

Headlines Himalaya

Aug 13 – Aug 19 (2018)

No. 518

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For the 518th issue of Headlines Himalaya, we reviewed 28 news from 16 sources and selected 24 happenings from five countries. Kalanki underpass in central Nepal comes into operation after taking complete five years for construction. Saffron (*Crocus sativus*) cultivation is under tremendous pressure of pollution in Jammu and Kashmir, northern India. Popular annual 'Yogurt Festival' commences in Tibet for a week since August 11. National Elephant Survey Report 2018 in Bhutan shows an increase in elephant (*Elephas maximus*) population. While in northern Bhutan, young yaks (*Bos grunniens*) are suffering severely from Gid disease.

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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Thote celebration in Pokhara
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PAKISTAN

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EMBANKMENT CONSTRUCTED

An embankment has been constructed at Amar Community forest of Kanchanpur District, far western Nepal to overcome destruction caused by enlarged rivulets. The embankment is 1,000 meters in length along the Trishuli and Rautela rivulets with cost construction of NPR 6 million collected by the forest from the sale of wood, fodder and gravels. The construction of this embankment has secured more than 150 families as per the Chairperson of Amar Community Forest.

Aug 13

<https://bit.ly/2nS3zux>

THOTE CELEBRATION IN POKHARA

Gurung community has recently celebrated Thote festival in Pokhara, western Nepal with a belief to chase away the enemy of the country and to get rid of negative spirit in villages. The festival was solemnized joyfully by Gurungs dressed beautifully in their cultural attires rallying from Bagar Tudikhel to Nayabajar Tamughinma, Pokhara.

Aug 14

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

CAMPAIGN TO MINIMIZE CLIMATE CHANGE

With the aim to minimize climate change, an awareness campaign has been started with the theme 'Sit on One ton Carbon' in Kathmandu. This campaign was organized jointly by Association of Family Forest Owner's Nepal (AFFON), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Jeewan Kendra Nepal, and inaugurated by the Minister of Forest and Environment. Various personalities emphasized the necessity of carbon sequestration for climate change mitigation and adaptation and carbon trade.

Aug 14

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

PLANTATION AROUND TEMPLE PREMISES

One hundred and eight saplings of Peepal (*Ficus religiosa*) have been planted around the premises of Kedareshwor Temple of Pokhara, western Nepal during a program organized by the Lions Club of Pokhara Lake Valley. During the program, the Mayor of Pokhara Metropolitan City added that proper management and monitoring of the trees planted should be done and proposed the initiation of construction of a Green Highway in collaboration with various clubs in the Pokhara Valley.

Aug 14

<https://bit.ly/2MF39G0>

DISASTROUS FLOOD IN JAJARKOT

The flood, result of heavy rain at Jhupra River in Nalgad Municipality of Jajarkot, far western Nepal has caused massive destruction of developmental infrastructures and private properties while hundreds of families have been displaced. A bridge has also been swept by the flood.

Aug 15

<https://bit.ly/2N4Tm8S>

DECLINE IN RHINO POPULATIONS

Last year, the death toll of rhinos (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) reached 26 owing to natural causes. As per the Regional Director of Forests, four died due to flood, 12 due to old age and 10 due to clash among themselves. Rhino attack has caused more deaths of people than any other wildlife. Recently, one rhino was found dead near lake at Chitwan National Park (CNP), south central Nepal and according to veterinary doctor, rhino might have died due to old age. According to Information Officer of CNP, this is the first natural death of rhino reported this fiscal year and declining population of rhinos due to natural causes requires in-depth research as emphasized by the conservationists.

Aug 15 & 17

<https://bit.ly/2w2ymtf>

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

JUVENILE WATER BUFFALO AT CNP

A wild water buffalo (*Bubalus arnee*), listed as an endangered mammal in Protected Species of Nepal, has given birth to female calf at Chitwan National Park (CNP), south, Central Nepal. With the birth of this calf, buffalo population has reached ten in CNP. Fifteen wild water buffaloes were relocated to CNP from Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, eastern Nepal and Central Zoo, central Nepal two years ago. Some survived in the new environment while some failed to adapt and died.

Aug 16

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

PEOPLE CAUGHT RED HANDED

A group of five people were caught red handed with raw meat of deer (*Axis spp.*) and weapons from Sarlahi district, eastern Nepal by Sector Forest Officers. Culprits will be punished according to Wildlife Conservation Act. Poaching is prevalent more these days as wildlife encounter with humans has increased due to wildfire in dry season and habitat encroachment.

