

Clean Air News

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Protest Against Plan to Cut Trees to Widen Road



More than 200 people rallied in Nepal's capital Thursday to protest government plans to cut down about 2,000 trees to widen a key road that circles the city.

The protesters held signs urging the government to stop the plan to remove the trees on the outer edge of Kathmandu.

The 27-kilometer (17-mile) Ring Road encircles the capital and is a key road network for the increasingly congested city.

"These trees were controlling pollution and giving fresh air so they cannot be cut down to make roads," said Saurav Dhakal, a protester. "Kathmandu is suffering from massive air pollution, and cutting so many trees is going to make the situation worse."

They are demanding the government find other ways to widen the road.

When the government widened half of the road earlier this year, thousands of trees were believed to have been

cut down.

The second phase of the expansion covering the remaining half is expected to begin soon and protesters say they are determined to block that process.

Source:

www.washingtonpost.com, 29 August, 2019

Government Told to Adopt Pollution Control Measures

The National Human Rights Commission has said that the government and stakeholders should try harder to control and reduce environmental pollution in Kathmandu valley.

The rights body urged the authorities concerned to carry out monitoring of pollution standards set by the government and initiate action against violators as the rules are binding to all stakeholders.

“The government lacks provision of imposing on the spot fine on the owners of vehicles that fail emission tests in accordance with Nepal Vehicle Mass Emission Standard-2015, Nepal Vehicle Pollution Standard-2015 and Motor Vehicle and Transport Management Act-1993. Therefore, the government needs to enact and enforce rules enabling on the spot action against errant owners,” a report recently released by the NHRC said.

As per vehicle emission standards implemented by the government, permissible level for four-wheelers registered in Nepal in or before 1980 is maximum 4.5 per cent of carbon monoxide (CO) of the total emission and maximum 1,000 parts per million hydrocarbon concentration

Four-wheelers registered in the coun-

try after 1981 should not emit CO exceeding three per cent of the total emission and their ppm hydrocarbons emission is required to remain below 1,000. Two-wheelers are not permitted to emit CO exceeding 4.5 per cent of the total emission while their ppm hydrocarbon should be below 7,800.

In recent emission tests conducted by traffic police in various parts of Kathmandu valley, over 50 per cent of vehicles were found violating rules on air pollution. The authorities have also been told to provide for provision of emission testing facilities at all entry points of the valley for conducting tests on public, private and government vehicles.

Any vehicle that fails emission tests should not be allowed inside the valley. The rights body has also urged the government to enforce the provision of green sticker throughout the valley.

In addition, the NHRC has expressed concern about air pollution aggravated by brick factories operating inside the valley. Use of large quantities of coal in brick kilns significantly contribute to emissions of carbon dioxide and particulate matter including black carbon, sulphur dioxide, oxides of

nitrogen and carbon monoxide, causing serious and long-term impacts on human health.

About 110 brick kilns (Kathmandu 15, Lalitpur 32 and Bhaktapur 63) are in operation in the valley. “The government needs to ensure that brick kiln owners adopt technologies that help control and prevent emission of carbon dioxide and black carbon, besides conducting regular health check-up of workers and their children,” the NHRC said in its report.

The authorities have been suggested to implement ban on open burning of waste, including plastics, as such a practice was adding to air pollution in the valley. “NHRC also recommends the government to make arrangements of free medical treatment for persons affected by air pollution and recover reasonable compensation to the victims from the concerned polluters,” the report read.

According to Article 30 of the constitution each citizen has the right to live in a clean and healthy environment and be compensated for the harm caused by pollution.

Source:

www.thehimalayantimes.com, 7 August, 2019

Cleaning Nepal's Air

Nepal's government has decided to purchase 300 electric public buses considering the impending climate crisis posed by unabated air pollution in the nation's capital. Experts, however, believe that this move might not be enough to decrease air pollution in the Kathmandu Valley despite the country aiming to convert 20 percent of all public vehicles into battery run ones by 2020.

