

Headlines Himalaya

Oct 29 – Nov 4 (2018)

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For the 529th issue of Headlines Himalaya, we reviewed 34 news from 14 sources and selected 33 happenings from five countries. The government is promoting commercial agriculture with the development of 400 model farms in Gandaki province, western Nepal. The epidemic of armyworm has caused hundreds of Sal and Saaj tree plants to dry up in national and community forests in Udayapur, eastern Nepal. The construction projects have been rapidly destructing the vegetation of the chure region lying at the foothills of the Himalayas. Plan to construct food park will block elephant corridor in the outskirts of Tezpur of Sonitpur district in Assam, north eastern India. A batch of fishes Tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*) and Sturgeon (*Acipenser sinensis*) were brought from Beijing to a breeding pond in Yamda Township, Dulong Dechen District of Lhasa, Tibet. A programme was organized in Mera of Trashigang district, eastern Bhutan for encouraging young local minds in biodiversity conservation. The government of Peshawar, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, north western Pakistan banned use of smart phones and electronic equipments in healthcare facilities during work hours.

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NEPAL

Rice yield increases
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Model farms to be developed
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Nepal-Himalaya

RICE YIELD INCREASES

Rice (*Oryza sativa*) production this year is considerably high with the estimation to cross 5,500,000 metric tons mark in accordance to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development. Timely and adequate monsoon rain projected the harvest that will bring prosperity and economic growth and contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country. Increased paddy production will assist to replace the imported foodstuff lessening down the constantly expanding trade gap.

Oct 29

<https://bit.ly/2DKyB0G>

AIRPORTS IN KHOTANG REMAIN CLOSED IN FESTIVALS

The airports in Khotang, eastern Nepal which were closed during monsoon have not resumed services yet causing difficulties for the local passengers. Manamaya Rai Khanidanda Airport, Lamidanda Airport and Thamkharka Airport in the district did not provide services even during the festivals. Rainwater filled runways, blacktopping the runway and runway repair works led these circumstances.

Oct 29

<https://bit.ly/2P1HAfX>

MODEL FARMS TO BE DEVELOPED

The farmers are encouraged to be self-reliant by promoting commercial agriculture as a venture with the development of 400 model farms in Gandaki province, western Nepal. The provincial government has allocated NPR 400 million for the fiscal year 2018/19 for the purpose of developing small, business-oriented, commercial and enterprise model farms. The project proposals are registered at the province's knowledge and expertise centre.

Oct 29

<https://bit.ly/2FKsXy0>

FLOOD SURVIVORS SUBMIT MEMO FOR LAND HANDOVER

Displaced flood survivors of Parshuram municipality, Dadeldhura, far-western Nepal have demanded to speed up the process of handing 0.01 ha of land purchased for their rehabilitation. Memorandum had been submitted to the office of Chief Minister and Physical Infrastructure Ministry office through Dadeldhura District Administration Office. The flood victims have already submitted memorandum for 127 times to date made calling for expedition for land handover.

Oct 30

<https://bit.ly/2P6XFRk>

ARMYWORM EPIDEMIC

The epidemic of armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) first reported eight months ago have caused hundreds of Sal (*Shorea robusta*) and Saaj (*Terminalia elliptica*) plants to dry up in national and community forests from Mainamaini to Katari's Lekhani in Udayapur, eastern Nepal. The pests forage for leaves which may have led drying of the plants.. Division Forest Office has started collecting data of the dead trees.

Oct 30

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

CONSERVING CHURE HILLS

The construction projects have been rapidly destructing the vegetation of the chure region lying at the foothills of the Himalayas. An interaction programme on "Clean Janakpur Green Janakpur and Chure Conservation" was held at Janakpur, south eastern Nepal. In the programme, chure deforestation was cited as the main cause for the increased risk of floods and dryness in terai region.

Oct 31

<https://bit.ly/2PX2MsQ>

FIRST ASCENTS TO MT GHUSTANG AND NUPLA KHANG

An eight-member expedition team including five French nationals and three Nepalese summits Gurja West (6,465 m) or Ghustung peak located in Myagdi district, western Nepal on Tuesday. In earlier attempts Five Koreans, four Nepali climbers had lost their lives as a massive landslide buried their base camp. Similarly, the virgin peak Mt NuplaKhang (6,861 m) in Solukhumbu, eastern Nepal was ascended by six climbers along with five Sherpa guides of Madison Mountaineering NuplaKhang Expedition Team 2018.

