



# Clean Air News

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 6

JUNE 2013 (JUNE 1 - JUNE 30)

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## Roads Dept Seeks Rs 7.66b to Maintain Strategic Roads

The Department of Roads has asked the government to allocate Rs 7.66 billion in the next budget for its road maintenance programme. The funds will be used to improve more than 8,000 km of roads under the strategic road network (SRN) in fiscal 2013-14.

The department presents its estimated budget requirement by calculating a specific size before the start of each fiscal year. However, the government has been regularly providing less than the department's request citing lack of funds. Last year, the government earmarked Rs 2.71 billion against the Rs 8.34 billion demanded by the department. Normally, the government focuses on routine and recurrent maintenance work. Resources for other major maintenance work includ-

ing periodic and backlogged projects, reconstruction, rehabilitation and upgrading are allocated on a low priority basis.

"Periodic, specific maintenance and road rehabilitation have not received the attention of the government which ultimately increases the backlog of maintenance work and expenses," said Kailash Kumar Shrestha, senior divisional engineer of the department. He added that the department was getting funds for routine and recurrent road improvement activities as per its demand.

Out of the total budget request, Rs 3 billion has been planned to be spent on routine and recurrent maintenance. Dan Kumar Shakya, engineer at the Maintenance Division of the department, said that most of resources requested were for rehabilitation

and reconstruction work. "We have been assured a budget ceiling of Rs 4 billion for road maintenance for the next fiscal as the spending is less in the current fiscal year," he added. Periodic maintenance is carried out every five to seven years, while reconstruction and rehabilitation is done based on the condition of the road. The department stated that the total budget requirement for the next fiscal was lower than last year as donor agencies like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank were providing funds for rehabilitation in some road projects.

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## Establishing Kathmandu as a Cycle City by 2020

*By Amita Thapa Magar  
June 2, 2013 Kathmandu*

A workshop on "Cycling in Nepal: Challenges and Opportunities" concluded today issuing a 10 point Kathmandu Declaration 2013 for establishing Kathmandu as a Cycle City by 2020.

About 35 participants representing various government institu-

tions, non government organizations, youth groups, cycle entrepreneurs and promoters and media representatives participated in the program. The program was graced by the presence of Chief Secretary of Government of Nepal, Mr. Lilamani Poudyal, as well as the Mr. Keshab Prasad Bhattarai, Secretary of Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (MOSTE).

In the opening session, World cyclist Mr. Pushkar Shah talked about the benefits of cycling. Mr. Shah, who has traveled to more than 150 countries on cycle, made an appeal to start cycling at least once a week, for health, environment and saving

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### Road Dept Seeks

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The department is responsible for keeping the country's 14,488 km of roads under the SRN in good condition to ensure safe travelling. Lack of sufficient funds, overloaded vehicles and poor quality of maintenance work have been

cited as the major reasons behind the poor condition of Nepal's highways. An official at the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport said that the condition of the roads would not improve until the government focuses on maintenance and stops giving money for local roads under pressure from politi-

cal party leaders.

Source: [www.ekantipur.com](http://www.ekantipur.com), June 9, 2013

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Speaking at the program, Chief Secretary Mr. Poudyal urged all the stakeholders to follow up in order to ensure provision of cycle in the upcoming government plans and actions. He shared his cycling experiences and stories and stressed how much it is important to transform the cultural barrier in promoting cycling at all levels. He also highlighted the need to incorporate cycle track and trails in urban road designs. "Promoting cycling culture among youths and students is the most important intervention to make", he said and urged the campaigners to develop such campaigns in future.

Three presentations were made in the program. Mr. Bhushan Tuladhar from UN Habitat presented on the air quality and transport management situation in Kathmandu and discussed the potential for cycling. He presented the current status and trends of cycling and walking and transport sector as a whole. He also shared the international experiences of cycle development from around the world and compared them to local and national initiatives made on cycling in Nepal.

This was followed by a presentation by Mr. Prashanta Khanal from Clean Energy Nepal/ Clean Air Network Nepal on Policies and Economics of Cycling in

Nepal. Mr. Khanal stressed how pro cycling policies will benefit economically, environmentally and socially. He also emphasized that the amount deposited as Pollution Tax could be utilized in these initiatives.

Sharing the cycling experiences from youth, Sailendra Dongol from Cycle City Network Nepal, briefed on how the cycling campaign in Kathmandu as well and other cities are building the momentum to develop cycling culture and push the relevant authorities for cycle lanes. He also shared the vision and actions of Kathmandu Cycle City 2020 campaign and informed the activities of Cycle City Pokhara, Dharan Cycle City and Chitwan Cycle City.

Mr. Keshab Prasad Bhattarai, acknowledged the presenters for their comprehensive presentation and expressed his commitment to support cycling promotion. "We can initiate Car Free Saturdays", he said to support pedestrianization and cycling.

