

Headlines Himalaya

Dec 10 – Dec 16 (2018)

No. 535

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For the 535th issue of Headlines Himalaya, we reviewed 24 news from 13 sources and selected 23 happenings from five countries. Kathmandu Metropolitan City has forwarded works for the construction of a new landfill site. More than 28% households are at risk of food insecurity in Karnali Province, western Nepal. Wheat seed shortage hits farmers of Saptari, eastern Nepal. Throwing of city garbage in river in Kupwara of Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, northern India changes the river into dumping site. Healthy ecological conditions turn the Lhasa river valley a paradise for migratory birds. A study carried out in Bhutan documents ecological benefits of bats. A large artificial lake has been formed on the head of a village in Hunza district of Gilgit-Baltistan.

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!

NEPAL

KMC constructing new landfill site
Men held with tiger's hide
Food insecurity in Karnali
Flood-displaced rhino reinstated
Complaints on environmental pollution
Lower temperature increasing health problems
Snowfall disrupted normal life
Millions at risk
Wheat seed shortage hits farmers
Relief for Everest avalanche victims

INDIA

Special water filter designed
River turns into dumping site
Landslide hits highway
Coldest night recorded

CHINA

Railway service makes life easier
Solutions to climate change
A bird's paradise

BHUTAN

Study finds ecological benefit of bats
People benefit from biogas plants
One-horned rhino spotted

PAKISTAN

Artificial lake formed
Rainfall in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
Water scarcity displaces locals

KMC CONSTRUCTING NEW LANDFILL SITE

The Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC), central Nepal has forwarded works for the construction of a landfill site at Bancharadanda, Nuwakot for the long-term management of solid waste generated in the metropolis. KMC would continue to use the present dumping site at Sisdol, Nuwakot which has been used since 13 years, until the new dumping site is accessible.

Dec 11

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

MEN HELD WITH TIGER'S HIDE

Two people have been arrested with the hide of the Royal Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*). According to the deputy Superintendent of Police, culprits have been forwarded along with the tiger hide to the District Forest Office Kathmandu for legal action.

Dec 12

<https://bit.ly/2Gly1DH>

FOOD INSECURITY IN KARNALI

More than 28% households are at risk of food insecurity in Karnali Province, western Nepal according to a preliminary survey conducted in ten districts of the province. As per the survey, Kalikot district is most vulnerable (55%) to food insecurity among the 85% impoverished households

Dec 12

<https://bit.ly/2VgOa6z>

FLOOD-DISPLACED RHINO REINSTATED

Three endangered one-horned rhinos (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) were swept across the Nepalese border by Narayani River into India by flood from Chitwan National Park, south central Nepal. The Indian authority had refused to return the rhinos which are currently in the jungle of Balmiki National Park, India. Recently, one of the rhinos has been brought back to Chitwan National Park after the rhino returned to graze in the forest in Susta, southern Nepal and the locals stopped it from entering India.

Dec 13& 16

<https://bit.ly/2s0xDGh>

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

COMPLAINTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Kathmandu, central Nepal has started receiving complaints related to issues of environmental pollution including air pollution, pollution of rivers and streams and pollution of drinking water sources. As compared to the past, the number of complaints lodged with the NHRC has decreased at present and also the nature of complaints has changed.

Dec13

<https://bit.ly/2QVPsW8>

LOWER TEMPERATURE INCREASING HEALTH PROBLEMS

The number of patients has increased significantly at the Karnali Institute of Health and Sciences (KIHS), Jumla, western Nepal due to the dipping temperature. Most patients are suffering from common cold and asthma. The number has reached to more than 50 per day. Children have been suffering from cold and fever while the elderly people are struggling with pneumonia and asthma.

Dec 13

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

SNOWFALL DISRUPTED NORMAL LIFE

The regular life of the residents of Bajhang district, far-western Nepal has been disrupted due to the drop-in temperature as the region witnessed showers and heavy snowfall which badly interrupted in the operation of local FM radio stations. The schools have been closed, while the farmers were contented that this region received rainfall after a long interval.

Dec 14

<https://bit.ly/2s0xRND>

MILLIONS AT RISK

The Koshi basin shared by China, India and Nepal, is characterized by numerous natural disasters putting at risk 40 million inhabitants. The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Kathmandu, central Nepal in collaboration with the Bihar State Disaster Management Authority, Bihar, India and Sichuan University – Institute of Disaster Management and Reconstruction, Chengdu, China hosted an inception workshop on the Koshi basin Disaster Risk Reduction Knowledge Hub.

Dec 14

<https://bit.ly/2EVf91R>

WHEAT SEED SHORTAGE HITS FARMERS

The farmers of Saptari, eastern Nepal were compelled to return bare handed from Rajbiraj-based Agriculture Knowledge Centre due to the unavailability of wheat seeds (*Triticum aestivum*). The seeds provided by salt trading were 105 metric tonnes for both Saptari and Siraha whereas Saptari alone required 700 metric tonnes of seed. The cost was three times the original price in the markets than Salt Trading Corporation (STC) and Agriculture Knowledge Centre sold per sack of seed. The District Supply Committee has requested local levels to control black marketing of wheat seeds due the scarcity of the seed.

