

Clean Air News

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Kathmandu: Living and breathing in one of the world's most polluted cities



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Looking down on Kathmandu from Swayambhu temple, a sacred Buddhist pilgrimage site in the west of the city, — last year and in 1967. Green spaces have been built over, and mountains have disappeared behind a veil of smog. In 2018, Nepal ranked as having the worst air quality of the 180 countries in the global Environmental Performance Index.

Nepal's capital Kathmandu is one of the fastest-developing cities in the world — and also one of the dirtiest. The city's inhabitants are battling with the health consequences.

Source:

<https://www.dw.com/en/kathmandu-living-and-breathing-in-one-of-the-worlds-most-polluted-cities/g-50312783> , 16 September, 2019

Action plan being prepared for Pure and Clean Air



The Ministry of Forests and Environment has moved forward works pertaining to the Kathmandu Valley Air Quality Management Action Plan with a vision of a Kathmandu Valley with pure and clean air. The Ministry's Department of Environment is preparing the action plan to ensure the right of the citizens to live in a clean and healthy environment by preventing and controlling air pollution in the Kathmandu Valley.

In this connection, the Department on Wednesday held an interaction cum discussion programme with the stakeholder bodies and the environment experts regarding the air quality management action plan for the Kathmandu Valley. Suggestions were also collected from the stakeholders and experts on the occasion. Minister for Forests and Environment Shakti Bahadur Basnet expressed the belief that the action plan prepared after extensive consultations with the stakeholder bodies and the experts would help identify the problems related to air pollution and the ways of addressing them through wider coordination.

Stating that the policy and the laws have been made for pollution control and the discussions have been moved ahead regarding the structural arrangements. He suggested setting the goal of pollution control in big cities of the country on the basis of the action plan. National Planning Commission (NPC) member Dr Krishna Prasad Oli said pollution has crossed the limits in the Kathmandu Valley and stressed on the need of carrying out human activities in such a manner that the present human needs are fulfilled without damaging the environment for the future generations.

Dr Oli also reiterated on implementing the recommendations derived from research and on conducting public awareness programmes by reaching to the educational and industrial community. Secretary at the Ministry of Forests and Environment, Dr Bishwanath Oli said the goal of the interaction and discussion was also to revise and improve the related action plan which had been already prepared before this to fine tune it to the coun-

try's changed context. He believed the suggestions from the experts would be useful for the government to take decision. The Department had prepared the related action plan in 2017 but it was not implemented.

The action plan has the objective of minimizing pollution from the transport sector, the construction activities and the industries, reducing the air pollution through environment-friendly waste management and minimizing the in-house air pollution. Similarly, raising public awareness on the situation of air pollution, its causes, impact and ways of reducing and preventing it, developing support system for the air quality management decision, managing the air pollution in emergency situations and ensuring the economic resources for air pollution reduction by strengthening policies, laws and the structures are the other objectives of the action plan.

As per the data shared by the Department, the air quality in Kathmandu Valley is far below the national air quality standard determined by the government. Various studies have shown that the risk of diseases caused by air pollution is increasing in the Kathmandu Valley. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 37,000 people died due to diseases attributed to air pollution in Nepal in 2018. A study conducted by the Department in 2017 showed that transportation vehicles, dust on the road, industries, brick kilns, construction activities, open burning of agriculture residues and other wastes were among the main sources of air pollution.

Source: www.hakahakionline.com, 12 September, 2019

NEA to Install 50 Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

With the rising number of electric vehicles on the streets of Kathmandu, Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) is planning to instal 50 charging stations for electric vehicles across all seven provinces within a year and a half.

Of late, electric vehicles have captivated public attention with growing number of people interested in buying such automobiles.

“The demand for electric vehicles has doubled in the past year,” said Pramod Bhandari, senior executive manager of Agni Incorporated Private Limited, the authorized distributor of Indian automaker Mahindra in Nepal.

There are more than 41,400 electric vehicles across the country, according to Bhandari. Of them, there are 35,000 two-wheelers, 5,000 three-wheelers, more than 650 cars, 750 safe tempos and four buses.

