

Headlines Himalaya

June 8 - 14, 2011

No. 162

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For the 162 issue, we reviewed 59 news reports from 15 sources and selected 19 happenings in four countries. This week, good news are basketful. Nepal produces quality coffee, rhinos are rewildling India and forest guards are more vigilant. Tibet is even more attractive with red deer, antelope and preservation of Pattra-leaf Sanskrit Buddhist scriptures. Also, natives are exploring environmental thingamies that suppress natural populations and undermine our efforts on biodiversity conservation and livelihood.

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	<i>One rhino horn and two leopard skin</i> <i>Encroaching community forests</i> <i>Coffee from nine districts</i>
INDIA	<i>One rhino poached and another injured in Kaziranga and Pabitora, Assam</i> <i>Elephant killing and anthrax</i> <i>Rough estimate says around 300 red pandas</i> <i>Raiding timber on train</i> <i>Yes, shoot first, ask later</i> <i>Rewilding with rhinos</i> <i>Gearing from mass tourism to class tourism</i> <i>Apples in lower hills</i> <i>How to claim forests in Assam-Nagaland border?</i> <i>The world's most threatened deer faces a threat from grass</i>
CHINA	<i>Of red deer and Tibetan antelopes</i> <i>Lhasa population is aging</i> <i>Pattra-leaf Sanskrit Buddhist scriptures</i>
BHUTAN	<i>No rain, no potatoes</i> <i>Understanding climate change</i> <i>Rising per capita energy consumption</i>

Nepal-Himalaya

ONE RHINO HORN AND TWO LEOPARD SKIN

Two persons with a rhino horn, were arrested in Dhading district, Central Nepal. One of the arrestees has admitted to killing nine rhinos in Chitwan National Park. In another report, three persons with two sets of leopard hides were arrested from Krishnapur, near Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve, western Nepal.

June 9, 14
Kantipur

ENCROACHING COMMUNITY FORESTS

Around 85 ha of forest land in Surkhet district, western Nepal, has been encroached in three community forests. Lack of active participation of the members of forest users' committee has fuelled encroachment.

June 10
Kantipur

COFFEE FROM NINE DISTRICTS

Of coffee samples from nine districts including Gulmi, Lalitpur, Palpa, Kavre, Sindhupalchowk, Parbat district, western Nepal has been considered the best coffee of Nepal. In Parbat district, coffee is cultivated up to the height of 1,000 to 1,700 meters and it produced 10 ton parchment coffee this year.

June 12
Republca

India-Himalaya

ONE RHINO POACHED AND ANOTHER INJURED IN KAZIRANGA AND PABITORA, ASSAM

A male rhino was injured when poachers opened fire in the Kaziranga National Park, which led to exchange of gunfire between poachers and forest guards. In another report, a rhino was poached and its horn sawn off in Pabitora wildlife sanctuary in central Assam, where over 84 rhinos occur. The poachers took advantage of the night and the entire operation was over in 15 minutes as a rhino was shot to death with six bullets and. The last rhino death in Pabitora was reported in February 2006.

June 8, 13
<http://bit.ly/iD6sLo>; <http://bit.ly/j0KQFa>

ELEPHANT KILLING AND ANTHRAX

As a herd of 25 elephants has been rampaging crops like rice and corn in Haripur, 63 km from Alipurduar, west Bengal. An adult tusker was found dead in a village near Dhumchi forest, raising speculation that it might have been killed by people to save their crops. In another report, an adult male elephant was found dead in a yam field at Haripur, fearing spread of anthrax as the carcass had symptoms such as fluid was oozing, blood did not clot and rigor mortis hasn't set in even 12 hours after its death.

June 9, 10
<http://bit.ly/kyDBI0>; <http://bit.ly/k9dVMS>

ROUGH ESTIMATE SAYS AROUND 300 RED PANDAS

A preliminary survey in Pangolakha wildlife sanctuary and Barsey rhododendron sanctuary, eastern Himalaya has led foresters to believe a rough estimate of 300 red pandas in the state. Red panda is found in six protected areas including Kanchenjunga National Park, which covers West and North districts of Sikkim.

June 9
<http://bit.ly/lwhpJq>

RAIDING TIMBER ON TRAIN

A drive by the forest department to seize illegal timber from a train went terribly wrong at the Cooch Behar station when a block of wood fell from a bunk on a woman passenger sitting below. The timber smugglers transport expensive sal and teak into Bangladesh. None of the smugglers could be caught as they slipped away with the angry crowd.

June 9
<http://bit.ly/jm3T0c>

YES, SHOOT FIRST, ASK LATER

For fast moving, highly equipped gun-totting rhino poachers, plastic pellets guns are perhaps the answer. Forest guards in Jaldapara wildlife sanctuary, west Bengal will be equipped with plastic pellet guns. Plastic pellets will make poachers unconscious and guards can fire at them sight as it is non-lethal.

June 13
<http://bit.ly/mlDsp0>

REWILDING WITH RHINOS

Apalchand forest (80 km²) with a pair of rhinos in the last two years, is set to be declared the third habitat for one-horned rhinoceros in the state after Jaldapara and Gorumara in north Bengal. In the past, forest officials made several attempts to drive back these two to Gorumara National Park, 40 km away. But the animals did not return.