Dec 14

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

RELIEF FOR EVEREST AVALANCHE VICTIMS

The children of people who died in the deadliest avalanche on Mt Everest in 2014 have now received support for their education from different organizations such as Everest Sherpa Foundation and Sherpa Nepalhilfe. Each child has been getting NPR 39,044 annually to get better education and will get support till 16 years of age. The foundation also offers support to needy families in the Khumbu region, northeastern Nepal by running different health camps and rebuilding campaigns.

Dec 15

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

India-Himalaya

SPECIAL WATER FILTER DESIGNED

In Mandi and Sundernagar of Himachal Pradesh, northern India, people have been facing iron and bacterial contamination of water. Researchers of the Indian Institute of Technology are designing a water filter to remove biological and iron contamination, and they aim to improve the quality of life of the residents that are affected.

Dec 10

<https://bit.ly/2BQdp6z>

RIVER TURNS INTO DUMPING SITE

In Kashmir's Kupwara of northern India, around 450 tons waste is thrown every month into Kahmil stream that passes through the main town. The people of the area, who depend on the water for washing clothes and bathing, are seriously concerned over dumping of garbage into the river. Due to water pollution and the foul smell, many diseases have also spread, where children are most affected.

Dec 15

<https://bit.ly/2s0GyYs>

LANDSLIDE HITS HIGHWAY

Hundreds of vehicles were left stranded on the 167.77 miles long Jammu-Srinagar Highway, northern India due to a landslide. Traffic was stopped due to landslips and the road clearance operation has been going on.

Dec 15

<https://bit.ly/2LCoKf2>

COLDEST NIGHT RECORDED

In Kashmir, northern India, the minimum temperatures dropped way below the freezing point. Srinagar recorded a temperature of - 4.2°C, making it the coldest night of the season. The maximum temperature was recorded at 10.1°C.

Dec 15

<https://bit.ly/2LE6pOO>

China Himalaya

RAILWAY SERVICE MAKES LIFE EASIER

The Qinghai-Tibet Railway has extended its service route. Lhasa and Shigatse, the two cities of China's autonomous region of Tibet, are now connected by railway service. The life of people in the two cities, has become easier. More commuter trains, ticket-selling locations, and ways to purchase tickets have been developed to provide better service to the people in these twin cities.

Dec 10

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

SOLUTIONS TO CLIMATE CHANGE

In the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, rising temperatures and rainfall fluctuations can have impacts on grassland productivity and water conservation. While the local government and the herdsman are working together to protect the grasslands, the country is also making efforts to protect the region's glaciers by reducing emissions and carrying out international cooperation.

Dec 10

<https://bit.ly/2R07OoL>

A BIRD'S PARADISE

In the month of December, along the Lhasa River Valley, south western China, bar-headed geese (*Anser indicus*), ruddy shelducks (*Tadorna ferruginea*), yellow ducks (*Anas undulata*), and black-necked cranes (*Grus nigricollis*) are frequently seen. This region has healthy ecological conditions where migratory birds are attracted for wintering.

Dec 13

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

Bhutan-Himalaya

STUDY FINDS ECOLOGICAL BENEFIT OF BATS

One of the researchers at the Bhutanese Ecological Symposium said that the harm that bats (Chiroptera) cause makes up only 30% in comparison to the 70% of what they contribute to the ecology. Bats are pollinators, seed dispersers, and pest controllers, and their guano can be used as an organic fertilizer. Climate change is believed to impact the bats and change their habitats.

Dec 10

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

PEOPLE BENEFIT FROM BIOGAS PLANTS

The construction of a biogas plant in Bikhar-Domkhar electoral precinct in Samkhar village block, eastern Bhutan has led to a reduction in consumption of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders and firewood. There are now 246 biogas plants in the village block. The cattle population has increased by 39% from 2010 to 2017, thus improving milk production by 70%. As the biogas plants also produce organic manure that helps in growing vegetables, many farmers have stopped using chemical fertilizers in the area.

Dec 13

<https://bit.ly/2Vg311a>

ONE-HORNED RHINO SPOTTED

A one-horned rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) was spotted on a camera trap in May 2018 in the Royal Manas National Park, southern Bhutan. The last sighting was in February 1992. Human predation and poaching are the prime reasons for its extirpation from the national park.

Dec 15

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

ARTIFICIAL LAKE FORMED

In Hunza district of Gilgit-Baltistan, northern Pakistan, a Shishper glacier has broken. This has blocked the upstream canal of Hasanabad Valley and a large artificial lake has been formed on the head of a village where around 50 homes are located.

Dec 10

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

RAINFALL IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

The Metrological Department said that rain has been falling in different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, north western Pakistan. The most rainfall took place in Saidu Sharif in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Met Office has also issued an alert about expectancy of fewer rains this year due to climate change. This is likely to affect agriculture and cattle.

Dec 10

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

WATER SCARCITY DISPLACES LOCALS

In Chitral of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, north western Pakistan, 200 children protested against water shortage. Construction of irrigation channels, safe drinking water schemes and afforestation were their demands. The families that depend on farming and selling of dry fruits have lost their livelihood and around 200 families have migrated from Morilusht to Chitral City due to water crises.

Dec 15

<https://bit.ly/2CD1YRI>