

Headlines Himalaya

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Editorial Team – Bikash Gosain & Ananda Kumar Shrestha

For the 379th issue, we reviewed 26 news reports from 14 sources and selected 20 happenings in five countries. In Nepal, apple orchards are at risk in lower Mustang while estimation of wild animals is initiated in Uttarakhand, northern India. In Tibet, China, eco environment is being re-established and safeguarded and immature births increase in Bhutan.

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!

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PADDY STORAGE FOR QUAKE VICTIMS

The District Agriculture Development Office (Dado) has announced to open a collective paddy storage centre so that farmers can store around 20 metric tons of paddies in a store for the displaced earthquake victims in Gorkha district of western Nepal. The paddy store centers will be opened at Kaudi, Aarupokhari, Palungtar, Jaubari, Ghyalchowk areas in the district. The farmers cultivated paddy in around 75 percent of land but the paddy farming has been affected due to drought during the paddy transplantation period.

November 17

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2015-11-17/gorkha-to-set-up-paddy-storage-for-quake-victims.html>

FLOOD VICTIMS SUFFER

Flood victims especially senior citizens, pregnant women and children residing in temporary tents suffer from extreme cold in Surkhet and Bardiya districts of mid-western Nepal. Since the government plan has not yet been implemented, over 800 flood victims families were living in the temporary tent in Surkhet. The ongoing blockade has made life more difficult as prices of essential supplies have risen. The victims had requested the concerned authorities to take initiative to relocate the temporary settlements.

November 18

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2015-11-18/cold-hits-flood-victims-in-temporary-shelters.html>

TIMBER SMUGGLING ON THE RISE

Timber smugglers were increasing in many parts of Kavre district, central part of Nepal as authorities have relaxed restriction on firewood collection from forests in the period of fuel crisis. Police sources stated that illegal loggers were working in involvement with some forest officials. The police seized the logs while delivering to a furniture factory at Kamalbinayak and handed them over to the forest office.

November 19

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2015-11-19/smuggling-of-timber-on-rise.html>

CHINESE ASSISTANCE IN MUSTANG

The Chinese government has increased its regular support to the people of Mustang district of north western Nepal. A total of 7,800 bags of cement, 15,000 pieces of grooved roofing sheet, 8,000 pieces of plywood, 1,200 tonnes of iron rod, 25,000 kilogram of pea and 29,000 kilogram of soybean have been provided to the people of upper Mustang by China. The government of China has already installed a solar system of 70 kilowatt in Lho-Manthang directly benefiting 221 households.

November 20

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2015-11-20/china-increases-its-assistance-in-mustang-by-six-fold.html>

ORANGE PRODUCTION DECREASES

There has been a decrease in orange (*Citrus sinensis*) production by 75 percent in Lamjung district of western Nepal due to some pests and problems related to plant nutrition. The farmers of the area have moved towards production of paddy after the decrease in orange production. The government had carried out a field survey and advised the farmers for use of nutrients on orange trees.

November 20

<http://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/lamjung-sees-dnqe-production/>

APPLE ORCHARDS AT RISK

The apple orchards (*Malus domestica*) are disappearing at Lete and Kunzjo VDCs in Mustang of northern Nepal since the last six years. At one time the area was considered as the most productive areas for apple farming. Apple trees are disappearing in the lowlands while they have yielded fruits in the highlands of Upper Mustang where apple trees could not grow due to excessive cold. This is regarded as a clear effect of rising temperatures due to climate change. Farmers have sold apples worth NRs 290 million in Mustang district.

November 21

<http://www.myrepublica.com/society/story/31408/apple-orchards-vanish-in-mustang-villages-due-to-climate-change.html#sthash.fsqJTOD3.dpuf>

<http://www.nepalnews.com/index.php/top-story/46603-mustang-sees-apple-sale-of-rs-290-million>

India-Himalaya

ILLEGAL TIMBER TRADE

A forester and beat guard were placed under suspension for their involvement in the illegal trading of timber with the locals in Ramban Forest Division of Jammu state, northern India and nearly 972 kanals of the area from the land grabbers were saved by the forest department. In the area, 900 cubic feet timber including 43 long and 8 medium logs of timber were seized and transported to Ramban depot.

November 20

<http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/972-kanals-forest-land-retrieved-in-batote/>

STORKS KILLED

A large number of open-billed storks (*Anastomus oscitans*) died while making the way for the four lane national highway when forest department personnel supposedly set alight three trees where these birds were nesting in Charingia area, Jorhat district, North east India. The particular colony of open-billed storks has inhabited these trees for many generations and even though there is huge traffic on the highway, the birds had never changed their habitat. There were nearly 50 nests of open-billed storks in the three trees and the birds would leave as soon as the chicks grew up.

November 20

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1151120/jsp/northeast/story_54016.jsp#.VIFP1b833IU

PARK ENCROACHMENT

The boundaries of Kaziranga national park of Assam state, north-eastern India are being encroached day by day due to rising construction. The constructions in the protected areas of the park, which is famous for single-horned rhinos, are blocking the elephant corridors. Assam's resident has pleaded government to destroy the wall to prevent tree felling for environment protection.

November 17

http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/kaziranga-park-being-encroached-daily-ngt-115111701017_1.html

WILD ANIMAL ESTIMATION

Wildlife Institute of India (WII) has started the terrestrial assessment of the wild animals like tigers, leopards etc in the Rajaji Tiger Reserve of Dehradun of Uttarakhand state, northern part of India. Camera traps have been installed at various places in the reserve for the estimation. This assessment provides baseline data and studies the trends with regard to population swings and other related aspects of wildlife closely.

