

# Headlines Himalaya

March 22– March 27

No 397

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For the 397th issue of Headlines Himalaya, we reviewed 35 news from 18 sources and selected 27 happenings in five countries. In Nepal, government of Nepal intensifies monitoring on the use of plastic bag, cracks and holes were found in the Mount Everest due to April 25 earthquake, the wind has damaged the wheat production in Saptari. In India, global bird count was conducted, awareness program regarding fish farming was organized. In China, government put ban on glacier tourism to save the melting of glacier, the research done in China has revealed that the high plant diversity increases the susceptibility of disease in plants. In Bhutan, the government faces challenges on the hydropower production. In Pakistan, rainfall induced landslide has created difficulty in rescue.

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## NEPAL

*Government Intensifies Monitoring On Use of Plastic Bags*

*Historical Caves Await Conservation and Maintenance*

*Kuntabesi Farmers Gear Up To Adopt Gaps*

*Fire in Five Bajura Community Forests*

*Swamp Deer Translocation from Suklaphanta*

*Cracks and Holes in Mount Everest*

*Bagmati Clean- Up Celebrates 150th Week*

*Drinking Water Shortage in Earthquake-Hit Villages*

*Haze Attributed to Forest Fires*

*Fear of Famine in Far-Western Districts*

*Wind Damage Wheat in Saptari*

*Avalanches Continues At Annapurna South*

*Project Benefits Khotang*

*Incidents on Rise As Summer Begins*

*Plant Cycas Pectinata First Time Discovered in Nepal*

*Sightings of Rare Bengal Tiger Increases in Bardia*

## INDIA

*Global Bird Count in Uttarakhand*

*Highway Projects in Himachal Pradesh*

*Awareness Program Regarding Fish Development*

*Schools Threatened By Landslides*

*Collaborative Rituals to Recover River Heritages*

## CHINA

*Ban on Glacier Tourism*

*Species Richness Increases Disease Susceptibility*

## BHUTAN

*Challenge on Power Production*

*Conservation Program in Dangchu Valley*

PAKISTAN

*Development of 17 Disease Resistant Crops  
Landslides Obstructs Rescue in Manshera*

## Nepal-Himalaya

### GOVERNMENT INTENSIFIES MONITORING ON USE OF PLASTIC BAGS

The Ministry of Population and Environment inspects Kalimati Fruits and Vegetable Market and retail shops in Kalimati, Kathmandu, and central Nepal to check the regularity to the ban on use of plastic bags. The team comprising government officials and police personnel confiscated 322 kilograms of plastic bags from six retail shops. Kathmandu Valley was declared a polythene-bag-free zone on 14 April, 2015 but the decision was soon amended to put ban on plastic bags with thickness below 40 microns only. As per the existing law, anyone found selling, distributing, using and storing plastic bags with thickness below 40 microns are subjected to fine of Rs 50,000.

March 24

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-03-24/govt-intensifies-market-monitoring-on-use-of-plastic-bags.html>

### HISTORICAL CAVES AWAIT CONSERVATION AND MAINTENANCE

Historical caves with tourism significance are at a high risk of disappearance in various hilly districts of the far-west region. The historical caves of Dadeldhura district, famous caves Markende and Dharmi of Darchula and Bajhang districts, and dozens of caves in Doti, Achham, Bajura and Baitadi districts are at risk of disappearance due to lack of conservation, negligence and promotion. A death of a domestic tourist, due to lack of oxygen, was reported from Pataleshwor cave in Baitadi. The historically and religiously important caves also require maintenance.

March 24

<http://epaper.thehimalayantimes.com/Details.aspx?id=8377&boxid=101755781&dat=3/25/2016>

### KUNTABESI FARMERS GEAR UP TO ADOPT GAPS

The government is all set to launch new farming technique in Kuntabesi of Kavre district, central Nepal and in other parts of the country. Under the Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) technique, the farmers produce vegetables that will not adversely affect human health or the environment. The Ministry of Agricultural Development ( MoAD) developed the guidelines for GAPs based on the guiding principle of Food and Agriculture Organization ( FAO) of the United Nations. Excessive amount of pesticides, chemical fertilizers and other inedible chemicals are been used by farmers in recent years to increase the productivity. GAPs address various concerns related to human health, environment protection and improvement of worker conditions.

