

Clean Air News

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Ministry Plans to Launch 'Green' Vehicle Policy

If things go as per the government's plan, commuters will be able to ride on bigger and wider green or environment friendly electric vehicles from this year. The Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport (MoPIT) is doing final preparations to introduce a policy which aims to promote the operation of electric vehicles.

The proposed policy has planned to promote the operation of more electric vehicles for public transport by providing customs waiver to import such vehicles besides encouraging the use of private hybrid and electric automobiles. "The draft is almost final and will be sent to the Cabinet within a month for endorsement," said Tulasi Prasad Sitaula, secretary of MoPIT.

The draft is being finalised with inputs from other concerned ministries. MoPIT has sought suggestions from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, the Ministry of Urban Development and the Ministry of Finance. The policy will help increase the use of electric vehicles which is expected to contribute in bringing down the import of fuel and reducing air pollution.

In the first 10 months of the current fiscal year, the country imported petroleum products worth Rs 109 billion which is more than 25 percent of the total imports. Similarly, over 200,000 units of bikes and other vehicles are being imported annually.

Some electric vehicles like Safa Tempo are already in operation in Kathmandu Valley for public service, however they are small and can accommodate only 10-12 passengers. Sitaula said that once the policy is implemented, the private sector will be able to import bigger electric vehicles having capacity for 20-40 seats for public transport and if they want they will also be able to operate trolley bus service.

The policy has also planned to encourage conversion of old petrol or diesel run vehicles into electric vehicles. This permission to commercially convert fuel run vehicles to electric ones is also expected to reduce vehicle import. The Department of Transport Management (DoTM) said that the policy will include issues like issuance of route permission for operation of electric public vehicles, customs duty waiver, and areas for operation of electric public vehicles and charging stations for such vehicles.

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MoPIT officials said that the policy will not fix an exact facility for those importing electric vehicles. They said that based on the policy, the government either through annual budget announcement or through a special pro-

gramme of the Finance Ministry will be offering customs waiver, tax incentives and other facilities to individuals and public transport service operators using electric vehicles.

DoTM officials said that there are an estimated 2,500 electric vehicles in the country with around 600 units of Safa Tempos, 50 plus four-wheelers like

Reva electric cars and 1,500 two-wheelers.

Source: www.ekantipur.com, May 25, 2014

Capital's Maitighar-Tinkune Road Section Heads for Greenery

The Kathmandu Valley Development Authority under the Ministry of Urban Development today planted approximately 700 trees and shrubs on the eight-lane road strips stretching 2.66-km between Maitighar and Tinkune as part of initiation towards landscaping and promoting greenery in the capital.

Minister for Urban Development Narayan Singh Khadka inaugurated the function which was organised this morning. According to the KVDA, trees Maple, Flowering Peach, Chinese Kalki, Shyal Phusre (Masino Khapate) and Puwale along with shrubs like Yellow Duranta, Privet and Azalea were planted along the 350-metre Maitighar-Babar Mahal stretch.

Officials at the KVDA informed that the landscaping and promoting greenery was also part of embellishing the capital ahead of the next SAARC Summit which is taking place this November in Kathmandu. The KDVA is also doing groundwork to grow the shrubs as boundary roadsides for the pedestrians and ivies on the wall to function as medians.

This plantation is expected to provide greenery to the capital and control the balance in nature as well as to manage pollution in the city. The plantation of trees and shrubs is based on the feasibility and research study conducted by the research team.

Another significance of this new infrastructure stretching from Maitighar to Tinkune road is its cycle tracks, the first of its kind, in the country, which come in the wake of public demand for separate lane for the eco-friendly

vehicle. The estimated budget of the road section is Rs 660 million.

The KDVA, which is responsible for developing infrastructure and promoting greenery in the Kathmandu Valley, is planning to launch the second round of plantation from Babar Mahal to Tinkune with the onset of monsoon.

Source: www.thehimalayantimes.com, June 18, 2014



Two-Wheeler Registration Drops 10pc to 132k Units

Registration of two-wheelers fell 10 percent in the first 10 months of this fiscal year with 131,917 units being registered compared to 147,283 in the same period last year, said the Department of Transport Management.

