ARTMANDU

Modelled after major art events like the Venice Biennale and the Sao Paulo Biennial, the Kathmandu International Art Festival is a month-long festival that begins on 25 November. Artists from 31 countries collaborate on this year’s theme: ‘Earth/Body/Mind’ during the city-wide showcase. There will be installations that fill entire rooms, exhibits in stunning traditional spaces such as Mul Chok at Patan Darbar Square, and even a multimedia piece projected onto the Boudhanath Stupa.

Who will be a Gurkha?

Kesang Tseren’s latest film, Who Will be a Gurkha, will premier on 16 November at the 24th International Documentary Film Festival of Amsterdam (IDFA), where it is one of a dozen films selected in the main competition. The documentary will also be screened in Nepal at KIMFF 2012 from 7-11 December. Tseren is not judgemental about Gurkha recruitment; he simply documents the process where only 176 recruits are chosen from 10,000 applicants in a process lasting several months in Pokhara’s British Gurkha camp.

First Nepalis to be photographed

Rare photographs by Clarence Cottam Taylor provide a glimpse of what Nepalis looked like 150 years ago; how Nepalis carried themselves, how they dressed, how long they kept their hair, and what weaponry and implements they used. The pictures are from the book, The People of India, published in 1868 which contains 24 images of ordinary Nepalis, probably the first photographs ever taken of them.

Return to investment

A year after declaring investment a priority, lack of progress in governance and transparency are keeping investors away from Nepal. The Department of Industries has become the one-window agency for delays, and rampant corruption. Inconsistent policies, information gaps, shifting rules, and constant rotations in civil service personnel confuse and frustrate investors. An increasingly politicised and militant labour, corruption, the extortionist attitude of bureaucrats, and a crippling energy shortage have all affected investment.

Economy stupid

Page 5

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errors that is the Nepal ship of state.

a bargaining chip as everyone jostles for advantage

e elaborate legalistic excuses, and using the budget as

and their discredited leadership are terrified of facing

saying here every week, is to go for fresh elections. What

ended to the current crisis, and if they had fielded untainted,

like statesmen, instead of petty party bosses, we wouldn’t have

had enough heads of government behaved more like

statesmen, instead of petty party bosses, we might not

have got bogged down in the mud. If the opposition parties

had publicly acknowledged, even indirectly, that it was

their malgovernment over the years that contributed to

the current crisis, and if they had fielded united,

younger and more dynamic leaders, we wouldn’t have

hit rock bottom.

The only way out of the current crisis, as we keep

saying here, is to go for fresh elections. What is

holdings up is that just about every political party

and their discredited leadership are terrified of facing

voters.

Hence the hand-wringing, the delay tactics, elaborate

legalistic excuses, and using the budget as a

bargaining chip as everyone jostles for advantage in

the run-up to the election. What is it that has always been about: since no one is

prepared to face free and fair elections, they all want

to be where there is power and money, to gain an

unfair advantage.

The Maoists have not given up their goal of a one-party

state. This is not fear-mongering, they’ve repeatedly said

themselves. The strategy is to wait till they are sure

they can command a two-thirds majority in the next CA

or parliament by using money, state security, coercion,

and identity politics. No doubt, political exclusion of

marginalised ethnicities needs to be addressed, but only

tools would be neutral and effective.

The Manist’s would have gone for elections by

now had the party not split, seriously undermining

their chance of gaining a two-thirds.

All political parties want power, that’s a given,

but the Maoists are not just any other party. They may be

de-listed terrorists, but they still espouse an ideology

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No movement
The opposition’s winter street showdown may backfire because they have taken the people’s support for granted.

Nepalis celebrated the festival of lights this week with revelry and 24-hour power, trying not to dwell on the winter of discontent and uncertainty looming ahead. The prime minister’s directives to keep power cuts to 12 hours will be impossible to fulfil, inflation of basic food items has hit families nationwide, foreign investors are fleeing, there are no new jobs. And to add to the public’s misery, the opposition has decided to take to the streets to oust the prime minister.

Last week, the Baburam Bhattarai said, “We are all in the same boat, facing the storm.” In a normal society, this should have galvanised all sections to work towards keeping it afloat, instead the leaders are rocking the boat to overthrow each other.

The people may have lost interest in the political bickering, but they will have to suffer the consequences anyway because it is a time-honoured tradition in Nepali politics that the people are always punished for the inability of our leaders to get along.

In the past, people fought the state with a purpose and a mandate. These were spontaneous movements of the suppressed against the oppressors. Autocratic regimes were overthrown and power was handed to the political parties to lead the nation through democratic transition.

Now, those preparing for a ‘showdown’ on the streets seem to have mistaken partisan interests for people’s aspirations, and taken the public for granted. They forget that politics is about responding to public opinion, and addressing issues that the people are preoccupied with. And at the moment, they are almost exclusively economic issues.

Unless the opposition has a viable plan for economic upturn, to spur investment, control inflation and corruption, its agitation will have no rationale and no backing on the streets.

There are sufficient grounds to question Bhattarai’s caretaker government, especially for its tolerance of corruption and for condoning war criminals. But the opposition was no less irresponsible when it was in power. With the same tainted and aged personalities at the helm, the NC especially hasn’t been able to fire up the public’s support for its agenda.

The dissolution of the CA and failure to draft the constitution are blows on Nepal’s democracy for which all parties share the blame. They may like to point fingers, but people don’t have any overwhelming favourites.

Movements are successful when the larger polity is against a system, and when other avenues for its removal have been exhausted. Nepal’s democratic transition, although sluggish, has moved in the right direction. People may have become tired of the long drawn statute-drafting process, but the mandate for an inclusive federal Nepal remains valid because it was not a single party agenda or something that was cooked up inside the CA, nor was it donor-driven.

There are too many actors trying to lead, seek prominence, and direct Nepal’s complex transition. Barring the monarchists and a fringe section of anarchists, the parties agree on the fundamentals of the new constitution, but disagree on the details.

Although CA reinstatement would have been preferable to the parties in power, there are sufficient incentives for all the parties to go for fresh elections. Who gets to lead the electoral government does matter, and the NC has a valid claim since its past performance in holding elections has been credible. But the Maoists, Madhesis, and the Janjatis would understandably feel sceptical about it, especially because the president also has a NC background.

