

Headlines Himalaya

January 19-25, 2015

No. 338

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For the 338th issue, we reviewed 37 news reports from nine sources and selected 15 happenings in five countries. In Nepal, endangered hyena is spotted in western Nepal while continuous snowfall is making the lives difficult in Himachal Pradesh, India. In Tibet, China, a weather monitoring system has been established for the early warning to natural hazards and increasing wildlife conflict is discouraging the farmers in Bumthang, Bhutan. Likewise, Rawalpindi in northern Pakistan is under severe fuel crisis.

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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Nepal-Himalaya

HIGH LEAD LEVEL

Kathmandu valley in central Nepal is found to be exposed to the hazardous lead far beyond the permissible levels putting at risk the health of local people. Three consecutive studies of lead in paint carried out by a non-governmental research organization, from 2010 to 2013 found that over 70 per cent of paints contain high levels of lead. Similarly, as per the study conducted by Center for Public Health and Environmental Development (CePHED), the maximum level of lead exposure in schools of the area was 108 µg /ft² in 2014.

January 19

<http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2015/01/19/oped/colour-of-health/272213.html>

HYENA SPOTTED IN WESTERN NEPAL

An endangered hyena has been captured at Kalapani Community Forest located at Sisahaniya VDC, Dang of mid western Nepal. The study is an initiative of Tarai Arc landscape Programme which was conducted in about half dozen forests located in Sisahaniya and Lalmatiya VDC for the study of possible wildlife habitats. The study shows that about one-third of rare animals of the area had disappeared due to illegal poaching and smuggling of animals a decade ago.

January 19

<http://thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Endangered+hyena+found+in+Dang+forest+&NewsID=441528>

BIRD POPULATION DECREASING

A week long bird counting in the wetland in Chitwan district, central Nepal has shown decrease in the bird population due to water pollution. According to the ornithologists, five species of bird have vanished in a year and human activities are responsible for this situation. Altogether 44 species of bird have been found in the wetland in Chitwan district in the current bird census.

January 20

<http://thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Bird%27s+population+goes+down+due+to+polluted+water+&NewsID=441682>

AGRICULTURE APPS HELPS FARMERS

Advances in information and technology have eased the farmers of Banepa district, central Nepal to obtain information related to farming technologies, livestock, pest, weather, market price and even prospective buyers. According to the farmers, use of such applications has saved their time and money. Project for Agriculture Commercialization and Trade (PACT) and Agriculture Management Information System (AMIS), under the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MoAD) are working to increase the access of farmers to such mobile applications in Nepal.

January 20

http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=90697#sthash.q3tyRfC7.dpuf

ODF ZONES LOSING APPEAL

Because of the lack of proper sanitation and drainage system, illegally erected houses on road sides and practice of dumping waste haphazardly, several VDCs in Gorkha district of western Nepal has lost its appeal among tourists although they are declared open defecation-free (ODF) zones. Locals of the area blame the municipality for poor management while the concerned authorities blame the locals for non-cooperation.

January 20

http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=90632#sthash.RpBOKbeg.dpuf

WILDLIFE IN DANGER

The protected blackbucks (*Antelope cervicapra*), at Krishnasar Conservation Area (KCA) in Bardiya, mid-western Nepal are in danger due to poaching and more seriously by leopards. Within the past one month, six blackbucks were killed by leopards while about 40 blackbucks were killed by flood in August, last year. Similarly, tigers in Kanchanpur districts are also in danger as they are being poached for their bones and hides. One Indian poacher was caught by the district police recently and seized tiger hide eight feet long and 2.3 inch wide, 19 kg bones and two pistols.

January 21

<http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2015/01/20/nation/leopards-kill-six-blackbucks-in-one-month/272262.html>

WILDFIRE RAGES IN COMMUNITY FOREST

Wildfire is becoming an intense issue in Mahabhir Hariyali Community Forest in Baruneshwor of Okhaldhunga, eastern Nepal as all the efforts to control it have failed. According to the concerned authority, almost 250 ha forest area is likely to be destroyed. Attempts to control the wildfire have been hampered by the difficult topography and lack of easy availability of water in the vicinity.

