



# Clean Air News

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**Night Bus Service 3**  
to Close in inner Routes

**Ring Road Expansion to Begin on June 1**

**Ministry all set to 4**  
tighten In Use Vehicle Emission Standards

**Monitoring Beijing's Air Quality 5**  
is as Easy as flying Kite

**Good Reads 5**

## Sajha Bus Service In The Groove

After landing into sporadic troubles numerous times before and after beginning the service, Sajha Yatayat has successfully weathered the initial hiccups operating for one month.

The bus operators said the service has made profit together with the support it has gained from the passengers and other authorities concerned.

According to Sajha Yatayat Cooperatives, 268,982 passengers travelled in the Sajha bus in the first month averaging 8,966 commuters each day.

Of the ticket sales, the total revenue collected by Sajha in a month was Rs 3,826,156, out of which Rs 3,169,447 was spent on salaries of staffs, fuel and regular maintenance. The net profit earned by the service in the first month

stood at Rs 656,708.

Manager at Sajha Cooperatives, Mahendra Pandey, said Sajha buses are in high demand among passengers. "We have fewer buses in service and the demand is very high," said Pandey.

"We plan to add more buses and routes in the future." Out of the existing two routes, Lagenkhel-Buspark seems more popular among the passengers, carrying 170,959 people, while the Kalanki-Airport route ferried 97,823 passengers.

"The airport pick-up has also been popular among the arriving and departing passengers at the international airport," said Pandey.

This month Sajha also constructed 63 poles to signify bus stops around the two routes in cooper-

ation with the traffic police. It has also urged the regular and prospective passengers to buy the tickets and follow the rules while using the service. "We request everyone to travel with tickets and enjoy our service for months to come," said Pandey.

The buses currently ply on two routes—Satdobato-Lagankhel-Jawlakhel-Tripureshwore-Ratnapark-Maharajgunj-Basundhara-New Buspark route and Kalanki-Kalimati-New Baneshwore-Tinkune-Airport. Both the routes have two-way services from 5am to 11pm.

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## 1,239 Trees to be Felled for 9 km Ring Road Expansion

Nirjana Sharma

More than 1000 trees along the Kalanki-Koteshwar section of the ring road are set to be chopped down in a few days to expand the existing four lane roads to eight lanes. The government of China has pledged to provide Rs 3.7 billion for the widening of the 9km stretch that is set to begin in June. The District Forestry Office

(DFO), Lalitpur and Kathmandu have permitted the Department of Road (DoR), Lalitpur to cut down as many as 1,239 trees that were planted in the 70s.

Hundreds of mimosa trees have been beautifying the ring road area for around half a century now. But by the time the Kathmandu-ites start missing their beauty

next year, around 500 mimosa trees are likely to be set in people's home in the form of furniture or doors and windows as the DFO will begin cutting down the trees from Sunday.

According to Assistant Forest Officer Lon Nath Timilsina of the DFO, Lalitpur the permission

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Sajha Bus...

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Sajha charges a minimum fare of Rs 15 and can go up to Rs 20, according to the distance travelled, while the discounted minimum fare for students is Rs 10. Passengers are also enabled to transfer tickets or change routes with the tickets purchased. It operates 16 buses, which

are compliant with the Euro-III emission standards, while each bus boasts 55 seats and an 15 additional strap-hangers for standing passengers. The buses also have automated doors and two CCTV cameras and display screens for advertisements, public notices and entertainment. Sajha had halted its bus services in 2002 and politicisation and overstaffing

were blamed for the failure.

Its now under a new management and was established as a cooperative in 2011 with an executive board elected from general members.

Source: [www.ekantipur.com](http://www.ekantipur.com), May 15, 2013

1239 Trees....

Continued from page 1

letter to the DoR, Lalitpur would be sent on Friday.

"We have estimated that total 23000 cubic feet of air space would be vacant after the trees are cut down," said Timilsina. Of the total, 8000 cubic feet space has been covered by the mimosa, when measured by the cord unit, he added.

