

# Headlines Himalaya

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For the 383<sup>th</sup> issue, we reviewed 27 news reports from 12 sources and selected 25 happenings in five countries. In Nepal, the wind project remained close and the production of orange declined in Illam district of eastern Nepal. The forest land has been restored in Jammu and Kashmir of northern India and risk of migratory bird rise in Kashmir, northern India. In Tibet, China there has been highest production of grains and the climate resistant crops farming developed in Bhutan. There has been protection of heritage in Peshawar of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, northern Pakistan.

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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### LIVESTOCK RESTORED

Over 1,444,000 livestock from 90 Village development committees of five quake affected districts have been restored to the livestock service system in the last four months. Helping Earthquake-Affected Livestock in Nepal (HEAL-Nepal) provided trainings to the locals to build earthquake-resilient sheds, organized animal health camps and provided nutritional feed in the aftermath of the quake to minimize the loss of livestock assets. A total of 15145 households benefitted directly from this project.

December 16

<http://thehimalayantimes.com/business/144000-livestock-restored-in-90-vdcs/>

### CHARCOAL DEMAND RISES IN KAILALI

The crisis of LPG has led to an increase in the demand of charcoal as an alternative fuel in Kailali district of western Nepal. There has been a rise in demand of charcoal products with the dip in temperatures on top of the shortage of cooking gas leaving charcoal producers unable to meet the demand. There are as many as 25 charcoal entrepreneurs in the area.

December 16

<http://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/use-of-charcoal-up-in-kailali/>

### ILLEGAL MINERALS EXTRACTION

Illegal extraction and export of sand and boulders has been on the rise for a considerable amount of time in Nawalparasi district of western Nepal. Locals have constantly appealed to the administration to curb the illegal activity and yet around 20 to 235 tractors of materials are smuggled in a night. Extraction and export of construction materials from rivers of the region in 29 VDCs across six municipalities of the district is prohibited.

December 17

<http://thehimalayantimes.com/nepal/extraction-from-rivers-on-the-rise/>

### SMUGGLING AND POACHING OF PROTECTED ANIMALS ON THE RISE

Uncontrolled poaching and smuggling of rare birds and animals has led to a decrease in their numbers in Bajhang district of north western Nepal. It has been reported that smugglers are killing around 15 *Lophophorus impejanus* and kalij pheasants (*Lophura leucomelanos*) and three wild boars (*Sus scrofa*) ghoral, jharals and other endangered species every day. A lophophorus is sold for around NRs 3, 000 whereas meat of wild boars, ghorals and jharals costs around NRs 1,200 per kilogram.

December 17

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2015-12-17/poaching-of-protected-birds-goes-unchecked.html>

### MARIJUANA CULTIVATION IN FOREST

Smugglers from the Parsa and Chitwan district southern part of Nepal are cultivating marijuana (*Cannabis sativa*) and opium (*Papaver somniferum*) in the forest area by taking advantage of the prolonged Terai blockade and ongoing fuel crisis. Police destroyed marijuana plants in seven hectares of land at Paterwasugauli-8 and Nirmalbasti-7, 8 and 9 and also other awareness campaigns were conducted to stop farming of Marijuana.

December 17

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2015-12-17/farming-of-marijuana-rife-in-parsa-villages.html>

#### WIND PROJECT REMAINS CLOSE

The wind power project in Mustang, northern central part of Nepal, which carries huge potential as an alternative energy source has remained close due to a lack of repair and maintenance. The windmill suffered damage to two of its wings from strong winds. No initiatives have yet been taken to restore the project.

December 18

<http://www.myrepublica.com/society/story/33140/mustang-s-wind-energy-project-remains-grounded.html>

#### CARDAMOM FARMING INCREASED

A majority of farmers in Dolakha district have started commercial farming of cardamom which has grown exponentially in different VDCs of the district. Many farmers who had been growing maize, wheat, potato and other crops earlier have now turned to cardamom after realizing the profit that can be made from the crop. Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RNN) has been providing help to Dolakha-based farmers for the commercialization of cardamom farming.