So while the opposition has all the luxury to blame the government for being unable to hold elections on time, it must admit that it has not been constructive in its own efforts to that end. No matter who leads the electoral government, the interim constitution has doomed the parties to cooperate with each other for now. Legal pundits may have reservations, but there are sufficient provisions in the constitution to resolve the deadlock and move ahead by holding new elections.

For that, the incentive to cooperate has to outweigh the temptation for street confrontation.
India’s recent fall from macroeconomic grace is a lamentable turn of events. After many years of outperformance, GDP growth has slowed sharply. Annual output will most likely rise by less than five per cent this year, down from 6.8 per cent in 2011 and 10.1 per cent in 2010. Reform has stalled amid profound political paralysis. All of the major emerging economies face weakening external demand, but India’s slowdown has been exacerbated by a drop in investment that reflects a deeper loss of official direction and business confidence. Even the International Monetary Fund’s forecast of a modest outperformance, GDP growth is still likely to rise by the desperate need for renewed momentum. Economists around the world have taken note of the arrival of Raghuram Rajan as chief economist in the finance ministry. Rajan is a superstar academic researcher, a brilliant writer on political economy, and a former chief economist for the IMF. But it is far from obvious that Sonia Gandhi, President of the Indian National Congress and the country’s most powerful politician, shares Singh’s reform agenda.

Unfortunately, for a country as poor as India, only sustained rapid growth can lead to enduring development gains. India’s poverty rate (an indicator that is admittedly both conceptually and practically difficult to measure) fell by half between 1981 and 2010, to just under 30 per cent, a remarkable achievement. But faster-growing East Asia has experienced significantly greater progress, with the poverty rate falling from 77 per cent to 14 per cent over the same period.

India’s economic slowdown reflects a deeper loss of official direction and business confidence among investors. And yet changes currently afoot might just turn things around. India’s octogenarian Prime Minister, M. Singh, has recently awakened to the desperate need for renewed momentum. Economists around the world have taken note of the arrival of Raghuram Rajan as chief economist in the finance ministry. Rajan is a superstar academic researcher, a brilliant writer on political economy, and a former chief economist for the IMF. But it is far from obvious that Sonia Gandhi, President of the Indian National Congress and the country’s most powerful politician, shares Singh’s reform agenda.

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Why has India’s growth acceleration fizzled? For many years, India benefited from the long-lasting impact of economic liberalisation in the early 1990s. Back then, Singh, as finance minister, played a central role. He could count on the IMF – which had real policy leverage, owing to India’s need for a bailout program in 1991 – to provide external support to counter the huge internal obstacles to reform. Today, however, there is no external counterweight to the domestic political pressure that is stalling further liberalisation.

True, India’s government must now consider growing threats to the country’s investment-grade credit rating. The major ratings agencies are increasingly complaining about the country’s lack of a growth strategy and its outsized budget deficits. But the impact has been limited, owing to the authorities’ ability to stuff debt down the throats of captive local banks, insurance companies, and pension funds. Indeed, this ‘financial repression’ tax on domestic sources remains a huge opaque source of funding for India’s debt-ridden government. It also prevents funds from being channelled to private-sector investment projects with far higher rates of return than the government can offer.

The good news is that, from an economic perspective, there is still plenty of low-hanging fruit for restoring growth. Although India is rich in talent and infrastructure, it is far from obvious that foreign retailers like Wal-Mart, India should be finding ways to emulate and benefit from their hyper-efficient methods. Infrastructure is slowly improving, but roads, ports, water access, and the electricity grid are still horrific across large parts of the country. Of course, India’s democratic government cannot simply bulldoze through people and the environment to create infrastructure. But the obstacles also include layers of corrupt bureaucrats and politicians, a vast network of resistance to reform.

Some argue that central-government paralysis is inevitable in a democracy of 1.2 billion people, and that the only way to re-energise India is to establish a looser confederation. Devolution would unshackle the vast network of resistance to bulldoze through people and the environment to create infrastructure. But the obstacles also include layers of corrupt bureaucrats and politicians, a vast network of resistance to reform.

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Return to investment

A year after declaring investment a priority, lack of progress in governance and transparency are keeping investors away from Nepal

Twenty years ago, Nepal’s economy looked like it was headed in the right direction. The Foreign Investment Promotion Board was created and legislations like Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Act 1992 were introduced to promote foreign direct investment (FDI). It worked: there was a spurt in investors and Nepal got much needed private capital required to run the economy.

Nepal almost looked like it was replicating the success of the smaller tiger economies of south-east Asia. However, the institutions created to facilitate investments were heavily politicised. The Nepali private sector nervous about competition from FDI players, started to lobby for protectionism. Political instability and the conflict eroded investors’ confidence further.

Last year, total FDI into Nepal totalled only Rs 10 billion, a mere 0.12 per cent of the total flows to South Asia. With a low savings rate of 15 per cent or less, FDI contribution becomes paramount for Nepal’s economic development. Research shows that economic development through investment is more sustainable than development through aid, as the return of investment of 30 per cent and of both countries that the government will not nationalise the foreign investment projects and also pledges national and most-favoured nation treatment thereby reducing expropriation risk.

Labour issues have bedevilled almost every foreign investment venture in Nepal, and are now being addressed by the Ministry of Labour and Transport Management through a revision of three existing labour laws: Labour Act 1952, Trade Union Act 1992, and Bonus Act 1986. Under the proposed new laws, workers’ demands have to be linked to productivity, and in case of unlawful strikes, there is a provision for no pay, and lawful strikes will see salaries slashed by half.

Nepal has an adequate regulatory environment: not too restrictive but not too insufficient and can be constructive and worked around. It offers low barriers to trade and few restrictions on operations, which is good news for foreign arms in increasing the efficiency of existing economic activity. Small investors with a budget of even a million dollar, who would get lost in bigger economies, can thrive in the healthcare, education, IT, and high-end tourism sector of Nepal. And not just Greenfield investments, even mergers and acquisitions of existing ventures provide an equivalent opportunity.

Nepal must take advantage of its geography, and learn from the economic miracle happening south of the border in Bihar. And it isn’t fair to blame just the government for not being able to provide a conducive investment climate. Its efforts have been defeated repeatedly by the most-politicised attitude of the private sector.

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ARTMANDU

The city-wide, month-long Kathmandu Art Festival aims to put Nepal on the global art map

SALLY ACHARYA

With barely a week remaining for the Kathmandu International Art Festival, the excitement is palpable among artists from 31 countries who have just touched down in Nepal. What started off as a 12-day exhibit in October 2009 is back this year on 25 November as a month-long, city-wide showcase of eclectic work chosen by international juries.

