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'KVDA Should be Main Urban Planning Authority'

Lawmakers and urban planners have said that the government should not only develop Kathmandu Valley Development Authority (KVDA) as an authority to take the lead role in integrated physical development but also as a main urban planning entity.

"Only integrating local bodies for physical development is not enough. KVDA should be developed as urban planning authority for planned and sustainable development of the valley," said Gagan Thapa, Nepali Congress Lawmaker of Kathmandu-4.

He said all the urban planning activities of the valley should be carried out by a single authority, which is KVDA. "Now, after drafting an urban planning, KVDA can integrate required local bodies for development. It is high time for the government to empower the authority for sustainable development of the valley."

Speaking at an interaction program organized in the capital Sunday by Blue Coffee, a company working for the promotion of art, architecture and environment, under a theme 'Livable Kathmandu', Thapa said while working for physical development in any area of the valley, the government should always give top priority to sustainable development of basic infrastructural facilities like transportation, sewerage facilities, drinking water facilities, among others.

He was the main speaker of the interaction program. And during the program, he shed light on the current scenario of driving water, road, waste and sewerage management and electricity facilities, among others based on a report jointly by lawmakers of the Kathmandu Valley to mount pressure on the government for sustainable development of the valley.

Few weeks ago, the lawmakers had submitted the report to Prime Minister Sushil Koirala. The report strongly asks the government to amend some laws and policies to develop KVDA as sole urban planning and physical development authority in the valley.

"Lawmakers are mainly focused on political activities. But lawmakers of the valley have started to take part in development activities, which is really positive. I hope their efforts for sustainable development of the valley will bear fruits," said Kishor Raj Nepal, coordinator of Regional and Urban Planners of Nepal (RUPSON).

He also stressed on integrated and planned development efforts for sustainable development of the valley. "Nobody knows how the valley will look like after 20 years. But the time has come to develop a master plan for the valley to make it more livable."

Source: www.myrepublica.com, July 6, 2014

Vehicle Fitness Test Centre Yet to Get a Fine Shape

Though five years have passed since the much-anticipated Vehicle Fitness Test Centre (VFTC) was first envisioned to effectively monitor the health and roadworthiness of public vehicles, it is yet to come into operation.

The future of the centre remains in limbo even after the installation of high-tech equipment to ascertain roadworthiness of public vehicles, among others, mainly due to the lack of a separate office building and required staff, transport authorities say.

“Everything necessary to bring the centre into operation has been finalised. However, we are still waiting for the government to provide us workspace and required workforce,” said Sharad Adhikary, director at the Department of Transport Management (DoTM).

Though the government has made multiple commitments to complete the construction of the office building and import all the necessary equipment required for the Teku-based centre at the earliest, the problems faced by the centre have still not been addressed completely, thus resulting in the delay.

The centre was designed at the cost of Rs 60 million and the deadline to start its operation was set for 2009. However, the plan could not materialise as the centre lacked power supply after the then Nepal Transport Cor-

poration failed to clear the outstanding dues of Rs 6 million it owed the Nepal Electricity Authority.

Still, the DoTM in a proposal to the government last week demanded the establishment of a separate office for the centre. “The proposal highlights the need of 14 staffers, including four engineers to be hired in various capacities, to run the centre. If the Cabinet gives a green signal to our proposal, the centre will start its operation soon,” Adhikary said.

The Transportation Management Act 1993 has made it mandatory for public vehicles to be checked every six months and private vehicles once a year. However, till now vehicle inspections are performed manually without the use of any technology.

The vehicle fitness test conducted by the DoTM will require a public motor vehicle to pass a compulsory periodic inspection to determine safety and roadworthiness.

The centre has the capacity of testing six vehicles per hour. The facility is designed to conduct several tests such as Automobile Brake Test, Automobile Chassis Clearance Tester, Head Light Tester, Horn Tester, Automobile Sideslip Tester, Automobile Suspension Tester and the Automobile Wheel Load Tester. The centre is also designed to check over 100 interior and exterior parts of vehicles, including engines, brakes, horns, mudguards, body parts, headlights, springs, side slips, batteries and seat belts.

Source: www.ekantipur.com, 24 July, 2014



Photo Courtesy: www.atozautomobiles.com

Transport Entrepreneurs Decry Govt Decision on Fare Discount

Transport entrepreneurs have accused the government of taking the decision on seat reservation and discount to the elderly in public transport without consulting them.

