



Clean Air News

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Green Kathmandu Drive Begins

In a bid to ensure a healthy, green urban environment in the Kathmandu Valley, Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai on Wednesday initiated the Green Kathmandu campaign by planting a Jamun (Black plum) sapling along the Koteshwor-Lokanthali road.

In the presence of high-level government officials, including the chief secretary, ministers and police personnel, members of the government-led campaign planted 545 plants.

The saplings included species of Jamun, Karbir, Rajbriksha, Dhupi, Tejpat and Kamini and were planted in open spaces in the centre of the road section beginning from Koteshwor in Kathmandu to Suryabinayak in Bhaktapur.

Inaugurating the campaign, Bhattarai said that in the present context of building a New Nepal, it is equally important to improve the greenery of the city to control rapid urbanisation and desertification.

However, the government's road expansion drive has chopped down many tall trees that lined the city streets. The latest campaign is an attempt to replenish greenery and improve the deteriorating urban environment.

"Maintaining and improving a green and clean environment is not possible through just government efforts. It is equally important for each citizen to become aware and active in planting trees in their homes and open spaces," said Bhattarai.

As part of the campaign, around 1,500 trees will be planted along the 6.8 km road section and along the footpaths. Of the total estimated budget of Rs 2.5 million for the campaign, the Bhaktapur Municipality, Kathmandu Metropolitan City and Madhyapur Thimi Municipality invested Rs 600,000, Rs 200,000 and Rs 100,000 respectively. The remaining funds will be allocated by the government itself.

According to Krishna Hari Banskota, secretary at the Prime Minister's Office and the Council of Ministers, caretakers will be appointed to look after the saplings and they will be responsible for watering and gardening them. "Each sapling will be planted three metres apart," said Banskota. Traffic police working in the area will also be responsible for looking after the trees once they are planted.

Banskota further said that besides the government, various partners, including private organisations, trade unions and non-government organisations, are expected to participate in the greenery drive. "We want to make Kathmandu as beautiful and green as Indian cities like Dehradun and Delhi," said Banskota.

Source: <http://www.ekantipur.com/November 29,2012>

Construction Starts on Bathnaha- Katakari Railway Track

An Indian Company has begun construction of broad gauge railway track towards Nepali Territory from the Indian border as part of agreement between the two countries to expand railway service between the two countries to expand railway service between Katakari of Morang and Bathnaha in the Indian State of Bihar. The construction began after the Nepali government handed over the control of 14 Bighas of land to India to lay down the track near

the No Man's land which will enter Nepal has started," said Surya Prasad Paudel of Biratnagar Railway and Metro Development Project. "We hope to complete the project within two years". The Indian Railway Construction Private Limited had awarded the track on Tatiya and tatiya Construction company. Of the 18.1 km track, 13.1 km will be constructed in Nepal and the remaining 5 km will be in the Indian territory. The estimated cost of the

project is IRS 2.38 billion. Most of the people whose land was expropriated for the project have already been compensated. "More than 90 percent of the locals have already received compensation." said Paudel. According to Paudel, a railway platform passenger waiting room and an office will also built in Katakari VDC. The formal agreement between the two countries includes the building Contd....

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of five different railway lines in the bordering regions. However, three other projects Birgunj-Pataliya, New Jalpaigiri- Kakavitta and Butwal-

Sunauli has not started due to insufficient budget.

“It will be very helpful to extend the east-west railway track in future after we complete this project,” said Paudel.

Source: <http://www.myrepublica.com/November 5, 2012>

Kathmandu Metro Railway Project

The government is considering to hand over Kathmandu Metro Railway Project to Nepal Metro Private Limited. About three months ago, the company had submitted a proposal at the Investment Board (IB) to carry out the detailed study and build the metro railway—a mass rapid transit—in partnership with Korean companies.

A final report on feasibility of the metro railway prepared by the government-hired consultant shows it costs \$3.88 billion (Rs 330 billion) for building the metro railway system in the Kathmandu. However, the Nepal Metro has been saying that it would build the metro in Kathmandu investing \$ 3 billion.

