

# Headlines Himalaya

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For the 544<sup>th</sup> issue of Headlines Himalaya, we reviewed news from sources and selected happenings from five countries.

Forest area is depleting at an alarming rate in Kailali, farwestern Nepal. Work Procedure for cleaning river and other public places has been introduced by government in Kathmandu, central Nepal. Conservationists fear that trench dug by Indian border security forces along the border between Nepal and India hinder wildlife movement. Kullu, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, northern India is set to have liquid and solid waste treatment plant. The Tibetan government has announced a ban on tourists from visiting Mt. Everest base camp. Bhutan Ecological Society (BES) has started initiation to plant fruit trees in the urban areas across the country with the theme, "Fruits for All". A Ten-day awareness program about environmental pollution and cleaning of channels and canals has been launched in Peshawar, northern Pakistan.

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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### RAPID DEPLETION OF FOREST

In Kailali, far-western Nepal, forests covering an area of 205,939 ha have been depleting in alarming rate mainly because of over-exploitation of forest and its resources. Various ongoing development projects such as: Rani-Jamara-Kulariya Irrigation Project, Khutiya Dipayal Fast track, Seti Lokmarga have caused the serious depletion of forest. According to the Forest Division Office, various forest management works have also been started in Terai, Chure and Bhawar area to protect forests.

**Feb 11**

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

### FROZEN SNOW AFFECTS NORMAL LIFE

In various Himalayan districts of Nepal including Manang and Mustang, western Nepal, normal life has been severely affected by the thick layers of frozen snow formed due to low temperature and frosty weather. Transportation and communication system have been completely disrupted by snow. Local authorities have mentioned that the frozen snow would at least last for a week.

**Feb 11**

<https://bit.ly/2EIREs8>

### PROCEDURES INTRODUCED FOR CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

Work Procedure for cleaning river and other public places has been introduced by government in Kathmandu, central Nepal, allocating the duty of cleaning environment to local level. According to the Joint Secretary at the Ministry, all the 753 local levels should maintain the cleanliness of the rivers and other places as well as protect the biodiversity by maintaining environmental balance within their area.

**Feb 11**

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

### COMPENSATION PROVIDED TO APPLE FARMERS

In Jumla, mid-western Nepal, compensation has been provided to apple farmers hit hard by drought and hailstone rain. The production of apple had severely dropped during that period. A total of 716 farmers who had insurance policies for apple were provided compensation by insurance company. The number of apple farmers buying insurance policies for apple is increasing each year.

**Feb 11**

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

### DIGGING THROUGH GARBAGE

A group of Cleanup activists has been digging through garbage that were dumped at the side of Bagmati river stretching about 3.5 kilometers to track the polluters. They have already caught about 70 river polluters in three years.

**Feb 11**

<https://bit.ly/2SIK9FC>

### MANDAMUS ORDER ISSUED FOR MANAGEMENT OF STRAY CATTLE

The Mahendranagar bench of High Court, Dipayal, far-western Nepal issued a mandamus order for the proper management of stray cattle in four municipalities of Kanchanpur, far-western Nepal. Earlier, an interim order was issued to direct the local governments to remove cattle from public places, roads, temple and market areas. That order was not implemented which led to the issuance of the mandamus order.

**Feb 12**

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

### LEOPARD FOUND DEAD

In the forest of Bhanu Municipality-4, Tanahun, western Nepal, a male leopard (*Panthera pardus*) was found dead by Officials of the Division Forest Office (DFO). According to the Chief of DFO, 8-year-old leopard was spotted dead with an injury on its neck and the actual reason behind the death has not been determined yet.

**Feb 12**

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

### COMPENSATION PROVIDED TO ELEPHANT ATTACK VICTIM

In Gaighat of Udayapur, eastern Nepal, the family of a person who was killed by a wild elephant (*Elephas maximus*) attack on August 15 last year has been provided USD 8807.60 in compensation. The Chief of Division Forest Office gave the compensation to the victim's father provided by Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve (KTWR). This year alone, it has been reported that three people have been killed by the elephant attack in this district.

**Feb 12**

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

### INITIATIVES TAKEN TO SAVE PEEPAL TREES

In Rambha Rural Municipality-1 of Palpa, western Nepal, locals have teamed up to save Peepal trees (*Ficus religiosa*) which have both religious and environmental importance. They have raised the fund equivalent to USD 3523.04 and conducted a campaign by joining their hands carrying slogan 'Plant Peepal, Earn Blessings; Conserve Ecology, Become healthy.' 150 saplings of Peepal have been planted by locals in 3 ha of land along the banks of Kaligandagi river under the supervision of Peepal Protection Foundation and Laxminarayan Dham.

