

Headlines Himalaya

Apr 30 – May 6 (2018)

No. 503

Editorial Team: Shambhavi Giri and Bibash Gurung

For the 503rd issue of Headlines Himalaya, we reviewed 29 news from 14 sources and selected 29 happenings from five countries. In Nepal, public are immensely struggling due to heavy downpour in central and far-western part of the country. Overexploitation of Yarshagumba (*Ophiocordyceps sinensis*) through illegal entry of collectors in mid-western Nepal. In Bhutan, Red Panda (*Ailurus fulgen*) remain elusive to camera traps for two years.

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

Kirant people solemnize Sakela celebrations
Land encroachers on bank of Fewa Lake revealed
Malaria infects 21 in Nawalparasi
Spotted Deer killed
Thugs steal Yarshagumba
Quake-resilient school constructed in three month
Loss of 3100 banana trees
Damages due to hailstones
People arrested for illegal entry in cordyceps area
Nepal climbs up 20 spots in world happiness report
Heavy downpour obstructs the main road
Heavy rainfall caused massive destruction in Bajhang
Fire burns 18 houses
Veggie farmers collect NPR 1 million
Fear of losing traditional tattooing art
Flooded Bajhang rivulet takes five lives
Langtang National Park catches fire

INDIA

Deterioration of Janipur's oldest park
Man-elephant conflict
Pricey water for Himachal Pradesh villagers
Old woman builds toilet on her own
Judicious use of biodiversity in Sikkim
Poor livelihood fueled migration
Un-electrified villages in Jammu & Kashmir

CHINA

Tibet witnesses yogurt festival

BHUTAN

Zero sightings of Red Panda in two years
Reforestation program on the auspicious day

PAKISTAN

Birth of four leopard cubs in the zoo
Top judges ordered to combat air pollution

KIRANT PEOPLE SOLEMNIZE SAKELA CELEBRATIONS

Sakela, the month long festival of Kirant Community, which falls on the full moon day of Baisakh (Baisakh Sukla Purnima), has begun on Monday in Khotang district, eastern Nepal. The festival is performed twice a year – during plantation and harvesting period with various activities like: beating drum, cymbals, and imitating the activities of birds and creatures. According to Chairman of Kirant Rai Yayokhka, the festival is celebrated by worshiping land, ancestors and crops among Rai, Limbu, Yakkha and Sunuwar people in hopes of getting better crops, health and property.

Apr 30

<http://www.myrepublica.com/news/40840/>

LAND ENCROACHERS ON BANK OF FEWA LAKE REVEALED

An order has been issued by Supreme Court to dismantle the illegally built infrastructures on the banks of Fewa Lake, Kaski district, western Nepal and to get the land returned. According to the Mayor of Pokhara-Lekhanath Metropolitan City, the order is in favour of the conservation of the Fewa Lake and the people are happy about it. However, Pokhara-Lekhnath Metropolitan City is unable to take action against those involved in the land encroachment case despite having sufficient data provided by Fewa Lake Conservation Project on the infrastructures, which claims a total of 86.07204 hectares of land to be registered in the name of public.

Apr 30

<http://www.myrepublica.com/news/40844/>

MALARIA INFECTS 21 IN NAWALPARASI

In Nawalparari, western Nepal, 21 people have found to be suffered with malaria. A mosquito-borne infectious disease caused due to Plasmodium (*Plasmodium spp.*) has been found in both hill and plain settlement of the district, as per the District Public Health Office (DPHO) Chief. The majority of people sleeping outdoors to escape the summer heat is assumed to be the main reason for this life threatening disease.

Apr 30

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

SPOTTED DEER KILLED

On Monday April 29, six men were arrested for killing a spotted deer (*Axis axis*) in Tikapur, far western Nepal. They were caught along with the deer's meat and equipment used to slaughter, according to District Police Office Spokesperson. They have been sent to the Sector Forest Office for further action.

