

Headlines Himalaya

Apr 01 - Apr 07 (2019)

No. 551

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For the 551st issue of Headlines Himalaya, we reviewed 25 news from 13 sources and 20 selected happenings from five countries.

A massive storm was hit in Bara and Parsa that was declared as first ever tornado in Nepal. Banke has become a new hub for wildlife smugglers. Two hydropower has been listed in the government scheme 'Nepal's Water, People' Investment' to encourage peoples' participation in investment. The Global Air 2019 report has indicated that the air quality is degrading in Nepalese context. The height of Mount Everest is being remeasured by the survey department to confirm whether the height has been changed. The town in Nurpur is giving the stray cattles shelter, food and company to reduce their number. Illegal slaughterhouses in India will be closedown if they don't comply with the norms. Young energetic citizens of Dehradun of Northern India have started an organic farming venture. Fruit and vegetable cultivation industry is helping to alleviate poverty in China. In Bhutan the ban on plastic has been reinforced. Hailstorm damages the crops in central and eastern Bhutan. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project is taking its toll in Peshawar.

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

*MASSIVE STORM IN SOUTH-CENTRAL NEPAL
BANKE BECOME A NEW HUB FOR WILDLIFE SMUGGLERS
HYDROPOWER PROJECTS INCORPORATED
DEGRADING NEPAL'S AIR QUALITY
WILD ANIMALS FARMING
MOUNT EVEREST BEING REMEASURED
HABITAT OF RARE SPECIES THREATENED*

INDIA

*NO MORE STRAY CATTLES
CLOSEDOWN OF ILLEGAL SLAUGHTERHOUSES
ROAD TO DEVELOPMENT?
PROJECT FOR CLIMATE CHANGE
AFFORESTATION DRIVE
HIGH COURT AGAINST POLLUTING INDUSTRIES
ORGANIC ENTREPREUNERS*

CHINA

*ECOTOURISM – A NEW ROAD TO IMPROVED ECONOMY
AGRICULTURE HELPS ALLEVIATE POVERTY*

BHUTAN

*DAWN OF NO PLASTIC
WHITE-BELLIED HERON INCREASED
HAILSTORM DAMAGES CROPS*

PAKISTAN

BRT PROJECT TAKING ITS TOLL

MASSIVE STORM IN SOUTH-CENTRAL NEPAL

A massive storm hit Bara and Parsa districts of southern Nepal that killed 28 individuals and injured over 600 people. Immediate rescue and relief operations were being carried out by government and local organizations in the affected area. Meteorological Forecasting Division stated that this extreme case of storm was unusual in Nepal's context, and has been confirmed to be the first ever tornado in Nepal, which had 200-250 meter wide and covered at least 30 kilometers in these two districts.

Apr 1

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

<https://bit.ly/2VPTm1a>

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

BANKE BECOME A NEW HUB FOR WILDLIFE SMUGGLERS

Banke District of western Nepal is being used as an emerging smuggling area for poached animals including red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*), tiger (*Panthera tigris*) and elephant (*Elephas maximus*). A person was arrested with the skin of red panda, and an investigation identified the Kohalpur, Ranjha and Nepalgunj cities of Banke District were used as market hub by the poachers.

Apr 2

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

HYDROPOWER PROJECTS INCORPORATED

Under the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, two hydropower projects: Sanjen Hydropower (42.5 MW) and Rasuwa Hydropower (111 MW) have been listed in the government scheme 'Nepal's Water, People's Investment'- so as to encourage people's participation in investment. A Twenty five percent of the project's share has been issued as initial public offering out of which 15 % is for general public and 10 % for project affected people.

Apr 2

<https://bit.ly/2Vgw6fs>

DEGRADING NEPAL'S AIR QUALITY

The Global Air 2019 report indicated that air pollution level (PM 2.5 exposure) was recorded highest in Nepal (100 µg/m³) followed by India (91 µg/m³), Bangladesh (61 µg/m³), and Pakistan (58 µg/m³) in South Asia. However, PM 2.5 exposure in Maldives was recorded 7.8 µg/m³, which is the lowest in the region. In Nepal, around 65% (19 million) households were found to use solid cooking fuels in 2017.

Apr 3

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

WILD ANIMALS FARMING

With an aim to control illegal poaching of wildlife, the Ministry of Forest is formulating a new policy that allows local people to breed wild animals in households. The minister for Forest and Environment stated that this new policy will help to control the wildlife poaching. Recently issued 'National Forest Policy' promotes private company, cooperative and the local community for wildlife farming, its commercialization and import. However, the list of wildlife that will be included under this policy has not been finalized yet.

Apr 3

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

MOUNT EVEREST BEING REMEASURED

The height of Mount Everest is being measured by the Survey Department to confirm if the peak's height has been changed after the 2015 massive earthquake. Department has started this expedition with the cost of NPR 250 million since last year and two of the department's employees have been sent for this expedition this week. The department will announce the outcome within 9 months.

