

Kathmandu plug-in electric vehicles phevs

At COP26 held in November 2021, over 100 national governments and major businesses signed the Glasgow Declaration on Zero-Emission Cars and Vans to end the sale of internal combustion engines by 2035 in leading markets in 2040 worldwide.

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Markets Initiative announced on COP26 the pledges of 28 companies to drive growth in the demand for, and supply of, hydrogen.

Nepal's budget for the fiscal year 2021-22 has also emphasised that "Nepal plans to shift from light vehicles that run on petroleum products to electric ones by 2031" and announced a strategic plan to lower fuel imports and the concomitant pollution.

The budget has also announced that companies of the world's top ten brands will be attracted to set up their plants to manufacture and assemble electric vehicles. Tax subsidies would be offered and land on the lease would be provided to make Nepal attractive for such companies.

Experts say the move appears to be well-intentioned in the wake of rising pollution and ballooning trade deficit, which is primarily due to the import of petroleum products.

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics report released in 2019, Nepal's gasoline consumption almost doubled in the last five years, leading to a yawning trade deficit and environmental consequences.

The number of vehicles on the road is increasing by 14 percent annually and 70-80 percent of vehicles on the road consist of two-wheelers, Bhusan Tuladhar, an environmentalist, told the Post.

Electric cars are also not the solution to the ongoing traffic congestion, he said. "Until and unless we have cars as a major means of transport, pollution or traffic problems are not going to be solved," he added.

A study conducted by International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in 2017 found that about 35 percent of diesel-powered vehicles in Kathmandu Valley emit a visible plume of black smoke, contributing substantially to the ambient pollution.

The government has been levying 10-40 percent customs duty on an electric vehicle depending on the power capacity, including 13 percent VAT and refuse-derived fuel tax, for fuel produced from combustible components.

While the shift to electric vehicles is one of the major ways to cut down on pollution, companies have also

been trying hydrogen-fuelled vehicles as it can be an alternative option for an electric vehicle.

Utilising surplus electricity at a subsidised rate, Nepal can produce hydrogen at a cost of \$1 per kg, said academicians and researchers engaged in Green Hydrogen Lab funded by Nepal Oil Corporation.

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