



NEWSLETTER

Society of Transport Engineers Nepal (SOTEN)

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT



Er. Hare Ram Shrestha, PhD
President

Dear SOTEN Members and Friends,

On behalf of the Society of Transport Engineers Nepal (SOTEN), I am pleased to extend my warm greetings to all our members, partners, and readers through the fifth issue of the SOTEN Newsletter. This edition continues our journey of knowledge sharing, professional solidarity, and collective commitment to advancing Nepal's transport sector.

Over the past months, SOTEN has continued to strengthen its role as a professional platform for dialogue and learning. Our activities including knowledge sharing series, capacity-building initiatives and collaboration with various partners that reflect our sustained commitment to sustainable transport systems in Nepal. The successful organization of the Third International Transport Conference on "Towards Safe, Sustainable and Resilient Mobility", held in April 2025, stands as a significant milestone that reinforced SOTEN's growing recognition as a credible professional institution in the transport sector. This recognition was further amplified on the regional stage. The successful participation at EASTS conference held in Indonesia on 1-4 September 2025 was capped by a significant institutional achievement, as SOTEN, through its delegation's active engagement, successfully secured the commitment to host the next EASTS Board Meeting in Nepal. This milestone represents a diplomatic triumph for Nepal's transportation community, highlighting its growing influence and recognition.

This fifth issue of the newsletter captures highlights of our recent activities, technical articles, member contributions, and institutional updates. I encourage all readers to engage with the content, share insights, and contribute actively to future editions. Your ideas and experiences are essential to enriching our collective knowledge base.

Like most of the developing countries, Nepal is facing unplanned urbanization, climate challenges, and increasing mobility demands. Meeting the transport needs in sustainable manner has become the global agenda. UN has recently launched the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport (2026 – 2035). The role of transport professionals has become more critical than ever.

Through this 5th issue of SOTEN newsletter I urge transport professional and policy makers to put our collective effort in achieving the goal of sustainable transport. Let us reaffirm our shared responsibility to promote transport solutions, I sincerely thank all SOTEN members, contributors, and well-wishers for their continued support and dedication. I look forward to your active participation in our upcoming programs and events. With best wishes,

Warm Regards

Hare Ram Shrestha
President
Society of Transport Engineers Nepal



About SOTEN

The Society of Transportation Engineers Nepal (SOTEN), established in 2009, is dedicated to advancing the transportation sector through knowledge sharing, professional development, and capacity-building initiatives. It promotes research, innovation, and expertise within the field, contributing to sustainable and efficient transportation systems in Nepal. SOTEN is also a member of prestigious international organizations such as the Eastern Asia Society of Transport Studies (EASTS), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia (UNESCAP), TRAN, the International Road Federation (IRF), and the Pacific reflecting its commitment to global collaboration and excellence in transportation engineering.

SOTEN Executive Members

Fifth Executive Committee (2024-26)



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Vice-President



Er. Hemant Tiwari
General Secretary



Er. Shrawan Kumar Thapa
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Er. Saujanya Nepal
Member



Er. Shiva Ram KC
Member



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Member

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2009-14



Er. Lal Krishna KC
Second Executive Committee
2014-19



Er. Padam Badhadur Shahi, Ph.D
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2019-21; 2021-23



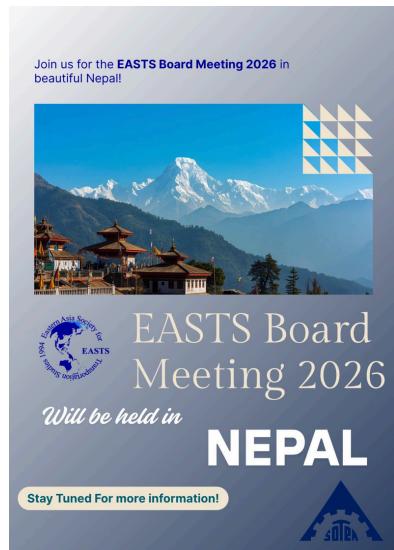
Er. Rajendra Raj Sharma
Fifth Executive Committee
2024-25



