Ground Zero in Pheta

When the wind started picking up on Sunday night, Aiwal Hat Miya Ttukuru Faiullah’s wife Mustakima Khatun and daughter-in-law Tikya Khatun rushed indoors thinking their new brick and cement house would protect them from the storm. It turned out to be a fatal mistake. The tornado tore through the village of Pheta like a scythe with wind speeds topping 100 km/h.

The wall of Faiullah’s house caved in, burying his wife and daughter-in-law. Faiullah (above) only survived because he had left for Jithpur market to sell his employer’s water buffalo. In fact, while his wife was battling with death, Faiullah was munching on snacks she had packed for him earlier in the day as he waited out the storm in Jharpur.

A neighbour came searching for him, and when he finally reached home at 11:30 on Sunday night, it was only to see his wife and daughter-in-law with other bodies lined up at the damaged neighbourhood mosque.

“She said goodbye in the morning, and when I came back at night she was dead,” said 62-year-old Faiullah, as he rubbed his swollen eyes.

The tornado killed at least 30 people in Bura and Parsa districts, and most of those who died were from Muslim families and were crushed by masonry, hit by falling pillars or flying debris. The fatalities show a clear link with Nepal’s migration-driven economy. Faiullah himself used to live in a mud and thatch hut till recently, but after working for three years in Saudi Arabia, he built his brick house with the money saved. His only surviving son, Raia Aalam, is in Malaysia, and sends money home regularly.

Faiullah’s eight other children died young due to various infections, and Aalam is his only support in old age. He used all of the Rs.450,000 earned in Saudi Arabia to build the brick structure nine months ago. It is now gone, and he will have to earn a living selling buffalos in the market.

Faiullah’s neighbour, Esther Miya also lost his wife, daughter-in-law and two young grand-daughters when his house collapsed, trapping the family. He had sold their original hut and moved to the brick house he built with the money his son, Bhuvwarr, sent home from Qatar.

Many Nepali families are eating better, wear better clothes, and have built stronger homes with the money relatives working overseas send home. However, many of the houses are poorly engineered, use sub-standard raw material. This was the reason for the high fatality rate in Bura and Parsa this week. What appeared to be strong brick and cement houses crumbled like match-sticks within seconds as the tornado tore through the villages in a wedge-shaped path 100m wide and up to 20km long.

THE NEW NORMAL EDITORIAL

Disastrous Management

by Sewa Bhattarai

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Find yourself in a world you have only ever imagined, amidst the charm and unique history of diverse cultures. Fly with us to more than 60 destinations worldwide.
THE NEW NORMAL

The devastating storm that ravaged Bura on Sunday night, leaving at least 30 people dead and hundreds injured, is a stark reminder of the fragility of life. Although not as common here as in the plains states of mid-western US, tornadoes have been known to occur during the pre-monsoon season in Bangladesh and parts of coastal India. Meteorologists were initially reluctant to confirm that this week’s disaster was caused by tornadoes because they were almost unheard of in the Nepal Tarai. However, the fact that scattered people in the plains have in their Marathi and Hindi vocabulary a word for tornado (chahekravan) means that they do occur.

The Department of Hydrology and Meteorology has come under a lot of criticism this week for not being able to forecast such extreme weather event. While storms, rain, and high winds can be forecast, tornadoes are notoriously difficult to predict, and it is next to impossible in plains new they will touch down. Even to the United States, which hit by more than 1,000 tornadoes a year, there are only general warnings about possibilities of these twisters, although computer modeling allows more accurate forecasting. Still, only the specific warnings people get is when they can actually see a tornado approaching with its ominous funnel. Homes and businesses along America’s “Tornado Alley” in states like South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and parts of Texas and Colorado are mandatory required to have shelters since wind speeds of up to 450 km/h inside a tornado can rip everything away.

As survivors picked up the pieces of their lives this week, in their village of Bura, scientists from the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM) saw the classic footprint of a tornado: a long and narrow path of destruction, houses and walls built with masonry key demolished, trucks and busses had been thrown away, might trees were uprooted – just a few metres away palm trees still stood with fronds intact and branch bones were unsighted.

Photographs taken by passengers on planes circling over Simon’s while waiting to land at Kathmandu airport show continuous lightning flashes inside a supercell reaching more than 10.000km². Right before those planes, the conditions were getting ripe for the twister to form.

Eyewitnesses describe the frightening storm that hit at dinner time, with the burst of the damage confined to a 50km wide trail of destruction along a few kilometres towards Birganj. As our coverage of the disaster in this edition explains (page 14-15), the tornado would be difficult to predict even with the most sophisticated equipment.

Nowcasting is possible, but not for a specific location or an exact time. The DHM has installed a Doppler radar in Sircar, and two of the best are getting set up in Pulpa and Udaypur to cover the entire country. Data from these can be fed into modeling programs, make predictions for rain and wind, and also gauge the possibility of tornado striking.

However, even if these radars had been operational and modeling software were already available, it would have been impossible to forecast a tornado hitting a localized cluster of villages in the central plains area at a specific time. And even if the warning gone out, there would not be enough time to respond, and in the absence of anyDirective, such a storm would still have high casualties.

For Nepal, therefore, there is only one thing to do: spread awareness and be prepared for more tornadoes. To further reduce the intensity of storms increases with climate change. Extreme weather events like wind storms, flash floods, cloud bursts, glacial lake outburst floods, droughts and erratic monsoons are the new normal, which we have to learn how to cope with and prepare for.

With climate change, extreme weather events like the Bura tornado are becoming more common in the years ahead. Let’s be ready with better forecasting and preparedness.

10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Why do these lines from an editorial in Nepali Times (MDN) of 5 April 2009 sound strangely similar today?

‘The unsatisfactory action of awaking the nation is beginning to be alarms.

I do not offer any question for before death. I offer my personal faith (that) you are above all.’

Most Nepalis expected that the constitution-making process would be lengthy and fraught with delays, but few were sure that new language would be too long for one generation to be the beneficiary of the government.

Most Nepalis expected that the constitution-making process would be lengthy and fraught with delays, but few were sure that new language would be too long for one generation to be the beneficiary of the government.

President Nabadwip Manandhar

Oasis within An Oasis

Join our video team at an island resort of Bhaishakti Mandir’s gorgeous bar, and take a break from all the travel and stress. An oasis in the middle of a stressful lifestyle. Stay calm and relaxed.

