

# Clean Air News

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## Valley's Air Quality Degrading

The deteriorating air quality of Kathmandu Valley has started manifesting in public health. Health officials say cases of pulmonary diseases has shot up in the recent time, and air pollution is one of the main factors to blame.

“Prolonged exposure to air pollutants has increased the cases of respiratory and pulmonary diseases,” said Dr. Arjun Karki, pulmonary specialist at Patan Academy of Health Sciences.

The quality of air in the Capital city is degrading due to the rise in the number of vehicles, growth in construction works and increased human activities.

Improving air quality, however, has not been a priority for the government. The air quality monitoring centres are no longer operational.

The bowl-shaped Valley traps pollutants, especially during the winter as there is no wind or rain, Araniko Pandey, an atmospheric scientist, said. “The shape of Kathmandu Valley prevents the free movements of air particulates and cause pollutants to remain within.”

Pandey said there are around 120 brick kilns operating in the Valley and they are one of the main factors for air pollution. Similarly, use of diesel-powered generators during power outage hours is also contributing to the air pollution. The use of diesel generators have increased in Nepal since 2006 with load shedding hours going up every year.

Nepal Oil Corporation sold around 299,419 kilolitres of diesel in fiscal year 2006/07 which reached 648,512 in 2011/12, mostly for use in generators.

According to a study by Clean Energy Nepal, diesel generators in the valley generate around 200 Megawatts of power and consume 30-40 percent of total diesel sale in the Valley. The reports further states that diesel generators across the country generate some 531 megawatts of power, while some 200,000 diesel generators were imported in last three years.

Coordinator of Clean Energy Nepal Prashant Khanal said that the ongoing road expansion in the Valley and increased use of private vehicles have also contributed to the air pollution.

“We need to encourage public transportation if we want to stop the air quality in the Valley from further degrading,” he said.

**Source:** [www.ekantipur.com](http://www.ekantipur.com), January 9, 2014

*(Correction: The preliminary findings of the study shows around 65% of total diesel sales in Kathmandu Valley goes to generate electricity from DG sets.)*

## Parking Violations Fills KMC's Coffers with Rs 1.2m Month

The Kathmandu Metropolitan City has collected a total of Rs 1.2 million in fines from two-wheelers for parking in no-parking spaces in just one month after the authority decided to free up 20 parking spaces in the metro city.

Along with the decision to create cost free parking spaces, the KMC had also imposed a hefty fine of Rs 1,000 if vehicles, especially two-wheelers, were found violating parking regulations. The total amount collected and the fine charged for each violation translates to 1200 two-wheelers fined in the span of one month.

“Vehicles must be parked in spaces marked for the purpose. We have clearly marked parking spaces with yellow color. If any vehicle is parked outside the marked line, the vehicle is carried to the Metropolitan Traffic Police Office, and released only after the owner pays the fine,” said Dhana-pati Sapkota, chief of Implementation Department at KMC.

As for now, the fine has been imposed on two-wheelers only.

The KMC is operating 20 legal parking lots free of cost since December 27 for parking two-wheelers and four-wheelers.

The authorized parking lots include Piukha New Road, Shukrapath, New Road Stupa, Dharahara-Sundhara, Khichhapokhari (in-front of Everest Bank), Pako Pipalbot, Dharmapath, Pako Photo Concern to Rannuteswhor, inside RB complex, Durbarmarg, New Baneshwor Chowk-I,

Shankar Dev Campus, Kamaladi Khanepani, Naxal Balmandir, in-front of Tribhuvan International Airport Gate and Khulla Manch, among others.

“We have arranged the parking facilities to develop a self-parking culture among the city dwellers. The fine imposed has been instrumental in discouraging people from reckless parking and forcing them follow parking regulations,” said he.

“It is true that the parking has been made free in the metro city. But that does not mean people can park wherever they like. Currently, we have mobilized city police to ensure that vehicles are parked properly, but we want people to voluntarily park their vehicles in an orderly fashion,” he said. He further said that the large chunk of fines collected comes from the parking spaces in the core areas of the city, including New Road, Pako, Khichhapokhari and Dharmapath.

Though the authority’s free parking scheme had made a shaky start in its initial days, lately, there has been

some improvement in the management of parking spaces.

