

Headlines Himalaya

March 28– April 03

No 398

Editorial Team – Kapil Silwal and Hari Basnet

For the 398th issue of Headlines Himalaya, we reviewed 28 news from 17 sources, and selected 26 happenings from five countries. In Nepal, dust storms engulfed Kathmandu valley, more than 100 deaths were reported due to lightening, Prime Minister directs termination of Environment Impact Assessment. In India, stress is given to use eco-friendly handmade paper to save environment, inspection of sewage plant took place. In China, Snow leopards were trapped in camera at Mt.Qumolangma. In Bhutan, medicinal plants are threatened by over harvesting, black stork and bar headed goose were first time recorded in Bumthanng.In Pakistan, sapling were planted for greenery ,rats and stray dogs create fear in Rawalpindi.

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

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Death toll Exceeds 100 Due to Lightening
Hailstorm Blights Crops in Kaski and Taplejung
SDG Strategy of the Country: Reduce Poverty to 5 Percent
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Endemic Species of Achham Cow in Endangered State

INDIA

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Villagers Limited the New Houses to Protect Forest

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Fire Burns Forests in Samdrup Jongkhar
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Forest Fire Threatens Chimi Lhakhang
Heavy Rainfall Delights Upland Paddy Cultivators in Bhutan
Windstorm Hit Eastern Bhutan
Black Stork and Bar-Headed Goose Recorded First Time in Bumthang

PAKISTAN

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Threats of Rodents in Peshawar
Torrential Rains Hit Northern Pakistan
Fear of Rat and Stray Dogs in Rawalpindi

DUST STORM ENGULFS KATHAMANDU VALLEY

A dust storm raging at a speed of 70 km/h hit Kathmandu on March 28. The storm which lasted for about 15 minutes reduced the visibility to 200 meters forcing the International Airport to shut down. Nepal Police reported that around half a dozen people were injured as a result of being hit by flying objects.

<http://www.thestatesman.com/news/world/dust-storm-hits-nepal-many-injured-airport-shut/132912.html>

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION THROUGH TRAINING

Ministry of Population and Environment organized a six-day training on 'Climate change and community-based adaptation plan formulation' in Nepaljung. The training stressed on building public awareness, developing functional uniformity, putting public advocacy efforts and preparing local resource people on climate change.

March 30

<http://radionepal.gov.np/radio-nepal/incorporate-climate-change-issues-in-local-planning-process/>

DEATH TOLL EXCEEDS 100 DUE TO LIGHTENING

According to Ministry of Home Affairs, the number of deaths caused by lightning has exceeded 100 every year since 2010. The major reasons for this could be accurate reporting, climate change and lack of awareness. Similarly, frequency and intensity of storm and global warming is also correlated.

<http://nepalitimes.com/article/nation/lightning-strikes-killing-people-in-Nepal,2940>

HAILSTORM BLIGHTS CROPS IN KASKI AND TAPLEJUNG

Incessant hailstorms wiped out winter crops in over a dozen VDCs of Taplejung district just before the harvest period. The full cost of the damage is yet to be estimated. Similarly, hailstorms accompanied with rain and strong winds in Kaski have also damaged crops, vegetables and fruits of worth more than NRs 70 million.

March 31, 2016

<http://therisingnepal.org.np/news/10113>

<http://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/hailstorms-damage-vegetables-fruits/>

April 01

SDG STRATEGY OF THE COUNTRY: REDUCE POVERTY TO 5%

National Planning Commission has prepared a National Strategy to implement Sustainable Development Goals passed by United Nations General Assembly, with the aim of reducing poverty to 5% within 2030. Sustainable Development Goals present an opportunity for Nepal as it includes economic, social and environmental aspects. Sustainable development goals (2015-2030) have been set for the period after the Millennium Development Goals concludes in 2015.

April 01

Kantipur Daily, Nagarik Daily

<http://epaper.ekantipur.com/kantipur/2016-04-01/16>

<http://nagarikplus.nagariknews.com/component/flippingbook/book/2551-nagarik-01-apr-2016/2-nagarik.html>

PM DIRECTS TERMINATION OF EIA PROVISION

Prime Minister K.P. Oli has directed concerned agencies to terminate the provision of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to ease the illegal extraction of gravels and sands from river. About two months ago, the government had already decided to reduce the 140 days long EIA process to 40 days. However, environmentalists have expressed their concern that this could lead to the over exploitation of natural resources.

April 02

Nagarik

<http://nagarikplus.nagariknews.com/component/flippingbook/book/2551-nagarik-01-apr-2016/2-nagarik.html>

ENDEMIC SPECIES OF ACHHAM COW IN ENDANGERED STATE

An endemic species of Achham, *Noumuthe Gai*, or Achham cow, is now endangered due to a lack in conservation efforts. There are only 447 females, 84 males and 367 calves of the species in the district. The cow known for its nutritious milk is found only in Achham, far western Nepal.

