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Plan to Make New Road Vehicle Free Zone Deferred

Kathmandu Metropolitan City's (plan to operate electric vehicles in New Road area from today after declaring it a vehicle-free zone has been postponed for another day.

Earlier, KMC had declared New road and Hanumandhoka Durbar Square areas vehicle-free zone from Sunday in a bid to preserve the UNESCO World Heritage Site. However, the plan was put on hold after some entrepreneurs in the area asked KMC not to be hasty in implementing the decision," Kedar Bahadur Adhikari, executive chief of the civic body said. According to KMC sources, entrepreneurs were afraid that restricting vehicles could affect their business during the festival season. "However,

we are committed to implementing the decision and a new date will be published soon after another round of discussion with entrepreneurs," Adhikari said without divulging details of the new date. According to KMC, vehicles will be barred in the area between 8:30 am to 7:30 pm. However, permanent residents will be issued entry passes. KMC has been holding discussions with all the stakeholders, including local clubs, entrepreneurs, local residents and other concerned parties about its plan. "We are also in touch with vehicle entrepreneurs to decide on operation of electric vehicles," Adhikari said.

KMC is likely to buy electric vehicles and operate them in the area, keeping

the cost for commuters minimum, KMC sources said. If the private sector shows interest in operating electric vehicles at a reasonable fare, they can be allowed to operate, said Adhikari.

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New Maitighar-Bhadrakali Road to Open Soon

An alternative road constructed by Nepali Army to replace the Maitighar-Bhadrakali short-cut section, which was closed 13 years ago during the Maoist insurgency, will be handed over to the government soon. However, it will open to the public only after four months. "The alternative road will help ease more than 30 per cent traffic pressure at the bottleneck in Singha Durbar area," said Traffic Police Chief Ganesh Raj Rai.

Owing to the security reasons, the army had restricted movement on this road as it passed through the Nepali Army Headquarters during the

Maoist insurgency.

"We have already completed half the graveling work on the new alternative road," some army officers said.

"If the rain stops, we will complete graveling in about three to four days," they added. "After completion of graveling, we will immediately hand it over to the Department of Roads under the Ministry of Physical Planning, Works and Transport Management (MoPPWTM)."

The Nepali Army contributed the entire cost of opening the track and graveling of 565-metre long and 10-

metre wide new alternative road.

Tulasi Prasad Sitaula, secretary at MoPPWTM, said they would proceed with blacktopping four-lane road immediately after the army hands it over.

It will cost about Rs 50 million to blacktop the road and construct a six-metre bridge over the Tukucha stream, according to MoPPW.

Source: <http://thehimalayantimes.com> September 17, 2012

Plan to make....

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KMC has three 14-seater electric vehicles at present. "However, if a majority of people prefer to walk, there may not be any need to operate EVs," he added.

The stakeholders have shown concern about parking lots in New Road area for KMC operated electric vehicles. "We are planning to manage parking lots in a better way," said Adhikari. "We will use the existing parking lots and develop new

ones if the need arises," he added. "We'll develop footpaths and permanent road dividers and add greenery to the area," he said.

Source: [www.thehimalayantimes.com/September 22, 2012](http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/September/22/2012)

Government Yet to Decide on Khokana Alignment

Although the government has intensified the investor selection process for the Kathmandu-Tarai Fast Track road by inviting a fresh expression of interest (Eol), it is yet to decide whether to build the road through Khokana of Lalitpur.

The government has been exploring alternative routes after it failed to acquire land for the expressway in the Khokana area. Locals have demanded hefty compensations for their land.

As per the proposed route of the 76-km road, 8 km falls in the Khokana area. In the Eol called nearly two months ago, the Ministry of Physical Planning, Works and Transport Management had named the Khokana area as the originating point of the Fast Track. However, the ministry has not shown any urgency to decide on whether to find an alternative route.

A ministry official said a survey report on an alternative alignment has been submitted to the Nepal Planning Commission (NPC) for approval. The proposed change in the alignment passing through Khokana is focused on ending the two-and-a-half year-long impasse.

"Since potential investors are likely to start submitting their Eols after a few weeks, the ministry must decide on the alignment issue at the earliest," said a high-level ministry official.

The project will need an estimated Rs 3 billion, if the government agrees to buy land from locals and work as per existing alignment plan in Khokana.

To avoid Khokana, the ministry has been considering bringing the alignment alongside the Bagmati River to the site of the abandoned Himal Cement Factory at Chobhar where a bus park can also be built on the government land.

Tulasi Prasad Sitaula, secretary at the ministry, said they would soon come up with a decision. "We are still trying to go through Khokana, with locals being little positive of late," he said, adding that the ministry would also decide on an alternative alignment based on the survey report.

Ministry to hold conference

The Ministry of Physical Planning, Works and Transport Management is preparing to hold a pre-application conference in its bid to interact with potential investors of the Kathmandu-Tarai Fast Track road, their local partners, representatives or agents. The conference slated for September 9 will hold discussions on the bidding conditions, queries of bidders and the project implementation. "Interested investors can get more information about the project," said Fast Track Project Manager Kishor Gangol. He added that representatives from four international companies—Reliance Infrastructure, Infrastructure

Leasing & Financial Services, Land Mark Worldwide and Larsen and Turbo (L&T) Infrastructure Development Projects—have so far purchased Eol documents.

