

Headlines Himalaya

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For the 546th issue of Headlines Himalaya, we reviewed 33 news from 16 sources and selected 28 happenings from five countries.

The government is planning to deploy Army to safeguard Chure region, the southern low elevation Himalaya Mountains. People in Tehrathum, eastern Nepal, have been irrigating their agricultural land by collecting rainwater in plastic ponds. The locals of Mahottari, south central Nepal, attended a rally to protest the illegal mining of sand and pebbles from Ratu River. Lakes are shrinking in alarming rate in Kashmir valley, northern India. The forest coverage of Tibet has increased by 12.4%. Awareness programme on the ban of plastic bags was conducted in Gelephu of Sarpang district, southern Bhutan. Poor sewage system in Hyderabad, southern Pakistan poses threat to human health.

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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LANDSLIDE IN ROAD UNDER CONSTRUCTION KILLS 1

Landslide occurred at Ratakatha of under-construction Darchula-Tinkar road, Darchula, far-western Nepal that left 1 dead and 2 injured. Dhimi was getting the cattle for grazing, and was buried in the landslide debris rolling down from the road side. It is suspected that the landslide occurred due to use of explosives for blasting during the construction work and the rain that followed.

Feb 26

<https://bit.ly/2Tr1WGe>

ELECTRICITY FROM WIND ENERGY

Electricity has been generated in Mityal of Nisdi Rural Municipality, Palpa, south western Nepal, by wind and solar energy. The 1,200 W electricity has been generated by Kathmandu Alternative Power Energy Group (KAPEG), People, Energy and Environment Development Association (PEEDA) Nepal and a Greek social organization.. NRP 800,000 was invested for the generation of the electricity, where 600 W was generated from wind energy and 600 W from solar energy.

Feb 26

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

CONSERVATION OF CHURE REGION

The government is planning to deploy Nepali Army to safeguard the Chure region, the southern low elevation Himalaya mountains which is depleting rapidly due to deforestation and illegal extraction of natural resources. Chure covers 12.78% of the country's land and is made of fluvial sedimentary rocks. Due to its ecological, geographical, and bio-physical conditions, conservation has not been effective and has been rapidly degrading.

Feb 27

<https://bit.ly/2H72tGU>

PLASTIC POND TO IRRIGATE AGRICULTURAL LAND

People in Tehrathum, eastern Nepal, have been irrigating their agricultural land in winter and dry season by collecting rainwater in a plastic pond. Due to the climate change, many water sources have dried up that has posed major challenge for the winter crops. People expressed their satisfaction to find this effective way to irrigate the winter crops.

Feb 28

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

SNOWFALL AFTER A DECADE

After the sudden change in weather, Makwanpur, central Nepal, received snowfall after 15 years. According to the District Police Office Makwanpur, at least 4-feet snow blanketed the Tribhuvan highway which obstructed vehicular movement. Likewise, Bhaktapur, central Nepal, witnessed the snowfall after 12 years.

Feb 28

<https://bit.ly/2EUpkD9>

<https://bit.ly/2VJdqI9>

DEATH OF RHINOS

A total of 32 rhinos (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) have died in Chitwan National Park (CNP), south central Nepal, due to natural causes from the beginning of this fiscal till date, while 25 rhinos died due to the same reasons in the last fiscal year. According to the Chief Conservation Officer of the Park, the death of the rhinos were due to the fights between the beasts, alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) attack, tiger (*Panthera tigris*) attack and illness. According to CNP statistics, as many as eight rhinos died in 2014, 15 in 2015, 14 in 2016 and 24 in 2017 due to natural cause. According to the latest statistics, there are 605 rhinos in CNP and the rhinos have not been poached since April 2017.

Feb 28

<https://bit.ly/2TleM2x>

MAIZE POCKET AREA

Tilottama municipality, Rupandehi, south western Nepal has been announced as maize pocket area. 70% of the total land in the municipality is considered suitable for maize (*Zea mays*) farming, in which the municipality has decided to grow maize. The municipality has decided to provide maize seeds on 100% subsidy and agricultural tools on 90% subsidy.

