

# Clean Air News

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## A Stand to Promote Cycling



*Photo credit: Bijay Gajmer/Republica*

As part of their campaign to promote cycling in Kathmandu, a group of cyclists set up a bicycle stand in Durbarmarg on Wednesday. The cycle stand, which has been set up next to the main entrance of Annurpana Hotel, can accommodate ten cycles at a time.

Cycle City Network Nepal (CCNN) in collaboration with Clean Energy Nepal has established the cycle stand as part of their campaign entitled Manab Kendrith Yatayath Abhiyan (MAYA). CCNN has been organizing

campaigns to mount pressure on the government to develop cycle lanes in the capital. "After long protests, the government has developed cycle track in some of the expanded roads. But what the authority failed to realize is that we need a cycle stand, too. So, we have set up the stand to symbolically urge the government to develop the infrastructures in the city," said Sailendra Dangol, vice-president of CCNN.

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He said cyclists in the capital have been facing parking problems as the parking areas in the capital usually remain occupied with motorbikes and four-wheelers vehicles.

“We have parking spaces allotted for motorcycles and cars. But there is not a single bicycle stand,” complained he.

He said CCNN is likely to set up similar cycle stands in other parts of the capital including Basantapur area and Patan Durbar Square Area.

“Our initiative is to maximize use of cycles in the capital and protect environment. We believe that if we have the required infrastructures, many city dwellers will take to cycling in the future,” said he.

The cycle stand designed in the shape of car reads 1 car equals to 10 cycles.

“Symbolically, we want to convey message that cars are not eco-friendly and, on top of that, it occupies more space, causing traffic jams,” said he.

**Source:** [www.myrepublica.com](http://www.myrepublica.com),  
April 30, 2014

## Millions of Pollution Tax Fail to Serve Purpose

The Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (MoSTE) has failed to utilise around Rs 1.7 billion collected as pollution tax by charging 50 paise per litre petroleum product sold in the Capital in the past five years.

The Financial Act formulated in 2007 had provisioned pollution tax on fuel products such as diesel and petrol in the Valley in order to utilise it for programmes and activities focussed on pollution control and management in the Capital.

The Rs 1.73 billion collected from consumers between fiscal years 2008-2009 and 2012-2013 in the Valley has reportedly not been tapped

to control environmental pollution specially when the Valley is experiencing deteriorating air and water qualities causing severe impact on public health, said an annual report published by the Auditor General last week.

The Act had agreed to establish a separate fund for the collected taxes but the amount is being deposited to an account operated by the Ministry of Finance.

Developed countries, where taxes levied on pollution are commonly seen, encourage environment-friendly measures. The air quality in the Valley has severely deteriorated in the lack of control and prevention measures that include air quality monitoring stations and promotion of eco-friendly vehicles.

The AG's report adds that the Environment Protection Regulation (1997) requires every industry to get a one-year pollution control certificate from the Environment Ministry.

The ministry then conducts lab tests to give the industries certificates for another three-year period if the pollution guidelines are met.

However, for the past 16 years, the ministry has failed to issue such certificates and monitor the industries operating in the Valley.

**Source:** [www.ekantipur.com](http://www.ekantipur.com),  
April 22, 2014

## Traffic Police Starts Classes on Safe Driving for Microbus Drivers

With road accidents involving microbuses increasing in the Kathmandu Valley, the traffic police have started giving safe driving classes to microbus drivers and conductors from Friday to encourage them to drive safely.

The road accidents recorded in the last eight months at Metropolitan Traffic Police Division (MTPD) shows that 20 percent of the total accidents were caused by microbus drivers' negligence.

SP Basanta Raj Panta, spokesperson for the MTPD, informed that the safe driving classes are being organized as part of the road safety awareness campaign. Under the campaign, the authority has been organizing road safety awareness classes in the valley in the running fiscal year.

He further informed that the road safety awareness classes will be given to all the microbus drivers and conductors in the valley.

Many microbus drivers are still unaware of the traffic rules, road lane disciplines and other skills on safe driving, causing road accidents. So, the MTPD decided to provide the safe driving orientation classes to micro bus drivers, said he.

On Friday, a team of traffic police led by Police Inspector Rajendra Pokharel gave a class to microbus drivers and conductors affiliated with Naya Bato Thimi Microbus Sadhbhab Samiti at New Thimi. Pokharel is the chief of Public Awareness Section of MTPD.

"With the help of the orientation class, we want to make the drivers and conductors more responsible toward pas-

sengers and commuters," said he.

During the orientation class, the participants were given safe driving tips, and taught other traffic rules through the use of various graphics and footages related with road accidents. Over 200 participants had attended the orientation class.

Of the total 7,08,616 vehicles, the number of registered microbuses in the valley stands at 1,647.

After attending the orientation class, Roshan Shrestha, a micro driver, said, "I now realize the importance of following traffic rules. Violating the traffic rules can claim our life as well as that of others."

The MTPD has collaborated with different microbuses associations to organize the orientation classes. As majority of the drivers are busy during the day time, MTPD has been organizing the orientation class in the evenings.

"It is mainly because we do not want anyone to miss the class," said Inspector Pokharel.

Sanu Kaji Prajapati, Coordinator of Micro Buses of National Federation of Nepal Transport Entrepreneurs

One out of five microbus drivers is reported to be involved in road accidents in Kathmandu. Are the accidents occurring due to negligence of the drivers?