Oct 31& Nov 2

<https://bit.ly/2PUm41X>

<https://bit.ly/2r5URu7>

RARA LACKS PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Rara lake with spellbound beauty situated in an altitude of 2,990 metres from sea level which lies in the lap of dense forest of Rara national park of Mugu District, Karnali province of mid-western Nepal witnesses inadequate physical infrastructure on its way. In order to fulfill the target of 500,000 tourists, the year 2075 has been announced as 'Karnali-Rara Tourism Year'. However, the insufficient accommodation and infrastructure has been a huge hindrance.

Oct 31

<https://bit.ly/2FS1JG2>

FOREIGNERS FOR TIGER CONSERVATION

Three South African nationals organized a press conference in Kathmandu, central Nepal regarding their efforts with the concerned authorities anticipated for the Save Tiger campaign. The trio will destine to Everest base camp along with different parts of the country and convey knowledge on the wildlife conservation addressing the conservation of tigers (*Panthera tigris*) and snow leopards (*Panthera uncia*). They stated Nepal as one of the best tourist destinations with rich wildlife serving as additional attraction and argued that the wildlife needs to be protected.

Oct 31

<https://bit.ly/2FJYCQ7>

RHINOCEROS DECEASED

A rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) has been found dead at Sehari, Nawalparasi district, western Nepal. The deceased was around two-and-half-year-old female rhino. A team of veterinary doctors said that the exact cause of the death will be known after the postmortem.

Nov 1

<https://bit.ly/2rfba8l>

RECLAMATION OF RELIGIOUS FOREST

The religious forest of 1.88 ha area has been repossessed by authority of Shivapuri-Nagarjun National Park, central Nepal from Osho Tapoban, international commune and forest retreat centre. The existing laws were violated which bars from felling trees from the conservation area for the physical infrastructure in the buffer zone. Accordingly, repossessed area will be handed over to a community forest.

Nov 1

<https://bit.ly/2Ap3AMu>

EARLY FLOWER BLOSSOM

The early bloom of Marigold flowers (*Tagetes erecta*) in Kaski, western Nepal has left the florists worried given that tihar is a week far leading to huge loss if the flowers will not be preserved. The farmers lack knowledge on well-managed tunnel, and planting the flower as per the calendar as they do not receive adequate trainings. Farmers and some agriculture cooperatives are cultivating flowers professionally in their own scale too.

Nov 2

<https://bit.ly/2FGgv2r>

RECONSTRUCTION OF HISTORICAL MONUMENT

The historic monument Kasthamandap located at Kathmandu, central Nepal is believed to have been built in the 12th century from wood of a single tree. Reconstruction of the monument which means 'wood pavilion' damaged by the April 2015 earthquake needs specially prepared timber which will be provided by Timber Corporation of Nepal (TCN) Ltd. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is signed by the committee with a target of completing reconstruction of the heritage within the next two years.

Nov 2

<https://thehimalayantimes.com/kathmandu/tcn-to-provide-wood-for-kasthamandap-reconstruction/>

WILD ELEPHANTS DESTROY CROP

Wild elephants (*Elephas maximus*) in Ichchhanagar, Parsa, southeastern Nepal had been invading in the paddy field for the last one month. The elephants already destroyed paddy amounting NRP 1.6 million this year. These disruptions by elephants led many sleepless and terrifying nights for the locals.

Nov 2

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

NATIONAL PARK WELCOMES FEW VISITORS

The Shuklaphanta National Park amongst the country's largest open grassland located at far-western Nepal welcomed few domestic and international tourists in the past four years. World's largest herd of swamp deer (*Rucervus duvaucelii*) numbering over 2000 can be spotted in the park. Local tourism board stressed out the need for publicity campaign attracting more visitors to the park which will be serving as a gateway to the entire Far-western province.