“Nepal is one of the most exciting destinations for contemporary art because we have such a rich heritage. We want to promote Nepal as a centre for the arts and hosting a world-class festival is a step in the right direction,” explains Sangeeta Thapa, director of the festival. Modelled after major league festivals like the Venice Biennale and the Sao Paulo Biennial, the Nepali edition will see top international and local artists collaborating on this year’s theme of ‘Earth/Body/Mind’ and transcending cultural boundaries. There will be installations that fill entire rooms, exhibits in stunning traditional spaces such as Mul Chok at Patan Darbar square, and even a multimedia piece projected onto the Boudhanath Stupa.

Kathmandu International Art Festival
25 November to 21 December
www.artmandu.org
01-4438979

LEANG SECKON, Cambodia
Visitors at the Jawalakhel Zoo will be startled to spot a mythical water creature as long as three elephants. Earlier installed along Cambodia’s Siem Reap River, the serpentine giant is made of rattan, recycled plastic, nylon fishing line, and electric lighting and is an updated, recycling-conscious cousin of the legendary naga that, in Cambodia as well as in Nepal, took on a variety of heavenly responsibilities, from forming a couch for Vishnu to sheltering Buddha.

NOMAD WAVE GROUP, Mongolia
Linked by long sleeves in a striking visual statement of interconnection, Nomad entwines the legacy of its nomadic past and communal dance with the earth. Comprising four visual artists and a designer, the group blends the sensibilities of Mongolian nomads with the concerns and aesthetics of the modern world.

4pm, 25 November at Nag Bahal
10.30am, 26 November at the Summit Hotel

MAUREEN BISILLIAT, Brazil
For much of her 81 years, Bisilliat has roamed the Amazon rainforest, camera in hand, recording the faces, lives, and folkways of the indigenous people of her adopted country. Born in the UK, but considered daughter of Brazil, she has created photographs of lasting poetic power that have also been instrumental in the struggle for indigenous rights. Her work can be seen at Siddhartha Art Gallery at Babar Mahal Revisited.

SHEBA CHHACCHI, India
The story is familiar to Hindus: once upon a time, gods and demons came together to churn the cosmic ocean, forcing it to yield a desired potion, but almost destroying the world in the process. Chhacchi asks us to think more deeply about this ancient tale of greed and hidden danger in which even gods can be short-sighted. A highly regarded installation artist and activist, and one of several groundbreaking artists from India in the festival, Chhacchi will install her piece at the Patan Museum.

TAKEHITO SHINA, Japan
Science fiction meets magic in this quirky document of an artist’s effort to become a plant. “What would happen,” asks Shina, “if people could photosynthesise? What would it mean for the economy, natural resources, and human relations?” This oddball question is now a multi-media project that highlights, in often unsettling ways, the place of the human body in nature and the interplay between bodily existence and spiritual feelings. Watch Shina’s documentary at Mul Chok in Patan Darbar Square.
LOK CHITRAKAR, Nepal

At first glance, it’s surprising to see a traditional paubha painter in a contemporary art exhibit. But Chitrakar, one of the world’s leading practitioners of this traditional art form, paints with a fluid abstraction, visionary punch, and philosophical rigour that defies the boundaries between ‘contemporary’ and ‘traditional’. His work will be displayed amid the brilliant Newar architecture of Mul Chok.

JANET CARDIFF and GEORGE BURES MILLER, Canada

Those artists don’t paint pictures to hang over the sofas. They create soundscapes, intense and disorienting and dreamlike, loaded onto iPads that visitors can sign out and experience. Visit the National Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) to see how this very 21st century piece interacts with an old Rana palace.

GOPAL DAS SHRESTHA ‘KALAPREMI’, Nepal

Starting on 22 November, Thursday, viewers can watch award-winning ceramicist Kalapremi as he creates 108 ‘people being cooked and sold’ (pakdai bikdai gayeko mancheharu), a sacred number of clay figures, all unique and connected to the earth. He’ll work in public until 26 November at Bhrikuti Mandap. The finished work will be on display at the Nepal Art Council.

HITMAN GURUNG, Nepal

Ah, the face mask: an iconic symbol of today’s Kathmandu. Gurung’s portraits of real people from all walks of life, all trapped behind face masks, raise a timely question: is this how we handle the problems we’ve made? Do we just stifle observations and go on our way?

His work will be up at the Nepal Art Council.

SHAHIDUL ALAM, Bangladesh

For four years, the prolific photographer, writer, and National Geographic Advisory Board member charted the epic course of one of the world’s great rivers, the Brahmaputra, seeking its glacial source in Tibet and following it down through its numerous transformations, from glacial trickle to overfished delta, until it spills into the Bay of Bengal. What he found about the power of nature and the way life and nature are changing can be seen at the Patan Museum.

The flags of their fathers

Nepali documentary on Gurkha recruitment is selected for IDFA in Amsterdam

Kesang Tseten’s latest film, Who Will Be a Gurkha, is one of 16 feature-length documentaries selected for the main competition of the 24th International Documentary Film Festival of Amsterdam (IDFA), Europe’s largest and most prestigious venues for documentaries.

The film looks at the selection process of Gurkha recruitment in which every year 10,000 young Nepali men vie for the 200 or so openings in the British Army which has been recruiting soldiers from Nepal for 200 years, ever since the end of the Anglo-Nepal Wars of 1814-16.

Gurkha recruitment elicits sharp, divided opinion in modern Nepal. Some say dying for another country is shameful and should be stopped, while others believe recruitment in the British Army offers employment, and the chance to uphold the Gurkha reputation as brave, loyal, and skilled soldiers.

Tseten’s film does not take up these issues, but simply observes and documents the entire process of recruiting which lasts several months in Pokhara’s lush British Gurkha camp. In the end, 500 potential recruits are left standing of which only 176 are chosen. Tseten employs his trademark filmmaking style: there are no characters in the usual sense, though some are recognisable, no interviews to the camera, no script, and no voiceover explaining what is happening. It is an exercise of observing the action as it unfolds, and then seeing what yields, a method known as ‘direct cinema’ by its most famous proponents Frederick Wiseman and the Maysles brothers.

There are two basic ways we learn about people,” Tseten told us before flying out to Amsterdam this week, “one by listening to them tell us about themselves, and the other by watching them do things. Both are legitimate and effective, but this time I chose the latter.”

