

# Headlines Himalaya

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For the 493<sup>rd</sup> issue of Headlines Himalaya, we reviewed 23 news from 9 sources and selected 23 happenings from five countries. In Nepal new breeding spots of Himalayan vultures (*Gyps himalayensis*) were identified in Mustang, north western part of the country. In India, elephant (*Elephas maximus*) fatalities on railway tracks of Assam, north eastern state, to be checked by Automated Early Warning System (AEWS). In Bhutan, a tiger (*Panthera sp*) was radio collared for the first time by Bhutanese biologists and foresters. In Pakistan, twenty nine-acres of zoo was inaugurated with a motto to develop Peshawar the country's most beautiful city.

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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## PAKISTAN

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### AGRICULTURAL FARM INAUGURATED IN DANG

To promote local items made from banana (*Musa* sp.) such as chips, pickles and other processed fast foods, an agricultural farm worth more than 2 million USD has been opened in Tulshipur Dang, mid western Nepal. This farm was inaugurated on the auspicious occasion of Shivaratri and hopes to provide employment to local people in Dang.

**Feb 14**

<http://gorkhapatraonline.com/news/50924>

### SCIENTIFIC STUDY AND RESEARCH IN SHUKLAPHANTA NATIONAL PARK

Shuklaphanta National Park embarks on its novel Savanna experiment. In one of its prime grassland, 20 hectares of land has been divided into five blocks for conducting separate research studies. Research related to observation of the small wildlife, vegetation and adaptations are being conducted there.

**Feb 14**

<http://www.myrepublica.com/news/36289/>

### KAPILVASTU: A NEW HUB FOR TOURISTS

Home stay services are gaining popularity among domestic tourists in Kapilvastu district, southern Nepal. The Tharu communities at Jagdishpur, Kapilvastu have started this service, especially to those people coming to the historic Tilaurkot Durbar, Kudan, Gotihawa and the Jagadishpur Lake among other touristic sites.

**Feb 14**

<http://therisingnepal.org.np/news/21897>

### SNOW ATTRACTS MORE TOURISTS IN RARA

Snow and cold, something new and unique for the people of the cities in Nepal, has been an important factor for tourism in the past few years. Similarly, one week of snow in Mugu district, mid western region of Nepal has seen an increased number of domestic and international tourists visiting the district's famous Rara Lake. Direct flights and proper transport might increase the tourism even more, authorities claim.

**Feb 15**

<http://www.myrepublica.com/news/36351/>

### MAIZE FARMING IMPROVED IN BARA

Farmers in Bara district, south eastern Nepal, have been encouraged in maize (*Zea mays*) farming following the introduction of new species that can grow in all three seasons. This year alone 450 hectares of land have been utilized for the production of this crop. This cash crop is especially popular in Fattepur, Dumarwana, Manharwa, Nijgadh and Kolhavi VDC of Bara and is emerging as one of the top exporters of Raw Maize in the country.

**Feb 15**

<http://gorkhapatraonline.com/news/50982>

### IDENTIFICATION OF VULTURES' NEW BREEDING SPOTS IN MUSTANG

A study led by Global Primate Network (GPN) and Modification Jomsom using several drones have found 49 nest of Himalayan Vulture (*Gyps himalayensis*) in Mustang, north western Nepal. The director of GPN praised this new technology, which eased the process of survey taking. The 2013/14 survey which was conducted with the help of binoculars had only found 8 nests of this species.

**Feb 15**

<http://gorkhapatraonline.com/news/50991>

### **POLICE CREATING TOUGH TIMES FOR POACHERS**

With the praiseworthy success of zero poaching of Rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) on the wake, police have arrested three persons on charge of smuggling rhino horns. The allegation although is yet to be proven in court, shows the result of the combined efforts from park rangers, Police and Army officials in the last few years to stop the trade and poaching itself.

**Feb 15**

<http://therisingnepal.org.np/news/21877>

### **AN INITIATIVE TOWARDS STRAY DOGS' ADAPTATION**

PAWsitive Hands, a non-government organization working to improve the lives of street dogs (*Canis* spp.) has been conducting awareness campaign to improve the life of stray dogs in Kathmandu with a slogan of "Adopt Don't Shop". The organization works to provide health care and vaccination services for street dogs.

**Feb 16**

<http://www.myrepublica.com/news/36435/>

## **India-Himalaya**

### **RISE IN ASSAM'S FOREST COVER**

Assam's forest cover has increased by 567 Sq. km due to excessive plantations, mostly outside forest areas. Assam has 2,979 Sq. km dense forest, 10,192 Sq. km moderately dense forest and 15,116 Sq. km open forest. Furthermore, the total area of water bodies within the forests has also recorded an increase of 87 Sq. km.

**Feb 13**

<http://bit.ly/2oBvWOH>

### **FARMERS MOTIVATED TO TAKE SERICULTURE ACTIVITIES**

The Central Silk Board (CSB) jointly with Union Ministry of Textile organized a daylong exhibition to urge farmers to adopt scientific sericulture activities to enhance the economy. The total budget of USD 3.5 million has been allocated for the north eastern States, including Arunachal Pradesh, to run three-year sericulture project.

**Feb 14**

<http://bit.ly/2HYX6Xg>

### **EARLY WARNING SYSTEM TO TRACK ELEPHANT FATALITIES**

The high extent of elephant (*Elephas maximus*) fatalities on the railway track in Assam, north eastern India has alarmed wildlife experts to use modern surveillance technology like Automated Early Warning System (AEWS) to check the disturbing trend. Nature and Wildlife Association of France (NWA) and Green Guard Nature Organization, jointly have recommended installation of an automated on-train early warning system to track and alarm drivers about the presence of animal around tracks from a distance of over 3 km.