Feb 28

<https://bit.ly/2J0g7gH>

SNOWFALL AND RAIN ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The whole country experienced snowfall and rain due to sudden change in weather influenced by low pressure created by westerly winds. Meteorological Forecasting Division Nepal showed the maximum rainfall in Jumla mid-western Nepal and minimum rainfall in Kathmandu, central Nepal. Karnali region including Dolpa, mid-western Nepal, experienced the highest snowfall of this decade which has greatly affected the lives of local people. The excessive snowfall in Mustang has increased the risk of avalanches, putting dozens of settlements at danger.

Mar 1

<https://bit.ly/2TG0n6A>

<https://bit.ly/2VKii9W>

<https://bit.ly/2XL6CFB>

LOCALS PROTEST ILLEGAL OPERATION OF CRUSHER PLANTS

The locals of Mahottari, south central Nepal, attended a rally to protest the illegal mining of sand and pebbles from the Ratu River. Protesters demanded that the authorities concerned take action against crusher plants operating illegally. Currently, 19 crushers are in operation in the river bank and there have been no efforts to shut down the illegal operation.

Mar 2

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

THOUSANDS OF HACTARES OF ARABLE LAND LACKS IRRIGATION

As the government has been focusing on modernizing agriculture, it was found that 800,000 ha of land is awaiting irrigation in the country. As mentioned in the irrigation national plan, 2075 prepared by Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, out of 2.2 million ha of arable land only 1.4 million ha land is provided with irrigation. According to the irrigation experts, Nepal is getting irrigation via underground water resources, well, canal and river.

Mar 2

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

DRILLING FOR DRINKING WATER

Potable groundwater has been extracted by drilling in Hiledada and Bhalukhop dada area of Ramechhap, central Nepal. The area was drilled to 45 meter in depth until plenty of water was found. The drilled water is expected to solve drinking water crisis of the village.

Mar 3

<https://bit.ly/2HI3pa6>

SANITATION CAMPAIGN IN KALAIYA

The state government in State 2, Kalaiya, Bara, south eastern Nepal, has inaugurated a sanitation awareness campaign to maintain cleanliness in the State. The campaign mainly emphasizes on the need for mandatory construction of toilet under the 'one house one toilet' initiative of the State government.

Mar 3

<https://bit.ly/2HI3c6O>

CONSTRUCTION OF COMMUNITY SHELTER

A safe community shelter has been constructed in Baijapur of Raptisonari Rural Municipality, mid-western Nepal, to minimize the damage caused by monsoon floods by Rapti River. The multi-purpose shelter home was constructed at the cost of NRP 8,400,000 in order to provide safe shelter to those affected by floods.

Mar 3

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

PROVINCE 1 RICH IN RHODODENDRON DIVERSITY

Nepal is home to 33 species of Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ferrugineum*) among which 31 species are found in Province 1, eastern Nepal alone, according to the experts. The flower blooms in March-April and Taplejung, Terhathum, Sankhuwasabha, Panchthar, and Ilam districts has abundant distribution of the flower. The research carried out on Rhododendron has been published in a recently released book called 'Kanchenjunga and the Rhododendrons Around'.

Mar 3

<https://bit.ly/2C5GZpB>

India-Himalaya

FIRE AFFECTS NORTHERN INDIA

In Jindi village of Kullu district, Himachal Pradesh, northern India, a fire burned nine houses, partially damaged 1 house and killed five animals. Similarly, a fire originating from a hut due to leakage of LPG cylinder followed by 5 LPG cylinder bursts has destroyed around 20 bamboo (*Bambusoideae*) huts at Jayanagar area of Guwahati, Assam, north eastern India on Wednesday. According to the Deputy Director of the Fire and Emergency Service department, total 10 fire tenders had been pressed in service in order to control the fire.

Feb 25 & 27

<https://bit.ly/2J2jDar>

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

SHRINKING OF LAKES IN KASHMIR VALLEY

In Kashmir valley, northern India, carelessness of authorities and lack of public awareness has resulted shrinking of many lakes in alarming rate. A local said that the lakes that are major tourist attractions in Kashmir valley are being severely polluted despite spending huge sum of money. Different departments and colonies that are nearby the Jhelum river are known to be responsible for the pollution of the river.

Feb 25

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

INITIATION OF PLANTATION DRIVE

Plantation drive has been launched at Green Belt park of Jammu district, northern India by Commissioner/Secretary of Forest, Environment and Ecology. The drive was conducted by the Urban Forestry Division, Jammu in collaboration with Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) 76 Battalion, Social Action for Women Empowerment and Rural Advancement (SAWERA), a Non-Governmental Organization, Civil Society and various schools. Various saplings of ornamental plants were planted and was dedicated to the Martyrs of Pulwama Attack. According to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Forest Department has a target of planting around 1500000 saplings.

