

Headlines Himalaya

Oct 22 – Oct 28 (2018)

No. 528

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For the 528th issue of Headlines Himalaya, we reviewed 21 news from 10 sources and selected 21 happenings from five countries. Following a decrease in number of Royal Bengal tigers, Chitwan National Park, central Nepal, has begun a study on the animal's carrying capacity. Under Nepal's national action plan for electric mobility, the Prime Minister inaugurated two electric buses that are to be operated in Kathmandu valley. Fifty five medicinal plant varieties are on the verge of extinction due to overexploitation by pharmaceutical companies in Himachal Pradesh, northern India. Initial phase of Tibet's first national desert park project has begun construction in March this year in Chanang County, Shannan City, in southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region. In some village blocks in Punakha, western Bhutan, farmers have been facing difficulties as the wild animals destroy field crops. The "Green and Clean Peshawar" drive was commenced by the district and Town-I administration in Gulbahar locality of Peshawar, north western Pakistan.

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NEPAL

Hydropower project nears completion
Darchula depends on India for electricity
Park to study carrying capacity of tigers
Two young Nepalese win green talent award
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Use of banned pesticides
Natural death of rhinos on the rise

INDIA

Medicinal plants on verge of extinction
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Banning of potato seeds

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BHUTAN

Wild animals destroys farmers' fields
High market demand of cabbage
Rescued animals in deprived state

PAKISTAN

'Clean and Green Peshawar' drive commenced
Trophy hunting gets permit
Water scarcity afflicts farmers

HYDROPOWER PROJECT NEARS COMPLETION

Ten years after construction started, the Simrutu River Small Hydropower Project of Rukum district, mid-western Nepal, has reached its final stages of construction. Financially aided by Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC), and labour contribution by the locals, this hydropower plant will generate 200KW of energy. The electricity will be supplied to 1296 households of the district.

Oct 22

<https://bit.ly/2PV4DOF>

DARCHULA DEPENDS ON INDIA FOR ELECTRICITY

Despite the presence of three hydropower plants with capacities of 30MW, 8.5MW, and 250KW in Darchula, far-western Nepal, the district has to import about 800KW from India. According to the Nepal Electricity Authority's Darchula distribution centre chief, this is because two of the three power plants supply electricity to other districts of the province.

Oct 22

<https://bit.ly/2r5rQ1V>

PARK TO STUDY CARRYING CAPACITY OF TIGERS

Following a decrease in number of Royal Bengal tigers (*Panthera tigris tigris*) from 120 to 93 in five years, Chitwan National Park, Chitwan, central Nepal, has begun a study on the animal's carrying capacity. The study team includes national as well as international experts. An ecologist from the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation stated that the study is the first of its kind in terms of participation of internal experts. The study is field-based and the methods followed are used globally.

Oct 23

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

TWO YOUNG NEPALESE WIN GREEN TALENT AWARD

Two young Nepali researchers were awarded with Green Talents Award 2018 in Germany, a platform for young scientists to share their views on green concepts. The awardees will get fully funded research stay in Germany in 2019 for three months in any institution of their choice.

Oct 23

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

E-BUSES: BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA

Under the national action plan for electric mobility, the Prime Minister, on October 23rd, inaugurated two electric buses that are to be operated by Sajha Yatayat in the valley. The action plan aims at a 20% share for electric vehicles in the electric finances by 2020, halve fossil fuel consumption by 2050, improve air quality by 2025, and run an electric railway network by 2040. This has been aimed to accelerate growth of e-vehicles in the country to combat climate change.

Oct 24

<https://bit.ly/2P4FThw>

USE OF BANNED PESTICIDES

Due to the ineffectiveness of legally available pesticides, locals of Dhankuta, far-eastern Nepal, have switched back to the banned pesticides that were made illegal due to their negative effects on human health. Since there is no regular monitoring of agro-shops in the district, the illegal pesticides are readily available whose use has reportedly caused an increase in respiratory and skin related diseases, and a number of cancer cases as well.