Aug 16

<https://bit.ly/2wkd1dS>

COMPLETION OF KALANKI UNDERPASS

Construction work of underpass at Kalanki chowk, central Nepal which connects Khasibazaar with Bafal chowk has been completed. This 800-meter long underpass will come into operation soon. With the completion of this four-lane underpass, traffic congestion at Kalanki chowk is expected to ease. Due to earthquake 2015 and India's trade embargo this project was delayed.

Aug 17

<https://bit.ly/2Ms1MuX>

DIALYSIS SERVICE AT ZONAL HOSPITAL

Dialysis service has started at Sagarmatha Zonal Hospital, eastern Nepal. Inauguration was done by Health and Population Minister and dialysis machines of worth NPR 10 million have been installed in the hospital. The Minister added on the upgradation of the hospital soon so that the patients need not be referred to other hospitals for treatment.

Aug 17

<https://bit.ly/2w2H1fc>

DEVASTATING FLOOD AT SINDHUPALCHOWK

A concrete bridge over Sandi stream which connects Barhabise and Khursani Bazaar of Sindhupalchowk District, central Nepal has been swept away by flood and landslide triggered due to heavy rainfall. With this, vehicular movement has stopped and people were terrified. The landslide debris has been removed using the excavators and as per the Engineer at the Road Division Office, Charikot in Dolakha, central Nepal, installation of Bailey bridge was underway.

Aug 19

<https://bit.ly/2nVBpi8>

FREE HEALTH CAMPAIGN

Free health camp has been organized by Star Hospital, Lalitpur, central Nepal with a slogan 'Health is Wealth' that will continue for one month. According to the officials of the hospital, services related to heart, kidney, liver, diabetes, and thyroid will be provided. In addition, on doctor's recommendation patients will get 50 percent discount in operation fees and 10 percent discount in medicine.

Aug 19

<https://bit.ly/2N6JueQ>

India-Himalaya

FIRST HARVEST OF HIGH DENSITY APPLES

The Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, northern India has inaugurated the "First Harvest of High Density Plantation of Apples (*Malus* spp.)" by plucking fruits from different varieties of plant at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST-K) Orchard, northern India on Aug 12. The Vice Chancellor of the university has urged the farmers to take help from the university's scientist and experts for the introduction of new High-density Apples in order to achieve higher yield in the years to come.

Aug 13

<https://bit.ly/2PrH8YG>

HEAVY RAINFALL CAUSES CHAOS IN HIMACHAL

Due to the heavy rainfall and landslide, about 400 roads and three National Highways: Hindustan-Tibet, Chandigarh-Manali and Pathankot-Chamba have been closed in Himachal Pradesh, northern India. According to the District Administration, a bridge and four irrigation canals have been completely damaged by the flash flood in Chorang nalah. As a result, more than 100 tourists are stuck in Sangla. Similarly, Kullu and Rampur of Himachal Pradesh have been heavily affected due to heavy rain damaging public and private properties. The District Administration has also warned the locals about the water level rise in Larji dam in Kullu district and asked them to be careful.

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<https://bit.ly/2PoNV5E>

<https://bit.ly/2C6WT5R>

ENCROACHMENT OF FOREST LAND

The villagers reported that the influential people of Barak Nallah area, north eastern India have encroached around 10 hectares of forest land. While the concerned forest officials including the District Forest Officer and a Ranger have not taken any action even after being informed about the matter. The villagers have requested the Governor to look into this matter.

Aug 13

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

SEVERE IMPACTS OF POLLUTION

According to the document published by Ecology and Environment Department, the water bodies and Saffron (*Crocus sativus*) cultivation have been greatly affected by increasing pollution in Jammu and Kashmir, northern India in addition to the impact on nearby forests and wildlife. Due to rapid industrialization and mining activities, the incidence of cancer and respiratory health problems have increased among the residents. The forest resources are also under overwhelming pressure due to changing land-use patterns, forest degradation and development of infrastructures giving rise to additional environmental problems.

Aug 13

<https://bit.ly/2PXya6E>

PLANTATION AND SANITATION DRIVE IN JAMMU

Plantation and Sanitation drive was organized by the Floriculture Department at MHS Zanana Park, northern India on August 16. Saplings were planted by Director Floriculture Jammu along with the participation of senior officers, members of ladies club and locals of the area. The director requested the local people to clean the surroundings and plant more trees in the areas to increase the forest area which will help to maintain the temperature and reduce the effect of climate change.