Feb 26

<https://bit.ly/2EVRM7V>

SNOWFALL IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

Life in various parts of Himachal Pradesh, northern India including the hill stations of Manali, Kalpa and Shimla and other higher reaches have been severely affected by snowfall and rain. Transportation system was affected as 303 roads were blocked for traffic and 302 machines were used to clear the blocked roads. In Shimla and Kinnaur, the schools and colleges remained closed on Thursday following the orders of district administration.

Feb 28

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

DEATH OF TRIPURA'S OLDEST LION

The oldest female lion (*Panthera leo*) named 'Hira' of Sepahijala Zoo of Tripura, northern India, died because of poor health condition. According to the warden of Sepahijala Wildlife Sanctuary, the lion was 27 years old and was facing ill health since last couple of weeks. Lions live for 22 years on average and now only 7 lions are left in Sepahijala Zoo.

Mar 1

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

AVALANCHE KILLS SECURITY PERSONNEL

An army jawan died in avalanche in Ladakh's Batalik sector of Jammu and Kashmir, northern India. According to the defence official, the army officer hit by the avalanche sustained severe injuries. He was then taken to the military hospital where he died.

Mar 2

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

PROGRAMME ON SWACHH BHARAT ABHIYAN

In Jammu, northern India, a programme on "Swachh Bharat Abhiyan" was conducted by Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) in collaboration with Government MAM College. In the programme, the mayor of JMC stated that the participation of all residents is required in order to complete the mission of making Jammu among top 10 cleanest cities of India.

Mar 2

<https://bit.ly/2EV9LLz>

AVIAN TREE TALK ORGANIZED

Avian Tree Talk as a part of Biodiversity Awareness for younger minds was organized by Government College for Women, Gandhi Nagar of Jammu, northern India. In the guest lecture, more than 100 biomedical students participated and interacted with learned speakers. The Director of State Forest Research Institute, Jammu and Kashmir, northern India, as the resource person gave an informative speech on topic "Feathered Friends of Man" providing interesting facts about birds.

Mar 2

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

China Himalaya

DAM PROPOSED TO PREVENT DESERTIFICATION

Environmentalists are recommending a dam in order to stop desertification in the frozen soil area in Hoh Xil National Nature Reserve in the northwestern part of Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. The dam would be an important breeding area for the endangered Tibetan antelopes (*Pantholops hodgsonii*), with the balanced water level in the lake and prevent loss of soil.

Feb 25

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

FOREST COVERAGE RISES IN TIBET

The forest coverage of Tibet has increased by 12.4% as Tibet has increased various afforestation drives and implemented afforestation project in the basins of Tibet including YarlungTsangpo, Nujiang, Lhasa, Nyangchu, Yalong, and Shiquan rivers. Statistical records show that in 2018, around 75,000 ha of forests were planted ending the history of no trees.

Mar 1

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

Bhutan-Himalaya

AWARENESS PROGRAMMES ON PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENT

In Gelegphu of Sarpang district, southern Bhutan, awareness programme on the ban of plastic bags was conducted by Gelegphu Thromde in collaboration with police and officials of Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA). Bhutan plans to reinforce the ban on use and sale of plastic bags and wrappers from 1st April this year. Meanwhile, foresters of Jigme Dorji National Park (JDNP) in Paro district, eastern Bhutan are raising awareness of locals by visiting their homes in order to prevent forest fires caused by human activities.

Feb 26 & 27

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

<https://bit.ly/2VKIX7G>

DAMAGES CAUSED BY WINDSTORM

In Wangdue district, central Bhutan, 33 houses were damaged by the windstorm including 12 houses with their roofs blown off. 29 sheets of tarpaulin were provided to the damaged households by the administration of Wangdue.

Mar 1

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

Pakistan-Himalaya

POOR SEWAGE SYSTEM POSES THREAT TO HUMAN HEALTH

Water samples collected from various parts of Hyderabad, southern Pakistan showed presence of several harmful viruses. The current outbreak of drug-resistant (XDR) typhoid in the city has already left the locals in panic. In addition, the sewage water samples were found to be contaminated with poliovirus.

Feb 25

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