

# Headlines Himalaya

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The 126<sup>th</sup> issue of Headlines Himalaya, weekly e-News is an attempt to keep our global readers abreast with the happenings in the Himalaya. As a part of your contribution to the environment and conservation in the Himalaya, please share it with your colleagues and friends. Also, subscription is free.

This week, good news are many. Nepal featured its living legend, brings Euro III standard fuel which costs just one rupee more, and warns about more garbage in Kathmandu. India is learning from Nepal on how to cope with flood. The 'mega dam liability' is a melting pot and something must come out of it. Unfortunately, we do not see how petty politics will safeguard community forests? For that reason, a forest monitoring team threw its towel saying there is not much one can do when people who are meant to protect their forests, are involved in destroying them. Happy reading!

**NEPAL**      Political parties decimate forests

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**INDIA**      Thousands displaced in Assam floods

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## Nepal-Himalaya

### POLITICAL PARTIES DECIMATE FORESTS

Encroachment of state-owned and community forests in Dang, west Nepal is huge. Whenever the issue of evicting illegal settlers arises, the political parties raise a hue and cry. It has entrenched community forests as well. The members of these community forestry user groups, backed by political parties, brazenly fell trees and allocate forest land among them. For example, Mahadev Community Forest Users' Group at Gobardiha built houses and farms in 70 ha of forest land. In another site, the Ghantadev Community Forest Users' Group at Lalmatiya has allowed 96 families to encroach forestland and build houses there. The chairman of the forest group made a decision to settle the community members in the forest following encroachment by outsiders. They opined that it is better that they build houses there instead of outsiders.

September 9

Kantipur

### RHINO HORN AND OTHERS

In Kathmandu, two people have been arrested for their alleged involvement in trading rhino horns. In the past months there have been quite a few arrests in the capital. In another report, two traffickers were arrested with trading of Eurasian owl. Also, police in Kaski district, West Nepal, nabbed 3 persons for poaching a Himalayan black bear and confiscated a deer that was being smuggled out from Parsa Wildlife Reserve to India.

September 9, 10, 11, 14

Himalayan Times, Gorkhapatra, Kantipur

### EURO III STANDARD

The Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) is distributing high-octane petrol of Euro III standard across the country from October. The fuel is considered environment friendly as compared to the existing fuels of Euro II standard, which has only 2.87% octane. The Euro III petrol contains 91 percent octane, which gives vehicles better mileage, increase engine efficiency and it contains substantially lower emissions of particulate matter. The Euro III diesel contains 0.15-PPM sulfur while the Euro II contains 0.5 PPM.

September 10

Kathmandu Post

### BUFFER ZONE COMMUNITY FOREST HOSTS 7 RHINOS

Seven rhinos and a recent birth of a rhino calf in the buffer zone community forest of Bardia National Park, has been reported which lies in the biological corridor of Bardia National Park (Nepal) and Katarniaghata Wildlife Reserve (India). During the armed insurgency period, 84 rhinos were killed in Bardia National Park.

September 12

Kantipur

### MORE GARBAGE ON THE WAY

Garbage disposal in the Valley has been obstructed for 260 days so far. Over one-and-a-half dozen groups formed by the so-called dumping site-affected locals, most of which function only when they call strikes, have disrupted garbage collection and disposal 68 times since the Sisdole site came into operation in 2005. Another disruption in garbage collection and disposal is likely as dozens of deals struck between the municipality and various locals groups in the past remains unimplemented. The municipality is notoriously known for its readiness to sign deals with current agitating local groups, is reluctant to implement them. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which earlier pledged financial assistance to build a state-of-the-art landfill site nearby Sisdole and Aletar, has informed Solid Waste Management and Resource Mobilization Centre (SWMRMC) of the municipality that it would provide support only after 2014. The long-term landfill site, which would cost around four billion rupees as per the 2005 projection, is expected to last for the next 25 years.

September 13

[http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news\\_details&news\\_id=23235](http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=23235)

### LIVING LEGEND

At his Ninety year age, Hutaram Baidya, still believes in developing technologies that poor people can afford and learn to use to better their livelihood. His workshop and classroom remain open for young with a hope that younger generation can make the difference. In 1990, Baidya started the 'Save Bagmati Campaign' which eventually transformed him into the country's best known spokesperson for the protection of river systems.

September 14

[http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news\\_details&news\\_id=23274](http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=23274)

## India-Himalaya

### THOUSANDS DISPLACED IN ASSAM FLOODS

At least one person was killed and 30,000 displaced in flash floods triggered by heavy rains in Assam's Lakhimpur district, eastern Himalaya. Kaziranga National Park has been inundated. Floodwaters of Drupang and Sessa rivers, both tributaries of the Brahmaputra River, entered at least 40 villages and forced residents to take shelter on higher ground and railway tracks. Also, the flash has inundated nearly three hundred houses in Oakland tea estate and adjacent Kachuan village including the tea estate's hospital and a primary school.

