

Headlines Himalaya

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No.492

Editorial Team: Suveksha Jha and Tsewang Nuru Sherpa

For the 492nd issue of Headlines Himalaya, we reviewed news from sources and selected happenings from five countries. In Nepal, a nine point declaration has been made to ensure the survival of mega wildlife species. In India, significant number of forest closures has been established across various parts of northern states. Road construction at the elevation high as 2500 m has been successful in eastern Tibet. While, population of Black necked cranes go up as reported by the recent census.

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

Recent census sheds light on declining visitor birds
Nine point declaration for conservation of wildlife
Local villagers benefit from poultry farming
Banana farming goes commercial
Rain water harvesting promotes local farming
Lower demands ease Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) management plans
Transformation from farmer to businessman through herb collection
Army and park officials rescued rhino from septic tank

INDIA

Forest closure developed across Jammu Kashmir
Efforts undertaken to ease traffic congestion
Kargil in Ladak recorded the coldest state
Forest guards equipped with weapons
Workshop on air pollution curbing
Leopardess found dead
Mineral reserves discovered
Assam ranked 21st at health index
Eruption of forest fire
Pangolin scales smugglers nabbed
Up gradation road works in full swing

CHINA

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Largest inland lake affected by the climate change
1000 scientific and technological projects implemented
Lake areas in "Asia water tower" increases
Rare footage of snow leopard found in Qinghai
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Fruitful development at 2,500 meters elevation

BHUTAN

Health service fund doubles in Bhutan
Rise in the population of black-necked crane

*New ways to protect tigers
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PAKISTAN *Farmers saved by the timely weather forecast*

Nepal-Himalaya

RECENT CENSUS SHEDS LIGHT ON DECLINING VISITOR BIRDS

A recent statistic on bird count has shown decreasing trend in indigenous and migratory birds in Nepal. Out of many possible reasons habitat destruction, obstruction in migratory routes and depleted fish numbers are believed to be the primary cause. However, Nepal is still home to 844 species of birds, among which 527 were found on the Koshi-Tappu Wildlife Reserve, south eastern Nepal alone.

Feb 7

<http://bit.ly/2ElIgvn>

NINE POINT DECLARATION FOR CONSERVATION OF WILDLIFE

A joint seminar conducted by Agriculture and Forestry University (AFU), Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) and National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), in Sauraha, Chitwan, south western Nepal with the presence of experts from 13 different countries has concluded a nine-point declaration for ensuring the protection of Bengal tigers (*Panthera tigris*), Asian rhinos (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) and Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*). One of the major declarations of this seminar is the proposal of establishment of a wildlife hospital in Chitwan National Park.

Feb 7

<http://bit.ly/2Ckig6T>

LOCAL VILLAGERS BENEFIT FROM POULTRY FARMING

People of Balefi, Sindhupalchowk, northern Nepal have been making remarkable profit from poultry farming in the past few decades. With increasing demands and decent transport connection different species of chicken like broiler, Giriraja and Turkey are marketed to nearby towns such as Barabishe, Khadi Chaur, Melamchi Bazaar and even to Kathmandu valley.

Feb 8

<http://bit.ly/2ooFpZI>

BANANA FARMING GOES COMMERCIAL

Farmers of Inaruwa, south eastern Nepal seem to favour the commercial plantation of banana (*Musa sps*) despite low yields and lower market availability. This is mostly due to the easiness in farming and its perennial nature, resulting in fruits for three years or more. This has ranked the district amongst the top producers of banana with 580 metric tons of annual production.

Feb 8

<http://gorkhapatraonline.com/news/50674>

RAIN WATER HARVESTING PROMOTES LOCAL FARMING

Locals of Okhre VDC, Terathum, eastern Nepal are seeking alternatives for irrigation in rainwater because of regular dry spell and decreasing availability of natural water from springs. People are now harvesting rain water in multiple plastic made ponds and using it to irrigate vegetables.