Oct 24

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

NATURAL DEATH OF RHINOS ON THE RISE

In Chitwan National Park, Chitwan, central Nepal, seven rhinos (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) have died due to various natural reasons like old age, infighting, and organ infections. Some cases included a male rhino hitting a female to death, a crocodile eating a baby rhino, and several flood incidents. While the number of rhinos to have died due to natural causes is quite high, no rhinos were killed due to poaching or illegal activities.

Oct 25

<https://bit.ly/2DY44gJ>

India-Himalaya

MEDICINAL PLANTS ON VERGE OF EXTINCTION

Fifty five medicinal plant varieties are on the verge of extinction due to overexploitation by pharmaceutical companies in Himachal Pradesh, northern India. The commonly found herbs such as 'tejpata' (*Cinnamomum tamala*), 'kala zeera' (*Elwendia persica*), 'ratanjot' (*Alkanna tinctoria*), 'kashmal' (*Berberis aristata*) and 'mitha telia' (*Aconitum violaceum*) have become vulnerable to extinction as said by Regional Director, National Medical Plants Board (NMPB). Government of India is now promoting the cultivation of medicinal plants by providing seeds and seedlings and subsidy to the farmers. .

Oct 22

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

MEASURES INITIATED TO PROTECT PRIZED POSSESSIONS

The state government has initiated several measures to protect the prized possessions such as manuscripts and historic books for future reference in Jammu and Kashmir, northern India. However, most of these are in bad state which needs to be particularly conserved. A five-day workshop on 'Preventive Conservation of Manuscripts' at Sri Pratap Singh (SPS) Museum, Srinagar from 23rd – 27th October is being organized by Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) Kashmir, in collaboration with Department of Archives, Archaeology, and Museums Jammu and Kashmir, and support from Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) New Delhi.

Oct 23

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

PANEL FOR HIGH-RANGE HIMALAYAN ECOSYSTEM CONSERVATION

The Jammu and Kashmir government has set up a 14-member panel for conservation, sustainable use and restoration of the high-range Himalayan ecosystem, northern India. The committee was approved through an order issued by General Administrative Department (GAD) Secretary and is headed by an administrative secretary. The committee will also implement and oversee annual work plans, progress and budget of the project, provide guidance and ensure consistency.

Oct 24

<https://bit.ly/2r8qX8C>

STRAY DOGS INCREASING ACCIDENT RISK

Stray dogs have triggered the risk of accidents as they chase pedestrians and bikers during evening in one of the busy areas of Srinagar in Jammu Kashmir, northern India. A delegation of commuters said that they have appealed the authorities to take constructive measures for controlling the growing population of stray dogs at Residency Road and its adjoining areas.

Oct 27

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

BANNING OF POTATO SEEDS

The marketing of potato (*Solanum tuberosum*) seeds from Himachal, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand and Tamilnadu to other states in India has been banned in by the Central government due to the presence of potato cyst nematode (*Heteroderidae*) which is a kind of small insect present inside the potato. The farmers of Lahaul-Spiti of Himachal Pradesh, northern India are in dilemma as around 1,000-hectare land is covered by potato production and this prohibition will inflict economic damage to them.

Oct 27

<https://bit.ly/2zmH4Ef>

China Himalaya

FIRST NATIONAL DESERT PARK

Initial phase of Tibet's first national desert park project has begun construction in March this year in Chanang County, Shannan City, in southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region. The main aim of this park is to show the characteristic desert landscape and for enjoyment purpose. It comprises ecosystem conservation area, science and technology museum, ecological recreational area and other areas. The main parts of the gate and exhibition centre of the desert park have been completed, and the construction of the gallery bridge also has begun.

Oct 23

<https://bit.ly/2r7pOhB>

RIVER BLOCKAGE DUE TO WARMING

The recent blockage on the Yarlung Zangbo River in southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region was due to the rising global temperature that caused the glacier to melt and become unstable, a renowned glacial scientist and an academician at the Chinese Academy of Sciences said. He also added that the blockage was caused by an ice avalanche and glacial debris. The local emergency response bureau said that 75-meter-deep barrier Lake was formed from the blockage that held 550 million cubic meters of water at its peak.

