

Headlines Himalaya

May 7 – May 13 (2018)

No. 504

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For the 504th issue of Headlines Himalaya, we reviewed 31 news from 8 sources and selected 30 happenings from five countries. In Nepal, figures collated from survey conducted through Bardiya National Park estimate the increment in Gharials (*Gavialis gangeticus*) population in Babai river by more than three times since 2016. One and half kgs of Pangolin (*Manis spp.*) scale was seized in Sankhuwasabha, eastern Nepal. In India, the solar power plant installed for the first time in Arunachal Pradesh. New world-class geological artifacts are discovered in Qinghai, north western China.

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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ATTEMPT TO REDUCE FRAUD IN FOREIGN EMPLOYMENT

A new report by the Ministry of Labour and Employment-2018 has released that thousands of Nepali workers choose to leave the country for foreign employment. The ministry presented 'inquisition guidelines' to the Council of Ministers, which later got approved. The guidelines are focused to reduce scams and cheating involved in foreign employment.

May 8

<http://www.myrepublica.com/news/41329/>

HOME BIRTHS HIKE IN KARNALI PROVINCE

Due to geographical remoteness, social superstitions, bad cultural and religious practices, lack of education and more, the rate of homebirths is very high in Karnali province, mid western Nepal. As suggested by the Ministry of Social Development, 65 percent of women gave homebirth while only 36 percent gave birth in health facilities. As reported in the province, the child mortality rate is 29 per thousand and the maternal mortality rate is 22 per 100,000 live births whereas the average life expectancy of the province is 65 years.

May 8

<http://www.myrepublica.com/news/41332/>

LOSS OF AQUATIC LIFE

The Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NFEJ) has called stakeholders to take strict actions by investigating the destruction of aquatic life in Andhikhola, a river near Galyang of Syangja district, western Nepal. Khilung Kalika Agro Farm in Bhirkot Municipality-6 has been blamed for turning the river water murky alongside death of aquatic animals including fish, tortoise (Testudines). They were reported to have mixed the faeces of chicken in the river.

May 9

<https://bit.ly/2s1juJo>

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

A Status Paper has been released by the Ministry of Forest and Environment which highlighted the need for additional support of the international community to protect the country from the increasing effects of climate change. According to the paper, Nepal, even though, being an insignificant contributor to climate change is vulnerable to severe impacts of climate change. The air pollution status of big cities of Nepal has also been described in the paper.

May 9

<https://bit.ly/2IHUddF>

HAILSTORM HITS LAMJUNG

Hailstorm which occurred continuously for three days has damaged the crops in Lamjung, western Nepal. Crops, vegetables and fruits planted in areas have been affected badly. The farmers are upset by the unexpected weather condition causing huge loss.

May 10

<https://bit.ly/2kjeonK>

SNOWFALL IN MUSTANG

Unseasonal snowfall occurred in various areas in Upper Mustang located in Dhaulagiri zone, western Nepal; including Barhagaun, Muktinath, Dalome, and Lomanthang Rural Municipality. The heavy snowfall has led to obstruction in Beni-Jomsom-Korala road construction under the national pride project.

May 10

<https://bit.ly/2x5p3f0>

COLLABORATION FOR NEPAL MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by NMB (Nepal Merchant Bank Limited) and The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Nepal, to provide finance opportunities to the mountain communities in Nepal. According to ICIMOD, NMB and ICIMOD have collaborated to contribute to sustainable mountain and socio-economic development in Nepal through the dissemination of knowledge and advancement of business.

May 10

<http://www.myrepublica.com/news/41429/?categoryId=81>

DRY PONDS IN BANKE NATIONAL PARK

Many artificial ponds in Banke National Park, mid western Nepal, have nearly dried up, leading many animals to move in search for water outside the park boundary. There are twenty seven artificial ponds, among which half the number has almost dried up and remaining have high chance of getting dry. The conservationists are worried that the animals could sink in the canal or hit by vehicle while crossing the road.