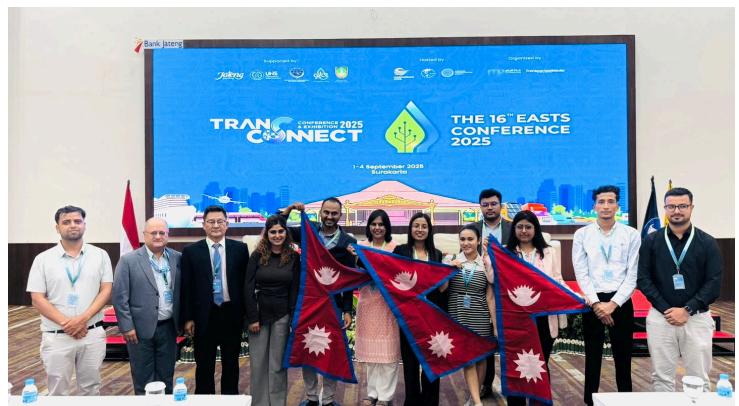
Representation of SOTEN

The Society of Transport Engineers Nepal (SOTEN) achieved a historic milestone of 18 participations, the highest-ever participation of Nepali researchers at an international conference, delivering 11 presentations during the 16th International Conference of the Eastern Asia Society for Transportation Studies (EASTS 2025), held from September 1 to 4, 2025, in Surakarta, Indonesia.

Representation of SOTEN members in 16 EASTS Conference under the leadership of our President. The paper presentation team was led by SOTEN's General Secretary Hemant Tiwari, alongside past president Prof. Dr. Padma Bahadur Shahi, Dr. Rojee Pradhananga, and talented engineers including Er. Aanchal Tiwari, Kushal Bhusal, Ronesh Shahi, Dipesh Thapa, Aakash Pradhan, Puspa Sukubhattu, Asmita Pokhrel, and Anu Poudyal. Their contributions showcased Nepal's growing expertise in transportation studies on a prestigious regional platform, covering diverse topics in sustainable transport, road safety, traffic management, and more.



The successful participation at EASTS 2025 was further amplified by a significant institutional achievement. The Society of Transport Engineers Nepal (SOTEN), through its delegation's active engagement, successfully secured the commitment to host the next EASTS Board Meeting in Nepal. This milestone represents a diplomatic triumph for Nepal's transportation community, highlighting its growing influence and recognition on the regional stage.





The following table summarizes the 11 research papers presented by the delegation from the Society of Transport Engineers Nepal (SOTEN) at the 16th International Conference of the Eastern Asia Society for Transportation Studies (EASTS 2025), detailing the title of each study and the respective lead presenter.

Paper Title	Authors
SR4S and Road Safety in Nepalese Schools: Evaluating Risk Factors and Effective Interventions	Asmita Pokhrel, Hemant Tiwari, Sanjay Luitel
Value of Risk Reduction of Fatal Road Crashes: A Case Study of Long- and Medium- Route Public Vehicle Passengers	Rojee Pradhananga; Puspa Sukubhattu; Padma Shahi
An Assessment of Intercity Public Bus Services: A Case Study of the Kathmandu-Dhulikhel Route	Ujjwol Thapa, Padma Bahadur Shahi
An Assessment of Public Transport System from the Integration Perspective: A Case Study of Pokhara Metropolitan City	Dipesh Thapa, Padma Bahadur Bahadur Shahi
Addressing Traffic Congestion: Strategic Approaches to Public Transport Optimization in Kathmandu	Anu Poudyal, Padma Bahadur Shahi
Evaluation of Traffic Performance and Signal Coordination at Urban Intersections: A Case Study of Pokhara City	Thusitha Chandani Shahi; Kushal Bhusal
Urban Mobility Shifts: Factors Influencing Ride-Hailing Adoption in Kathmandu Valley	Ronesh Shahi, Padma Bahadur Bahadur Shahi
Analysis of Pavement Stress-Strain Response Under Dynamic Loading with Geogrid Reinforcement	Aanchal Tiwari, Padma Bahadur Bahadur Shahi, Rajan Suwal, Ram Chandra Tiwari
Economic Impacts of Traffic Congestion in Kathmandu Valley: A 2021 Cost Assessment	Rojee Pradhananga, Aayush Maan Karki, Pratik Sapkota, Anil Marsani
Assessing Walkability in Kathmandu Metropolitan City Through Urban Density and Land Use Diversity Using GIS-Based Analysis	Padma Bahadur Bahadur Shahi, Aakash Pradhan
Curbside Bus Stops and their impact on urban traffic flow: A case study on Pokhara, Nepal	Hemant Tiwari, Suraj Bahadur Thapa, Asmita Pokhrel

The delegation's 11 research presentations not only showcased the nation's technical expertise across a comprehensive spectrum of key issues from road safety and public transport to sustainable infrastructure and economic impact but also earned significant international recognition. The delegation's contributions were further distinguished by key individual roles our General Secretary, Er. Hemant Tiwari, served as an evaluator for the Best Poster Presentation, while our President, Er. Hareram Shrestha, was involved in the Best Domestic Society award evaluation. Their active participation underscores SOTEN's committed and respected presence in regional academic and professional forums.



