

Headlines Himalaya

March 16 – March 21

No 396

Editorial Team – Sabita Gurung & Anusha Pandey

For the 396th issue of Headlines Himalaya, we reviewed news report from 17 sources and selected 31 happenings in five countries. In Nepal, the sudden downpour of rain affected the crop and lives of people in the western region, two people were caught with the hides and skeleton of snow leopard and the forecasted wheat production dipped in comparison to last year. In India, training for tiger conservation was conducted while excessive rain in Kashmir triggered landslides. In China, a fall in income from Yarshagumba was reported due to overexploitation of the fungi and generation of electricity from wind power provided a viable energy solution. In Bhutan, wild elephants destroyed poles and wires, and car washing facilities pose threat to aquatic life. In Pakistan, government approved two hybrid maize seeds and 8 students lost their lives in mudslide. 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!

NEPAL

Precipitation affects crops and life in west Nepal
Heavy precipitation delights farmers with good harvest
Two caught with hide and skeleton of a snow leopard
Tiger population rises in Bardia national park
Organic farming improves yield and income
Lack of Lokta decreases handmade paper production
Red panda hides seized
Micro solar-grids supply 24h power
Barren land turned into a burgeoning farm
Illegal excavation-threats to forest
Counter fire' campaign to save wildlife
Census of endangered gharial
Electric power from organic waste
Decrease in wheat production
Kathmandu third polluted city in world
Himalayan consensus fund" for Himalayan region
Challenge in management of wildlife body parts

INDIA

Training for tiger conservation
Urban biodiversity awareness
Krishikarman award awarded to Arunachal
Rainfall triggers landslide in Kashmir
Pre-monsoon obstructing Srinagar-Jammu highway

CHINA

Decrease in income due to overexploitation of Yarshagumba
Electricity generation from wind in Tibet

BHUTAN

Workshop for livestock consultative
Elephants destroy poles and wires
Car washing facilities pose threat to aquatic lives
Bhutan as a carbon sink

PAKISTAN

*Death of eight students from mudslide in Pakistan
Approval of four hybrid maize seeds by government*

Nepal-Himalaya

PRECIPITATION AFFECTS CROPS AND LIFE IN WEST NEPAL

Sudden downpour, accompanied by hailstones and snowfall has caused significant damage to winter crops, fruits and vegetables in Kanchanpur and Kailali districts, far-west Nepal. Similarly, heavy snowfall followed by drop in temperature has affected daily lives of people living in the highlands in Karnali, mid-west Nepal.

March 14

<http://radionepal.gov.np/radio-nepal/hailstone-damages-crops-in-kanchanpur/>

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-03-15/downpour-snow-trigger-mixed-feelings-in-far-western-districts.html>

<http://www.myrepublica.com/society/story/38675/heavy-snowfall-disrupts-normal-life-in-kalikot.html>

HEAVY PRECIPITATION DELIGHTS FARMERS WITH GOOD HARVEST

The farmers of Mugu, Humla and Dolpa districts, mid-west Nepal, are delighted by the heavy precipitation and expect a good harvest this season after a dry spell since July. The crops, fruit trees and even the herbs and mushrooms in forest are expected to grow well after the welcome rain.

March 14

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-03-15/downpour-snow-trigger-mixed-feelings-in-far-western-districts.html>

TWO CAUGHT WITH HIDE AND SKELETON OF A SNOW LEOPARD

Two persons were arrested for trapping and killing a Snow Leopard (*Panthera uncia*) for smuggling purposes in Darchula district, far-west Nepal. The hide and skeleton the animal in their possession was seized by the authorities. The district police has launched a special mission against smuggling of wildlife parts.

March 14

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-03-14/snow-leopards-hide-skeleton-seized.html>

TIGER POPULATION RISES IN BARDIA NATIONAL PARK

The sighting of endangered Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris*) has increased in Bardia National Park, Bardiya district, west of Nepal. Almost 99 percent of tourists visiting the park for tiger sightings have reportedly seen one. At present, the park has recorded 50 adult Bengal tigers in its perimeters. Tiger census is ongoing in the park by use of camera traps since January 15.