Feb 8

<http://bit.ly/2BOGSiW>

LOWER DEMANDS EASE NEPAL ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY (NEA) MANAGEMENT PLANS

Before the start of the winter, Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) had estimated a 330 Mega Watt (MW) shortage of electricity demand, but decreased usage as a result of increased awareness and better management has cut the shortage to 280 MW. At present, around 1380 MW of electricity demand is received from across the country. With the increase in temperature, melting glaciers and rivers contribute to a higher production of electricity.

Feb 8

<http://bit.ly/2EVD1TW>

TRANSFORMATION FROM FARMER TO BUSINESSMAN THROUGH HERB COLLECTION

A project conducted by Asian Development Bank to improve the high altitude agriculture industry and uplift the socio-economic status of the people living in those regions has helped people of 10 districts in high hill region to make a living out of herbs collection and production. Herbs such as Chiraito (*Swertia chirayita*), Jatamansi (*Nardostachys jatamansi*), Allo (*Girardinia diversifolia*) and others are collected and sold on proper market values.

Feb 9

<http://gorkhapatraonline.com/news/50825>

ARMY AND PARK OFFICIALS RESCUED RHINO FROM SEPTIC TANK

A team of army and the park officials with the help of an elephant (*Elephas maximus*) has rescued a rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) that reportedly fell into the tank after its lid slipped under. Following this incidence, the Park administration has requested the residents living near the buffer zone to make sure to cover their septic tanks and bio-gas outlets properly.

Feb 10

<http://www.myrepublica.com/news/36052/>

India-Himalaya

FOREST CLOSURE DEVELOPED ACROSS JAMMU KASHMIR

The Ministry of Forest, Ecology, and Environment has developed 1233 forest closures in last three years at various parts of the Jammu Kashmir state, northern India. The Department of Ministry has further added around USD 19,200,000 to the estimated cost of around USD 21,000,000 for the completion of this project.

Feb 7

<http://bit.ly/2CJkAMg>

EFFORTS UNDERTAKEN TO EASE TRAFFIC CONGESTION

The Ministry of Agriculture in Srinagar, northern India has taken an initiative to ease the problem of traffic congestion in Jammu and Srinagar. The government has proposed the creation of parking space and two ring road projects worth around USD 624,000,000. Furthermore, Jammu and Kashmir traffics have also implemented effective management tools to enforce traffic laws.

Feb 7

<http://bit.ly/2ClwYw7>

KARGIL IN LADAKH RECORDED THE COLDEST STATE

Kargil in the Ladakh region was recorded as the coldest place in Jammu and Kashmir, northern India with the temperature dropping at minus 16.5 degree Celsius and Leh at minus 11.2 degree Celsius. The minimum temperature in Kashmir valley has remained below freezing point.

Feb 8

<http://bit.ly/2owpKaz>

FOREST GUARDS EQUIPPED WITH WEAPONS

Forest and Sports Ministry have released a statement inferring the provision of weapons for the forest guards to protect the forest reserve in Sultanpur, Kullu, Himachal Pradesh, northern India. The guards will be equipped with weapons to tackle the attack from the poachers and forest mafias.

Feb 8

<http://bit.ly/2oyMhIV>

WORKSHOP ON AIR POLLUTION CURBING

After the exceedance of National Ambient Air Quality Norms (NAAQ) beyond the permissible limits, State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) has taken an initiative to control air pollution in major industrial areas like Parwanoo and Baddi, Himachal Pradesh, northern India. A workshop was even conducted in the city to adopt remedial efforts so to address the problems of increasing air pollution.

Feb 9

<http://bit.ly/2HJmkZX>

LEOPARDESS FOUND DEAD

A carcass of leopardess (*Panthera pardus*) was retrieved by the villagers of Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh, northern India. Such incident has occurred for the 2nd time in the past 1-month time. Although no injuries were recorded, the dead body had been sent for further investigation.

Feb 9

<http://bit.ly/2BPhDNI>

MINERAL RESERVES DISCOVERED

The mineral reserves consisting deposits of granite, silica, and china clay (Kaolin) have been discovered at different sites of Goalpara, Nagaon and Karbi Anglong districts, Guwahati, north eastern India. The total worth of about USD 310,000,000 of mineral reserve has been estimated. With this exploration, more research team has been allocated for further reserve estimation and mapping for more mineral exploration.

