

Headlines Himalaya

Nov 12 – Nov 18 (2018)

No. 531

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For the 531st issue of Headlines Himalaya, we reviewed 28 news from 13 sources and selected 26 happenings from five countries. Farmers in Bajhang, far-western Nepal have started switching back to organic fertiliser. Haphazard road extension around Phewa Lake in Pokhara, western Nepal has led to deposition of mud in the lake. More than 1,40,000 ha of forest land in Kailali district, far-western Nepal have been encroached upon in the last six decades in the name of providing land to landless people. A gravity dam has obtained an environmental clearance to be built in lower Dibang valley of Arunachal Pradesh, north eastern India. A study by the Department of Forests and Park Services (DoFPS) of Bhutan found that farm roads have been causing environmental problems. Peshawar district administration in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, northern Pakistan has launched computerized and digitalized land transfer system.

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NEPAL

Farmers switch to organic fertilizer
Jackal attack injures people
Kaligandaki project at fast pace
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Renovation in Swoyambhunath
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Bagmati restoration initiative
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Relief to leopard attack victims
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Hike in price of coffee
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INDIA

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PAKISTAN

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FARMERS SWITCH TO ORGANIC FERTILISER

Many farmers in Bajhang, far-western Nepal have started switching back to using organic fertiliser to protect the soil health on their farms which had started deteriorating due to use of chemical fertiliser and pesticides. The chemical fertiliser had a lot of harmful impacts among which hardening of soil, increase in soil acidity and reduction in productivity were the major.

Nov 12

<https://bit.ly/2SO5AFE>

JACKAL ATTACK INJURES PEOPLE

A jackal (*Canis aureus*) attack has left over 15 people injured in Likhu Rural Municipality in Nuwakot, central Nepal from a nearby forest on Saturday. The injured are undergoing treatment at Nuwakot District Hospital and others have been urged to stay alert as the animal is suspected of being infected with rabies.

Nov 12

<https://bit.ly/2Em3Oav>

KALIGANDAKI PROJECT AT FAST PACE

The long awaited construction of corridor that connects the north-south region of Kali Gandaki region of Parbat area, western Nepal is finally underway after the pressure given by the member of parliament of Parbat. Considered as a link road which further can help import goods from India and China, this road construction had been delayed due to various political reasons. However, once constructed, it is believed to ease the connection between north and south.

Nov 12

<https://bit.ly/2Ex7kzK>

ELECTRIFICATION AFTER DECADES

The Mayor of Mahakali municipality recently inaugurated the illumination of electric lamps in a village of Ward No. 2 of the municipality in Darchula, far western Nepal. Electric poles for power supply to the village were erected in 1992, but the villagers had to wait next 26 years for their dream come true. People from the municipality also have access to telephone service from this year.

Nov 13

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

LANDSLIDES OBSTRUCT HIGHWAY

Traffic along Kodari Highway has come to a halt following Sunday's landslides at Liping and Kodari, central Nepal. The landslides have also affected the construction of Liping road, which is being built by China Railway Construction Corporation. The corporation had started the repair of Liping road after completing the reconstruction of Tatopani-Piplang road.

Nov 13

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

RENOVATION IN SWOYAMBHUNATH

The Swoyambhu Management and Protection General Committee has completed the renovation of 19 heritages in the Swoyambhunath area in Kathmandu, central Nepal. As stated by the committee, the restoration works were carried out with the help of several donor agencies and internal resources were also mobilized. The committee has so far spent around NPR 50 million for the renovation.

Nov 14

<https://bit.ly/2UINtT6>

NEPAL LEANS ON POWER IMPORTS

The delay in completing the much awaited Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project of central Nepal leaves no option but to rely on the electricity imported from India to eliminate power cuts this winter. Currently, the peak electricity demand is being accessed by importing around a third of the total national need from India via various cross-border transmission lines.

Nov 14

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

BAGMATI RESTORATION INITIATIVE

The polluted Bagmati River that runs through the Kathmandu valley, central Nepal is going to be restored back to its pure form under the effort of Bagmati Development Committee. This restoration work includes construction of dam, management of sewage disposal, plantation in the peripheral region etc. The Committee has taken the responsibility of restoring other smaller rivers that affect the region too.