Top 5 Things to Do in Nepal

Nepali Nepali

Kathmandu has always been a beautiful city, but now it is even more so! The architecture, the food, and the people are all absolutely wonderful. Every visit to Nepal is a joy.

Om Namah Shivaya

Om Namah Shivaya

Om Namah Shivaya

Om Namah Shivaya

Om Namah Shivaya

Om Namah Shivaya

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Coming soon: two-way migration to Nepal

I t was an ironic coincidence that the week Nepal hosted its second trade fair in 30 years, the country signed an MoU with Japan for the export of Nepali skilled workers. Also last week we saw photographs of thousands of young Nepali men sleeping out in the open as they waited in line for Korean language tests, which they must pass in order to work in Korea, Nepal’s long awaited G2G deal with Malaysia that will remove labour middlemen will come into effect. As Nepali workers in Korea had to create employment at home, overseas workers are paying for our cheap labour. This trend will only increase as East Asian countries age, and as traditional labor-exporting countries like the Philippines and our South Asian neighbors attain higher standards of living. If all the new energy investment and South Asia’s gas projects committed at the Nepal Investment Summit actually come through, we are surely going to need the workforce here at home. Conservatism has now showed that no Nepali youth will now have to seek jobs abroad. That is a hyperbole. It is also a contradiction. A government that is promising huge employment opportunities at home is siging deals with Japan, Korea, Malaysia and Qatar to export our youth.

This is likely to go on for some time, as Nepal is already addicted to remittance revenue to sustain the economy. Two imports of everything from vegetables to fruits. For now, about the only ones where remittance inflows have shown an impact is in driving up land prices in Kathmandu and urban centers. If we want to see Nepal developed in our lifetime, we should have to aggressively go out into the world and recruit. Many hotels, international non-profit, foreign-aided projects and bilateral and multilateral agencies already have foreigners as hosts. To push this line of argument further, Nepal can serve in the British and Indian armies and the Singapore Commandos, why not a Japanese or Korean heading an irrigation or hydropower project in Nepal? We can already offer jobs to the Japanese and Koreans in Nepal. Proof of whether the Investment Summit was really successful to generate $10 billion will be if Nepal finally turns into a country that offers employment to Koreans and Japanese. Workers from India and China already have jobs in Nepal, and in fact Nepal is the third largest source of remittances for India. Given that the summit is organized every two years, and every day of the past two years at least 1,500 Nepalis left for work overseas, we need to start thinking of rousing the flow. No more is it time for aflo manche or Hamro paryo ke manche. Nepal now needs ramro manche from all over the world.

When Nepal Airlines proceeds its new Airbus 350 to Tokyo Narita and Kanazawa, the seats should be booked both ways. Investment is also about technology transfer, and induction of skilled human resources – Nepal needs trained and experienced human capital that helped build the modern Japanese and Korean economy. This would be a perfect match, and now that Nepal can take full advantage of. They benefit from the energy of the young Nepalis, and see our brains drain away. Further, Nepal always seems to have money to hire more police and administrative staff but not the technical and managerial people who can build this country.

Nepali politicians is a dem, while we here and have about procuring the services of qualified managers and technicians. As many other countries, Nepal has embraced the idea of the free flow of goods and services. We have benefited from the one-way free flow of human capital as well, now we need to re-evaluate and relax our work visa. The real advantage of heling globally will also be to get investment engineered about how to do business in these countries. We would know, for example, what to grow, how to process and export value-added agricultural products from the Himalaya to Japan or Korea. We do not get to produce and sell our products because of geopolitical positioning. Nepal who are likely to oppose the idea of recouping Chinese remittances because here, how their children are now earning illegally in the diamond trade. Why should we deny this opportunity to those who are in the best countries? We need them now. We may not need this in the future. Let us all watch carefully who get hired to bring cars for the government and for Nepali aflo manche first, then let us do a global search.

Anil Chitrakar
President of Sathodhikar

Going is tough for Chinese investor in Nepal

The Nepal government has hailed its two-day Investment Summit that ended on Saturday as a resounding success with the signing of 15 deals with foreign investors. However, here in Nepal, the experience of a Chinese investor in a state-of-the-art cement plant demonstrates how hostile the environment is for foreign direct investment (FDI) in the country.

Chinese Hengdi Cement, an affiliate of China Hengdi Group, which is investing $1 billion in a 3,000-ton-per-day cement plant in western Nepal, had expected a commitment from the government to protect its investment. Instead, the Chinese investor is having to deal with roadblocks and bureaucratic hurdles.

But faced with obstacles every step of the way, Hengdi tied up with Nepal’s Shiva Cement hoping that the involvement of a local partner would ease bureaucratic hurdles along the way. Even though the government has promised to provide a road, transmission line and other infrastructure, it has not kept its promise.

The plant is located 28km from the east-west highway, and Hengdi opened a dirt track itself because it would have taken too long to wait for the government. However, the road has not yet been blacktopped, and none of the bridges have been built as per the agreement.

The Chinese have built another 17km road to its limestone quarry from where it sources raw material. The company says it has spent Rs 2 billion of its own money to build roads the government had promised.

Similarly, the Nepal Electricity Authority was supposed to extend its transmission line from the Barddahhat Substation with the installation of 21 pylons. But this has not happened either. Hengdi would have bought 40MW of power from the Nijgadh grid, but since the transmission lines are not yet ready it has to generate its own expensive electricity from diesel-powered captive plants.

The factory employs 530 Nepali engineers, managers and workers, and although Hengdi’s agreement with the government allows it to produce 12,000 tons of cement a day, it only brings in 5,000 tons because of the lack of electricity supply, according to manager Liu Xuegang.

China’s Hengdi Cement owns 70% of the venture with Shiva having 30% of the shares in the $330 million project. This is the largest foreign joint venture investment project in Nepal today, and although it is termed as a model, it is clear that unless Nepal provides the right environment, the venture is unlikely to be successful.

Some 600 foreign delegates from 26 countries took part in the Nepal Investment Summit during which some 15 deals were signed in hydropower, solar energy, tourism, 5G telecommunication, and other projects.
Chaos at airport due to runway repair

An investigation committee has been formed after a scheduled Dubai-bound Airbus 330 of Nepal Airlines was canceled on the night of 2 April after all 297 passengers had boarded because it was ready for takeoff four minutes after the airport closed at 1915pm for the night to allow runway repairs. Kathmandu airport is closed between 10pm-4am every day for the first refuelling of the runway in 30 years.