The government had planted the trees, as per the green belt program after the construction of the 27 km ring road, says Shyam Kharel, chief of Kathmandu Valley Road Improvement Project (KVRIP).

There are some other trees such as the Australian species silky oak, fir, gum tree, maple and some local varieties such as birch.

Both the forest offices of Kathmandu and Lalitpur would provide technical assistance to the DoR to cut down the trees and manage them. But the auctioning of the trees would be undertaken by the DoR. According to Timilsina, most of the trees of Australian variety are not of much use except for fuel and timber. "But the mimosa trees that are full grown can be auctioned for making furniture and wooden crafts," he added. Meanwhile, the conservation activists have warned of a stir if the government

does not find an alternative to knocking down the trees. Urban birds' habitat in danger. With the authorities preparing to demolish the trees along the ring road, urban birds are set to lose their habitats. According to Hem Sagar Baral, director of the Bird Conservation Nepal, as many as 110 species of birds are found in Kathmandu. Among them, 100 species of birds have been nesting in the Valley.

The tall trees around the 27 km area of the ring road is home to cuckoo, house crow, jungle crow, black kite, owl, small cranes and creepers. Similarly, bats are also among the major species in those trees.

Baral said that the government must ensure that the trees would be replaced in the area once the construction works are over. He also stressed that local tree species should be planted in the area to protect our native vegetations.

"Instead of newly introduced species from foreign countries, the government must plant local trees such as Lapsi, Chilaune, Kattus that would conserve our bio-diversity," said Baral.

The government could also plant the flowery trees at the busy road sides of

the capital, which can also be used as a medium of tourism. "The authorities need to realize that the greenery around the city reflect the way of life of Nepalis and speak of their positive attitude."

the road. The locals had provided their land at that time when the government wanted to develop the ring road green belt decades ago.

Source: [www.myrepublica.com](http://www.myrepublica.com), May 23, 2013



## Night Bus Service To Close In Inner Routes

After urging the government several times to help settle the fare issue and improvise the routes, the night bus service operators are planning to close their inner city commuter services and run only on the Chakrapath circle. Operators, citing huge losses, have confirmed to halt the services by this week on the Satdobato-Lagankhel-Ratnapark, Koteswor-Sinamangal and Bansbari-Ratnapark routes.

According to Dharma Raj Rimal, the Bagmati zonal coordinator of the National Federation of Nepal Transport Entrepreneurs (NFNTE), the government failed to meet their demands while the Kathmandu Metropolitan City undermined the problems. "We will close the routes in two days. Our demands were never taken seriously and we cannot afford more losses," said Rimal. Two weeks ago, the transport entrepreneurs warned the government of shutting the service, unless their demands were met.

Transport Management officials say no requests of fare hike in the bus service

have been received. "We would surely like to support the night bus service. But we haven't received any formal request for fare increment or the routes," said Sharad Adhikari, Tech director at the Department of Transport Management. He added, however, that there is no valid logic for fare increment as other recently introduced services were not demanding a hike and are operating till 11pm.

The Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) granted the NFNTE Rs 4.5 million at the launch of the service in August last year. Earlier, the government had made commitments to increasing the fares by 40 to 50 percent after three months of operation which have not materialised, even after repeated requests from the operators. "Authorities always claim of the subsidy granted, which is a small amount to run the service. Our investment is a lot more as a single bus is priced at Rs 3.5 million. And we are running 14 of them," said Rimal. Operators claim that a round trip costs Rs 1,500, including the fuel price and allowance for drivers and conductors, while they are making only Rs 700 per trip. The monthly

operating cost of a bus comes close to Rs 51,000 but it has only been making Rs 15,000 to Rs 22,000.

However KMC, one of the pioneers of the service, has been saying it is not in a position to grant any more subsidies. "It's a historic service and we will do as much as possible to keep it running. But we cannot inject more funds," said Sadhu Ram Bhattarai, the KMC spokesperson. KMC claims that it has regularly been urging the government to segregate the night bus service from others.