March 25

<http://epaper.thehimalayantimes.com/Details.aspx?id=8360&boxid=10333861&dat=3/25/2016>

### FIRE IN FIVE BAJURA COMMUNITY FORESTS

Five community forests in Badimalika Municipality of Bajura district caught fire. The fire started from Bheralamandu community forest and spread over to Badimalika, Sallena, Jalpa and Ghaldhuri community forests.

The fire is supposed to be initiated by locals due to anger or to drive away wild animals in the forest. The five community forests have about 800 family consumers collectively.

March 25

<http://www.myrepublica.com/society/story/39402/fire-in-five-bajura-community-forests.html>

#### SWAMP DEER TRANSLOCATION FROM SUKLAPHANTA

Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve (SWR) plans to translocate Swamp Deer (*Cervus duvaucelii*) to Bardiya National Park (BNP) and Chitwan National Park (CNP). They plan to relocate 15 Swamp Deer in the first phase. The SWR has 2,300 Swamp deer as per last year's record which is the highest number in the country. Currently deer pen are under construction to facilitate the translocation process. The translocation is believed to improve their breeding and survival rate.

March 25

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-03-25/suklaphanta-to-shift-some-of-its-swamp-deer.html>

#### CRACKS AND HOLES IN MOUNT EVEREST

The specialist team responsible for maintaining the climbing route on Mount Everest reports several cracks and holes along the route. The great earthquakes of April 25 and May as well as a large number of aftershocks are blamed to have caused the damages in the region. More than 40 ladders have been installed below Camp 1, and the number of ladders is supposed to reach 200 by the time the team reaches Camp 2. Due to the delay in fixing ropes, the climbers, who have already reached the base camp, are yet to start their climb towards the peak.

March 25, 26

<http://www.ndtv.com/world-news/cracks-and-holes-develop-in-mt-everest-after-deadly-2015-nepal-earthquake-1290884>

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-03-25/icefall-doctors-report-cracks-holes-along-everest-route.html>

#### BAGMATI CLEAN- UP CELEBRATES 150TH WEEK

The Bagmati Clean-up Campaign was initiated on May 18, 2013. Coming to the 150th week, 7,000 metric tons of solid waste has been taken out from the river. President Bidya Devi Bhandari inaugurated the Bagmati Festival organized by the High Powered Committee for Integrated Development of the Bagmati Civilisation on the occasion of the 150th week of the Mega Bagmati Clean-up Campaign at Guheshwari. President Bhandari appealed everyone to take initiatives to preserve the holy river and bring it to its initial state. Degradation of the Bagmati Basin is increasing in recent years due to rapid urbanization, population growth and uncontrolled disposal of untreated wastewater in the rivers.

March 26

<http://www.myrepublica.com/feature-article/story/39411/prez-bhandari-urges-to-maintain-glory-of-bagmati-river.html>

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-03-26/bagmati-mahotsav-begins-to-mark-150th-week-of-clean-bagmati-campaign.html>

<http://epaper.thehimalayantimes.com/Details.aspx?id=8408&boxid=11315279&dat=3/27/2016>

#### DRINKING WATER SHORTAGE IN EARTHQUAKE-HIT VILLAGES

After the devastating earthquake of 25 April 2015, sources of water has dried up in villages of Rampur VDC in Ramechhap district, central Nepal. The areas have been facing drinking water shortage compelling locals to spend whole day in fetching water. The villagers demand to lift water from Khanikhola to solve the shortage issue in the villages.

March 26

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-03-26/quake-hit-villagers-face-drinking-water-shortage.html>

#### HAZE ATTRIBUTED TO FOREST FIRES

Thick blanket of haze with increased concentration of particulate matter envelop Kathmandu and several other parts of the country. Air quality monitoring stations in Bhaktapur district have showed higher concentration of aerosols since March 16. This is an indication that there are combustion sources giving rise to these particles. During March, over 60 forest fires were recorded across the country in 24-hour period. On March 23, as many as

285 forest fires were identified in the country, while it was 125 and 120 on March 21 and March 20 respectively. Various studies have found that trans-boundary haze pollution resulting from vegetation fires and forest fires is considered a serious environmental challenge and serious health threats to millions of people.

Mar 26

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-03-26/haze-attributed-to-raging-jungle-blaze.html>

#### FEAR OF FAMINE IN FAR-WESTERN DISTRICTS

The far western hilly districts Achham, Baitadi, Bajura, Dadeldhura, Bajhang, Doti and Darchula have not received rainfall since August 2015. A majority of farmers in the remote far-western districts depend on rain for cultivation so they could not plant crops properly. Seven hilly districts of the region require 5.67 lakh metric tons of food per year. Productivity of around 34 per cent land in the mid-hill region has massively diminished in recent years. The prolonged droughts are likely to hit food production and result acute food crisis.