Ashish Gajurel, a traffic engineer, said, “Many vehicles have been fined for not parking in designated spaces. It shows that a large number of drivers lack the skill to park their vehicles properly in small spaces.”

Sapkota said the revenue generated from the fines will be used for developing.

**Source:** [www.myrepublica.com](http://www.myrepublica.com), January 27, 2014



## Disabled People Halt Construction of Disabled-Friendly Road

It has been more than two weeks that the construction of the first disabled-friendly road has been halted by none other than the disabled people themselves. The disabled people, who had been eagerly waiting for the construction to begin, are obstructing the process because it is said that some portion of their organization building would be damaged during the course of construction.

The construction of the first disabled-friendly road called Khagendra Disabled-Friendly Road, was started from November 2013 and is supposed to be completed by mid-January 2014.

Rishi Ram Dhakal, coordinator of Khagendra Disabled Friendly Road Campaign Implementation Committee (KDFRCIC), said that the road touched the stairs of the NDA buildings and the organization would rather prefer the width of the road to be 18 meters from the planned 22 meters. Or, they want

the authorities to construct a footpath over those stairs.

“Members of Nepal Disabled Association are also in the KDFRCIC. They should have raised this issue before we started the construction,” said Dhakal. “We had shown them road designs and they had approved it. But now they are raising several issues and disrupting the construction of the road.”

The committee has estimated a total budget of Rs 3 million for the road construction, 50 percent of which would be provided by the government. And the rest of the budget was collected through different fund raising programs.

According to Bidhur Thapa, a member of the NDA, they need disabled-friendly roads in every manner. If the stairs will be destroyed for constructing footpaths then how will they reach to the shutters of the building without the stairs? “Our main concern is a proper disabled-

friendly road. If they destroy the stairs and build footpath, then that road won't make any differences in our lives,” said Thapa.

Arun Panta, designer of the road sketch, said that if the width of the road is contracted to 18 meters than the road will not have space for restrooms for disabled people, trees, among others.

Sudharshan Subedi, chairperson of National Federation of the Disabled Nepal (NFDN) said that the disabled-friendly road will be constructed as per the design. No compromises will be done in its construction. The NDA members have to understand that and allow the construction work to go ahead.

“Rule is for everyone. The NDA members do not have the right to disrupt the construction,” said Subedi.

**Source:** [www.myrepublica.com](http://www.myrepublica.com), January 12, 2014

## Coordinated Efforts Must to Reduce Road Accidents

Home Secretary Janardan Nepal today underlined the need of coordinated efforts among the government agencies and concerned stakeholders to tackle with road accidents across the country.

Addressing a two-day interaction programme on ‘Traffic Management and Accident Reduction’ organised by the Directorate of Traffic Police and Nepal Police in the capital today, Nepal said it was high time concerned agencies operated, regulated and controlled official driving schools, put traffic management system on top priority, produced skilled drivers and improved technical aspects

and vehicle parking system to manage traffic and reduce road accidents in the country.

“Awareness-raising programmes among transport entrepreneurs, workers and general public are equally necessary to combat road fatalities,” Nepal said.

Inspector General of Police Upendra Kant Aryal said technical problems were also adding to road accidents and underscored the need to fix the road networks which are in bad shape. Nepal Police will also focus on the investigative aspect of road accidents to reduce the

fatality rate, he added. According to police statistics, road accidents claimed as many as 1,800 lives in the past one year across the country.

At the programme, DIG Yadav Adhikari, Director at the Directorate of Traffic Police, presented a working paper on the upcoming capacity development programmes of traffic police and various activities to reduce road accidents.

**Source:** [www.thehimalayantimes.com](http://www.thehimalayantimes.com), January, 17, 2014

# Better Air Quality Conference 2014 and 8th Regional EST to be Organized in Sri Lanka

## Better Air Quality Conference (BAQ 2014)

BAQ 2014 is co-organized by Clean Air Asia, the Ministry of Environment and Renewable Energy of Sri Lanka, and Clean Air Sri Lanka together with development partners and other supporting organizations from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> November 2014 in Bandaranaike memorial international conference hall, Colombo, Sri Lanka

BAQ is the leading event on air quality in Asia, covering the key sectors of transport, energy, industry and climate change, with a particular emphasis on government policies and measures. Policy makers, practitioners and industry leaders meet at BAQ to network, innovate, learn and share experiences. Past BAQs have proven to leverage change; influence policies, initiate new projects and programs across Asia and not the least establish innovative partnerships.