April 02

Nagarik

<http://nagarikplus.nagariknews.com/component/flippingbook/book/2553-nagarik-02-apr-2016/2-nagarik.html>

FOREST ENCROACHMENT ELEVATED

Accelerated rate of institutionalized forest encroachment in the name of various public bodies is putting the vast forests of Kailali district in far-western Nepal, under increasing risk. Out of the total 205,939 hectares of forest area in the district, over 20,500 hectares has been encroached upon so far, as per the data maintained by District Forest Office.

Gorkhapatra daily

India-Himalaya

SEWAGE PLANT INSPECTION IN SHIMLA

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) constituted a committee for undertaking inspection of sewage treatment plants (STP) in Shimla, capital city of Himachal Pradesh, northern India. All hotels in the town and suburbs have been directed to have their own treatment plants within the next three months. Unmanaged STPs was blamed to have caused the recent jaundice outbreak in the capital city.

March 29

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/himachal/community/green-tribunal-forms-panel-to-inspect-sewage-plants-in-shimla/214788.html>

MONKEYS DECLARED VERMIN IN SHIMLA

The Rhesus Macaque (*Macaca Mulatta*) has been declared a vermin for a period of six months within Shimla, capital city of Himachal Pradesh, northern India. During the last three years, a total of 296 persons have been victims of monkey bites in the area. Despite sterilization programs, the number of monkeys in the area continues to grow. The recent 2015 census showed that there are 2,452 monkeys within the municipal limits.

March 30

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/himachal/community/centre-declares-monkeys-vermin-in-shimla-mc-limits/215197.html>

UNEXPECTED HAILSTORM HITS DARJEELING

Darjeeling in West Bengal, eastern India, received an unexpected hailstorm that covered the town with more than four inches of ice. The area last received snowfall back in 2008. The locals and tourists enjoyed playing in the snow. However, tea planters expressed concern about its impact on their tea production.

March 31

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1160401/jsp/siliguri/story_77552.jsp#.Vv4GjTG6Reg

BARAMULLA RESIDENTS FORCED TO DRINK POLLUTED WATER

Around 80,000 people in Baramulla town in Baramulla district, Jammu and Kashmir, northern India, have been forced to drink polluted water from River Jhelum. The three filtration plants in Baramulla, constructed decades

ago, can only filter around 2.10 gallons of water a day, while the town requirement stands at 6 million gallons a day.

March 31

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/kashmir/baramulla-residents-forced-to-drink-polluted-water/213513.html>

BAN ON PLASTIC AROUND REWALSAR LAKE

Ban on the use of plastics has been imposed in and around Rewalsar Lake in Mandi district, Himachal Pradesh, north India. A four-member high-level committee comprising the Secretary, Environment, Member Secretary, Pollution Control Board and Secretary, Irrigation and Public Health has also been formed to ensure the lake is restored to its previous glory. Dumping of municipal waste, particularly plastic waste, in the lake has been prohibited.

April 01

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/himachal/ngt-bans-use-of-plastics-around-rewalsar-lake/216021.html>

STRESS ON USE OF ECO-FRIENDLY HANDMADE PAPER

The State Government of Assam, Northern India, has requested the use of handmade-paper folders in place of plastic to safeguard the ecological balance of the earth. Handmade paper has been globally acclaimed as an eco-friendly product for its non-toxic and biodegradable properties.

April 02

<http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=apr0316/city053>

China Himalaya

SNOW LEOPARDS CAMERA TRAPPED AT MT. QOMOLANGMA

A large number of endangered snow leopards (*Uncia uncia*) were caught on camera on the north face of Mt. Qomolangma (commonly called Mt. Everest). Out of 17,304 photos taken by 64 infrared cameras placed in Gyirong County of southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, 606 contained snow leopards and the rest contained other wild animals. Snow Leopard, one of China's Class A protected animals, has population count of about 2,500 to 3,500 in China.

March 30

<http://eng.tibet.cn/news/1459325472852.shtml>

VILLAGERS LIMITED THE NEW HOUSES TO PROTECT FOREST

Villagers who live in Langrong village in Diqing Tibetan autonomous prefecture of Yunnan province, can only build a new house if their old house is over 30 years old. Limiting the number of new houses is one of the many environmental protection measures taken by the villagers, who live within the Potatso National Park. The park compensates their efforts by providing solar panels, more efficient stoves, and abandoning herding. Nujing Central Government has invested USD 56.62 million to protect the forest over the past six years.

April 02

<http://eng.tibet.cn/news/145960427728.shtml>

Bhutan-Himalaya

EFFLUENTS POLLUTES THE RIVERS IN THIMPHU

About 6.5 million liters of car-wash wastewater or effluent is generated every year in Bhutan. Out of the total 68,685 vehicles registered in Bhutan, more than half of them are in Thimphu, the capital. As such, the car-washing

facilities of Thimpu are posing a threat to the aquatic lives in the rivers, by releasing the noxious effluents containing oil, toxic detergents and other harmful chemicals in the rivers.