Knowledge Sharing Series

SOTEN has continued its knowledge sharing series with the following episodes.

Episode 15 – Sustainable Pavements and Pavement Evaluation.

SOTEN, in collaboration with Universal Engineering and Science College organized 15th episode of knowledge sharing session on “Sustainable Pavements and Pavement Evaluation” on July 22, 2025. Our speaker Dr. Tanuj Chopra discussed about international practices of pavement evaluation along with a descriptive talk on sustainable pavements.



Episode 16 – Pavement Stabilization in Highway Projects

Knowledge Sharing Session 16 of the Society of Transport Engineers Nepal (SOTEN) was conducted on “Pavement Stabilization in Highway Projects.” The session featured a technical presentation by Mr. Saurya Dash, DGM & BU Head – Geosynthetics, Maccaferri Environmental Solutions Pvt. Ltd, highlighting modern pavement stabilization techniques and the role of geosynthetics in enhancing highway pavement performance. The session, organized exclusively for SOTEN members in collaboration with Maccaferri, promoted focused technical discussion and professional knowledge exchange.

Knowledge Sharing

Pavement Stabilization in Highway Projects

SCAN ME

15 seats exclusively for SOTEN MEMBERS ONLY !!

Deadline: Wednesday, 10 December ,2025

Saurya Dash
DGM & BU Head- Geosynthetics
Maccaferri Environmental Solutions Pvt Ltd

In collaboration with: **MACCAFERRI**



Webinars and other Sessions

EC-06 Event #49

SONEUK WEBINAR SERIES 06

World Models: The Digital Twins for Agentic AI

Dr Rudra Poudel
Speaker

About Speaker

- Associate Principal Research Scientist (AI) at Toshiba
- PhD supervisor (Universities of Cambridge & Oxford)
- 20+ years of academic and industry research experience

Event Overview

- Digital twin of the environment
- Beyond scene understanding
- Insights driving intelligent AI

Saturday
11th October, 2025
Online through Microsoft Teams
14:30-16:00 BST
9:30 - 11:00 EST
19:15 - 20:45 NST

Prof Keshav Dahal
Moderator

About Moderator

- Professor of Intelligent Systems and Director of AVCN Research Institute at the University of the West of Scotland
- Senior Member of IEEE
- 200+ papers, including award winning publications

Slogan for 2024-26: “Uniting Engineers for Change”

For more information email us at chairperson@soneuk.org or visit our website www.soneuk.org

SONEUK Webinar Series 06 was successfully conducted on “World Models: The Digital Twins for Agentic AI.” The webinar featured Dr. Rudra Poudel, Associate Principal Research Scientist (AI) at Toshiba, who discussed the concept of world models, digital twins of the environment, and their role in advancing intelligent and agentic AI systems.

Issue 5 (July-December, 2025)

05



The session was moderated by Prof. Keshav Dahal, Professor of Intelligent Systems and Director of AVCN Research Institute at the University of the West of Scotland. Conducted online via Microsoft Teams, the webinar attracted participants from different regions and promoted insightful discussions on emerging AI research and applications.

Pre-Session on Youth & Road Safety

On September 26, 2025, a successful pre-session on Road Safety, Global Issues, and Local Solutions was held in collaboration between SOTEN (Society of Transport Engineers Nepal,



presumably), YOURS (Youth for Road Safety), and other key national partners including Safe & Sustainable Travel Nepal (SSTN) and the National Road Safety Council, Nepal.

Building Resilient Roads: From Infrastructure to Operations



On 3rd December during the IRF Conference our General Secretary Hemant Tiwari delivered was invited to speak on the topic "Building Resilirnt Roads".This session will explore how these dimensions of resilience come together across the lifecycle of road systems.

It will highlight practical approaches – from engineering innovations to new financing models – that can help road networks withstand shocks, recover faster, and deliver reliable mobility under changing conditions.