As per the directives issued by the Department of Transportation Management (DoTM) in August, 2013, public transport, especially buses and mini-buses, should reserve two seats for the people above the age of 60 and provide them 50 percent discount on fares. But the directive has yet to be implemented.

“We have issued strong instructions to transport entrepreneurs. Now, the elderly will receive fare discount,” said Chief District Officer of Bhaktapur Anil Kumar Thakur.

“As I am the coordinator of the zone, I should have been informed about the meeting. But I was not informed. Moreover, none of our district representatives have attended the meeting at DAO. The government is trying to implement the directives without consulting us. This is unacceptable,” said Dharma Raj Rimal, coordinator of Bagmati chapter of Federation of Nepalese National Transport Entrepreneurs (FNTE)

“We are already providing fare discount to the students. So we can provide discount to the elderly only if the government provides us subsidies,” said Rimal, adding, “We will be compelled to take to the streets if the government tries to forcefully implement its directive.”

Agitating elderly to self-immolate Elderly citizens, who have been staging protests outside the DoTM for the last 16 months, have warned of self-immolation on Sunday evening if the government fails to address their demand on discount in public transport and hospitals

Maha Prasad Sitaula, coordinator of a struggle committee of the elderly citizens, said the elderly would resort to self-immolation if the government does not address their demands through the budget announcement on Sunday.

Source: www.myrepublica.com, 12 July 2014

Entrepreneurs Oppose Vehicle Import Tax Waiver

The Federation of Nepalese Transport Entrepreneurs (FNTE) has opposed the government’s recent decision to offer discount on the customs duty to import public vehicles with forty or more seats.

Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat while presenting the government’s annual budget for the fiscal year 2014/2015 on Sunday made the announcement in order to promote the concept of mass transit system and enhance the standard and security of public transportation in the Kathmandu Valley.

FNTE General Secretary Dol Nath Khanal said transport entrepreneurs opposed the decision as the government did not consult them on the matter.

“The decision was taken without doing proper homework on identifying problems and studying the vehicle routes,”

Khanal said the government is just plotting to introduce new vehicles rather than promoting and making efficient the existing ones and has also failed to mention the amount to be waived on the purchase of such vehicles. “The government has only focused on the transportation in the Valley and excluded other districts from the scheme,” he said.

Currently, the government has been providing 54 percent discount on the total tax imposed on the import of vehicles used for mass transportation. Officials at the Department of Transport Management (DoTM), however, say the government’s decision helps increase

the number of well-facilitated and managed public transportation. DoTM Director General Kashi Raj Dahal said the problem of fuel consumption and traffic congestion can be resolved through the promotion public vehicles.

“The government is always ready to discuss the matter with transport entrepreneurs and take their recommendations before the decision is implemented,” he said. “We need to categorise public vehicles and work on the discounts for such vehicles. For this, we will consult the concerned authorities and vehicle owners,” he added.

Source: www.ekantipur.com, 16 July 2014

Legal Provision ‘Hinders’ Plan to Replace Old Vehicles

Though the the government first envisioned a plan to replace vehicles older than twenty years plying on the Valley roads over a decade ago, the initiative still remains unimplemented.

Officials at the Department of Transport Management (DoTM) say the reason behind the failure to implement the policy is that the idea was just floated and wasn't made mandatory. "In order to make the policy mandatory, amendments are to be made in the Transport Management Act," said DoTM Director Sharad Adhikari.

In 2000, with the vision to decrease pollution and consumption of fuel, the government had published a notice stating that vehicles older than twenty years would be removed from the Kathmandu valley and relocated to other districts where they could be operated for the next five years. The government then claimed that it pitched the plan in order to review the existing transport policy.

Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport (MoPIT) estimates that around 16,000 public vehicles across the country are twenty years and older. Considering the change of ownership also a major cause to hinder this ambitious plan, the government also prohibited registration or transfer of ownership of such vehicles a decade ago.

Adhikari also emphasized on the cooperation with vehicle owners in order to implement the policy effectively. "Unless the transport entrepreneurs coordinate with us, the problem regarding the replacement of the old vehicles will never see light," he said.