“If the company signs bond with enough Korean firms and come up with technical and financial capabilities required for this type of project, IB could assign the project to work in joint venture,” said a source at the IB. The source said that the Kathmandu metro, being a huge project, would be decided based on in-depth study over the proposal, feasibility report and its benefit to the government and to investors.

After nearly a year of study, consultants consisting of a consortium of Korean (Chungsuk Engineering Company,

Korea Transport Institution, Kunhwa Consulting and Engineering Company, Korea Rail Network Authority) and Nepali (Research Management Consultant Environmental and Building Design Authority) firms recently submitted a final feasibility report to the Railway Department. The report says that it will cost around Rs 330 billion to build a 77-km-long metro system in Kathmandu in next 10 years.

According to officials at the department the Nepal Metro had also assured the IB that it would reimburse to the government Rs 60.5 million spent on the feasibility study. There will be five lines of metro railway—four lines planned for inside the Ring Road and one line of 27.35 km running around the Ring Road.

With no resources for detailed project report (DPR) and less chances of the government undertaking the project in future, the IB was mulling to accept the Nepal Metro’s proposal, according to the IB source. The government, after the completion of feasibility study, was supposed to carry out a detailed study to build the metro railway—also a part of the national priority railway development project.

However, officials at the Ministry of Physical Planning, Works and

Transport Management said that there was no resource to carry out the DPR due to this year’s budget being limited to two-thirds. “No budget has been allocated for the DPR of the metro railway,” said Tulasi Prasad Situala, secretary at the ministry. He also informed that the IB might entrust the metro project to Nepal Metro after studying the company’s proposal, its Korean parties and capacity.

Earlier, the Ministry of Physical Planning, through the Finance Ministry, had requested the South Korean government and the Asian Development Bank to conduct the DPR for the metro. However, the Railway Department officials said they have not received any response till date.

Source: <http://www.ekantipur.com/November 25, 2012>

Vehicle Registration In Bagmati

Registrations of new automobiles grew 10 percent year-on-year in the first quarter. Car dealers attributed the rise to easier auto loans, festive demand and the lure of new models arriving in the local market.

Almost all the automobile dealers representing international brands have been providing large discount offers with an eye on the Dashain and Tihar festivals. Sales of motor vehicles usually jump 15-20 percent during the festival buying spree.

According to the Department of Transport Management, 15,895 motor vehicles were registered in Q1 in Bagmati zone, the largest auto market in the country where the capital Kathmandu is situated. During the same period in the last fiscal year (mid-July to mid-October), the figure was 14,400 vehicles. Nationwide, registrations reached more than 50,000 vehicles.

Local dealers said sales had improved after mid-September with the holding of the Nepal Automobile Dealers Associa-

tion (NADA) Auto Show and different sales schemes offered by dealers. "Many new models hitting the market has also resulted in sales going up," said NADA president Saurav Jyoti.

However, he said that the automobile sector was still struggling to recover from a slump.

According to the Q1 figures, registrations of all types of vehicles except the car, jeep, van category have gone up. Registrations of cars fell 9 percent to 1,428 units. Last year, 1,582 cars were imported in the country.

"Many vehicles ordered by customers prior to Dashain are yet to arrive, so the small number of registrations does not reflect the true picture," said Rupesh Sharma Bhatta,

assistant general manager at the sales and marketing division of Laxmi Intercontinental. He added that sales of motor vehicles rose after banks lowered the interest rate to around 10 percent from a high of 15 percent earlier.

Car dealers have been blaming high interest rates and excise duty and a slowdown in the realty sector for the auto business taking a dive. Currently, the excise duty on motorbikes and four-wheelers stands at 40 percent and 60 percent respectively.

Jyoti said that NADA had urged the government to lower the excise duty on bikes to 25 percent and to 45 percent on four-wheelers in the new budget. "We have also asked that the excise duty on the import of spare parts be fixed at a flat 5 percent."