The plane, which was scheduled to fly to Dubai at 8:35pm, had sought permission to tow from the hangar to the apron at 7pm. But Air Traffic Control (ATC) only gave permission to tow at 8:25pm because all three bays for widebodies were occupied. Passengers boarded the plane at 9:55pm, and refuelling was finished at 9:37pm. The engineering team cleared the flight at 9:45pm, and the plane closed its doors two minutes later. The pilot asked the ATC for permission to taxi out to runway 20. ATC asked the plane to hold while a Dragon Air Airbus 330 taxied out for takeoff. The Hong Kong-bound flight took off 3 minutes before the cutoff time of 1910pm. The ATC then informed the Nepal Airlines flight that since the airport was closed, it would not have the clearance to take off.

Since 1 April, Kathmandu Airport has been closed for 10 hours daily for runway repairs. Airline staff were living at the Tower for not even giving a break of 5 minutes when it was their fault for delaying the towing in the first place. According to Nepal Airlines, the plane requested permission to take off several times, but the airport officials ignored the pilot. ATC staff say they were busy discussing the request with higher officials, but did not get the requisite permission to extend the cutoff by 15 minutes. Miscommunication between airport officials and plane crew seems to be the cause of the confusion.

Nepal Airlines offered to put up all 135 passengers at hotels in Kathmandu, but 163 passengers refused to disembark from the plane, saying they would not hesitate until the plane took off. The airline had to incur a loss of Rs6.5 million to pay for overnight hotel for passengers in Kathmandu and Delhi.

“More than any money lost, the passengers had to go through a lot of trouble because of the incident,” said Nepal Airlines spokesperson, Capt Vwety Lama. “It gave the carrier a bad name for no fault of its own. It also gave the impression the airport can treat the national flag carrier in any way it likes.”

The passengers stayed in the aircraft all night, and were finally forced out by police early in the morning of 3 April, and the plane took off for Dubai at 8:45am – 11 hours behind schedule. It was the Home Secretary who is said to have issued the order to the Police to force the passengers out of the plane by any means possible.

According to an airport official, this is the first time in Nepal’s aviation history that passengers spent an entire night in a plane at Kathmandu Airport to protest the delay.

Domestic and international flights have been badly hit by the airport closure at the height of the tourist season. The repairs are scheduled to end on 30 June.

Sharad Ojha
Ever since it opened more than 20 years ago, Patan Museum has been a quiet sanctuary hidden away from the densely-packed city outside. And in a tranquil, leafy corner of the complex is an oasis within an oasis: the Patan Museum Café.

Under new management by Dwarka’s Hotel, the restaurant offers a delectable selection of continental cuisine, as well as finessed pickings of Nepali and Asian dishes. The menu features healthy salads, brunch, specialties, snacks and full portioned meals, hinting at the raison d’être of the place: all-day dining, whether you choose to start, continue or end your day at the museum.

Lush greenery reaches up to rooftops of weathered glimpsed tiles. Artfully contained shrubs spread against the geometric curves of patterned brick and into dining nooks and inviting enclosures. Low-hanging pavilions reminiscent of Patan’s many seating platforms (pati) provide shady private cubicles, as do cafe-style umbrellas dappled with shadowplay as the trees dance with the wind.

Austrian restoration architect Géza Hugmiller also transformed the Kaiser Café in the Garden of Dreams in Thamel, into the popular destination it is today. It seems fitting, then, that both these treasured historic restorations now feature bars and cafes managed by Dwarka’s Hotel, whose revenues contribute to the upkeep of the sites. Patan Museum Café now has a menu and services that places quality and consistency foremost.

**Museum menu**

Organic produce from Dwarka’s own organic farm in Dhulikel features on the cafe menu.

**Baked Jalkapur fish with quinoa and vegetable salad**
A sweet sticky sauce accentuates the mouthwatering caramelization of a filet Jalkapur fillet, paired to mates, brochette patties. Salt, quinoa and hearty vegetables complete the healthy ensemble.

**Shrimp bisque**
A rich shoyu, perfectly sweet and bitter, with pieces of cooked shrimp and a hint of cream, garnished with a sprig of micro herbs.

**Caprese salad**
Creamy buffalo mozzarella, organic tomatoes and torn holy basil, dressed with rich, tangy balsamic oil, and a selection of arugula, basil, and a drizzle of white wine vinegar to lean the palate.

**Affogato**
A generous double shot of espresso with a double scoop of vanilla ice cream, served in style in a martini glass.

**Almond chocolate cake**
A luscious tag of nutty chocolate cake, smothered in rich chocolate ganache, accompanied by an assortment of fresh fruits and sliced almonds.
The Patan Museum is a must-visit among the draws of Kathmandu Valley: tastefully designed and informative, its curator is logical yet sensitive to the nuances of the richly-layered heritage and local traditions. Visitors can trace chronological lines in Nepal’s cultural history, and are guided to recognize stylistic themes in the lives of gods and goddesses and the iconography that they pass on the streets of the Valley’s old towns. Visitors get an introduction to the symbiosis of Hinduism and Buddhism in the Newa civilization. Besides the artifacts on display, the corridors provide an amusing serendipity, places of repose and leisure of rulers past. We see courtyards where the public would gather to celebrate, debate or exchange, and sense a grittiness, a deep attention to detail. And most striking: these are living traditions that carry on to the present day.

There is the bathing well, Nava Mandir of King Siddhi Narasimha Malla in Sundari Chowk with its gilded gandha spout. Or, a large display of a gilded pair of the Buddha’s hands, ‘calling the earth to witness’, depicting the moment of attained enlightenment.

In those days of quick-fix concrete and steel, visitors sense a dwindling appreciation of lingering around a water well, resting on a courtyard ledge, or leaning in to admire the intricate carvings of a temple’s eaves.

Which is why it is important to accept the invitation to spend a day at the museum, to explore, to rest, to compose one’s impressions of the city, and even rekindle the divine spark with greenery, nourishing food and inspiring architecture.

Monuments are kept alive by their relevance to the community. In Nepal, they have been maintained by devotion: annual rites and festivals that ensure places of worship are regularly tended to and repaired by devotees. In cases where monuments are given into state care, they have often fallen into disrepair.

