

Headlines Himalaya

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For the 377th issue, we reviewed 28 news reports from 12 sources and selected 23 happenings in five countries. In Nepal, hotel occupancy rates decline due to the Indian blockade while Kashmir walnut faces competition from international market. In Tibet, China, world's highest saltwater lakes enters a freezing period. Beekeeping farming is promoted in Bhutan and smuggling of endangered species is prevented in Peshawar, north-western Pakistan.

Headlines Himalaya, a weekly e-News is an attempt to keep our global readers abreast with the happenings in the Himalaya. Please share it with your colleagues and friends. Also, subscription is free. Enjoy!

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INSUFFICIENT RAINFALL CAUSES FOOD CRISIS

Less rainfall has created food shortage fear in the Mugu district, north-western Nepal where around 90 percent people are involved in agriculture. Poor harvest of summer crops triggered by insufficient rainfall has decreased the food security situation in Photu, Jima, Kalai, Natharpu, Dhainakot, Rara, and Vihee VDCs in the district faced shortage of food. According to the District Agriculture Development Office, crops worth around NRs 210 million were destroyed due to the drought.

November 03

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2015-11-03/food-shortage-looms-large-in-mugu.html>

WATER SCARCITY IN QUAKE HIT AREAS

People in various quake-hit villages in Nuwakot, Kavre, Ramechhap and Dolakha districts of central Nepal are facing acute shortage of drinking water after local sources of water dried up. Some wells, springs and small streams in the hilly areas have shrunk in Nuwakot. According to Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Division in Kavre, around 600 drinking water projects have been destroyed due to the quake. There are total of 492 drinking water projects in Ramechhap out of which 486 were damaged by the earthquake. Sources of water for 20 projects have dried up whereas 466 projects sustained severe damages.

November 04

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2015-11-04/earthquake-affected-families-grapple-with-water-shortage.html>

DECLINE OF OCCUPANCY RATES

Hotel occupancy rates dropped drastically as every sector of the economy declined due to the fuel scarcity in Nepal. According to preliminary estimate of the Tourism Ministry, the average occupancy of hotels plunged below 20 percent following the Terai agitation and the fuel shortage. There has been a recorded average occupancy of 30-35 percent after some few months. The slow down of tourism activities had affected the jobs and livelihoods of hundreds of tour guides. Only 10-15 percent of the tour guides are employed at present.

November 05

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2015-11-05/hotel-occupancy-rates-fall-from-bad-to-worse-report.html>

SUPPORT FOR BIO-GAS PLANT

Financial support has been granted to locals to enable them to arrange alternative sources of energy in a bid to preserve the forest by Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve Office Kanchanpur southern part of Nepal. The support of grant of NRs 10,000 each to 24 households were granted by the financial assistance of National Nature Conservation Fund, the Wildlife Reserve for the construction of bio-gas plants.

November 05

<http://www.nepalnews.com/index.php/news/46446-Subsidy-for-bio-gas-plant-construction>

PANGOLIN FOUND DEAD

The endangered wildlife species Pangolin (*Pholidota*) which is an endangered wild life species was found dead in a field in Chirtung VDC of Palpa district, western region of Nepal. According to District Forest officer the dead pangolin was 75 centimeter in length and 5 kilogram in weight. The forest office of the area was informed by one of the locals after noticing the dead pangolin.

November 06

<http://www.myrepublica.com/society/story/30736/endangered-pangolin-found-dead.html>

NEW BIRD NOTICED

A new species of bird has been observed recently in Chisapanitar, Chitwan, Central Nepal. A team of Bird Education Society of Chitwan discovered the bird known as 'Hoary throated barwing' in course of their three-day monitoring workshop. Ornithologists believe that the increase in number of birds in the area is due to the migration of the birds in winter.

November 06

<http://www.nepalnews.com/index.php/society-archive/46466-new-bird-species-spotted-in-chitwan>

RELIEF TO VICTIMS OF WILDLIFE CONFLICT

About 66 victims of elephant rampage in Jhapa district in the south-eastern part of Nepal were provided with compensation of NRs 970,100. According to the District Forest Office, the compensation was distributed based on the details of loss caused to the people by the tuskers. The wild tuskers have been entering into the human settlements in the eastern, northern and southern VDCs of Jhapa and causing hardship to the locals every year.