Meanwhile, registrations of motorcycles in Q1 rose 10 percent to 13,428 units. Chiranjibi Shah, deputy general manager of HH Bajaj which deals in Bajaj two-wheelers, said that imports had increased from last year. "Sales are on an upward trend due to the launching of the Pulsar 200 NS and Discover 125 ST models and festive schemes," he added.

Source: [www.ekantipur.com/ November 12, 2012](http://www.ekantipur.com/November12,2012)

KMC Resolves to make New Road area Vehicle Free Zone

If everything goes as planned, the Kathmandu Metropolitan City will declare the entire New Road area a vehicle-free zone and will operate electric vehicles for commuters instead from the New Year.

The plan of the metropolis is aimed at easing traffic congestion in the Unesco World Heritage Site. KMC has been discussing the plan with the stakeholders, including local clubs, entrepreneurs and the local people, to pave the way for its implementation.

According to KMC Executive Director Kedar Bahadur Adhikari, the plan will be executed once the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries, and the Nepal Chamber of Commerce agree to cooperate.

"We will be talking to them within a week," said Adhikari. All the private and public vehicles would be barred from entering the area between 8:30am and 7:30pm. However, permanent residents will be given identity cards to use their private vehicles in the no-go area. They will be allowed to park their vehicles at

their residence. Other users will have to leave their vehicles at Khula Manch and take an electric vehicle from the New Road gate. Two routes have been developed-- New Road Gate-Juddha Salik-Indrachowk-Ason and to Ratna Park; and New Road Gate-Khichapokhari to Dharahara.

"The private sector will be allowed to operate electric vehicles if it shows interest to do it for reasonable fares.

If not, the KMC will buy electric vehicles
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Government Oversight Applies Brakes on Electric Vehicles

Samik Kharel

Although pollution caused by vehicle emissions is increasing by the day in Kathmandu, the government, instead of encouraging the public to invest in clean energy vehicles, is undermining efforts to promote Electric Vehicles (EV) in the Capital.

In the past, the government had been providing subsidies to electric vehicle, but the incumbent government has cancelled the few subsidies and imposed taxes on parts required for electric vehicle. According to Bishnu Dhital, chairman of the Electric Vehicles Association Nepal (EVAN), the government has even cancelled past privileges extended to EVs.

“Earlier the government had made plans to promote eco-friendly vehicle. It gave subsidies on electricity usage but the incumbent government has increased the price of electricity at the charging stations,” said Dhital. A unit of electricity now costs Rs 5.50, up from Rs 2.50 a year ago.

The government has also increased taxes on batteries that have to be transported

to the United States for recycling. “The government used to provide tax exemptions during the transportation of the batteries for recycling, but even this has been cancelled now and we have to pay huge amounts in taxes,” said Dhital. At present, there are around 700 electric ‘safa tempos’ in operation in the Valley with a total of 32 charging stations. The safa tempos are also providing employment to around 200 women. However, authorities concerned said problems have come up due to loadshedding.

According to Secretary at the Ministry of Physical Planning, Works and Transport Management, Tulasi Prasad Sitaula, the government has been encouraging the use of electric vehicles. “We have managed to subsidise the import tax for electric vehicles but even the safa tempos in use haven’t been able to multiply in the many years that they have been in operation,” said Sitaula.

He claimed that interest among the public in purchasing electric vehicles for private use has diminished. “People show little interest in electric vehicles. It is mostly

diplomats who have been using them privately,” said Sitaula. Meanwhile, EV entrepreneurs claimed that a lack of proper routes was also creating a roadblock to ensuring the proper operation of these eco-friendly machines.

EVAN has proposed that the government make plans to introduce electric buses for public transport. “We have around 10 electric buses, however, the government has shown no interest in bringing them into operation,” said Dhital.

Besides the long-term health and environmental benefits of EVs, experts claim that they are also more efficient and road-friendly. “Since these vehicles run slow, they reduce the chances of accidents. Brakes are also more efficient in electric vehicles. They are probably the best mode of transportation in a city like Kathmandu as they will contribute towards keeping the city clean and green,” said Dhital.