May 1

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

THUGS STEAL YARSHAGUMBA

Around 200 thugs have illegally entered into flat terrains of Mugu village of Karmarong rural municipality, mid western Nepal, to steal Yarshagumba (*Ophiocordyceps sinensis*). According to locals, the gang of thugs have threatened to set the village on fire yet they managed to take five thugs under control. Locals are seeking help from District Administration Office for security as border police could not take hooligans under control.

May 2

<http://www.myrepublica.com/news/40958/>

QUAKE-RESILIENT SCHOOL CONSTRUCTED IN THREE MONTHS

Everest English School, located in Bhaktapur district, central Nepal, has completed its quake-resilient construction in just three months at a time when most of the reconstruction works have been hit by delays. According to the school principal, the building has been constructed with reinforced concrete cement (RCC) foundation, steel pillar and precast concrete to substitute bricks. The building has already come into operation.

May 2

<http://www.myrepublica.com/news/40925/>

LOSS OF 3100 BANANA TREES

Overnight, 3100 banana (*Musa spp.*) trees have been chopped in Chitwan, south central Nepal. The group who vandalized the act is still unknown. Hardly 200 trees are left whereas, ready-to-harvest trees have all been destroyed according to a farmer. Altogether, owners had a loss of nearly NRP 1.5 million.

May 2

<https://bit.ly/2jSHk5T>

DAMAGES DUE TO HAILSTONES

Barekot Rural Municipality and Kushe Rural Municipality, mid western Nepal, has been struck by the hailstones which took place continuously for two hours in Jajarkot last night. According to local farmers, wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) and vegetables cultivated by around 5,000 households were damaged and more than 40 sheep (*Ovis aries*) have died due to hailstones in Barekot, Nepal, an area which is often affected by food insecurity. Chairman of Barekot Rural Municipality said that he was sad to learn about damages of crops and vegetables caused by the hailstones.

May 2

<https://bit.ly/2l6nvqe>

PEOPLE ARRESTED FOR ILLEGAL ENTRY IN CORDYCEPS AREA

As the picking season of Yarsagumba (*Ophiocordyceps sinensis*) nears in Dolpa, mid western high hills of Nepal, a joint team of Shey Phoksundo National Park and the security forces arrested 49 people on Monday night for smuggling the entomopathogenic fungus. Due to high richness of aphrodisiacal properties and high cost, Yarsagumba is being smuggled in high frequency. In order to stop the smuggling, security has been tightened in various border points and places, where the herb is found in abundance.

May 2

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

NEPAL CLIMBS UP 20 SPOTS IN WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT

The World Happiness Report 2018 has been released by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), where Nepal ranked on 101st position among 156 countries. In South Asia, Nepal ranks third behind Pakistan (5.472) and Bhutan (5.082). The rankings were determined on the basis of Gallup surveys that analysed the key factors such as GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom to make life choices, generosity and freedom from corruption.

May 3

<https://bit.ly/2rAA6H7>

HEAVY DOWNPOUR OBSTRUCTS THE MAIN ROAD

A heavy rainfall has obstructed Jaleswor-Janakpur road. The road falls in the main section of the main road of Mohottari, central Nepal which was on the way of upgrading task along with the construction of four lanes on the section. Due to the heavy downpour the under construction roadway has been muddy and has no favourable situation for transportation along the section until the road gets dry.

May 3

<https://bit.ly/2l5ZZcR>

HEAVY RAINFALL CAUSED MASSIVE DESTRUCTION IN BAJHANG

Bajhang, a far western district has been affected with massive disaster of heavy rainfall accompanied by hailstones on Wednesday which destroyed houses, crops and cattle. The disaster took life of three persons who were in a jeep which have been buried and swept down to some 100 meters to a river. Addition to that, several houses including animal sheds and shops have been massively damaged by floods. Likewise, over 100 hectare land has been buried by floods and landslides as per the initial assessment by District Agricultural Development Office. Due to which ready to harvest crops like wheat (*Triticum aestivum*), barley (*Hordeum vulgare*), vegetables, fruit etc. were all damaged by the massive disaster.