**Feb 12**

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

### GHARIALS RELEASED INTO WATER

Officials of Chitwan National Park (CNP) of Chitwan, central Nepal, have released gharials (*Gavialis gangeticus*) reared at the Crocodile Breeding Centre into Rapti river. CNP has initiated breeding gharials and setting them free in several rivers of Nepal since 1981. According to the Chief Protection Officer of CNP, the breeding centre was established in 1978 and 1,380 gharials have been released in various rivers till now and at present the breeding centre has 500 gharials.

**Feb 12**

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

### DIKTAT ISSUED TO STOP WATER CONTAMINATION

Shuklagandaki Municipality of Tanahun, western Nepal, has issued a diktat to crusher industries to stop contamination of Seti river during extraction of boulders and sand. An officer of Municipality wrote to crusher industries to solve the problem regarding the river pollution within this week and has threatened to close the industries if they follow the order.

**Feb 12**

<https://bit.ly/2Eqtxx6>

### ROADS IN FOREST: FACILITY OR DANGER?

In Dharan Sub-Metropolitan City-6 of Sunsari, eastern Nepal, there is a road passing through Panwari Community Forest and to the South of the road there is a fence with wires made by forest conservation group to prevent smuggling of forest resources. The road and the fence have become death traps for wild animals. The chances of vehicles to crash the wild animals are very high and the noise from horns is scaring them. According to the Chairperson of Dharan, several wild animals have been severely injured or lost their lives.

**Feb 13**

<https://bit.ly/2Tb2dNv>

### **PRIVATE SECTOR ENTRUSTED FOR SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT**

The responsibility of managing solid waste generated from Beni Bazaar, Galeshwar Bazaar and Ratopahiro of Myagdi district, western Nepal has been given to the private sector. The agreement for this was signed between Mission for Waste Management Pvt Ltd Pokhara and Beni Municipality and from this agreement the private sector could use a compactor and a tractor of municipality for managing wastes.

**Feb 13**

<https://bit.ly/2TnL9mS>

### **CONSERVATION DRIVE TO SAVE RED PANDA**

In Jumla, mid-western Nepal, conserving red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*) is becoming a major challenge due to increasing human encroachment, forest fires as well as attacks from domesticated dogs. In the program, "The role of media in conservation of red panda from poaching and killing" conservationists and participants have marked the need to formulate strict laws against killing and poaching of Red Pandas and local governments to act actively in conserving them.

**Feb 14**

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

### **LIGHTNING STRIKES ACROSS THE COUNTRY**

A fire accident caused by lightning strike at Bijayapur of Gadawa Rural Municipality in Dang, western Nepal, erupted a thatched house and a member belonging to that house has been critically injured. During that accident, properties of worth USD 4400.32 were destroyed. In Panchthar district, eastern Nepal, a youth of 17-year-old lost his life while his younger brother has been severely injured by lightning strike. Similarly, in Bhaktapur, central Nepal, six people including few students and staffs of Tribhuvan University were injured by lightning strike.

**Feb 15, 16 & 17**

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

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

<https://bit.ly/2tVP7Vz>

### **DESTRUCTIONS CAUSED BY FIRE**

In Sindhuli district, central Nepal, a fire accident by the explosion of solar battery resulted in destruction of two houses and loss of properties of around NPR 564000. Likewise, a woman of 60-year-old has been severely injured in fire accident at Dhapre of Sindhuli district, central Nepal. Similarly, in Bhojpur, Nepal, a fire gutted a house and destroyed a property of around NPR 600000.

**Feb 15 & 17**

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

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

### **PURCHASE OF PLASTIC WASTES**

Illam municipality, eastern Nepal, is buying plastic wastes to keep the environment clean and has set a price of NPR 15 per kilo plastic. Although the municipality has started to buy the plastics from 15<sup>th</sup> Jan, nothing has been provided to the sellers till now. The municipality is also going to mention the exact place for buying plastics and increase publicity.

**Feb 15**

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

### **INCREASE IN NUMBER OF RED PANDA**

Himalayan districts of karnali region is known to be safe habitat for one of the world's rare animal, Red Panda (*Ailurus fulgens*). According to the research done by Red Panda Network, the population of Red Panda is increasing in different forests of Jumla. Red panda can only be found in 5 countries of world and among them 44% population of Red panda is found in Nepal.

**Feb 15**

<https://bit.ly/2T9M3E9>

### **INDISCRIMINATE DISPOSAL OF GARBAGE AFFECTS RHINO**

Few months ago, a local in Chitwan, central Nepal, found a baby rhino severely injured by pieces of glass bottles that were dumped at nearby community forest. Arrival of tourists for picnics in the area has increased the amount of plastics and bottles which has worried conservationists. Various efforts were made to solve this problem but the measures were not effective. As a last resort, the locals banned picnic activities in the area in coordination with the Chitwan National Park..

