

# Headlines Himalaya

July 2 - July 8 (2018)

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Editorial Team: Priyanka Belbase and Priya Belbase

For the 512<sup>th</sup> issue of Headlines Himalaya, we reviewed 27 news from 12 sources and selected 23 happenings from five countries. In Nepal, relentless downpours sparked flash floods and landslides, across the country. Monsoon triggers the migration of South-Asian river dolphins (*Platanista gangetica*) to Kailali rivers in far western Nepal from the Ganges in India. State Government in Shimla, northern India proscribed the use of thermocol plates and glasses. China's government restricted the collection of rare caterpillar fungus (*Ophiocordyceps sinensis*), after extensive exploitation.

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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### MONSOON DISASTERS OVER NEPAL

Continuous rainfall all over Nepal has killed around 26 people, injuring dozens of them in different parts of country. Flood in Terai region and landslide in hilly and mountain areas have increased the casualties and injuries day by day. Different infrastructures are being destroyed by flood and landslides and water levels in rivers of Terai and hilly areas are also rising above the danger zone. As a support, the Government of Nepal has deployed team for relief and rescue for victims in affected areas.

**July 3 & 4**

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

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

### FARMERS DEMOLISH GANDAK DAM

Gandak dam has been destroyed by farmers in Nawalparasi, south central Nepal, to save crops which were damaged due to flood. According to Chief District Officer (CDO), every year several hectares of crops gets damaged during monsoon due to improper Gandak dam management. Furthermore, the local officials have been communicating with Indian officials for proper management of dam but currently the issue seems unheard.

**July 3**

<https://bit.ly/2L3h1JS>

### PILGRIMS STUCK

Indian pilgrims traveling from Nepalgunj, mid western Nepal to Mansarovar China, have been stranded at Simikot and Hilsa (route to Mansarovar) due to continuous rainfall in an inappropriate weather. According to Indian Embassy, local police authorities are providing food and lodging facilities to the pilgrims whereas the clearing of blockage is their first priority. Around 1500 pilgrims are stuck in Mansarovar route.

**July 3**

<https://bit.ly/2NWK4wS>

### SEASONAL MIGRATION OF DOLPHINS

With the increase of water level in the rivers of Kailali, far western Nepal, South-Asian river dolphins (*Platanista gangetica*) have started appearing in Kanda, Pathraiya and Kandra rivers in Kailali. Native to Karnali and Ganga, this Dolphin spend a period of four months in these rivers. Around 15 dolphins have been seen recently in those rivers, reported to have migrated from India.

**July 3**

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

### SUNSARI DECLARED AS ODF DISTRICT

Sunsari, eastern Nepal has been declared as 56<sup>th</sup> ODF (Open Defecation Free) district on the basis of monitoring the toilets in every household which are used daily. The monitoring campaign was done by different governmental and non-governmental organizations along with the team of Mission ODF. Various educational institution, journalist, political parties, religious leaders and local levels had contributed in declaring Sunsari as ODF district.

**July 4**

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

### **BEST FARMERS REWARDED**

On June 4, five best farmers of Nepal have been awarded with 'President Best Farmer Award' by the Ministry of Agriculture, Land Management and Cooperatives in Kathmandu, central Nepal. Letter of appreciation with cash prize was given to farmers for their contribution on agricultural field. The Minister said that such programs should get continuity as it encourages the farmers and agricultural sector of Nepal.

**July 5**

<https://bit.ly/2LeJ2O8>

### **KING COBRA DISCOVERED IN NEW HEIGHT IN DOLAKHA**

A female King Cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*), an endangered species of snake has been found in Dolakha district, eastern Nepal for the first time at a height of around 1300 meter above sea level. According to the officers of Gaurishankar Conservation Area, Cobra is normally found in low land but surprisingly the species is found along with its eggs in Dolakha. They reported that they have banned the entry of people in that area.

