many more climate induced disasters are frequent these days and hitting the records. Globally, various efforts are being done for the climate actions but they seem to be ineffective. The earth temperature has already reached 1.1 degree Celsius and possibly will increase more in near future. It's better to call Climate Crisis than Climate change since, it is adding extra burden to the people and environment. Nepal's contribution in global GHGs emission is comparatively very low than the richer nations. As, Nepalese economy

and the livelihood is based on Nature, Nepal will face more impact than the highly emitter nations. So, to be climate resilient it is necessary to introduce climate change adaptation plan.

Published on: Jan 21, 2022

Source: <https://annapurnapost.com/news/climate-change-1-194642>

Good reads:

EU scientists say 2021 was world's fifth-hottest year on record

Source: <https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/eu-scientists-say-2021-was-world-s-fifth-hottest-year-on-record/>

China warns of air pollution risk during Beijing Winter Games

Source: <https://thehimalayantimes.com/world/olympics-china-warns-of-air-pollution-risk-during-beijing-winter-games>

Simple policies can help to reduce air pollution deaths

Source: <https://airqualitynews.com/2022/01/21/simple-policies-can-reduce-fine-particle-air-pollution-and-deaths-researchers-urge-urban-leaders/>

Nepal struggles to balance nature and industry

Source: <https://www.nepalitimes.com/banner/nepal-struggles-to-balance-nature-and-industry/>

Editorial Team;

Barsha Parajuli – Program Coordinator at Clean Energy Nepal

Ronish Pandey – Campaign Coordinator at NYCA

Layout;

Prakash Lama – Media Coordinator at NYCA



info@cen.org.np



cen.org.np



@CE_Nepal



@CENepal

Copyright © 2022 CEN

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