June 13
<http://bit.ly/mqFFq6>

GEARING FROM MASS TOURISM TO CLASS TOURISM

In Himachal Pradesh, western Himalaya, tourism is not contributing much to the economy despite the phenomenal growth with over 10.3 million visitors, almost double the native population, in 2010. The main reason for the fast-growing sector making a relatively low contribution is that the high-spending tourists account for only 7 to 8% of the total visitors.

June 13

<http://bit.ly/jXActU>

APPLES IN LOWER HILLS

In Himachal Pradesh, experts have succeeded in growing apples in lower hills at 900 m. So far, apple was grown only in upper areas above 1200 m in Kullu, Mandi, Shimla and Kinnaur districts only. A variety of “spur apple” imported from the USA was found most suitable in lower hills

June 13

<http://bit.ly/jXActU>

HOW TO CLAIM FORESTS IN ASSAM-NAGALAND BORDER?

People from Nagaland have allegedly come out with a unique strategy to stake claim on Assam forest by inscribing the name of the neighboring state on trees inside Desso Valley reserve forest, along the Assam-Nagaland border. The forest official said encroachment by the people of Nagaland in all the three reserve forests- Desso Valley, Desso and Tiru Hills — in Jorhat along the Assam-Nagaland border started since 1956. The original area of Desso Valley reserve forest was 16,381ha, and encroached area is 13,322 ha and 14 villages have been set up.

June 13

<http://bit.ly/mMX56F>

THE WORLD'S MOST THREATENED DEER FACES A THREAT FROM GRASS

The world's most threatened deer species Sangai, which is only found in Manipur, now faces a new threat from a plant known as para grass (*brachiaria mutica*) which covered about 5% of the 45 km² park area inside Loktak lake and because of the grass the water plants on which the deer species survived could not grow. “There are about 11-12 species of water plants on which the 180 deer survive.

June 14

<http://bit.ly/lzgjTR>

China-Himalaya

OF RED DEER AND TIBETAN ANTELOPES

Once considered extinct, the number of red deer, under state second-class protection, is increasing sharply in the Red Deer Nature Reserve, southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region. In 1997, estimated number of red deer and white-lipped deer were around 2,000 and now over 6,000. The Red Deer Nature Reserve covers about 180,000 hectares and a total of 42 villages lie in the nature reserve. The local government installed solar cookers for rural Tibetans to protect the vegetation, food of red deer. In another report, the population of Tibetan antelopes has increased to 150,000 in Hoh Xil Nature Reserve, Tibet Chang Tang Nature Reserve, Three Rivers National Nature Reserve in Qinghai and Aierhcin Mountain Nature Reserve in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

June 8, 11

<http://bit.ly/lqyUon>; <http://bit.ly/jir2EO>

LHASA POPULATION IS AGING

Lhasa's aging population is expanding fast . One out of every eight residents in the city of Lhasa is over the age of 60. By the end of this year, about 70,000 of Lhasa's 560,000 residents will be 60 years of age or older. Tibetans' average life expectancy has nearly doubled, from 35.5 years in 1959 to the current average of 67 years.

June 10

<http://bit.ly/izKX92>

PATTRA-LEAF SANSKRIT BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES

In the past three years, experts are trying to protect valuable Sanskrit Buddhist scriptures that were written on leaves. So far, 4,300 pages of the rare tree-leaf Buddhist Sanskrit scripture in 426 volumes have been recorded. It contains narratives of ancient Indian literature, code and classic Buddhist sutras. Most of them are stored in major monasteries, museums and research institutes in Lhasa, Shigatse and Lhoka respectively. The pattra-leaf sutras were brought to Tibet from India between the 7th and 13th century and were better preserved than those remained in India, where many decayed in the hot, humid climate or were lost in wars.

June 13

<http://bit.ly/mJ4ISj>

Bhutan-Himalaya

NO RAIN, NO POTATOES

Absence of rain this year has dampened hopes and spirits of farmers in Drametse and Narang, the two major potato growing gewogs of Mongar, central Bhutan. Farmers witnessed their potato plants, the biggest cash crop besides maize, die an early death under the scorching heat.

June 9

<http://bit.ly/iemAsL>

UNDERSTANDING CLIMATE CHANGE

A survey that covered 16 dzongkhags (districts) comprising 31 gewogs, 154 villages and 417 households across the country representing four broad eco-floristic zones, reveals that the people across the country have observed the impact of climate change but their understanding of climate change is generally poor. Seventy-two percent of the respondents across the zones observed that rainfall had become more erratic and less reliable.

June 13

<http://bit.ly/kyc0jL>

RISING PER CAPITA ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Bhutan's per capita energy consumption has increased by 12% annually which is estimated to be equivalent to 0.63 ton oil. Firewood is the primary source of energy for Bhutan representing the largest slice of energy consumption. The per capita consumption of firewood for cooking, space heating and lighting stands at 1.3 ton. Most of it is consumed by the households.

June 14

<http://bit.ly/jbKwAT>

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