**July 5**

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

### **IRRIGATION PROJECT DELIGHTS FARMERS**

Farmers of Kapilvastu, Sudhodhan village, south western Nepal have been pleased when the irrigation dream has been completed after two and half decades. This scheme will provide irrigation facility to 70 hectares of land. There is a lot of excitement and enthusiasm in the farmer as before the completion of this project, the drought had affected the yield of the crops by drying them in the field.

**July 6**

<https://bit.ly/2Jv1soH>

### **VILLAGES ON RISK**

Kholing Taplejung, north eastern Nepal, is reported to be under high risk of landslide due to continuous rainfall as active monsoon has spread all over the Nepal. The fear of landslide in the region has led locals' sleepless nights and fearful day. District Red Cross Society, District Disaster Management Committee, District Land Conservation Office has prepared a list of extreme risks and risks based on general studies. Similarly, in Nawalparasi, central Nepal landslide has swiped two houses and four houses are under extreme threat.

**July 8**

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

<https://bit.ly/2uHKUo6>

### **COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION OF SUNFLOWER**

Farmers in Baganaaskali, Tinau village and Rampur and Tansen municipality of western Nepal, have started commercial production of sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*) after the successful sunshine farming planted as a model. Knowing the benefits of its farming, growers of Baganaaskali has started this business, according to one of the cultivators. However, as per one of the Technical Agricultural Officers, the farmers should be supported with trainings for commercial farming of sunflower along with the techniques on market management, for the significant result.

**July 8**

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

### VILLAGERS IN PANIC SITUATION

Herds of elephant (*Elephas maximus*) have been frequently creating havoc among the locals of Assam, north eastern India. The houses of locals and crops have been damaged and the cattle were killed by the herds. Though, the forest officials have assessed the damage but no permanent solution to the menace of elephants has been so far discussed.

**July 2**

<https://bit.ly/2uG5dlU>

### RECORD BREAKING RAINFALL

Heavy rain in Shimla, northern India breaks the rainfall record of 68 years when the city witnessed 118.6mm rain in 24 hours. As per the Meteorology Department, the heavy rain in Shimla was due the formation of tall cumulonimbus clouds and moisture incursion from both Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal resulting in the choked drains and the flooded roads with dirt.

**July 4**

<https://bit.ly/2uFL2V5>

### PONDS DRYING UP RAPIDLY

Due to the unscientific conservation method in Jammu, northern India, thousands of ponds are on the verge of extinction. According to environmentalist, ponds retain water due to accumulation of clay and layer of dead moss at the bottom, but the governments soil excavating activities has destroyed the natural ability of ponds to retain water even during monsoon. In addition to this, the construction of residential and commercial buildings has reduced the ground water recharge which also aids in the drying up of ponds.

**July 5**

<https://bit.ly/2z1vsOz>

### FLOOD RESISTANT RICE

Assam Agriculture University (AAU) and the Agriculture Department of Assam have promoted the submergence-resistance rice (*Oryza sativa*) varieties to cope with the damage that occurs due to recurring flood. Two varieties of rice are popularized to the worst flood affected districts. According to the Chief Scientist of Regional Agricultural Research Station under AAU, the two varieties can resist deluge for up to two weeks, and significantly, they do not sacrifice their potential yield because of the prolonged submergence.

**July 6**

<https://bit.ly/2Jr5qj9>

### ENCROACHERS GRIP MANAS

Manas National Park, northern India, which has been listed as a World Heritage Site has been found to be encroached rapidly in the past four years. According to Google Earth image, around 2200 hectares of land has been encroached whereas little less of around 1800 hectares of land was obtruded in 2014. The officials said that they will be checking on spot to know the real reason behind the encroachment.

**July 7**

<https://bit.ly/2LgK63R>

### **BAN ON THERMOCOL PLATES**

The government of Shimla, northern India has banned the use of thermocol plates and glasses after imposing a ban on the use of polythene and plastic to protect the environment from its harmful effects. The ban on use of thermocol plastics has been announced by the Chief Minister on the occasion of World Environment Day. No one is allowed to use the thermocol plate either in consumer levels or in producer levels and this ban will be applicable after three months from the date of notice.