Fortunately, the team led by Austrian architect Géza Hagnmüller that was given the charge to restore Patan Durbar in the 1990s, took to the task with an intention to turn the palace complex into a self-sustaining cultural institution, capable of withstanding not just natural shocks but also political instability.

In its modernisation into a world-class cultural treasure, the palace complex underwent a significant rearrangement to house not only artifacts, but a constant flow of people within what would once have been quiet, private quarters of the royal court. Amidst the mostly faithful restoration of the palace to its Malla heritage, the Patan Museum also features a clutch of modern elements: new materials and motifs seamlessly worked into the intrinsic historical fabric of the East Wing’s Malla and Rana styles. As part of the rearrangement, a graceful timber staircase leads from a new foyer to a stunning display of iconic roundel intricately carved timber struts featuring deities in various postures.

The columns and capitals supporting the restored Rana-style wing are detailed in steel and timber, to clean modernist lines, and hold their own within the simple brick and white-plastered detailing of the period. They also feature a postmodern take on the scrolls of old Newa capitals, reinterpreting the decorative art of traditions past, whilst acknowledging the architectural language of the restoration’s own timeline. At the Museum Café, new metal-coated pavilions also feature similar modern detailing in timber, a graceful reminder within the new construction of its heritage.

The restoration efforts that led to the establishment of Patan’s Royal Palace as a public museum in 1997 feature modern revitalisation of traditional motifs, designed in timber and steel by Hagnmüller’s team. The clean lines and geometric postmodern interpretation of decorative Newa carving presents a nod to the architectural language of the restoration’s own timeline.

Shelvin Tse

Patan Museum

Am 2 10pm

Courtyard and access to the Museum Cafe are open 10am to 10pm.

Entry fees to the Museum:

- Adult: Rs 100.00 (included in Patan entry fees)
- Child: Rs 50
- Adult w/ID: Rs 50
- Child w/ID: Rs 25

http://www.patanmuseum.gov.np/

OASIS WITHIN AN OASIS

In a pristine lane of one of Nepal’s prime tourist spots, amidst the beauty for both local and international, the Museum Cafe, a highlight among the Panathala cafes.

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Nepal has notched notable successes in conserving nature: five years of zero poaching of rhinos and tigers in national parks, the doubling of the wild tiger population in 10 years and protection of plant species. However, roads, irrigation canals, transmission lines and even railways are now threatening to undermine those achievements.

Conservationists say that balancing the need for economic growth with ecological protection will be even more challenging than combatting poaching. At the country marks National Wildlife Week from 14-20 April, Nepal’s planners need to find ways to build new infrastructure without irreversibly harming the country’s biodiversity.

Now that Nepal has domestic poaching under control, it needs to focus on controlling the traffic of wildlife smuggling. Nepal is a hub for trafficking of tiger, rhino and pangolin parts from India and Africa. Even low chimpanzees and birds have been found at Kathmandu airport.

Nepal is now a victim of its own success in conservation. With poaching controlled, protected areas are now getting overcrowded with wildlife, leading to the threat of disease and an increase in human-animal conflict.

In addition, climate change is leading to weather extremes that have aggravated the problem of water scarcity, flash floods and prey decline. Even though rhinos are no longer poached, for example, there has been a sharp increase in fatalities, with 41 dead in the last 9 months alone in Chitwan. Besides rhino, most have died of disease, fights with other rhinos, or poisoning. Last summer, rhinos died in Sunauli after falling into the septic tank of a hotel.

There has also been an increase in wild elephants and tigers entering human settlements in search of food due to habitat encroachment in their migration corridors. Last year, flash floods in Chitwan washed away rhinos; 12 of them had to be rescued and brought back from India.

However, the biggest threat to Nepal’s wildlife in the post-poaching era is a new infrastructure crossing nature reserves. Major transmission lines have been built or are planned through national parks, the new postal highway slices through nature reserves, new irrigation canals such as Bahal, Sitka and Ramjumla have bifurcated areas frequented by wildlife, and the new East-West railroad running parallel to the E-W highway will fragment many national parks.

Nature reserves and national parks make up one-fourth of Nepal’s area. With infrastructure building going on, experts say the country will soon lose 200,000 hectares of forests. This will result in rampant habitat destruction, and increase in road kills and deaths of animal that fall into irrigation canals, which account for the highest number of wildlife fatalities. New roads have also brought haphazard urbanisation and pollution: a growing number of ungalulates and carnivosers have been found to have died after ingesting plastic or chemicals.

One of the biggest sources of habitat destruction will be the much talked about Ngaju airport near Pansa National Park, which will decimate one of the last remaining hardwood forests in the eastern Terai, removing a major migratory corridor for wild elephants.

“The government has always prioritised infrastructure, which is a major threat to conservation,” says Bisnu Prasad Shrestha of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Nepal.}

The habitat of this unique to Nepal bird and other rare species is threatened by a new road.

The raised 250-year-old Gokhali Fort of Upardang Gedi, is located on the northern rim of Chitwan Valley. But that is not the only reason these forested mountains are special; this is also home to the Spiny Babbler, the rare bird found only in Nepal (left).

Bird Life International and Bird Conservation Nepal have concluded that the Gedi-Simanchal Forest is an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) of international value. There are only 17 other IBAs in Nepal, and this is one of the few not located within a protected area.

But now the forest is threatened by the construction of a new road that will be a short cut from Mahillo Khola to Gadi (map). The alignment is along the steep forested slope, and locals are worried that it will destroy trees, disrupt water sources and threaten landslides. They
Wildlife Conservation (INFWC): “Our preoccupation therefore is with mitigation measures on the existing roads and finding out ways to make new infrastructure safer for wildlife. If we do not act now, it will be too late. Our tourism industry and economy depend on our conservation efforts.”

INFWC and WWF Nepal organized a regional workshop this month in Kathmandu to find ways to promote sustainable green infrastructure. Some of the key recommendations include the study of wildlife movements, more mapping of linear infrastructure, like roads, railways, canals and transmission lines.

The good news is that planners at the Department of Roads think the country does not need too many more roads, the existing strategic highways and feeder roads need to be upgraded. There have been initiatives like installing CCTV cameras to monitor vehicles, enforcing time cards on highways that traverse national parks, as well as building over and underpasses so wildlife can cross highways, irrigation canals or train tracks.

