



Clean Air News

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HAPPY NEW YEAR 2014

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First Disabled-Friendly Stretch by Mid-January

The construction of 100-meter stretch of disabled-friendly road from the main gate of the Khagendra New Life Centre, an organization that works for disabled people, to the intersection at Narayantar, Jorpati, is going to be completed by mid-January.

Disabled-friendly road is a kind of road where people with various disabilities like blind, wheelchair users, among others, can move easily without support from others. The disabled-friendly road is constructed along the footpaths only. Along with pedestrians, people with various kinds of disabilities can walk on the same path.

After a protracted hue and cry for disabled-friendly infrastructure fell into deaf ear, Khagendra Disabled Friendly Road Campaign Implementation Committee (KDFRCIC), which is formed by uniting all the organizations working for the disabled in the capital city, has started constructing the 100 meter long stretch as a pilot project to exert moral pressure on the government on November.

"The major reason behind the construction of the first disabled-

friendly road is to show the government that it is possible to construct such kind of road in the capital city," said Rishi Ram Dhakal, coordinator of the KDFRCIC. "This road is different from the ordinary roads of the city as it is designed for disabled people. We have tried to maintain international standard in its design."

For instance, the traffic lights will be accompanied by sound of bells to allow the blind people to recognize different traffic signals. Similarly, special kinds of marble will be used on the footpaths to make the movement of the wheelchair easier.

According to him, the road widening work was done and they have separated the footpaths. Now, they have started construction work which won't take more than one month.

"We need to have wide roads to construct disabled-friendly roads which is not possible at all places of the Kathmandu Valley," said Shyam Kharel, chief of Kathmandu Valley Road Expansion Project. "But on the spacious roads we have already started constructing

two-meter footpaths." Tika Dahal, general secretary of National Federation of Disabled Nepal (NFDN), an umbrella body of the organizations of disabled, said that the government should construct disabled-friendly roads in the capital city as it is possible.

"The government has not given any priority to our demands," said Dahal. "They are busy with other issues and totally ignoring ours. Our first disabled-friendly road will definitely set an example."

The committee has estimated a total budget of Rs 3 million for the road construction, and 50 percent of the budget has been provided by the government. And the rest of the budget was collected through different fund raising programs organized by the committee.

Source: www.myrepublica.com, December 11, 2013

City Road Widening Taking Shape

Kathmandu denizens will be relieved of dust and potholes, as most of the major roads will be transformed into proper tarred driveways by early April.

The construction target set by the Kathmandu Valley Road Improvement Project (KVRIP) has miserably failed time and again, but it sounded committed this time to complete the task within three and a half months.

Among them is the ambitious Maitighar-Tinkune stretch, which has been divided into two parts and handed over to two contractors. The first part from Maitighar to Everest Hospital has witnessed a major transformation within a month as 80 percent works have been completed.

“We have completed the tarring of the service lanes and the road has also been equipped with a cycle lane and footpath as well. The first section is of this road will be completed in the next

two weeks,” said Shyam Prasad Kharel, chief at KVRIP, responsible for the construction of this road. The section of the road, Everest Hospital to Tinkune, is likely to be completed in the next three months as the work has been paced, said Kharel.

This road will boast of a green belt to be constructed to as a divider between the service lane and the express way, which in the past, was the footpath and had trolley bus poles. “The decision to construct a green belt was recently made. But this is to beautify the road which will be extended till Tinkune,” said Kharel.

The Maitighar-Tinkune road stretches 2.6 kilometres. After the blacktopping of the service lane, the authorities also plan to put a four-inch overlay in the current expressway.

Similarly, another important road, New Baneshwor to Battisputali measuring

one kilometre, has also been blacktopped recently with only the remaining work of footpath construction. The road section from Lainchaur to Budanikantha via Maharajgunj has been a headache for the stakeholders as the underground wiring of utility failed after two months of handwork. “We cannot blacktop this road until the contractors redo the underground wiring as it will invite utility problems later,” said Kharel.

Now the contractors have been given 500 meters cabling work each day, likely to be completed in next two months. The 10-km Lainchaur-Budanilkanta is also likely to be completed by April. As an alternative, the authorities plan to tar the three lanes of this road and spare the one lane for underground wiring work.

Source: www.ekantipur.com, December 18, 2013



KMC's Free Parking Makes a Shaky Start

Even though the Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) office has made vehicle parking free for the public from Friday, the authorities could not manage the parking facilities properly on the first day of the free-parking scheme, for lack of manpower and required infrastructure.