Guest Lecture on "The Practice of Transportation and Geotechnical Asset Management in North America"

On November 27, 2025 (11 Mangsir 2082), a highly successful guest lecture on "The Practice of Transportation and Geotechnical Asset Management in North America" was delivered by internationally renowned expert Dr. Scott Anderson at Universal Engineering & Science College in Lalitpur, Nepal. The event was proudly organized through a collaboration between SOTEN, the Nepal Geotechnical Society (NGS), and Universal Engineering & Science College. Dr. Anderson, Principal Engineer at BGC Engineering, Canada, and Retired Senior Leader from the U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), shared valuable insights drawn from over 35 years of experience in risk-based geotechnical asset management and transportation practices. The session featured an engaging Q&A and highlighted global best practices particularly relevant to Nepal's challenging Himalayan terrain, marking a significant milestone in fostering international knowledge exchange and strengthening capacity in transportation and geotechnical engineering.



Guest Lecture

Topic:
The practice of transportation and geotechnical asset management in North America.

27th November, 2025, Thursday
 11 Mangsir, 2082
 5:00 PM onwards



Dr. Scott Anderson
 Principal Engineer, BGC Engineering, Canada
 Retired Senior Leader, U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

VENUE:
 Sagarmatha Hall
 Universal Engineering & Science College
 137/20 Manido Marg, Chakupat, Ward 11, Lalitpur Metropolitan City, Nepal



ATO and SOTEN Renew Partnership

One of the key highlights of the event was the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ATO and SOTEN. This MoU signifies the continued shared commitment of the ATO and SOTEN to strengthen knowledge exchange, collaborate on capacity-building initiatives, as well as collaborative research activities aimed at enriching the discourse on sustainable transport in Nepal, and beyond. This collaborative effort between ATO and SOTEN symbolizes the conference's broader goal: to drive substantial reforms in Nepal's transport sector, guiding the government towards building safer, more sustainable, and inclusive mobility solutions for the future.





Hemant Tiwari
General Secretary
SOTEN

Call for Contribution

This Newsletter is the initiative of 5th Executive Committee of SOTEN where we bring the summary of SOTEN activities together with major national affairs on transport sector. Being the first issue, the newsletter may have some rooms for improvement, and we will keep enhancing the quality of newsletter in future. We planned to publish newsletter quarterly. In this regard, we would like to request all SOTEN members to share any of your individual or organizational achievement or blogs/articles. There is also a dedicated space on SOTEN website for our member's blogs/articles. Promoting research and publication is one of the major goals of SOTEN and we are moving on that track through these kinds of initiatives.

Feel free to provide us feedback.

Workshops

Public Transport and Fare Review Policy

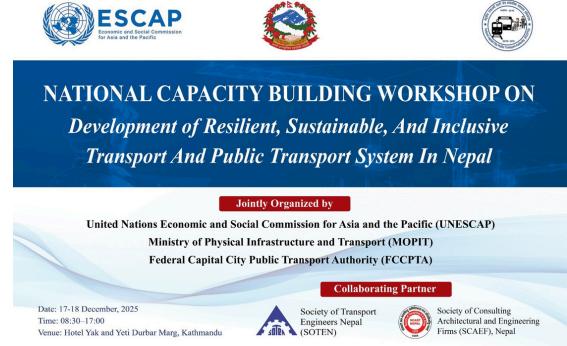


A productive and insightful discussion on public transport fare reforms in the Kathmandu Valley was successfully held, organized by the Society of Transport Engineers Nepal (SOTEN). The interactive session brought together key stakeholders from the public transport sector, including representatives from the Federation of Nepalese National Transport Entrepreneurs (FNNTE), Sajha Yatayat, Sarwajanik Yatayat Mahasangh, and other prominent players.

Participation from engineers, entrepreneurs, and experts, the gathering fostered healthy debates on fare structures, operational challenges, sustainability, and potential reforms to improve efficiency and affordability for commuters in the Valley. This collaborative initiative highlighted SOTEN's ongoing commitment to addressing critical transportation issues through stakeholder engagement and knowledge sharing.



National Capacity Building Workshop on Development of Resilient, Sustainable, and Inclusive Transport and Public Transport System in Nepal.



Jointly Organized by

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)
Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport (MOPIT)
Federal Capital City Public Transport Authority (FCCPTA)

Collaborating Partner

Date: 17-18 December, 2025
Time: 08:30-17:00
Venue: Hotel Yak and Yeti Durbar Marg, Kathmandu



The National Capacity Building Workshop on Development of Resilient, Sustainable, and Inclusive Transport and Public Transport System in Nepal was successfully held on 17-18 December 2025 at Hotel Yak and Yeti, Durbar Marg, Kathmandu. The workshop was jointly organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transportation (MOPIT), and the Federal Capital City Public Transport Authority (FCCPTA).