March 26

<http://epaper.thehimalayantimes.com/Details.aspx?id=8393&boxid=122347781&dat=3/26/2016>

#### WEST WIND DAMAGE WHEAT IN SAPTARI

With the start of March, west wind blows daily and the wind has dried the wheat crop causing it to ripe early in Rajbiraj, Saptari, south-eastern Nepal. This has feared the farmers on production of wheat grains with less weight and unsuitable seedlings for next year. 25 thousand hectares of farmlands has been cultivated by wheat crop this year.

March 26

Gorkhapatra

#### AVALANCHES CONTINUES AT ANNAPURNA SOUTH

The avalanche that occurred at Annapurna South at Narchang VDC in Myagdi since one month ago still continues. The avalanches have also caused increment of water level of Kaligandaki river and has swept away a wooden bridge constructed for Ghalemdi hydropower project. Bad weather condition also disrupted disaster inspection plan scheduled in the area by the team from ACAP and Ghalemdi Hydropower Project.

March 27

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2016-03-27/avalanches-at-annapurna-south-continues.html>

<http://www.abhiyan.com.np/new/Articles/view/75875>

#### WATER PROJECT BENEFITS KHOTANG

The completion of Gurung Village Drinking Water Project delights the locals in Nerpa VDC of Khotang district, eastern Nepal. As many as 53 households of Nerpa VDC are benefited by the project. Around 57 taps have been installed in the VDC, including one each for a monastery and school, and two public taps. The project was developed with an investment of around Rs 5.3 million from the British Gurkha Welfare Fund.

March 27

<http://epaper.thehimalayantimes.com/Details.aspx?id=8414&boxid=114494&dat=3/27/2016>

#### WILDFIRE INCIDENTS ON RISE AS SUMMER BEGINS

With the start of summer season, the wildfire incidents have increased in various community forests. Due to the prolonged drought in Bajura, far-western Nepal, more than a dozen forest areas were destroyed in wildfires within a week. As many as five community forests were destroyed in Badimalika Municipality of the district alone.

March 27

<http://epaper.thehimalayantimes.com/Details.aspx?id=8415&boxid=111247963&dat=3/27/2016>

#### RARE PLANT *CYCAS PECTINATA* FIRST TIME DISCOVERED IN NEPAL

A rare and protected plant species *Cycas pectinata* is discovered for the first time in Nepal. Also called as Nepal Cycas, its habitat is identified in Srijana Community forest, Danabari and Bagaicha Sero Community Forest, Chisapani, Ilam, eastern Nepal. It was discovered during documentation and study on local use of plant species in the area.

March 27

<http://avenues.tv/news/%E0%A4%87%E0%A4%B2%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%AE%E0%A4%BE-%E0%A4%B2%E0%A5%8B%E0%A4%AA%E0%A5%8B%E0%A4%A8%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%AE%E0%A5%81%E0%A4%96-%E0%A4%AC%E0%A4%A8%E0%A4%B8%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%AA%E0%A4%A4%E0%A5%80/>

#### SIGHTING OF RARE BENGAL TIGER INCREASES IN BARDIA

In recent days, the sightings of Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris*) has increased in Bardia National Park (BNP). With this increase in tiger population and sightings, tourism industry is delighted for the increase in domestic and foreign tourist.

March 27

<http://avenues.tv/news/%E0%A4%AC%E0%A4%B0%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%A6%E0%A4%BF%E0%A4%AF%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%AE%E0%A4%BE-%E0%A4%B2%E0%A5%8B%E0%A4%AA%E0%A5%8B%E0%A4%A8%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%AE%E0%A5%81%E0%A4%96-%E0%A4%AA%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%9F%>

## India-Himalaya

#### GLOBAL BIRD COUNT IN UTTARAKHAND

Great Backyard Bird Count was the world's largest coordinated bird count was held from 12 to 15 February in Uttarakhand. More than 1100 bird enthusiast participated and submitted over 7800 bird checklists. According to Nature's Science Initiative, India has 785 bird species out of which 402 bird species were recorded in Uttarakhand only.

