

Karnali Corridor Road Project (Jamunaha- Nepalgunj- Surkhet- Hilsa)

Salient Features

1. **North South Connecting :** Karnali Corridor is one of the trade routes to connect (Jamunaha) India from South and (Hilsa) China from North. The length of the trade route is 505 km.
2. **Route to Shigatse:** From Hilsa border the nearest market to china is Taklakot which is just 30 km far from border. The distance from Hilsa to Shigatse is around 700 km.
3. **Asian Highway Links:** Karnali corridor connects Asian Highway Network at Kohalpur.
4. **Crosses Major Highway:** This corridor will crosses Mid Hill Highway at Sai Khola, Dailekh , Madan Bhandari Highway at Badichaur, Surkhet, East West Asian Highway at Kohalpur, Banke , and Postal Highway at Nepalgunj, Banke.
5. **Rivers :** Alignment of Karnali also meet major rivals like Karnali river, Bheri River , Babai
6. **Hydropower:** This route will help to develop major hydropower projects like Karnali hydropower projects, Phuket hydropower Projects, Mugu karnali hydropower projects, Bheri Babai diversion multipurpose projects.
7. **Tourism:** Major tourism destinations are Kailash Mountain , Mansarovar, Tibet, Apil Himal, Badimalika, Ramaroshan, Rara National Parks, Banke National Parks, Limi Lapcha valley.
8. **Herbs:** Famous for major herbs like cordyceps, Paanchaule, chutro
9. **Current Status:**
 - Jamunaha to Nepalgunj :** 6km India Portion
 - Nepalgunj to Kohalpur: 16km Black top 4 lane Road
 - Kohalpur to Surkhet : 68km Blacktop Intermediate lane Road
 - Surkhet to Khullalu: 135 km Blacktop Intermediate lane Road
 - Khullalu to Pilichaur: 60 km (35km Gravel double lane and 25km Earthen Road Intermediate Lane)
 - Pilichaur to Salisalla : 63 km Blacktop Double Lane upgrading running contract works
 - Salisalla to Simkot: 51 km Earthen Road
 - Simkot to Hilsa: 95 km (62 km Gravel Road and Earthen Roads)

10. Jurisdiction: Nepalgunj to Khulalu (263 km) under jurisdiction of Road Division Offices (Nepalgunj, Surkhet, Jumla). Khullalu to Salisalla (123 km) under Karnali Corridor south Project office Kalikot, and Salislla to Hilsa (146 km) under Karnali Corridor (North) Project Office Humla.

11. Estimate Cost:

Pilchaur to Tumcha (50 km) : NRs. 4,260,000,000 (for double lane upgrading and blacktop Works construction going on)

Khulaulu to Hilsa (196 km): NRs. 18,620,000,000 (for Double Lane upgrading and blacktop Works)

Pilichour to Hilsa (246 km): for 4 lane road upgrading NRs 36,900,000,000

Concept Note

Karnali Corridor (Jamunaha -Nepalgunj-Surkhet-Hilsa)-505km

Background:

The development of the Karnali Corridor, a national pride project, is believed to contribute to the prosperity of Karnali and Nepal as a whole. The Karnali Corridor will play an important role in connecting the remote district of Humla in Karnali to the national road network, expanding Karnali's trade relations with China via the Hilsa checkpoint, and connecting Kalikot, Bajura, and Humla in a triangular manner. The Nepalese government has put forward the concept of the Karnali Corridor to connect Jamunaha Rupaidiya in India, Nepalgunj, Kohalpur, Surkhet, Kalikot, Bajura, Humla, and Hilsa in China with a road network of about 538 km. Currently, this corridor has been named as the Karnali Highway NH-58. The Karnali Corridor was started in 2007 A.D as the Kalikot-Humla-Jumla road project. After delays in the construction work, the government gave the responsibility of construction to the Nepal Army in 2014 AD. The Karnali Corridor covers a 269 km stretch from Khulalu in Kalikot to Hilsa, a border crossing in China. Of this, 123 km stretch from Khulalu to Salisalla was opened by the Nepal Army and handed over to the Hilsa Simkot Project under the Road Department in Shrawan 2021 A.D

The total length of this project is 269 km. is, which has been divided into two sections for the convenience of management:

- Karnali Corridor South Section: Khulalu – Sallisalla (123 km) — Kalikot, Bajura and Humla Districts
- Karnali Corridor North Section: Sallisalla – Simikot – Hilsa (146 km) — Humla District

Strategic Importance

This road project has the potential to develop into an important trade corridor between Nepal and China (Tibet). This road has great strategic importance in strengthening bilateral trade and economic relations through the Hilsa border crossing to China. In addition, this road connects the most remote and backward districts of Nepal to the national mainstream.

