



# Himalayan Light Foundation

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## CHARGED!

The Newsletter of the Himalayan Light Foundation

Issue III

May 2002

### Welcome to Issue 2!

Here is the third “CHARGED!” the newsletter of the Himalayan Light Foundation. Much awaited! Much spicy with the sparkles from lightening, thunders and acid rains! Be informed about us & let’s be informed from you at [info@hlf.org.np](mailto:info@hlf.org.np)

### EVs R Us

THE KATHMANDU POST.

MONDAY, JUNE 25, 2001

#### New EV project launched

KATHMANDU, June 24 (PR)- The British Embassy to Nepal has announced the launching of a new electric vehicle (EV) project designed and implemented by Himalayan Light Foundation (HLF) a Nepal based NGO.

The project aims to built on the success of Kathmandu’s three wheel electric vehicles, and to move the development of this form of transport to the next level.

Project aims to reduce production of carbon emission into the environment and will act as a suitable alternative to obstruct existing pollution.

HLF will bring this new electro bus technology into the forefront in order that the existing and struggling Ev industries can again go into production to offer HMG/N and the Nepalese a clean zero emission alternative to diesel busses that operate on subsidized fuels.

### Foundation Activities

- ✚ Participated at the National Workshop on ‘Home Based Workers in Nepal’ with special reference to women organized by Homenet Nepal. The Foundation also had one booth at the Exhibition during the workshop where GEF funded HELP™ products were displayed and briefed to the visitors
- ✚ Participated at the Eco-rally along with the Foundation’s new release (yet to be released due to the government’s red tape policy) **The Electro Bus**, organized on the morning of the Earth Day, April 22.
- ✚ Electro Bus Demo Program at the NTB ??????????
- ✚ Participation at the Amchis Association ??????????
- ✚ Participated at the “Nepal Country Dialogue Workshop” programme organized by Global Environment Facility (GEF).
- ✚ Also in Baglung district, Khungkhani villagers will produce handmade Lokta paper products which will sell on the open market via HLF assistance. Khungkhani will start with about 40 solar home systems supported by UNDP and Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Small grants program.

**Solar Sisters keep on trekking to launch in Khotang district.**

More sisters are coming this fall from University of New South Wales, Australia and will head all the way up to Khotang in east Nepal. Khotang village has been very organized and so far HLF has not been able to do more than one or two community systems. Now the solar sisters are coming to the rescue! More solar for Khotang! See solar sisters on HLF web site.

### **Himalayan Light Foundation Gets Environmental award!**

His Majesty's government Nepal Ministry of Population and Environment (MOPE) has awarded HLF HELP program a special environment award for World Environment Day 2001. The award will help the HELPTM program gain national and international support for further activities. Thanks to HMG/N's MOPE for recognizing our hard work!

### **New! The Himalayan Light Foundation's village art take home party program!**

Solar sisters or HLF volunteers can now take home crocheted bags (Krusse jhola) made from the Baglung HELP program and sell them out of their homes when they return from Nepal. Volunteers can buy 5-10 bags at a special discounted rate, take them home and throw a party to sell the bags. The profits pay for the party elements like wine, beer, chips and other types of unmentionable fun people can dream of.

!Special Feature!

### **The Future of EV**

– An interview with Adam Friedensohn chief advisor of Himalayan Light Foundation

**Charged!:** EVs have met with much resistance from HMG/N it seems. Why is there such a strong resistance? .

**Adam:** Actually I have many thoughts on the various reasons and many of our

audience will also have their own theories but today I would offer an interesting one. I feel that the style or look of public transportation in any city represents the face of a city or country in the case of Kathmandu which is Nepal's capitol city. So the SAFA Tempos are a great technology but somehow their boxy looks remind the Nepalese officials that we are a bit primitive compared with other places. Somewhere in the hearts of HMG /N decision makers they just look too outdated and low quality in appearance to stand behind them politically.