Automobile dealers said that motorcycle sales plunged mainly due to the tougher tests for driving licences and increasing preference for cars among the public induced by rising incomes.

“The government has introduced a new process for obtaining driving licences for two-wheeler riders without proper infrastructure which has discouraged people from buying motorcycles,” said Shekhar Golchha, president of the Nepal Automobile Dealers’ Association (Nada). Bike riders have to give tougher tests nowadays compared to the past.

Golchha also said that urban middle class people had been upgrading to cars from bikes which also contributed to the fall in two-wheeler registration. Easier and cheaper bank credit has encouraged the middle class to buy four-wheelers. “Banks are more interested in financing purchase of cars than motorcycles,” said Golchha.

Despite the overall slump in bike registration, dealers are excited at the increased demand for two-wheelers from rural areas where remittance has become a huge source of income for the general people. Increased road access has also led to a rise in demand for two-wheelers in rural areas. Auto dealers said that increased income had led people to move to urban centres resulting

in swelling demand for means of transportation. “We are witnessing increasing demand from places outside the Kathmandu valley like Butwal, Chitwan, Birgunj and Nepalgunj among other urban centres these days,” said Dinesh Ratna Bajracharya, head of the Hero division at Nepal General Marketing, the authorised distributor of Hero motorcycles in Nepal.

According to him, monthly sales of motorcycles and scooters amount to 3,000 units. “Around 40 percent of the total sales are taking place outside the Kathmandu valley,” he added.

Auto dealers have complained that despite the rise in demand for two-wheelers, the growth rate has slowed this year. “Even though we are seeing a certain amount of growth since the launch of motorcycles like the Hero iSmart and a modified version of the Hero Xtreme and the Hero Pleasure

scooter, the overall growth rate has come down,” said Bajracharya.

While bike sales have been not so encouraging, people’s increased interest in scooters has caught the eye of auto dealers. Gaurav Hamal, marketing manager of MAW Enterprises, the authorised distributor of Yamaha motorcycles in Nepal, said scooter sales had almost doubled compared to last year.

Similarly, Rajan Raj Puri, manager, Honda division at Syakar Trading, the authorized distributor of Honda bikes and scooters in Nepal, said that increased sales of scooters had made up for the fall in motorcycle sales. “The scooter market has been growing by around 25 percent in recent days,” he added.

Source: www.ekantipur.com, June 17, 014



Pollution Level due to Road Expansion Several Times Higher

Road expansion activities without proper environment management plan have led to massive dust pollution in Kathmandu Valley. Levels of particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) are several times higher than the WHO safer limit.

17th June 2014

Dust pollution from the massive demolition and reconstruction activities under road expansion campaign throughout the Kathmandu Valley has serious impact on environment, public health and economy. As the road construction activities are being conducted without proper environment management plan and considering the surrounding air quality, particulate matter (PM) level in ambient air has presumably risen to hazardous level. The government has neither conducted monitoring of air quality nor an effective action to abate the pollution.

Clean Energy Nepal and Clean Air Network Nepal in collaboration with Hong Kong Polytechnic University conducted a quick assessment of the current state of ambient air quality near the sites where road construction activities are undergoing. The levels of PM10, PM2.5, and other air pollutants in ambient air were monitored for around 2 hours during the morning rush hour using portable air quality monitoring equipment. The air quality were monitored at three major traffic intersections: Maharajgunj, Sohrakhutte and Putalisadak (way to Dillibazaar), where the roads are being demolished and expanded.

Putalisadak was found to be the most polluted, with particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) seven times higher the National Ambient Air Quality Standard

(NAAQS) and sixteen times higher the WHO safer limit. The average 2-hour concentrations for PM10 in Putalisadak, Maharajgunj and Sohrakhutte were found to be 781, 723 and 362 mg/m³ respectively. Similarly, the average PM2.5 levels were found to be 260 mg/m³ in Putalisadak, 244 mg/m³ in Maharajgunj and 182 mg/m³ in Sohrakhutte. The National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS), 2012 has set guidelines of PM10 and PM2.5 for 24-hours averaging time as 120 mg/m³ and 40 mg/m³ respectively, which means that 2-hour average concentrations of particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) at three locations were found to be three to seven times of the standard. Compared to the WHO guidelines (for 24-hrs), the particulate matter level were found to be seven to sixteen times higher.