Similarly, Mr. Keshab Kumar Sharma, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport (MoPIT) appreciated the initiative to discuss explicitly on cycle issues. He pointed some interventions required to support cycle promotion like safe infrastructure, parking facilities and promoting cycle as pride man's ride. He also shared that about 18 km of cycle lanes will be added

newly expanded road in Kathmandu, which includes Kalanki to Koteshwor (10 km), Maitighar to Tinkune (3 km), Kalimati to Balkhu (1 km), Maitighar to Bhadrakali (600m), Police Headquarters Naxal to Baluwatar (3km) and Balaju Bypass (1 km).

A panel discussion followed the presentations, where a panel consisting of Bhushan Tuladhar (UN Habitat), Jagat Man Shrestha (SP, Metropolitan Traffic Police Division), Dr. Jaya Ram Adhikari (MoSTE), Prashanta Khanal (Clean Energy Nepal), Shail Shrestha (Cycle City Network Nepal), and Sthaneshwor Dhungana (Traffic Volunteer) responded to queries and comments from the floor.

Delivering his concluding remarks, Mr. Jaya Ram Adhikari from MOSTE said that a Cycle Policy and Strategy, with various components such as infrastructure development, promotion among youths, economic instruments and compliance, is an urgent need and expressed his commitment towards supporting this.

The program was organized by Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment in coordination with Cycle City Network Nepal, Clean Energy Nepal and Step for Miles and supported by USAID and WWF Nepal. The event was managed by Rise Global Pvt. Ltd.

Source: [Clean Energy Nepal](http://Clean Energy Nepal)

## Capital's First Disabled-Friendly Road in Offing

A 100-meter stretch of disabled-friendly road is all set for construction from the main gate of the Khagendra New Life Centre, an organization for the disabled, to the intersection at Narayantar, Jorpati.

A disabled-friendly road is something that all disabled people have been waiting for for years in the hope that it would set a precedent for the construction of more such roads. Khagendra Disabled-Friendly Road will be the country's first disabled-friendly road where people with various kinds of disabilities can walk without any help from others.

Wheelchair users can move on the road without having to worry about other vehicles.

According to the Khagendra Disabled-Friendly Road Campaign Implementation Committee (KDFRCIC), the road is being designed to international standards. For example, traffic lights will be accompanied by the sounds of bells to allow the blind people to recognize different traffic signals.

Similarly, special kinds of marble will be used on the footpath to make the movement of wheelchairs easier, and the blind will be able to tell where they are walking because of the kind of sound produced when walking on it.

Railings will be installed on either side of the pavement. Rest areas will also be arranged with trees and flowers.

"The road is designed in such a way that the disabled will not need help from others nor fear any road accidents," said Rishi Ram Dhakal, coordinator of KDFRCIC. "The road will be quite different from ordinary roads as it will be wider and more comfortable not only the disabled but all other pedestrians also." The committee has estimated a total budget outlay of Rs 3 million for the road, and 60 percent of the budget will be provided by the government, with the rest to be collected through different fund raising programs.

As of now the committee has collected Rs 600 thousand in a fund-raising campaign. Many well-known individuals have helped in the campaign, including Haribansa Acharya and Madan Krishna Shrestha.

"The presence of such personalities in our fund raising campaign really helped," said Dhakal. "They have assured us of help in future as well."

According to the Department of Roads (DoR), a 175 meter-wide road is needed in order to make it disabled-friendly. Four meters on both sides will be for

footpaths. This is hardly possible in all roads of Kathmandu Valley.

"We do not have such wide roads at all places of the capital," said Shyam Kharel, chief of Kathmandu Valley Road Expansion Project. "But on spacious roads, we have started to construct two-meter footpaths."

According to him, such footpaths will be constructed from Gaushala to Sankhamul, Lainchour to Maharajgunj and Tinkune to Maitighar. They are also preparing other roads in the capital for such footpaths.

However, although the roads department has decided to put in such footpaths at every wide road, the disabled have doubts about implementation.

"Many programs of the government are still confined to the files," said Rabin Thapaliya of the National Disabled Journalists Organization. "This disabled-friendly road has become possible only because of the initiative of different disabled organizations and various well-known personalities."

**Source:** [www.myrepublica.com](http://www.myrepublica.com), June 26, 2013



## China-Aided Ring Road Expansion Begins

It was built in the 1970s with Chinese assistance. Now, after some 40 years, the expansion of the Ring Road is also being carried out with support from the northern neighbor. The first phase of the Kathmandu Ring Road Improvement Project took off formally on Tuesday, Vice-president Paramananda Jha and visiting State Councillor of China Yang Jiechi jointly inaugurating the project. The existing 27-km four-lane two-way road around Kathmandu will now be widened to eight lanes, with a two-way bicycle lane and a pedestrian pathway. Addressing the inaugural programme, Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport Chhabi Raj Pant said the improved road would provide better by-pass service to inner roads and ease traffic pressure. "The road has been designed incorporating a bicycle lane and a pathway for pedestrians," he said. China's Vice-Minister of Commerce Jiang Zengwei said the road witnessed tremendous changes in the last 30-40 years. "So we

