

# Clean Air News

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2015 (FEB 1 - FEB 28)

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## Urban Road Standards for Valley on Cards

Kathmandu Valley Development Authority (KVDA) is all set to enforce “Urban Road Design Standards” for road construction in Kathmandu Valley.

Once the standards come into effect, all the 21 municipalities in the valley will have to design and construct roads complying with its guidelines.

“Currently, we are consulting experts for necessary inputs. We will finalize the draft within the next three months and make it mandatory for road construction works in

the valley,” said Parajuli. The KVDA is currently in the process of drafting urban road standard, which it plans to finalize by the next three months.



**The Maitidevi-Dillibazar road section currently under construction pictured on Sunday. (Dipesh Shrestha/Republica)**

“We are anticipating that the new municipalities will invest heavily on building roads. So we have decided to enforce the standards to ensure that all the roads are constructed in a more organized way and meet certain standards,” said Yogeshwor Krishna Parajuli, development commissioner of KVDA.

The government had last revised the Nepal Road Standards in 2013. “But, as the standards have become outdated and does not include guidelines for urban roads, we have decided to draft a new road standards specifi-

cally for the roads of the valley,” said Parajuli. He said the standards envision making all the newly constructed roads to be disabled friendly. It will also contain guidelines for contractors to consider the aesthetic beauty of the capital while building roads. The standards will clearly mention the width of roads, footpaths and instructions to set aside green belt along the roads to promote greenery in the city.

**Source: [www.myrepublica.com](http://www.myrepublica.com), February 9, 2015**

## Govt Yet to Install New Air Monitoring Stations

Despite growing concern over air pollution in and outside the Kathmandu Valley, the government has still not been able to set up air quality monitoring stations as promised a few months ago.

The Department of Environment under the Ministry of Science Technology and Environment (MoSTE) had formed a committee to conduct study on the number of stations required and the possible sites for setting up such stations, but little progress has been made so far.

The stations would help identify air pollutants and suggest measures to bring down air pollution levels. Talking to Republica, Director General for the Department of Environment (DoE) Suraj Pokharel admitted that work

pace is sluggish. "Although we are trying our best, the plan of setting up air quality monitoring stations has not materialized yet."

As per the previous agreement, the committee had proposed conducting feasibility study on installation of five air quality monitoring stations in the cities and heritage sites. But the government has yet to make any significant progress on the plan.

"The committee had been given three months to complete the study. But it has yet to submit its report even a week after the deadline," said Pokharel.

New air quality monitoring stations have become urgent as three stations, which had been brought into operation in 2012, have stopped giving

proper readings. The government had installed six air quality monitoring stations in various parts of Kathmandu Valley in 2002. In 2006, most of the stations had already incurred damages. Three of the devices had already stopped functioning by then.

The National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) 2012 requires monitoring air pollutants like Total Suspended Particulates (TSP), Particulate Matter (PM10 and PM2.5), carbon monoxides, lead, carbon monoxide and ozone level for at least 347 days in a year. However, this has been not been possible due to lack of the monitoring stations.

According to DB Bhandari, a chemist at the Environment Pollution Control and Evaluation Section, the last report they had gathered from the stations had clearly shown increasing air pollution inside the Valley.

The report has shown significant rise in particulate matter level at Putalisadak station compared to other two stations installed at Bhaktapur and Maychyaun. The level of (PM) 10 should be around 20 microgram per square meter.

Source: [www.myrepublica.com](http://www.myrepublica.com), February 11, 2015



Photo courtesy: [www.ekantipur.com](http://www.ekantipur.com)

## DoR Developing Disabled-Friendly Footpaths

The Department of Roads has started removing slabs from footpaths to make them disabled-friendly.

With the development of new footpaths, visually-impaired persons and wheelchair users will be able to travel around independently on the 15-kilometre long disabled-friendly footpaths which are being reconstructed by the DoR in collaboration with the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transportation and Kathmandu Metropolitan City.

According to Arjun Jung Thapa, Deputy Director at the DoR, the streets in core areas and footpaths of the capital will be paved using cobblestones with tactile tiles to assist the mobility of visually-impaired pedestrians. Basantapur, Naradevi, Tebahal, Satghumti, Janabahal, Kilagal, Thamel, Chhetrapati, Thahiti,

Indrachowk, Ason, Jhonchhe, Hanu-mandhoka, Bhimsensthan, Kalmochanghat and New Road among many other old quarters of the capital, covering about eight kilometres, will have tactile paving for the visually-impaired.

Likewise, the footpaths around the Tripureswor-Tundikhel-Lainchaur and Durbar Marg-Singha Durbar-Bhadrakali stretches are also being renovated with tactile tiles to assist with navigation for the visually-impaired. "The tactile tiles will be embedded along the centre of the cobblestone footpath in the city's core areas and main roads. As per design norms, these tiles at the proximity of junctions, traffic signals, overhead bridges and zebra crossing will be circular to signal the visually-impaired of the nature of the adjoining area. They can easily move around using white sticks on tactile tiles," said Thapa, adding that

the footpaths will be designed to suit the wheelchair users as well.

He stated that the footpaths around the Naryanhiti Palace Museum too will be reformed to make it disabled-friendly. Besides the footpaths, the streets of core areas will be fenced with new iron railings to support the differently-abled people.

Thapa informed that the bid to construct the footpaths has been delegated to Raman Construction. The DoR, KMC and MoPIT have made an investment of Rs 19 crore to pave the new footpaths with disabled-friendly infrastructures and designs.

