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FK Network Nepal Meeting Held

Kathmandu, October 10, 2009

FK Network Nepal conducted a meeting on October 10, 2009 at Hotel De'l Annapurna, Kathmandu Nepal with the objective of sharing and updating on FK Nepal partners regarding the Exchange program and plan for FK Network Nepal activities in 2010.

Newly appointed FK Director General Ms. Nita Kapoor was present in the meeting. Along



with Ms. Ellen Linde from FK Norway and FK Asia Coordinator Mr. Sacha Jotikalikorn were also in the meeting.

The FK alumni participant Mr. Yogendra Shrestha welcomed all the attendees of the program and highlighted on the speech and highlighted the objectives of the meeting.

Following to that, Ms. Nita Kapoor, FK Director General, shared that FK is working on the new strategy development of FK, and said that the priority of FK might change based on the new strategies. Then, a brief sharing about other FK Networks in Asia was done by Sacha Jotikalikorn.

The current FK participant Ms. Rebecca Birungi, from Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA), Uganda presented briefly about her experience of FK exchange program in terms of the advantages she got and the challenges she faced. She is currently working with College of Journalism and Mass Communication (CJMC), Kathmandu. Then after, Ms. Radha Gurung, FK Network Nepal Coordinator, presented briefly about the updates on FK Network Nepal activities which was followed by the 'Discussion and Planning for FK Network Nepal activities for 2010.

Stakeholders meet to discuss on AQM and SUT issues



Kathmandu, October 15, 2009

Clean Air Network Nepal and Clean Energy Nepal organized a stakeholder meeting on 15th October 2009 at ENPHO Hall, Thapa Gaun, New Baneshwor. The program was organized under SUMA program which is supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) through a grant from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). The CAI-Asia Center and the CANN organized this annual meeting of stakeholders with the aim of identifying

AQM and SUT issues, possible solutions to the identified issues, and agreement on a course of action following up on recommendations agreed upon during the meeting.

The program witnessed the presence of relevant stakeholders from the Academia, Non Governmental Organization, International Non Governmental Organizations, Entrepreneurs and private sectors to identify and discuss on Air Quality Management and Sustainable Urban Transport Issues in Nepal. The program also included the burning issue of Government's recent decision to ban LPG three wheeler with the title, "LPG run three wheelers: Should it be banned?". The program was an attempt to reach to the consensus between Transport Entrepreneurs and the Government with a common and important factor of Environment in the concern.

Mr. Ram Kumar Blon, coordinator of the ongoing protests regarding the matter expressed his remarks on the views of the Department of Transport Management (DoTM) that the Government by saying that the decision to ban LPG three wheelers is totally unjustified.

CANN in Fredskorpset South-South Programmes

For the first time Clean Air Network Nepal (CANN) in partnership with CAI-Asia centre engaged on a young professionals exchange program under the Norwegian volunteer service, Fredskorpset.

Fredskorpset facilitates exchanges of young professionals between Norway and countries of the South. Participants live and work in another country for approximately 12 months, with exchanges being affected between partner institutions in Norway and a South country. Exchange programs are intended to enable young professionals to use their skills in working for a partner employer in another country.



In this professional exchange program, CANN has received one participant from Philippines and sent one to HongKong under Clean Air and Blue Skies Asia Year 2 Project" of CAI-Asia. The project aims to improve the air quality in Asian cities through learning of new experiences from the host country and its implication to the home country.

Regional Youth Summit on Climate Change Held



A four-day South Asian Youth Summit on Climate Change concluded in Dhulikhel on Sunday, September 6, making a five-point commitment and dishing out a 10-point demand.

The Youth Summit was organized by Nepalese Youth for Climate Action, Clean Energy Nepal and other Youth Networks across South Asia and 350.org. Clean Air Network Nepal was one of the Supporters of the Summit.

The 80 participants promised to form a youth network for uniting grassroots and country-level movements across South Asia. They plan to organize follow-up events, sensitize the society and create generations of youth committed to a low carbon life.

The participants demanded that South Asian governments agree on the Most Vulnerable Countries/ Alliance of Small Island States stance that temperature increase should be limited to below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and CO2 concentration should be brought back to below 350ppm. They urged the Annex 1

parties to commit to reduce emission by 45 per cent by 2020 AD and 90 per cent by 2050 AD with base year 1990 AD and emission peaking no later than 2015 AD.

They demanded the need for the establishment of a party-funded South Asian regional centre. Such a centre is to facilitate research, scientific development, economic diversification and inclusion of youth representative in the official delegation to climate change negotiations, especially as a constituency to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change talks.

