

Headlines Himalaya

December 01- December 08, 2015 No. 381

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For the 381th issue, we have reviewed 26 news reports from 12 sources and selected 24 happenings in five countries. In Nepal, there is a higher risk of child mortality while a new technique in poultry farming has been introduced. Meanwhile in Uttarakhand of Northern India, water shortage is causing migration and wild boars are wreaking havoc on agricultural lands. In Tibet, China, there has been an improvement in ecological and environmental conditions in the Tibetan plateau and Cardamom farming is growing in popularity in Bhutan. Indus-Delta is facing increasing threats from construction works, pollution and encroachment endangering the fragile ecosystem there.

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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HIGH RISK OF CHILD MORTALITY

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has said that more than three million children under the age of five in Nepal are at risk of death or disease during the extreme cold due to a severe lack of fuel, food, medicines and vaccines. More than 200,000 families affected by the quake are still living in temporary shelters at an altitude above 1,500 metres where weather conditions are very cold. Fears are also growing that the rising dependence on firewood caused by the fuel crisis is increasing indoor pollution resulting in heightened risks of pneumonia.

December 01

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2015-12-01/over-3-million-under-fives-at-risk-of-death-or-disease-un.html>

NEW TECHNIQUE IN POULTRY FARMING

Poultry farmers have started the practice of molting due to the shortage of chicken feed in Chitwan district of central Nepal. The practice saves up to 15 days' feed as the level of feed is gradually reduced to zero within the first week followed by an additional week without any feed. This also helps increase poultry production and production period over time as diseased hens die off during the molting. Moreover the Nepal-India blockade has also led to a reduction in the production of eggs by 25 percent and the production of chicks by 30 percent.

December 01

<http://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/chitwan-poulterers-resort-to-molting/>

FOREST USED AS DUMPING SITE

The forests are increasingly being used as a dumping site by the local people in Rupandehi, Lumbini district of western Nepal. The municipality's failure in managing a proper dumping site has meant that the pollution is rising day by day degrading the air quality in the city. Urbanization is the key reason behind this increase in waste production as well as pollution due to improper management.

December 02

<http://www.gorkhapatraonline.com/news/17492>

PROBLEMS IN CROPS STORAGE

Quake affected farmers are facing problems with crop storage in Gorkha district of central Nepal. The sudden temperature drop and inadequate storage space caused the millet (*Pennisetum glaucum*) to go moldy and the rest stored in bamboos were rotten and inedible. According to a Senior Agriculture Development officer, collective store houses are being constructed in 10 areas of the district to address this problem.

December 03

<http://www.nepalnews.com/index.php/news/46759-quake-survivors-facing-crops-storage-problem>

RED PANDA CONSERVATION

World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the Hariyo Ban Programme, Red Panda Network and Himlai Conservation Forum have initiated a campaign to protect Red Panda (*Ailurus fulgens*) by creating awareness in communities and schools in Myagdi district of western Nepal. The researchers confirmed the existence of Red Panda in the area after they found its excreta in Mareni Community Forest in Lulang, Jaljala area of Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve and forest area of Gurja and Mudi VDCs, in course of their research on endangered wildlife.

December 03

<https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/red-panda-protection-campaign-kicks-off-in-myagdi/>

LOCALS AGAINST ARMY MOBILISATION

Locals have lodged a complaint against the government's decision to mobilize Nepal Army in Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve in the Dhaulagiri Himalayan range in western Nepal. Locals of 14 VDCs in Baglung, Myagdi and Rukum districts are against this decision stating that the Army cannot perform any activities in the land of indigenous people. The Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve Victims Struggle Committee accused the government authorities of being involved in poaching and illegal wildlife trade.

December 05

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2015-12-05/locals-against-army-guarding-dhorpatan.html>

OVERGRAZING IN KHAPTAD MOORLANDS

Overgrazing and insufficient conservation efforts are threatening the existence of moorlands in Khaptad region of far western Nepal. Some areas are sinking as a result of that and several cracks have appeared on the surface. In total, there are 52 big and small moorlands in the area and many of which are on the threshold of losing their existence.