May 10

<https://bit.ly/2LmM00b>

POPULATION OF GHARIAL INCREASE IN BABAI RIVER

Enlisted as protected species in Nepal, Gharials (*Gavialis gangeticus*) have increased in number in the Babai River, that flows through the Bardiya National Park, mid western Nepal. The population has jumped from 18 in 2016 to 70 gharials in recent times. The positive result is due to the availability of prey and suitable habitat around Parewa Odar area in the Babai River. But at the same time, overfishing, sand mining and others human activities have led to the decreased number of gharial in Karnali River.

May 10

<https://bit.ly/2ICR7LT>

RING ROAD EXPANSION HALTED

Since June 2013, 10 km long road extending from Koteswor to Kalanki, Kathmandu Valley, central Nepal was under the project of expansion. Due to earthquake of 2015 and the Indian border blockade, the completion date was shifted from 2017 to July 2018. But, as the date is near, the Department of Roads has again postponed the deadline as some additional overhead bridges were to be made for which they had to wait till the end of monsoon. Addition to that, they are unsure about the road being resistant to cracks due to the monsoon. Overall, the expansion of the road is facing many criticisms about the pedestrian issues.

May 11

<https://bit.ly/2kfrC4S>

ARRESTED WITH PANGOLIN'S SCALE

A 38 year old man has been arrested with 1.5 kilogram of Pangolin (*Manis spp.*) from Sankhuwasabha, eastern Nepal. The scales of endangered species were found in his bag while he was caught. Besides that, further investigation is on the process according to police authorities.

May 11

<https://bit.ly/2IDRHoQ>

TIJI FESTIVAL OBSERVED IN UPPER MUSTANG

The three days Tiji festival has been observed by the local Gurung and Bista communities of upper Mustang, western Nepal, since fifteenth century and is celebrated by worshipping various deities. The essence of the festival is the desire for world peace and zero natural destruction. Activities such as cleanliness programs, cultural dances have also been conducted to support the exchange of love and greetings among many communities.

May 13

<http://www.myrepublica.com/news/41637/>

LOCAL SHERPAS SUMMIT MT EVEREST

A team of eight climbing Sherpas scaled Mt Everest, north eastern Nepal, by opening the route to the summit point at around 3:30 pm to become the first team to scale the world's highest peak this season. The rope fixing team opened the route for other climbers to reach the summit. The responsibility of rope fixing on Mt Everest was allocated to the Himalayan Guides Nepal (HGN) for this season.

May 13

<https://bit.ly/2J0yr8b>

BHOTO JATRA WITNESSED

The festival of Rato Machindranath came to an end with the demonstration of Bhoto, a black jewel-studded vest, supposed to be of then serpent king at Jawlakhel, Lalitpur, central Nepal on Sunday. There was the presence of president, vice-president and other high ranking personalities. The month long chariot pulling festival was witnessed by a large crowd of people gathered in hopes of gaining good luck and fulfilling one's wishes.

May 13

<https://bit.ly/2kfGJLt>

India-Himalaya

DESTRUCTIVE CYCLONIC STORM

A gusty cyclonic storm has affected more than 150 families in Tripura state, north eastern India on Monday. Over 10,000 people have been affected and a 40 year old man has died due to the breakdown of house. The storm has damaged many houses and transmission lines have also been affected. The local administration has been making preparations to provide all possible aids to the victims.

May 7

<https://bit.ly/2kgFxYn>

PESTS SEVERELY AFFECT HORTICULTURE CROPS

On a huge scale, horticultural crops have been affected due to the synergistic process of small insects called "mili bird" and a fungus "sooty mould" (commonly include *Cladosporium* spp. and *Alternaria* spp.) in Nalbari district in Assam north eastern India. Fruit plants like papaya (*Carica papaya*), banana (*Musa* spp.), mangoes (*Mangifera indica*), betel nut (*Areca catechu*), coconut (*Cocos nucifera*) have been badly affected. This joint attack of pests, first layers the leaves, flowers and fruits with black powdery products, affects the photosynthesis and weakens the plant letting them to dry up at last, as per senior scientist of Assam Agricultural University. Though the loss is huge, striking thing is that Agricultural Department has turned a blind eye on the issue.