This collaborative initiative brought together government leaders, international experts, provincial and local authorities, academics, and transport stakeholders to share global and regional best practices, assess Nepal's transport challenges (including climate resilience, disaster preparedness, public transport quality, fare/route reforms, and electrification), and develop actionable strategies for a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient mobility future in the country.

Research Grant 2025

The Society of Transport Engineers Nepal (SOTEN) proudly announced the winners of its 2025 Research Grant program, supporting innovative master's-level and independent research projects in transportation engineering. These grants recognize talented engineers addressing critical issues in Nepal's transport sector, such as road safety, traffic management, urban accessibility, and safety performance.

In the Academic Research category, the recipients are:

- Rahul Kamal Bajracharya (MSc in Transportation Engineering and Management, Pokhara University), for the project "Evaluating Dilemma Zone Boundaries Under Mixed Traffic Conditions: A Case Study of Sallaghari and Naya Thimi Signalized Intersections of Kathmandu Bhaktapur Road".
- Utsav Dahal (MSc in Transportation Engineering, Pulchowk Campus), for "Reinforcement Learning-Based Adaptive Traffic Signal Control Using Field-Calibrated Simulation: A Case Study of Mixed Traffic in Kathmandu Valley".
- Krishna Bhattarai (Thapathali Campus), for "Calibrating Safety Performance Function and Predicting Crash-hotspot at Urban Highway (Tripureshwor-Kathmandu) of Kathmandu Valley".

In the Female Researcher category, the grants were awarded to:

- Ingila Simkhada (Universal Engineering and Science College), for "A Behavioral Study on the Comprehension and Compliance with Road Traffic Signs Among Drivers and Pedestrians in Nepal".
- Merina Shrestha (details not specified in the announcement).
- Nhuja Bajracharya (Aviyaan Consulting Pvt. Ltd.), for "Network-Based Assessment of Urban Fire Service Accessibility in Bhaktapur".

All winners are engineers whose research contributes to safer, more efficient, and sustainable transportation solutions tailored to Nepal's unique mixed-traffic and urban challenges.



Moments from the final thesis defense of Mr. Rahul Kamal Bajracharya, a 2023 batch TEAM student from Nepal Engineering College, who received a SOTEN Research Grant for his study titled "Evaluating Dilemma Zone Boundaries Under Mixed Traffic Conditions: A Case Study of Sallaghari and Naya Thimi Signalized Intersections of Kathmandu-Bhaktapur Road."



Supporting in Bachelor Level Exhibition



Proudly collaborated with Thapathali Engineering Campus Civil Engineering Students Society for "समाधान" Makerthon 2.0 – From Ideas to Solution",



Supporting Pulchowk Campus

The Society of Transport Engineers Nepal (SOTEN) was delighted to extend heartfelt congratulations to the victorious Civil Engineering students from Pulchowk Campus, CESS-Nepal, for their outstanding performance at the International Student Civil Engineering Competition (ISCE 2025) held in Bengaluru, India.

SOTEN felt honored to have contributed to this remarkable journey as one of the esteemed co-sponsors, alongside other valued partners. This support helped provide young Nepali engineers with the opportunity to learn, compete, and excel at the global level.



Road Safety Awareness

Road Safety Awareness & Candle Lighting program by SOTEN, in collaboration with Safe and Sustainable Travel Nepal.

We successfully conducted a Road Safety Awareness program followed by a Candle Lighting Ceremony in observance of the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims.

The event aimed to honor the lives lost on the roads, support families affected by road tragedies, and raise awareness on the importance of safe driving practices. Together, we stand committed to advocating for safer roads and a more responsible road culture.



16TH SOTEN DAY CELEBRATION with Technical Session on "Public Transportation in Nepal: Issues & Way Forward"



The 16th SOTEN Day Celebration was a momentous occasion, underscored by collaboration and recognition. The event featured congratulatory remarks from esteemed representatives of allied institutions including NGS, SERDen, SCAEF, NSEG, and DEAN, highlighting our strong professional network. In a gesture of deep appreciation, our Immediate Past President, Er. Rajendra Raj Sharma, was felicitated with a Token of Appreciation for his exemplary leadership and dedicated service. The society also had the distinct honor of conferring Honorary Membership upon Dr. Bindu Lohani, in recognition of his remarkable achievements and lifelong dedication to the engineering community contributions that continue to inspire and elevate our profession. The day further included a productive technical session, followed by a heartfelt Token of Love distribution to our dedicated volunteers, whose tireless efforts were instrumental in the resounding success of our recent International Conference. Their commitment truly embodies the spirit of SOTEN.