decided to undertake this improvement project," he said. Nepal and China had signed and exchanged the Letters of Exchange for a Chinese grant of Rs 547 million for the widening of the Ring Road and other mutually agreed projects in February 2011. The road will be expanded in three phases. In the first phase, 9-km Kalanki-Koteshwor stretch will be improved, which will cost around Rs 5.27 billion. The first phase also includes intersection improvement in three locations, bus stations and parking lots. The three junctions—Kalanki, Satdobato and Koteshwor—will be improved for uninterrupted operation of vehicles. Third Railway Survey and Design Institute Group Corporation of China had prepared the design of the 9-km stretch. In December, 2012, the Department of Roads and Chinese contractor Shanghai Construction Group Company had signed an agreement for the improvement of the 9-km stretch. According to the Physical Infrastructure Ministry, Shang-

hai Construction would first develop 1-km model road in two locations. Shanghai Construction has already started work on the project by setting up its office in Malphokhari, Balkhu. Road department officials said the Balkhu River-UML Headquarter and Ekantakuna-Gwarko sections have been selected to be developed as model road. "Based on the 2-km model road, remaining 7-km section will be widened," said Ashok Tiwari, chief of the project. He said the first phase is expected to be completed in 40 months. Earlier, China had also shown interest in constructing an Outer Ring Road in the Kathmandu valley. But the plan could not make headway due to the government's failure to ensure availability of land.

**Source:** [www.ekantipur.com](http://www.ekantipur.com), June 26, 2013

## Activists Pave Cycle Lane Along Ring Road

A group of environmentalists on Friday paved 350 meter long and 2 meter wide cycle lane along the ring road in Thasikhel to show that roads can be widened without cutting the trees.

It is an attempt by the youths united under 'White Butterfly Movement' that is working to prevent the felling of over 1200 trees along the Kalanki-Koteshwar section of the ring road that has been earmarked for expansion under Chinese government's aid. Earlier, they had submitted letters to several government bodies and also to the Chinese Embassy to reconsider the decision to cut the trees while widening the road. "It cost Rs 7,500 for the materials, while the labor was voluntarily provided by the movement activists. It is only symbolic protest against the government move. We built the cycle lane just to show that roads

can be widened while still saving the trees," said president of Cycle City Network Nepal and member of the movement Shail Shrestha.

According to Ishan Adhikari, one of the active members engaged in making the lane, urban planning engineers and architects have been invited on Saturday to do serious environment assessment in the area. "The concerned government department needed to be anxious about saving the trees. But they are not. We have been organizing several programs to sensitize the government and the people against cutting down the trees. This is an effort to save the greenery," he said.

Adhikari added that if the road is expanded to six instead of 8 the trees can be saved. "This is not a highway. The road is inside the city. So we feel that just 6 lane ring

road would be sufficient."

The government of China has pledged to provide Rs 3.7 billion for widening the 9 km stretch. The construction was set to begin in June. However, consistent pressure from the campaigners against cutting down the trees has delayed the project. The District Forestry Office (DFO), Lalitpur and Kathmandu have already permitted the Department of Road (DoR), Lalitpur to cut down as many as 1,239 trees that were planted in the 70s.

Ajit Karna, district forest officer at Lalitpur, said that the department has authority to influence the decision.

**Source:** [www.myrepublica.com](http://www.myrepublica.com), June 22, 2013

# Pollution in Singapore Hits Record Level

The Pollution Standards Index, a uniform system used by Singapore to measure pollution, hit 371 at 1 p.m., topping the previous record of 226, which was set in 1997. Health officials consider any level above 300 to be hazardous to health.

Residents were urged to remain indoors, while air traffic controllers at Changi Airport were told to take extra precautions in directing flights. In neighboring Malaysia, more than 200 schools were ordered closed because of the pollution.

The persistence of the pollution this week has tested ties with Indonesia, where farmers in Sumatra often burn forests at this time of year as a cheap way to prepare the land for new plantings. Though such burning violates local laws, Indonesian officials have failed to stop it.

“No country or corporation has the right to pollute the air at the expense of Singaporeans’ health and well-being,” Vivian Balakrishnan, Singapore’s environment minister, said in calling for Indonesian action to curb the fires.

Indonesian officials say Malaysia and Singapore deserve part of the blame because their companies control many of the palm oil plantations where the burning takes place.

An Indonesian official struck back on Thursday at the criticism from Singapore. Agung Laksono, the coordinating minister for people’s welfare, said, “Singapore shouldn’t be like children, in such a tizzy,” according to The Straits Times of Singapore.

The problems in Singapore and Malaysia come at a time of increasing concern about pollution across Asia, particularly in China, where pollution readings this year have been

at least 30 percent higher than in previous years.

Source: [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), June 21, 2013



## Good Reads:

1. [Short Sighted](#): Republica, June 9, 2013
2. [Night Bus Service Falter in Absence of Nightlife](#) : Republica, June 10, 2013
3. [Fitting parallel](#) : Dr. Shambhu Ram Simkhada, Republica, June 12, 2013
4. [A Green Quandary](#) : Adity Karki, Republica, June 13, 2013

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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)

### Building Partnership for Clean Air

To contribute articles, news items, or event announcements for the next issue, send an email with the complete details and URL source to [cen@cen.org.np](mailto:cen@cen.org.np) or [anjila@cen.org.np](mailto:anjila@cen.org.np)