On the first day, parking lots in the core areas in the city were on a first come, first served basis. On top of that, KMC curtailed the parking lanes from three to one, squeezing the space for parking.

As a result, a majority of service seekers were prevented from parking their two-wheelers and four-wheelers. It even contributed to traffic jams in some localities, including New Road, Pako, Khichapokhari and Dharmapath.

Earlier, though parking lots operated by private individuals charged a certain fee for using the facility, vehicles were parked systematically and it was spacious compared to under the new setup.

“We could not manage the flow of vehicles coming to park, so we reduced the parking lanes to just one. But as we develop the infrastructure, we will expand

the parking lots back to their actual size,” said Dhanapati Sapkota, chief of Implementation Department at KMC.

KMC planned to operate the 20 legal parking lots free of cost from mid-November, prior to the second Constituent Assembly election, in order to discourage rampant illegal parking; but the authorities did little to develop the infrastructure and appoint sufficient manpower for the purpose.

Sapkota further said that many businesses operating around the core areas occupied the free parking lots with their vehicles the whole day. “This has prevented others from parking. In order to discourage this, we are thinking to set a time limit and charge fines for crossing the limit,” he added.

The authorised parking lots include Piukha New Road, Shukrapath, New Road Stupa, Dharahara-Sundhara, Khichapokhari (in-front of Everest Bank), Pako Pipalbot, Dharmapath, Pako Photo Concern to Ranmuteswhor, inside RB complex, Durbarmarg, New Baneshwor Chowk-I, Shankar Dev Campus, Kamaladi Khanepani, Naxal Balmandir, in-

front of Tribhuvan International Airport Gate and Khulla Manch, among others.

The parking lots remain open to the public from 6 am to 9 pm. KMC deployed as many as 15 city police on Friday to supervise the parking lots. Likewise, the authorities imposed fines of Rs. 1,000 on 46 vehicles found parking in no-parking areas.

“We will develop infrastructure by next month and systematize the facilities. We have arranged the parking facilities to develop a self-parking culture,” he added.

KMC will mobilise two persons at each parking lot to help vehicle owners and mark out the parking areas. A team will also be formed to monitor the parking lots.

Sign boards will be placed at each parking lot with information on a parking code and other rules to be followed by vehicle owners.

Source: www.myrepublica.com, December 27, 2013

Regmi Directs Authorities to Blacktop Expanded Roads

Chairman of the Interim Government Khil Raj Regmi has directed the authorities concerned to speed up the road construction work in the Kathmandu Valley as the government getting more and more complaints of air borne infections with the onset of dry season.

Addressing a high-level monitoring com-

mittee meeting on road widening and construction work held at the Prime Ministers' Office on Sunday, Regmi said that the construction drive that is already late due to the second CA polls should not slow down anymore.

He urged the concerned government officials to speed up the work to give

respite to the people, as smog -- the mixture of dust and smokes -- due to the vehicular movement near the demolished areas has affected peoples' health adversely.

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The delay in construction work has given a wrong message to the public, the wastes produced in the demolished area is also yet to be cleared, coordinator of the monitoring committee and PMO Secretary Krishna Hari Banskota briefed Regmi in the meeting. Chairman Regmi also directed the authority to make the compensation process and criteria transparent and make government officials and private con-

tractors publicly accountable. Until now, a total of 37 km road of the capital's expanded roads have been blacktopped. The PMO has estimated that a total of 69.47 km road would be blacktopped by mid-March.

Banskota added that of the total 104.9 km under construction roads, 89.2km road would be blacktopped by the end of the current fiscal year.

Within the Kathmandu Metropolitan City, 6.2 km road in the expanded areas has been blacktopped whereas the office ex-

pects to complete work of 19 km by mid-March and 22 km as this fiscal year ends.

Source: www.myrepublica.com, December 29, 2013

Air Pollution Giving Capital Denizens a Cough

The ongoing road expansion drive has given rise to various respiratory disease in the Kathmandu Valley.

According to Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, it has recorded 831 patients of pneumonia, 676 of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, 114 of asthma and 144 of bronchitis since July.

"Number of people suffering from various respiratory diseases has doubled since the road-widening drive began," said Dr Dirgha Singh Bam, a former health secretary. "Though the government's road expansion initiative is appreciable, it has not been well-organised."