May 8

<https://bit.ly/2J0JQVK>

ELEPHANT KILLED WITH ELECTRIC SHOCK

The construction of electric wire supply which hanged just five feet above the ground in a forest area of Nalgedra village, Guwahati, north eastern India, took away the life of a wild elephant (*Elephas maximus*). According to an eyewitness, there were three elephants of which one came in contact with the 11-kilovolt power line. The elephant has been said to be dead in second contact with the wire when it tried to move away.

May 8

<https://bit.ly/2x6pYMd>

TWO-DAY TRAINING PROGRAM ABOUT WILDLIFE CRIME

Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) under the Union Ministry of Environment and Forest, Guwahati, north eastern India has conducted a two-day training program on prevention of wildlife crime. The participants consisted of 50 forest personnel from the forest divisions of Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi, were accompanied with police officers. According to the Divisional Forest Officer of Cachar, the program was held in order to make foresters aware to proactively deal with wildlife crime along with the knowledge of legalities and prevention measures.

May 8

<https://bit.ly/2KOV5xR>

DAMAGING STORM FOLLOWED BY HAILSTORM

Thousands of villagers were left homeless in last Friday evening due to the storm followed by hailstorm which destroyed nearly 900 houses in Lakhimpur, north eastern India. Due to house collapsing, three female labourers of Dolahat Tea Estate were injured seriously. The storm also damaged many schools, uprooted many trees and disrupted electricity supply.

May 9

<https://bit.ly/2s1kTj8>

ARUNACHAL CONSTRUCTS ITS FIRST SOLAR POWER PLANT

A north eastern state, Arunachal had its first solar power plant having a capacity of 1 Mega Watt power. The project named "Installation of 1MWp Grid Connected Solar Photovoltaic Power Plant" was implemented by Arunachal Pradesh Energy Development Agency (APEDA) with the cost estimation of USD 85 million. The Chief Minister was invited for the inauguration of the power plant where he highlighted the importance of renewable sources of energy in the course of global warming. Addition to that, it has been found that the plant is able to reduce carbon-dioxide by 78 tons, which supported the claim done by the minister.

May 10

<https://bit.ly/2x3XORY>

STORM DISTURBED MORE THAN 200 FAMILIES

A violent storm in Kokrajhar, north eastern India has disturbed many places across the district on Thursday night. Lasting for more than an hour, the storm has caused destruction in roofs of houses, also destroyed many huts. Besides that, many trees and electric polls have been uprooted disrupting the power supplies. Altogether, the storm has affected over 200 families in the region.

May 11

<https://bit.ly/2s0DXhp>

BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER ERODES MASSIVELY

Over the years, Brahmaputra River has been eroding its bank massively in Jamuguri Area, north eastern India. This year, those banks are standing in a very perilous way. Local people of the area are spending sleepless nights to get alert for massive land flow in night. Even though there had been many retaining structures, the river has succeeded in cutting down many hectares of arable land and has sub-merged many villages in the past three years. Though USD 5 million is drafted for the protection of bank this year, local people are complaining about the slow speed of the concerned authority.

May 12

<https://bit.ly/2x7SWLG>

China Himalaya

PREGNANT TIBETAN ANTELOPE MIGRATE TO THE “DELIVERY ROOM”

In evening of May 3, about 50 Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops hodgsonii*) have migrated via Qinghai-Tibet highway making Zonag Lake in Hoh Xil, north western Tibet as their final destination. The final area is also referred as the “delivery room” of the species, since annually, in the period starting from late May to early June; tens of thousands of the pregnant antelope travel here for labor and return in August with their calves. In spite of hunting issues in the 1980s, which declined the population to 20,000, has revived to about 60,000 due to conservation and Hoh Xil has also been listed as a world heritage in July 2017.