Technical Session

The Technical Session on "Public Transportation in Nepal: Issues & Way Forward", held as part of the 16th SOTEN Day celebration on 7th July 2025, was expertly moderated by Dr. Rojee Pradhananga, an esteemed Assistant Professor at the Institute of Engineering (IOE), Pulchowk Campus, whose academic expertise and deep understanding of urban mobility guided the discussion with clarity and insight.

The distinguished panel featured a wealth of experience from key figures in Nepal's transport sector: Mr. Rajeev Pokharel, Director General of the Department of Transport Management, who brought valuable governmental perspectives on policy and regulation; Er. Kamal Pandey, Senior Infrastructure Specialist and Member of the Sajha Yatayat Board, offering practical insights into public transport operations; Mr. Ashish Gajurel, a renowned public transportation expert and advocate, known for his passionate advocacy for sustainable mobility; Er. Kuber Nepali, CEO of the Federal Capital City Public Transport Authority, providing critical views on urban transport planning in the capital; Mr. Vijay Bahadur Swar, President of the Federation of Nepalese National Transport Entrepreneurs (FNNTE), representing the voice of transport entrepreneurs; and Ar. Kishor Thapa, former Secretary of the Ministry of Urban Development and a public transportation user, contributing high-level policy experience and user-centric perspectives.

Together, this impressive lineup of moderators and panelists fostered a rich, constructive dialogue that addressed the real challenges and promising pathways for improving public transportation in Nepal.





Journal on Transportation System and Engineering (JoTSE)



Journal on
Transportation System
and Engineering

A Peer Reviewed Journal

Special Edition

Volume 1 Issue 2 December 2025

Published by

 SOCIETY OF
TRANSPORT ENGINEERS NEPAL
Lalitpur, Nepal

SOTENs Journal on Transportation System and Engineering (JoTSE) was also officially launched on SOTEN day with an aim to be internationally recognized journal in next 3-5 years, we completed the first step by indexing in NepJol with DOI number and having around 50% rejection rate. 11 papers were selected among 25 papers.

Call for papers was made during the International Conference for proceeding from which 12 exclusively selected papers were reviewed and are published in the special edition of our journal.

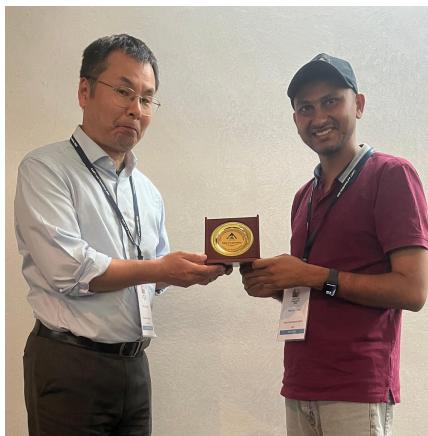


JoTSE special edition, This special edition features 12 selected papers presented at the 3rd International Transport Conference 2025, highlighting cutting-edge research and innovations in transportation systems and engineering. Following the success of Volume 1, SOTEN now invites submissions for the 2nd Volume of the Journal of Transportation Systems and Engineering (JoTSE).



Society of Transport Engineers Nepal

Facilitation to advisory board of JoTSE



Facilitation was provided to key Journal on Transportation System and Engineering (JoTSE) Advisory Board members Prof. Yu-Chiun Chiou, Prof. Taku Fujiyama, and Mr. Sudhir Gota to leverage their distinct regional and professional expertise in guiding the journal's strategic direction, enhancing its academic rigor, and expanding its global network within the transportation research community.

What's Next?

SOCIETY OF TRANSPORT ENGINEERS NEPAL (SOTEN)

Call for Papers

DEADLINE EXTENDED

Second Volume

JoTSE
SOTEN

The Society of Transport Engineers Nepal (SOTEN) invites submissions for the "2nd Volume of the Journal of Transportation Systems and Engineering (JoTSE)"

Following the successful publication of Volume 1 with two issues, which featured a diverse range of research articles and technical papers contributing to advancements in Nepal's transportation sector, SOTEN seeks new and original works for its upcoming issues. The journal serves as a platform for scholars, practitioners, and academics to share innovative ideas, research findings, and practical insights in the field of transportation systems and engineering. Original research papers, technical articles, and case studies are welcomed.