Home to more than 3 million residents, the Kathmandu Valley today chokes under a blanket of toxic air. The cause of this climate epidemic is due to the surge in diesel- and petrol-run vehicles. According to the Department of Transport Management (DoTM), as of the fiscal year 2016-17 11,956 vehicles were registered in the Bagmati zone. This includes 1,405 buses, 2,132 minibuses, 14,542 cars and jeeps, 222 minibuses, and 94,751 motorcycles. In the absence of proper public transportation, the ownership of private vehicles continues to soar, complicating the situation.

The Kathmandu Valley is vulnerable to air pollution, mainly due to its geography. The valley is surrounded by massive hills, giving it a bowl-like topographic shape. This leads to restrictions in wind movement and pollutants linger in the atmosphere. The situation worsens during the



winter season (November to February) because of thermal inversion, which occurs during the early morning and late night. The cold air that arrives from the mountains gets trapped under the layer of warmer air, which then acts a lid. This results in pollutants hovering close the city ground for a lengthy period of time. Thus, air pollution in the Kathmandu Valley during winter escalates to dangerous levels, posing threats to its denizens.

Vehicular emissions are one of the key contributors to air pollution in Kathmandu, apart from dusty roads, brick kilns, and construction work. Keeping aside other factors, vehicle emissions remain in the top spot as it is a large and grow-

ing source for air pollution in the Kathmandu Valley, mainly due to the continuous sale of petrol- and diesel-run vehicles.

Nepali Prime Minister KP Oli has lofty plans to reduce dependence on fossil fuels by 50 percent or more by the year 2050. With that aim in mind, the government recently handed more than \$2.6 million to the Sajha Yatayat Cooperative for the purpose of buying 300 electric buses, hoping to launch the services within the next 10 months.

Source: www.msn.com, 12 August, 2019

Government to Build 200 Charging Stations Across Country

In a bid to promote the government's plan to prioritise electric vehicles (EVs) to maximise the use of electricity, the government is gearing up to set up more than 200 EV charging stations across the country.

As per the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation (MoEWRI), the guideline for operation of EVs is in the final stage and will be made public within a week.

Prabin Aryal, joint secretary at MoEWRI, informed that a taskforce assigned the responsibility of making the guideline is finalising it. The team has completed the preliminary works of holding necessary discussions with the concerned stakeholders and drafted the guideline.

Once the guideline is implemented, Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) will be responsible for building charging stations and providing electricity. "However, the guideline will be flexible in terms of setting up the charging stations, meaning companies selling EVs will also be allowed to instal them."

Aryal further said the government is primarily targeting to minimise the use of vehicles operating on fossil fuels and

promote EVs.

Earlier, Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Barsha Man Pun had said the government will instal more than 200 charging stations across the country to minimise the trade deficit and also for the betterment of the environment.

In December, the government had decided to buy 300 electric buses for public transportation. "The operation cost of the EVs is cheaper than fossil fuel-run vehicles, so the basic infrastructure of charging stations will be needed," Aryal explained.

On May 5, NEA published a notice seeking to rent land for establishment of 10 vehicle charging stations in the Valley. However, nothing concrete has materialised so far due to lack of a related guideline.

Prabal Adhikari, spokesperson for NEA, informed that after receiving the guideline from the energy ministry, the power utility will focus on building the charging stations and other EV-related works.

"We will have energy surplus from the end of this fiscal year," he said, adding

that NEA also plans to set up such charging stations in different places like Pokhara, Nepalgunj, Chitwan and Biratnagar, where vehicle density is comparatively higher.

Through the budget for the ongoing fiscal year, the government had also reduced import duty on public electric vehicles to one per cent from 30 per cent. Similarly, import duty on private electric vehicles had been slashed to 10 per cent from 30 per cent. Along with this, the government does not levy excise duty on electric vehicles.

Source: www.thehimalayantimes.com, 27 August, 2019

Electric buses to start operation in Valley today

With an aim to reduce the use of fossil fuels and protect the environment, the private sector initiated Sundar Yatayat Pvt Ltd is all set to operate electric vehicles (EVs) from Monday.