**Charged!:** What about the future? Any technological breakthroughs coming soon?

**Adam:** *There are so many good fits for Nepal actually. I know also that there is an upcoming project to introduce and assist the electric Trolley busses. I have some hope to join the electro bus project onto the trolley lines eventually to take what is known as "opportunity charging" while the vehicles run a route. In that way the electro bus could start before the trolley lines, run to let's say Bhaktapur, and then disconnect from the line (after charging the batteries form that) and continue way past the reach of the lines. This is just an idea we are working on at the moment.*

**Charged!:** How will the new Electro-Bus help Kathmandu when there is such resistance to EVs?

**Adam:** *I think this will help immensely in the following ways: The operations costs of the Electro-Bus should be better and more convenient than the SAFA Tempos. The look of the thing will be something we can all be proud of. The end cost will be very reasonable and battery life longer than SAFA Tempos. Most importantly the larger carrying capacity of the Electro-Bus will allow them to be used to replace some diesel busses that jam the small streets of Kathmandu. Carrying 20 passengers is not too many and not too few so there should be better profitability.*

**Charged!:** What is the general advantage of EV's?

**Adam:** sometimes and in some countries I feel there is no advantage. But in our small country Nepal there are many superior reasons to choose EVs over other internal combustion forms of transportation. To start with Nepal produces Hydro power which is clean. Other countries use of EVs may simply make the pollution come out in some other place like the oil burners that make the electricity. Nepal has slow speed requirements which are great for EVs. Slow speeds are safer and less taxing on energy use patterns. Lastly, Nepal cannot afford to send more people to the hospital with respiratory diseases. Even tourists are turning away from this city due to its overwhelming pollution levels. What about those costs? SO far all profits from operating diesel vehicles go to individuals and all the liabilities go to the public. Do the diesel bus companies pay for your hospital bills? We may tolerate it but people who come from clean places find the pollution level in Kathmandu to be like hell. HMG/N needs to see the truth and act. The people's right to breath clean air cannot be sold by HMG/N. HMG/N needs to protect it.

**Charged!:** EVS didn't work in developed countries. Why do you think they can work here?

**Adam :** In California where much money went from the US government to help industries develop EVs they had requirements of 200 mile ranges and speeds of 75 MPH!. They tried making EVs work in the worst place. That is why the Japanese moved to hybrids. Pure EVs just cannot do that much due to the limitations of batteries. We don't have those intense requirements in Kathmandu at all. There were also political reasons in the USA just like here.

**Charged!:** Where will you put the batteries?

**Adam;** Currently you may know all spent batteries go down to India for recycling. They re-use the lead. More than 90% of these are from regular

petrol automobiles and not EVs. HMG/N should insist this continues. If India turns around and say" We won't take them" then HMG/N should immediately refuse to allow Indian batteries to sell into Nepal. Then the Indians will immediately allow the batteries in. Why should Nepal take Indian batteries into Nepal if India refuses to take them back for recycling? Also, why focus on stopping EVs due to their batteries? Why not ban petrol vehicles if that is the criteria? As I mentioned they are responsible for 90% of the batteries not EVs. That's another reason why the Electro-Bus is so important as the batteries are tubular plate and should last much longer. In the future we could reach the critical mass needed to open a clean recycling plant and a battery manufacturing plant in Nepal. Business people are sharp to grab reasonable opportunities. But we are not ready for that now and need to coordinate with India and Bangladesh on these issues since they have the critical mass and markets.

**Charged!:** Where does the Electro-Bus technology come from?

**Adam:** the Electro-Bus is a combination of off the shelf and custom made components. It is not rocket science just normal EV parts. The Chassis is from a UK milk float which is very strong and can support much more weight than a SAFA Tempo.

**Charged!** Why did you let go of your shares of the electric vehicle company EVCO that you founded?

**Adam:**I opened EVCO in order to prove that Evs could work for Nepal and to clean our air sustainably, not in order to get rich. I thought the best way to continue with that objective was to drop my EVCO shares and take on a project that could save 5 companies and also increase the numbers and types of EVs that can make our life nice here by replacing the polluting types of vehicles.

**Charged!:** What is the future for EVs?

**Adam:** The future is electric! especially for Kathmandu if HMG/N drops their

*vested interests. We all must work hard for what is right for this place. To keep it clean for our children and for tourism and for our own enjoyment. Who needs to breath filth? None of us should take it sitting down. We need to fight for our air before someone sells it away from us.*

*Adam Friedensohn is the designer of the British Electro-Bus demonstration program, previous founding director of EVCO and founder and Chief advisor of Himalayan Light Foundation.*

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