Source: [http://www.ekantipur.com/September 03, 2012](http://www.ekantipur.com/September/03/2012)



Govt. Action Plan to Avert Road Accident Deaths on The Cards

One year after adopting the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-20, the government has come up with a work plan to prevent road accident deaths. The United Nations General Assembly has endorsed the action plan that aims to prevent five million road traffic deaths globally by 2020.

The work plan, also called Nepal Road Safety Action Plan, will be initially implemented along the Naubise-Muglin section of Prithivi Highway.

According to Dr Baburam Marasini, senior official at the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), the government will focus on the specified five activities—road safety management, safer road design, safer vehicle design, safer road users and post crash care. The Ministry of Labour and Transport Management, the Department of Roads (DoR) and traffic police, among other stakeholders, will also be part of the

project, Dr Marasini said.

He said the programme, if successful, will be gradually replicated in other parts of the country. The plan has envisioned operating a trauma centre at the earliest, imparting training related to an emergency rescue and management, ensuring availability of ambulances, conducting a detail study on the existing standard of roads and vehicles and taking proper measures for its improvements, among others.

Chandra Kumar Subedi, chief of DoR's Road and Traffic Unit, said this action plan will bring all stakeholders working on road safety together. "We hope that the government will like our work plan so that we can translate our various ideas into action," said Subedi.

The MoHP estimates that 3,000 people lose their lives annually and around 10,000

are injured in road accidents across the country.

According to a Global Status Report on Road Safety, a study conducted by the World Health Organization, over 1.2 million people die each year on the world's roads and 50 million suffer non-fatal injuries.

The report further states that more than 90 percent of the world's fatalities on the roads occur in low-income and middle-income countries, which have only 48 percent of the world's registered vehicles.

Source: <http://www.ekantipur.com>

September 16, 2012



SC Orders Government to Implement EURO III

The Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday ordered the government to implement the Euro III vehicle emission standard. The new emission standard was not being implemented fully, with automobile dealers demanding at least a year's time for the execution.

A division bench of justices Girish Chandra Lal and Gyanendra Bahadur Karki on Tuesday issued the order, directing the government to implement the Nepal Vehicle Mass Emission Standard (NVMES) 2012, which bars the import of vehicles that do not comply with Euro III, and the National Ambient Air Quality Standard 2012.

On September 6, advocate Jivan Kumar Pokhrel had filed a writ petition against the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology, Nepal Automobile Dealers

Association (NADA) and Siprodi Trading, seeking the SC's order to implement the new emission standard.

Nepal has been importing vehicles based on the Nepal Vehicle Mass Emission Standard 1999 (Euro I) for last 13 years. As per the new emission standard, all vehicles, except for heavy equipment vehicles, entering Nepal are required to be in compliance with Euro III. About one and half months ago, the government had published a notice in the Nepal Gazette, implementing the NVMES 2012. However, automobile dealers criticised the government's move, saying they were not consulted before bringing the provision.

NADA, the apex body of automobile and spare parts dealers, had, however, welcomed the government move, but had also

demanding that the government allow dealers to import vehicles built under old standards that have already been ordered for a certain time. "This is good that the SC too has directed to implement the new emission standard," said NADA member Gopi Krishna Neupane. But he underscored the need for correcting some minor mistakes in the NVMES 2012 notice published in the gazette.

Lack of 'hi-tech' workshops and delay in bringing vehicle fitness test centres into operation have been highlighted as major hurdles for the effective implementation Euro III.

Source: www.ekantipur.com September 26, 2012

'Successful' 1st month for Night Buses



Despite initial hiccups, the night bus service 'successfully' completed its first one month operation in the Kathmandu Valley. Operators say by providing an uninterrupted service to commuters the night bus service has made a world of difference.

They also say its success shouldn't be measured in terms of commercial value. "The bus users are very happy with the service. We haven't received any complaint from customers till now," said Niraratna Newa, Bagmati Coordinator of National Federation of Nepal Transport Entrepreneurs (NFNTE).

Currently, 16 night buses are plying on six routes starting 8 pm. According to bus operators, the night buses are not making income as expected. They, however, say the bus service will continue despite a meagre earning.

"The first trip is lucrative than the second trip. On an average, the first trip makes Rs 600-Rs 800 while the second one makes Rs 300-Rs 500. The most successful Chakrapath (Ring Road) route makes around Rs 1,600 on each trip, which is an encouragement to us," said Newa. "We have to come up with a careful planning to, at least, meet the operation cost."

Additional routes have been added such as

Gangal Hospital to Galfutar and Jorpati to Nepal Medical College. The route from Bhadrakali to Singha Durbar to Koteshowr will now include the Anamnagar area too.

Metropolitan officials say the night bus service is providing a huge relief to those working at odd hours in particular. Kedar Bahadur Adhikari, chief at the Kathmandu Metropolitan City, said the service has been a successful endeavour. "We have to call it a success because it is still in the initial phase."