**July 8**

<https://bit.ly/2us9nPb>

## **China Himalaya**

### **TOURISM PARK UPGRADES**

Tibet's first cultural tourism park in Lhasa, south western China, has been upgraded to the national cultural tourism export base. According to Deputy Chief of the Department of Commerce of Tibet Autonomous Region, by 2020, this park will produce an estimated cultural export amount of USD 45 million. This park aims to complete several projects promoting cultural products.

**July 3**

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

### **FLOURISHING TOURISM INDUSTRY**

In Ali Administrative Division, south western China's Tibet Autonomous Region, local farmers and herdsmen have started to receive tourists and pilgrims since 1980s which have increased their income since past 30 years. The upgraded tourism service has developed tourism industry, resulting in the betterment of economic status of locals. Similarly, on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, two new tourist trains have been launched in Tibet Autonomous Region. These trains are reported to carry tourists in the high altitude zones of Tibet with the facilities of healthcare, a baby room and private rooms for their convenience. This is part of efforts by the regional government and the tourism development commission to turn the region into an important tourist destination.

**July 4 & 5**

<https://bit.ly/2usWLY7>

<https://bit.ly/2LIC86A>

### **GOJI BERRY VALUE INCREASES**

Goji berry (*Lycium barbarum*) output value has increased from USD 5 million in 2008 to USD 0.33 billion in 2017. According to the Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Bureau of Haixi Prefecture, south western China, the Administrative Division grows organic Goji berries in 6,700 hectares with largest growing site.

**July 6**

<https://bit.ly/2zKz9Df>

### **INCREASE IN PROTECTED ANIMALS**

The number of protected animals at Ngari, western Tibet has increased significantly over last 20 years. Ngari Prefecture with 14 Nature Reserves and three National level forest and Wetland Parks has protected the biodiversity in an effective way. Ngari has also invested to fund restoration and preservation work of lakes. Furthermore, the Ngari Prefecture has also played a very important role in controlling the poaching and killing of wild animals by intensifying patrolling and through proper management.

**July 6**

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

### **EXCESSIVE COLLECTION DETERIORATES ENVIRONMENT**

Excessive collection of traditional Tibet medicine ingredient has destructed the ecosystem of Zaduo village, south western China. People have been extensively collecting the rare fungus called as caterpillar fungus (*Ophiocordyceps sinensis*) because of its aphrodisiac properties and other medicinal values. As it has given profit to the locals, the collection has reached to the extent that it has created conflict among the locals. The government has allowed collecting the fungus only between May 15 and June 30 to prevent excessive collection and damage to the environment.

**July 6**

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

## **Bhutan-Himalaya**

### **AWARDED FOR WASTE MANAGEMENT**

Different districts of Bhutan, namely Samtse, western Bhutan, Tsirang, central Bhutan and Thimphu, western Bhutan, have been awarded with the certificate of recognition for their contribution to waste management and environmental activities at the opening of the annual environmental officers' conference held in Thimphu, western Bhutan. Samtse also received a certificate of recognition from the Agriculture Ministry for constructing 800 biogas digesters and for carrying out biogas promotional programme. In addition to this, the conference has also focused its discussion on several issues like waste management, issues related to the Water Act, renewal of Environment Clearance (EC).

**July 4 & 7**

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

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

## **Pakistan- Himalaya**

### **POLO FESTIVAL ATTRACTS TOURISTS**

Chitral, north western Pakistan has hosted three days Shandur polo festival in the highest polo ground of the world with the aim to promote the local tourism and local culture. The Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has inaugurated the festival. He reported that the festival has grabbed huge attention of international tourists, thus stimulating the tourism industry of the state

**July 8**

<https://bit.ly/2NiQx3Q>