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Stakeholders Meet For Sustainable Urban Mobility In Kathmandu

Krity Shrestha

Clean Energy Nepal (CEN) and Clean Air Network Nepal (CANN) in collaboration with Ministry of Physical Planning, Works and Transport Management (MoPPWTM) has organized "Kathmandu Sustainable Urban Mobility Forum" on 21st December at Hotel Shanker. This forum is in sequel with the "Kathmandu Sustainable Urban Transport Forum" organized by CEN/CANN. The Mobility forum supported by Fredkorpset-Norway, informed and sensitized stakeholders on sustainable urban transportation, shared approaches/initiatives and forged collaboration and enhanced coordination among various governmental, non-governmental and private sectors working on urban transportation. The program also discussed the challenges, way ahead for improving urban transport system.

Mr. Tulasi Prasad Sitaula, Secretary, Ministry of Physical Planning, Works and Transport Management was the key note speaker and there was active participation from the key stakehold-

ers from different ministries, divisions, non-governmental organizations, private sectors and academia. Speaking at the occasion, Mr. Sitaula mentioned that "The air pollution and urban pollution is at a precarious state, the people wearing masks while going on morning walk explains the gravity of pollution. We at MoPPWTM are working to make transportation more sustainable, but its is only possible if the government and people work together ". Also, Mr Bhushan Tuladhar, South Asia Technical Advisor for UN HABITAT briefed the participants overall Air Quality and Transport Scenario of Kathmandu Valley. He showed various data on the haphazard urbanization, deteriorating air quality and highlighted the need for immediate action. "Kathmandu, because of its bowl shaped topography, traps the pollutants (temperature Inversion) especially during winter. It is somewhat similar to not flushing the toilet for 4 months. And we are worsening it further adding pollution."

He mentioned.

He technical sessions included 3 presentations on Non-Motorized Transport by Mr. Jeff Olsen (author of "The Third Mode" Book), "Strengthening the Public Transport System in Nepal" by Mr. Prashanta Khanal (CEN/CANN) and on "Status of VET Program in Nepal" by Ms. Krity Shrestha (CANN/CEN). The presentations were followed by strong panel discussions. The forum ended with key recommendation to strengthen the issues of Emissions and Urban Mobility . Around 50 participants were present from different sectors.

Source: <http://cen.org.np/December21.2012>



Nepali Army Ordered To Ditch Cars To Cut Pollution

Nepal's senior army officers have been ordered to ditch their cars at least once a week when coming to office - to reduce air pollution and traffic jams.

From now on, every Friday they must walk, cycle or use public transport to go to work in the capital Kathmandu. Army chief Gen Rana set an example by riding a mountain bike from his official residence to the office.

The capital lies in a bowl-shaped val-

ley and suffers from high levels of dust pollution.

The army move was welcomed by environmentalists, who also urged the government and NGOs to follow the suit.

Gen Rana asked all army officers - from lieutenants to generals - based within Kathmandu valley to refrain from using private vehicles on Fridays.

He said the move would also help

promote healthy lifestyle.

A known cycle-enthusiast himself, Gen Rana on Friday donned cycling gear and pedalled about 3km (two miles) from his residence to the army HQ, passing through dusty and busy roads.

The army chief - who looked quite comfortable - was joined by a number of senior army officers along the way.

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Better Air Quality Conference In Hong Kong

Improvements in air quality improvements in Asian cities that were visible in the last decade have stalled and the levels of fine particulate matter (PM10), the most important air pollutant in terms of health impact, are back to pre 2000 levels and still climbing in

many of the cities in Asia. Information released by Clean Air Asia, a leading regional network on air quality management in Asia at the Better Air Quality 2012 conference shows that 70% of cities in developing Asia for which air quality data is available are not meeting the most lenient World Health Organization (WHO) PM10 interim target of 70µg/m³. The World Health organization in the most recent (2008) Global Burden of Disease study estimated that ambient (outdoor) air pollution caused 1.3 million premature deaths worldwide per year; 800,000 of which are in Asia. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in its Environmental Outlook 2050 report, published earlier this year, warns that urban air pollution could become the biggest environmental cause of premature death by 2050 with the number of premature deaths doubling if no actions to improve air quality are implemented. The majority of the additional deaths are expected to be in China and India, making urban air quality very much an Asian problem.