January 21

<http://thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=Wildfire+rages+in+community+forest+&NewsID=441925>

SHORTEST ROUTE TO KATHMANDU

Construction of BP highway that connects Tarai districts of eastern Nepal to Kathmandu has been completed after two decades. It is the shortest route taking only four hours to reach Kathmandu. The highway is 160 km long and was constructed with the financial assistance of the Japanese government. The highway connects areas of Mahottari, Dhanusha, Sindhuli and Kavre districts of eastern and central Nepal to Kathmandu and is expected to be crucial in the development of the region.

January 22

<http://www.ekantipur.com/2015/01/22/national/bp-highway-construction-complete-after-20-years/400671.html>

GARBAGE DUMPED IN BAGMATI RIVER

Although numbers of campaigns are being conducted in Kathmandu, central Nepal to control the pollution in Bagmati River, Kirtipur municipality continues to dump garbage into the river irresponsibly. The municipality generates around 10 tons of garbage daily which is supposed to be dumped in landfill site of Sisdole area. But instead, they are being dumped into the river since the last four months. According to the municipality officials there are no designated transfer stations thus they are compelled to dump the waste temporarily in the river.

January 24

http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=90928

India-Himalaya

EXTREME WEATHER IN HIMANCHAL

Continuous snowfall in Himachal Pradesh, northern India has affected lives of people in the entire tribal belt of Lahaul and Spiti. Kufri and Narkanda in Shimla district also had mild to heavy snowfall. Poor visibility due to thick fog has affecting local transportation. At the same time threat of avalanches has also loomed large over the high-altitude tribal areas of the state.

January 22

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/himachal/>

HUMAN WILDLIFE CONFLICTS

Uttarakhand in northern India has been experiencing wildlife depredation each year and the human wildlife conflict in the area worsens with the arrival of winter. Shrinking habitat due to human encroachment as well as rising population of leopards are considered to be the main reasons for the increased number of wildlife attacks. According to an earlier census, there were around 2000 leopards in the area.

January 22

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/uttarakhand/man-animal-conflicts-rise-in-winter-months/33251.html>

China Himalaya

EARLY WARNING SYSTEM IN TIBET

A weather monitoring system has currently been established in Tibet, southwestern China which is expected to release warnings on natural disasters about 15 to 30 minutes earlier. According to the authority, Tibetans will receive text messages prior to the hazard so that they can escape to safer places. Currently, Tibet is providing trainings to the disaster monitoring personnel and setting up means to disseminate the information.

January 21

http://eng.tibet.cn/2012sy/xw/201501/t20150121_2226077.html

Bhutan-Himalaya

FARMLAND LEFT FALLOW

Increasing wild life attacks on the crops of Umsang in Chumey, Bumthang district, central Bhutan have compelled the farmers of the area to shift to other sources of income. Over 16 ha of farmland in the area is left fallow for years. At the same time, the ministry of Agriculture of Bhutan has been encouraging the farmers towards more productive agriculture by distributing power tillers to the 25 farmers of Mongar and Lhuentse in eastern Bhutan.

January 23

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/increasing-number-of-farmland-being-left-fallow/#.VMH2GCxkDcs>

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/25-power-tillers-provided-to-mongar-and-lhuentse/#.VMH2XSxkDcs>

BAMBOO CULTIVATION IN RADHI

Cultivation of bamboo, in Radhi, Trashigang district in eastern Bhutan has benefitted the local farmers to an unexpected extent. The cultivation was started about seven years ago through agriculture ministry's sustainable land management project and at present a bamboo pole is sold at Nu 100 and its rhizome costs about Nu 75. However, the farmers are afraid to start its commercial farming since the demand of the plant is fluctuating throughout the year.

January 23

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/commercial-cultivation-of-bamboo-yet-to-take-off-in-radhi/#.VMH2VSxkDcs>

Pakistan-Himalaya

FUEL CRISIS IN RAWALPINDI

Fuel crisis is worsening in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. The government has also failed to provide gas to the locals making the situation even worse. According to the 'The News', there are 175 petrol pumps in Rawalpindi, northern Pakistan but with the shortage of energy, there are only 51 filling stations left to serve the needs of the public.

January 19

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-6-296914-Petrol-crisis-worsens-as-a-few-filling-stations-dole-out-small-quantities>