**Feb 15**

<https://bit.ly/2VzDYp6>

### **DRINKING WATER CRISIS**

The locals of Suun village of Tripurasundari Municipality-3 of Dolpa, mid-western Nepal are facing scarcity of drinking water because the main source of water in the village has dried up. Due to lack of drinking water, locals have started to fetch water from distant source by the means of horse.

**Feb 15**

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

### **THIRTY-EIGHT TONNES OF GARBAGE COLLECTED IN VALLEY**

In Kathmandu, central Nepal, 38 metric tons of garbage was collected from rivers and rind road area of the valley. The waste collected after the clean-up was managed by local governments. Over 500 volunteers representing 25 organizations and the security personnel were involved in the clean-up campaign.

**Feb 16**

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

### **RAINFALL DISRUPTS TRANSPORTATION IN BAITADI**

Continuous rainfall for consecutive 4 days in Baitadi, far-western Nepal, has damaged the local roads and brought the traffic movement to a standstill.. According to the locals, the transportation was disrupted by snowfall only few days ago and now it is being disrupted by continuous rainfall.

**Feb 16**

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

### **CHITAL KILLED IN ROAD ACCIDENT**

A female chital (*Axis axis*) has been killed by a jeep near Suklaphanta National Park of Kanchanpur, far-western Nepal along the East-west highway. According to the Police Inspector, the jeep was going to Bhimdatta nagar of Kanchanpur district from Kailali district, far-western Nepal. The jeep, driver and dead chital have been referred to the conservation office.

**Feb 16**

<https://bit.ly/2SE9z7h>

### **INDIAN HUNTERS ARRIVED TO TRAP MONKEY**

In Khotang, eastern Nepal, 9 hunters from Khusinagar, India have been welcomed by the locals to catch the monkey that have troubled the farmers by destroying their crops. The hunters were invited by Monkey Control and Management Committee to trap the monkey into net or cage and catch them.

**Feb 16**

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

### **TRENCH POSES THREAT TO WILDLIFE MOVEMENT**

A trench between India and Nepal at Shivaratnapur area of Kailali, far-western Nepal has been dug by Indian border security force. They claimed that the trench is being dug to conserve the wild animals of Dudhwa National Park. However, the conservationists have expressed their concern that the trench will obstruct the movement of wildlife.

**Feb 17**

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

## India-Himalaya

### JAMMU-SRINAGAR HIGHWAY CLOSED FOR A WEEK

Jammu-Srinagar national highway, northern India has been shut down for 7 consecutive days due to the heavy snowfall and fresh landslide. The road clearance has been carried out in full swing. On the 9<sup>th</sup> day, authorities allowed only stranded vehicles to move from the highway.

**Feb 12 & 14**

<https://bit.ly/2NF8wmy>

### DISCOVERY OF NEW SPECIES

A non-venomous snake 4.8 m was discovered in Arunachal Pradesh by herpetologists. The snake is named Crying Keelback (*Hebius lacrima*) as a black spot is below the snake's eye. The findings have been published in 'Zootaxa'.

**Feb 13**

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

### TIGRESS FOUND DEAD

A 8-10-year-old tigress (*Panthers tigris*) has been found dead in Gadgadia range of Terai central forest division. Nainital, Uttarakhand, northern India. This is the second recorded death of tiger in Uttarakhand. The cause of the death is yet to be determined.

**Feb 13**

<https://bit.ly/2XwoX9b>

### PROTEST AGAINST THE GARBAGE TREATMENT PLANT

A large number of villagers in Palampur, Himachal Pradesh, northern India has protested the reopening of the garbage treatment plant. The plant was set up by Municipal Council (MC) 3 years ago but was shut down due to the improper management. The plant was in the residential area and had no scientific disposal and MC used toxic chemical to burn the garbage which had caused various health hazards.

**Feb 13**

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

### WILD ELEPHANTS ENTER THE VILLAGE

More than 12 wild elephants (*Elephas maximus*) entered the village around Majhgai range of Dudhwa tiger reserve in Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh, northern India. The elephants went on rampage and trampled the standing crops almost every day. This incident has been taken to the forest department but there has been no sign of relief. A herd of elephants entered chokra farm, Uttar Pradesh, northern India and destroyed 1 ha of wheat crops.

**Feb 14**

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

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

### PROMOTION OF HIGH VALUE RICE AS NICHE CROPS

The state administration, Kashmir, northern India has announced to promote the high value rice (*Oryza sativa*) varieties as niche crops. Due to the lack of irrigation and fewer revenues, farmers had been shifting to apple farming but now the government wants to revive the rice cultivation. The government has identified the south Kashmir for the cultivation of 'Mushk Budgi' (scented rice) whereas, the north Kashmir for cultivation for 'Zag' (red rice) and the budget of USD 420586.86 has been provided.

