Clean Air Asia’s interview with S K Lohia, MoUD

It is only through awareness we can make society sensitive

*Mr Sanjeev Kumar Lohia is Officer on Special Duty (Urban Transport) and Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Urban Transport of the Government of India. His field of work includes policy and reforms relating to urban transport and development of metro rail services and BRTS in the country. He is the architect of India’s highly successful bus transport story under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission. Clean Air Asia catches up with Mr Lohia on a busy day to get his perspectives.*

1. India has a large share of nearly 40 per cent users of non-motorised transport (NMT). In this background, how can the infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists be provided in the country?

The issue is not of money. Had the money been an issue, we would not have been able to build roads and flyovers. The issue is more of understanding and awareness. So the focus has to be right. At present,
unfortunately, the focus has still to move from vehicles to people though the National Urban Transport Policy (NUTP) envisages that. Through various actions like the comprehensive mobility plan, the parameters for national mission on sustainable habitat, advisories, tool kits and training programmes, we have been trying to raise awareness on NMT.

2. The National Urban Transport Policy spells out that cities should be designed for people, not for vehicles, yet funds for transport projects go to car-friendly infrastructure and mass transport like metros rather than for last mile connectivity or footpaths. How can we realize NUTP’s vision for cities designed for people?

The NUTP also talks of prioritizing investment in public transport and NMT. It doesn’t say we should forget about non-motorised transport. We take up most of the projects like the Metro, which are all for public transport. The issue is of first mile and last mile connectivity. Henceforth all MRTS and DPRs will be multi-model to include feeder buses, public bike sharing and pedestrianisation. The cost of all this will be included in the main project so that the issue of funding doesn’t come up at a later stage of the project.

Read the complete interview http://walkabilityasia.org/2013/08/04/2358/

We express our love for the city through walking: A Delhi perspective

In a warm morning late March this year, a group of young women and men assembled at the Mehrauli Archeological Park in New Delhi to begin a four-hour walk through the 200-acre area next to the famous Qutab Minar. The event organized by the Mehrauli branch of the socio-cultural organization Jansanskriti in association with KLODB, an amateur city group, marked the first phase of a three-phase walk tour through the historic surroundings of the monument-filled Mehrauli. “All those who join the walk tour are passionate about the history of Delhi and

also passionate about walking,” says Sumanto Bhowmick, a member of KLODB, which was founded 16 years ago.

Read more: http://walkabilityasia.org/2013/08/04/we-express-our-love-for-the-city-through-walking-a-delhi-perspective/
How to Maintain your Bike!

Contributed by: BumsOnTheSaddle

‘What you see is what you believe’

Most people think a clean bike is the first sign of a great service. Some just want to ride the beast. A clean bike is certainly a sign of good maintenance. A clean drivetrain (chain, cogs and gears) is default to even a basic service. It’s essential to keep the moving parts of a bike clean and adequately lubed with the right kind of lube to ensure minimal wear and tear. This has an effect that one can immediately experience on the human-powered machine - a smooth quiet hum of efficiency and power.

Read more: http://blog.bumsonthesaddle.com/qzazu

Aizwal: Hilly terrain navigated by staircases

The small hill towns of India face unique mobility challenges, with equally unique responses. Aizawl is one such example, and was a participant city in the NMT readiness assessment project. Being a part of this project, Aizawl was assessed for its readiness or preparedness to take the issue of NMT in a structured manner. A city characterized by steep ramps and staircases, a high percentage of trips made in Aizawl are by walk. A series of staircases - wide, narrow, steep and gentle - criss cross the town to enable its people to get from one location to another.

Read more: http://ecomobilitynm.blogspot.in/2013/07/hilly-terrain-navigated-by-staircases.html
Ahmedabad: Janmarg to scrap cycle tracks

When the bus rapid transit system (BRTS) was conceptualized for Ahmedabad in 2007, a social marketing campaign was run. It advertised that Ahmedabad Janmarg would be constructed on the lines of the BRTS in Bogota, Colombia. The promise was that the city would be transformed with walkways, bicycle routes and colourful public plazas. While mayor Enrique Penalosa’s model made Bogota BRTS an example in wise planning, Ahmedabad remains a shoddy imitation. What’s more, authorities have now decided to do away with bicycle lanes in upcoming BRT corridors.

Read more:
http://walkabilityasia.org/2013/08/01/janmarg-to-scrap-cycle-tracks-2/

Pune: PMC’s cycle track back on track?

After failing to implement a pilot project for use of bicycles in the last three years, the Pune Municipal Corporation now wants to start afresh by laying a comprehensive bicycle plan. The PMC has rubbish claims that the pilot project has been junked. In fact, civic officials say the project is at an advanced stage, but there is a need for a comprehensive action plan if the project has to succeed. One of the focus areas while preparing the plan is to consider suggestions and objections of citizens. Read more: http://walkabilityasia.org/2013/08/01/pmc-cycletrack/

Gurgaon: Bid to reclaim the roads

Imagining a traffic-free Gurgaon is every citizen’s dream. After Let’s Walk Gurgaon, where office-goers ditched their vehicles to walk to work a few months ago, now, a group of class VIII students has teamed up with teachers and locals to try and make the city’s jam-packed roads pedestrian and bicycle-friendly. With the international concept of traffic-free Sundays, they are planning on having recreational activities on city roads.

Read more:
http://walkabilityasia.org/2013/08/01/bid-to-reclaim-gurgaons-roads
Relax Vancouver drivers; you can handle another bike lane

Why do bike lanes proposals create such reaction? From Wall Street Journal editorial writers to hundreds of Point Grey homeowners, the battles over bicycles have created unprecedented levels of passion. A ‘First-World’ problem, to be sure, but clearly something is going on – and it’s about more than just bicycles.

Read more: http://walkabilityasia.org/2013/07/10/la-reclaims-its-famous-street-for-pedestrians/

Cebu City identifies locations for bike share

At least 24 areas in Cebu City have been identified as possible sites for bicycle racks to support a plan to put up bike lanes in some streets. The sites are public places, some government offices, and institutions, said Rafael Yap, Cebu City Traffic Operations Management (Citom) executive director.

Read more: http://walkabilityasia.org/2013/07/25/cebu-city-identifies-locations-for-bike-share/

LA reclaims its famous street for pedestrians

Los Angeles has a great deal of walkability despite its car-centric reputation, but much of it remains hidden to the public. In the city’s historic Broadway corridor, at least, that secret is about to come out. The city council recently voted to fund an initial redevelopment of Broadway into a legitimate pedestrian plaza reducing six lanes of road down to three in the process.

Read more: http://walkabilityasia.org/2013/07/10/la-reclaims-its-famous-street-for-pedestrians/

Beginning in March, each of the Walkability parameters is briefly described

**PARAMETER 5: Motorist Behavior**

The behavior of motorists towards pedestrians indicates the pedestrian environment in that area. This parameter mainly emphasizes on the motorists behavior towards pedestrians who are crossing at intersections or at mid block. Motorist behavior also reflects the culture and courtesy of the motorists towards other road users. A low score indicates that the city’s motorists are intimidating and would not like to slow down for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the road.