

# Our Concern

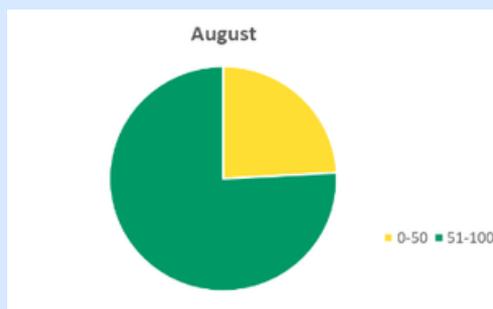
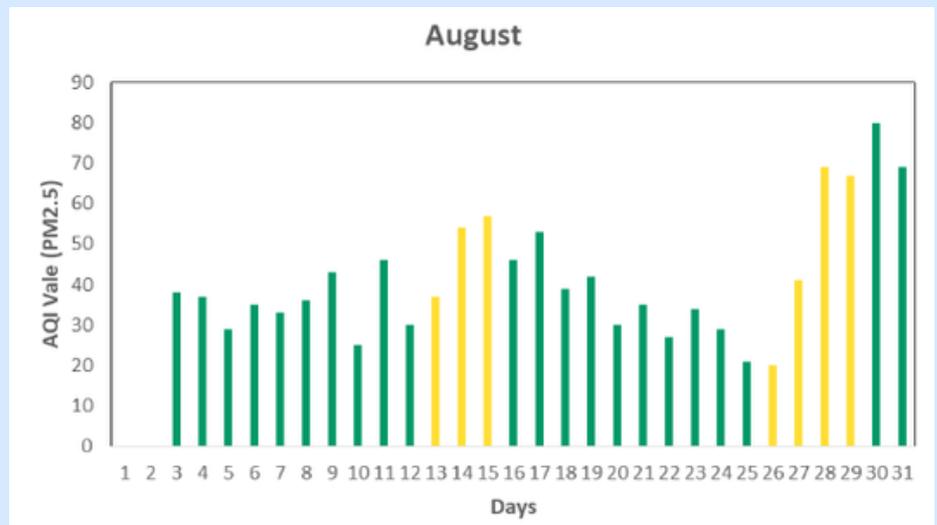


## E-Newsletter August 2023

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.

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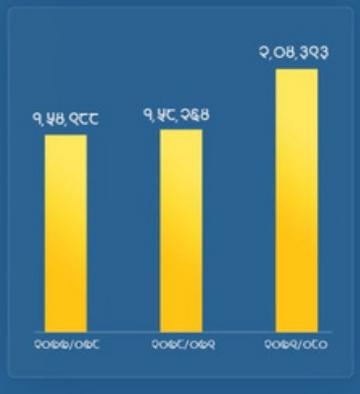
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- There were 22 days when the AQI value was below 50 and the air quality posed little to no risk.
- There were 7 days with moderate air quality with AQI values between 51-100, which is acceptable but can cause moderate health issues for a very small number of people.
- Data for 2 days were missing.

## Increase in the use of e-cook stove

तीन वर्षयता भिन्निका विद्युतीय चुल्हो



The business of electric cookstoves has increased throughout the country. Until a few years ago, the number of electric ovens imported from around 1000 per year has increased to 100,000 in recent days. From star hotels and small restaurants to home kitchens, induction and infrared are being used as alternative cook stoves. Due to the increasing use of electric stoves along with cooking gas, businessmen have said that there has been excitement in its import and sale.

Source | August 9th

## Air pollution greatest global threat to human health, says benchmark study

The University of Chicago's annual Air Quality Life Index reveals that fine particulate matter (PM) remains the "greatest external threat to public health". PM2.5 comes from wildfires, vehicles and industrial emissions, leading to lung disease, heart disease, strokes and cancer. Globally, South Asia is the worst impacted region. Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan are in order the top four most polluted countries in terms of annualized, population-weighted averages of fine particulate matter, which are detected by satellites and defined as particles with a diameter of 2.5 microns or less (PM2.5). In Bangladesh, people stand to lose 6.8 years of life on average per person compared to 3.6 months in the United States.



Source | August 28th

# Air Pollution and its threat to health are spread unequally spread throughout the world



As global pollution edged upward in 2021, so did its burden on human health, according to new data from the Air Quality Life Index (AQLI). If the world were to permanently reduce fine particulate pollution (PM2.5) to meet the World Health Organization's (WHO) guideline, the average person would add 2.3 years onto their life expectancy—or a combined 17.8 billion life-years saved worldwide. In no other location on the planet is the deadly impact of pollution more visible than in South Asia, home to the four most polluted countries in the world and nearly a quarter of the global population. In Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan, the AQLI data reveal that residents are expected to lose about 5 years off their lives on average if the current high levels of pollution persist, and more in the most polluted regions—accounting for more than half of the total life years lost globally due to pollution.

Source | August 29th

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## Climate change and increased lightning

Jaleshwar used to be cooler during the summer than nearby Janakpur, and slightly warmer in the winter than upcoming settlements close to the Chure foothills such as Bardibas. The groundwater was clearer, sweeter and easier to extract. Floods did play havoc with everyday life sometimes, but the eastern part of town remained relatively dry even during heavy monsoons. All that seems to be changing and at an unprecedented rate.

It has been the hottest and longest summer in living memory. The delayed and below average monsoon was predicted, but very few had imagined that the rice paddies would remain dry till early August. Extremities of weather have begun to impact the agrarian life of the borderlands.