Nov 14

<https://bit.ly/2zVMuq8>

PRODUCTS FROM LOCAL HERBS

A factory established in Sulichaur, eastern belt in Rolpa district, mid-western Nepal has started productions of oil through the processing of medicinal herbs available in the locality which are exported to various cities in Nepal. With the investment of NPR 15 million, a total of 35 people have been employed. Bay leaf (*Cinnamomum tamala*), Calamus (*Acorus Calamus*), muskroot (*Nardostachys jatamansi*) and many other locally available herbs are being used to produce the hair oil and some to make insecticides as well.

Nov 15

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

RELIEF TO LEOPARD ATTACK VICTIMS

The family of a four-year-old girl who died in an attack by a leopard (*Panthera pardus*) in Damauli of Tanahun district, western Nepal has received financial support from local authorities. The Tanahun Division Forest Office and Bhanu municipality jointly provided NPR 50,000 as early relief support to her mother.

Nov 17

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

SOIL DEPOSITION IN PHEWA LAKE

Haphazard road extension around Phewa Lake at Pancheswor in Pokhara, western Nepal has led to deposition of mud, released during construction, in the lake. This has damaged the natural composition of the lake. Landslides in the roads have become very frequent due to haphazard use of dozers and excavators.

Nov17

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

DUDHANG BRIDGE IN LIMBO

Negligence of the contractor has put Dudhang bridge of Ilam, eastern Nepal in limbo. Although the deadline has been extended twice, the completion of the bridge is still uncertain. The contractor has claimed that the delay was due to design change from the concerned authorities. This has made locals cross the river on their own inviting many risks.

Nov 17

<https://bit.ly/2LhVv5H>

BRICK KILNS DEFY GOVERNMENT ORDER

Brick kilns based in Bhakundebesi of Namobuddha municipality, Kavre, central Nepal are still operative against local government's order for their closure in the locality. The adverse impact on human health due to increasing atmospheric pollution has caused a rise in respiratory and eye diseases in the municipality. However, the owners of these kilns show no intention of shutting down as they argue that millions have been invested in the business providing employment to the poor.

Nov 18

<https://bit.ly/2zX4Vux>

HIKE IN PRICE OF COFFEE

National Tea and Coffee Development Board has increased the prices of coffee (*Coffea sp.*) to support farmers of Pokhara, western Nepal who are facing increased costs in production. The price has also been increased to encourage farmers towards coffee plantation following the reports that there was more coffee import than export in the last fiscal year.

Nov 18

<https://bit.ly/2CcC8na>

FOREST LAND USURPED

More than 1,40,000 ha of forest land in Kailali district, far-western Nepal have been encroached upon in the last six decades in the name of providing land to landless people. Conservationists fear the complete removal of forest if the destruction continues. Due to this, the Forest Minister has pledged that strong actions will be taken to stop forest encroachment.

Nov 18

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

India-Himalaya

TEMPERATURE DROPS ACROSS VALLEY

The rainfall was observed in different parts of Kashmir, northern India with possibility of snow drastically lessening day temperature. Similarly, the lowest temperature in Himachal Pradesh, northern India was recorded in Keylong at minus 6 degrees Celsius on Friday after the recent snow and also the Kargil town of Kashmir valley, northern India was recorded as the coldest in the valley at minus 9 degrees Celsius.

Nov 12, 17&18

<https://bit.ly/2QyG5vl>

<https://bit.ly/2Lgjl0q>

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

TECHNICAL GUIDELINES FOR FARMERS

The Chief Agriculture Officers (CAOs) of Kashmir, northern India is requested to provide technical guidelines to the farmers so that they can tackle with the present weather situation. Maintenance of digital records of the Impacts of weather on the agriculture could be relevant for the upcoming autumn season to narrow the losses caused due to snowfall. Accordingly, on-farm training programmes for farmers should be given to weather-oriented situation management.