However, efforts to reduce Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂) and Nitrogen Dioxide (No₂) are working. "We are very concerned about the increase in PM10 levels over the last three years and that seven out of ten cities in Asia have unacceptably high levels of PM10 pollution", says Sophie Punte, the Executive Director of Clean Air Asia. "The economic rebound in Asia following the global economic crisis of 2008 has accelerated sales of both passenger and freight vehicles as well as power generation and this is putting pressure on urban air quality in the region. We welcome the promulgation of PM2.5 standards in a number of Asian countries, including China, and the tightening of air quality standards that has been agreed on, in for example

India, and the plans of Hong Kong SAR to do so. What is important now is that these standards are implemented without delay."

Clean Air Asia announced its intention at BAQ 2012 to prepare together with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and key international and regional environmental and health experts a Roadmap for Better Air Quality in Asian Cities. The Roadmap will cover five key areas: (a) Setting and strengthening national ambient air quality standards; (b) Air quality monitoring and



emission inventories; (c) Health impacts and their social and economic cost; (d) Clean air plans, policies and measures (assessing cost-effectiveness and co-benefits); and (e) Communicating air quality information through Clean Air reports and other ways. The Roadmap expected to be endorsed in 2016 by governmental air quality stakeholders in the biennial governmental meeting on urban air quality organized by Clean Air Asia and UNEP.

The Better Air Quality Conference in Hong Kong, which from 5th to 7th December, brought 700 local and overseas experts, policy makers and practitioners together to share their experience. "Hairy Nose" campaign was also launched at the event. "Hairy Nose" Campaign basically focuses that our nose hair protect us from foreign particles/pollutants and if the pollution keeps on increasing, we will need more nose hairs / hairy nose to survive. The campaign has "Don't Adapt to Air Pollution" as its punch

line. Sophie Punte of Clean Air Asia, think otherwise about nose hairs and call for a fight from each one of us, rather than to concede defeat to air pollution.

"We see that people will start wearing masks or buy air filters for their houses and cars, and move away from heavily polluted areas if they can afford it. In short they are adapting to air pollution rather than doing something about it", she remarked. "We see that there is increasing political will in Asia to address air pollution but without broad based popular support such political will cannot succeed". The video can be watched at the [link](#). Also, Motor Vehicle Emissions Workshop 2012 was also organized along with BAQ Conference.

The event was organized by Clean Air Asia, Hong Kong polytechnic University and Hong Kong Environment Protection Division (EPD) in association with Asian Development Bank and World Bank.

Nepal's Role in BAQ Conference:

Nepal also participated in the BAQ Conference. Nepal was a member of country roundtable discussion. Mr. Shankar Adhikari, Joint Secretary for Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment leded the Nepali delegation. In the country round table Nepal has prioritized the following major activities for the year 2013-2014- (1) Awareness and Advocacy Program For Promotion of Non Motorized Transport (Walking and Cycling) in Kathmandu (2) Improvement of Public Transportation system (3) Revamp/ Revive the Air Quality monitoring Stations in Kathmandu. Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment will play a key role of coordination in attaining the activities to be done to achieve the target.

More updates can be found on : <http://www.cse.polyu.edu.hk/> and <http://www.baq2012.org>

Sans Blueprint, Road Expansion Going On An Ad Hoc Basis

City people must be wondering what a messy Kathmandu will look like in a few years' time. Though roads have been widened in every nook and corner, there is no vision for the city.

Although more than a dozen of authorities are involved in the [road expansion](#) drive and city planning, none of them has a clue on how to develop the infrastructure. Many amenities—green belts, cycle lanes, and disabled-friendly footpaths—have been promised but the planners are unaware of where and how these will be built.

Officials responsible say they don't have a blueprint for a future Kathmandu. Most of them say they are doing only what they were instructed. "We don't know the post-reconstruction face of the city. We are only doing the job assigned to us following set standards and simple engineering sketches," says Gopal Khadka of the Kathmandu Road Division at the Department of Roads.

Authorities involved in the expansion drive claim it is not their job to develop a blueprint. Chief of Kathmandu Valley Town Development Implementation Committee Bhaikaji Tiwari says no design has been developed as to how the city's infrastructure

will be constructed. "Our task is to demolish structures encroaching upon the road and hand over the construction job to other authorities. It's the duty of future planners to formulate a design," says Tiwari.