"Transport entrepreneurs have been very cooperative. We together plan to make it a long-term service by creating a pool fund, which will be based on revenue sharing."

The bus operators are planning to construct 25 stations before the Dashain festival. "Right now we have built one model station in front of Bir Hospital. There will be plenty more by the end of this month. We also plan to put a route map containing information and a time card in all the stations and also distribute pocket maps to people," said Adhikari.

Adhikari said the bus service has been gaining more popularity with the Valley denizens. "The customers are feeling secured to travel by night buses. Night workers use the service on a regular basis. Many of them have discarded their cycles."

Transport entrepreneurs say the night buses have taught owners of day buses a lesson. "There is a very healthy competition now. Even the day operators are servicing the costumers till late in the evening. Earlier, they used to ply buses till eight. Now we can see some day buses on roads till 10 o'clock. The privately owned buses and micro buses have been showing positive and healthy competition, which is a good news for us and the costumers," said Newa.

Taxi drivers, however, are not happy with the night buses as they have been trying to disrupt the service. "Some of the taxis even attempt to block our routes saying that the night bus service dwindled their customers," said Newa.

More plans are in the offing to make the night bus service a popular and draw more passengers. The idea to introduce time cards have been conceived. Operators are planning to round each short route in 45 minutes and long routes in 75 minutes. If things go well, an SMS service will also be unveiled to view the arrival and departure timing of night buses.

Source: www.ekantipur.com September 17, 2012

Sajha Yatayat to Resume Service from February

After remaining dysfunctional for four years, Sajha Yatayat is planning to resume service in Kathmandu from February, 2013. Initially, it plans to operate 20 TATA-brand vehicles on two routes within the Kathmandu valley.

Sajha has already applied to the Department of Transport Management for route permission. It is also scheduled to sign an agreement with India's TATA Motors in a week for the supply of 20 Euro III vehicles.

"We are planning to start service by mid-February, 2013," said Mahendra Raj Pandeya, manager of Sajha Yatayat Cooperative. He said the cooperative will operate in a competitive way as an efficient mass transport service in the valley.

In the global tender called for vehicle supply, TATA had bid the lowest among Hong Kong-, China-, Singapore- and India-based companies. Sajha officials said they would sign a contract by Friday and the vehicles would be delivered after four months.

According to the department, Sajha has requested permits for two routes — Harihar Bhawan-Tripureshwor-Ranipokhari-Kamalpokhari-Gaushala-Koteshwor-Satdobato-Lagankhel (16.5 km) and Satdobato-Lagankhel-Jaulakhel-Tripureshwor-Teku-Kalimati-Kalanki (16.4 km). Both the routes will have two way services.

Mohan Bhattarai, mechanical engineer at the department, who was also a member of the bid evaluation team, said the TATA buses to

be imported would have 55 seats and low deck would help elderly people get on easily. "Two doors, one each for getting on and off, will be operated by driver," he added.

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Sajha Yatayat to resume.....

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Last year, the government decided to operate Sajha under a cooperative model, ending almost half-a-century government control. The cooperative had earlier planned to resume service before Dashain this year, but the delay in procurement process delayed the

plan.

Based on the experience from the 20 buses, Sajha plans to gradually expand services in national as well as international level. During its heydays, Sajha operated over 180 buses on different routes across the country (60 percent of the transport routes).

The department has said the routes would be assigned after discussions with the private sector transport entrepreneurs' organisations. However, transport entrepreneurs are hesitant to allow Sajha buses on the sought routes.

Source: www.ekantipur.com September 17, 2012

Fuel Prices Go Up Again

Nepal Oil Corporation on Sunday raised the prices of petroleum products.

The new rates that followed a board meeting on Sunday night will come into effect on Monday. The state-owned oil monopoly has raised Rs 5 on a litre of petrol, Rs 4 on a litre of diesel and kerosene and Rs 55 on a cylinder of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG). With the revised prices, petrol will now cost Rs 125 per litre and diesel/kerosene Rs 97 per litre. The price of an LPG cylinder will cost 1,470.

According to a source at the NOC, the rise in prices of oil in the international market compelled the NOC to effect the hike.

The monthly projected loss of the NOC ballooned three folds to Rs 1.17 billion as per the oil tariff sent by the Indian Oil Corporation on Saturday.

NOC's loans to the government and banks and financial institutions currently stand over Rs 26 billion. The last time NOC revised fuel

prices was on June 20.

Source: <http://www.ekantipur.com> September 03, 2012



Good Reads:

1. [Kathmandu, The Masked City](#) - Samik Kharel, The Kathmandu Post, September 06, 2012
2. [Air Pollution Still a Major Bugbear](#) - Pragati Shahi, The Kathmandu Post, September 11, 2012
3. [Make City Air Breathable](#) - Prashanta Khanal, The Kathmandu Post, September 11, 2012
4. [Suffocating Road Expansion Debris](#)- Samik Kharel, The Kathmandu Post, September 11, 2012
5. [Toxic Air](#) - Editorial, The Kathmandu Post, September 17, 2012

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