

Headlines Himalaya

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For the 532nd issue of Headlines Himalaya, we reviewed 27 news from 13 sources and selected 23 happenings from five countries. The Ludi Damgadhe Community Forest of Gorkha, western Nepal which is home to 99 species of birds, is found to have three rare species of birds. Water sources are drying up in Chandragiri Municipality of Kathmandu, central Nepal after the 2015 massive earthquake. Air pollution in Kathmandu Valley, central Nepal has reached to dangerous levels. An elephant was hit by an express train in between Titabar and Mariani stations, Assam, north eastern India. The development of Trans-Himalayan multi-dimensional transport network is planned to be extended from the railway from Lhasa to Xigaze in Tibet. Farmers are using chemicals to control rat population and save crops. The Punjab government, Rawalpindi, northern Pakistan has approved a project aimed to overcome water crises.

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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IRRIGATION PROJECT IN LIMBO

Owing to sheer negligence of contractor, the Dharapani Irrigation Project based in Krishnapur Municipality-1 Domilla , Kanchanpur, far western Nepal has not been completed yet despite extending deadlines twice. The construction company had signed a contract of NPR 40.15 million for the construction of canal of irrigation project and culverts.

Nov 19

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

VEGETABLE PRICES FALL

Vegetable prices in the Kathmandu Valley have dropped up to 36 percent as fresh winter harvests arrived in the market, bringing relief to consumers hit by skyrocketing prices during the September-October festive season. Prices of tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum*), potato (*Solanum tuberosum*), cauliflower (*Brassica oleracea* var. *botrytis*) and eggplant (*Solanum melongena*) have fallen by 23-36 percent. However, the prices of off-season vegetables like okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus*), pointed gourd (*Trichosanthes dioica*) and mushroom (*Agaricus bisporus*) have increased by 10-30 percent.

Nov 19

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

RARE BIRD SPECIES SPOTTED

The Ludi Damgadhe Community Forest of Gorkha, western Nepal which is home to 99 species of birds, is found to have three rare species of birds. The birds are White-Rumped Vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*), Asian Woolly-necked Stork (*Ciconia episcopus*) and Steppe Eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*).

Nov 20

<https://bit.ly/2rEUQh2>

FLOOD SURVIVORS UNDER BAMBOO HUTS

The flood survivors of Lamahi of Rapti zone, mid-western Nepal have been living in the huts made of bamboo (*Bambusoideae*) after the flood swept their houses away. They have not been getting any sort of help from the government and the bamboos have started to decay too which has been putting the people into great stress. Though the government earlier had pledged to provide the grant on four installments, the victims have only received two installments to this date.

Nov 20

<https://bit.ly/2SaXl6l>

FREE HEALTH CAMP SERVICE

A three-day health camp was recently organized at the Taksindu Primary School in Solukhumbu district, central Nepal during which more than 1,300 people from Taksindu and surrounding 40 villages received various health services. A temporary pharmacy was also set up inside the main part of the school with eye-care facility along with distribution of 1,000 pairs of prescription glasses to local patients.

Nov 21

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

PIPE LAYING WORKS IN FAST PACE

Nearly 80 percent of pipe-laying works of the cross-border petroleum pipeline have been completed on Nepal's side in the last nine months. The work was halted for few days because of plastic and other wastes that affected the pipe drilling works. 25,000 trees inside Bara-Parsa National parks of Narayani zone, central Nepal which fall along the pipeline's route, needs to be cut and the government, however, has not given approval yet to cut down the trees.

Nov 21

<https://bit.ly/2GpLMA7>

WATER SOURCES DRYING UP AFTER EARTHQUAKE

People of the Chandragiri Municipality of Kathmandu, central Nepal are getting displaced with water sources drying up after the 2015 earthquake. According to the municipality chairperson, 200 households have been rendered displaced with drying up of water sources. The ancient Indradaha pond in the area has also completely dried up.

Nov 23

<https://bit.ly/2Ci74T6>

VICTIMS OF POLLUTION TO BE COMPENSATED

The Environment Protection Act (First Amendment) has stipulated a provision of compensation to any person or organization harmed by pollution for which the victim of any kind of pollution must submit an application to concerned authority. Thus, the victim can receive reasonable compensation depending on the gravity of the situation. The government is also planning to restrict the public movement in a place where any harmful or hazardous waste has been stored or disposed-off by declaring it a polluted area.