The operators say they will continue to run the buses on the Ring Road even by incurring losses. "We don't want the service to die, since we initiated it with hard work. We will continue to serve on the Chakrapath route with six buses at the moment," said Rimal, warning that the services would also close down by the end of this fiscal year if nothing was done about their demands.

Source: [www.ekantipur.com](http://www.ekantipur.com) May 29, 2013



## Ring Road Expansion to Begin on June 1

The much talked about plan to widen the Ring Road in Kathmandu is scheduled to start on June 1. According to officials of the Department of Roads, the Chinese contractor has been making the final preparations to begin work by setting up its office and summoning technicians from China.

Last month, the contractor Shanghai Construction Group Company started survey work to widen the 2-km-long Koteshwor-Kalanki section as a model. Under the government's Ring Road Improvement Project, 9 km of the road between Koteshwor and Kalanki will be upgraded in the first phase.

"The contractor has informed us that it plans to start work on June 1," said Ashok Tiwari, chief of the Ring Road Improvement Project. He added that road widening, bridge improvement and building of an underpass at Kalanki would be done in

tandem in the first phase.

Initially, two 1-km sections on the Balkhu River-Kalanki and Ekantakuna-Koteshwor sectors will be expanded. Based on these models, the remaining 7-km section will be widened; and two other junctions, Kalanki and Satdobato, will also be improved for uninterrupted operation of vehicles.

The first phase of the improvement plan includes upgrading of the Koteshwor-Kalanki section to eight lanes with a four-lane main road, a two-way service lane, two-way bicycle track and two-way pedestrian path. The first phase of the widening work will take around 40 months. The government has been planning to upgrade the entire Ring Road with the support of China in three phases under the Ring Road Improvement Project.

The Roads Department and the Chinese contractor had signed a pact to upgrade the 9-km Koteshwor-Kalanki stretch last

December. Under the agreement, the government is responsible for clearing the space by removing water, electricity and telephone lines, but little progress has been made on this score, said department officials. Many trees remain to be chopped down too.

Last month, the government had directed Kathmandu Upatyaka Khanepani Limited, Nepal Electricity Authority and Nepal Telecom to relocate their service lines built on either side of the road. The offices of the district commissioners of Kathmandu and Lalitpur under the Kathmandu Valley Development Committee had issued a 15-day notice to clear a 31-m width on the Koteshwor-Balkhu-Kalanki stretch. Department officials said they would write to the concerned offices to remove the power and telephone poles.

Source: [www.ekantipur.com](http://www.ekantipur.com) May 23, 2013

## Ministry All Set To Tighten In Use Vehicle Emission Standards

Krity Shrestha

By the month of June, Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (MoSTE) is all set to tighten the In Use Vehicle Emission Standards. In Use Vehicle Emission Standards, are also greatly known as "Green Sticker Standards" in Kathmandu.

The current In Use Vehicle Emission Standards have been used from 2060 BS. With the new adoption of Euro III standards through Nepal mass Vehicle Emission Standards (NVEMS 2069), for new vehicles, and the In Use Vehicle Emission Standards still based on Euro I standards, the need of new standards has been greatly felt.

A steering committee has been formed under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (MoSTE) to upgrade the In Use Vehicle Emission Standards. The steering Committee includes representa-

tives and experts from different ministries, divisions and civil societies. Another technical committee has also been formed to propose the new In Use Vehicle Emission Standards. The technical committee is working on the standards proposed to the ministry by a research organization a few years back. MoSTE is also planning to purchase modern emission testing equipments for the In-Use Vehicles.