December 05

<https://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/grasslands-in-khaptad-area-sinking/>

India-Himalaya

WATER SHORTAGE CAUSES MIGRATION

After six decades of independence, villages in Pauri, Garhwal, Uttarakhand, northern part of India still do not have access to safe drinking water. Over 50 percent of villagers choose to migrate to other places like Kotdwar, Rishikesh and Dehradun. According to locals, around 700 people used to reside in Khandoli and Paali village but now only about half of the populations still live there. Water scarcity has also hit the farm economy of the villages. The Uttarakhand government is yet to authorize funds for the proposed Bhairav Garhi multi-village drinking water project.

December 01

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/dehradun/Water-scarcity-driving-migration-from-the-hills-in-Pauri/articleshow/50002087.cms>

WILD BOARS DRIVEN AWAY

Wild boars (*Sus scrofa*) have wreaked havoc on the agricultural fields in Uttarakhand, northern part of India. The government has declared them to be pests and sanctioned their culling. However after various failed measures, the farmers have finally found something that works - loudspeakers around their farmland, playing the latest songs on full blast. This has managed to drive away not just the boars but other wild animals too.

December 01

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/dehradun/Farmers-play-loud-music-to-drive-away-wild-boars/articleshow/50002164.cms>

STRICT SAFETY DEMANDS

The Himdhara Environment Research and Action Collective demands the adoption of strict environmental and safety norms in hydropower projects in Himachal Pradesh in northern India. A series of casualties at the site of the projects along with the massive landslide in Chagaon village, located on the alignment of the Karcham Wangtoo hydro project's tunnel has led to increasing concerns. According to forest department estimates, over 7,000 hectares of 9,000 hectares forest land allotted for non-forest use is currently used for hydels projects..

December 03

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/shimla/Himachal-NGO-demands-strict-safety-norms-in-hydro-projects/articleshow/50021178.cms>

FOREST LAND RETRIEVED FROM ENCROACHERS

A total of 18 hectares of forest land was recovered in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir, northern most state of India from forest invaders. According to forest division around 67 hectares of land has been retrieved in Kishtwar. The forest officers have been organizing awareness programs so as to stop the encroachment in different parts of forest.

December 5

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jammu/JK-govt-retrieves-over-45-acres-of-forest-land-in-Kishtwar/articleshow/50054334.cms>

SUBSTITUTION OF OLD TEA PLANT

The Tea Board of India has detailed a plan for the revival of Kangra tea industry in Kangra district of Himanchal Pradesh, northern India. The Ministry of Commerce has approved a special project for the substitution of old tea bushes with new high-yield varieties so as to increase the production. There had been plans to improve productivity and quality of tea plantation in the state.

December 06

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/himachal/community/plan-afoot-for-revival-of-kangra-tea-industry/167567.html>

ILLEGAL CUTTING OF TREES

Last year alone, 2,477 trees were felled illegally in the Himanchal Pradesh state of northern India. According to Section 247 of the Municipal Council Act, 1994 people felling trees on private land were charged a minimum fee of Rs 500 and imprisonment up to three months. In most cases, the municipality compounded the offences by imposing the penalty alone resulting to the increase in deforestation rate. The Act was amended in 2010 to increase the fine to Rs 5,000. However, the municipality continues to compound offences by imposing a fine encouraging the offenders to continue felling trees.

December 06

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/himachal/2-477-trees-felled-in-1-yr-govt/167578.html>

GLOBAL WARMING SYMPTOMS

In the last 60 years, maximum temperature has risen by 3.6°Celsius and normal temperature by 5.3°Celsius in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand, northern part of India. Weather Department officials said that the rise in temperature is due to global warming. Increasing pollution and urbanization has accelerated the effects of global warming in the region.

December 06

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/uttarakhand/mercury-rising-in-kumaon-due-to-global-warming/167165.html>

China Himalaya

RESTORATION PROJECT FOR SALT PANS

A restoration project of USD 4.8 million was launched in Tibet southwest of China for inheritance and preservation of thousand years old salt pans. The salt producing technique in Tibet has been listed in the 2nd batch of national imperceptible cultural heritage and those pans have also been listed as traditional vestige sites of national level.

December 02

http://eng.tibet.cn/2012sy/xw/201512/t20151202_3986015.html

GOOD ECOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITION

The ecology on Mt. Everest, also called Mt. Gomolangna, located in the Himalayan mountain region on the border between China and Nepal is returning to its natural state. The rising trend of endemic species Taer sheep (*Ovisaries*), appearance of once extinct black necked cranes (*Grus nigricollis*) and increasing highland plants by 200 shows the ecological environment is getting better. The strict implementation of environmental protection policies in recent years along with a decrease in human activity has led to an improved ecological environment of the region.