The number of electric vehicles is likely to go up in the days to come because of tax exemption by the government. Besides being environment-friendly, the government has introduced policies to promote electric vehicles. The government has exempted road tax for electric vehicles while the customs duty on their imports is very low compared to the vehicles operating on fossil fuel.

Stakeholders claim that more people are keen on buying electric vehicles but they are hesitating to buy vehicles due to the lack of charging stations. Currently there are four charging stations and all of them are privately-owned. Two of the charging stations are located in the Kathmandu valley and are designed especially to charge electric buses. The remaining two stations are in Kurintar of Chitwan and



Nagarkot of Bhaktapur.

The charging stations outside Kathmandu can charge cars only.

NEA is looking for places where it can set up charging stations without having to pay any rent.

“We are planning to operate charging stations in places such as government offices, parking areas of public schools and other public places,” said Pramod Rijal, deputy chief of NEA’s Energy Efficiency Program.

“We are currently in the last stage of issuing a call for tender for setting up charging stations,” said Rijal. The work should be completed within a year and a half, he added.

Economists and environmentalists believe the use of electric vehicles in Nepal will not only help control air pollution but will also improve the country's GDP as Nepal has a huge potential to generate hydro-electricity.

According to Rijal, the charging stations will be fully automated. Individuals will be able to charge their vehicles themselves and make payment through QR codes, online payments and other similar systems.

The cost of charging electric vehicles is currently Rs 7-8 per unit.

Source: www.myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com, 13 September, 2019

Euro VI Standard Fuel in Local Market From April



Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) will soon start supplying high-quality Euro VI standard petroleum products in the domestic market.

As the Indian government is switching to the Bharat Stage (BS) VI standard petroleum products, which is equivalent to the Euro VI standard, from April across the country, implementation of this decision of the Indian government will automatically ensure the supply of Euro VI standard fuel in Nepal.

“The Indian government has already announced to substitute the BS IV with BS VI from April next year. As Nepal solely imports petroleum products from India, substitution from BS IV to BS VI in India also means the same in Nepal,” informed Birendra Goit, spokesperson for NOC.

The Indian government had upgraded to Euro IV standard petrol and diesel in

July 2017. In line with India, NOC had started supplying Euro IV standard fuel in the domestic market from the same time.

Euro VI is the European fuel emission standard succeeding Euro V standard petroleum products. However, India is switching directly to Euro VI standard fuel from Euro IV standard. Fuel of Euro VI standard is said to be environment-friendly and crucial to curb vehicular pollution.

Regarded as high-grade fuel, emissions from petrol and diesel with Euro VI specifications contain low amount of sulphur, hydro-carbons, carbon monoxide and other particulate matters, helping to control pollution.

However, NOC informed that Euro VI standard petroleum products will be slightly costlier compared to the price of Euro IV petroleum prod-

ucts.

“NOC and Indian Oil Corporation have already agreed to start supplying Euro VI standard fuel in Nepal as soon as the Indian government switches to this standard of fuel,” informed Goit.

Though the public will get Euro VI standard petroleum products from April next year, NOC has already opened the door for customers who consume fuel in bulk to import the Euro VI standard fuel from India.

Meanwhile, NOC has said that the supply of petroleum products is normal and expressed commitment to ensure effective supply in the domestic market during Dashain.

Source: www.thehimalayantimes.com, 3 October, 2019

President Authenticates Environment Protection Bill-2019



President Bidhya Devi Bhandari has authenticated the Environment Protection Bill endorsed by both Houses of the Federal Parliament.

A press statement issued by the Office of the President yesterday said President Bhandari authenticated the bill in accordance with Article 113 of the constitution.

The bill has come into effect following its authentication.

This law has stipulated a provision of compensation to any person or organisation harmed by hazardous waste or pollution emitted against the standards set by the government.

As per the act, if any person or organisation suffered any loss or damage due to sound pollution, harmful waste or due to air pollution by anyone, the victim may file an application at the concerned authority at local level demanding compensation from the polluter.

