

# Our Concern



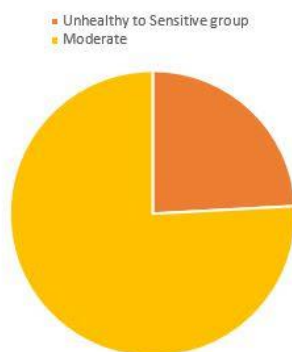
E-Newsletter May, 2022

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)



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



- None of the days in May had AQI satisfactory (AQI values from 0 to 50) i.e. air pollution posing little or no risk.
- Most of the days i.e. 22 days in the month of May had AQI values ranging from 51 to 100. During such period, air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants, there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people who are unusually sensitive to air pollution
- 7 days were unhealthy for the sensitive group with AQI values reaching 101 to 150. Active children and adults, and people with respiratory diseases, such as asthma, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion during such period.
- Data for 2 days were missing.

# News and Views

## Prolonged drought and the degrading AQI

In March and April 2021, the quality of air in Kathmandu was unhealthy and occasionally hazardous due to the fire events in different parts of Nepal. Recently, research by a team in collaboration with the Central Department of Hydrology and Meteorology, Tribhuvan University, on the inter-annual variability of spring fire focusing on southern Nepal from 2001 to 2020 found that prolonged drought conditions have resulted in frequent and severe fire events across the country. Reduced spring precipitation and an extremely high temperature in the case of Nepal enhance evapotranspiration from vegetation and provide more combustible fuels. Scientists have been continuously working on fire prediction mechanisms by using the latest climate models. However, their efforts have not yielded much in the way of results.

Published on: May 5

Source: <https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/prolonged-drought-leading-to-fire-events>

## Global Pollution: A Death Threat

Pollution of all types is blamed for 9 million fatalities worldwide each year, with the death toll attributed to dirty air from cars, trucks, and industry rising 55% since 2000, as per a new study. The deaths attributed to pollution worldwide, are the same figure as that of cigarette smoking and second-hand smoke combined. Further, modern types of pollution are rising especially in developing countries where the population is most dense (e.g. Asia) and where financial and government resources to address the pollution problem are limited. However, the growing ambient air pollution and chemical pollution causing deaths are overlooked because death certificates don't state air pollution to be the cause of death. Based on calculations derived from the Global Burden of Disease database and the Institute for Health Metrics & Evaluation, India and China lead the world in pollution deaths with nearly 2.4 million and almost 2.2 million deaths a year.

Published on: May 18

Source: <https://thehimalayantimes.com/environment/global-pollution-kills-9-million-people-a-year-study-finds>

## Why are Nepalese not keen on electric cooking?

Nepal imported cooking gas worth NPR 52 billion in the first 10 months of the year amid calls for making kitchens electric. In 2020-21, Nepal spent NPR 36 billion to import 477,422 tonnes of LPG. The LPG import bill is expected to double by the end of this fiscal year. Despite the hassles associated with LPG purchases, Nepali consumers are still reluctant to cook food using electricity. Irregular supply and high per-unit cost in Nepal have prevented Nepalese from switching to electricity from liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). A cheaper and uninterrupted supply of electricity should be ensured besides the reduction in the electricity tariff for people to switch from LPG to electric cooking.

Date: May 28

Source: <https://kathmandupost.com/money/2022/05/28/why-are-nepalis-not-keen-on-electric-cooking-outages-and-power-tripping>

## Climate change: 'Fifty-fifty chance' of breaching 1.5C warming limit

There is around a 50/50 chance that the world will warm by more than 1.5C over the next five years (UK Met Office Researchers). At COP26 in Glasgow last November, governments reiterated their commitment to keeping "1.5C alive." But scientists claimed that with around 1C of warming, the world is already experiencing significant impacts such as the unprecedented wildfires seen in North America, and drastic heat waves hitting India and Pakistan. Met Office Researcher predicts that for any one year in the period, the likelihood of reaching the 1.5C level is around 48% or close to 50-50. Also one of the coming years will likely break the 2016 and 2020 records for the warmest year.

Published on: May 10

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-61383391>

## Unusual rains are expected this year, authorities stress preparedness

As per the seasonal forecast by the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology, this year, 55 to 60 % more rainfall is likely in some places of the country. In the past few years, the country has been receiving more rainfall in short durations—an abnormal phenomenon that is slowly becoming a new normal. This could further trigger more incidents of floods and landslides. National Disaster Reduction and Management Authority has prepared the National Monsoon Early Preparedness and Response Work Plan- 2022 to deal with disaster incidents and advised the provincial and local governments to start preparations. Every year, floods and landslides cause huge loss of life and property, but the country's disaster preparedness has not been well organized.

Published on: May 16

Source: <https://kathmandupost.com/climate-environment/2022/05/16/unusual-rains-expected-this-year-authorities-stress-preparedness>

### **Expert stress on emphasizing climate diplomacy**

Speakers including Ganesh Shah (former minister of science and technology), Gunaraj Dhakal (Renewable Energy Confederation of Nepal), Raju Pandit (Prakriti Resource Centre), Manjeet Dhakal (Head of LDC support team at climate change), Milan Dhungana, (MofFE), during online interaction programme organized by Nepal Weekly, highlighted that climate diplomacy is an important aspect that Nepal should consider to add in its methodology to coordinate with other countries for receiving technical and financial cooperation and exchanges.

Published on: May5

Source: <https://www.paschimtoday.com/news-details/49566/news.php>

### **Climate change to make drought longer and more common**

Frequency of drought will continue to rise as a result of human-caused climate change, according to the United Nations, with water scarcity already affecting billions of people throughout the world. The U.N. desertification agency, estimates that roughly one third of the world's population - 2.3 billion people - is already facing water scarcity, with that number expected to double by 2050. A report noted that Africa is the hardest hit continent, with the Americas, India and Australia also highlighted as areas of particular current and future concern.

Date: May 12

Source:<https://thehimalayantimes.com/environment/climate-change-to-make-droughts-longer-more-common-says-un>

### **Who will pay for climate disasters?**

Nepal, one of the countries most vulnerable to the impacts of the climate emergency witnessing several events like Melamchi flood of 15 June last year and several hours of a historical hailstorm on 20 February earlier this year in Pokhara just the two latest examples of climate-related loss and damage in Nepal. Nepal's adopted two-pillar climate policy; adaptation and mitigation does not have provisions to compensate for the losses and damages. With climate change impact now crossing the adaptation threshold, loss and damage have become unavoidable across vulnerable countries. This requires the third pillar for a climate solution, namely Loss and Damage (L&D), a concept which gained momentum during the COP26 in Glasgow last year.

Date: May 30

Source: <https://www.nepalitimes.com/opinion/who-will-pay-for-climate-disasters/>

**Good reads:**

Air Quality in Nepal

Source: <https://airsouthasia.org/open-data-and-air-quality-toolkit/air-quality-in-nepal-can-open-data-really-help/>

Mt Everest in Business Class

Source: <https://www.nepalitimes.com/banner/mt-everest-in-business-class/fbclid=IwAR323yn9YKZEpAM8YddIO55VGpmzRJtRs7eAQ8c6AIN2SXWLWAldKwCsXs8>

Oceans are hotter, higher and more acidic, climate report warns

Source: <https://thehimalayantimes.com/environment/oceans-are-hotter-higher-and-more-acidic-climate-report-warns>

Climate change: impacts in Agriculture in-spite of increased investment

Source: <https://purwanchaldaily.com/>

Atrocity of inflated Fuel prize

Source: <https://annapurnapost.com/news/atrocities-due-to-high-fuel-prices-204702>

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