For more information: [www.baq2014.org](http://www.baq2014.org)

## 8th Regional EST Forum in Asia

The 8th Regional EST Forum in Asia is co-organized by UNCRD, the Ministry of Transport of Sri Lanka, and the Ministry of the Environment of Japan. The event aims to call for more progress in EST as a key driver for sustainable development to enhance national productivity and human development, while protecting the environment and local ecosystems.

The Regional EST Forum in Asia, the high-level intergovernmental policy forum, provides a strategic knowledge

platform to address policy and institutional challenges concerning multi-sectoral environment and transport issues inviting 24 member countries as well as international organizations, development banks and donors, NGOs and other key stakeholders. It has been very successful in bringing together key line ministries and agencies such as environment ministries, transport ministries, and health ministries to promote an integrated approach to deal with the region's transport and related sustainable development issues, with the adoptions of *Aichi Statement (2005)*, *Seoul Statement (2009)*, *Bangkok 2020 Declaration (2010-2020)*, and *Bali Declaration on Vision Three Zeros – Zero Congestion, Zero*

*Pollution, and Zero Accidents (2013).*

For more information: [www.uncrd.or.jp](http://www.uncrd.or.jp)



# China's 'Airpocalypse' Kills 350,000 to 500,000 Each Year

The equivalent of the population of Bristol dies each year in China because of lethal air pollution, according to Chen Zhu, who was the country's Health minister until last year.

Mr Chen, who is also a professor of medicine and a leading molecular biologist, is the most senior government official to put a human cost on the smog that regularly clouds Chinese skies. Until recently, any mention of deaths relating to pollution was strictly censored.

Mr Chen's claim came in a commentary in December's issue of the Lancet, co-written with Wang Jinnan, Ma Guoxia and Zhang Yanshen from the Ministry of Environmental Protection.

"Studies by the World Bank, WHO, and the Chinese Academy for Environmental Planning on the effect of air pollution on health concluded that between 350 000 and 500000 people die prematurely each year as a result of outdoor air pollution in China," Mr

Chen and his fellow authors noted.

He added that air pollution has become "the fourth biggest threat to the health of Chinese people" (behind heart disease, dietary risk and smoking) and that lung cancer is "now the leading cause of death from malignant tumours in the country".

Mr Chen said China "now produces the largest number of major pollutants in the world", and accounts for half the world's coal consumption.

The estimate that the authors quoted, however, is lower than the 2010 Global Burden of Disease Study, also published in the Lancet, which estimated that airborne particles smaller than 2.5 microns in diameter (PM2.5) caused 1.2 million premature deaths in China in 2010 alone.

Mr Chen's commentary said the Chinese government has now enacted "tough measures" in order to fight the smog.

"According to research results from the Chinese Academy for Environmental Planning, 200,000 people will be prevented from dying prematurely each year if the annual level of PM in Chinese cities reaches the first level standard of 40 micrograms per cubic metre, as set out in the newly revised China National Ambient Air Quality Standards," he wrote.

Between 2002 and 2011 the incidence of lung cancer in Beijing near doubled. Nationwide, deaths from lung cancer have risen 465 per cent in the last three decades.

Mr Chen's commentary is particularly notable because in 2007 Chinese censors removed a claim that air pollution caused 350,000 to 400,000 premature deaths from a joint report between the World Bank and the Chinese government.

**Source:** [www.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk), January 7, 2014

## Good Reads:

1. [Public Vehicles Hold Key to Better Transport Management in Capital](#): Sangeet Sangroula, myrepublica, January 1, 2014
2. [Mismanaged Development: Living in a city of challenges](#): Nitya Pandey, myrepublica, January 17, 2014
3. [Green is the Colour](#): Rahul Karki, Rajesh Bista, ekantipur, January 8, 2014

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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](http://www.cen.org.np); [www.cleanairinitiative.org](http://www.cleanairinitiative.org)

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