Oct 24

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

NEW ROAD TO ENHANCE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

China adds Binhe Road to the road network of Lhasa, southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region that stretches over 15 Km, along the north bank of Lhasa River. This project will promote construction of infrastructure and urban civilization of the city, and improve economy and travel conditions of local people.

Oct 26

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

Bhutan-Himalaya

WILD ANIMALS DESTROYS FARMERS' FIELDS

The villagers in Dompala in Limbukha and Kabisa village block in Punakha, western Bhutan have been facing difficulties as the wild animals such as wild boars (*Sus scrofa*), monkeys (*Cercopithecidae*) and deer (*Cervidae*) destroy field crops, and the situation is becoming worse gradually. It is difficult to guard the fields due to limited manpower. Some farmers have installed electric fences to safeguard their fields, but that is not controlling wild animals effectively. Of 5,984 households in Punakha, only around 6 percent have electric fencing of 1,069 Kms.

Oct 23

<https://bit.ly/2r8zKro>

HIGH MARKET DEMAND OF CABBAGE

The farmers in Kabisa village block in Punakha, western Bhutan are preparing to plant cabbage (*Brassica oleracea var. capitata*) in paddy (*Oryza sativa*) terraces as the farmers have begun harvesting paddy. Since 2016, the production of cabbage in Punakha increased to 298 metric tons from 74 metric tons. One of the farmers earned about USD 690 from the sale of cabbages last year and intends to grow the vegetable in about 0.1 ha to 0.2 ha land this year. As cabbage is easy to grow and has high market demand, other farmers in the village are also planning to grow cabbage.

Oct 27

<https://bit.ly/2E0JvQO>

RESCUED ANIMALS IN DEPRIVED STATE

The condition of pigs (*Sus spp.*) rescued from being slaughtered and now sheltered at Dekiling, southern Bhutan is not in good state. Due to insufficient food to feed the animals, taking care of them has become difficult, according to the caretaker of the animals. District livestock officer (DLO) mentioned that besides limited manpower the division does not have a rescue centre to provide proper treatment on time.

Oct 27

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

Pakistan- Himalaya

'CLEAN AND GREEN PESHAWAR' DRIVE COMMENCED

The "Green and Clean Peshawar" drive was commenced by the district and Town-I administration in Gulbahar locality of Peshwar, northwestern Pakistan. The drive was initiated by removing the posters and banners from the walls in the area. The anti-encroachment drive was also a part of 'Clean and Green Peshawar' as mentioned by one of the people of Town-I.

Oct 23

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

TROPHY HUNTING GETS PERMIT

The Gilgit-Baltistan wildlife department located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, northern Pakistan auctioned hunting permits for 18 rare species under trophy hunting programme 2018 and 2019 which includes 4 Astore Markhor (*Capra falconeri falconeri*), 14 blue sheeps (*Pseudois nayaur*) and 95 ibexes (*Capra ibex*). The hunting season in the region begins in November and ends in April. Chairman of Khunjerab Villagers Organisation, stated that the trophy hunting programme was first organized in the region in 1993 to control illegal hunting of rare species.

Oct 26

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

WATER SCARCITY AFFLICTS FARMERS

Severe water scarcity afflicts in the plains of Peshawar, north western Pakistan due to which hundreds of thousands of orchards and agricultural lands are rapidly becoming barren. A protest rally was held on Charsadda Road to press for the concerned authorities to take constructive steps to deal with the water shortage that has caused huge losses to the farmers and landowners in various villages. If the irrigation issue is not resolved in time, the farmers have decided to hold protest in front of provincial assembly, Peshawar Press Club and secretary irrigation office, according to Town-II council member.

Oct 28

<https://bit.ly/2KDLDi0>