**Source:** [www.thehimalayantimes.com](http://www.thehimalayantimes.com), February 4, 2015

## Sajha Bus Extends to Swayambhu, Pashupati

Sajha Yatayat Cooperative has extended its bus routes to more areas of the capital. Responding to public appreciation, the transport service has begun a Swayambhu to Pashupati route from Tuesday.

In addition to the two current trunk routes, the green buses will now also ply a Swayambhu- Kalanki-Kalimati-Tripureswor-Ratna Park-Jamal-Kamalpokhari-Gaushala-Airport route, stated Mahendra Raj Pandey, director of the transport service.

"The new route targets to connect the two religious sites of Swayambhu and Pashupatinath, to ease the difficulties faced by passengers along that particular route," he stated.

Following resumption of service after a

gap of a decade, 16 new buses have been plying the trunk routes Satdobato-Lagankhel- Tripureswor-Ratna Park-Maharajgunj-Basundhara-New Bus Park and Kalanki-Kalimati-New Baneshwor-Tinkune-Airport, to facilitate public transport in the Valley.

In contrast with most other public transport, more friendly drivers and conductors and free wifi in the vehicles have added to the popularity of the buses among Valley dwellers, who wish to see more of such buses on the roads.

The bus cooperative had revived the service after intense preparations for more than a year and with support from the government.

Sajha Yatayat, which used to be com-

pletely under government control in its earlier setup, collapsed through unsustainable losses and a cooperative model was adopted in 2011. The cooperative now elects its board of directors directly from among the shareholders.

**Source:** [www.myrepublica.com](http://www.myrepublica.com), February 17, 2015



## Replace 20-yr-Old Vehicles: House Sub-Committee

In a bid to lower the increasing tendency of road accidents across the country, a parliamentary sub-committee on Wednesday recommended the government to replace 20-year-old vehicles as soon as possible.

A parliamentary committee on November 2 last year had formed a sub-committee to study the causes of road carnages and recommend the government measures for lowering accidents. The sub-committee has yet to submit the report in the full committee before it is presented to the government for implementation.

Though the major roads to various hilly districts are bumpy, narrow and steep and full of sharp bends, the poor condition of vehicles are the key causes among other, the report reads. Of the 34,069 passenger buses registered since 1991, majority of them have substandard body structure and lack safety features.

The report has also claimed that the 'Nepal Road Safety Action Plan (2013-2020)' that aims to halve the road accident rates, will be insignificant if the government tries to continue curbing accident rates on the same ground. The panel suggests that the government should first plug the legal loopholes related to road accidents and work according to the action plan.

The report has also suggests that, the roads, especially in the rural parts of the country, should be upgraded, driving license issuance system should be revised, stringent code of conduct for drivers be introduced, new technology be used to control overspeeding, and vehicle fitness test centers be decentral-

ized.

The report has also urged the government to bring awareness program on road safety, identify high accident prone zones and introduce measures to minimize them.

The panel has also strongly recommended ending transport syndicates, which are blamed as major contributors to accidents.

Road accidents in Nepal killed over 9,760 people in the past six years alone. In the current fiscal year, 977 people have lost their lives due to road accidents across the country.

While some 22,115 others were seriously injured, another 43,090 sustained general injuries over the period, according to the Traffic Police. The annual mortality rate in road accidents in Nepal has stood at 1,800 over the past few years.

Source: [www.myrepublica.com](http://www.myrepublica.com),  
February 19, 2015



# Indians Lose Billions of Life Years to Air Pollution

Don't take a deep breath. Air pollution in India is robbing its citizens of an estimated 2.1 billion years of life collectively. India is home to 13 of the 20 cities with the highest levels of particulate air pollution worldwide, according to a 2012 report by the World Health Organization.

To find out what impact this is having on life expectancy, Michael Greenstone at the University of Chicago and his colleagues collected information on air pollution levels from the country's environmental regulator, which among other things measures the level of fine particulate matter in the air. These particles and droplets are small enough to enter the lungs, where they can cause or worsen respiratory and heart diseases.

Greenstone's team compared levels of particulate matter across India and used a model to convert those

levels into the number of years of life lost. They found that around 55 per cent of India's population – or 660 million people by the 2011 census – live in areas where the level of fine particulate matter in the air exceeds the guidelines set by India's National Ambient Air Quality Standard. As a result, these people can expect a 3.2 year cut on average to their lifespans – a total of 2.1 billion life years.

Joshua Apte at the University of Texas in Austin is also studying the impact of air pollution on health in India. "Our results broadly agree," he says. "There is a very large burden of disease from [fine particulate matter] in India, killing about three times as many people in India as HIV/AIDS and malaria combined." "Major improvements in India's air quality could reduce attributable mortality by hundreds of thousands of deaths per year, and likely would

provide substantial increases in life expectancy for Indians," Apte says. Greenstone's team say that India should start by collecting more and better data on air pollution and its sources. They also suggest changes to the law.

While the number of years of life lost to air pollution is higher in China – a previous study estimated 500 million people were collectively losing 2.5 billion years – China has started to do something about it, says Apte. In 2013, the country's State Council announced a raft of measures to cut pollution, such as requiring industries to replace outdated technology and record and publish the pollution they produce. "

**Source:** [www.newscientist.com](http://www.newscientist.com), February 25, 2015

## Good Reads

1. [Clearing the air](http://nepalimes.com): nepalimes.com, February 20– 26, 2015
2. [Getting Rid of Soot](http://nepalimes.com): Helena Molin Valdes and Arnico Panday, nepalimes.com, February 20– 26, 2015
3. [Building Blocks](http://nepalimes.com): Jan Moller Hansen, nepalimes.com, January 31– February 6, 2015

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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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