Bhesh Bahadur Thapa, chairman of Sundar Yatayat, said the company has completed all the operating procedures as required by the government and will be operating four electric buses along the Ring Road. "The electric buses are

air-conditioned," he added.

"In the first phase, we have planned to operate these buses along Ring Road from tomorrow and in the next phase we will operate our buses along other routes of Kathmandu after we obtain the route permit from the government," Thapa informed.

The company has already brought four electric buses for the service and placed

an order for more such buses to operate along different routes in Kathmandu Valley.

"We have applied for permission at the Department of Transport Management (DoTM) to provide our services along additional routes. I hope they will provide the permit for three additional routes by next week," Thapa added.



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According to him, the company has applied for permission to operate its buses in the New Buspark to Satdobato route too for which the company expects to get the permit by this week.

The service will start from New Buspark and pass through Maharajgunj Chakrapath, Baluwatar, Putalisadak, New Baneshwor and Koteshwor before reaching Satdobato and return along the same route.

The company plans to start its electric bus service in Biratnagar and Butwal too in the near future.

Meanwhile, Sundar Yatayat also established a charging station for electric vehicles in Kathmandu last week. The company has plans to construct five more charging

stations in Kathmandu, Biratnagar and Butwal.

Thapa claimed that a fossil fuel run bus moving along the Ring Road consumes fuel worth Rs 4,000 daily whereas an electric vehicle uses electricity worth only Rs 700. This thus makes transportation by electric vehicles cheaper.

Last week, the government finally determined the fare for public EVs albeit on a temporary basis. The DoTM for the time being has decided to fix the fare of public EVs which is similar to that of other fossil fuel operated public vehicles.

Thapa further said that the company has decided to provide 20 per cent discount to travellers on the existing fares charged by fossil fuel run public vehicles. The company has already fixed the fee to charge

electric buses at Rs 4.20 per unit.

At present, the fares determined by DoTM range from a minimum of Rs 14 to a maximum of Rs 1,875. However, fare for trips in Kathmandu Valley for the moment has been fixed at Rs 29 for a 19-kilometre distance.

Source: www.thehimalayantimes.com, 9 September, 2019

Delhi's Air Pollution Levels Came Down By 25% In Past 4 Years

The Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal recently said that air pollution levels in the city have come down by 25 per cent in the past four years, referring to a report by Central Pollution Control Board. The news comes in as a big relief for the Delhi government as it faced constant criticism after the World Health Organisation's (WHO) report in 2014 on air quality ranked New Delhi as the most polluted city in the world.

The Delhi CM in a tweet also announced a seven-point action plan to tackle air pollution.

Since 2014, Delhi government along with Central Pollution Control Board, and Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority carried aware-

ness drives, issued orders and implemented orders passed by NGT, and implemented the odd-even scheme to curb air pollution.

Later on, the government created a rapid response action plan in 2017. Graded Rapid Action Plan (GRAP) which took timely actions when bad environmental condition sustained for more than 48 hours. Construction around the city was stopped, heavy trucks were bypassed at eastern and western sides, ban on PET Coke as an industrial fuel, awareness



against using firecrackers in marriages were some of the measure taken by the Delhi government. Apart from that people were encouraged to use public transport such as metro and buses.

Source: www.thelogicalindian.com, 15 September, 2019

Good Reads

1. [Air pollution can kill, even when it meets air quality guidelines, study finds](#), Jen Christensen, shorturl.at/EFKMW, 21 August, 2019
2. [More e-scooties for cleaner Kathmandu air](#), Sonia Awale, www.nepalitimes.com, 23 August, 2019
3. [When Kathmandu Was 'Shangri-La for Electric Vehicles'](#), Atul Bhattra, www.citylab.com, 26 August, 2019
4. [Air pollution linked to bipolar disorder and major depression](#), Melissa Breyer, www.treehugger.com, 20 August, 2019

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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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