

Headlines Himalaya

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Editorial Team:Haribol Acharya and Jyoti Aryal

For the 508th issue of Headlines Himalaya, we reviewed 27 news from 9 sources and selected 27 happenings from five countries. A team of the archaeologists has revealed evidence of ancient human civilizations around Jamuni river system in south eastern Nepal. Most of the vehicles have failed to meet the minimum emission standard in Kathmandu valley, central Nepal. People of Kashmir in northern India get relief from heat wave, after heavy rainfall accompanied with strong windstorm and hailstorm, but also suffered extensive damage to fruit crops. The ecological environment of plateau rivers and lakes such as the Salt Lake in Hoh Xil and Lake Keluke in the Tsaidam basin, northwest China has been monitored for the first time. The roads in Thimpu, central Bhutan remain jammed throughout the day due to sharp increase in the number of vehicles recently.

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NEPAL

Ancient civilizations discovered in Dhanusha
Apple farming booming in Karnali
Villagers migrating in search of water
Banned logs confiscated
Minor earthquake felt
Nepal Food Corporation accused of bias
Renovation of Gokarneshwor Temple
Vehicles fail emission standard in Kathmandu
World environment day in Singhadarbar
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Embankment along Chudhar river
Inspection on flood prone sites
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INDIA

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Monitoring of ecological environment of Plateau rivers and lakes

BHUTAN

Penalty charges for black marketing
Rise in vehicle number and air pollution
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PAKISTAN

Afforestation project workers protest unpaid salaries

ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS DISCOVERED IN DHANUSHA

A team of the archaeologists has revealed evidence of ancient human civilizations around Jamuni river system which is at a distance of 16 km from Janakpur, south eastern Nepal. Earlier, locals had reported discovery of ancient idols while embanking the river and requested Department of Archaeology (DoA) to conduct further research in the area . The study also identified dozens of evidences such as ancient brick walls, floors of human settlement, human-made pits, piles of mud utensils and terracotta beads and bangles during the excavations. Based on the evidences, DoA concluded that there were at least eight human civilizations in different times during the period of 200 BC to AD 200 in the area.

Jun 4

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

APPLE FARMING BOOMING IN KARNALI

Apple (*Malus species*) production has been increasing in Karnali region, mid western Nepal due to the road expansion and easier excess to the market. Compared to previous years more farmers are now becoming commercial and making attractive income from the apple market in the districts Jumla, Mugu and Kalikot. According to the government's record, 18,650 tonnes of apple was produced in the fiscal year 2016/2017 and Jumla alone has earned around NPR. 160 millions from the apple market. To promote apple production in the region, the Government of Nepal has selected Karnali as apple super zone.

Jun 4

<https://bit.ly/2LJc19h>

VILLAGERS MIGRATING IN SEARCH OF WATER

More than 300 families in village of about 500 families have migrated to other places in search of drinking water in Gothari Ghari village of Mathagadhi Rural Municipality-5, Palpa, western Nepal. Locals said that there is only one source of water near the village which is drying up day by day and one has to travel atleast two hours to reach the water source. According to the chairperson of the village, a project is underway to supply drinking water to the villagers using lifting technology.

Jun 4

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

BANNED LOGS CONFISCATED

A large amount of the banned logs has been seized in Phidim Municipality of Panchthar district, eastern Nepal by the police with the support of armed police force. According to the government evaluation, current market value of the banned logs of the Sal and Sakhuwa (*Shorea species*) seized in the raid was about NPR. 5 lakhs. According to the Deputy Superintendent of police, the logs have been handed over to the District Forest Office for further action.

Jun 5

<https://bit.ly/2t0D2gU>

MINOR EARTHQUAKE FELT

An earthquake of magnitude 4.9 on Richter scale was felt in Bajura, far western Nepal. The earthquake was recorded at 7.19 a.m. on Tuesday. The Seismological Centre Surkhet said that the epicentre of the earthquake was in a forest situated in the border between Bajura and Humla districts of mid western Nepal.

Jun 5

<https://bit.ly/2sW7ERx>

NEPAL FOOD CORPORATION ACCUSED OF BIAS

Nepal Food Cooperation (NFC) is accused of bias while distributing rice in the remote Saipal village, Bajhang, far western Nepal. According to some locals, NFC staffs are providing rice and flour to well-connected people and telling others that the supplies have run out. The local residents have also blamed NFC staff of selling good quality

foodstuffs to grain retailers and distributing rotten and weevil-infested rice to the beneficiaries. However, NFC staff refused the allegations and argued that the quality of foodstuffs should be controlled by the contractor.

Jun 5

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

RENOVATION OF GOKARNESHWOR TEMPLE

The Department of the Archaeology(DoA)has allocated NPR 10 million budget for renovation of the Gokarneshwor temple, Kathmandu, central Nepal in the fiscal year 2018/2019. The historic temple displaying various art and designs was damaged by the massive earthquake in 2015. The renovation committee had requested for NPR. 25 million, however, the DoA has allocated only 10 million.