Apart from upgrading the In Use Vehicle Emission Standards, MoSTE is also planning to implement the In- Use Vehicle Emission Testing Program in 2 cities outside Kathmandu, Pokhara and Lumbini. "We are now working to set new air pollution standard. The present green sticker is just a symbolic step, said Mr. Keshav Prasad Bhattarai, Secretary of Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment." We are unable to fully control the quality of air in the valley. We are in the process of adopting new vehicle

emission standards. It will complete within a couple of months. There is the need to control the vehicles which have been running in the street for last forty years puffing heavy smoke."

Even with the old Green Sticker System, Implementation has been a big issue. Apart from that, the technical challenges such as less testing centers, faulty equipment, lack of calibration, corruption has been making the "Green Sticker System" ineffective. Hence, new In Use Emission Standards will not solve the problem, the whole system needs to be strengthened. Clean Air Network Nepal (CANN) had conducted a study on the "Status of Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance Program in Nepal" and provided a set of recommendations to overhaul the I/M system. The report can be accessed [here](#).

# Monitoring Beijing's Air Quality Is as Easy as Flying a Kite

The world's air pollution is a huge problem—worldwide, air pollution kills more people than malaria and AIDS combined—and its heart lies in Beijing, which regularly lies blanketed in pea soup smog. While the air pollution woes of major Chinese cities has received plenty of international attention, especially with China's economy at risk.

But what can the average person on Beijing's streets do to combat the problem, especially in light of the Chinese government's strict control over pollution monitoring? Well, why not fly a kite?

The video above was produced by ChinaFile, a project of the Center on U.S.-China Relations at Asia Society. It takes a look at the FLOAT project, which combines kites with cheap, lightweight air monitoring technology to put the power of studying Beijing's choking air into the hands of the people. FLOAT was

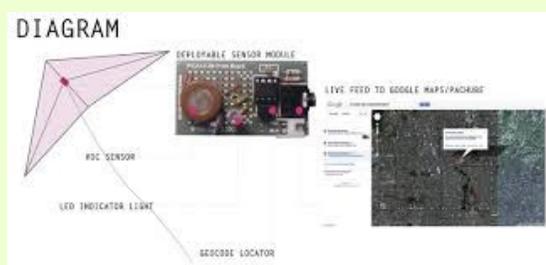
created by a pair of US graduate students—Xiaowei Wang, a master's student at Harvard's Graduate School of Design, and Deren Guler, a master's student of Tangible Interaction Design at Carnegie Mellon—to help combat China's crushing grip on air quality data.

In the style of the Twitter account @beijingair, rogue air monitoring groups have worked to distribute air quality data across the web and social networks. The problem is that high-grade monitoring equipment can be cost-prohibitive, which spurred the FLOAT organizers to combine a technology that's been used in China for millennia with cheap air monitoring tech.

Last year, Guler spoke with Joshua Frank (who shot and edited the above video) about FLOAT for Motherboard, and the two compared the kites to our favor-

ite air technology: drones. It's a valid comparison, as whether it's a quadcopter or a kite, lightweight, relatively inexpensive technology is making our skies more accessible than ever. In this case, with China's factories belching pollution in their quest to scratch the world's technology itch, there's something particularly perfect about using simple kites to raise awareness of the polluted air they're gliding through.

The video can be accessed [here](#).



## Good Reads:

1. [हफ्तामा एक दिन साइकल सरर](#) - Setopati, Blogpost, May 31, 2013
2. [Early Exposure to Air Pollution Tied to Higher Risk of Hyperactivity in Children](#) - Bonnie Rochman, Time, May 21, 2013
3. [Volunteers Chipping in to Ease Traffic Woes](#)— Pratikha Rawal, Republica, May 12, 2013
4. [Outer Ring road a hard sell among Valley Public](#) - Republica, May 14, 2013
5. [Obstacle Course](#) - Editorial, Republica, May 13, 2013
6. [Women Conductors at Sajha breaking Gender Stereotypes](#) - Nikita Tripathi, Republica, May 16, 2013
7. [China's Air Pollution: Is The Government Willing To Act?](#) - Frank Langfitt, Parallels, May 24, 2013

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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)

### Building Partnership for Clean Air

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