May 3

<https://bit.ly/2jSHuu1>

FIRE BURNS 18 HOUSES

The fire spread from a house has destroyed at least 18 houses in a village of Mugu, mid western Nepal. Because of lack of water shortage in the village, locals were unable to control the fire in time. According to the Chief District Officer, the fire has displaced 111 people.

May 4

<https://bit.ly/2I84und>

VEGGIE FARMERS COLLECT NPR 1 MILLION

In Kanchanpur, far western Nepal, farmers have been collecting a worth of NPR 1 million daily by exporting their fresh vegetables. Mainly, the vegetables are exported to big cities like Nepalgunj, mid western Nepal, Butwal, western Nepal, Chitwan, south central Nepal, and Kathmandu, central Nepal. With 14 tons per hectare productivity, fresh vegetables are cultivated on around 2550 hectares of land in the district. But, due to excessive production, the price of many vegetables has dropped down, causing farmers to get the market rate for their produce.

May 4

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

FEAR OF LOSING TRADITIONAL TATTOOING ART

Tharu, Nepal's indigenous people, living in the southern plains of Nepal, are worried as the practice of tattooing has been slowly declining in the younger generations. The main reason for tattooing among these Tharus is aesthetic and most of the tattoos reflect the elements of nature. However, traditional tattooing practices are painful and distressing.

May 6

<https://bit.ly/2ww2NKT>

FLOODED BAJHANG RIVULET TAKES FIVE LIVES

The flood that occurred on the rivulet of Diklagad, Bajhang district, far western Nepal, has killed five persons including four members of a same family on Saturday night. They got swept away by the flooded rivulet while crossing it on their way back home from local Dhodhekhhet Bazaar after 8 pm.

May 6

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

LANGTANG NATIONAL PARK CATCHES FIRE

Langtang National Park situated in central Himalayan region, is in flames since Sunday. Locals from Langtang National Park, Nepal Army's Kali Jung Battalion and the Harit Yuwa Tourism Development Society are trying their best to control the fire but harsh wind is creating a major problem in extinguishing the fire.

May 6

<http://www.myrepublica.com/news/41195/>

India-Himalaya

DETERIORATION OF JANIPUR'S OLDEST PARK

Located in old Janipur, Jammu, northern India, the park constructed during the tenure of then Governor Jagmohan lies in shambles today. The park looks more like an abandoned piece of land than a public park, with filthy and stinking toilets constructed in the corner of the park, defunct lights and bad state of flower beds and grass. According to a resident, people used to come into the open during the evenings, but now want to stay away from the park as it is in such neglected condition.

Apr 30

<http://earlytimesnews.com/newsdet.aspx?q=231452>

MAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT

Home of around 1,800 Asiatic elephant (*Elephas maximus*), Meghalaya State, north eastern India has recorded nearly 10,000 cases of human elephant conflicts, where 25 people have died in the period between the years 2012 to 2017. Along with the deaths, widespread damage to crops has occurred, says Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India. According to the report by CAG, deforestation and construction activities have led to the scarcity of food and water due to which the conflicts roused.

Apr 30

<https://bit.ly/2jP4qKE>

PRICEY WATER FOR HIMACHAL PRADESH VILLAGERS

People in Shimla's Naya Gaon village in Himachal Pradesh, northern India, have been facing water crisis with the onset of summer and are forced to buy water. One of the locals expressed his worries that most of their time is spent fetching the water. The voices of locals have been unheard as they have reported numerous complaints to the officials of Irrigation and Public Health Department.

May 2

<https://bit.ly/2jM87Rc>

OLD WOMAN BUILDS TOILET ON HER OWN

An 87-year old woman from Jammu and Kashmir, northern India, has been supporting the 'Swachh Bharat Mission' by building a toilet by herself. She has been a source of inspiration for hygienically backward Indian communities. She said that after knowing about the health effects of open defecation, she has been constructing the toilet near her house. She is doing it alone as she is economically backward to pay the fees for labours.