Tulasi Prasad Sitaula, secretary at the Ministry of Physical Planning, Works and Transport Management, however, does not agree that works were being done without a plan. He said they have developed a design for the road stretch from Maitighar to Tinkune. "We have a proper design for the Maitighar-Tinkune road and we are developing further designs for other roads in the Valley," said Sitaula. He added that Chinese engineers were surveying and developing a design for the Ring Road. "It will surely have bicycle lanes and a green belt," he asserted. "It is next to impossible to develop bicycle lanes and green belts," counters Shyam Kharel, head of the Kathmandu Valley Road Improvement Project. "Even if there is a blueprint for the two, it is impossible to construct them along the Ring Road for lack of space. We have compromised a lot even in the building of standard footpaths due to the space crunch," says Kharel. "The few bicycle lanes planned will have dead ends.

We can just expect to build disabled-friendly footpaths and crossings, which is our priority."

While the authorities are discussing on a regular basis the future of the expansion, there are some officials who aren't satisfied with the overall formulation and implementation of the plans. They said too many authorities were involved, resulting in the mess. Keshav Sthapit, commissioner of the Kathmandu Valley Development Authority, says the construction is in jeopardy. "We haven't developed anything of a future plan," laments Sthapit. "Meetings have been worthless as nothing related to the city's future plan has been discussed," he added.

Source: [http://www.ekantipur.com/December 17, 2012](http://www.ekantipur.com/December-17,2012)

1,279 Traffic Rule Violators Held In 3 days

Traffic police personnel in civvies have caught 1,279 drivers for breach of traffic rules in the past three days, the Metropolitan Traffic Police Division said. According to the MTPD, the cops booked 403 offenders on the first day (Tuesday), 215 on the second day and 661 offenders on the third day. DSP Pawan Giri, MTPD spokesperson, said the new initiative is proving effective in catching the offenders, who play hide and seek with on-duty cops in uniform.

During the period, plainclothes traffic cops have recorded 11 instances of violations related to lane discipline, pick up and drop rules, traffic signals, use of mobile phone while driving, seat belt rules, violation of

manual signals of on-duty cops, carrying passengers beyond vehicles' capacity, mechanical modification of motorcycles, U-turn and driving four-wheelers with doors open. Plainclothes traffic cops equipped with communication sets, cameras and breathalyzers have fanned out across the Capital with major focus on busy intersections at Koteswor, Babar Mahal, Maitighar, Keshar Mahal, Singha Durbar, Baneshwor, Durbar Marg, Thapathali, Tripureswor, Putalisadak, Sundhara, Ratna Park and Bag Bazaar. Plainclothes cops also take photos of rule violators as evidence.

"We also impound vehicles of rule violators and keep them in custody for 24 hours. They

are required to pay fine and participate in an hourlong lecture about traffic safety before getting released the next day," DSP Giri said.

Source: [http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/December 13, 2012](http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/December-13,2012)



Kalanki-Koteswor Road To Be Expanded To 10 lane Road

The nine-kilometer Kalanki-Koteswor road in Kathmandu is to be expanded to a 10-lane road with grant assistance of the Government of China. An agreement to expand the section of the ring road was signed here on Tuesday between the Department of Roads and Shanghai Construction Group.

Director General of the Department of Roads Dinkar Sharma and Deputy Director General of Shanghai Construction Group Shen Caxing signed the agreement on behalf of their re-

spective organization.

The expansion work would begin within the next three months as per an agreement reached in principle to expand the ring road during the official visit of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao to Kathmandu in January earlier this year.

The expansion is estimated to cost Rs. 4 billion and it would include a four-lane each road on the left and the right, and one lane each for cyclists and pedestrian with three overhead

bridges in between, according to Director General Sharma.

"Some 200 major workers and necessary equipment will be brought here from China and as it would take at least two months to make arrangements for their accommodation, the work will begin after three months", added Sharma quoting a section of the bilateral agreement.

Source: <http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/December 18, 2012>

65% Of Air Pollution Deaths Occur In Asia: WHO Study

A new global study ranks air pollution as one of the top 10 killers in the world, with 65 percent of the air pollution deaths occurring in Asia. The findings of the new Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study 2010 (GBD) were released at a public event at the Royal Society of London on Friday. The launch coincides with the publication in *The Lancet* of seven original research articles and eight commentaries describing the findings. Based on the latest tally, air pollution causes 3.2 million deaths worldwide, a whopping 300 percent increase from the 800,000 estimate in 2000. The new estimates of particulate air pollution are based on ground-level measurements, satellite remote sensing, and global chemical transport models to capture population exposure.