Deadline Extended: 30 January, 2026

JOURNAL PUBLICATION: MAY, 2026

FOR MORE DETAILS CONTACT US AT SOTEN.NEPAL@GMAIL.COM

LALITPUR ENGINEERING COLLEGE
(Affiliated to Tribhuvan University)

SAFE SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL NEPAL

International Conference on Engineering Technology and Infrastructure Development

Symposium on Sustainable Mobility and Transport

Organized by
Lalitpur Engineering College
Chakupat, Lalitpur, Nepal

Date: 31st January, 2026 / 17th Magh, 2082
Venue: Lalitpur Engineering College
Chakupat, Lalitpur, Nepal

Collaborative Partners
Society of Transport Engineers Nepal (SoTEN)
Safe and Sustainable Travel Nepal (SSTN)
Green Decision Labs and Research (GD Labs)
(Supported by: Royal Academy of Engineering)

Scan for Registration

For inquiry e-mail us at: leccconference2026@gmail.com

Contact us at: +977-9840021910

SOTEN has now called for papers for the second volume of JOSTE after the success of the first volume. We have also collaborated with Lalitpur Engineering College (LEC) for International Conference on Engineering Technology and Infrastructure Development.

Transport Affairs

National Pride Projects (Tunnels & Projects)

Nagdhunga Tunnel is set to receive an operator, for which the government announced international bids on November 2. The deadline has been extended twice: first until December 31 and again until January 14, 2026. This extension was required due to clarifications needed by bidders regarding the operations. The tunnel is 2,688 m long, accompanied by a 2,577 m emergency tunnel.

The operators will be held responsible for the overall management of traffic, emergency response, toll collection, and maintenance. A total of 150 personnel will be required for 24-hour operation throughout the year, including 5 experts with prior experience. Tolls collected on a daily basis will be received by the Road Board Nepal's account. Physical progress has reached approximately 97% at present. Pedestrians, motorcycles, three-wheelers, and non-motorized vehicles are barred from using the tunnel.



Fig. Nagdhunga Tunnel (The Kathmandu Post, Dec 28). The government has fixed different rates for various vehicles as follows:

Vehicle Type	Entering Kathmandu	Returning from Kathmandu
Car/Jeep/Van	Rs 65	Rs 60
Minibus/Small truck	Rs 115	Rs 80
Large bus/Medium truck	Rs 260	Rs 200
Heavy Equipment	Rs 600	Rs 250

(Clickmandu.com, Nov 14). The article states that the project faces cost overruns and has sought an additional Rs 5.7 billion on top of the original Rs 22 billion from JICA for completion.

The 70.977 km Fast Track, comprising tunnels and high/long bridges, reached 43.3% physical progress by mid-October. An amount of Rs 82.17 billion has already been spent. There are altogether 13 packages, of which 12 are under construction (The Rising Nepal, November 10). Design work at the starting point has delayed land acquisition, which is still underway in that area. The Fast Track includes 7 tunnels with a total length of 10.979 km currently under construction. Major progress has been achieved in the Dhedre and Lendanda tunnels, where breakthroughs have been made, while progress of 61% and 68% has been achieved in the Mahadevtar tunnel. Other tunnel locations include Chandram Bhir, Mouri Bhir, Devi Chaur, and Sisautar. Out of 89 bridges, 85 are under construction. Major activities also include land acquisition along different chainages and the felling of trees.

Tunnel construction at Siddhababa has reached 65% physical progress. The project's 1,126 m main tunnel and the 151 m, 161 m, and 130 m bypass tunnels have been completed. Remaining work includes stabilization, retaining walls, and access roads to these tunnels, totaling 2,398 m in length. A rock shed of 780 m is meant to be constructed after vehicular movement begins through the tunnel. A 19-month extension has been sought by the contractor, citing various issues. As per the contract, the project is slated for completion by 2027. (My Republica, 22 December).