INFWC is now planning five canopy bridges for referred species on Besisahar-Bhulbhule route and constructing one for the new Larke La. The bridges will allow wildlife to cross the high-altitude roads without disturbing them.

The Sisa Irrigation Canal has several overpasses for wild animals.

ROADS AND ANIMAL KINGDOMS:
(Clockwise from left) Many wild animals fall into the Sisa Irrigation Canal that crosses Bane Natural Park parallel to the highway and a national transmission line. A hog deer wallow in a jungle pond in Banke, where wild exploitations regularly occur on SH-19 Highway. The Sisa Irrigation Canal has several overpasses for wild animals.

Nature and Infrastructure

Gadi-Siratchuli Forest

Until recently, the indigenous Chepang people followed a nomadic lifestyle, living off the rich forests as hunter-gatherers. As other ethnic groups migrated here, the Chepang started to take up a more settled life based on subsistence agriculture. But their terraces on the steep slopes do not produce enough food, and the Chepang still depend on wild food from the forest.

The new road will run through the pristine forest area for wildlife and destroy their homes, as well as alter the terraces on the slopes.

The sub-tropical hilly deciduous forests of the Gadi-Siratchuli BFA are of high quality and are now a rare and declining habitat in Nepal. They support great biodiversity and are an invaluable resource for local Chepang communities. The forest lies at the northern end of the Birandhara Corridor that links Chitwan National Park to the Mahabharat range, and is important for the north-south movement of animals in the Chitwan-Annapurna Linkages (CALA) and Terai Arc Landscape (TAL).

Says conservationist Hem Sagar Surai: “Prevalent livelihoods, including those of the Chepang, depend on the watershed and forests of this area. Development impacting wildlife here should not be tolerated as we have no other places like this one. What is left is that the road should be modified.”

Carol Inkojis is a conservationist who has been coming to Nepal since 1977. Rupendra Kamchakarya runs a lodge in Gadi village and works to preserve the local culture and biodiversity of the area.
EVENTS

Trash To Treasure
This workshop by Kavirana will help you upcycle waste. Students will work with Kavirana teachers and learn how to reorganise useful parts in electronic waste and use them to create a useful product. Register online.
10.30-1, April 10, 10 am, open on first Tues of every month, Kavirana’s Workshop. Dhulikhel. 9845571757

KatJazz International Festival
A 16-member band from Germany and Switzerland, a classical orchestra from Spain, a classical piano duo from Germany and Morocco, and Harry, a Hislop trained Cambodian vocalist, are coming to Kathmandu this April. The classes and concerts by these artists are open to anyone. Interested candidates should register as soon as possible for workshops.
16-19 Apr, Katmandu Jazz Conservatory. 9848224564.

Readers’ Workshops
An independent, community-driven workshop to build strategies for better reading. The topic this week is identifying various genres and strategy for reading. Every Saturday, 11 am, Antony & GN Library, Thapathali. 9841095400.

Climbing Everest
Sir Birching is an unaccompanied mountaineer who climbed five peaks above 8000m, including Everest, in 1979 for the benefit of the Gorkha Special Forces. 17-19 Apr, 6:30 am, KTM. 9846728344.

Maggie Doyle
CNH Hero Maggie Doyle will share her inspirational story about her work. Doyle co-founded the Kopila Valley Children’s Home and School in Sunsher and received the CNH Hero Award in 2015. 10 Apr, 6:00 am, Hotel. 9849673544.

Summer Pop Up Market
Shop for a variety of items including clothes, gift items, customised bedheads, home decor, plants and more with exhibitors from Nepal and India. Enjoy some delicious food items and a fun day with family and friends. 5-16 Apr, 10 am, Heritage Gardens, Sano Paulo.

Kathmandu Film Festival
The seventh edition of the Nepal Human Rights Film Festival (NHFRF) will screen over 100 films mostly dealing with human rights issues. Screenings will be followed by discussions. The festival is organised by Nepal Human Rights Film Centre. 7-17 Apr, 2.30 pm, Open fundraiser Centre of Science and Culture, Kapan Pothai. 9841784886.

Mazzika
Middle eastern music from Egypt combined with Nepali tunes. 6-7 Apr, 7 pm, Night Club Bar, Thamel. 9841700153.

Jazz at Black Light
Eight artists from Nepal, India and France will perform. Jazz music with guitar, violin, percussion and vocals. 5-7 Apr, 7 pm onwards. List Escola’s, Grassmarket. 9841760840.

Friday Night Music
Enjoy a musical evening with O Elevus’s Nepali Band. April 13, followed by Sultan Riz and The Phantom City at 8 pm. 5-7 Apr, 7 pm onwards, Seven Diner, COT www.7diner.com. 9846545441, 9843059383.

Tangra Chinese Fest
The fest will highlight the Tangra Chinese street and restaurants with dishes that are fresh, skillfully designed, and delicious. Only a limited number of restaurants serve this cuisine, so the fest will be an interesting experience for guests. 7-14 Apr, 11 am to 10.30 pm. Bawarchi, Upper Maharajgunj, 9841704644.

Armo Room
Armo Room’s Quick Business Lunch is fast, delicious and reliable to the busy individual who has little time to spare. 12-2 pm, every Monday to Friday. 9841721717.

Hotel Baha
This traditionally built hotel is located in the heart of Bhaktapur and is surrounded by temples, providing the natural heritage of Bhaktapur while enjoying the peaceful ambience of the hotel. 9846169010.

Hotel Annapurna View
The new boutique hotel situated at 1,600m in Sauraha offers everything: sunshine, the Annapurna, a view of Pokhara lake, serenity, and luxurious accommodation. Springdale, Pokhara. 9843105566.

Hotel Mount Princess
The hotel offers magnificent views of the surrounding valleys and mountains and is especially recommended for those wishing to escape the city’s madness. You can book your stay at 984255 Mount Princess Room through the CNH app. Kathmandu. 98456650.

Jagatpur Lodge
Enjoy a great view of Phewa Lake, cultural shows, or indulge in the sumptuous dishes from The German Bakery. Lakeside, Pokhara. 9843261807.

Hotel Barahi
Enjoy a great view of Phewa Lake, cultural shows, or indulge in the sumptuous dishes from The German Bakery. Lakeside, Pokhara. 9843261807.