Nov 14

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

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN ON ENERGY CONSERVATION

Under national campaign on Energy Conservation-2018 of union ministry of Power organized by the Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited (SJVNL), the significance of the energy conservation was explained. Furthermore, the goal of energy conservation techniques which advocates for reduced demand, protect and replenish supplies, develop and use alternative energy sources case in point Himachal Pradesh, northern India the first state in the country to frame investor friendly hydro power policy.

Nov 15

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

TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE TOURISM

Arunachal Pradesh, north eastern India launched a tourist police and tourist app to promote tourism as safety is a key aspect for any tourist visiting a destination. The Himalayan mountain range, stretching across the entire state offers magnificent beauty and panoramic view fascinating tourists as the state witnessed over 3.5 lakh tourists in 2016.

Nov 15

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

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE FOR GRAVITY DAM

A gravity dam has obtained an environmental clearance to be built in lower Dibang valley of Arunachal Pradesh, north eastern India by The National Green Tribunal (NGT). The project has been approved for a reduced height by 10 m from 288 m. This project demanded a huge impact on the environment including seismic sensitivity and loss of biodiversity due to which the multi-purpose dam project was delayed.

Nov 15

<https://bit.ly/2RTU7Es>

China Himalaya

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS BY FARMROADS

The Department of Forests and Park Services (DoFPS) conducted a study of about 50 km of farm roads in Dagana, southern Bhutan and found out that the roads constructed didn't meet the required standard and is that causing landscape scrapping, soil erosions and landslides, wildlife habitat fragmentation and sedimentation of water channel with extensive environmental impacts. Thus, the engineering aspects need to be monitored during road constructions along with slope stabilization measures at erosion-prone sites.

Nov 14

<https://bit.ly/2Gdd0kc>

POTENT ACTION AGAINST POLIO

According to Bhutan's annual polio-free progress report 2018, 97 percent of Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) coverage has been achieved. The maximum children were immunized against polio for the prevention of imported (transborder) wild poliovirus to circulate and also the emergence of vaccine-derived poliovirus in the country. The report also highlighted challenges faced in polio eradication initiative including sample shipment, limited funding for training and monitoring activities and hardship to reach nomadic population.

Nov 16

<https://bit.ly/2Lh9g07>

ENDANGERED CRANES SIGHTED

This is the third successive year when the endangered black-necked cranes (*Grus nigricollis*) have been spotted in Drangmechu in Udzorong village block, south eastern Bhutan away from their regular roosting and feeding habitats. The two adults and a juvenile were caught in sight and residents were informed not to disturb the cranes if they were working nearby in the field. Also, the officials from Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN) along with some others marked the annual black-necked crane festival to spread awareness about the importance in the conservation of the black-necked cranes.

Nov 17

<https://bit.ly/2ElkQ8P>

Pakistan- Himalaya

FISHING REGULATED IN RAWAL LAKE

The illegal and environment perilous fishing activity in the portable water reservoir streaming to the city of Rawalpindi, northern Pakistan was restricted by Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration's Fisheries department. However, Fisheries Department had auctioned fishing rights only to a private contractor for USD 0.33 million for two years. The department has also added hatchery boosting the number of fishes and improving breeding in the Rawal dam. This would enhance tourist numbers for fishing at Lake View Park giving opportunities of livelihood to many people.

Nov 13

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

LAND ENCROACHMENT

The Supreme Court of Pakistan sought complete record of land allotment to Bahria Town, a real state of Rawalpindi, northern Pakistan blamed for encroaching 59.2 ha of forest land. The environmental impact of the encroachment is massive as 10,000 trees were mowed down and an entire forest was also demolished. This case's hearing was later delayed till December 3.

Nov 13

<https://bit.ly/2BgG1G2>

DIGITAL LAND TRANSFER SYSTEM

The Peshawar district administration in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, northern Pakistan launched computerized and digitalized land transfer system for the ease of the people. The system is expected to build transparency and accountability during transfer of property. The system requires taking the biometric thumb impression and digital photo of buyer, seller and witnesses to the land transfer which will serve as a database for record.

Nov 18

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