Tseten added: “These young guys are undertaking a potentially life-transforming series of tests, so it wasn’t fair to put them under the gun, as it were, by interviewing them.” In the film, the recruits do interact with the British and Nepali Gurkha officers and among themselves. “I try not to interfere, so people can make sense of what they see and hear for themselves,” he explained.

The film depicts the unique nature of the British Gurkha, with the British state as employer and ordinary Nepalis as job applicants. Tseten said: “It is in a way the less dramatic story, which might have been about Gurkha exploits on the battlefield, but it is also the less usual story. The film is less explicit, less iconic, less story-ed, nor does it declare a position of endorsing recruitment or being against it. But there is a point of view, or varied points of view, which Tseten aims for in his films, and it lies in the capture and illumination of moments and details.

The intervening of archival footage from the Gurkha Museum and the Imperial War Museum in the UK leaves viewers to respond to the film in their own way. It is fitting that the film, made from grants by the IDFA Fund, the Sundance Institute, and the Busan International Film Festival and by Finnish and Norwegian support, is premiering at IDFA, where creative documentaries take centre stage and form is as important as content.

The Amsterdam festival, 14-25 November, draws thousands of documentary lovers and industry professionals from television, film festivals, film markets, and sales and distribution, and Who Will Be a Gurkha will be premiered on 16 November. The film will also be screened in Nepal at KIMPF 2012 from 7-11 December.
EVENTS

EARTH, BODY, MIND. a four-week long celebration of art that includes symposiums, art performances, a Pecha Kucha gathering, guided tours and screenings. 25 November to 21 December, 1pm to 6pm, multiple venues across the Valley. 94945-5033, www.artmandu.org

Educating Nepal, take part in this short-film competition and see if you can bag the prize to Rs 75,000 and get your film screened at the annual Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival in December. Submit by 20 November. (01)4464063, (01)5529463, www.kiff.org

Living pictures, watch Nepali and Finnish films every Wednesday evening, 31 October to 28 November, 9.30pm, Moksh Restaurant, Jhamsikhel. (01)9849519933, www.artmandu.org

HUMAN RIGHTS FILM WEEK 2012, a screening of Nepali and international features and documentaries on humanization and gender issues, 17 to 24 November, www.hrffn.org for schedule and locations

In the eyes of Kathmandu, screening of films where Kathmandu is depicted through the eyes of street children who made them, 16 November, 9.30pm to 7pm, Delices de France, Thamel. (01)4260326, 9817136896

INTRODUCTION TO VI-J-ING, learn the art of video jockeying with renowned video director and light designer Mathieu Crette. Rs 1,500, 21 to 24 November, 7am to 5pm, Satya Media Arts Collective, Jawalakhel. Apply by 18 November, shreyans@sattya.org

ADVENTURE FILM FESTIVAL, come and explore the Nepali edition of this global event that celebrates art, activism, and indie film. 17 November, 7pm onwards, St. Xavier’s School, Jawalakhel

DELIGHTS OF SOLITUDE, world-renowned cellist and ethnomusicologist Frank Bernede will perform select compositions of JS Bach on the violoncello. Rs 750, 17 November, 6pm, Vedi Hotel, Swayambhu, limited seating, book early. (01)4271545

MUSIC

THE HERITAGE, escape the hodgepodge of the tourist hub as you relish delights like paella and panna cotta. Thamel

Sarangkot Forays Dayzband, have a Sarangkot special breakfast, while enjoying spectacular views of the Himalaya. Sarangkot, Pokhara, (061)461412/462978

DRAGON CHINESE RESTAURANT, try the famous drums of Pokhara and the Nilai Cao if with company. Lakeside, Pokhara

CHOPSTIX, savoury Asian food cooked in true Chinese fashion sure to charm and impress. Try the famous drums of heaven. Kamalpokhari, (01)3359718

Boomerang Restaurant & German Bakery, offers a large selection of cuisine for those who want to enjoy a full meal and desserts. Lakeside, Pokhara, (061)614142462978

NEW TUSHITA RESTAURANT, relaxing ambiance and good food. Don’t miss out on its penne with creamy bacon and mushroom sauce. Lazimpat, (01)44432967

Fujii Bakery, tucked in Chakupat this bakery offers homemade goodies like apple pie, pain du chocolat, and banana cake. Chakupat

GETAWAYS

BALTHALI VILLAGE RESORT, a small, cozy retreat with a bird’s eye view of green terrace fields dotted with ochre painted houses. Balthali, Kavre, 9851073818

Charikot Panorama Resort, enjoy mountain views and local culture in the historic town of Charikot. Special packages on offer. Charikot, Dolakha, (01)5529463, thapamaag@gmail.com

HOTEL LANDMARK, made entirely from traditional Nepali brick and woodcraft, this hotel is rich not only in heritage, but also in services and boasts an award winning restaurant, the Hungry Eye. Pokhara, (061)4623306/3327, www.landmarkpokhara.com

Fulbari Resort, enjoy the scenic view of Pokhara as you pamper yourself with tennis, golf, drinks, and dinners. Rs 6500 per person for 2 nights and 3 days. Call (01)4461918/2246

RANIBAN RETREAT, situated at the other end of the Phewa lake and nestled inside the Raniban forest and the World Peace Stupa, this retreat has one of the best views of the Annapurna range, Phewa lake, and Pokhara. World Peace Pagoda, Pokhara, (061)682136, 9843180523

DIAS SHIPPING, take part in this photography and documentary competition that aims to record lost childhoods, and win prizes worth Rs 50,000. Entry fee Rs 300 for photography. Rs 600 for documentary. 21 November, 7pm onwards. Nepal Tourism Board, 9819214828
A part of the Surya Nepal Asha Social Entrepreneurship Awards 2012, ChangeFusion Nepal is hosting a three-day series of seminars on social entrepreneurship. This event aims to promote the social entrepreneurship among Nepalis, and recognise entrepreneurs who have been combining business with social values in their own communities. Open to all, the program will bring together aspiring entrepreneurs, potential investors, and representatives from the government, banks, and corporate houses.