March 23, 2016

[http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/51530214.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/51530214.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

#### HIGHWAY PROJECTS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

Government has approved 11 highway projects with total lengths of about 453 km in Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh in India. The total budget allocated for the project is INR 6284 corer. Indian Prime Minister has launched the Setu Bharatam project in 3<sup>rd</sup> March under which 208 over-bridges will be constructed. The total cost for this project is INR 10000 corer.

24<sup>th</sup> March, 2016

<http://www.ibtimes.co.in/govt-okays-highway-projects-worth-rs-6284-crore-karnataka-himanchal-pradesh-671987>

#### AWARENESS PROGRAM REGARDING FISH DEVELOPMENT

An awareness program was launched on 22<sup>nd</sup> March regarding fish and fisheries development. It was organized at the DFDO's office providing training on skill development in fisheries development. Women were more encouraged to take part in such trainings to uplift their economic status.

March 24, 2016

<http://www.arunachaltimes.in/awareness-camp-on-fish-and-fisheries-development-held/>

#### SCHOOLS THREATENED BY LANDSLIDES

Due to the continuous rain from March 14 to March 16, a Government Kiong Primary School's retaining wall fell down. It was constructed last year. This school's building is threatened by landslides many times and it can collapse any time. They have appealed to local authorities for early solution to the falling wall. However, no measures were taken.

March 24, 2016

<http://www.arunachaltimes.in/kiong-primary-school-threatened-by-landslides/>

#### COLLABORATIVE RITUALS TO RECOVER RIVER HERITAGES

To recover river heritages in Lahaun valley of Himachal Pradesh, tribal, NGOs, religious and cultural organizations have come together to organize Chandra-Bhaga Sangam Parv at Tandi on 2<sup>nd</sup> May. Tandi is the convergence point of Chandra and Bhaga Rivers. This program will be conducted by Lela Meme Foundation.

25th March, 2016

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/himachal/lahaul-all-set-for-sangam-parv-at-tandi-on-may-2/213337.html>

25th March, 2016

## China Himalaya

### BAN ON GLACIER TOURISM

Xinjiang government in northwest China has banned glacier tourism to prevent glacier retreat. It is the first region in China to impose such ban because government officials believe that the environmental damages caused by the tourists are higher than the revenues generated. However, conservationists believe that global warming is the major cause for glacier retreat.

22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2016

<http://www.thethirdpole.net/2016/03/22/xinjiang-ban-on-glacier-tourism-ignores-the-bigger-problem/>

### SPECIES RICHNESS INCREASES DISEASE SUSCEPTIBILITY

According to the study results by Chinese and Australian researchers, it was revealed that higher plant species richness was associated with higher pathogenic fungi that attacks leaves but ironically, less leaf damage. They further stated that increased temperature and nitrogen fertilizers have severe environmental infections.

23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2016

<http://ensia.com/notable/is-biodiversity-the-best-medicine/>

## Bhutan-Himalaya

### CHALLENGE ON POWER PRODUCTION

Bhutan produces 1,500 megawatts (MW) of electricity at present. And Bhutan has promised to produce 10,000 MW of hydroelectricity by 2020. However, with the emerging problems of shrinking glaciers, a changing economy and other environmental worries, Bhutan is now questioning if its dependency towards hydropower is the realistic way forward.

21<sup>st</sup> March, 2016

<http://www.scidev.net/global/energy/data-visualisation/bhutan-quest-for-alternative-energy.html>

### CONSERVATION PROGRAM IN DANGCHU VALLEY

The Dangchu Valley of Bhutan is the largest natural resource for Tsenden globally. However, with increasing threats of construction, the area is now being converted into a conservation program by the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) and the local people.

24 March 2016,

<http://www.hortweek.com/rbge-arboriculturists-helping-save-bhutans-sacred-cypress/parks-and-gardens/article/1388915>

### **DEVELOPMENT OF 17 DISEASE RESISTANT CROPS**

17 varieties of crops which were resistant to disease and weather hardships have been developed by Nuclear Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The NIFA works under Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, being based on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, focusing on the food sufficiency through research.

26th March, 2016

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/107984-Striving-for-self-sufficiency-in-agriculture-says-PAEC-chief>

### **LANDSLIDES OBSTRUCTS RESCUE IN MANSHERA**

Landslide that buried six houses in Jabar and Siran village of Manshera district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have created obstruction in rescue activities. The landslides have blocked roads for past two weeks.

28th March, 2016

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/108427-Landslides-hamper-rescue-efforts-in-Mansehra>