Nov 23

<https://bit.ly/2QCdLn2>

AIR POLLUTION GETS WORSE

Air pollution in Kathmandu Valley, central Nepal has reached such dangerous levels that it is now considered one of the most polluted cities in the world along with Delhi and Beijing. In the past few years, pollution levels have peaked at unhealthy levels in the Kathmandu Valley, increasing health risks for citizens, especially traffic police officers. Vehicular emission is considered the main source of particulate matter in the valley.

Nov 23

<https://bit.ly/2EqRAO8>

ARRIVAL OF MIGRATORY BIRDS

Winter migratory birds have arrived in Chitwan, central Nepal to escape cold in the Northern Hemisphere with the beginning of winter season. More than 150 species of winter migratory birds from Russia, China, Sri Lanka, India and Korea flock to the southern plains every year with the start of winter.

Nov 24

<https://bit.ly/2PHSrM7>

WATER HYACINTH BEING REMOVED

District Administration Office, Kailali, far-western Nepal along with the Nepal Army, Nepal Police and Armed Police Force have started removing water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) from Jakhor Lake in the Dhangadhi Sub-metropolitan City, far western Nepal. With the aim of maintaining tourist destination, the clean-up campaign has also been started in public places of the municipal area.

Nov 24

<https://bit.ly/2BnKy9O>

VALLEY CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

Kathmandu Metropolitan City, central Nepal launched a city clean-up campaign. Newly bought broomers and jet machines were used during the clean-up campaign. Apart from the road cleaning programme, KMC has devised a plan to maintain greenery in the city, manage utility wires and water supply pipes, and open blocked drains. The campaign will also focus on road safety measures like maintaining road markings, managing dividers on the roads, and filling potholes.

Nov 25

<https://bit.ly/2QWIK15>

POLLUTANTS IN RIVER INCREASE

Sirsiya river of Parsa, western Nepal has been polluted mainly due to indiscriminate disposal of sewage from different industries. Although this pollution has been affecting the locals of that region greatly, concerned authorities have not been able to address the problem. Therefore, a case has also been filed against the industries and the Municipality for polluting river water.

Nov 25

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

India-Himalaya

ELDEST HIPPO DIED IN ZOO

A hippo (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) named Raja, 48, died on Sunday at Assam State Zoo, Arunachal Pradesh, north eastern India. Raja was the oldest inmate among the mammals and the zoo authorities were in deep grief on his demise.

Nov 19

<https://bit.ly/2PHLef5>

ELEPHANT HIT BY A TRAIN

An elephant (*Elephas maximus*) was hit by an express train in between Titabar and Mariani stations, Assam, north eastern India at around 4:50 am. Sadly the elephant died in this accident; however, no human casualties were reported. The trend of elephant crossing the track had increased in the recent past due to which the information of herd movement were shared with the railway by the forest department in the state to slow down the train preventing 200 dashing this year alone.

Nov 21

<https://bit.ly/2rGj3E0>

FISH HUNTER DUCK VISITS TRICITY

A wild duck (*Mergus merganser*) had been spotted again in the Tricity region far down from its breeding grounds in the Ladakh lakes of Himachal Pradesh, northern India as it was last seen at Sukhna Lake, north western India 16 years ago. These birds prefer fast flowing streams in its own uplands due to which they probably find their way home in the summer again. These fish hunting ducks are mostly confined to high altitudes and were regularly spotted at Pong Dam in Himachal Pradesh.

Nov 21

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

EARLY SNOW RAVAGES HORTICULTURE

The foothill of Kashmir, northern India received early snowfall in the beginning of November creating a huge impact in the harvesting season destroying significant amount of orchards and farmland in the foothill with an estimated loss of USD 71 million and more. Disaster mitigation can be done as scientific methods could be applied to reduce the loss which must be taught to the farmers.

Nov 21

<https://bit.ly/2S72ImF>

TREK TO TRIUND PEAKS REGULATED

The famous trekking route in Himachal Pradesh, northern India will now be witnessing scheduled entries to the Triund mountain peaks as the snow fall in the higher regions had shifted wild animals to the lower region which may pose threat to the trekkers. This place had been the best place for star seeing in the past decades and served in the economy through tourist intakes. The police check post will be established and only entries during the day time will be allowed to this touristic destination.