Feb 9

<http://bit.ly/2sTxQyt>

ASSAM RANKED 21ST AT HEALTH INDEX

According to the "Healthy States Progressive India, Assam, north eastern India has been ranked 21st position at the health index. This study has been conducted jointly by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, World Bank and Niti Aayog. Kerala, southern India with the score 76.55 has topped the list followed by Tamil Nadu, southernmost with 63.38, Gujarat, western as 61.99 and Himachal Pradesh, northern India with 61.20 respectively.

Feb 9

<http://bit.ly/2sVYXZF>

ERUPTION OF FOREST FIRE

A forest fire has erupted in Kamla forest, Tral township of Pulwama district in Kashmir, northern India. This fresh fire has been reported as the ninth fire incident in Tral, Kashmir just in past few weeks. The paucity of modern equipment has further exacerbated the delays in dousing the incessant fire.

Feb 10

<http://bit.ly/2EXVpl1>

PANGOLIN SCALES SMUGGLERS NABBED

Six kg of pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*) scales obtained from 20 pangolins were seized by the forest officials and the special task force of Belakhoba, in Siliguri, northeastern state of India. The forest officials arrested four smugglers when the consignment was being taken to Nepal.

Feb 11

<http://bit.ly/2FvgDxu>

UP GRADATION ROAD WORKS IN FULL SWING

The construction of 30 kms Banihal-Mangith road and 9.20 kms Khari-Sharbagni-Shagan road in Jammu and Kashmir has resumed after the hindrances caused by the delay in clearance of forest and unclaimed land issues. Furthermore, the progress on 6.30 Km's Shalgadi to Panchal Road and 8 Km's Shalgadi to Pogal road is under the construction and is expected to be completed by the end of June this year.

Feb 11

<http://bit.ly/2F36P0t>

China Himalaya

HYDRO-POWER SUPPLIED TO TIBET'S SMALL TOWN

Situated in the foothills of Himalaya, Yumai, south west China has been receiving power supply of 125 kilowatt. The town that provides settlement to around 9 household families will no longer have to rely on oil lamps and can now operate the electrical appliances.

Feb 5

<http://bit.ly/2orsBS2>

LARGEST INLAND LAKE AFFECTED BY THE CLIMATE CHANGE

Qinghai Lake situated at southern part of Tibet, also known as China's largest inland saltwater lake has been completely frozen in late January two weeks later than its normal time. The lake which usually freezes starting from mid-December for five months until mid-January took longer time to freeze due to the rise in temperature since 2004. Qinghai Lake is a famous tourist destination and also responsible for the maintenance of ecological stability in the Qinghai-Tibet plateau.

Feb 5

<http://bit.ly/2ownXkE>

1000 SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED

According to the new study published by the Tibet Autonomous Regional Department of Science and Technology, Tibet has implemented around 1,000 scientific and technological planning projects in the past five years. The projects have been implemented in fields such as agriculture and animal husbandry, ecological protection, and people's livelihood, with the investment of about USD 315 million for the scientific and technological planning project.

Feb 7

<http://bit.ly/2GJEWHU>

LAKE AREAS IN “ASIA WATER TOWER” INCREASES

Due to the incessant rain and snow, the lake areas in Sanjiangyuan, or Three Rivers Nature Reserve has increased on average by about 3.6 millimeters a year ever-since 2000. Furthermore, satellite monitoring in 2017 has recorded an expansion in the lake areas by 7.5 percent since 2006. Sanjiangyuan falls within Tibetan Plateau in Qinghai province and harbors three of major waterways — the Yangtze, Yellow and Lancang rivers.

Feb 7

<http://bit.ly/2oAOjC2>

RARE FOOTAGE OF SNOW LEOPARD FOUND IN QINGHAI

A total network of 154 infrared cameras installed in an area covering 2,000 square kilometers in the northeastern part of China's Qinghai province has recorded rare footage of snow leopards (*Panthera uncia*). The recent footage recorded by 37 cameras at the Qilianshan National Nature Reserve have observed five endangered adult cats with five cubs, and the third snow leopard with a marmot in its mouth. The images of snow leopard have helped the conservationist in China to fill the gaps in the understanding of snow leopard distribution in China.

