

Nepal’s cliff honey hunters risk their lives

By Niranjan Shrestha
The Associated Press

DOLAKHA, Nepal — High up in Nepal’s mountains, groups of men risk their lives to harvest much sought-after wild honey from hives on cliffs.

Trekking hours through the steep mountains, one group led by experienced honey hunter Devi Bahadur Napali carried food, bamboo ropes, sharp bamboo sticks, and other tools needed to harvest the honey.

A minor slip could mean falling hundreds of feet and sure death for the hunters, who carefully navigated the steep and narrow openings on the mountain.

Before starting to climb a steep cliff high above the Tama Koshi River, Nepali reminded the group to ensure they had enough food, water, and local alcohol.

They piled up grass and logs at the bottom of the cliff and lit a fire to smoke the bees out of their hives.

Nepali climbed up a ladder made from bamboo rope with a sharp bamboo stick in one hand and a basket in another — the stick to break off the hives and the basket to collect them.

Dangling in the air, he sliced off pieces of hives and caught them with the basket,



HIGH-RISK HONEY. A Nepalese honey hunter holds a bamboo rope ladder as team leader Devi Bahadur Napali climbs to harvest cliff honey in Dolakha, 115 miles east of Kathmandu, Nepal, in this November 19, 2021 file photo. High up in Nepal’s mountains, groups of men risk their lives to harvest much-sought-after wild honey from hives on cliffs. (AP Photo/Niranjan Shrestha, File)

then gave a signal to a teammate to use a rope tied to the basket, full of dripping hives, to lower it to the ground. Two other team members prepared to clean off all the bees and squeeze the hives to extract the honey.

Thousands of bees hovered over the men’s faces, which were protected by face nets.

Nepali’s hands were swollen badly. He was stung on his hands, feet, and elsewhere on his body. He drinks the alcoholic beverage, he said, to make the pain bearable.

On this day, the group was able to harvest around 34 liters (9 gallons) of honey from the cliff colony. They will be able to sell it at a market for \$25 a liter.

Delta: Flight to Shanghai turned back because of COVID rules

BEIJING (AP) — Delta Air Lines says new pandemic-related cleaning requirements at a Shanghai airport were behind the turning back of a recent flight from Seattle in midair, a move that had prompted a protest from the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco.

An e-mailed statement said the new mandates at Shanghai Pudong International Airport “require significantly extended ground time and are not operationally viable for Delta.”

It wasn’t clear what the rules are and what prompted the change, but it comes as China tightens its already strict COVID-19 travel restrictions in the face of a growing outbreak in the city of Xi’an and ahead of the Winter Olympics in Beijing in February.

Xi’an, which is about 600 miles southwest of Beijing, reported a sharp rise in cases. The city of 13 million people has been locked down, with only one person per household allowed out every two days to shop for necessities.

The Delta flight that was turned back to Seattle left passengers with expired COVID-19 test results and U.S. visas, according to Chinese media reports.

The consulate in San Francisco did not name Delta but said in a short statement that many flights from the U.S. to China had been delayed or cancelled in recent days, including a flight that turned back more than halfway to its destination. The consulate “had made a stern representation to the airline,” the statement said.

Chinese hackers targeted Southeast Asian nations

BANGKOK — Chinese hackers, likely state-sponsored, have been broadly targeting government and private-sector organizations across Southeast Asia, including those closely involved with Beijing on infrastructure development projects, according to a report released in December by a U.S.-based private cybersecurity company.

Specific targets included the Thai prime minister’s office and the Thai army, the Indonesian and Philippine navies, Vietnam’s national assembly and the central office of its Communist Party, and Malaysia’s Ministry of Defense, according to the Insikt Group, the threat research division of Massachusetts-based Recorded Future.

Insikt said it determined that the high-profile military and government organizations in Southeast Asia had been compromised over the last nine months by hackers using custom malware families such as FunnyDream and Chinoxy. Those custom tools are not publicly available and are used by multiple groups believed to be Chinese state-sponsored, the group said.

All of the countries were notified in October of the findings, though it is thought that at least some of the activity is ongoing, the company said.



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