December 18

[http://www.myrepublica.com/society/story/33131/dolakha-sees-a-boom-in-cardamom-farming.html#disqus\\_thread](http://www.myrepublica.com/society/story/33131/dolakha-sees-a-boom-in-cardamom-farming.html#disqus_thread)

#### DECLINE IN ORANGE PRODUCTION

Production of Orange (*Citrus sinensis*) has declined by 10 percent in Ilama district of eastern Nepal due to citrus greening. Trees in more than half of the village Development committees (VDCs) including Barbote, Namsaling, Soyak and Godak have been affected. Stunted growth, multiple off-season flowering and production of small, irregularly shaped fruit that tastes bitter are some of the symptoms of the disease. Oranges are cultivated in 309 hectares of the district.

December 20

<http://gorkhapatraonline.com/news/18221>

#### CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF EDUCATION

Many children in remote villages are unable to get the education of past primary level in Chitwan, central Nepal. Schools are few and far between in rural parts of Chitwan and children have to travel a long distance to reach their schools. Most families cannot afford to send their children to town where they could have access to schools.

December 20

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2015-12-20/children-in-chitwan-deprived-of-education-past-primary-level.html>

## India-Himalaya

#### FORESTLAND RESTORED IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

The government has recovered 1062.3 hectares of forestland from illegal control in Jammu and Kashmir of northern India this year. It has decided to free every inch of encroached land and restore these as green cover. The government has decided to carry out afforestation program to refresh and restore the degraded forest areas.

December 15

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/jk-govt-retrieves-2-625-acres-of-forestland-from-land-grabbers-115121500881\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/jk-govt-retrieves-2-625-acres-of-forestland-from-land-grabbers-115121500881_1.html)

## CONSERVATION OF TRIKUTA HILLS

Successful steps have been taken to increase the green cover in the area around the Holy Cave Shrine so as to conserve and protect the environment of Trikuta Hills of Jammu and Kashmir state, northern India. Forest Wing has brought more than 1200 hectares under afforestation activities and planted over 17.10 lakhs saplings during the past 7 years. A hi-tech Nursery has also been set up in an area of about 1.01 hectare with a production capacity of around 5 lakhs plants per annum, to meet its annual plantation requirements.

December 15

<http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/smvd-shrine-board-takes-big-step-towards-environment-conservation-of-trikuta-hills/>

## LAKE FREEZES

A portion of Srinagar's Dal Lake froze over as an extreme cold wave swept through Jammu and Kashmir and northern plains of India. Severe fog was reported in the isolated areas in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana. The cold-wave conditions also hit road and rail traffic in the state. In several cities of Uttar Pradesh, the minimum temperatures dropped to 2.2 degrees in Najibabad, 3.4 degrees in Kanpur, 4.7 degrees in Lucknow and 4.8 degrees in Agra areas.

December 17

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Dal-Lake-freezes-as-cold-sweeps-north-India/articleshow/50212331.cms>

## RISK TO MIGRATORY BIRD

There has been a sharp decline in migratory birds around Kashmir's wetlands this winter. Only 18 species were observed visiting the area compared to 28 that came three decades ago. During the winter of 2009 to 2010, more than one million birds visited Kashmir's wetlands but this number has declined to half last year. Losses of habitat and climate change are major factors to decline in the number of migratory birds in the area.

December 17

<http://thehimalayantimes.com/environment/wetland-loss-development-put-kashmir-bird-migration-at-risk/>

## WATER SHORTAGE

Shortage of water exist in Indian Oil Corporation's Guwahati Refinery in Guwahati of Assam, north eastern India. This is following a heavy silt deposition in the stretch of Brahmaputra River where it has eight pumps. The refinery used to pump 1300 cubic meters of water per hour daily before mid-October. Currently only four pumps are operational with round the clock dredging.

December 18

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/guwahati/Water-crisis-hits-countrys-oldest-refinery/articleshow/50233351.cms>

## TRANSPORT INDUSTRY BIGGEST CULPRIT BEHIND AIR POLLUTION

The State Pollution Control Board has recognized the transport sector as the major source of air pollution in Himanchal Pradesh of northern India. Industrial pollution accounts for just 22 percent of the air pollution. The biggest culprit seems to be the 9000 diesel run trucks along with other factors like diesel and kerosene generators, cheap domestic fuels, burning of household garbage etc. A major amount of non-exhaust road dust emission from the movement of vehicles on the badly maintained roads also caused air pollution in the area.