**Feb 15**

<https://bit.ly/2H9mV9c>

### **WASTE TREATMENT PLANT PROJECT**

Kullu, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, northern India is set to have liquid and solid waste treatment plant. The plant is expected to collect waste from 11 wards of Kullu Municipal Committee and garbage would be converted into compost in a scientific and environment friendly manner. The plant will also generate 1.5MW of electricity.

**Feb 16**

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

### **TEMPERATURE DROPS BELOW FREEZING POINT**

After the heavy snowfall and rain for three consecutive days in Himachal Pradesh, northern India, the temperature remained below the freezing point despite a bright sunny day. The minimum temperature was recorded to be -11 °C in Lahaul and Spiti.

**Feb 17**

<https://bit.ly/2C2Wajp>

### **HOUSES DAMAGED BY AVALANCHE**

The avalanche damaged 15 houses in Sural area of Chamba district, Himachal Pradesh, northern India. The rescue team had been sent to the affected area but team is assumed to arrive late due to heavy snow in the valley.

**Feb 17**

<https://bit.ly/2XDdF2S>

## **China Himalaya**

### **BLIZZARDS HIT TIBET**

Heavy snowfall in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture is considered to be the hardest hitting blizzard in the last 20 years with 1.5 feet of snow. The blizzard killed 13960 livestock and 219 wild animals as reported Yushu Prefecture Disaster Relief Work Emergency. The livestock were succumbed to cold and hunger. Meanwhile, people were trapped in their house without electricity and water. Relief materials have been sent to the affected areas.

**Feb 13**

<https://bit.ly/2Tajjv9>

### **BAN ON TOURIST IN MOUNT EVEREST BASE CAMP**

The Tibetan government has announced a ban on tourists from visiting Mt. Everest base camp due to the increase in litter in the mountain area. According to the Tibetan authorities, more than 300 tons of waste was collected last year. The government has announced that the number of permit would be limited to 300.

**Feb 15**

<https://bit.ly/2C3Rslu>

## **Bhutan-Himalaya**

### **PLASTIC BAN TO BE REINFORCED**

National Environment Commission (NEC) has announced the reinforcement of plastic ban in Bhutan from 1<sup>st</sup> of April this year. The plastic ban was first initiated in 1999 but was not successful. NEC said that due to the lack of alternatives to plastic, lack of coordination, and poor public awareness caused the of failure of the enforcement 20 years ago. NEC expects the ban to be reinforced strictly across the country.

**Feb 9**

<https://bit.ly/2EyegI8>



### INITIATION OF PLANTING TREES

Bhutan Ecological Society (BES) has started initiation to plant fruit trees in the urban areas across the country with the theme, "Fruits for All". The project aims to utilize and improve the green open urban spaces. They have planted around 80 trees in Thimpu and is targeting Paro, Punakha and Wangdue Phodrang for the project.

**Feb 12**

<https://bit.ly/2TkbP87>

### NEW CASH CROP IN RIKHEY

As the orange (*Citrus sinensis*) tree, major cash crop started dying, the farmers has adopted the farming of ginger (*Zinziber officinale*) as a cash crop in Rikhey, Samdrup Jongkhar, south-eastern Bhutan. Almost every household in Rikhey has ginger field. The farmers showed their satisfaction on the ginger farming and its profit.

**Feb 13**

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

### ECO-FRIENDLY WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

The first ever eco-friendly sewage treatment plant has been inaugurated in Hejo, Thimpu, western Bhutan. The treatment plant is expected to benefit 86 households and 700 people of locality. The treatment is eco-friendly and does not produce secondary pollution such as foul odour.

**Feb 14**

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

### SHORTAGE OF DRINKING WATER

The residents including the civil servants and students of Sherubtse College in Kanglung town, eastern Bhutan has been experiencing acute crisis for drinking water. The water supply has been running muddy for past days making it unsuitable to drink.

**Feb 16**

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

## Pakistan- Himalaya

### UNIVERSITY TO ESTABLISH CLIMATE CHANGE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The University of Peshawar (UoP) has started its effort to establish National Climate Change Research Institute stated in International Conference on Disaster Management 2019. The institute is expected to be the alliance of department of environment, geology, geography and Centre for Disaster Preparedness and Management to withstand the climate change challenges and build research reservoir for real time assessment of natural and man-made hazards.

**Feb 13**

<https://bit.ly/2Tv4CSw>

### AWARENESS PROGRAM LAUNCHED

A Ten-day awareness program about environmental pollution and cleaning of channels and canals has been launched in Peshawar, northern Pakistan. The initial phase of the campaign was started in Kabul river canal and Dilazak road.

**Feb 14**

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