Fig. Siddhababa Tunnel (Source: My Republica)

Road Projects and Performance

Road construction is challenging, especially in difficult terrains. As of July 2025, with the completion of a 170-foot Bailey Bridge over Chuwa Khola by the Nepal Army, the district headquarters of Humla, Simikot, was finally connected, meaning all district headquarters are now linked via the road network. The Nepal Army has completed 32 strategically important road projects and has been responsible for 1,400 kilometers of track opening. Currently, the Nepal Army is constructing over 274 kilometers of roads across five projects: Khandbari-Kimathangka, Karnali Corridor, Benighat-Arughat-Larkhebanjyang, and Darchula-Tinkar. (26 October, Nepal News).

The Narayangarh-Butwal Road Project has gained pace following a government warning. Physical progress of 76% has been achieved as of this December (on the 65 km section). The government has directed completion by July 2026. Current activities include blacktopping and bridge construction. Work at the Daunne section and blacktopping at bridges are underway; however, the bridges remain unoperational due to unfinished road links. (The Himalayan Times, December 4).

There is a delay in construction work, evidenced by the performance of the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport, which utilized only 24% of its quarterly budget. About 43 contracts that were pending for years under the DoR have been canceled, costing Rs 2.97 billion. The major problems cited are budget blockages and local obstructions. Terminated projects are being prioritized as they must go through the bidding process again. Rs 48.52 billion was allocated for the first quarter, of which only Rs 11.64 billion was spent



Fig: Narayangarh-Butwal Road section observing blacktopping (The Himalayan Times)

Airway Developments

Nepal has constructed two international airports to accommodate growing air travel demand; however, a lack of flights has been a major setback. In the forthcoming 2025/26 winter, most foreign airlines declined regular flights to Gautam Buddha International Airport (GBIA) and Pokhara International Airport. Only two airlines are operating this winter at GBIA (Thai Air Asia on Sundays and Wednesdays, and NAC on Mondays), while Pokhara continues with Himalaya Airlines, which conducts one flight every Monday to Lhasa. Meanwhile, Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) remains busy with 93 flights daily. (Tourism Mail, Nov 15, 2025).

Due to technical issues, flights are sometimes diverted. During a disruption at TIA on November 8, two flights (Korean Air and Fly Dubai) were diverted to Delhi and Lucknow, despite Nepal having two additional international airports. To date, GBIA has been used for diverted flights only three times.

A report in The Republica notes that inadequate facilities for passengers and crew during emergency night landings, a lack of support services, and the absence of qualified technical personnel are reasons for not selecting GBIA for emergencies. Another reason for choosing India is lower aviation fuel costs. Local business communities in Bhairahawa have expressed clear dissatisfaction with these events. (Nov 11, The Republica). Last winter, GBIA handled approximately 23,000 passengers.

Miscellaneous Work

Podway, an alternative mass transit system, is being explored. A DPR for a podway system along the Kathmandu-Hetauda corridor was awarded to Kathmandu Podway Pvt. Ltd. on August 22, 2025. The proposed podway is approximately 42 km long with 5 stations. Long-term planning includes extending this corridor to the Birgunj Dry Port, totaling approximately 100 km. (podwaynepal.com, August 24). Podways use advanced, computer-controlled podcars to reduce pollution and accidents while ensuring faster travel.

An article published in The Rising Nepal Daily on July 18, 2025, by Amul Shrestha, discusses the growing traffic management problems in Kathmandu Valley. Issues stem from inadequate infrastructure (supply side) and a lack of regulation. The article highlights the need for a BRT system and encourages financing and loans to solve these issues. It also emphasizes that behavioral change is required for proper urban travel in Kathmandu.

Tolls are vital for road maintenance. Consequently, the government, through Road Board Nepal (under MoPIT), plans to re-establish modern digital toll gates on 22 national highways. This will help develop sustainable travel. According to Executive Director Ganesh Bahadur KC, these will be automated. A digital toll gate is already operating on the Bhairahawa-Bhumahi road, charging Rs 30 for heavy vehicles and Rs 20 for light vehicles. The second gate under construction is at the Nagdhunga Tunnel. Revised fees are included in the Road Usage Fee Procedure Regulations 2024. This digital system aims to eliminate problems like underreporting and rude behavior. Fees will be scanned and deposited directly into the RBN account. In the first phase, locations such as Nagdhunga, Narayangarh-Butwal, Biratnagar-Dharan, Birgunj-Pathlaiya, Narayangarh-Mugling, and Mugling-Pokhara are prioritized. The current budget allocates Rs 4.28 billion, with each toll gate costing approximately Rs 50 million. (clickmandu.com, December 19).



Fig: Toll gates (Picture credit: clickmandu.com)



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