Baglung lad builds solar vehicle

By Dilip Paudel

BAGLUNG, Oct 27:

A 16-year-old has surprised one and all in Baglung with the successful trial run Tuesday of his indigenous solar vehicle.

Kushal KC, a 10th grader at local Amrit Adarsha Higher Secondary School, paraded his vehicle around Baglung to the approval of a massive crowd gathered on roadsides throughout the town. Born in Binamare-7, Kushal has no formal training nor did he take help from any technician in making his solar vehicle, which includes a battery, a motor and solar panels.



Kushal, who had earlier made a 'helicopter' and displayed it in Pokhara and Kathmandu, took just 40 days to put together the solar vehicle with materials bought in China and India. He has placed six 20-watt panels at the front, rear and roof of the vehicle and these can power it even in the absence of battery as long as there is sunlight. It has to use a battery during darkness.

"I have made this vehicle to help reduce pollution and global warming," KC said, claiming that the vehicle can hit a speed of 60kmph. "In the next five years I will make others that can compete with petrol cars in performance," he told media persons gathered at his school.

He has sought government help for getting his name into the Guinness Book of World Records as the youngest person to make such a vehicle and his school principal, Mahesh Chandra Pradhan, promised to take the initiative for that.

Kushal's father Bhim KC says they had a torrid time putting together the Rs 600,000 required for making the vehicle. "NAST (Nepal Academy of Science and Technology) provided Rs. 10,000 while the school helped collect Rs 200,000. We even had to take out a loan to cover the rest of the cost," says KC. Kushal's school and different organizations felicitated him on Tuesday but his father regrets that no one has come forward to help him in his mission.

Govt. All Set to Begin Work on The East-West Railway

By Sundar Khanal

The government is all set to begin work on the east-west railway project, possibly alongside the Mahendra Highway, with a feasibility study worth Rs 90 million.

The Ministry for Physical Planning and Works has recently qualified Rights India Limited from India to take up one year long feasibility study that, according to officials, will begin within two weeks.

While it is clear that the construction of the railway track might take years and billions, the government now tends to outline it as the long-time development plan of the nation. It is one of the two major developmental ventures announced by the government through the budget for the fiscal 206667.

Rights India Limited, which was selected from among four foreign companies fighting for the bid, is also supposed to conduct a feasibility study of the two mid-hill linkages of the railway to Kathmandu and Pokhara respectively.

According to Tulsi Prasad Sitaula, chief of the works section at the Ministry, the feasibility study will offer a total spectrum of the project including the budget, environmental impacts and economic requirements.

A study by the ministry shows that some 4000 vehicles ply along the Mahendra Highway that links the eastern towns to the far western city of Mahendranagar. "To operate a railway service of that magnitude, the current ration of transportation load is not enough," Sitaula said. He added that the concept of the two mid-hills linkages stands in view of supplying sufficient load to the railway.

The mid-hills linkages, however, only appears to be a pipe-dream as track-building in the rough terrain is a very difficult job, said officials. "Maximum underground construction would be required to connect Kathmandu and Pokhara to the Tarai with a railway track. Let ´s imagine the labyrinth of tunnels and the cost!" they said.

After the government announced a global tender for the feasibility study of the project some months ago, 19 different foreign companies initially applied out of which four companies, including two from America were short-listed. "The Indian company was finally selected as it offered a bonus advantage of its pertinent experience in the Indian sub-continent," Sitaula said.

Source: <http://myrepublica.com> Oct 1, 2009

Plea For Rollback Decision: SFNTE

The Supreme Federation of Nepal National Transport Entrepreneur (SFNTE) today urged the government to rollback its decision of phasing out cooking gas-operated three-wheelers.

Ram Kumar Blon, coordinator, ad-hoc struggle committee, said that the government's move was both impractical and illegal. "It will have an adverse impact on the livelihood of many," he said.

Addressing a press conference, organised by the SFNTE, he demanded job security for all those, who are associated with the trade, and 99 per cent tax holiday while importing alternative vehicles.

Earlier, a meeting convened by the Ministry of Transport, which was held on September 9, had decided to ban cooking gas-run three-wheelers and issue route permit for micro buses.

Though the transport entrepreneurs' body submitted a memorandum to the ministry on September 22, it is yet to hear from it from reasons best known to the authorities concerned.

Rebuffed, the SFNTE is holding a rally tomorrow from Balkumari at Koteshwor that will wind its way through the capital and conclude at New Road tempo terminus. A meeting will be held there as a mark of protest. The SFNTE members also plan to gherao the Department of Transport Management at Koteshwor on October 7.

Blon alleged that contrary to the popular perception, the micro buses were largely responsible for pollution and traffic snarls.

The SFNTE plans to intensify its stir if the demands are not met on time.