May 4

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

JUDICIOUS USE OF BIODIVERSITY IN SIKKIM

Though occupying only over 12% of the state's area under cultivation, Sikkim, north eastern Indian state has succeeded to provide livelihood to 64% of its population by maintaining high agro-genetic diversity. On Friday, while speaking at an international conference on Biodiversity and Sustainable Development Goals, The Chief Minister of Sikkim claimed that though their state is geographically small, but they have highly prioritized in maintaining a rich biodiversity along with the practice of organic farming leading towards an adequate yields of agriculture and horticulture product.

May 5

<https://bit.ly/2l6nUce>

POOR LIVELIHOOD FUELED MIGRATION

In the period of 10 years, more than 383,726 people have migrated from their village in Uttarakhand, northern India. Due to the elevating migration, over 700 villages in the state have been deserted. According to the data, 70% of the migrants are internal migrants. Poor livelihood, education and health facilities had been the major causes for these consequences.

May 5

<https://bit.ly/2ww6Zub>

UN-ELECTRIFIED VILLAGES IN JAMMU & KASHMIR

As Prime Minister of India has prioritized to provide electricity to each and every household in the country, it was found that 102 villages in Jammu and Kashmir, northern India had no access to electricity. Power Development Minister has claimed that these villages will be electrified by June 30. On top of that, they are producing electricity in the State with the construction of hydro-power plant in numerous rivers and rivulets as the state is blessed with numerous water resources and hilly and tough terrain landform.

May 6

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

China Himalaya

TIBET WITNESSES YOGURT FESTIVAL

The 23rd Shoton festival has been organized at the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts, Dharamshala. One of the most popular cultural festivals of Tibetan, Shoton is also known as a yogurt eating festival, which is celebrated in the summer of the 5th lunar month which mainly consists of 3 parts – Great Buddha Display, Tibetan Opera Show and Horsemanship and Yak Race Show which represent the best of Tibetan religion, culture and tradition. The event was joined by eleven groups from different parts of India and one from Nepal.

May 2

<https://bit.ly/2lx2x2Q>

Bhutan-Himalaya

ZERO SIGHTINGS OF RED PANDA IN TWO YEARS

Ten camera traps were installed in Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary, eastern Bhutan for almost two years where not a single Red Panda (*Ailurus fulgens*) was sighted. This, extremely elusive species has the bigger threats of habitat fragmentation, overgrazing, presence of highly distributed livestock and other natural calamities like landslides. A direct correlation between the grazing of bamboo by cattle and bamboo being the main food of the species has been an intense competition which is avoided by the species, says a forest officer speaking on a three days workshop on red panda.

May 2

<https://bit.ly/2lsypG7>

REFORESTATION PROGRAM ON THE AUSPICIOUS DAY

Altogether, 2,750 saplings of various trees have been reforested in the auspicious day of the birth anniversary of the third King and Teachers' day in a region of Tendruk Sewog, south western Bhutan. The reforestation program was initiated to bring sustainable environment development by replacing the deforested trees due to construction of farm roads. The saplings were also distributed to Royal Bhutan Army and local community forest groups.

May 5

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

Pakistan- Himalaya

BIRTH OF FOUR LEOPARD CUBS IN THE ZOO

A leopardess (*Panthera pardus*) has given birth to four healthy cubs on Monday at the Peshawar zoo, north western Pakistan. Striking thing is that commonly, leopard only reproduces three cubs for most. Addition to that, the zoo was just inaugurated in February 2018 and this has been the one of the success after a minimum death of three animals including a 10 year old snow leopard (*Uncia uncia*).

Apr 30

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

TOP JUDGES ORDERED TO COMBAT AIR POLLUTION

A panel of the country's top judges has ordered the government to put efforts to combat the worsening urban air pollution. For that, the environmental protection agency is installing air quality monitors and also the factories are warned to put pollution filters. The sources like traffic abundance, brick kilns, open incineration and lack of trees are the main causes of the urban air pollution, as per 2016 study by the World Health Organization (WHO). WHO has also ranked several cities of Pakistan in the context of air pollution where Peshawar comes first, Rawalpindi comes second and the capital city is ranked as the fifth air polluted city.

Apr 30

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