



Clean Air News

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Cycle Lane from Tinkune to Maitighar in Two Months

Here's good news to all the cycling enthusiasts out there. The capital will finally have a 2,600-meter cycle lane from Tinkune to Maitighar within two months. Started in July, the government has already completed 80 percent of the construction work-despite the Constituent Assembly elections.

"We would have completed it a bit earlier. But contractors and the workers left for their constituencies to cast their votes," said Shyam Kharel, head of the Kathmandu Valley Road Improvement Project. "Anyway, the remaining work should not take more than one and a half months."

He informed that they have almost finished laying blocks and giving finishing touches. As part of the project the sidewalks on both sides of the road are being divided with red and white color blocks. The 2.5 meter white block strips are meant for bicyclists and the red ones for pedestrians.

The government had decided to carve out cycle lanes in all the newly widened thoroughfares in the capital, acting upon the request from various organizations

as well as cyclists.

However, the stakeholders are not completely happy with the pace as the government is yet to finalize even designs of some of the cycle lanes. Kharel, however, said that they were building a cycle lane at a time.

"Once this one is done, we will immediately start Kalimati-Balkhu lane," he said, adding that the cycle lane on both sides of the road will be 1,300 meter long but only 1.5 meter wide, owing to space constraint.

The cyclists have other reservations, too. First, they wanted cycle lane in the every roadsides of the capital, which the government officials have ruled out, and they are also not satisfied with the choice of material used for the cycle lanes.

"They have used block, which won't last long," complained Sailendra Dangol, vice-president, Cycle City Network Nepal (CCNN), an organization of the cyclists in the valley. "This does not meet international standards. They should have used the same material which is used to con-

struct roads."

Back in April 2012, CCNN had submitted a memorandum to the authorities concerned - the Department of Road, Kathmandu Valley Town Development Committee, the Ministry of Physical Planning and Works and Kathmandu Metropolitan City - for the establishment of cycle lanes in every widened roads across the valley.

They had even gifted a bicycle to the then Prime Minister Dr Baburam Ram Bhattarai in a bid to oblige the government to construct the cycle lanes. Dr Bhattarai had assured them to build cycle lanes, but no initiatives were taken during his tenure for the same. They had to wait till the incumbent government started constructing the cycle lanes in the capital.

"This is just a humble effort by the government. We will continue to construct cycle lanes on every possible roads of the valley," said Kharel.

Source: www.myrepublica.com,
November 26, 2013

Traffic Police to Resume Awareness Program for Students

With the conclusion of the Constituent Assembly (CA) election, the Metropolitan Traffic Police Division (MTPD) is making necessary preparations to expedite its traffic safety awareness program among students in the Kathmandu Valley.

According to MTPD spokesperson Deputy Superintendent of Police Basanta Pant, the traffic police office has decided to resume safety awareness program in schools from December 1.

“We had launched the awareness program from the beginning of the current fiscal year. But due to series of festivals and the election, the program remained disrupted and we could not move ahead in a full-fledged manner. Now, we want to go to schools and give students classes about traffic rules and road safety,” said DSP Pant.

He said MTPD has given emphasis to public awareness programs in the recent years as punishment for breaking traffic rules have failed to make people abide by the law. “Public should realize that traffic rules are for their safety. The change in the mindset is possible through awareness programs,” added he.

In the previous years, MTPD had carried several anti-jaywalking campaigns, urging pedestrians to use zebra-crossings and overhead bridges and follow the traffic signals. And the traffic police had even fined pedestrians.

But such measures have invariably failed to make public follow traffic rules. So, the MTPD has taken to public awareness programs. So far, the MTPD has already given traffic safety related classes to around 30,000 students by visiting over 60 schools and colleges in the valley in the first two months of the current fiscal year.

Focal person of the Public Awareness Section, Inspector Rajendra Pokharel said MTPD is going to give classes to students from grades 4 to 12.

“For the secondary level students, we will make them familiar about the traffic rules and traffic signals, and develop road civilization among students. Similarly, for the higher secondary level students, we are going to take classes about safety driving basically focusing on two-wheelers,” said he.

Likewise, MTPD is also going to form traffic clubs in schools and produce over 20,000 traffic volunteers. “The volunteers will later be deployed in communities to raise awareness about traffic safety. Unlike the past years, we are moving strategically to make people aware at the grassroots level,” added Pokharel.

Ashish Gajurel, a traffic engineer, said it is easier to inculcate school children with traffic rules and safety than elders.

He believes that such awareness programs will help in decreasing accidents

in the country. According to MTPD, about 2,500 people are killed in road accidents every year across the country and around 50 percent of the total accidents take place in the Valley.

Source: www.myrepublica.com, November 25, 2013

Bike to School Campaign

Clean Energy Nepal/Clean air Network Nepal and Cycle City Network Nepal have initiated "Bike to School" campaign to aware school/college students on importance and benefits of cycling, promote cycling culture and encourage students to ride cycle to school. This campaign is supported by UN-Habitat. The campaign started from August 2013 and is one of the activities under the MaYA-Manav-kendrit Yatayat Abhiyan supported by UN-Habitat.

Around 500 students from 10 different schools/colleges participated in the campaign. The presentations and interaction were made on existing issues related to urban mobility (such as air pollution,

congestion, dependency on imported fossil fuel, economic loss, road fatalities, climate change etc), importance and benefits of cycling, road safety and initiatives of young people to promote cycling culture.