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<https://bit.ly/2PxLV9>

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

China Himalaya

POPULAR ANNUAL FESTIVAL COMMENCES

The Annual Sho Dun commonly known as Yogurt festival has started in Lhasa, south western China at Deprung and Sera monasteries on Aug 11 by unrolling thangka, a giant religious silk painting. This festival was originated in 11th century when pious folks were served with Yogurt on their very last day stay in mountain hermitages for penance. In 2006, this was included in the National intangible cultural heritage.. A week-long celebration this year includes activities such as Tibetan opera performances, horse races, an ethnic costume show, hiking and a trade fair.

Aug 13

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

TOURISM BLOSSOMS IN GANSU

The current environmental regulation aiming for a garbage free environment enacted by the Tibet autonomous prefecture's government in 2015 in Gannan, south western China Tibetan autonomous has begun to show its good impacts in tourism in the region. According to the District's Tourism Bureau, more than 11 million tourists visited the areawith the income reaching USD 726 million in 2017 which is double compared to the inflow in 2014.

Aug 16

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

Bhutan-Himalaya

ELEPHANT NUMBER MULTIPLIES IN BHUTAN

According to the second edition of National Elephant Survey Report launched on World Elephant Day, Aug 12, there is an increase of 165 (*Elephas maximus*) reaching 678 than the survey in 2011 in Bhutan. With the increase in number of elephants, the human-wildlife conflict has also increased in the southern region of the country where the elephants inhabit. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has adopted a SAFE system to resolve the human-wildlife conflict and the Chief Forestry Officer of the Nature Conservation Division of the Department of Parks and Services mentioned that maintenance of continuous forest cover and balance between conservation and development are of utmost importance in Bhutan for elephant conservation.

Aug 13

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

PROMOTION OF BAMBOO FOR HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION

The South Asian Bamboo Foundation (SABF) in collaboration with the Handicrafts Association of Bhutan (HAB) and the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) has launched an application called “Bamtech” to promote the use of bamboo (*Bambuseae* spp.) in housing and constructions instead of timber on Aug 14 in Thimpu, west central Bhutan. This app provides information and awareness to the people about different species of bamboo grown in the country. According to the Founder and Executive Director of the SABF, around 36 species of bamboo are grown in Bhutan.

Aug 15

<https://bit.ly/2C8yr3P>

BENEFITS FROM CONSTRUCTION OF HIGHWAY

The widening and blacktopping of 37 km Tingtibi-Gongphu Highway, southern Bhutan completed in June has made the transportation easier and faster by reducing the travel time between the two places by two hours. According to the locals, the turnings of the road have been damaged but the condition is far better than past. The officials of Department of Roads (DoR) have been monitoring for the compliance with the quality specifications made in the contract.

<https://bit.ly/2Pt2DIF>

YOUNG YAK-KILLING DISEASE IN BHUTAN

The people in Gasa district, northern Bhutan have been losing their young yaks (*Bos grunniens*) due to Gid disease every year. The disease directly affects the central nervous system of yaks and sheep (*Ovis aries*) caused by the larvae of a tapeworm, *Taenia multiceps* known as *Coenurus cerebralis* present in the faeces of dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*) which is consumed by the yak while grazing. Over 9,500 yaks have died due to Gid during the past 15 years. The livestock extension office of Lunana have been raising awareness about vaccinating calves on time and de-worming of dogs.

Aug 17

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

Pakistan- Himalaya

PLANTATION CAMPAIGN IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

With the aim to reduce the effect of climate change, the administration has launched tree plantation campaign in Mohmand district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, north western Pakistan on Aug 13. The condition of Mohmand is found to be suitable for pine (*Pinus* spp.) plantation and 130,000 saplings are decided to be planted during this campaign. Similarly, on the occasion of 71st Independence Day of Pakistan, Sustainable Forest Management Project and Forest Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, north western Pakistan have planted 25,000 saplings in one hour at different areas of Kaghan valley in Hazara division on Aug 14 making it a record. About 22,000 students from different schools actively participated in the plantation program.

Aug 14 & 17

<https://bit.ly/2ov8L7P>

<https://bit.ly/2Q0a4sf>