November 06

<http://www.nepalnews.com/index.php/news/46458-Relief-distributed-to-victims-of-tusker-rampag>

SHORTAGE OF MEDICINES

There has been severe shortage of medicines, including life saving drugs in several districts in central and western Tarai of Nepal due to India's unofficial blockade and the prolonged Tarai strike. A majority of pharmaceutical industries import 90 percent of raw and packaging materials from Birgunj border. At least 400 cargo trucks loaded with medicines were awaiting clearance at Raxaul. Health services in the districts have been affected as the stocks of medicines and surgical equipment in both government and private hospitals have already depleted.

November 09

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2015-11-09/shortage-of-medicines-hits-health-services.html>

India-Himalaya

PRICE OF KASHMIR WALNUT DECLINES

The huge volume of import of American walnut in India from America has threatened the producers of walnut in Kashmir, India. The price of the Kashmir's walnut has decreased by 50 percent and has hit the business of Kashmir walnut badly. According to the stakeholders, the IRs 800 crore industries are in the midst of crisis with prices falling considerably due to large imports of walnuts and kernels.

November 08

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/business/story/201089.html>

WATER CONTAMINATION RISKS

The Residents in various parts of Srinagar of Kashmir region in the northern part of India complained that they were getting contaminated water supply from the last two weeks which has increased risks to various water-borne diseases. It was found that 63.9 percent of the households get tap water of which only 34.7 percent get it from treated (dependable and clean) sources in Kashmir while 29.2 percent of the households get tap water from untreated sources and 6.7 percent fetch water from rivers and canals. Due to the repeated floods in the valley, most of the water sources remain inundated and were likely to get contaminated.

November 08

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/jammu-kashmir/residents-complain-of-dirty-water-supply/156173.html>

ASSESSMENT OF LOSS DUE TO HEAVY RAIN

A Central team had visited Dharampur subdivision in Madi district of Himanchal Pradesh in northern India to assess the loss caused by heavy rainfall this year. It was found that roads and bridges had suffered a losses worth nearly IRs 104 crore, Power Department IRS 1.50 lakhs, Animal Husbandry Department IRS 20 lakh, agriculture IRs 12 lakhs and horticulture IRs 68 lakhs. 676 damaged houses were provided immediate relief of IRS 1.93 crore.

November 08

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/himachal/community/central-team-assesses-rain-loss-in-mandi/156305.html>

DEVELOPMENT AFFECTED FARMERS

Farmers who were affected by the four lane extension of the Nagchala to Manali stretch in Himanchal Pradesh, Northern India have decided to step up their demonstration against inadequate compensation and lack of transparency in the land acquisition process. The state government was supposed to compensate two to four times the value but notified that it had decided to give only two times as compensation. The farmers wanted to know the market value fixed for their land so that they could make alternate arrangements.

November 08

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/himachal/affected-farmers-to-intensify-agitation/156289.html>

China Himalaya

PROTECTION OF BLACK-NECKED CRANES

Efforts have been stepped up to protect black-necked cranes (*Grus nigricollis*) in Yarlung Tsangpo river valley near Samdrup District in Shigatse City, northern part of Tibet. The estimated population in 2007 was over 4,200, but it is expected to reach more than 6,000 by February 2016. There are currently 33 staff patrolling and monitoring the protected areas for epidemic diseases.

November 03

http://eng.tibet.cn/2012sy/pd/hj/201511/t20151104_3968937.html

GARBAGE CLEARING IN SNOW MOUNTAIN

150 tons of garbage has been collected in the forest of Meili Snow Mountain of Tibet autonomous region, southwest of China which received nearly 600,000 pilgrims from Tibet, Sichuan, Qinghai and Yunnan, leaving a lot of garbage. This has not only affected the lives of local Tibetan villagers but also has damaged the local environment. They have collected more than 100 tons of garbage in the last six years.

November 03

http://eng.tibet.cn/2010ly/tnews/201511/t20151103_3968424.html

FIRST SOLAR POWERED ELECTRIC VEHICLE

Operation of environmental friendly electric vehicles has been started for the very first time in Lhasa, Tibet autonomous region in south-west China which depends on the sunlight for power supply. The vehicle consists of solar photovoltaic panels covering more than 20 square meters that converts solar energy into electricity. After full charge, the vehicle can run for about 260 kilometers and saves over 40 percent of cost.