The campaign also focused on consultations with principal or school administration to build cycle-friendly environment in schools to encourage students to bike to school. Questionnaire survey was also conducted to understand the perceptions of students to towards cycling, challenges they are facing and their daily travel characteristics. The campaign also included the showcasing the video documentary related to cycling, and cycle fun

ride for students in the school premise.

While interacting with students it was found that most of them were interested in riding bicycle or to learn cycling. Some of the girls also participated in the cycle rally held on 3rd October 2013 in the occasion of International Day of the Girl Child. It was not just the student who found fun riding bicycle around the school premise after the presentation session; the teachers were also interested in cycling. A female teacher from Padma Kanya Higher Secondary School couldn't stop herself riding bicycles with her students.

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Bike to School Campaign

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It was also observed that in almost all of the schools/colleges, there is lack of bicycle parking infrastructures. The students were to park their bicycles in the poles or the walls. During this campaign, we also had interaction with school teachers and administration regarding the cycle-friendly environment in the schools.

Feedbacks were taken after Bike to School Campaign from different schools. The teacher from Tarun Secondary School said that the students riding bicycle has increased after the campaign and they are looking forward for bicycle rally. Ms. Nisha Sharma, teacher from said that "Students are interested to learn cycling whereas

students who know to bicycle don't ride because they don't have access to bicy-



cles", said Ms. Nisha Sharma, teacher from Padma Kanya Higher Secondary School. Clean Energy Nepal and Cycle City Network Nepal are further planning to provide cycling training to students in different interested schools as a follow up campaign.

The campaign has been successful in sensitizing both school students and teachers on the importance and benefits of cycling, and road safety issues. School administration is also positive towards installing the bicycle parking facilities in the school premises.

Source: www.cen.org.np/maya

Handle Asbestos Carefully: NGO

A non-government organisation has drawn the attention of the government towards the mismanagement of asbestos in the Kathmandu Valley.

The Centre for Public Health and Environmental Development, in a letter to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, pointed at haphazard handling of the cancer-causing substance during the ongoing road construction work. According to the World Health Organisation, asbestos is one of the most important occupational carcinogens that causes about half of the deaths from occupational cancer, including lung cancer. Exposure to asbestos occurs through inhalation of fibres primarily from contaminated air in the environment, as well as from ambient air in the vicinity of point sources, or indoor air in housing and buildings containing friable asbestos materials.

The WHO and the International Agency for Research on Cancer have identified asbestos as a cancer-causing factor, prompting around 40 countries in the world to ban its export and import, it said.

"Records at the Department of Customs show that Nepal imported about 1,195 tonnes of asbestos for use in construction work in the fiscal year 2012-13. According to estimates, around 40,000 people are living with cancer in Nepal," the centre said, pointing that the exact causes are not known.

Exposure can also occur during installation and use of asbestos-containing products. Asbestos is used in a number of products for a number of applications, such as roofing, shingles, water supply lines, fire blankets, plastic fillers, medical packing as well as clutches and brake linings, gaskets and

pads for automobiles.

"Asbestos is piled up in different parts of Kathmandu, including Maitighar, for use in road construction work. We request the ministry to manage such materials in a way that reduces potential risk to humans. It is equally important to take initiatives to gradually ban the use, import and export of such products," Ram Charitra Sah, the centre's executive director, said.

Source: www.thehimalayantimes.com, November 26, 2013

Air Pollution in China Blamed for 8-year-old Girl's Cancer

China has a massive air pollution problem. How bad is it? Dirty air is making cities in the country barely suitable for living, taking a toll on tourism, becoming a threat to national security and making people sick – so sick that it is now being blamed for cancer cases.

An eight-year-old girl has reportedly been diagnosed with lung cancer. She is the youngest victim of lung cancer to ever be recorded, according to the The Telegraph, and doctors are saying the high levels of air pollution are to blame.

The girl, who was not named, lived in the eastern Chinese province of Jiangsu, near a very busy road where she was exposed to PM2.5 pollution. According to Arden Pope, an economics professor at BYU in Provo, UT, PM2.5 is a measurement that indicates the finest of particles that are small enough to penetrate the lungs and are made up of all sorts of nasty bits and pieces that came from burning things like coal, gasoline and diesel.

Doctor Fengdong Jei, a doctor at Nanjing's Jiangsu Cancer Hospital, was quoted by the People Daily News in China saying that the likely cause of the girl's cancer was the exposure to tiny airborne particles from vehicle emissions.

The People Daily also reported that more people die from lung cancer every year in China than from any other type of cancer. The World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer listed air pollution as a carcinogen.

The case has sparked new discussions about how to clear China's smog-filled skies as it has severely affected the mental and physical health of the Chinese people. China's deputy head of the National Development and Reform Commission Xie Zhenhua blamed the smog crisis on China's obsolete development model and excessive use of fossil fuels.

Well, duh. The question now becomes, what

will be done to reverse this dire situation? Something has to give somewhere. Hopefully, this girl's diagnosis will prompt some serious action on this issue, otherwise it could become just one case among many.

Source: www.ryot.org.com, November 12, 2013

Good Reads:

1. [Tardy Road Expansion Drive Adds to Public Woes](#): Sangeet Sangroula, myrepublica, November 28, 2013
2. [Blaming cyclists for their road deaths is easy, but wrong](#): Susanna Rustin, The Guardian, November 20, 2013
3. [Blaze these trails](#): Bhushan Gautam, ekantipur, November 29, 2013
4. [No Traffic than Mismanagement is Seen](#): Milan Timilsina, Ujyaalo, November 29, 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

www.cleanairinitiative.org

Building Partnership for Clean Air

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