

Clean Air News is a free e-mail publication that features news, information and events related to clean air. Clean Air News is published by Clean Air Network Nepal to highlight the activities and initiatives for clean air by CANN and its members or partners. For more information on our campaign, please visit www.cen.org.np/cann and www.cleanairnet.org/cann

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Clean Air Network Nepal is Local Country Network of CAI-Asia Center and secretariat is hosted by Clean Energy Nepal, a local NGO dedicated for research based education, awareness and advocacy on sustainable environmental issues.

To know more about CAI-Asia Centre please visit www.cleanairnet.org/caiasia

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CLEAN AIR NEWS AND HAPPENINGS

181,000 new vehicles registered in last 5 years Staggering growth in capital's vehicles

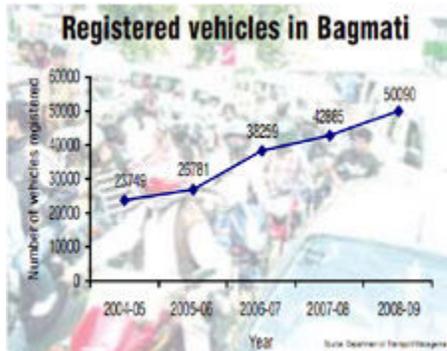
Kantipur Report

KATHMANDU, July 30 - Regular traffic jams inside the Valley are no surprise, but if one considers the increase in number of vehicles, and compares it to the increase in the length of roads inside the valley, there is but one conclusion: there are more vehicles in the valley than what the roads can handle.

While 2004-05 saw 23,749 new vehicles registered in the zone, 2008-09 saw nearly double that amount, 50,090 new vehicles being registered.

In fact, there were around 235,000 vehicles registered in Bagmati till 2003-04, but in the last five years itself, a staggering 181,000 new vehicles have been registered.

Also, Bagmati accounts for more than half of all the vehicles in the country itself.



Metropolitan Traffic Police Superintendent Rabi Raj Shrestha said, "The number of vehicles inside the valley is easily more than what its roads can take." He claimed that if all the vehicles inside the Valley came on the streets together, there wouldn't be any space at all.

Strangely, the Department of Roads does not have the data regarding the increase in the length of roads in the last five years. However, the Budget this year stated that a measly 62 km of roads were added across the whole country in the first eight months of fiscal year 2008-09, whereas in the last year itself, 102,570 new vehicles were registered in the country.

Data on the Department of Road's website states there was a mere 8.57 percent growth in the Valley's roads in the two years between 2002 and 2004.

Sharad Chandra Paudyal, director-general at Department of Transport Management denies that the Valley's roads are overcrowded. He blames the traffic management rather than the length of the roads. "The traffic management should be systematic. Drivers should park vehicles at the right place and the traffic police should manage the situation better."

Suraj Sigdel, senior divisional engineer at the Department of Roads said, "Roads have not been increased in terms of length. Only the maintenance is done."

What's in the Budget?

On 13th July 2009, Mr. Surendra Pandey, Finance Minister, Ministry of Finance, Nepal Government presented the Budget Speech for the fiscal year 2066/067.

In the several hours' long speech, Minister Pandey mentioned that the sectors like Comprehensive Peace, law and order, employment orientation, disadvantaged groups, communities and geographical areas, physical and economic infrastructure, agriculture, drinking water and sanitation, energy crisis, international assistance, public administration and service delivery were among the next year's policy wise priorities.

Every year the budget comes, all people have their hope and faith that their agenda would be addressed and will provide a good track by the government for the development; this year was no exception. The budget was said to be over-ambitious, difficult to be implementable etc. however the government has shown its commitment that the help of all the local sectors would make it possible. There was some concern in the budget as for the people of environmental concern under Climatic Change and Natural Disaster and Drinking Water and Sanitation head.

"Nepal has been facing problems of natural disaster due to excessive carbon emission by developed countries and Nepal's inability to prevent forest encroachment and its distribution. Government budget has to increase every year for the relief and rehabilitation of the loss of lives and properties caused by natural disaster, this also has resulted in negative impact in the agricultural production as well. Creating mass public awareness, developing integrated strategy and institutional mechanism has become challenging tasks in order to minimize natural disaster", said Minister Pandey at his speech.

As part of the Traffic management, the government has made mandatory to produce the evidence of third party insurance for new vehicle registration and its renewal. To fully enforce the traffic rules, a penalty by 25% and provision of distribution of the additional amount has been made. Also, there was support for the drinking water projects, water treatment plants, rain water harvesting for the improvement and access of reach to the safe drinking water of the people. Apart from that "One Toilet in One House" initiative by the government was part for the Sanitation issue.

Considering the need to protect the environment, the interest of domestic crusher industry, the export duty on stones, crushed stones and sand has been raised.

But, there was no any specific focus on the air quality issue which was a disappointing factor. Nevertheless, a hope always prevails that the issue will be addressed well in the coming years.