I do not completely agree that the road accidents involving microbuses are occurring only due to the fault of drivers. The valley roads are in sorry state. Due

to the ongoing road expansion, pedestrians have been forced to use road instead of footpaths. Roads are narrower and dusty. These factors are also contributing for road accidents in the Valley. So, I urge public not to blame drivers only.

What is the federation doing to minimize road accidents in the valley?

We have already directed all microbus associations associated with us to ask the drivers to operate vehicles responsibly. We are also collaborating with traffic police to train drivers on safe driving. I think the road safety awareness classes should be given to the drivers and conductors periodically.

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

## KVDA Hires Botanist to Select Trees to Adorn Expanded Roads

In the last two weeks, he has already visited over a dozen of nurseries looking for various saplings and spent hours studying characteristics of trees in the Kathmandu Valley.

Despite having worked as a botanist for almost two decades, Dr. Mahendra Nath Subedi does not remember working so hard just to select trees for any purpose.

“I would not have bothered much if I was to select saplings for my courtyard,” said the 62-year-old botanist. “However, selection of trees to be planted along the expanded road stretches in the capital valley is a different ballgame altogether.”

The Kathmandu Valley Development Authority (KVDA), the authority responsible for the infrastructural development and promotion of greenery in the valley, has hired Subedi to select the right kind of trees to be planted on the major thoroughfare of the city from Tinkune to Maitighar.

As part of the preparation ahead of the approaching summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), KVDA has decided to plant trees alongside the expanded roads to give a facelift to the city by promoting greenery.

It is probably the first time that the government authority is consulting with experts to select trees to be planted on the roadsides through scientific approach of KVDA.

He said the rampant plantation of trees in the city promoted greenery but did not provide beauty to the city.

“So, basically, I have focused on three major things for selecting trees. First, the trees should not be more than 6 feet tall and thick. Second, they should be environment friendly. Third, they

Subedi has already decided to include Maple trees. Apart from this, he is also selecting bushes and flower plants such Nerium (Aashare Phool) and Lagerstroemia plants to enhance the beauty



Picture credit: awgp.org

should also provide aesthetic pleasure,” of the capital city. said Subedi.

Around 400 trees are going to be planted on the Tinkune-Maitighar road stretch, according to KVDA. Each tree will be planted at a distance of 25 feet from the next.

“We are selecting only those species of trees which does not grow more than 5 to 7 feet tall and thick,” said Subedi. Thick steams obstruct the pedestrian movement and shadow the beauty of the city.

“Trees with thick leaves can absorb air pollution of the city. So, I am looking for trees that provide thick foliage,” said he.

Such plants will fill up the gap between the trees.

KVDA has planned to begin planting trees and bushes along the road stretch from mid-May.

**Source:** [www.myrepublica.com](http://www.myrepublica.com), April 25, 2014

# Asian Air Pollution Strengthens Pacific Storms

Researchers have found that pollutants are strengthening storms above the Pacific Ocean, which feeds into weather systems in other parts of the world.

The effect was most pronounced during the winter.

Lead author Yuan Wang, from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory at the California Institute of Technology, said: "The effects are quite dramatic. The pollution results in thicker and taller clouds and heavier precipitation."

Parts of Asia have some of the highest levels of air pollution in the world.

In China's capital, Beijing, pollutants frequently reach hazardous levels, while emissions in the Indian capital, Delhi, also regularly soar above those recommended by the World Health Organization.

This has dire consequences for the health of those living in these regions, but there is growing evidence that

there are other impacts further afield

To analyse this, researchers from the US and China used computer models to look at the effect of Asia's pollution on weather systems.

The team said that tiny polluting particles were blown towards the north Pacific where they interacted with water droplets in the air.

This, the researchers said, caused clouds to grow denser, resulting in more intense storms above the ocean.

Dr Yuan Wang said: "Since the Pacific storm track is an important component in the global general circulation, the impacts of Asian pollution on the storm track tend to affect the weather patterns of other parts of the world during the wintertime, especially a downstream region [of the track] like North America."

Commenting on the study, Professor

Ellie Highwood, a climate physicist at the University of Reading, said: "We are becoming increasingly aware that pollution in the atmosphere can have an impact both locally - wherever it is sitting over regions - and it can have a remote impact in other parts of the world. This is a good example of that."

"There have also been suggestions that aerosols over the North Atlantic affect storms over the North Atlantic, and that aerosols in the monsoon region over South Asia can affect circulation around the whole of the world."

**Source:** [www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com), April 14, 2014

## Good Reads

1. [Can Kathmandu Kick the Motorbike Habit and become Cycle Friendly?](http://www.theguardian.com): [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com), April 23, 2014
2. [Foul Air](http://www.thehimalayantimes.com): [www.thehimalayantimes.com](http://www.thehimalayantimes.com), April 2, 2014
3. [Haphazard Urbanization Risks Showdown Between Industries and Residents](http://www.myrepublica.com): Upendra Yadav, [www.myrepublica.com](http://www.myrepublica.com), April 16, 2014

**Prepared by: Rassu Manandhar | Edited by: 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](http://www.cen.org.np); [www.cleanairinitiative.org](http://www.cleanairinitiative.org)

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Secretariat: **Clean Energy Nepal**  
POB No. 24581 | 140 Bulbule Marg, Thapagaun, Baneshwor,  
Email: [info@cen.org.np](mailto:info@cen.org.np) | Web: [www.cen.org.np](http://www.cen.org.np)  
Tel: 977-1- 4464981