SCHEDULE
22 November, aspiring entrepreneurs will discuss how to infuse innovative ideas into a business plan
23 November, businessmen and women will talk candidly about the challenges they faced while setting up and running their organisations
24 November, a day for entrepreneurs to make their business pitch and panel discussions with representatives from different sectors

www.changefusionnepal.org

Talk smart

B attisputali is on its way to becoming the next Jhamsikhel with a slew of new eateries. Four month old Cafe 32 announced itself as one of the coolest joints in the neighbourhood. The expansive two storey eatery has indoor and outdoor seating complete with a bar and live music performance. The menu looked as impressive as the decor with a selection of Chinese, Indian, Mexican, and Continental dishes. However, the restaurant’s glittering facade fell apart the moment our first order arrived. And from then on, it was all downhill.

CAFÉ 32

Since nothing from the Mexican selection was available we settled for Salad Nicoise (Rs 170) which was a clumsy mix of tuna, green beans, boiled eggs, and olive seeds. It felt like the chef had simply dumped a can of tuna and a random mix of vegetable and poured a generous portion of oil. The Cheese Balls (Rs 190) didn’t get our taste buds rolling either. The eight nibble size pieces oozed disappointment and not melting cheese. Although the balls were crisp on the outside, the cheese was scarce and they tasted like soggy bread pakodas.

For mains, Supreme Chicken Imperial (Rs 225) smothered in creamy white sauce was well-cooked and stuffed with Pork Sizzler (Rs 390), like many other dishes weren’t available so we had to settle for the chicken variety or no sizzler at all. But before we could take in the taste of the tender chicken, the salty sauce spoiled the rather delectable sizzler. The canned mushroom and the overall greasiness only made things worse.

We were hoping for a sweet luscious mushroom and spinach. The butter rice accompanying it along with mixed greens was however dripping in oil almost overpowering the succulent chicken. The bland Spaghetti Bolognese (Rs 185) didn’t do much to our appetite. It resembled fried noodles with minced meat and lacked a generous serving of cheese.

end to our otherwise disastrous meal with chocolate pudding. But the manager suggested we try rice pudding instead because the chocolate pudding wasn’t good and the other dessert items weren’t, you guessed it, available.

The slow service and disoriented, clueless waiters added icing on our missing cake. Although not as expansive and buzzing with live music there are plenty of other options along the same lane to satiate your growling stomach. Maybe in a few months Cafe 32 will have found its missing ingredients and become worthy of a second shot.

Trishna Rana

22 to 24 November, 11am to 6.30pm, Dhokaima Cafe, Patan Dhoka All sessions are free and open to the public.
Moonrise Kingdom

Wes Anderson’s newest film Moonrise Kingdom which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival this year is as charming as any of his previous films (Rushmore, The Royal Tenenbaums, Fantastic Mr Fox), perhaps even more so because here finally, Anderson has embraced the fact that his films are trying to re-capture a certain nostalgia for childhood that adults can never fully regain.

The film is set on a fictitious island called New Penzance that is supposedly in the vicinity of New England. On this rather magical island there are many different landscapes, ranging from woods complete with rushing streams, open fields where one might easily be struck by lightning, craggy rocky areas, and, of course, a magical little inlet that is hidden from the world.

It is to this inlet that Suzy Bishop (played by Kara Hayward) and Sam Shakusky (Jared Gilman) are headed. The two perceive themselves as outcasts, misunderstood by their peers, runaway from home. They are also 12-year-olds.

Sam has absconded from his Khaki Scout summer camp on the island, taking with him essentials such as food, comprehensive camping gear (albeit a bit miniature), and an air gun for survival on the island. Suzy arrives to meet Sam armed with her cat, a suitcase full of books, and her little brother’s gun for survival on the island. Suzy and Sam develop an affinity for each other, other characters too, come into their own, however comically.

For those who love Wes Anderson films, Moonrise Kingdom carries all the hallmarks of his past successes. The sets are intricately detailed with particular attention, so much so that future repeat viewing of Anderson’s films are particularly delightful for catching what one might have initially missed. Nothing is left to chance, each set is personally overseen by Anderson himself, and Suzy’s books, though fictitious, have a ring of truth in them, partly because Anderson himself wrote some of the passages that she reads out loud every night, first to Sam and later to his entire Khaki scout troupe.

I will not go into details regarding the slightly convoluted adventures that these children, pursued by their respective frantic adults, embark upon, even after Sam and Suzy’s apprehension from their Moonrise Kingdom inlet haven. Suffice to say that they are both heart-breaking and hilarious.

With this latest film Anderson has done the very difficult: he has tapped into our deepest childhood fears, our happiest memories, the innocence of make-believe that one never again feels after adolescence, and the very real conflict between children and adults, which if not treated with respect, can lead to deep and enduring trauma.

Cephalosporins are classified into four generations based on their activity against bacterial organisms, specifically gram-negative organisms. The third generation cephalosporins are much more active than the first or second generation cephalosporins against many dangerous gram-negative bacilli.

The overuse of ceftriaxone has caused common gram-negative bacteria, for example Klebsiella and Escherichia coli to produce ‘extended-spectrum beta-lactamases’ (ESBL) strains.

These ESBL strains of Klebsiella and Escherichia coli are now no longer susceptible to ceftriaxone. It is as if the bugs have found an armour to defend themselves against a very powerful enemy.

As a result, more potent antibiotics have to be deployed to fight against the same infection and these new drugs are usually more expensive.

ESBL strains have been increasingly documented in Nepal and indeed treatment of patients with infections caused by these strains has been challenging whether it is a meningital, sepsis, pneumonia or urinary tract infection. What is the solution?

Sensible use of third generation antibiotics is the first step in tackling this problem. Hospitals need to introduce a policy to cycle antibiotics so that another substitute antibiotic is used in place of third generation cephalosporins like ceftriaxone.

Current ceftriaxone along with its oral form (cefixime) are easily available over-the-counter so patients don’t even need a prescription.

Some degree of government control in the sale of these life-saving antibiotics is essential in avoiding the dangerous spread of ESBL strains. If precautionary measures are not taken soon, we may be faced with a medical crisis in the near future.

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Tibet’s burning issue

In setting their bodies on fire Tibetan protesters are in reality cremating themselves, and mocking their tormentors

From February 2009, in 63 instances of self-immolations, 52 Tibetans have died. This tragic and unique form of protest has escalated: 49 of those who set themselves ablaze did so this year.

Many protestors are between 17 to 30 years old. Most self-immolated outside famous monasteries or public places, consciously seeking to turn their death into a public spectacle in the hope of conveying to both the people and police the meaning of their action.