March 14, 15

<http://setopati.com/samaj/43246/>

ORGANIC FARMING IMPROVES YIELD AND INCOME

The use of cow-dung instead of urea and, cow-urine and ashes instead of pesticides has enhanced vegetable production in Madi, Chitwan district, central Nepal. High yield from organic farming is becoming strong source of income and challenging the traditional belief that chemical fertilizers and pesticides produce high yield.

March 14

<http://www.chitawan.com/?p=6867>

LACK OF LOKTA DECREASES HANDMADE PAPER PRODUCTION

The handmade paper production, the major industry of Bajura district, far-west Nepal, is under threat due to lack of raw material Lokta (*Daphnesps.*) in the forests. Out of total 22 handmade industries registered, only 7 are in operation. Unscientific collection in past days has pushed Lokta to the verge of extinction in the forest areas.

March 15

Kantipur

RED PANDA HIDES SEIZED

Two persons were arrested with hides of Red Panda (*Ailurusfulgens*) from Swayambhu, Kathmandu, central Nepal. The hides were bought for Rs 200,000 and the suspects were heading to sell them to other customers at higher rates.

March 15

<http://thehimalayantimes.com/kathmandu/two-held-red-panda-hides/>

MICRO SOLAR-GRIDS SUPPLY 24H POWER

The three solar micro-grids, with combined capacity of 35 KW, installed in the communities of Harkapur in Okhaldhunga district, and Kaduwa and Chyasmitar in Khotang district, east Nepal, provide 24-hour electricity supply to around 540 people in 83 households and 25 local businesses. The grids were built by Gham Power Nepal with a 100,000 USD grant from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). It is expected to prevent 41 tons of carbon dioxide emissions every year.

March 15, 16

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-03-15/solar-micro-grids-supply-24h-power.html>

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-03-16/micro-solar-grids-brighten-off-grid-rural-communities.html>

BARREN LAND TURNED INTO A BURGEONING FARM

With the use of 'net house' and ultra-modern techniques of farming, farmers have transformed barren land into a thriving vegetable farm in Ratnagar, Chitwan district, central Nepal. The net house, made of special wires, helps control sunlight according to the plant's need and flourishes vegetables better than by traditional farming.

March 15

<http://www.myrepublica.com/society/story/38821/transforming-a-barren-land-into-a-burgeoning-farm.html>

ILLEGAL EXCAVATION-THREATS TO FOREST

Patrolling has been increased to keep the haphazard excavation posing environmental threats to various forest areas in check in Morang district, east Nepal. The forest official has arrested 78 persons involved in illegal excavation of soil and aggregates from various rivers flowing through the forest and taken 25 vehicles under control. An awareness campaign has been launched to conserve forests at the local level.

March 16

<http://setopati.net/society/12544/Noose-tightens-against-illegal-excavation/>

'COUNTERS FIRE' CAMPAIGN TO SAVE WILDLIFE

The 'counter fire' campaign has been worked out in Chitwan National Park, Chitwan, central Nepal, to protect wild species from forest fire during the dry season. The counter fire is a method to check wildfire by igniting fire from opposite direction in uncontrolled situations. The method is also applicable in checking hunting and poaching.

March 18

<http://setopati.com/samaj/43473/>

<http://radionepal.gov.np/radio-nepal/counter-fire-campaign-in-place-to-save-wildlife/>

CENSUS OF ENDANGERED GHARIAL

A census of endangered gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*) is all set to start in Narayani and Rapti rivers in Chitwan. The 2013 survey reported only 200 gharial crocodiles in the area. Increased pollution, fishing, extraction of stones, boulders and other activities are threatening the habitat of Gharial crocodiles in Nepal.

March 18

<http://epaper.thehimalayantimes.com/Details.aspx?id=8243&boxid=21944354&dat=3/18/201>

ELECTRIC POWER FROM ORGANIC WASTE

The Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) signed an agreement with three companies--Raj and Riwarz, Nepalese Waste and Xeon—to produce 14 kilowatt electricity from the organic waste in Kathmandu valley, central Nepal. Around 300 tons of organic waste is produced in the valley daily which if treated can produce enough power to light more than 1,000 houses. European Union will fund 80 percent of the Rs 18.2 million project with KMC making up the remaining 20 percent.