Nov 3

<https://bit.ly/2Sg8S3V>

THIRD CABLE CAR IN OPERATION

The third cable car service in the country was operated at Kalinchowk in Dolakha, central Nepal. Pilgrimage to Kalinchowk Bhagawati temple, a touristic and religious spot situated at the altitude of 3,755 meters has been easier with onset of the operation. And it is also believed to play huge role in promoting tourism in Dolakha district.

Nov 3

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

TRIBUTE TO A CYCLIST

A yoga teacher, motivational speaker and an avid cyclist Shyam Shrestha 37, passed away on the way back in his cycle ride, as he fell into an open drain in Kirtipur, central Nepal on October 27. He was actively promoting cycling for clean energy in Nepal. In tribute to this honorable soul, a ghost bike (also referred as a white cycle) was set up in his memory by civil society groups and people involved in promoting clean environment in Kirtipur. The drain was left open for the past six years by Kathmandu Uptyaka Khanepani Limited Kirtipur.

Nov 4

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

India-Himalaya

IMPROVEMENT OF FOREST PRODUCTIVITY

In a three-day training programme on 'Planting Stock Improvement for Enhancement of Productivity', commenced in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, northern India on Monday, it was concluded that there was a dire need to improve forestry sector. The director of the Himalayan Forest Research Institute (HFRI) stated that the density and productivity of Indian forests is decreasing mainly due to increasing demand for timber and other products. This improvement should therefore focus on importance of better production stock, importance of vegetative propagation, clonal forestry etc. to achieve the goal.

Oct 29

<https://bit.ly/2PXCK8z>

TEA BOARD SETS ORDERS

The Tea Board of India in Guwahati, Assam, north eastern India issued an order fixing the deadlines for plucking and receiving tea leaves (*Camellia sinensis*), their processing and manufacturing time, sorting and packaging processes, etc. in the north eastern region. The tea industry welcomed the Tea Board for this move which would alert the manufacturers who would often dupe the buyers with low quality teas.

Oct 31

<https://bit.ly/2P6XMMK>

BURNING GARBAGE ON ROADS

The increase in complaints of burning of collected garbage at roadsides and residential areas of Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir, northern India from past several weeks caused Secretary of Housing and Urban development (H&UDD) to issue an order to stop Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) from the practice of burning of garbage on roads. Strict action has been commanded against the violators.

Oct 31

<https://bit.ly/2r6KLJF>

WATER SUPPLY WORK STARTS

In Bathindi, Jammu & Kashmir, northern India, the improvement of water supply work from Tube Well Malik Market to Gurudwara Lane Malik which was the long pending demand of the locals has been fulfilled. Over 2000 individuals of Malik Market, Gurudwara Lane, SC Basti and adjoining areas will be benefitted with the scheme. The concerned officials have taken up the repair work on defunct Water Supply Schemes and change of worn-out pipe lines so that regular water supply can be ensured in the area.

Nov 1

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

ELEPHANT CORRIDOR BLOCKED

In the outskirts of Tezpur of Sonitpur district in Assam, northeastern India habitually used by migrating wild elephants (*Elephas maximus indicus*) for years, the owner of Nezone Foods is planning to set up a Food Park thereby blocking the elephant corridors. Such rampant activities of industrialization have already resulted to loss of grazing grounds for wild elephants compelling them to use risk-areas like railways for their fodder, leading to the death of many elephants. Consequently, organizations like All Assam Students' Union(AASU) and Tezpur unit of other organizations have approached concerned stakeholders to take necessary measures to halt such construction activities and hence ensure the overall welfare of the elephants.

Nov 2

<https://bit.ly/2DW0LXe>

LIFT IRRIGATION SCHEME LAID

The Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, northern India on Friday laid the foundation stone of a USD 785,846.58 lift irrigation scheme at Pooh in Kinnaur. It would help irrigate 230 ha of land in Kinnaur which is one of the biggest and strategically important districts of the state. He stated that the government has given special focus on the development of this area.

Nov 2

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

HIGHWAY POLLUTION IRRITATES LOCALS

The pollution due to excavation, construction and other works on Jammu-Srinagar Highway, Jammu and Kashmir, northern India has become a serious cause of concern for the people, especially those living in the vicinity of the highway in Ramban and its adjoining areas. They have started developing many health related problems and have appealed to the district administration to take immediate steps to check rising pollution levels before the situation takes ugly turn.