In South Asia, air pollution has been ranked as the sixth most dangerous killer, just below blood pressure, tobacco smoking, indoor air pollution, poor intake of fruits, and diabetes. Outdoor air pollution is a leveler that makes everyone – rich or poor – vulnerable, says The Center for Science and Environment (CSE) based in New Delhi, India. The GBD estimates that over 2.1 million premature deaths and 52 million years of healthy life lost in 2010 are due to fine particle air pollution in Asia. 1.2 million deaths occurred in East Asia which is in throes of high level of economic growth and motorization, and 712,000 deaths occurred in South Asia which is at the take-off stage.

These figures are much higher than the combined toll of 400,000 in EU 27, Eastern Europe, and Russia. The CSE recommends that

National Ambient Air Quality Standards be legally binding across India. Better fuel quality and in-use vehicle management could also cut the health impact of motorization, it says. India must also control and cut the explosive increase in vehicle numbers by scaling up public transport, non-motorized transport, and compact city planning, while also cleaning up critically polluted areas, it adds. The latest GBD results were produced by more than 450 global experts and partner institutions including the World Health Organization, Johns Hopkins University, and the University of Tokyo.

Source: <http://www.asianscientist.com/December 17, 2012>

New Measures Expected To Ease Traffic

With a view to reducing congestion in the Capital's roads, Metropolitan Traffic Police Division has begun barring cargo vehicles from plying Ring Road from 7 am to 8 pm. DSP Pawan Giri, MTPD spokesperson, said the rule enforced from yesterday prevents trucks, tippers, tractors, power tillers and pick-ups. "The move is aimed at ensuring a smooth flow of vehicles and effective traffic management in the city marred by willful parking, and loading and unloading of goods and construction materials on the roadside," DSP Giri said. However, the cargo vehicles can ply the 27.2 km

Ring Road without any obstruction. "We have notified transporters about the new rule and asked them to abide by it. This rule shall not be applicable to cargo vehicles operating on public holidays," he said, adding that the MTPD had taken the transporters into confidence before taking the step.

According to MTPD records, 1,200 cargo vehicles used to enter the Ring Road on an average day. This rule does not apply to long-route buses transporting passengers and vehicles operating along the Araniko Highway from Purano Bus Park. MTPD said vehicles on

educational, religious and inspection tours will have to inform the Traffic Control Room (103) before entering Kathmandu. "After getting information, traffic police will make arrangement for such vehicles to enter the Ring Road area," DSP Giri said. MTPD officials said this move is expected to ensure smooth traffic in the city, especially during rush hours.

Source: <http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/December 13, 2012>

Nepal Army..

Contd. From Page 1

Gen Rana took over the reins of nearly 100,000-strong army three months ago.

Commenting on the new initiative, army spokes-

man Brig Gen Suresh Sharma said: "We are observing Fridays as a clean environment day."

Nepalese environment activists say the levels of dust pollution in the Kathmandu area are up to seven times higher than the permissible limit set by the country's health authorities.

While welcoming the army drive, they also point out that the lack of dedicated cycling lanes remains a major handicap to the campaign.

Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk>, December 21, 2012



[Glimpses of Kathmandu Sustainable Urban Mobility Forum II:](#)

(From Left) 1. Ms. Amita Thapa Magar, CANN welcoming the stakeholders 2. Stakeholder participants of the forum 3. Ms. Anjila Manandhar, CANN clarifying the objectives of the forum 4. Mr. Bhusan Tuladhar, UN-HABITAT giving an overview of Air Pollution in Kathmandu 5. Mr. Jeff Olsen, Alta Corp giving presentation through Skype 6. Mr. Prashanta Khanal, CANN presenting on public transport 7. Ms. Kritya Shrestha, CANN presenting on Vehicle Emission Testing Program

(On Page 1) Panel Discussion on Public Transportation and Non Motorized Transportation

Good Reads:

1. [Freak Streets](#) - My Republica Daily, December 10, 2012
2. [The Elusive Makeover](#) - Samik Kharel, The Kathmandu Post, December 21, 2012
3. [Road Expansion Half Complete. Work satisfactory](#) - Narayan Prasad Neupane, My Republica Daily, December 22, 2012
4. [Autism and Early Exposure to Traffic Pollution Linked](#)- Melissa Healy, Los Angeles Times, December 1, 2012
5. [Protest Demanding Disabled-friendly Public Infrastructure](#) - Pratibha Rawal, My Republica Daily, December 14, 2012

Compiled by : Kritya Shrestha
Edited by : Anjila Manandhar and Prashanta Khanal

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

Clean Energy Nepal

POB No. 24581, 140 Bulbule Marg,
Thapagaun, Baneshwor,
Email: info@cen.org.np
Web: www.cen.org.np
Tel: 977-1- 4464981

Building Partnership for Clean Air

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