March 18

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-03-18/power-from-organic-waste-in-3-months.html>

DECREASE IN WHEAT PRODUCTION

Nepal's wheat production is estimated to drop by 20.5 percent this fiscal year, according to CCAFS Regional Agricultural Forecasting Toolbox (CRAFT). The production forecast of 1,570,546 tons is comparatively lower than the 1,975,607 tons produced in 2014/15. Severe shortages of fuel for irrigation and limited availability of fertilizers due to restricted cross-border trade with India, along with lower levels of precipitation in the past winter has resulted in the decrease in production.

March 18

<http://www.myrepublica.com/economy/story/39015/wheat-production-set-to-drop-by-20-5-percent.html>

KATHMANDU THIRD POLLUTED CITY IN WORLD

According to Pollution Index 2016 published by Serbia-based research website Numbeo.com, Kathmandu, central Nepal, has been ranked the third most polluted city in the world with a pollution index of 96.66. The rankings are based on perceptions of visitors to the website, relevant data from World Health Organisation, other institutions and data mainly on air and water pollution. In the Pollution Index for Country 2016, Nepal is ranked in the 17th place with Egypt as the most polluted country in the world.

March 19

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-03-19/kathmandu-the-third-most-polluted-city-in-the-world.html>

“HIMALAYAN CONSENSUS FUND” FOR HIMALAYAN REGION

Laurence Brahm, the founder of Himalayan Consensus Institute, China, announced formation of Himalayan Consensus Fund, for development of clean energy and water in the Himalayan region, and a Heritage Fund for restoring the cultural heritage of the region. The announcement was done during a two-day Himalayan Consensus Summit 2016 concluded on March 18 in Kathmandu, central Nepal.

March 19

<http://thehimalayantimes.com/kathmandu/himalayan-consensus-summit-concludes/>

CHALLENGE IN MANAGEMENT OF WILDLIFE BODY PARTS

The Parliamentary Committee on Environment Protection recorded 369 rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) horns, 4,782 rhino hooves, skulls, skins and products, 69 tiger (*Panthera tigris*) hides, 3 snow leopard (*Uncia uncia*) skins, 2 clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*) skins, 184 elephant (*Elephas maximus*) tusks, 36 musk deer (*Moschus moschiferus*) pods, 439 kg tiger and leopard bones and 352 pangolin (*Manis javanica*) scales in Central Storage Centre in Kasara and Armed Forest Guard Training Centre in Tikauli. Such items have not been destroyed by the park since 1998 due of legal framework for its management and is now in a state of decay.

March 20

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-03-20/mgmt-of-wildlife-body-parts-trophies-a-big-challenge.html>

India-Himalaya

TRAINING FOR TIGER CONSERVATION

Experts from Awely-Wildlife and People, a global conservative body in France conducted a two week training in India for the frontline staff of the Manas National Park. It was part of the Manas Tiger Conservation Programme (MTCP) launched by Aaranyak, jointly with Awely, Panthera, Wildlife Conservation Trust of India and BTC Forest Department. The training which ended on March 12 deals with the creation of a competent and dedicated pool of forest guards in Manas, patrolling techniques, dealing with wildlife crimes, etc.

March 16, 2016

<http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=mar1716/at056>

URBAN BIODIVERSITY AWARENESS

An NGO in collaboration with Kamrup (Metro) district administration, State Forest Department and the Assam State Biodiversity Board has started an initiative "City's animal" to raise awareness on urban biodiversity. This program will particularly focus in the awareness of black soft-shell turtle, greater adjutant stork and Ganges river dolphin. Urbanization and deforestation are the main reasons for the loss of habitat and breeding space.

March 20, 2016

<http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=mar2116/city054>

KRISHI KARMAN AWARD AWARDED TO ARUNACHAL

Arunachal Pradesh received Krishi Karman Commendation Award 2014-15 and a cash award amounting to USD 150395 for maintaining steady growth in overall food grain production. Arunachal enhanced its productivity from 2,060 kg/ha in 2011 to 2,240 kg/ha in 2014 along with significant rise in production and productivity of other food crops like maize, millet. This development is attributed to awareness of the farmers about modern farm science and labor with assistance from Agriculture department.

March 20, 2016

<http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=mar2116/oth059>

RAINFALL TRIGGERS LANDSLIDE IN KASHMIR

Kandi Belt of north Kashmir's Baramulla district has suffered from landslides since last night. People from those areas have already abandoned their houses due to fear of landslides. 33 families had previously been shifted due to fear of landslides from the uninterrupted rain.