Key Objectives

2.1 Primary Objective

- To enhance bilateral trade and economic ties by establishing a paved road connection between Nepal and China (Hilsa border crossing).
- Promote regional economic development by improving transport infrastructure.
- Support access to tourism, hydropower projects, agriculture, herbs,
- To provide safe, reliable and year-round transportation services to the people of Kalikot, Bajura and Humla districts.
- To improve the living standards of the local community by connecting the remote and backward areas to the national road network.
- Upgrading of paved blacktop roads from Khulalu to Sallisalla (123 km) in the southern section and from Sallisalla to Hilsa (146 km) in the northern section.

Secondary Objectives

- Facilitating the transportation of local agricultural, herbal and livestock products to the market.
- Enhancing access to education, health and other basic services.
- Strengthening Nepal-China friendly relations and making border security effective.

Technical Aspects

Current Status and Completed Works

a) Southern Section (Khulalu – Sallisalla, 123 km)

- 123 km. Road track construction completed.
- 35 km. Road gravel road upgrade completed.
- Pilichaur (Ch 60+000) – Kuwadi (Ch 83+700): 23.70 km. Blacktop upgrade contract has been managed and construction work is underway
- Kuwadi (Ch 83+700) – Tumcha (Ch 110+000): 27.3 km. Blacktop upgrade contract has been managed and construction work is underway
- Ghatachaur – Bhukka: 14 km. Hard rock breaking construction work is underway by Nepal Army (currently traffic is being operated through diversion).

Currently, 50 km. road section of the southern section has been contracted and active construction work is underway.

b) North Section (Sallisalla – Simikot – Hilsa, 146 km)

- 146 km. Road track construction completed.
- 62 km. Road upgraded to gravel road.
- Construction of additional 21 km. Road upgraded to gravel road is ongoing.
- Contract management for 9 out of 15 bridges has been completed and construction work is ongoing (1 Bailey Bridge completed, 8 under construction).

c) Other Sections

Jamunaha to Nepalgunj : 6km India Portion

Nepalgunj to Kohalpur: 16km Black top 4 lane Road

Kohalpur to Surkhet : 68km Blacktop Intermediate lane Road

Surkhet to Khullalu: 135 km Blacktop Intermediate lane Road

Key Benefits:

North South Connecting : Karnali Corridor is one of the trade routes to connect (Jamunaha) India from South and (Hilsa) China from North. The length of the trade route is 505 km.

Route to Shigatse: From Hilsa border the nearest market to china is Taklakot which is just 30 km far from border. The distance from Hilsa to Shigatse is around 700 km.

Asian Highway Links: Karnali corridor connects Asian Highway Network at Kohalpur.

Crosses Major Highway: This corridor will crosses Mid Hill Highway at Sai Khola, Dailekh , Madan Bhandari Highway at Badichaur, Surkhet, East West Asian Highway at Kohalpur, Banke , and Postal Highway at Nepalgunj, Banke.

Rivers : Alignment of Karnali also meet major rivals like Karnali river, Bheri River , Babai

Hydropower: This route will help to develop major hydropower projects like Karnali hydropower projects, Phuket hydropower Projects, Mugu karnali hydropower projects, Bheri Babai diversion projects.

Tourism: Major tourism destinations are Kailash Mountain , Mansarovar, Tibet, Apil Himal, Badimalika, Ramaroshan, Rara National Parks, Banke National Parks, Limi Lapcha valley.

Herbs: Famous for major herbs like cordyceps, Paanchaule, chutro

Expected Achievements

Infrastructure and Transport Achievements:

- 269 km. Upgradation of the entire road section to Four Lane Blacktop / Rigid Pavement standard.
- 15 permanent bridges completed to ensure safe movement of vehicles.
- Continuous transport operation possible from Jamunaha to Hilsa throughout the year.
- Paved roads and safe traffic flow up to the Inida- Nepal-China border (Hilsa).

Economic and Trade Achievements

- Increased trade exchange between Nepal and China (Tibet); Reduced import-export costs and time.
- Market expansion of local products including Yarsagumba, herbs, ghee, Yak,
- Increased local entrepreneurship and employment; Employment opportunities for local youth.
- Easy transportation of materials and equipment to Phukot Karnali Hydropower and other hydropower projects.