May 9

<https://bit.ly/2lFRv8l>

CHINA’S SOLE BARREN CITY IS NO MORE BARREN

The city situated in northern Tibet at an average altitude of 4,500 meters, Nagmu, is accompanied with frequent extreme cold and used to be China’s sole treeless city. In the period between October to May, the city suffers extreme snowstorm and frozen ground. Despite of that, 98 percent of the afforested trees have survived the harsh climate. About 600 trees of 20 different species like spruce (*Picea* spp.) and sea buckthorn (*Hippophae* spp.) were planted. On top of that, 20 people of poor background were hired to take care of the newly planted trees.

May 10

<https://bit.ly/2lYV39o>

DISCOVERY OF WORLD-CLASS GEOLOGICAL ARTIFACTS

With the completion of the project “Investigating Important Geological Heritages in north western China (Qinghai)”, Qinghai has been discovered with 10 world-class geological relics, which are a kind of natural heritages which formed in the long geological history of the earth's evolution under inner and outer geological dynamics. These relics were discovered in the various lakes, glaciers, salt deposits and even in the basin of Yellow River. According to a senior engineer of the project, these relics were dated to be formed in the period between 570 to 250 million years ago, which are capable to give much information about geological history of the study area.

May 10

<https://bit.ly/2lYVpge>

Bhutan-Himalaya

FOREST FIRE IN KUENSELPHODRANG

Forest above a Hindu temple in Kuenselphodrang, north western Bhutan has been set in fire which destroyed about 0.08092 hectare of forest area. The fire was extinguished immediately with the help of three fire engines. The forest fire is supposed to be happened due to burning incense offering. After the incident, the open burning is meticulously being checked by police in the area.

May 7

<https://bit.ly/2x02zMe>

TWO BHUTANESE SMUGGLERS ARRESTED

In night of May 4, two Bhutanese men were caught with eight-foot long dry adult leopard (*Panthera pardus*) hidden in their car. The smugglers were captured in Belakoba in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal, south eastern India by the traps set by the anti-poaching squad. It was found that the smugglers were a lay monk and a tourist bus driver of Thimpu, north western Bhutan.

May 8

<https://bit.ly/2lGpPAj>

WATER SHORTAGE IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF BHUTAN

The capital city of Bhutan, Thimpu, north western Bhutan has been suffering from water shortage and it has been a daily routine. Homes in the city get water once a week or in fluctuating degrees due to which many household chores related water has been disrupted, say many residents. Main reason for this condition is the drying up of sources at Chamgang and Motihang of Thimpu. Also, the water supply of Chamgang got disrupted due to landslide. Along with this, due to the destruction of Power supply at Bhutan Power Corporation (BPC) on May 7, water supply has been dustructed in Phuentsholing, southern Bhutan. The incident has been occurred because 60% of total water in Phuentsholing is a groundwater source which needed high voltage power to pump from the ground.

May 8 & 10

<https://bit.ly/2s050cO>

<https://bit.ly/2Gld9a9>

Pakistan- Himalaya

CHALLENGING LIFE DUE TO TOXIC WATER

The region of Punjab, north eastern Pakistan has many stories of plight due to toxic drinking water, mainly due to Arsenic contamination in water sources. Many people have been suffered with neuropathy deformities. Their body has been deformed since their childhood and they remain hidden in their house for most of the days. The main cause of the phenomena goes to the groundwater contamination by dumping of untreated industrial, municipal and agricultural waste. But there is no any national strategy for the purification of water.

May 11

<https://bit.ly/2KOMYSx>

LOSS OF LIVES AS BRIDGE COLLAPSED

On Sunday, a battered bridge in Neelum Valley of Azad Kashmir, northern Pakistan has been collapsed. The accident has taken lives of at least five tourists, which may rise, along with that dozens are missing. While taking pictures in the bridge the apocalypse happened. According to the Deputy Commissioner, over-crowding on the bridge induced the situation; he also added that six people have been rescued.

May 13

<https://bit.ly/2GEScgx>