Mount Princess Hotel

GETAWAY

Pashupatinath

ENVIRONMENT

KATHMANDU AIR QUALITY INDEX

KATHMANDU, 30 March - 4 April 2013

Environment

The table below is the week’s daily average for Air Quality Index in Kathmandu. It did not reach the upper ‘very unhealthy’ category. The last week was a mix of the ‘very unhealthy’ and ‘unhealthy’ and was very poor. In fact, some days were at the ‘very unhealthy’ level. The city has to deal with a problem, although it seems to have gone down somewhat with the cold this week, but emissions from vehicles are still a major health hazard.

https://np.environment.nepal.gov.np/air-quality-metric/

Our Pick

Kathmandu, 26 March

Open to the public on Monday 26 March.

Two couples are desperate to go abroad and earn money. One becomes rich and another willingly marries an older man, complete with a romantic photo shoot, just to guarantee the other. The story is full of twists and turns.

Meanwhile, what happens to the partners they left behind, only they know? Watch an end to this and find out the predicament of thousands of Nepalis who leave the country every day. Directed by Dip Sable, the multi-star Nepali films, Kishor Manjhi, Baburam, Madhav Sconti, and Sunita Giri.

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Finnish paper exposé on Nepali restaurants

Helsingin Sanomat investigates trafficking and tax evasion by Nepali restaurants in Finland

Namrata Sharma

Helsingin Sanomat follow-up published on 30 March 2021 reports that a human trafficking ring operated by some Nepali restaurant owners in Helsinki has created an underground economy and made Helsinki the happiest country in the world.

The investigative story by Parvo Tittinen builds on an expose published in this newspaper in January in which a Nepali cook, who uses the pseudonym Malia, mustered the courage to report injustices he faced to Finnish Police.

Malia is named Sanam in the Helsingin Sanomat story and still wants his real identity concealed because of threats he received after the Nepali Times story came out.

Finland’s largest-circulation newspaper reveals just how widespread the exploitation of Nepalis by Nepali employers is in Finland.

It says that more than 70 across Finland. Most of them are owed by a handful of Nepali set between three, mainly from Galmi.

The first Nepali restaurant, Himalaya, was established in Helsinki in 1985 by Devi Sharma. He and his wife Manju now own Himalaya, Lai Gurman, Gurkhas and Yeti restaurants, and Hemraj Sharma runs Mount Everest restaurant. Malia filed a case against Parma Adhikari of another restaurant, Mount Sherpa.

During a visit to Helsinki in 2018, most cooks and waiters complained of exploitation, threats and slave-like working conditions, but were fearful about giving their names because the restaurant owners were said to be powerful in the community and could have them fired, or even deported. Despite their meagre salaries, the workers said they needed their jobs to pay back loans and send money home to their families. There have been cases of cooks and waiters who suffered depression, and have even attempted suicide.

Helsingin Sanomat reports that 260 Nepalis have gone to Finland over the last seven years to work as cooks in Nepali restaurants, where many of them have been exploited. The paper says that besides feeding Finland’s labour laws, some Nepali restaurateurs are also involved in money laundering and tax evasion.

Hemraj Sharma told this reporter during a visit to his restaurant in Helsinki in 2018 that there were no Nepalis in Finland, and denied that he was involved in anything illegal. However, the Helsingin Sanomat quotes Devi Sharma’s former maid as telling police that he had received payments, evaded tax and stabbed cash in the hand, sending it regularly with Nepali workers to Kathmandu.

John Rekola, the international Ombudsman of the Union of Journalists in Finland, who has frequently visited Nepal to train journalists, says he has often visited the Nepali restaurants and mentioned in the Helsingin Sanomat report but never saw signs of trafficking or tax evasion.

Said Rekola: “When I first read the piece in Nepali Times in January I thought that it was good that the problem had been uncovered and brought to court. But when Helsingin Sanomat exposed just how widespread it was, I thought, ‘Oh no, it cannot be this bad, not in Finland’. It always hits you worse when you see it in your own language and morning paper.”

Rekola considers himself a well-wisher of Nepal, and says the blame has to be shared with Finns who ignore warnings that a cheap meal is a sign of a grey economy. “Nepali lunches are relatively cheap compared to the quality and size, but people still go there to eating that it is ok,” Rekola adds. “Our government has put enough safeguards in places, and tax evasion is easy. Tightened immigration laws also put many people in a vulnerable position to such blackmail.”

As for Malia, he feels vindicated after Finland’s most prestigious newspaper has printed the plight of workers like him. “The risk I took by reporting this case to the police has yielded results, and this has helped me and other like me,” Yet Malia still has not received the compensation that the court ordered the restaurant owners to give him.

The Helsingin Sanomat report has tarnished the image of Nepal, Nepali and Nepali restaurants in Finland, and many Finns are said to be in a dilemma about whether to eat in Nepali-owned restaurants. On one hand they want to help Nepalis and do not want laws which make them suffer, and on the other they do not want to support traffickers.

The Non-Resident Nepal Association of Finland has been accused of protecting powerful restaurant owners, and not helping the workers. In response, the association’s national coordination council released a statement saying it had not protected anyone from wrong-doing.

Asked what is next, Rekola told Nepali Times: “I just hope the genuine Nepali restaurants do not suffer, and the customers return. There should also be closer contact between restaurant owners and their Finnish customers instead of these Nepali and Finnish food.”
Arati Ranju Yadav grew up in a village of Radhuni of Saptari, and learned Mithila art from her mother, grandmother and aunts, who painted the walls and floors of their traditional mud houses. In her first solo exhibition, ‘Colours of Change’, Yadav translates her heritage from walls to paper, creating a collection which represents Mithila art pieces that are a commentary on society.

Yadav stays true to the techniques of Mithila art, her human characters face sideways, have elongated almond eyes, and all wear traditional clothing — women in saris and men in kurta. The paintings feature intricate borders, as well as animals and birds. “Peacock, fish, lotus, elephants, and the detailed hoores are defining elements of Mithila art,” explains Yadav, who takes pains to represent the finest details. The borders and geometricities have a consistency that enlightens the viewer.

Yadav also presents a balanced variety in patterns that draws the viewer into the diverse intricacies of the painting. Her pieces are a burst of colour and the reds, greens, blues and yellows all combine harmoniously to convey the vibrance of Mithila art.