CANN Meeting

Clean Air Network Nepal (CANN) organized a meeting of its Network Members on 13 July 2009 at ENPHO Hall, Baneshwor to discuss on the CANN activities and Updates, Selection of Participants for "Clean Air and Blue Skies Asia" project, SUMA Project and Future course of actions for CANN.

In the Program, Mr. Gopal Raj Joshi, Country Network Coordinator initially briefed about the agenda of the meeting. He also did a presentation on CAN-N activities carried out in the year 2008 and 2009. After the presentation, Mr. Joshi shared the information of SUMA Project among the participating members. He briefed about the Project in terms of what, where, who and how the project is being implemented and its necessity in the Asian cities. He also emphasized that for the city like Kathmandu and other urban turning cities this type of initiation hold a great value in the improvement of air quality. At the end, he also shared about the proposed course of action for CANN and requested all the CANN members to provide inputs and suggestions.



Followed by the first presentation, Ms. Amita Thapa Magar presented on the overview of Clean Air and Blue Skies Project Phase 2: its background, objectives, substance, participants and mechanism of exchange. CAI-Asia and Fredskorpset Norway is implementing "Clean Air and Blue Skies Asia" project in the second year which incorporates the Exchange of Professionals among CAI-Asia Center Local Networks and Identified Partners.

The meeting discussed on the selection procedure of the participants for the exchange program and came up with the selection committee of five personnel including Mr. Bhusan Tuladhar, Mr. Bibek Chapagain, Ms. Rejina Maskey, Mr. Urs Hagnaeur and Ms. Amita Thapa Magar. It was decided that the selection committee would take its final verdict of decision.

The CANN members also discussed on how CANN should move ahead in the coming days. The members realized that investment, projects and advocacy on AQM issues in Nepal is not so sufficient as compared to problem. And SUMA have a strong scope in the AQM. In this context, the meeting decided that CANN once again should come up with some action points for strong advocacy and to lobby for investment in AQM by government and donors.

Partners Meet at HaNoi

The Vietnam Clean Air Partnership (VCAP) hosted the Mid-Term Review Meeting for the Clean Air and Blue Skies Asia Exchange Project, a young professional exchange program under the Fredskorpset exchange program, which was scheduled on 30 June – 2 July 2009 at the Thang Long Opera Hotel in Hanoi, Vietnam.

The Lead Partner of the project is Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities Center (CAI-Asia Center) and funded by Fredskorpset (FK) Norway. The local Country Networks of CAI- Asia are identified as the Primary Partners.



The objective of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for project partners to meet, plan the next round of the exchange and discuss the progress of work carried out by current participants.

The partners from Hong Kong, Srilanka, Vietnam, Philippines and Nepal attended the meeting. Meanwhile, Ms. Saowanee Sangsawangisri from FK was present.

The previous round of change was successful in developing some Air Quality Management tools and enhancing the capacity of the young professionals in the program.

For the year 2, Vietnam (Vietnam Clean Air Partnership of the Vietnam Association for the Conservation of Nature and Environment - VCAP/VACNE), Philippines (CAI-Asia Center), Sri Lanka (Clean Air Sri Lanka), Hong Kong, China (Department of Civil and Structural Engineering, Hong Kong Polytechnic University) and Nepal (Clean Air Network Nepal) were identified as the partners.

This year the exchange is to take place among the Partners as Nepal to Hong Kong, Sri Lanka to Hong Kong, Vietnam to Philippines, Philippines to Sri Lanka and Philippines to Nepal. The exchange lasts 12 months comprised of 1 month preparatory course, 10 months posting duration in another country and 1 month experience-sharing in the home country.

Through the exchange of young professionals under the Fredskorpset exchange program, the project aims to improve air quality in Asian cities.

KNOW ABOUT CLEAN AIR INITIATIVES

Countdown to Youth Summit on Climate Change begins!!

The South Asian Youths are uniting their voices and aspirations for a cleaner and better world in the first ever South Asian Youth Summit on Climate Change (SAYSOCC 09) which is scheduled to be held on Sep 3- 6, 2009 in Dhulikhel, Nepal.

The Summit is jointly organized by Nepalese Youth for Climate Action, Clean Energy Nepal, Indian Youth Climate Network, Bangladesh Youth Climate Network, Sri Lankan Youth Climate Action Network and 350.org, an international campaign on climate change.

The summit is expected to come up with a vision of South Asian youths and plan of action for the participating countries. Thematic Session, Climate Negotiation, Advocacy and Campaigning Skills are the highlights of the Summit.

This summit will launch the South Asian Youth Network for Climate Change and a team of delegates to COP15 representing their issues, ideas and hopes for an effective and equitable solution to climate change.

The application for the Summit is open now which can be downloaded from the official website of the Summit. Deadline of the application is August 10 for the International Participants and August 15 for the Nepalese.

For further details: <http://nyca.net.np/saysocc09>

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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.

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