December 19

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/himachal/trucks-not-industry-main-cause-of-pollution-in-baddi/172887.html>

## THREAT FROM GLACIER DEPLETION

Jhelum which is the main channel of drainage from the Kashmir valley is facing solid degradation with its water discharge decreasing amid rapid socio-economic transformation. The river forms the bedrock of Kashmir's ecology and has been an important source of life-support. There has been an emerging risk from the decreasing water discharge into the river due to depleting glaciers.

December 19

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/jammu-kashmir/depleting-glaciers-pose-threat-to-jhelum/172926.html>

## China Himalaya

### HIGHEST GRAIN PRODUCTION

A record high grain production exceeding one million tons to 1.01 million tons has been recorded in Tibet for the year 2015, of which 700 thousand tons was highland barley. The high yield has been attributed to the increase in farm land, promotion of certified seeds, and implementation of scientific farming initiatives. In 2015, more than 2.55 million mega units of grains were planted in Tibet, with more than 1.87 million of them as highland barley.

December 15

[http://eng.tibet.cn/2012sy/xw/201512/t20151215\\_3993468.html](http://eng.tibet.cn/2012sy/xw/201512/t20151215_3993468.html)

### WORLD'S LARGEST WINTER HABITAT

Southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region has become the world's largest winter environment for the critically endangered black-necked crane. The area is currently transitory home to 7,000 to 8,000 black-necked cranes which is around 70 percent of the world's total. The birds arrive from mid-October to spend the winter in Tibet because of the warm climate and plentiful food.

December 15

[http://english.chinatibetnews.com/hb/News/201512/t20151215\\_977446.html](http://english.chinatibetnews.com/hb/News/201512/t20151215_977446.html)

## Bhutan-Himalaya

### CITRUS PRODUCTION SUFFERS

Gewong officials in Nganglam of Bhutan are worried that they will not meet even half of their annual performance agreement (APA) which they had signed in orange production. Farmers are worried because many trees are not bearing fruits though it's already harvest season or fruits are falling before they ripen. Villagers have attributed this drop in production to climate change and the spread of citrus greening.

December 15

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/nganglam-cant-depend-on-orange-anymore/>

### CLIMATE RESISTANT CROP

The Renewable Research and Development Centre (RRDC) has released a new climate resistant rice variety, JRN White in Bumthang of Bhutan. It is considered climate resistant because of its resistance to climate change induced pests, diseases and changing weather conditions. JRN White is the highest yielding of the six varieties of rice grown on station in the center with a yield of 2.2 tons per acre.

December 16

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/climate-resistant-rice-released/>

### HIGH NUMBER OF WHITE BELLIED HERON

The international workshop on White-bellied Heron conservation conducted by the Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN) revealed that Bhutan has the highest population of the White-bellied Heron (*Ardea insignis*). Of the total population of 60 individuals, 28 are found in Bhutan, 23 in Myanmar and 7-8 in India. Bhutan now has 47 percent of WBH population up from mere 14 percent before.

December 19

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/bhutan-has-most-of-the-global-white-bellied-heron-population/>

### DECLINING TOURIST ARRIVALS

According to the Hotel Association of Bumthang (HAB) Tourist arrivals in Bumthang of Bhutan decline to 15,482 in 2015 although the government's decision to re-schedule road widening works at night for the convenience of travelers. This year the number of tourist arrivals dropped by 8,618 as compared to last year's 24,100 and only 15,482 visited in this year.

December 21

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/bad-business-for-bumthang-hotels-this-year/>

## Pakistan- Himalaya

### HERITAGE PROTECTION

The provincial government in association with the department of archaeology and other authorities concerned has outlined the new legislation to conserve the heritage in Peshawar of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, northern Pakistan. This is more proficient than the previous laws in reducing historic smuggling, illegal mining and demolishing of archeological sites and buildings. The new law consists of a penalty of NRs 2 million for the same.

December 20

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1227780/new-law-to-effectively-protect-heritage>

### WATER CRISIS

The drying up of Ankara Dam which is the main source of supply to the city has led to a shortage of drinking water in Gwadar of western Pakistan. People have accused the government of not learning any lessons from a similar shortage in the area four years ago. A desalination plant constructed by the government has yet to be functional and Sod Dam has been under construction for 14 years. The provincial government has provided Rs15 million for supplying water to affected areas through water tankers as a temporary measure.

December 21

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1227817/gwadar-in-grip-of-severe-water-crisis>