Yet the audience could not interpret their action in any way other than as a protest against the Chinese government, for they shouted, as they turned into raging balls of fire, slogans for freedom or demanding the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

Some self-immolators chose to record their statements before walking to their chosen site of death. In their English rendering, these testimonials are remarkable for the absence of fear of death, and their expression of anguish at the repression of their people.

Typical is the statement Nangdrol recorded before self-immolation on 19 February: “Wear Tibet if you are Tibetan / Never forget you are a scholar of religion in Boston / For preserving the cultural unity of Tibet. It means, so to speak, walking the path of Buddha, one of whose incarnates offered his body to a famished lioness who was about to feast on her cubs. Thus, in setting their bodies on fire they are in reality cremating themselves, and also mocking their tormentors who, unable to establish supremacy over the hearts and minds of Tibetans, forever seek to control their bodies. The Tibetan self-immolator, like Eagleton’s suicide bomber, defies power by simply learning to overcome his or her fear of death.

Consequently, the capacity of political power to coerce people stands undermined. About suicide bombing, Eagleton says, “It proclaims that what your adversary cannot annihilate is the will to annihilation.” In its failure to overpower the Tibetans’ will to annihilation, as also in its inability to convince the Tibetans to live, the Chinese regime is rendered a bit more illegitimate every time a monk sets himself ablaze.

The feared erosion of their legitimacy prompts the Chinese to take retributive actions against the monasteries to which the dead were affiliated. As for the rest of us in the world, we prefer silence to the grim prospect of China directing its wrath against us or depriving us of its money to develop our economy. The raucous American election circus helps to muffle the murmur of our conscience.

Three conclusions can be drawn from these recorded statements: there exists at least a rudimentary network to record and transmit the statements of self-immolators worldwide. Tibetans don’t consider self-immolation as sin, it is in fact entailed, and each self-immolator seems to inspire others.

All this has prompted many to demand that the Dalai Lama should express his disapproval of self-immolation, believing such a proclamation could dissuade those contemplating to voluntarily embrace fiery death. Others, like Stephen Prothero, a scholar of religion in Boston University, have questioned the silence of westerners over self-immolations in Tibet, particularly as suicide bombing seems to repel them. The Chinese themselves have dubbed self-immolation as terrorism, and claim it violates the tenets of peace and compassion enshrined in Buddhism.

Indeed, both the suicide bomber and the self-immolator believe death is the only recourse left for them to secure justice. Both choose to die because they wish through their sacrifice to provide a better future for their people. Yet there is a vital difference between the suicide bomber and what cultural theorist Terry Eagleton calls the martyr, or the person who fasts to death for a cause. In a piece for The Guardian in 2005, Eagleton wrote, “The martyr bets his life on a future for their people. Yet there is a vital difference between the suicide bomber and what cultural theorist Terry Eagleton calls the martyr, or the person who fasts to death for a cause. In a piece for The Guardian in 2005, Eagleton wrote, “The martyr bets his life on a future for their people. Yet there is a vital difference between the suicide bomber and what cultural theorist Terry Eagleton calls the martyr, or the person who fasts to death for a cause. In a piece for The Guardian in 2005, Eagleton wrote, “The martyr bets his life on a future for their people. Yet there is a vital difference between the suicide bomber and what cultural theorist Terry Eagleton calls the martyr, or the person who fasts to death for a cause. In a piece for The Guardian in 2005, Eagleton wrote, “The martyr bets his life on a future for their people. Yet there is a vital difference between the suicide bomber and what cultural theorist Terry Eagleton calls the martyr, or the person who fasts to death for a cause. In a piece for The Guardian in 2005, Eagleton wrote, “The martyr bets his life on a future for their people. Yet there is a vital difference between the suicide bomber and what cultural theorist Terry Eagleton calls the martyr, or the person who fasts to death for a cause. In a piece for The Guardian in 2005, Eagleton wrote, “The martyr bets his life on a future for their people. Yet there is a vital difference between the suicide bomber and what cultural theorist Terry Eagleton calls the martyr, or the person who fasts to death for a cause. In a piece for The Guardian in 2005, Eagleton wrote, “The martyr bets his life on a future for their people.

The self-immolator is as much Eagleton’s martyr, as his or her fear of death. By simply learning to overcome his fear of death, the self-immolator defies power. In a piece for The Guardian in 2005, Eagleton wrote, “The martyr bets his life on a future for their people. Yet there is a vital difference between the suicide bomber and what cultural theorist Terry Eagleton calls the martyr, or the person who fasts to death for a cause. In a piece for The Guardian in 2005, Eagleton wrote, “The martyr bets his life on a future for their people. Yet there is a vital difference between the suicide bomber and what cultural theorist Terry Eagleton calls the martyr, or the person who fasts to death for a cause. In a piece for The Guardian in 2005, Eagleton wrote, “The martyr bets his life on a future for their people. Yet there is a vital difference between the suicide bomber and what cultural theorist Terry Eagleton calls the martyr, or the person who fasts to death for a cause. In a piece for The Guardian in 2005, Eagleton wrote, “The martyr bets his life on a future for their people. Yet there is a vital difference between the suicide bomber and what cultural theorist Terry Eagleton calls the martyr, or the person who fasts to death for a cause. In a piece for The Guardian in 2005, Eagleton wrote, “The martyr bets his life on a future for their people. Yet there is a vital difference between the suicide bomber and what cultural theorist Terry Eagleton calls the martyr, or the person who fasts to death for a cause. In a piece for The Guardian in 2005, Eagleton wrote, “The martyr bets his life on a future for their people. Yet there is a vital difference between the suicide bomber and what cultural theorist Terry Eagleton calls the martyr, or the person who fasts to death for a cause. In a piece for The Guardian in 2005, Eagleton wrote, “The martyr bets his life on a future for their people. Yet there is a vital difference between the suicide bomber and what cultural theorist Terry Eagleton calls the martyr, or the person who fasts to death for a cause. In a piece for The Guardian in 2005, Eagleton wrote, “The martyr bets his life on a future for their people. Yet there is a vital difference between the suicide bomber and what cultural theorist Terry Eagleton calls the martyr, or the person who fasts to death for a cause. In a piece for The Guardian in 2005, Eagleton wrote, “The martyr bets his life on a future for their people. Yet there is a vital difference between the suicide bomber and what cultural theorist Terry Eagleton calls the martyr, or the person who fasts to death for a cause. In a piece for The Guardian in 2005, Eagleton wrote, “The martyr bets his life on a future for their people. Yet there is a vital difference between the suicide bomber and what cultural theorist Terry Eagleton calls the martyr, or the person who fasts to death for a cause. In a piece for The Guardian in 2005, Eagleton wrote, “The martyr bets his life on a future for their people. Yet there is a vital difference between the suicide bomber and what cultural theorist Terry Eagleton calls the martyr, or the person who fasts to death for a cause. In a piece for The Guardian in 2005, Eagleton wrote, “The martyr bets his life on a future for their people. Yet there is a vital difference between the suicide bomber and what cultural theorist Terry Eagleton calls the martyr, or the person who fasts to death for a cause. In a piece for The Guardian in 2005, Eagleton wrote, “The martyr bets his life on a future for their people.
The People of India, published in 1868, was a photographic album prepared at the insistence of the Viceroy Lord Canning. Glass plate photography had been invented barely a decade earlier, but by 1860 colonial officers all over the subcontinent were proficient in the process. The colonial administration in Calcutta clearly wanted to document the people, a need that seems to have been felt after the mutiny of 1858.

