

Sovereignty vs. underground cables

In a small village in Phobjikha Valley, Bhutan, the residents chose to live without electricity for many years because installing an electricity grid with overhead wires would hinder the migration and conservation of Black-necked migratory Cranes. In response to a question, "Would you prefer to have electricity, or is conserving cranes more important to you?", the villagers answered, "It's good to have electricity, but we can do without it. But cranes are different from electricity. We feel happy when they visit this valley. We've seen them every year since childhood." Finally in 2009 when the electricity was brought to the village, the electrical wires around the crane habitats were laid underground, to prevent any restriction in the path of the migratory birds.

In yet another country, a flock of an equally exquisite migratory "Houbara bustards" arrives every winter. Little do the birds know that the hosts have prearranged a trap to ambush and kill the unsuspecting creatures. To massacre some five to six thousand endangered birds every year does not bother either the conscience or the constitution of this heartless country. There are no political parties, parliamentarians, religious leaders, human or animal rights organisations that have assertively raised a voice of protest.

Giving permits for hunting of Houbara bustard is a violation of the law, constitution and the International conventions signed by Pakistan. The first rule of diplomacy is to protect one's own legal integrity - before others begin to do so. By violating our own legal system we are selling our soul and our sovereignty. Do we understand that preserving our migratory birds is far more important than the coins doled out by the pleasure seeking men in white robes.

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