Nov 3

<https://bit.ly/2Rj96aA>

CATTLE KILLED BY LIGHTNING

More than a hundred goats (*Capra aegagrus hircus*) and sheep (*Ovisaries*) of nomadic shepherds were killed after being struck by lightning in a makeshift camp of shepherd families in Thanamandi area of Rajouri district, Jammu and Kashmir, northern India last night. The affected nomadic families have appealed to the government for compensation.

Nov 3

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

ELDERLY HEALTH CARE SERVICE

Municipal party committee and municipal government of Lhasa, south western China has extended health subsidies for elderly people. The specific standards allotted USD 86.39 for 70 to 79 year olds, USD 172.78 for 80 to 89 year olds, USD 345.56 for 90 to 99 year olds and USD 518.34 for those aged over 100, per year.

Oct 29

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

SCREENING FOR DEAFNESS GENE

More than 150 hearing-impaired people from south western China were screened for a deafness gene in Lhasa on October 28. The event was initiated by the China Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Scientific research showed that more than 50 percent of deaf cases are caused by genetic factors, and 25 percent of deaf cases are caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. The screening was reportedly free of charge.

Nov 2

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

FISH BREEDING TO RAISE ECONOMY

In early September, a batch of fishes Tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*) and Sturgeon(*Acipenser sinensis*) were brought from Beijing to a breeding pond in Yamda Township, Dulong Dechen District of Lhasa, capital city of southwestern China's Tibet Autonomous Region. The successful breeding of these fishes have been helping breeders in Lhasa to increase production and earn profit.

Nov 2

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

WORK TEAM TO LANDSLIDE-HIT AREAS

A joint work team has been dispatched to the landslide-hit area in Baige Village of Bolo Township in Jomda County, south western China according to China's Ministry of Emergency Management (MEM).The team was led by MEM with members from the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of Water Resources, National Energy Administration and other authorities to guide and assist in identifying the cause of landslide, studying and judging the development of the disaster and dealing with the emergency rescue work.

Nov 4

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

Bhutan-Himalaya

CROP RAIDING REDUCES PRODUCTION

In Radhi village block, Trashigang, eastern Bhutan, harvest of rice (*Oryza sativa*) ebbed from last year because of the constant attacks from wildlife in the field. About 1300 ha of solar fencing work has been provided to the village block by the government this year under the completion of which, the farmers are hoping better rice yield and no wildlife attack.

Oct 31

<https://bit.ly/2r1FAGO>

RANGER CLUB IN MERAK

In Merak of Trashigang district, eastern Bhutan, Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary (SWS) in collaboration with Merak Primary School which formed a ranger club, organised junior ranger programme for encouraging young local minds in biodiversity conservation. Special emphasis was given on the endangered Red Panda (*Ailurus fulgens*) whose population has decreased highly in recent years because of anthropogenic activities. During the programme, SWS officials demonstrated on operation and set up motion-sensitive camera traps in the field for conservation and monitoring of the rare mammal. The future plans of the club include in field activities such as forest walks, bamboo planting, giving presentations and involving in celebration of International Red Panda Day.

Nov 2

<https://bit.ly/2PlDzb5>

Pakistan- Himalaya

NO SMARTPHONES IN HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

The government of Peshawar, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, north western Pakistan banned use of smart phones and electronic equipments in healthcare facilities during work hours to provide best healthcare. However, one can use ordinary mobile phones with no internet facilities for official use and emergency call only. Independent Monitoring Unit of Health department was instructed to monitor implementation of the policy and report any violation to the health minister's office.

Oct 31

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

USE OF APPROVED WHEAT SEEDS

The farmers of Timergara, lower Dir district of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, north western Pakistan were allowed to get only the registered and approved wheat (*Triticum spp.*) seed from the nearest farm service centres for sowing under the supervision of the district director of agricultural department. Other farm service centres of the nearby areas of Timergara had also been provided with enough wheat seeds and urea fertilizers along with necessary trainings to help farmers increase produce.

Nov 4

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