The book contains around 400 albumen prints of people from Burma to Afghanistan, and includes 24 photographs of Nepali citizens even though Nepal was not part of the Indian empire. For whatever reason this was done, we have a treasure trove of portraits from long ago.

The Nepal pictures provide a window on how Nepalis carried themselves 150 years ago, how they dressed, how long they kept their hair, what weaponry and implements they used. Whereas we have many photographs of the Rana court and subsequently of the Newar and Khas nobility, this is the first photographic ‘shoot’ of ordinary Nepalis. The text which accompanied the photographs are thought to have been provided by the previous British resident in Kathmandu, Brian Hodgson.

Given the relatively static nature of the times, this is probably what Nepalis looked in at least the century preceding the photographs. The photography was concentrated in Kathmandu Valley, and we do not find Tarai or high-Himalayan portraiture.

When the order for pictures came from Calcutta to the British Resident in Kathmandu, George Ramsay, he wrote back that he had neither money nor expertise. Fortunately, Clarence Comyn Taylor, who had learnt the newborn art of photography while serving in Rajputana, was assigned as the Assistant Resident during the same time. A budget was then arranged, and the photography began. It was only in 1992 that scholar JP Losty identified Taylor as the photographer, and historian Pratyoush Onta suggests that Taylor’s photographs of 1863 are most likely the first taken in Nepal of Nepali subjects.

That was the time when Jung Bahadur Kunwar had already emerged as the supreme of Nepali politics with King Surendra Bir Bikram already relegated to ceremonial status. At first Resident Ramsay worried about Jung Bahadur’s reaction to the proposed photographic documentation, but the latter proved enthusiastic and even bought one album of the Nepal photographs for himself. Taylor also took portraits of Jung Bahadur, and King Surendra.

For the longer version of this piece in Nepali with more images, see: www.nepalihimal.com
1. A Gurung youth looks to us through the prism of history. His hair is nearly at shoulder length, and a talisman hangs from his neck. He wears a peculiar garment that all the other males wear in this set of photographs, seeming to represent the pre-daura suruwal era.

2. There are only four pictures with female subjects in the collection. In general, the dress, coifure, and ornamentation of women seem to have changed less than those of the males. Pictures 2 and 3 show a Sunuwar and Limbu woman, respectively.

3. The middle-aged Limbu gentleman wears a regular padded Nepali topi and has twisted his moustache.

4. Picture of a Magar elder wears a regular padded Nepali topi and has twisted his moustache.

5. Titled ‘Murmi’ in The People of India, this Tamang youth sports a khukuri and a topi of the kind that is worn by Himalayan Tamangs.

6. Identified in the book as Khasi, the youth is wearing a Nepali topi with a khukuri placed on his cummerbund. The same man is made to pose at rest in photograph 7.

7. Group photograph of Newar ‘Banda’ priests in their unique traditional attire.

8. Photograph of Tamang trio shows two young men observing a woman carrying a load of firewood.

9. Photograph shows the youth from photograph 1 in conversation with two others, while holding on to what seems to be a ceremonial umbrella.

10. The young Newar sports a padded Nepali topi and shoulder-length hair. He is seen at the left in the picture meant to depict a bazar scene.

11. Group portraits showing platoons of Gurung, Limbu, and Magar soldiers (left to right), perhaps deputed from the Gorkhali army by Jung Bahadur to pose for the photographer. The subjects carry khukuris as well as bows, arrows, and quivers.

12. Two Tamang youth are seen with pick-axes, apparently part of some construction activity.

13. Sunuwar youth wearing a turban.
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3. The middle-aged Limbu gentleman wears a regular padded Nepali topi and has twirled his moustache.

4. Picture of a Magar elder with wrap-around shawl and a ‘Himal’ topi.

5. Titled ‘Mumi’ in ‘The People of India’, this Tamang youth sports a khukuri and a topi of the kind that is worn by Himalayan jamas.

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11. Sunuwar youth wearing a turban.
Coup, polls, and loyalty

Interview with Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Nepal, 11 November

Yasoda Timilsina: You refuse to come to an agreement, and spread rumours that the president is staging a coup. Are these tactics to stay in power forever?

Pushpa Kamal Dahal: I met the president on Friday, and he told me to work on forging consensus on issues like the budget, elections, and government change. I believe he gave me this responsibility because I am the chairman of the biggest party. He also categorically denied all the rumours circulating by the media, and said he would not be a hurdle if there is consensus on the budget. Although there has been some confusion in the past few days, I believe the president is committed to national integrity and even now his emphasis is on consensus.

It seems you are eager to maintain a strong hold over your party by keeping Baburam Bhattarai in power. These are all false allegations. There is no relation between the government and our party's leadership. I am very worried that the process set in motion by the 12-point understanding might get derailed. The party split because we were determined to take this process to its conclusive end. So how is this related to the party split?

Are you afraid of going to polls because your support base is now divided after the break up of the party?

We have no reservations against elections, and want to pass the constitution from the constituent assembly itself. A few seats might be lost because of the split, but this will not affect our party's position much. Who knows, we might even work together, so why should we be scared?

You are also blamed for the death of the CA because after seats might be lost because of the split, but this will not affect us. The privileged class has one mantra: to guard. Championing the rights of one side does not mean we are against the other. The privileged class has one mantra: to tarnish Prachanda's image and wipe out the achievements of the 2006 uprising. And after that, they want to continue ruling. Certain actors from the ruling class are arm twisting the media and spreading propaganda.