Jun 5

<http://www.newsofnepal.com/2018/06/05/106667/>

VEHICLES FAIL EMISSION STANDARD IN KATHMANDU

Most of the vehicles have failed to meet the minimum emission standard in Kathmandu valley, central Nepal. Random tests conducted by the Department of the Environment (DoE) for vehicular emissions, during last few months in different parts of Kathmandu Valley, indicates over 50% of the vehicles violate government standards. Vehicle emission tests revealed that the amount of emitted gaseous pollutant along with particulate matter is much higher than minimum emission standards. The DoE plans to take strict actions against smoky vehicles on the roads.

Jun 5

<https://bit.ly/2JFT1h>

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY IN SINGHADARBAR

On the special occasion of the World Environment day, Prime minister (PM) and other ministers of Nepal planted the saplings of Litchi (*Litchi chinensis*) in Singhadarbar, Kathmandu, central Nepal. In a message delivered at the event, the PM said that the environment of Nepal has degraded due to lack of awareness and development activities and stressed the need for collective effort for environmental protection.

Jun 5

<https://bit.ly/2HGe4Zm>

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ON CONSERVATION

Rupandehi Municipality, mid western Nepal has started a campaign to conserve the ancient relics and historic sites that date back to the period of Buddha. These site have been fenced to protect the ancient brick walls, deep well and other historic structure. Besides, they have managed a museum to display the ancient artefacts and other excavated objects. According to the mayor, a master plan is being prepared to protect the sites.

Jun 7

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

EMBANKMENT ALONG CHUDHAR RIVER

Municipal office, Hariyo Forest and Baitada Community forest have provided fund to construct an embankment along Chudhar river in Bedkot, Kanchanpur, in far western, Nepal due to high risk of flood and erosion. Due to unchecked extraction of sand and stones, river altered its course towards the settlement which led to damage lands and homes of the local villagers. Villagers are contributing their labour to install gabion baskets along the river to stop further damages.

Jun 8

<https://bit.ly/2Jx5m5k>

INSPECTION ON FLOOD PRONE SITES

To study the situation of flooding and to identify the real cause of inundation, Nepali and Indian officials set to visit the flood prone sites from Jhapa, eastern to Parsa, central Nepal in three phases - before monsoon, during monsoon and post-monsoon. The study will also assess the damages caused due to infrastructures like

embankments at the bordering rivers. The prime ministers of both Nepal and India had expressed satisfaction over the inspection of joint team and appropriate measures for sustainable solution.

Jun 8

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

REVENUE FROM YARSHA PICKERS

Saipal Rural Municipality in Bajhang, far-western Nepal, gave permits to around 4,500 people to collect the Yarsagumba (*Cordyceps sinensis*), world's most expensive medicinal herb, on the slopes of Mt. Saipal. The village council charged each picker NPR. 300 from locals, NPR. 500 from neighbouring villages, NPR. 1,000 from district and NPR. 2,000 from outside the district. Bajhang district has collected NPR. 20 lakhs in revenue that would be spent on infrastructural development in the villages.

Jun 8

<https://bit.ly/2sLL2TB>

INITIAL STUDY OF RAILWAY LINE

Preliminary study for construction of Kathmandu-Raxaul electric railway line estimated to be 113 km has been started by a technical team from India. The team will approach towards Chobhar, Kathmandu the end point of the railway line from Birgunj, central Nepal after looking out a location in Raxaul, eastern India. The Indian Government would bear the cost of building the railway line.

Jun 10

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

RICE VARIETIES VANISH

Growing use of hybrid and genetically modified varieties of rice (*Oryza sativa*) for higher production has resulted in the disappearance of the indigenous varieties of rice. The farmers in Chitwan, central Nepal, used to transplant 321 local varieties of rice but they have vanished except one variety called Anadi. Local rice varieties are suitable to local climate, can cope with local climate change and can resist disease. Considering the benefits of local varieties, Nepal Agricultural Research Council (NARC) is doing research to develop high-yielding varieties of rice that can adjust current climatic condition and resist diseases through the use of seeds of indigenous species.

Jun 10

<http://therisingnepal.org.np/news/24129>

India-Himalaya

WINDSTORM DAMAGE FRUIT CROPS

People of Kashmir in northern India get relief from heat wave after heavy rainfall accompanied with strong windstorm and hailstorm, but also suffered extensive damage to fruit crops. Due to heavy rainfall, visibility had also improved. Sources said that trees were uprooted in the windstorm and a woman was killed after tree fell on her when she was planting paddy (*Oryza sa.*)saplings.

Jun 5

<http://earlytimesnews.com/newsdet.aspx?q=234404>

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY OBSERVED AS DAY OF SORROW

Environmental Policy Group (EPG) in co-ordination with organizations and members of civil society organized a protest against the encroachment, destruction of natural resources and private or public properties in Kashmir, northern India. They expressed serious concern over the reduction of tourist flow due to unplanned town and dying Dal Lake due to waste dumping on it. Hence, Environment Day was observed as "A Day of Mourning", and the organizations involved in the conservation of environment and the civil society vowed to work together to protect the environment and punish the violators and vandalizers.