March 28

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/impact-as-effluents-go-into-the-rivers/>

FIRE BURNS FORESTS IN SAMDRUP JONGKHAR

The first forest fire incident of the year in Samdrup Jongkhar district, south-eastern part of Bhutan, razed over 40 hectares of forest area. Steep slopes and wind caused difficulties in containing the fire, finally coming under control after two days of efforts by the firefighters.

March 28

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/fire-burns-almost-100-acres-of-forests-in-samdrupjongkhar/>

MEDICINAL PLANT SPECIES UNDER THREAT

The increasing demand for traditional medicines and unsustainable use of medicinal plants is threatening the plant species in Bhutan. The demand for raw materials like roots and flowers for traditional medical practice has increased from seven metric tons in 2000 to 30 metric tons at present. About 600 medicinal plant species have been identified and around 60 traditional medicine units are operate in the country.

March 30

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/demand-for-traditional-medicines-could-threaten-plant-species/>

FOREST FIRE THREATENS CHIMI LHAKHANG

A forest fire destroyed around seven hectares of forest in Lobesa, below Chimi Lhakhang, in Punakha district, north-west Bhutan. It is suspected that the fire started from a private land where debris were being burnt. The fire also affected the bamboo plantations along the Punatsangchhu area, below Chimi Lhakhang.

March 30

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/forest-fire-threatens-chimi-lhakhang/>

HEAVY RAINFALL DELIGHTS UPLAND PADDY CULTIVATORS IN BHUTAN

Heavy rainfall in the past two days has delighted the famers of Taraythang Gewog, Gelephu, Sarpang district, southern Bhutan. They hope better yield from their upland paddy cultivation this year. The upland rice technology is favorable in areas dependent on rainwater. Introduction of this climate-smart agriculture technology has greatly enhanced food security of the farmers as well as the conservation, development and utilization of rice.

April 01

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/upland-rice-a-perfect-solution-for-farmers-of-taraythang/>

WINDSTORM HIT EASTERN BHUTAN

A windstorm hit 35 houses including schools and lhakhangs in four gewogs of Pemagatshel district, eastern Bhutan. Among the affected houses, 27 were partially damaged while five houses and a temple completely lost their roofs. No casualties were reported. Tarpaulin was provided to the affected houses by Dzongkhag administration, the disaster committee, and the compensation was assessed by Royal Insurance Corporation of Bhutan.

April 02

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/windstorm-blows-roofs-in-pemagatshel/>

BLACK STORK AND BAR-HEADED GOOSE RECORDED FIRST TIME IN BUMTHANG

Black stork (*Ciconia nigra*) and Bar-headed Goose (*Anser indicus*) have been recorded for the first time in Wangchuck Centennial National Park (WCNP) in Bumthang, northern Bhutan. Black Stork's presence at around 1680m has been recorded for the first time in the country: it is usually found only in southern region below 600 masl. It is speculated that climate change might be causing their migration to higher altitudes.

April 02

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/black-stork-sighted-in-bumthang/>

SAPLING PLANTATION FOR GREEN ISLAMABAD

Capital Development Authority (CDA) planted 375,502 saplings in last two years at a cost of Rs 6 million in capital city Islamabad, northeastern Pakistan. CDA is planting an additional 450,000 saplings in the federal capital in collaboration with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and different institutions this year. Plantation in the urban areas, particularly in different residential sectors, median strips of avenues, green belts along major highways and parks is expected to enhance natural beauty of the capital city.

March 28

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/islamabad/28-Mar-2016/cda-plants-375-502-saplings-plans-450-000-more-this-year>

THREATS OF RODENTS IN PESHAWAR

Large sized mice are posing serious health threats to the locals of Peshawar, north-west Pakistan, by contaminating food and biting people. In last three years alone, five people have lost their lives to infections caused by rat bites. The local authorities recently announced reward money of Rs. 25 for each dead mouse.

March 31

<http://www.khybernews.tv/newsDetails.php?cat=3&key=MTA1MDg3#>

TORRENTIAL RAINS HIT NORTHERN PAKISTAN

Heavy rains engulfed various parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Azad Kashmir in northern Pakistan. At least 45 people were killed and more than 30 were injured. Most of the damage was caused by landslides and incidents of roof collapse. Rainfall and flooding in the Peshawar valley, capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, caused the Bara Khowar Lake to overflow, washing away over 70 shops and destroying a number of houses, crops and orchards.

April 3

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1249711/at-least-45-killed-as-torrential-rains-flood-parts-of-kp-azad-kashmir>
<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/109908-Rain-snowfall-hit-parts-of-KP>

FEAR OF RAT AND STRAY DOGS IN RAWALPINDI

Rising numbers of rats and stray dogs in Rawalpindi, northernmost part of the Punjab province, has led to the residents appealing to the city district government to start a campaign to curb their numbers. There is a sense of fear and panic among the residents of Rawalpindi as their numbers seem to be growing out of control. The residents urged their district government to start a campaign similar to Peshawar, where they fixed a head price of a rat at Rs 25, as incentives for locals to kill them.

April 04

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/110091-Rising-number-of-rats-stray-dogs-irks-people>