November 04

http://english.chinatibetnews.com/tt/201511/t20151104_898854.html

http://english.chinatibetnews.com/hb/News/201511/t20151103_897419.html

GARBAGE POLLUTES TIBET'S WETLAND

Hundreds of tons of garbage were dumped along the Qinghai Lake which is the largest lake on the Tibetan Plateau of lake shore, which has been killing domestic animals and polluting the lakes and rivers in the region. The Lake area has been covered by garbage and local residents are responsible for such pollution. The guts of dead animals were filled with plastic and over 360 kilometers of wetland is now threatened from toxic garbage pollution.

November 04

<http://www.voatibetanenglish.com/content/article/3027853.html>

WORLD'S HIGHEST SALTWATER LAKE ENTERS FREEZING POINT

The world's highest saltwater lake, Namco Lake, in the Tibet autonomous region has entered a freezing period and the migratory birds have already left. In winter, the lake is surrounded by snow-capped mountains and the green frozen water shines. The previous year data showed that 710,000 domestic and foreign tourists visited Namco scenic area.

November 04

http://eng.tibet.cn/2010jj/xw/201511/t20151104_3968933.html

JACKALS AND TAKINS IN TIBET

Takin (*Budorcas taxicolor whitei*) and Jackal (*Canis Aureus*) were observed by the scientists in the southeast part of Tibet recently during the second *terrestrial survey of wildlife resources*. During the second terrestrial survey of wildlife resources, precious close-up photographs of Bhutan Takins and Jackals were taken, especially in the southeastern area which indicates that wildlife activities are gradually starting to expand in the area.

November 06

http://eng.tibet.cn/2010ly/tnews/201511/t20151106_3970811.html

GEOLOGICAL PARK ESTABLISHED

A geologic park has been established in Qinghai, China where there is largest glacial coverage, in the eastern part of the Tibet autonomous region. The scenic spot has viewing platforms, parking areas and a geological museum along with other basic facilities. There are a total of 57 glaciers covering an area of 126 square kilometers. This area also has some of the most intact Paleo-Asian geological land formations.

November 09

http://eng.tibet.cn/2012sy/xw/201511/t20151109_3971894.html

Bhutan-Himalaya

BEEKEEPING FARMING

Gasa's livestock sector has started a trial bee keeping project in "Khatoed Gewog", Western part of Bhutan. If it is successful in the area, it will encourage farmers to take up beekeeping as an additional source of income. The livestock sector had decided to add three more indicators so as to increase milk and egg production and start honey harvesting to increase the annual performance agreement. The beehive comes with about 10,000 bees and each hive is fed 30 kilograms of sugar a month from which 30 kilograms of honey can be extracted.

November 05

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/trial-beekeeping-project-begins-in-khatoed-gewog/>

BLACK-NECKED CRANES ARRIVE

The Black-necked Cranes (*Grus nigricollis*) arrived in Gangteng-Phobji valley in Wangduephodrang, Western Bhutan. A total of 13 cranes flew in on that day. Three cranes (including a juvenile) were spotted flying into the valley and then another group of seven. The last group for the day arrived in the afternoon including a juvenile. In 2014-15, the first group of five cranes arrived on 31st October and in 2013-14 first groups of two cranes arrived on 22nd October.

November 06

<http://www.rspnbhutan.org/news-and-events/news/616-black-necked-cranes-arrive-in-phobjikha.html>

Pakistan- Himalaya

SMUGGLING OF ENDANGERED SPECIES PREVENTED

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa wildlife department had prevented eight Saker falcons (*Falco cherrug*) and one eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) from being smuggled to Karachi from Peshawar, Pakistan. The smugglers were trying to transport the falcons to Karachi where buyers from Gulf countries gather to buy these illegal netted birds for a price of at least Rs 6 million.

November 03

<http://insafonline.com/khyber-pakhtunkhwa/03-Nov-2015/smuggling-bid-foiled-by-khyber-pakhtunkhwa-wildlife-department>

FREE SEEDS DISTRIBUTION

The agriculture department has distributed free seeds to farmers with the help of Insaf Food Security Programme in Mansehra district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, north-west Pakistan. High quality seeds in the area were distributed to bring a revolution in the lives of farmers and enhance annual production compared to the previous years. Farmers from 12 remote union councils of Balakot Tehsil attended the programme and there 20,000 seed packets were distributed to farmers.

November 04

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1217401/agriculture-dept-distributes-free-seeds-to-growers>