

Headlines Himalaya

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No. 507

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For the 507th issue of Headlines Himalaya, we reviewed 17 news from 8 sources and selected 17 happenings from the four countries. In Nepal, Bheri Babai Diversion Project in mid-western Nepal enhanced the local income providing job opportunities. The completion of Rani-Jamara-Kularia irrigation project and adoption of modern technology has led to an increase in agricultural productivity in Kailali in far western Nepal. The Dal Lake of Kashmir, northern India which is considered top tourist attraction, has turned into a dumping ground of waste. Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA) has temporarily banned import of some fresh vegetables due to high levels of pesticide residues.

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

Climber rescued
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Increased agro-product
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CHINA

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CLIMBER RESCUED

A Polish climber has been rescued from Mt. Makalu region, north western Nepal. The climber was airlifted from a camp at 6,600 m on the world's fifth highest mountain after he suffered from altitude sickness while descending from the summit of the mountain. The climber is now out of danger and is receiving treatments at CIWEC International clinic in Kathmandu. The climber had run out of food before suffering from the altitude-sickness.

May 31

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

HOMESTAY FASCINATING TOURISTS

Several facilities including homestay opportunity is appealing larger number of tourists in Ilam, eastern Nepal. The homestay is operated aiming to provide an organic feel of the rural Ilam settings to the visitors especially in the villages in and around Antu, Mai pokhari, Balangau, and Jamauna. As homestay services are providing better facilities for visitors such as gardening, organic taste, tea garden visit and family environment, the number of visitors is increasing and the visitors are extending their stay in Ilam.

May 31

<http://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/homestay-alluring-tourists/>

SDG ON DISCUSSION

Resource Centre for Primary Health Care (RECPHEC), LDC Watch and South Asia Alliance for Poverty Alliance (SAAPE) jointly organized a one-day national consultation workshop entitled "Roles and Responsibilities of Private Sector in Public Services for achieving SDGs in Nepal". The workshop was held in Kathmandu, central Nepal. The consultation was focused on how private and public sector can contribute to achieve the sustainable goal by 2030. The program concluded realizing the need of all business companies and private sectors to contribute voluntarily and take actions in support of SDGs.

May 31

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

WILDFIRE IN KAILALI

Wildfire is destroying local flora and fauna, and their habitats in various places of Kailali, far-western Nepal. According to the district's Assistant Forest Officer, wildfires were raging in Mohana bio-corridor and the forests in Basanta, Karnali, Chure and Bhawar areas. He stated that there is lack of resource and technology to combat wildfires effectively. He also added wildfires have been causing colossal loss every year in spite of the public awareness programs organized frequently. According to him, the district lost around 25,000 hectares of forest cover last year alone due to wildfires.

May 31

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

AGENCIES PHASING OUT AID

The donor agencies are withdrawing from the reconstruction and restoration projects of the cultural and historic sites that were damaged by 2015 earthquake. One of the major supporting donor, German government decided to withdraw from a project to restore monuments, schools and streets in Bhaktapur, central Nepal destroyed by the earthquake. The government of Germany had initiated its first partnership with German Development Bank as an implementing partner in heritage conservation activities. A dispute in modalities and procedures for the reconstruction between the bank and the local government has been blamed for the cancellation of the restoration project.

Jun 1

<https://www.nepalitimes.com/banner/clash-of-cultures-in-bhaktapur/>

BHERI BABAI ENHANCED LOCAL INCOME

Bheri Babai Diversion Project has provided economic opportunities to the locals in Bheri-Ganga Municipality, Surkhet, mid- western Nepal. It is a Multipurpose Project being constructed in Surkhet district. More than 560 Nepalese and 90 Chinese are employed directly through the project and many others are getting benefits from side business opportunities. On the other hand, the project has launched Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) for the first time in Nepal. The project is about 40% complete till date. The project is assumed to make an indirect financial contribution of NPR 3.1 billion to the state, and a direct revenue contribution of NPR 2.1 billion through electricity..

Jun 1

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

INCREASED AGRO-PRODUCT

The overall productivity has increased in Tikapur, Kailali in far western Nepal due to modern technology that was adopted by the farmers in support of Rani-Jamara-Kulariya Irrigation Project. A study reveals that the land covered by the project has been producing 3.8 tonnes of paddy per hectare which is higher than national average of (3.5 tonnes per hectare). The paddy productivity elsewhere in the district without irrigation facility is around only 2.5 tonnes per hectare. The project aims to enhance the productivity and produce sufficient seeds. To reach the grass root level, it has built ties with five co-operatives.

Jun 1

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

ONE HOME, TWO TREES

The Ministry of Forest and Environment has initiated a campaign called 'One house Two trees' on the occasion of the World Environment Day in Kathmandu Metropolitan city, central Nepal. At least 700 plant individuals of bay leaves (*Laurus nobilis*), dhupi (*Juniperus* sp.), guava (*Psidium guajava*) were distributed. On the occasion, the concerned authorities have appealed the local residents to keep the city clean and eco-friendly.