Feb 9

<http://eng.tibet.cn/news/th/1518144556262.shtml>

INCREMENT IN EMPLOYMENT RATE IN TIBET

With the creation of 54,000 new jobs in the urban area of China's Tibet Autonomous Region, the rate of employment has increased compared to the last year. The training program was conducted to around 110,000 underprivileged laborers, especially to the rural farmers and herders to acquire new skills.

Feb 9

<http://bit.ly/2FymKlh>

FRUITFUL DEVELOPMENT AT 2,500 METERS ELEVATION

The construction of a road in Sichuan province, eastern part of Tibet Autonomous Region, situated at the height of 2,500 meters has given new hope for the villages to alleviate business, and improve the agricultural productivity. The improved infrastructure has allowed access to better farming practices, raising living standards and lifting local people out of poverty. The Xiaojin government has provided more than USD 800,000 for the further construction of the road.

Feb 11

<http://bit.ly/2CGj8KF>

Bhutan-Himalaya

HEALTH SERVICE FUND DOUBLES IN BHUTAN

The government of Bhutan has doubled the health trust fund up to USD 51 million. Furthermore, the radiation therapy for the cancer patients has also started in Bhutan where, 15 patients recently underwent a therapy.

Feb 6

<http://bit.ly/2Cn4sVp>

RISE IN THE POPULATION OF BLACK-NECKED CRANE

According to the recent data published by the Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN), the population for the Black-Necked Cranes (*Grus nigricollis*) in the country has increased up to 625, the highest recorded till date. The annual counting which was conducted on 2nd February witnessed an increase of 70 cranes from 55 in between 2016-2017 time period.

Feb 6

<http://bit.ly/2oz1Hqr>

NEW WAYS TO PROTECT TIGERS

Conservationist has taken the new initiative to convince farmers in the rural area to protect tigers (*Panthera tigris*) by introducing a direct linkage between the presence of tigers and fewer incidences of crop and livestock depredation. This approach has been taken as current conservation efforts to protect habitat and advocate for anti-poaching activities.

Feb 6

<http://bit.ly/2H0mcls>

NATIONAL VETERINARY HOSPITAL INAUGURATED

Her Majesty the Gyaltsuen inaugurated the national veterinary hospital that caters the provision of health services and treatment required for pets and domestic animals in Motithang, north eastern Bhutan. The inauguration ceremony also commemorated the golden jubilee celebration of the formal diplomatic relations shared between Bhutan and India. The hospital has been built in cooperation with the monetary assistance of USD 77724 funded by the government of India.

Feb 6

<http://bit.ly/2F6Nifi>

FOOD LABELING SUCCESS IN BHUTAN

Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA) have reported a success in the implementation of labels requirements in Bhutan. Since June 2017, all the prepackaged foods have been labeled with the name of the food, ingredient declaration, net content, country of origin. BAFRA officials in the country have been investigating more on the import of manufactured foods since the beginning of 2018 to ensure proper labeling and safe health of its consumers.

Feb 7

<http://bit.ly/2HOLFkW>

INCREMENT IN CARDAMOM PRICING

Cardamom (*Elettaria cardamomum*) fetches good pricing in Bhutan as the price for a kg of cardamom is sold at about USD 10-11. With the increase in demand, the price of this cash crop is expected to raise more. The price for a kg of cardamom is predicted to rise up to USD 13.

Feb 8

<http://bit.ly/2EUnaRC>

Pakistan- Himalaya

FARMERS SAVED BY THE TIMELY WEATHER FORECAST

The timely weather forecast in the northeastern part of Pakistan's Potohar region has motivated the farmers to plant wheat. As a result of this, farmers in this region are expecting to yield at least 1,200 kg of wheat from each acre of land this year along with the increase in income by about USD 210.

Feb 8

<http://bit.ly/2sSuoUU>