March 21, 2016

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/kashmir/story/212517.html>

PRE-MONSOON OBSTRUCTS SRINAGAR-JAMMU HIGHWAY

Kashmir has received fresh snowfall in its higher altitudes with intermittent rains on its plains for fourth consecutive day. A 300 meter stretch of the Srinagar-Jammu highway has also sunk resulting in the obstruction of the highway. The Met Department issued an avalanche warning for next 24 hours in the higher altitudes of this region.

March 21, 2016

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/kashmir/story/212513.html>

China Himalaya

DECREASE IN INCOME DUE TO OVEREXPLOITATION OF YARSHAGUMBA

In Tibet, the caterpillar fungus also known as "yarshagumba" has significantly decreased in number due to overexploitation. These high altitude fungi are believed to possess cancer fighting properties and boost the

immune system. Tibetans have shifted from fungus collecting job to mushroom farming and their economy has been reduced by around 5 percent.

March 17, 2016

<http://eng.tibet.cn/news/1458183942822.shtml>

ELECTRICITY GENERATION FROM WIND IN TIBET

Tibet branch of National Grid's Naggu wind power station is currently world's highest wind power station. It was opened in October 31 and currently initiates 5 wind power plants generating capacity of 10.66 million KWH. Engineers believe these new methods of power generation will decrease the power shortage of Naggu Prefecture and whole Tibet region.

March 21, 2016

http://en.tibetmagazine.net/news/201311/t20131113_2470098.htm

WORKSHOP FOR LIVESTOCK CONSULTATIVE

A training workshop was started from March 18 in Phuentsholing for livestock consultative. This program will act as a platform to discuss the challenges of livestock farming and review the progress of its developments in five dzongkhags of the western region of Bhutan.

March 19, 2016

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/livestock-officers-to-air-issues-at-workshop/>

Bhutan-Himalaya

WILD ELEPHANTS DESTROY POLES AND WIRES

A herd of 20 mature elephants including their young calves destroyed 23 poles with 100 meters wire and 70 poles with 300 metres wire by entering two villages of Khamaythang and Phuntshothang respectively. The poles and wire were meant for the installation of solar electric fence.

March 20, 2016

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/herd-of-elephants-destroy-solar-electric-fence-poles-in-sj/>

CAR WASHING FACILITIES POSE THREAT TO AQUATIC LIVES

Thimpu has witnessed an issue of water pollution with increase in car wash facilities. Construction of 6.2km road has increased the number of car owners in Thimpu. Run-off from car washing facilities released into water body includes oil, detergents that affect and threaten water quality and aquatic lives.

March 20, 2016

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/environmental-concerns-grow-as-car-wash-facilities-increase/>

BHUTAN AS A CARBON SINK

According to recent figures, Bhutan emits around 1.5 million tons of carbon while its forest absorbs around 6 million tons making it a carbon sink. It means that Bhutan absorbs more carbon than its emission. It is further looking forward to wind, biogas and solar as energy sources.

March 20, 2016

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/news/environment/bhutan-is-not-just-carbon-neutral-it-s-carbon-negative/article/460581>

Pakistan- Himalaya

DEATH OF EIGHT STUDENTS FROM MUDSLIDE IN PAKISTAN

Eight students have been buried in the mudslide created by several days of heavy rain in the Susam village of Peshawar. Rescue team of district administration with army, police and parliamentary forces have recovered 2 bodies so far, with the continued rainfall posing a major obstacle to the rescue efforts.

March 20, 2016

<http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2016/03/20/mudslide-buries-8-students-as-torrential-rains-hit-pakistan.html>

APPROVAL OF FOUR HYBRID MAIZE SEEDS BY GOVERNMENT

In Peshawar, government has approved four different hybrid seeds of corn produced by private companies to produce and distribute locally on commercial grounds. This will decrease the monopoly of multi-national company and increase the production of corn by 1,000 kilogram per acre. It is because these locally produced hybrid seeds would be resistant to harsh environments, diseases and heat-tolerant.

March 21, 2016

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/106783-KP-govt-approves-maize-hybrid-seeds-to-promote-agriculture>