Source: <http://www.thehimalayantimes.com> Oct 4, 2009

Pollution Monitoring Equipment Shut Down

Power cuts have meant that none of the six pollution-monitoring stations in the Valley are working, leading to serious health questions as air pollution continues to rise visibly.

"Due to power cuts, we have not been able to operate the equipment," said Mina Khanal, spokesperson for the Ministry of Environment, adding that regular power supply is essential for obtaining accurate data from the monitoring stations.

The six pollution monitoring stations in the Valley- located in Putalisadak, Matshegaon, Tribhuvan University, Bhaktapur, Patan Hospital, and Thamel- were set up with the assistance of Danish agency DANIDA in 2003. The stations monitor the air quality in the valley, providing data for analysis on a weekly basis. According to the Ministry, as power cuts became more frequent, the stations ceased to function properly and have now been shut down completely.

"The 16-hour power-cuts forced the stations to shut down," said Khanal, "therefore, we cannot provide accurate information about the present situation of air pollution in the Valley," Though the stations can be run by solar power, Khanal says that it is an expensive alternative, costing at least "Rs. 1.7 million to run one station". She added that a lack of interest and initiative on the part of both the private sector and other concerned agencies in this non-profit venture also makes it less likely that solar power will be a viable alternative.

Bhusan Tuladhar, executive director of Environment and Population Health Organisation, supports Khanal, confirming that the use of the equipment is impossible unless the problem of power cuts is addressed first. "Load-shedding is a

long term problem in Nepal and in such a situation, operating these stations is quite impossible," he said. "And as pollution sources continue to rise in the valley, it must be assumed that pollution levels too must have increased." Tuladhar concluded.

Vehicular emissions, centralised industrialisation, and the topographical shape of the Valley are stated as being major contributors to the air pollution in Kathmandu valley.

Source: <http://www.ekantipur.com/tkp/news> Oct 13, 2009

Africa 'a hotspot for bad air quality'

By Kanina Foss

South African healthcare costs arising from air pollution amount to R4-billion a year. This figure was revealed at the launch of the first South African State of the Air report, which provides a comprehensive picture of what the country's air looked like in 2005, the year in which the Air Quality Act came into effect.

The report - which has taken four years to put together - will act as a baseline to measure the efficacy of the new air quality management regime.

"Until 2005, there was absolutely no centralised gathering of air quality information. With the crossover to the new legislation, we thought it was important to gather all the information," said the Department of Environment and Tourism's chief director of air quality management and climate change, Peter Lukey.

South Africa's air quality was governed for 40 years by the Atmospheric Pollution Prevention Act, which was considered ineffective for a number of reasons, including the belief that it had not prevented the emergence of air pollution hotspots around the country.

According to the report, the most serious national air pollution problem is the human health impacts related to inhalation of particularly household coal and wood emissions.

Other air pollution problems are high-ambient sulphur dioxide and concentrations of fine particulate matter resulting from primarily fuel combustion within the household, industrial and power-generation sectors.

The report showcases cost-effective air quality monitoring systems that will be able to target individual industries responsible for polluting.

Source: <http://www.iol.co.za> October 13 2009

Glaciers at Heart of Climate Change

By Ramesh Prasad Bhushal

The melting of the glaciers in the Himalayan belt may be a hot topic linked to the ongoing debate on climate change.

But experts claimed that the existing data is inadequate to conclusively predict that glaciers would cease to exist in the near future.

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) report stated that the total area of the glaciers would shrink from 500,000 to 100,000 sq km by 2035.

Richard Armstrong Professor, Colorado University, USA, however, has debunked this forecast. "The data is baseless since the total area of Himalayan glaciers is less than 1, 00,000 sq km," said Armstrong.

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), too, has supported Armstrong.

"I've no idea about the source of the WWF's data. As per our study, the total area of the Himalayan glaciers is around 100,000 sq km," said Pradeep Mool, glacier expert, ICIMOD.

Armstrong has pointed out that several articles on the melting of glaciers in popular scientific journals were misleading.

"The global map on the fourth assessment report of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) showed that the Himalayas as a blank spot due to lack of adequate and authentic data on the glaciers," said Andreas Schild, Director General, ICIMOD.

"The available data on the melting of the Himalayan glaciers reflects a sweeping generalisation, which is largely incorrect," explained Armstrong. There is a lack of data on all in the Himalayan region, especially in the higher altitudes.

Studies reveal that the altitude above 5,400 metres has less than 0 degree Celsius throughout the year. Hence, the meltdown of glaciers in this altitude is virtually impossible. The existing data has only been collated from the altitude below 5,400 metres, which are prone to meltdown.

Source: <http://thehimalayantimes.com> Oct 12, 2009

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

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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