When the government formulated the policy to revise the National Transport Policy with a legal provision to replace the old vehicles, it was opposed by transport entrepreneurs and vehicle owners. In 2011, the Parliamentary Finance and Labour Relations Committee had also directed the government to remove such old public vehicles from the Valley roads.

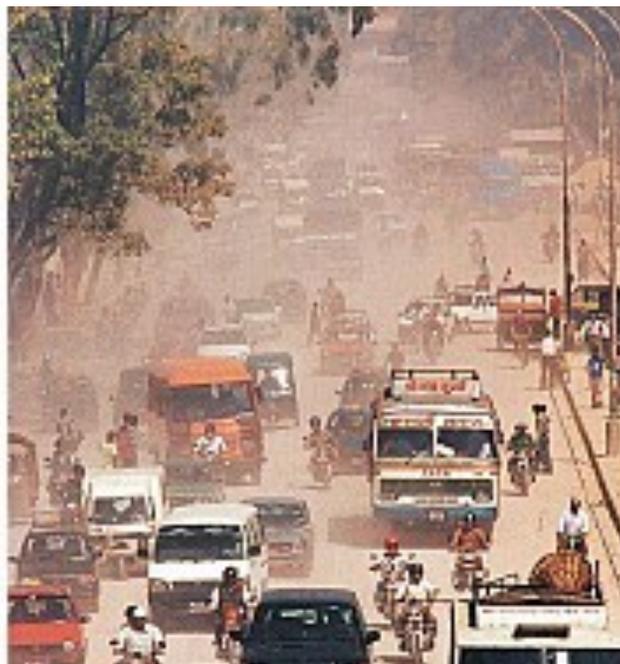
The initiative, however, could not be implemented after the two concerned ministries—the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Labour and Transport Management—couldn't reach an agreement over the compensation to be provided to the vehicle owners. The vehicle owners had demanded that the government had to reimburse 75 percent discount on the import duty to purchase new vehicles .

Environmental experts say the outdated vehicles have been a huge burden

for the Valley roads.

According to Bhusan Tuladhar, an environment expert, older vehicles create more pollution and consume additional fuel. "Various environmental problems arise due to the wear and tear of old vehicles . Hence, the government should implement certain standard to replace the polluting vehicles ."

Source: www.ekantipur.com, 17 July 2014



China Makes New Electric Cars Tax-Free

China will exempt electric cars and other types of "new energy" vehicles from purchase tax, the government said, as it seeks to reduce pollution and conserve resources.

The State Council, or cabinet, said that buyers of new energy vehicles – fully electric, hybrid and fuel cell cars – would not have to pay the levy from September to the end of 2017, according to a statement.

The tax is 10% of the net value of the vehicle, according to state media.

"For achieving industrial development and environmental protection, this is a win-win," the state council said in a statement on Wednesday.

The exemption applies to imported vehicles as well as domestically produced ones, the statement said, adding the government would compile a catalogue of eligible models.

China has sought to increase ownership of electric and hybrid vehicles to ease chronic pollution and reduce reliance on oil imports, but high prices, lack of infrastructure and consumer reluctance have been obstacles.

The government has set a target of having five million new energy vehicles on the streets by 2020.

But China has only 70,000 currently in use, the China Daily newspaper reported on Thursday.

The central government also offers outright subsidies for electric passenger car buyers, which were set at \$5,700 to \$9,800 last year, while local incentives can bring the price down further.

Lack of charging stations and the desires of Chinese consumers - many first time owners - for big, flashy vehicles have hurt electric car sales.

Policymakers are seeking to move away from state spending to domestic consumption as a key driver of the economy, which has been slowing.

Several foreign auto makers have announced plans to develop environmentally-friendly vehicles in China, despite the currently small market.

US electric car maker Tesla Motors has also caused a stir with aggressive marketing and by pitching its imported vehicles to luxury buyers in China, although analysts say they might only find a niche market.

Source: www.theguardian.com, 10 July 2014

Good Reads

1. [Nepal-Rolling On](#): Ross Advin, caravanmagazine.in, July 1, 2014
2. [Promotion of Cycling Its Benefits](#): Ashish Gajurel, thehimalayantimes, July 15, 2014
3. [यातायातमा सास्ती](#) : nagariknews, July 20, 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; www.cleanairinitiative.org

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