November 20

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/flora-fauna/Wild-animals-estimation-program-started-Rajaji-by-WII-scientists-and-IFS-probationers/articleshow/49860694.cms>

POACHING OF MUSK DEER

The practice of setting the forest on fire by poachers to trap and capture the musk deer (*Moschus*) in Panchchuli of eastern Kumaon Himalayans of Uttarakhand, northern India continues. Poachers block off escape routes for the deer by burning forests and then strike to kill these animals. This musk is used in perfumes and medicines and is sold for as much as USD 50,000 for a kg in the black market.

November 23

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/flora-fauna/Smoke-at-Panchachuli-peak-poachers-on-the-hunt-for-musk-deer/articleshow/49887006.cms>

China Himalaya

RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF ECO ENVIRONMENT

The ecological environment alongside the Qinghai-Tibet Railway which is the world's highest railway is getting better after its first five years of operation. Ecological protection measures taken during and after the construction of the railway have ensured it to remain as "a green railway". The alpine vegetation ecosystem has been effectively protected, the permafrost environment has been stable for years, the eco-function regions have been doing well and the plateau landscape remains intact. There is no clear effect on vegetation composition in the areas along the railway.

November 18

http://english.chinatibetnews.com/hb/News/201511/t20151118_926814.html

PROMOTION OF RATIONAL MINING

40 mining companies which failed to meet environmental standards in Tibet, western China have been closed with the objective of protecting the delicate ecological environment of the Tibetan plateau. The regional government has tightened controls on exploration of mining resources. The areas with registered mining rights have covered 749.62 square kilometers which is less than 0.1 percent of total areas of the autonomous region.

November 18

http://english.chinatibetnews.com/hb/News/201511/t20151118_926820.html

TIBET PLATEAU AS CLEAN AS NORTH POLE

The several data discovered by a global research effort showed that the Tibetan plateau of western China remains one of the world's cleanest regions in spite of pollutants discharged by surrounding regions. The environment background value of pollutants in the Tibetan plateau is similar to that of the Arctic and is remarkably lower than that of densely-populated areas. The average deposition of black carbon in southeastern and central parts of the plateau from the beginning of this century was three times the average in the period between the 1950s and the 1980s.

November 18

http://english.chinatibetnews.com/hb/News/201511/t20151118_926779.html

INCREASING NATURAL DISASTERS

According to a recent environmental assessment report, natural disasters are on the rise on the Tibetan plateau as the region is affected by global warming and increased human activity. Disasters like landslides, torrential floods and snow disasters were expected to increase and fires will be more difficult to prevent and extinguish. From 1988 to 2014, a total of 373 forest fires were reported and the scale of snow storms and avalanches has extended distinctly over the past 40 years under the influence of climate change, affecting human activities and the climate in the north hemisphere.

November 19

http://eng.tibet.cn/2012sy/xw/201511/t20151119_3977904.html

Bhutan-Himalaya

RISE IN PREMATURE BIRTHS

The number of premature births across the country is growing in Bhutan where one in every 10 children born is premature. Premature birth is the leading cause of neonate and infant mortality in the country. The Annual Health Bulletin, 2015 (AHB) showed that the number of neonatal deaths dropped from 72 in 2013 to 62 last year. According to the AHB, about 12,500 women received at least one time antenatal care from a skilled health professional in 2014.

November 18

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/premature-births-on-the-rise/>

INVASIVE WEED ATTACK GRASSLAND

The grassland of Royal Manas National Park's (RMNP) in Specialthang region of south central part of Bhutan was invaded by the invasive plant species. Conservationist and foresters believe that the plant is a native of South America and has spread in the region through transportation and mostly by road. The plant can reproduce without natural control. The sanctuary tried burning the invasive species in grasslands but it only backfired with even better growth in the next season.

November 20

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/grassland-in-manas-park-under-weed-attack/>

Pakistan-Himalaya

PARTRIDGE HUNTING PERMITTED

The hunting of the bird Partridges (*Perdixperdix*) has been permitted in all parts of Peshawar district of northern Pakistan. Birds' like See-See partridges, black partridges, grey partridges and Chakur partridges were included in the list of birds that can be hunted. The partridge shooting can be done only on Sunday and holidays.

November 20

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/994964/relaxation-of-rules-partridge-shooting-permitted-till-feb-7/>

LANDSLIDE HAVOC

Landslide in a village of Havelian tehsil of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of North West Pakistan has damaged 50 houses. The hazard has affected about 25 villages from rest of the region and all possible steps have been taken to help people and minimize the damage. A heavy boulder had damaged the area and the residents were in afraid of more damage if the rocks continued rolling down the hill.

November 23

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1221656/landslide-damages-50-houses-near-abbottabad>

FERTILIZER SMUGGLING

Large quantities of fertilizer have been smuggled to Afghanistan at the Torkham border connecting Peshawar of North West Pakistan. The officials recovered 375 bags of Diammonium Phosphate (DAP) from truck carrying cement to Afghanistan. The local administration took into custody a distributor from a private health clinic in Mirdad Khel area of Landi Kotal upon the complaints from local residents.

November 23

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1221654/bid-to-smuggle-fertiliser-to-afghanistan-foiled>