But the artist is also conveying a message: women’s empowerment is a prominent theme. In Education is Power, Yadav has a woman at the centre, reading, and four sections fan out, each showing a woman at other tasks: flying a plane, typing on a laptop, peering through a telescope, and giving a speech. Via education, women can do anything, it is the message. What makes this painting even more powerful is that the women are in traditional Mithila attire; they are empowered but simultaneously carrying on their traditional roles. In Equality, Yadav shows a couple doing household work together, indicating what equality should look like. In another, Yadav shows a woman fighting a bull, one of many symbols of women’s inner strength. While her art highlights the problem, Yadav says her objective is to also provide solutions and her paintings successfully convey that.

Mokh Chitrak and Aripan are tributes to her heritage, featuring intricate patterns. In The World of Fish, Yadav paints six fish with detailed work in design and colour, while in Celebration of Beauty, magnificent peacocks interact with women. Disaster Tourism is Yadav’s sarcastic portrayal of the government’s liability to efficiently handle citizens suffering in disaster, and is poignantly timely with this year’s tornado destruction in Bara.

Through her art, Yadav aims to raise awareness about issues of injustice. She says: “There are many themes I have yet to tackle, like the rape cases earlier this year. I hope to paint them all.”

Pratibha Kandel

‘Colours of Change’
10th April, 11am-5pm
Nepal Art Council, Sidan Mokhel
roja.pallngalp@gmail.com

**HAPPENINGS**

**VISIT RUN:** Department of Immigration Director General Raj Paumel hands over first ten-year, multiple-entry tourist Visas to three American citizens in Kathmandu on Monday, establishing partial visa reciprocity with the United States.

**ENDURANCE:** Sportspersons Dame Katherine Grainger, Miri Ral and Louise Hawker meet at the British Embassy in the presence of ambassador Richard Morris, to discuss sports and cuisine.

**NO TO NUKES:** Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Gyawali unveils the delegation of international Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War on Sunday, a Nobel Peace Prize winning organization.

**BLOOD RELATIONS:** Youth in Dharapur donate blood as the tornado-hit districts Bara and Parsa face scarcity of blood for the treatment of those injured in the disaster.

**MUCKRAKERS:** Journalists take part in an investigative journalism training by the US Embassy this week in Pokhara.
It is a tragic irony that many who had invested in stronger houses perished in Bara on Sunday night. But poorer neighbours living in mud and thatch huts nearby survived.

The government says 1,895 huts and buildings went down in the storm, 855 structures were partially damaged and 940 collapsed completely – homes, brick kilns, health posts and mosques. Of the 27 people killed, four were from India.

It was the first major disaster to hit Nepal post-local elections in 2017, and the presence of elected Municipality and Ward officials was reflected in the immediate rescue operation. Rapid response teams under local disaster management committees quickly mobilised Police and Nepal Army personnel which helped in timely rescue. However, the lack of proper equipment, and medical services were apparent.

The understaffed Kalrya Hospital in Bara operated throughout the Sunday as more and more injured were rushed in. Most suffered from hypothermia and fractures. Of the 354 patients two critically injured were referred to Kathmandu and eight patients with head injury went to Birganj.

“We tried our best to provide immediate rescue and supplied electricity to the hospital despite a power cut,” said Bara CZO Rajesh Fauchel. The lack of coordination between local, provincial and federal governments in information gathering had adverse effect on relief distribution. There were plenty of relief materials to go around but most essential items like tents, tarpaulins and medicines were in short supply. VIP visits did not help the situation and only added to gofers from surrounding areas.

The tornado was not the first of its kind in Nepal. In fact, literature and folklore speak of twisters ravaging Tamu villages. But because these are localised disasters, they did not make it to the news.

The Bara-Parsa disaster should be taken as an opportunity to invest in weather forecasting equipment and training for climate modelers. Nepal needs customised weather modeling for its conditions, experts say.

We have learned some lessons from previous disasters and the presence of local government after 20 years helped search and rescue operations, but the Sunday’s tornado still reflects the dire need of disaster preparedness.
As the Bara tornado showed, vulnerability to calamities increases with the lack of preparedness

Sewa Bhattarai

The tornado that killed dozens of people on the night of 31 March highlighted Nepal's vulnerability to disaster. It proved what has to be presented just for the deadly calamities we know about like earthquake, floods and landslides, but also rare ones like tornadoes.

Nepal is a disaster prone country, Kathmandu is number one among the top ten cities in the world most vulnerable to a catastrophic earthquake. The topography, high population density, vigorous monsoons, and underdevelopment make Nepal vulnerable to multiple disasters. All these dangers are exacerbated and can combine due to climate change – for example the next megacapuc could cause glacial lakes swollen by global warming to burst simultaneously and unleash catastrophic floods downstream.

Nepal was preparing to be prepared for earthquakes, when 25 April 2015 happened. The National Emergency Rescue Operations Centre (NEROC) with its seismic resistant building had just been set up inside Singh Darbar, with the task of being a communication hub and relief coordination centre after a disaster. The Centre's website now lists real-time information of water levels in rivers, information that is vital during the monsoon. It is now setting up a comprehensive Disaster Information Management System (DIMS) for the 49 types of potential natural calamities that Nepal faces.

"Thus, this system can analyse each disaster in terms of its nature, vulnerability, and exposure," says Chhadi Khadgi, Khadgi, founder of Youth Innovation Lab that built the portal. The portal will also provide vital information about nearby resources, local capacities, availability of hospitals, which will be crucial in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.

A beta version of the system is expected to be ready in mid-April, but detection and prediction of disasters will still be difficult. Though the river water level data can provide early warning of potential floods, and the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology uses social media to disseminate its forecasts of extreme weather events, there are still problems with accuracy and understanding. For example, a tornado of the type that devastated villages in Bura and Panch this week is not even in the list of 49 potential disasters that Nepal should be preparing for.

"A tornado that occurred in such a short time over such a small area would be difficult to predict anywhere in the world even with the most sophisticated equipment," says Dashrang Kumar Bhurad at the NSDG. "Detecting tornadoes is also a problem because we do not have our own satellites, and real-time images are hard to source."

A new Doppler weather radar has been installed in Surkhet and two more are planned, but while they can detect supercells and forecast cloud bursts, they would still not be able to accurately predict when and where a tornado would touch down. Briefing Nepal TV on Tuesday, the Director General of the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM) Sanju K. Vajracharya admitted: "Yes, all signs in Bura point to it being a rare tornado, but with climate change these may become more frequent, and we have to prepared by upgrading forecasting and computer modelling capacity."