Nov 23

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

ROHTANG PASS OPENS FOR LOCALS

The Rohtang pass, a high mountain pass that connects the Kullu valley with Lahaul and Spiti valleys of Himachal Pradesh, northern India has been permitted for the local residents of Lahaul and Pangi after a high demand from the residents. However, the tourists have been restricted to use the road due to extreme cold which has made the road slippery. Although the locals are allowed to use the highway they are abided to follow the safety protocols.

Nov 24

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

ELECTRIC BUSES PURCHASED

The electric buses were purchased by the government of Himachal Pradesh, northern India in comparatively low price in contrary to previous records. The Himachal Road Transport Corporation (HTRC) claimed that all the technical, operational, and commercials were secured according to the documents with maximum transparency.

Nov 25

<https://bit.ly/2Eoeky9>

INTERVENTION FOR THE REJUVENATION OF GANGA

The methodology used for environmental flow analysis of the Ganga River was found to be incorrect scientifically by environmentalists. They claimed that 942 dams, barrages and weirs in Ganga basin restricted the flow of the river and interrupted in the river's rejuvenation. The flow rate had decreased to a notable amount due to the dams, barrages, and weirs on its way. The central government has notified that the diversion of the river for different purposes must follow the protocol to maintain minimum flow and the existing projects must obey this rule within three years.

Nov 25

<https://bit.ly/2QklE4f>

China Himalaya

VISITORS MAGNETIZED BY HIGH MOUNTAINS

Tibet autonomous region of south western China upholds five mountains above 8,000 meters and thousands above 6,000 meters and with the approval of Tibet Autonomous Region 46 Mountains had been assessed by the global visitors including Mount Qomolangma, known in the West as Mount Everest. Moreover, this region welcomed more than 20,000 climbers from 40 countries in the past 28 years. The wastes of the mountain are being cleaned by both local farmers and professional mountain-climbing guides in this time interval.

Nov 20

<https://bit.ly/2Ex4YRJ>

RAILWAY CONNECTING TIBET AND NEPAL

The development of Trans-Himalayan multi-dimensional transport network is planned to be extended from the railway from Lhasa to Xigaze in Tibet, south western China by 660 km to reach Nepal's capital of Kathmandu. The estimated initial cost of this project USD 2.5 billion may increase due to the topographical challenges in the Himalayan region constituting the world's highest mountain range. According to the Foreign Minister of Nepal, although this will play huge role in the development of the nation, the government will consider the ethical aspects of funding decisions so as not to fall in debt trap.

Nov 22

<https://s.nikkei.com/2R57LUz>

Bhutan-Himalaya

PEOPLE-ORIENTED BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

The livelihood of the farmers in the mountain region of Bhutan is supported by the United Nations to utilize their unique knowledge of over 200 local plant species such as mountain ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) and rhododendron (*Ericaceae*), which can be used to manufacture essential oils, lip balms, organic candles, etc. This project is sustained by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with the aims to further study and harness the potential of these plants, train the farmers on biodiversity protection, and then develop products for sale in lucrative domestic and international markets.

Nov 20

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

DIGITAL FABRICATION AND CATASTROPHE

The first digital fabrication laboratory, launched in Thimpu, central Bhutan in July 2017, comprises rapid-prototyping facilities, combined with technical knowledge, which will assist in the time of future disasters including earthquakes by enabling more people to mobilize for the early stages of responses along with emergency assistance. Digital fabrication technologies could also convert debris into construction materials for reconstruction and developmental activities.

Nov 21

<https://bit.ly/2Epe55Z>

RODENT OUTBREAK DAMAGES CROPS

The increasing rat(*Rattus*) population damaged huge amount of crops that led the farmers to use Zinc phosphate in order control the rat population which was first initiated in Tsirang, south western Bhutan. Also the locals had a belief that the flowering of bamboo (*Bambuseae*) seen this year was rare and was an indication of famine. The farmers in many districts of Bhutan lost at least 20-30 percent of their crops due to rodent outbreak and its cause is still to be investigated by the National Plant Protection Centre in Thimphu.

Nov 23

<https://bit.ly/2S7AAAy>

Pakistan- Himalaya

WATER SUPPLY PROJECT APPROVED

The Punjab government, Rawalpindi, northern Pakistan has approved a project aimed to overcome water crises by supplying the water from Jhelum River. The water would be brought to the Rawal dam through a bigger pipe line to reduce estimated cost. The recent report of Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) stated that the groundwater table in the Rawalpindi city depleted immensely from 550 feet to 650 feet over the last half decade due to over-extraction of groundwater.

Nov 19

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