“While examining the application, if it is

confirmed that loss or damage has been caused, the executive of the local level shall order concerned person or organisation or the proponent of a project to pay reasonable compensation to the victim depending on the gravity of the harm,” states Section 33 of the act.

The act also prohibits carrying out of any project without getting the environmental impact assessment or initial environmental examination approved by the local level or the concerned agency. If any person or organisation is found to have committed such offence, prescribed authorities can punish him/ her with fine ranging from Rs 500,000 to one million rupees, depending on the gravity of the case.

The act also envisions to protect fundamental right of every citizen to live in clean and healthy environment, with proper use and sustainable management of natural resources.

According to the act, the government

may declare any place with a natural heritage, rare wildlife, plants or places with biodiversity and places of historical and cultural significance as protected area by issuing notice in the Nepal Gazette.

The government may also issue an order to maintain any particular area as an open space or a green zone with the objective of protecting the environment. The act also empowers the government to restrict the movement of general public in and around a place where harmful materials or waste have been stored or disposed, by declaring it ‘polluted’ area.

“The government may participate in carbon trading as per international treaties and agreements with foreign governments or institutions, professional bodies and private sectors,” the act states.

As per the act, the government is empowered to set standards to reduce or mitigate adverse impacts of pollution or hazardous waste by vehicles, machines, equipment, industrial enterprises, hotels and restaurants.

Source: thehimalayantimes.com, 12 October, 2019

Air Cleaner, But Smog Remains a Problem, Minister Says

Despite significant improvements in air quality, China still faces a grim situation in air pollution control because of high emissions, the head of the country's top environmental watchdog said.

The 74 major Chinese cities that adopted a new air monitoring standard in 2013 saw their average concentration of PM2.5-tiny particulate matter that is a health hazard-drop by 41.7 percent over the past six years, Li Ganjie, minister of ecology and environment, said at a news conference on Sunday.

The average density of sulfur dioxide in cities above prefecture-level across the country declined from 35 micrograms per cubic meter to 14 mcg per cu m last year, down by 60 percent, he said.

The marked improvement came through continuous efforts made by the central government. While establishing regional coordination procedures for air pollution control and enhancing law enforcement, the government has also been beefing up the transformation of industry, transportation, energy and land use structures, he said.

China has managed to achieve extra-low emissions for 80 percent of its coal-fired power. The proportion of non-fossil-fuel energy in primary energy consumption increased to 14.3 percent last year, he said. Air quality, however, is still sensitive to changing meteorological conditions because polluting emissions remain high, he said.

Li said such conditions affect air quality, making it 10 percent better or worse, if pollutant discharge remains unchanged. In some months, the effect could be up to 30 percent in certain cities annually, he said.

The improvement made shows that China has been on the right track for air pollution control, but "the situation remains really not that optimistic" and "even grim". The air quality still depends on meteorological conditions, he said.

Source: www.chinadaily.com.cn, 30 September, 2019

Good Reads

1. [Our skin is bearing the brunt of Kathmandu's bad air](#), Smriti Shrestha, www.kathmandupost.com, 26 September, 2019
2. [Southeast Asia's Deadly Annual Haze is Back](#), Luke Hunt, www.thediplomat.com, 26 September, 2019
3. [Kathmandu's Air Pollution Is Killing Its People Quietly](#), Arun Budhathoki, www.kathmandutribune.com, 4 October, 2019
4. [Climate change and air pollution: Our health depends on a healthy environment](#), Health Engine, <https://bit.ly/2OwcArr>, 4 October 2019

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Clean Air Network Nepal (CANN) is a network of organizations and professionals involved in air quality management in Nepal. The goal of CANN is to increase the ability of professionals and other interested stakeholders to effectively address the problems of air pollution in Nepal. We encourage you to join hands with us to expand our campaign for clean and better Air. CANN is a country network of Clean Air Asia and hosted by Clean Energy Nepal. For more information: www.cen.org.np; www.cleanairinitiative.org

To contribute articles, news items, or event announcements for the next issue, send an email with the complete details and URL source to info@cen.org.np

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