Air pollution is a major environmental risk to public health. According to World Health Organization, outdoor air pollution in both cities and rural areas was estimated to cause 3.7 million premature deaths worldwide per year in 2012. According to a study by Nepal Health Research Council and World Health Organization in 2006, over 1,900 premature deaths occur per year in Kathmandu Valley. The World Bank study in 2007 estimated Nepal's annual health cost attributed to urban air pollution is USD 21 million, equivalent to 0.29% of the GDP. Nepal is the second last worst performing countries in the world in terms of air pollution and its impacts to human health according to Environmental Performance Index.

Addition to the vehicular exhaust, the re-suspended dust from the movement of vehicles on demolished and unpaved

roads have contributed greatly to the PM concentration. As many roads throughout the city are being expanded, dust pollution is likely to be the one of the major contributor of particulate matters, and consequently affecting the health of millions in Kathmandu Valley. Pedestrians and local residents, especially, are exposed to hazardous level of air pollution daily for a longer period of time. Stakeholders including media have proactively raised the issues of dust pollution from road expansion activities; however no effective steps have been taken for the abatement of dust pollution. The government should take immediate action to control air pollution and devise environmental management plan prior to implementing the road construction activities.

Air quality will further degrade if the government continues vehicle-centric approach in urban transport planning by building more road infrastructures and making more space for private motor vehicles. If we want clean air and make our city livable, we need to invest on improve public transportation and promote non-motorized transport system such as walking and cycling, rather than simply widening the road. Citizens wearing masks while walking in the streets should be taken as silent protest against government inability to reduce the air pollution. The government needs to ensure that the rights of citizens to live in clean environment by making the city's air breathable.

Source: www.cen.org.np/maya, June 17, 2014

France is Paying People to Bike to Work

France has started a six-month experiment with paying people to cycle to work, joining other European governments in trying to boost bicycle use to boost people's health, reduce air pollution and cut fossil fuel consumption.

Several countries including the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Belgium and Britain have bike-to-work schemes, with different kinds of incentives such as tax breaks, payments per kilometre and financial support for buying bicycles.

In France, some 20 companies and institutions employing a total of 10,000 people have signed up to pay their staff 25 euro cents (34 U.S. cents) per kilometre biked to work, the transport minister said in a statement on Monday.

French Transport Minister Frederic Cuvillier, noting that commuting using public transport and cars is already subsidised, said that if results of the test are promising, a second experiment on a larger scale will be done.

The ministry hopes that the bike-to-work incentive scheme will boost bike use for commuting by 50 per cent from 2.4 per cent of all work-home journeys, or about 800 million km, with an average distance of 3.5 km per journey.

In Belgium, where a tax-free bike incentive scheme has been in place for more than five years, about 8 per cent of all commutes are on bicycles. In the flat and bicycle-friendly Netherlands, it is about 25 per cent, cycling organisations say.

The Brussels-based European Cyclists' Federation has European Union funding to study best practices among various cycling incentive schemes, the group's Bike2Work project manager

Randy Rzewnicki said.

City bike-loan schemes have played a large role in boosting bicycle commuting and cities including Barcelona, London and Stockholm have followed the model of the Velib in Paris.

Source: www.businessinsider.com, June 3, 2014



Good Reads

1. [Rising air pollution spurs health concerns among Kathmanduites](#) : Pratibha Rawal, myrepublica, June 5, 2014
2. [क्विलचियरमा हिंडु, तर म बिरामी हैन!](#): Sagar Prasain, setopati, June 2, 2014
3. [Can a City Ever be Traffic Jam-Free?](#): Katia Moskvich, bbc, June 11, 2014

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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

To contribute articles, news items, or event announcements for the next issue, send an email with the complete details and URL source to info@cen.org.np or rassu@cen.org.np

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