Apr 4

<https://bit.ly/2Utlh4i>

HABITAT OF RARE SPECIES THREATENED

The construction of new road in northern rim of Chitwan Valley, south-central Nepal that extends from Mathillo Kaule to Gadi threatens the Gadi-Siraichuli Forest. This forest is listed as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) that is home to many endangered and endemic species including Spiny Babbler (*Turdoides nipalensis*) and Black Giant Squirrel (*Ratufa bicolor*).

Apr 5

<https://bit.ly/2V5ZWUA>

India-Himalaya

NO MORE STRAY CATTLES

The town of Damtal in Nurpur, northern India is housing 500 stray cattles from around giving them shelter, food and company in a temple ground. The administration of the temple is planning to further expand their project.

Apr 2

<https://bit.ly/2Dmn8U1>

CLOSEDOWN OF ILLEGAL SLAUGHTERHOUSES

A plea in the form of Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed for closedown of slaughterhouses has been heard by the High court. Illegal slaughterhouses that do not comply with the norms are ordered to be shut down by mid-July or force to comply.

Apr 2

<https://bit.ly/2IsuAB3>

ROAD TO DEVELOPMENT?

The forest department of Himachal Pradesh, northern India issued a complaint against the Himachal Pradesh Power Works for not getting a prior approval under Forest Conservation Act, 1980. The Forest Conservation Act, 1980 requires an approval from the department prior to mining and excavating works.

Apr 3

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

PROJECT FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

The government of India granted Rs. 5.84 million to Islamic University of Science and Technology to study effect of climate change on Kashmir Himalayan Region. This project will focus on Odonata (Class Insecta) as an indicator species to predict effects of climate change and aims to study the various aspects of conservation including taxonomy, distribution and diversity, ecology and monitoring of this insect.

Apr 3

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

AFFORESTATION DRIVE

A total of 50,000 conifer trees were planted by Social Forest Department in Kupwara district of North Kashmir as an act of major afforestation drive. Department has aimed to plant around 60,000 more trees in coming days in the district by encouraging locals and interested organizations to participate in the mission.

Apr 4

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

HIGH COURT AGAINST POLLUTING INDUSTRIES

Uttarakhand High Court in northern India has directed the state government to close down 12 industrial units that have severely violated norms and standards. In August 2018, the High Court ordered the Central Pollution Control Board to submit a compliance report of 323 factories that pollute the environment, and the board reviewed 135 units and found 12 severely guilty.

Apr 5

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

ORGANIC ENTREPREUNERS

Young energetic citizens of Dehradun of Northern India have started an organic farming venture with a dedication towards organic farming in the space they can find to. A group of young people are growing organic vegetables and providing the products to locals in an affordable price.

Apr 5

<https://bit.ly/2lvC4Dt>

China Himalaya

ECOTOURISM – A NEW ROAD TO IMPROVED ECONOMY

The village of Lunang, southwest China is receiving a huge economic boom by transitioning from just an agricultural village into an ecotourism hub. Lunang was identified as a new tourism destination in March 2017 and welcomed more than one million tourists last year. This tourism project has created over 1,000 jobs and helped to improve the skills of local people.

Apr 01

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

AGRICULTURE HELPS ALLEVIATE POVERTY

Fruit and vegetable cultivation industry in Bainang County, southwest China currently holds the 30 percent of the Shigatse market, and has attracted a number of well-known agricultural businesses for industrial development. It is reported that the fruit and vegetable planting area covers more than 933.93 ha of land and produces nearly 140 varieties. This agriculture industries contributed over 60% of the poverty alleviation in the county by helping directly to 4,000 people.

Apr 6

<https://bit.ly/2VPy5Vc>

Bhutan-Himalaya

DAWN OF NO PLASTIC

Bhutan has started the reinforcement of the plastic ban for limited use from 1st April. However, local customers and shopkeepers doubt for the success of this campaign. To facilitate this initiative, over 3,000 eco-friendly bags were distributed to customers and vendors in Thimphu on 30th March.

Apr 1

<https://bit.ly/2DgvP27>

<https://bit.ly/2ZpgZc2>

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

WHITE-BELLIED HERON INCREASED

The recent survey on the white-bellied heron (*Ardea insignis*) found the population of 25 individuals, a slight increase in its population to 24 last year. This indicates Bhutan rich in biodiversity and its habitat intact.

Apr 3

<https://bit.ly/2Ivy5GL>

HAILSTORM DAMAGES CROPS

Fields around Trongsa, central Bhutan was experienced the hailstorm that destroyed chili (*Capsicum frutescens*), buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum*), cardamom (*Elettaria cardamomum*), maize (*Zea mays*), potato (*Solanum tuberosum*) and orange (*Citrus X sinensis*). Chili is a major cash crop in Trongsa. Even in Jamkhar of eastern Bhutan, hailstorm destroyed potatoes.

Apr 4

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

Pakistan- Himalaya

BRT PROJECT TAKING ITS TOLL

Twenty five thousand saplings and numerous trees were cleared for the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project in Peshawar, northern Pakistan. Though government had spent millions of rupees for the clean and green Pakistan project before the BRT project, those investment has gone in vain with this BRT project.

Apr 1

<https://bit.ly/2GvFa8g>

<https://bit.ly/2IENB2m>