People had a lot of expectations from you, do you think you fulfilled these expectations?

When I met all the representatives of the major parties and proposed that we discuss two alternatives, elections or CA revival, they started accusing me of double-speak. They assumed that by doing so, they could render all our achievements insignificant. Recently, I have stopped wasting time by blaming others, and am instead focused on institutionalising our era-defining proposals. Maybe one section of society thinks it is possible to wipe off our achievements by instilling party leaders, ordinary Nepalis, and martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the republic. This happens, the country will sink, but I will not let that happen.

You have been warming up towards India lately. Why is that?

This is a very sensitive issue, and I don't see any wisdom in commenting on it. India is the UN, and other nations have helped us with the 12-point understanding. Today, we are walking on the path set by it, but haven't reached our final destination yet which means we still need everyone's help, including India.

Are you leaning towards India for good?

It's nothing like that. We are simply seeking help in order to fulfill our goals. The problem is once you are in power, outsiders presume you are leaning one way or another. Yesterday I too felt like others were 'leaning' towards certain power centres when they were in government, but now I realise I was wrong. I am loyal towards Nepal and Nepalis only.

Out of business

Editorial, Karobar, 11 November

The Jana Andolan in 2006 brought about massive political transformation and Nepal's economy to an all time low. Countless underground utilities and many large and small political parties and their sister organisations have picked up on this habitat and are bleeding the business community dry. While the leaders are busy bickering amongst themselves, the business environment has become a hostage to power politics and is falling apart with each passing day. Even when the government is trying to present a budget, the opposition is hell bent on stopping it. The Maoists started collecting large sums of money from business houses as 'donations' during the war. The practice continues unabated till this day. Countless underground utilities and many large and small political parties and their sister organisations have picked up on this habitat and are bleeding the business community dry. While the leaders are busy bickering amongst themselves, the economy has become a hostage to power politics and is falling apart with each passing day. Even when the government is trying to present a budget, the opposition is hell bent on preventing it.

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When you add the perennial energy crisis to the mix, it is not surprising to learn that the morale of the business community especially the industrial sector is completely shattered. If the political parties fail to lift the spirit of entrepreneurs through proper policies, Nepal's economy will come crashing down.

(The FNCCI) showed political instability, energy crisis, strike, weak governance, labours, and financial problems as the major challenges of doing business in Nepal.

The Jana Andolan in 2006 brought about massive political transformation and Nepal's economy to an all time low. Countless underground utilities and many large and small political parties and their sister organisations have picked up on this habitat and are bleeding the business community dry. While the leaders are busy bickering amongst themselves, the economy has become a hostage to power politics and is falling apart with each passing day. Even when the government is trying to present a budget, the opposition is hell bent on preventing it.

When you add the perennial energy crisis to the mix, it is not surprising to learn that the morale of the business community especially the industrial sector is completely shattered. If the political parties fail to lift the spirit of entrepreneurs through proper policies, Nepal's economy will come crashing down.
Crisis in Chure

When villagers in Chepuchar, Ilam go to bed, smugglers descend into the community forests in the cover of darkness to fell Sal and Sisau trees. Entire trunks and wooden beams are floated down the rivers, where they reach markets further downstream and hundreds of tractor-loads of timber are carted across the border into India.

According to the District Forest Office, 21,000 trees are plundered every year in Ilam, which means one hectare of hillside becomes barren annually. Heavy denudation of the Chure hills has worsened the effects of deforestation couldn’t have been more real. Heavy rainfall in 2011 set off a flood in the Mai Khola which swept hundreds. The brothers lost their mother and a sibling in the floods, and sudden droughts and flash floods have made things worse for farmers in eastern Nepal.

For Som Bahadur Magar, 19, of Danabari VDC and his 16-year-old brother Amrit the scars of the war: Nepal’s conflict report is getting international attention.
Gangnam Style in Gangsterland

Hope all Ass fans out there had an indolent Dasain than TiBar out of solidarity with our political leaders who sat back, relaxed, and gobbled with the country’s future. Here are some happenings that you may have missed because newspapers (except yours truly) will not be coming out on Friday. Surgeon general’s warning: none of this is made up.

PKD promised two months ago to party faithful that he would move into a more modest residence, but haven’t yet found any home they have looked high and low closely by Comrade Sita and agent Mr Lal is being supervised house-hunting was on, real estate sidekick clarified to the press the lifestyle. Anyway, the Chairman’s his luxuriously revolutionary place where he was skinned alive for remember? That was the plenum into a more modest residence, party faithful that he would move

The award next year is working hard to bag honour, and at the deserves the Awesome say, Chairman

Needless to politicians. Dirty Half-Doz Top a list of the most-corrupt person has named him the chuffed that a tabloid must be mighty any one, never hurt FGFG

The Great Helmsman didn’t keep his trap shut?

The paper also has a list of the three top honest leaders and, guess what, Jhoul Da comes out as the cleanest politician alive. Almost makes you want to wish our leaders would be just a little crooked, so we could get things moving. A bit of constructive corruption never hurt anyone, eh?

PKD must have been bored out of his mind during the holidays because he agreed to be brand ambassador for Everest Toothpaste. Is there a message there? He also signed an agreement with himself for the Lumbini project. Get this: Chairman of the ruling party signs a MoU with an organisation of which he is the vice-chairman.

And the total allocation for the Lumbini project. Get this:

Meanwhile, Hubby Boy was off again for his once-a-month sleep-over with the downtrodden, and this time it was the Dali family in Kapilbastu. BBK is making these trips to “learn firsthand the problems of my people”. Which must be why he built the Dalis an indoor squatting toilet. But, hey, where’s the flush? Just before being helicoptered off for his night out, Comrade Lal Dibd said he was still a revolutionary at heart and called his prime ministership a ‘paji’ job. Interesting choice of word because the dictionary doesn’t even list such epithets. Some research has revealed that ‘paji’ actually means ‘armpit hair’ which proves the prime minister was actually being polite, and didn’t want to use the Nepali word for ‘cockpit hair’.

Guess who makes up the biggest chunk of the applicants to the US e-Diversity Visa this year? Yes, former combatants from the cantonsmen who are no longer terrorists. Very apt that ex-baddies have altered their wartime motto from “Yankees, Go Home!” to “Yankees, Go Home. And Take Us With You!”

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