Jun 1

<http://www.newsofnepal.com/2018/06/01/105896/>

QUESTIONED ON CHURE ROAD CONSTRUCTION

Environmentalists and Conservationist have expressed serious environmental concerns about the Government's plan to construct a new highway in Chure region (Siwaliks), southern Nepal. They have claimed that lots of the natural resource (flora and fauna) may be destructed during the project. The government has allocated NPR 4.5 billion for the new highway in this fiscal year and planned to construct an industrial corridor, connecting valleys of Chure and inner-Madhesh in 11 different section of 1200 km long road.

Jun 1

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

India-Himalaya

DELAY IN SOWING OF PADDY

Heavy cross-border firing along international border has disturbed the work routine of farmers in Jammu, northern India. Farmers are feeling unsafe to go out in the fields and labours hired from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar also fled from Jammu after heavy firing. This is the time of sowing paddy but it has been delayed due to tension of shelling on the border.

May 29

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

ENCROACHMENT ON PALUWAMA TEMPLE

Villagers of Pulwama district, Jammu and Kashmir in north western India, have encroached the temple's land to use it as a graveyard. Last year, similar attempts were made but the efforts of Pandit community discouraged them. Jammu and Kashmir Dharmarth Trust President has said that appropriate legal action would be taken if the report of encroachment is true. For safeguarding the temples and properties, establishment of a management board has been demanded by the community.

May 29

<https://bit.ly/2xF2IFj>

DAL LAKE TURNED INTO A DUMPING GROUND

The Dal lake of Kashmir, northern India which is considered to be the top attraction for tourists, has turned into a dumping ground of waste. Government claimed to have preserved and cleaned the lake but it is getting worse day by day due to entry of sewage into the lake. One of the boatmen who has been working for more than two decades said that as hundreds of boatmen are dependent on lake for livelihood, but the Kashmir government is not being sincere, for the preservation of the lake. The executive engineer of the Lakes and Waterways Development Authority said that they were releasing tenders for the upgrade of treatment plants and planning new ones.

Jun 2

<https://bit.ly/2xHN6kq>

China Himalaya

SECURITY FOR SAGA DAWA FESTIVAL

Saga Dawa festival, one of the most important festivals of Tibet, south western China as it marks the birth of the Buddha, falls in-between 16 May and 13 June. To ensure security during festival, Chinese authorities laid out three priorities measures. The measures were to step up political stances for the workers, to maintain strict discipline within the party and to improve worker's performance during the events.

May 28

<https://freetibet.org/news-media/na/lhasa-officials-plan-security-saga-dawa-festival>

Bhutan-Himalaya

TEMPORARY BAN ON IMPORT OF FRESH VEGETABLES

Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA) has temporarily banned import of fresh vegetables like cauliflower (*Brassica sp.*), beans (*Phaseolus sp.*) and green chillies (*Capsicum sp.*) due to pesticide residues above MRL (Maximum Residue Limit). Although the country faced shortages of these vegetables during initial period of the ban, the production and supply of local vegetables has improved except with chillies. BAFRA has made extra investments in winter chillies.

May 28

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

GIRLS MISS SCHOOL DUE TO MENSTRUATION

A study by the Education Ministry of Bhutan and UNICEF carried out in schoolgirls aged between 10-19 and the nuns, has highlighted the social stigma around menstruation. Though menstruation is a normal biological cycle, some people considered it a curse or disease and more than 40 % of nuns were unaware of reproductive tract infection related to poor menstrual hygiene. About 44.7 % girls missed school during every cycle due to pain and discomfort while some missed due to lack of place to dispose-off sanitary pads and dirty toilets.

May 29

<https://bit.ly/2kAQ013>

ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION IN MOUNTAIN ECOSYSTEM

National dialogue has been held in Thimpu, central Bhutan, to raise awareness on the impact of environmental degradation in mountain ecosystems. Tarayana Foundation in collaboration with Global Environmental Facility's Small Grants Programme (SGP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Gross National Happiness Commission organised the national dialogue discussing the five key sustainable development goals (SDGs). SGP has led Bhutan for a series of national dialogues and activities to implement the initiative among mountain communities and the government.

Jun 2

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

NEW TECHNOLOGY ON AGRICULTURE

About 60 % of Bhutanese depend on agriculture for their livelihood and about 16.52 % country's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2016 was contributed from agricultural production. Farm productivity is low due to traditional technologies, steep geographic terrain and labour shortage. To improve agricultural productivity, new farm technology is being introduced by Agriculture Machinery Center (AMC). AMC has released the direct paddy seeding technology by drum seeder, AMC weeder to weed paddy, the stone picker, in southern districts.

Jun 2

<https://bit.ly/2Jo8VXG>