**Feb 14**

<http://bit.ly/2CQeERL>

### **VILLAGES UNDER WATER CRISIS**

Residents of Mohalla in Dangerpora area of Sopore in Jammu and Kashmir, northern India have been struggling with the lack of water supply as the Public Health and Engineering Department (PHE) has failed to provide adequate water supply to these areas.

**Feb 15**

<http://bit.ly/2oB6EzW>

### **INCREMENT IN SANITATION COVERAGE**

Sanitation coverage has doubled from overall 38% to 78% in Jammu and Kashmir, northern India in the past three years. Furthermore, over four Lakh toilets have been constructed in the State during the last three years including 2.39 Lakh in 2017-18.

**Feb 15**

<http://bit.ly/2t5yetW>

### **OBSTRUCTION IN THE RIVERS EMBANKMENT WORK**

The breached and damaged embankment in Guwahati, north eastern India has not been repaired due to inactive cooperation from the government department. According to sources, 26 major embankments were destroyed in the flood last year. Meanwhile, Rural Infrastructure Development Fund has implemented 40 anti-erosion schemes to control the ongoing problems of river embankment.

**Feb 15**

<http://bit.ly/2oBGux4>

### **FOREST GUARDS EQUIPPED WITH SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS**

With the aim to protect wildlife, forest guards in Assam, north eastern India have been provided with sophisticated arms and allied equipment's to monitor poaching of rhinos (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), tigers (*Panthera tigris*) and other wild fauna. Altogether, 272 Insas rifles, 91 Ghatak rifles 20 9-mm pistols, 131 12-bore pump action guns and 954 SLRs were distributed to the forest guards.

**Feb 18**

<http://bit.ly/2GWQx6u>

### **FLORICULTURE: POTENTIAL SECTOR TO BOOST RURAL ECONOMY**

Floriculture has been cited a potential sector to rejuvenate rural economy in Sikkim and the other north eastern States of India. A three-day National Conference on 'Floriculture for Rural and Urban Prosperity in the Scenario of Climate Change' was held on 18<sup>th</sup> February in Gangtok, where the emphasis on floriculture was discussed to improve rural economy of north eastern states.

**Feb 18**

<http://bit.ly/2FLT9oz>

## **China Himalaya**

### **MEASURES ADOPTED TO CONTROL DESERTIFICATION OF LAND**

Various measures have been implemented in Tibet, China in order to control the desertification of land. In recent years, around 40666 hectares of desertification land has been controlled. Moreover, 20000 hectares of land has been converted into sealed conservation areas. As per the recently published 5<sup>th</sup> Desertification Monitoring Results, the area of desertification land in Tibet Autonomous Region has been decreased to 13,600 hectares.

**Feb 14**

<http://bit.ly/2FK9vhc>

### FOREST FIRE FINALLY CONTAINED

The forest fire that began from Tshendona in Paro, north western Bhutan since February 9 has been spreading in various directions in the last five days. The spread of fire towards Taktsang side was finally contained around 3:30 PM on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2018. More than 500 people including armed force personnel, locals and people from forestry were involved in containing the fire.

**Feb 14**

<http://bit.ly/2HZepaY>

### WORRISOME PRICE OF BHUTAN'S GINGER

Farmers in Bhutan have expressed their concern over the decreasing price of ginger (*Zingiber officinale*), as the price of ginger has plummeted to a record low of USD 0.02 per kg for the new harvest that has started to hit the market. Unlike this year, the price of ginger had skyrocketed to USD 1.85 per kg last year. The better yield of ginger this year has caused a surplus supply, eventually decreasing the rate of ginger in the market.

**Feb 14**

<http://bit.ly/2t8785r>

### ASSISTANCE FOR HORTICULTURE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Japan's government has pledged to assist a horticulture project to research and diffuse subtropical cultivations in Panbang, Zhemgang, south central Bhutan. The USD 66000 project aims at constructing a research center and a farm irrigation system to carry out research and diffuse subtropical horticulture like mango (*Mangifera indica*) and litchi (*Litchi chinensis*).

**Feb 14**

<http://bit.ly/2F58qDv>

### TIGER COLLARED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN BHUTAN

For the first time, a team of Bhutanese biologists and foresters have radio-collared a tiger (*Panthera tigris*). The three-year-old female tiger weighing 110kgs was collared on 9<sup>th</sup> February at the Royal Manas National Park (RMNP). The tiger was named Tendrel Zangmo which means auspicious omen.

**Feb 16**

<http://bit.ly/2CTO4r8>

### IMPROVEMENTS IN SARPANG'S AGRICULTURE

Sarpang, southern Bhutan greatly improved agricultural productivity for self-sufficiency. The Farm Machinery Corporation Limited (FMCL) in Sarpang had been following the national mission to not leave any wetland fallow. (FMCL) started large-scale commercial paddy farming over 81 hectares of private wetland at the fishery site in Gelephu.

**Feb 17**

<http://bit.ly/2HYXoxu>

### TWENTY NINE-ACRES ZOO IN PESHAWAR

The long-awaited Peshawar Zoo, northern Pakistan, spread over around 12 hectares of land with the total budget of around USD 4,170,000 was inaugurated on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2018. The zoo contains all the species of wild animals and birds from across the country and has been caged there in natural habitat. The zoo is not a symbol for the environmental and aesthetic betterment but for beautification of the city.

**Feb 13**

<http://bit.ly/2CSnM8I>