According to World Health Organisation, air pollution is a significant risk factor for multiple health conditions, including respiratory infections, heart diseases and lung cancer.

Air pollution causes breathing difficulty, pneumonia, asthma, bronchitis, skin diseases, allergy, wheezing and coughing problems. The problems caused due to air pollution is broad, however, it mostly affects

the respiratory and cardiovascular systems.

"The government could have prevented this problem by expediting the road construction and carrying out the works at night," Dr Bam said.

According to WHO standards, the level of Particulate Matter 10 should be 20 microgram per cubic metre ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$). The Ministry of Environment informed that the PM-10 concentration in ambient air was recorded at up to 699 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ against 120 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, the national ambient air quality standards in Kathmandu in March.

The air pollution in Kathmandu is mainly attributed to vehicular emissions. The Metropolitan Traffic Police Division says that on-duty traffic cops can be taken as indicator to the adverse health hazards triggered by the air pollution as they perform duty by standing at least 18 hours on the roads daily.

According to statistics, an average of four traffic cops are taken ill daily due to exposure to dust particles and exhaust, prompt-

ing the MTPD to organise health camps from time to time. Shyam Kharel, project manager of Kathmandu Valley Road Improvement Project, said, "The road construction was delayed due to various obstacles." According to him, the ongoing underground wiring from Lainchaur to Chapali, which began on September 23 had mainly delayed the road construction.

Likewise, road construction from Pani Pokhari to Baluwatar began today without the completion of underground wiring.

Meanwhile, the road from Maitighar to New Baneshwor is expected to be completed soon and road construction from New Baneshwor to Tinkune, which was obstructed due to contractor's engagement in elections, has just resumed. "Thirty kilometres of the 92-km road stretch has been completed," Kharel added.

Source: www.thehimalayantims.com, December 5, 2013

China Faces \$176bn Bill to Clean Up Air Pollution

Cleaning up China's air pollution will cost 1.75 trillion yuan (£176b) between 2013 and 2017, a high-ranking environmental official has estimated.

Wang Jinnan, deputy head of the Chinese Academy for Environmental Planning, said that the investment – part of an anti-pollution "action plan" announced by China's cabinet in September – "would drive up GDP by nearly two trillion yuan (£202b) and create over two million jobs, China's official newswire Xinhua reported.

The total cost will be higher than the 2012 gross domestic products of most countries, including Finland, Israel and Portugal.

"36.7 percent of the investment, or 640 billion yuan (£64.5b) should go on cleaning up industry, followed by 490 billion yuan (28.2 percent) on cleaner energy sources. Cleaning up motor vehicles will absorb 210 billion yuan," Xinhua reported, citing Wang.

In 2013, broad swaths of China recorded their highest air pollution levels in 52 years, causing widespread outrage over the massive environmental toll wrought by decades of unchecked economic growth.

On Friday, Shanghai's concentration of airborne PM 2.5 – particulate matter small enough to lodge deep within the lungs – rose to 214 micrograms per cubic meter, three times China's national limit. The official Shanghai Environmental Monitoring Center warned children and the elderly to stay indoors.

In its five-year action plan, China's State Council pledged to reduce the level of airborne particulate matter by at least 10% in major cities by 2017.

Yet many smog-related government measures, such as curbing street-side barbecues and certifying pilots to land in low-visibility conditions, have drawn criticism for glossing over the problem. In October, one Beijing official

blamed the smog on "the traditional way of cooking Chinese dishes."

In response, many Chinese people have taken measures into their own hands. Face masks have become a fashion statement; air purifier sales have spiked. An elementary school in north China's Shijiazhuang, one of the country's most polluted cities, has begun teaching its students a smog-defying aerobics routine involving acupuncture points associated with respiratory health.

Last week, a hospital in the southwestern Chinese city Chengdu opened a "smog clinic" to treat air pollution-related ailments such as coughs and asthma; it has been treating roughly a dozen patients a day. "We should not fear smog. It's preventable and curable," says a banner hung by its entrance.

Source: www.theguardian.com, December 20, 2013

Good Reads:

1. [Road to Inequality](#): LS Ghimire, ekantipur, December 19, 2013
2. [Road Construction Chokes Valley Traffic](#): Sangeet Sangroula, myrepublica, December 23, 2013
3. [New Nepal Awaits Disabled Friendly Infrastructure](#): Anjali Subedi, myrepublica, December 3, 2013
4. [Road to Somewhere](#): ekantipur, December 1, 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

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