Jun 5

<http://earlytimesnews.com/newsdet.aspx?q=234403>

POWER CUT OFF

The electric power has been cut off for shifting of load from Janipur grid to Barn grid in north-west India. The shutdown of 33 KV Barn Bhalwal-Thathar-Bantalab line directly affected the Nardni, Raipur, Radio station, Local Batal, Telephone, hospital, Bantalab on June 9 and 10 for five hours a day.

Jun 7

<http://www.thenorthlines.com/power-shutdown-61/>

PROMOTING PLANTATION

A plantation program was organized jointly by Samvedna Society and revenue department, aiming to aware people in Jammu, northern-India on June 7. The organizer had appealed every people to act on the biodiversity conservation as the extreme climatic conditions is affecting lives on the earth. It was also requested that each of the member of the family join the plantation program.

Jun 7

<http://www.earlytimes.in/newsdet.aspx?q=234593>

WATER PRESERVATION FAILED IN POONCH

The department of the soil has failed to address local people's demand to preserve water in Poonch, northern , India. According to the previous report, all sub-divisions of Poonch have been facing acute shortage of water. The department has also claimed that millions of the dollars had been already spent to construct dams, water ponds etc. However, no result has been achieved.

Jun 7

<http://www.earlytimes.in/newsdet.aspx?q=234542>

China Himalaya

MONITORING OF ECOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT OF PLATEAU RIVERS AND LAKES

The ecological environment of plateau rivers and lakes such as the Salt Lake in Hoh Xil and Lake Keluke in the Tsaidam basin, northwest China has been monitored for the first time by the Qinghai Provincial Water Conservancy Department, Qinghai Hydrology and Water Resources Survey Bureau and the Yangtze River Scientific Research Institute. Advanced equipments and technologies such as satellite remote sensing, unmanned aerial vehicles, and multi-beam underwater terrain detectors were used for the monitoring. Using the data, the monitoring group aims to assess the impact of regional climate change on melting ice and snow levels, regional precipitation levels, and aquatic life.

Jun 5

<https://bit.ly/2y49hBp>

Bhutan-Himalaya

PENALTY CHARGES FOR BLACK MARKETING

Importing green chillies (*Caspicum* sp.) from India has been banned but due to high demand of Indian chillies, the black market is growing in Trashigang, eastern Bhutan. Trashigang imposed a fine for illegal possession of Indian chillies. However, as the customer's demand for spicy chillies is increasing, the black market is growing to keep the supply going. Indian chillies are more spicy than Bhutanese chillies and also facilitate the sale of onion (*Allium cepa*) and tomatoes (*Solanum lycopersicum*). Hence, dealers take the risk of importing chillies illegally.

Jun 5

<https://bit.ly/2MiY8Q8>

RISE IN VEHICLE NUMBER AND AIR POLLUTION

The roads in Thimpu, central Bhutan remain jammed throughout the day due to sharp increase in the number of vehicles recently. Particulate matter particles (PM₁₀) has crossed the WHO guideline values in 2015 which can result respiratory problems, heart attacks and irritation to eyes. The increased number of vehicles in the city has also resulted in increased responsibilities of the police personnel.

Jun 5

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

SAMDRUPJONGKHAR TO BAN PLASTIC PRODUCTS

The Samdrupjongkhar thromde in southeast Bhutan has planned to become the first plastic free town by banning the use of plastic plates, cups and cutlery during all official meetings and gatherings. Plastic products would be replaced with areca nut products.

Jun 5

<https://bit.ly/2JBk5bC>

CHILLI PRODUCTION IN WINTER

The chilli (*Caspicum* sp.) farming is encouraged by the government of Bhutan, in winter season providing efficient water use facilities, protected cultivation technologies and high quality seeds. Sankose Villiage, west Bhutan alone had produced about 140 metric tonnes of chilli last year and farmers are attracted more as government is providing technical support for higher yield. According to a research, there is lack of pollination and farmers need to open the sides of the green house to facilitate the pollination to increase the yield. Last year, the estimated total winter chilli production in Bhutan was 1011.92 metric tonnes and 157.89 metric tonnes was imported from India.

Jun 9

<https://bit.ly/2JC6G73>

PADDY PLANTATION PERIOD SHIFTED

Paddy (*Oryza sa*.)plantation time has been shifted earlier in Kilkhorthang district in Tsirang, central Bhutan, to cope with water shortage. As Dampfu Khola is the only source for irrigation, and it could be used for about 10 farmer's field, the farmers are irrigating their field in turn wise. To resolve water shortage, some farmers are forced to transplant earlier. Farmers are also waiting for rainfall for paddy plantation as source of irrigation is limited.

Jun 9

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

Pakistan- Himalaya

AFFORESTATION PROJECT WORKERS PROTEST UNPAID SALARIES

Under the " Green Growth Initiative", the government had initiated billion tree afforestation project in Chitral in northwest Pakistan, spending around USD 110 million for the project. The project has covered 380,000 hectares of the land creating employment for at least 500,000 locals. However, around 400 youths employed for the project in upper Chitral region have not yet received their 9 months salariesand even they have been notified of their dismissal although the project will phase out in June 2020. The employers are planning to protest for the payment of salary and continuity of the job.

Jun 9

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