September 7, 10

Assam Tribune

### YES, THERE IS A WAY OUT!

A disaster risk reduction program, inspired by a Nepal rescue model, will help thousands in four districts of lower Assam prepare for the annual calamity called flash floods. The program that helps communities prepare for a disaster, has been successfully implemented in the remote Kailali district of Nepal, will cover Nalbari, Barpeta, Baksa and Bongaigaon districts in Assam. The floods are triggered by severe rainfall in the hills of Bhutan and sometimes by release of excess water from the Kurichu dam in the Himalayan country. There will be a network of volunteers in the upper catchment as well as in the lower catchment areas, who will inform each other about the regular update on rainfall through Fortin's barometers which will be installed in various locations. The barometers will predict the probability of strong winds and thunderstorm an hour in advance. In Nepal, the Kailali Disaster Risk Reduction Initiative involved six communities along the Mohana River and tributaries in Kailali district, far western Nepal, which helped communities to prepare for and respond to floods, followed by evacuation plans and conducted search and rescue.

September 8

Telegraph

### MINING FIRST, CONSERVATION LATER

State forest department in Assam are left with no choice but to allow permissions to business community for mining and other developmental activities in the forest area. This practice has lead to an extensive change in land use pattern in forest areas with adverse effect on rare and endangered flora and fauna.

September 9

<http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep1010/at08>

### PROBABLE ACT ON 'MEGA DAM LIABILITY'

In Assam, the demand for a 'Mega Dam Liability' legislation is being raised to ensure compensation of any loss suffered by the downstream people during and after the construction of any mega or medium sized dam over any river in the country. Experts say that there is the need of a "Mega Dam Liability Bill" in line with the Nuclear Liability Bill. Enactment of such bill enables people living by the riverside to assume how much water they will get in each month of the year and they can plan their crops accordingly in different seasons including their safety aspects with respect to giving environmental clearance.

Sept 11

<http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep1110/city05>

### SMUGGLED CATTLE

Large-scale cattle smuggling to Bangladesh through the riverine border in Dhubri district of Assam has become rampant. Every night, thousands of cattle including bulls, calves and buffaloes are smuggled to Bangladesh through the Brahmaputra River. As the river is in a spate, the cattle are just pushed into the river and within two or three hours the cattle reach where the Bangladeshi smugglers wait with mobile phones using networks on both sides of the border.

Sept 12

<http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=sep1210/state05>

## Bhutan-Himalaya

### THORTHORMI WATER

According to the US Geological survey, there are 25 are potentially dangerous glacial lakes. Of these, Thorthormi is a priority. From June to August 14 this year, the mitigation workers at the Thorthormi lake site in Lunana have reduced the water level by about 43 cm. The Department of Geology and Mines is targeting to reduce the water level by two meters this season and five meters in three years. Last year, the water level of the lake was reduced by 87 cm. A few working months in monsoon, high altitude sickness and extreme harsh conditions taking toll on the workers are the key reasons.

Sept 3

<http://www.bhutanobserver.bt/2010/bhutan-news/09/thorthormi-water-level-brought-down-43-cm.html>

#### **ANTHRAX OUTBREAK**

After Bangladesh, it is Bhutan to have been infected by the outbreak of Anthrax. Death of 29 cattle and infection of bacterial disease into 8 humans have been reported. The bacteria, bacillus anthrax stays in the soil and spreads to animals during rainy seasons.

September 8

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=16659>

#### **A SOLDIER KILLED IN MANAS, TIGER KILLS A MAN**

A soldier of the Royal Bhutan Army was killed and two others seriously injured on the evening of September 11, when suspected poachers fired at the RBA patrol team in the Royal Manas national park. A team of 35 soldiers and two officers were camping near the Gobarkunda river. In another report, a tiger had killed a 32-year old man from Dorji Gonpa village in Trongsa, central Bhutan. The incident occurred when the father of three went to look for his ox in the forest near his village. The family of the deceased has been granted a cash of Nu 35,000 and scholarships for two children by the King. However, the government had yet to decide the compensation for loss of human life as it is perhaps the first incident ever reported in Bhutan.

September 13

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=16710>

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=16714>

#### **RELIGIOUS REASON**

Farmers in eastern Bhutan, quit resin tapping from pine trees that grow in abundance. Initially there were more than 600 collectors, but now there are only 70 registered collectors, and the numbers of people, who actually collect turpentine, are even fewer. They have left the trade because of religious reasons. Lots of insects like flies and ants die as they get stuck in resin while being collected from trees.

September 14

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/2010/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=16715>

## **China-Himalaya**

#### **TIBETAN ANTELOPES**

To keep poachers at bay, four nature reserves of China situated on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau that houses Tibetan Antelopes are joining hands to protect this endangered species. Tibetan Antelopes are poached mainly for its hide, which is used to produce shatoosh shawls, a luxury items that requires three to five antelope skins to make just one shawl.

September 10

[http://eng.tibet.cn/09index/yctt/201009/t20100910\\_626836.htm](http://eng.tibet.cn/09index/yctt/201009/t20100910_626836.htm)

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