Significant improvement in per capita income and living standards of the residents of Kalikot, Bajura and Humla.

Social Achievements

- Easy access to education and health services - students and patients can easily reach the district headquarters and national service centers.
- Strengthened supply chain of food and essential commodities.
- Equal access to services and facilities for women, children and senior citizens.
- Rapid relief and rescue possible during natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods and landslides.
- Inclusion of remote and marginalized communities in the national mainstream.

Tourism Achievements

- Easy access to the world-famous Rara Lake; Support for tourism infrastructure development.
- Expanded access to historical, cultural and religious tourism destinations in Humla.
- Development of ecotourism based on the natural heritage (mountains, rivers, forests) of the Karnali region.

- Increase in the number of domestic and foreign tourists and increase in tourism income.

Strategic and diplomatic achievements

- Strengthening security arrangements and ensuring the presence of the state in the Nepal-China border area.
- Nepal-China friendly relations further strengthened.
- Increased trust of the residents of remote Himalayan regions towards the state.
- Prepared the basis for developing Nepal as a transit hub between South Asia and Central Asia.

Estimate Cost:

Pilichour to Hilsa (246 km): for 4 lane road upgrading NRs 36,900,000,000

Time Line:

Project Completion for four lane road upgrading work will be 5 years.

Project Status:

IEE approved for majority of road sections,

DPR completed for upgrading 2 lane road

Till now out of 246 km road only 50 km road upgrading construction is going on for 2 lane road standard.

Implementation Modality:

The project is proposed under a grant based model, with financial, technical and executional assistance from the Government of Tibet, Dinggye (Dingji) county.

Responsibilities:

Nepal's Responsibilities

- Facilitate land acquisition and management resettlement
- Coordinate utility relocation (electric poles, water supply, irrigation systems)
- Provide administrative and local level support for project implementation.

China's Responsibilities

- Funding and construction of four lane black top roads and bridges along Jamunaha -Hilsa Road Project especially 246 km
- Supply advance technology and construction procedure.
- Provide technical expertise and innovation and technology transfer.

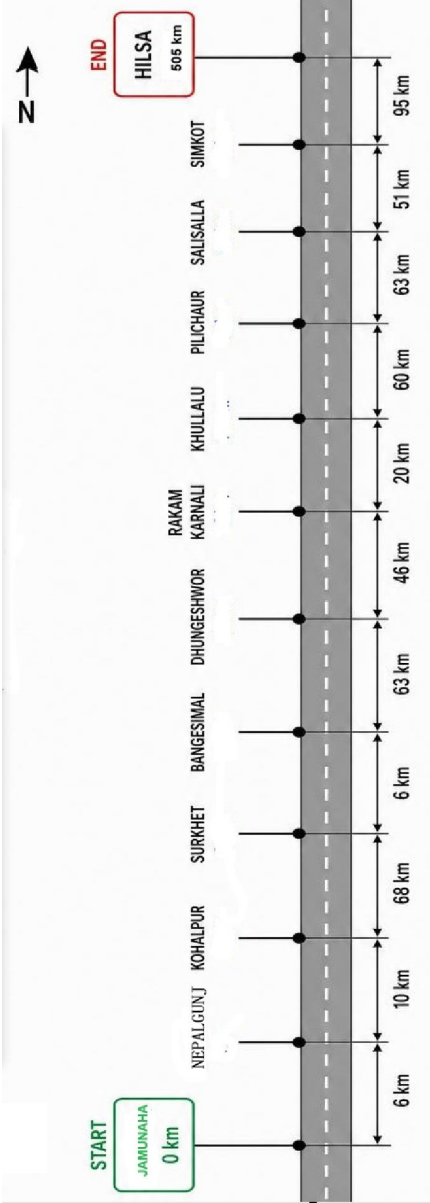
Policy Suggestions and Necessary Steps:

- Develop and implement separate procedures and standards for projects of national pride.
- Assure for sufficient funding/budget for early completion of projects

Conclusion

Karnali corridor is the game changer tri-nation trade route project to transform economic and social structure for the remote hilly and mountainous districts of Nepal — it is a symbol of development, justice and inclusion. If the state gives this project top priority and mobilizes ample resources, it will change the lives of millions of citizens forever.

SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM OF
CORRIDOR ROAD NETWORK



KARNALI