Source: <http://www.kantipuronline.com/November 27, 2012>



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and operate them in the area, keeping the cost for riders as low as possible,” Adhikari added.

The KMC will keep trolleys in places for people to transport goods to the vehicle station.

The metropolis plans to develop more parking lots if needed while footpaths will be improved. Permanent dividers will be placed on the roads.

Source: www.ekantipur.com/November 7, 2012

On the Road

The road widening campaign in Kathmandu Valley is well underway. In many areas, the demolition phase has ended and reconstruction has begun. Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai has received a mix of praise and criticism for spearheading this initiative. While many are relieved that once-narrow, overcrowded streets like the Lazimpat road are finally going to get some respite, others have pointed the peaceful inner roads that have been demolished, the trees that have been replaced by more concrete and the peace and quiet of certain neighbourhoods shattered by the clamour of motorised vehicles. In places like Lazimpat, Chabahil and Maharajgunj, the road widening will definitely ease much of the traffic congestion; however, it cannot be overlooked that the entire road expansion drive aims to promote the continued, and increased, use of motor vehicles while placing little emphasis on other modes of transport.

One of the newly-expanded roads between Ring Road and Chundevi, for example, is now

at least five metres wider on either side. However, its brand new sidewalks are only a few feet across. Cars and bikes have no trouble passing by but because the sidewalks are so narrow, pedestrians have no space to call their own. Just as before, they are forced to walk along the sides of the roads, inconveniencing themselves and the drivers passing by. Herein lays a fundamental fault in the way the whole road redesign project is functioning: it places far too much emphasis on motorised mobility, at the detriment of motor drivers themselves, while neglecting pedestrians, cyclists and the environment. A more pragmatic approach would have been to widen roads where necessary, widen sidewalks in most places, outline bike paths in other places and keep the environment in mind throughout. By the looks of it, the government plan only seems concerned with squeezing more cars on to already-packed roads.

To add to pedestrian woes, the plans to construct flyovers in various parts of the cities

will only further alienate the majority of Kathmandu's inhabitants who do not possess their own vehicles. Instead of investing so heavily in these far-fetched plans to turn Kathmandu's road network into one mirroring those in Western cities, it would be wiser to invest in an efficient, practical public transport system, good bus and cycle routes with plenty of sidewalks and greenery alongside. This could even encourage private vehicle owners to opt for public transport, cycling or walking, reducing carbon emissions and contributing to making lives that much better. What the road expansion drive aims to do in the long-run, it is presumed, is ease traffic in the city and make travel more pleasant. But if other mechanisms which emphasise non-motorised mobility are not taken up with equal, if not more, vigour, the roads may be wide but more cars and chaos is sure to follow.

Source: http://www.ekantipur.com/November_2_2012

Good Reads:

1. [Govt's electric vehicle plan brings cheers](#) - Binod Gimire, The Kathmandu Post, November 27, 2012
2. [Small, compact and a good friend](#) - Ajaya Dixit, The Kathmandu Post, November 27, 2012
3. [Make way, here we come](#) - Ananta R. Baidhya, The Kathmandu Post, November 29, 2012
4. [Inclusive Roads](#) - Jagannath Lamichane, The Kathmandu Post, November 23, 2012
5. [Congestion Can be Alternative to Traffic Jams](#) - Ashish Gajurel, The Kathmandu Post, November 18, 2012
6. [Sidewalk City](#) - Sabin Ninglekhu Limbu, Republica, November 5, 2012
7. [Stuck in Traffic](#) - Angel Sharma, The Kathmandu Post, November 17, 2012
8. [Road Expansion: When the going gets rough](#) - Samik Kharel, The Kathmandu Post, November 9, 2012

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[Building Partnership for Clean Air](#)

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 Initiative for Asian Cities and hosted by Clean Energy Nepal.

For more information: www.cen.org.np/cann

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