December 03

http://eng.tibet.cn/2012sy/xw/201512/t20151203_3986510.html

RED SANDAL WOOD SMUGGLER CAUGHT

Seven smugglers, including two Tibetans smugglers, of Red Sandal wood (*Pterocarpus santalinus*) which is an endangered species by IUCN were seized with a haul worth INR 15 lakhs, INR 10, 000 and seven lakhs foreign currency on National Highway-4 in Kadapa District in Andhra Pradesh India. These species are in high demand as for their uses as ingredients in alternative medicines and availability of radioactive elements like Thorium and Uranium.

December 03

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=36808&article=Two+Tibetans+among+sandal+wood+smugglers+arrested>

TOURISM REVENUE RISE

Tibet received a number of over 20 million tourists in 2015 and has generated more than USD 4.48 billion in tourism revenue which is higher than the records of past years. In the past nine months of this year, 17.47 million tourists have visited and there has been rise in tourist visits by 36 percent which generated USD 3.64 billion in revenue.

December 04

http://english.chinatibetnews.com/ly/lyxw/201512/t20151204_958628.html

PROTECTION OF ECOLOGY

The ecological environment of the Tibetan plateau has improved since the 1980s despite the increase in human activities. Since the 1990s, there has been an increase in vegetation and ecological functions and forested areas have also increased. There are 47 natural conservation areas which cover 34 percent of the region and 125 rare wild animals are protected by the State.

December 05

http://eng.tibet.cn/2010hb/xw/201512/t20151205_3987992.html

Bhutan-Himalaya

CARDAMOM FARMING

Cardamom cultivation has spread rapidly in Dogap, an isolated settlement in Dophuchen (Dorokha), Samtse of Bhutan. There are 80 households in the area that involved in cardamom farming. A kilogram of cardamom fetches USD 23. There has been a decline in maize and rice cultivation in the area as farmers switch to cardamom. All families have stacked their harvests waiting for the price to rise.

December 01

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/cardamom-farming-goes-viral-in-dophuchen/>

AGAR WOOD CULTIVATION DECLINED

Cultivation of Agar wood trees (*Acquilaria agallocha*) has not improved in more than three decades in Panbang, Zhemgang District of southern Bhutan. Out of 23,098 numbers of trees, 2,443 trees were found in private lands across Panbang and Samdrupjongkhar town. The villagers are not interested in agar wood cultivation because of the hardships involved in getting permits to harvest.

December 01

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/agarwood-cultivation-has-not-improved-in-more-than-3-decades/>

ARMYWORM ATTACK BUCKWHEAT

The Armyworm (*Pseudaletia unipuncta*) Haworth had been invading and destroying buckwheat (*Fagopyrum sculentum*) fields for the last few days in Decheling Gewong of Pemagatshel district, south east of Bhutan. The pests have swarmed about 1.41 hectares of buckwheat farms belonging to six households. Controlling measures like hand picking of worms and spraying of chemicals in the infested areas have begun with the help of communities.

December 05

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/armyworm-attack-buckwheat-fields-in-nganglam/>

Pakistan- Himalaya

THREATS TO INDUS DELTA

The ecosystem of Indus Delta in Karachi, Pakistan is degrading day by day. According to a WWF report, the construction of dams and various canals, encroachments, cleaning mangroves for agriculture, reduced sediment loads; habitat destruction and pollution are the main threats to biodiversity change. The study discovered that disturbance of seawater inland has created a surface water problem for people living in the Delta and for riparian plants and aquatic organisms.

December 1

<http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/sindh/01-Dec-2015/less-water-flow-mangroves-removal-pose-threat-to-indus-delta>

STOCKING OF FOOD

Locals have started to store food for the winter as bad weather makes it hard for them to pass through the roads in Shangla village of Haripur district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, north west of Pakistan. The link roads close during heavy snowfall and often people have to walk for eight to 10 hours to reach the desired destination. Snowfall usually starts in November and continues till end of February.

December 06

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1004651/preparing-ahead-people-of-shangla-start-to-stock-up-on-food/>