Source | August 1st

# Most of Tarai is reeling under unusual mid-monsoon drought



Kalikamai Rural Municipality is among the dozens of local units in the Madhesh Province that have been facing an acute drinking water scarcity due to extreme drought-like conditions during the mid-monsoon season. According to the rainfall data of the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology, most districts in the Tarai, except the districts of Koshi Province, have been witnessing severe to extreme droughts. The department had predicted below-average rainfall this year. Last year too, districts of western Tarai, including Banke witnessed drought during the entire monsoon season and freak rains post-monsoon inundated farmlands. Nepal is one of the world's most vulnerable countries to the climate crisis and has witnessed multiple extreme weather events over the past decade and a half.

Source | August 1st

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## “From Drought to Deluge: Mustang’s Mystifying Flood Crisis Unveiled”

On August 13th, a severe flood occurred in the Muktinath area of Mustang, Nepal where the terrain is fragile, and heavy rainfalls have an immediate impact, which caused a significant damage to the Kagbeni tourist and religious area. Mustang is an area situated close to high mountains, which largely intercept rain-producing clouds, resulting in less rainfall. However, the excess water has started to fall in the region, leading to landslides and floods.

This situation occurred when the Kaligandaki river was blocked due to a landslide, causing an initial halt in water flow followed by a subsequent increase. Although rainfall data from the nearest monitoring station, Jomsom, shows that rainfall is high, there is not enough information on the impact of the high-altitude rains. Over the past ten years, the communities of Leyte, Jomsom, Tiri, Jhong, and other areas in the Mustang district have experienced five major floods, leading to extensive damage. Climate experts argue that climate change and the rise in temperature could be the significant reasons behind such incidents.



Source | August 15th

# Urban flooding calls for urgent measures

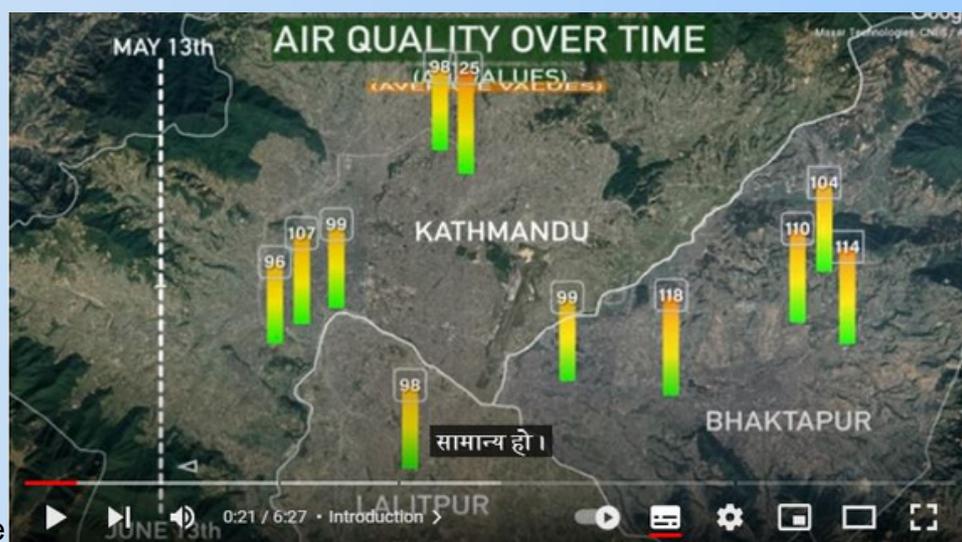


Flood occurs every year in the heart of cities. The blame rests on a foursome of factors including concretisation, rapid urbanisation, waste mishandling, and the looming presence of climate change. The chaos unfolds for a few weeks or a month during the monsoons, only to retreat and then reappear with the next rainy season. Kathmandu Valley has been built up rapidly and most of these settlements are very haphazard with little planning. The transformation in land use over the past several decades has heightened the vulnerability of urban centres like Kathmandu and Bhaktapur to regular flooding. A study by the SANDEE and the ACD between 2017 and 2020 revealed that rapid urban population growth leads to cities spreading into flood-prone lowlands. Additionally, climate change intensifies rainfall, overwhelming drainage systems, and careless solid waste disposal clogs drains, causing waterlogging.

Source | August 16th

## ‘How better buses will save lives in Nepal’

Kathmandu's stunning beauty contrasts with its persistently hazy skies due to severe air pollution. Despite the monsoon season, air quality never reaches safe levels, leading to 42,100 deaths in Nepal in 2019. Transportation, particularly motorcycles, contributes significantly to pollution. While electric vehicles seem logical, Nepalis prioritize improved public transportation like Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems. BRT could alleviate congestion, making public transport more appealing. Bhushan Tuladhar, an environmental activist, advocates for a BRT system to tackle the chaos in Kathmandu's transportation sector. Investment and action are essential to save lives and improve air quality.



[Video Link](#)

Video By CEN Team

# Good Reads

Some supplemental readings if you are interested in diving deeper into contemporary environmental issues in Nepal and beyond. Take a peek for a broader array of topics.

[Pollution reduces life by five years](#)

[Deprived communities in England experience higher emissions of air pollution](#)

[Nepal ranks third in the list of countries with extremely high air pollution, reducing the average life expectancy by 4.6 years](#)

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