The Bara experience is also a proof that Nepal is not prepared for the immediate aftermath of disasters either. Manish Shrestha of FOCUS Research & Analytics who was involved in the emergency response this week says the priorities on the ground do not necessarily match the response.

Shrestha says: "Local officials informed us that there were four immediate priorities: nutritious food, water, medical treatment, and children's safety. But in the spontaneous scramble to rush help, many unnecessary items landed up at the site. People are eating instant noodles and biscuits, spending nights in the open, and children have nowhere to go, adding to their guardians' responsibilities."

The Bara tornado was the first major calamity to strike Nepal after federalism, and it has become a test case on how political devolution can indeed be more prompt and responsive after a disaster strikes. Province 2 officials had mobilised local rescue at Ground Zero almost immediately. Chief Minister Lal Babu Raut relocated to Birgunj to coordinate relief. Province 3 donated Rs 10 million to Province 2. However, locals were critical of VDIs rushing south in helicopters from Kathmandu with token relief and competing to upload selfie of handover.

There is a daily traffic jam on the Palaiya-Birgunj road because of the number of cars from all over the country bringing relief material to the worst-affected villages, already crowded with gawkers. Such activities have deprived local governments of the opportunity to develop their own response capacity, and raised concerns of mismanagement of funds and resources.

Token relief measures take the focus away from long-term disaster management planning, necessary in a country going through rapid infrastructure development. Disasters may be natural, but much of the fatal impact is manmade. For example, forests reduce the speed and impact of violent storms, boulder mining on rivers increases the chances of destructive..."
Disaster Management Act

The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Act was passed in September 2017, replacing the Natural Calamities Relief Act of 1962. The new act provides a National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council to oversee the management of all kinds of disasters. In the absence of such an act, the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) was formed in 2015 to manage only the aftermath of Bishnu’s earthquake. However, more than one year after the DRRM Act was passed, the response to disasters like the recent tornado is still stuttering, since the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council still does not exist.

The Act provides for a multi-sector institution with a federal body and branches at the province, district, and local levels, also provides for disaster management laws at every level. The main body for managing disasters lies with the local level, but higher levels can intervene if the local level does not have enough resources to manage it,” says Bishal Raj Gyawali, head of the DRRM Study and Research Section at the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The DRRM Act has a comprehensive approach to disaster, rather than just rescue and relief but also recovery and reconstruction. It also provides for risk reduction, preparedness, management, and maintenance of the DRRM in development. In other words, disaster management would not be limited to responding to disasters, but would involve year-round actions to prevent them. All of these were missing in the Natural Calamities Relief Act.

As such, the Act provides opportunities for new tools to handle disasters in a federal system. "Local level authorities often have the best understanding of the needs on the ground, but they are also very costly to operate," a federal disaster management group wants to maximize local level knowledge while providing facile layers of support and resources from higher level of government," says Santosh Gyawali, Senior Development Program Specialist at the Disaster Risk Reduction Reconstruction and Resilience Office at UN OCHA.

lessons. Houses that ignore zoning and seismic guidelines have started coming up in Kathmandu and most urban areas. NEDCO has identified only 83 remaining open spaces in Kathmandu safe for evacuation in a future earthquake. Four years on, experts say the focus for earthquake preparedness should now shift nationwide and not just to be limited to the 14 districts around Kathmandu affected in 2015. Public buildings need to be reevaluated. Homes must require seismic resistant designs, there has to be pre-constructed digging equipment and shelter material in open spaces, and there has to be local response strategies.

"Some in the earthquake-hit areas in 2015 are building seismic-resistant structures, but the same cannot be said of the rest of Nepal," says Bipan Singh Bajracharya of the National Reconstruction Authority. "There has been no study so far on how seriously the rest of Nepal will be affected by another earthquake, but the risk factor is very high. The whole country has to be better prepared."
In a Feral Republic

Now that Nepal has turned from an Animal Kingdom into a Feral Republic, we need to be more politically correct and inclusive in addressing our feathered, four-legged and furry friends in a more polite and respectful way.

On World Wildlife Week we humbly have to notice the horrific wrongs we have perpetrated against fellow creatures great and small, including waging genocide, driving them to extinction, and inexcusing their body parts at BBQ parties.

Ever since our cave-dwelling quadruped ancestors decided that their co-animals were tasty, we have decapitated them, amputated their limbs and sold them as McNuggets and Drumsticks. Man has also treated animals in a derogatory way in everyday language by attaching negative attributes to them.

In referring to the current political scenario as a ‘snake pit’ think of what an insult it is to snakes. By describing the Melamchi Tunnel dig as moving as a ‘snail’s pace’ we belittle the velocity of gastropod locomotion. We show a singular lack of sensitivity to the feelings of our aquatic friends when we walk down shores of reservoirs (pronounced: ‘horse devoirs’).

But as animals ourselves, and a species that has reached the pinnacle of evolution and civilisation, we have to learn to be less anthropocentric, and more sympathetic when referring to fellow animals in daily conversation. As we can see from recent headlines in the papers, animals are retaliating by ‘Wreaking Havoc in Dhamusha’ and ‘Going on a Rampage in Jhupa’. In Chitwan, tigers have turned into present-maters.

It is time to call for a ceasefire, and to make first amends we must replace speciesist language with more politically correct formulations:

WRONG: The leader of the coalition partner is a son of a bitch.
CORRECT: Most politicians in Nepal are proud to be sons of female dogs.

WRONG: You cannot trust an old dog new tricks.
CORRECT: Kathmandu’s canines proved in celebration when they were told the country was going to the dogs again.

WRONG: The only fly in the ointment was that the Minister made a last minute at the Investment Summit.
CORRECT: At the Capital Reception she found the courage to inform the Minister that his fly was open.

WRONG: The Prime Minister’s kept a lid on the Minister’s portfolio.
CORRECT: The PM is the Lion King incarnate of single durbar.

WRONG: Reporters at the press conference behaved like vultures diving into the carcass of a food waste buffalo.
CORRECT: Famished rapscallions nibbled at the moral remains of a decade that gave a ring of jours and another government officials.

WRONG: It is quite acceptable in politics to be a sheep and a fox.
CORRECT: The Beast has been a visionary statesman for donkeys’ years.