



Newsletter

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We publish this month a photograph of the AIDA Sol of AIDA Cruises.

If you have pictures or postcards of your ship, please send them in to us for future Newsletters.

Several months ago, I wrote that we had been asked by Columbia Cruise Services to crew the Ocean Gala, which was intended to house refugees in Sweden. I regret that we were told this month that the project could not go ahead as the local authorities in the designated port and the ship owners were not in agreement. I apologise to the crew who had been selected and trained for this work. Columbia has reassured us that those concerned will be reassigned to other posts, although after some delay. We shall work to make this happen.

BGOS NEW OFFICE

Last month we let you all know that BGOS had moved its offices. For anyone who missed that, we repeat the map and new address here:

British Gurkha Overseas Services (P) Ltd
Shanti Chowk, Jawalakhel – 4, GPO 8975, EPC 775, Lalitpur, NEPAL



We Welcome

Norwegian Cruise Lines
 Dev Bahadur Tamang

SHIPPING COMPANIES AND SHIPS LINKED TO US

We are working with 21 shipping companies, and have 743 men and 171 women on ships, a total of 914 crew and staff under management.



GI (HK) Business

We are providing security services for 28 Hong Kong Clients and have 104 security staff employed.

Our employment agency placement service found 0 Bodyguard/Driver post position over the last month.

Editor of Newsletter



Derek Lin

World Security

Economics

Things seem to be relatively stable at the moment.

Nuclear

North Korea has fired several test missiles into the sea this month.

Europe

After the horrific events of the previous month, it is good to be able to report that the continent has been free of major terrorist incidents this month. Tensions on the border between Ukraine and Russia remain high. After it alleged that Ukrainian forces had killed one of its officers in the Crimea, Russia began a build up of armoured units along its frontier with Ukraine.

The Middle East and the Arab World

The Syrian civil war has continued. Rebel forces broke through the forces of the Assad regime which had been encircling the besieged city of Aleppo, inside which there is enormous suffering. For a time, Russia began to bomb rebel forces from a base in Iran, but this was stopped by the Iranians when Russia made use of this information for PR purposes.

In Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan continued the crackdown on rebels and individuals connected with the wider opposition after the failed military coup of the month before. On Thursday 18 August, three bombs targetting security forces were detonated in eastern Turkey, killing 11 people. On Saturday 20 August, so far unidentified bombers struck two Jewish synagogues in Istanbul, killing 23 people. Also on Saturday, a bomb planted by Islamic extremists ISIS (ISIL), perhaps by a child suicide bomber, killed 54 people at a Kurdish wedding at Gaziantep near the Syrian border. Turkish forces are now in the process of capturing the remaining town in ISIS control on the Syrian-Turkish border.



Turkey said early signs suggested so-called Islamic State was behind the attack.

The Middle East and the Arab World

Conflict has not yet ended in Libya, where rival governments continue to exist with separate military forces; the UN-backed 'unity' government is in Tripoli in the west and the other in Benghazi in the east. Backed by US air strikes, Bunyan Marsous forces loyal to the UN-backed government have been fighting in the town of Sirte since May to eject ISIL (ISIS) forces from their remaining base in Libya. Conflict continues in Yemen, where Saudi and UAE forces are aiding Sunni Muslim factions against Houthi Shia militias who control the capital, Sanaa. Since fighting erupted there in March 2015, more than 9,000 people have been killed and 2.8 million driven from their homes. The country remains split between both the two major factions and many local militia, including group allied to al-Qaeda.



Forces loyal to Libya's UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) drive their military vehicle in al-Zaafaran neighbourhood as they fight Islamic State group (IS) jihadists holed up in residential district two on August 14, 2016 in Sirte, east of the capital Tripoli.

Afghanistan and Pakistan

The security situation in Afghanistan remains grave. Taliban forces are mounting a major effort to take Helmand Province, and US forces have been deployed there to aid Afghan troops. Pakistan has not suffered large-scale attacks by Islamic militants recently but remains unsafe in many areas.

Palestine

There is little news currently in Gaza or the West Bank.

Asia

Tension also remains in both the South China Sea and the Sea of Japan around islands claimed by China. China's insurgency problems in the Muslim areas of far-western Xinjiang province and in Tibet continue. The President of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte, has caused international alarm by sending police forces on a killing spree to rid the country of drug dealers. Police announced that in seven weeks they had killed 1,900 drug dealers.



The Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which began this week, is a sensitive period of the year in Xinjiang.

Thailand and Malaysia

The Muslim insurgency in southern Thailand, near the Malaysian border, continues. Bombs exploded in several tourist areas of Thailand during the period. On Thursday 11 and Friday 12 August, a total of six bombs were detonated in the resorts of Hua Hin and Phuket, and in towns in the southern provinces of Trang and Surat Thani, killing 4 people and wounding over 24. On Tuesday 23 August, two bombs were detonated in the beach resort of Pattani, killing 1 and injuring 36. Since 2004, fighting between government troops and insurgents has killed more than 6,500 people in the southern, largely Muslim, provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat that border Malaysia.

The Malacca Straits

There is no news this month of piracy in the area.

Somalia

There have been no more reports of Somali piracy. Fighting continues in the country between the government and its foreign allies and Islamic militant al-Shabaab fighters.

Africa

Nigerian forces have attacked Boko Haram Islamic terrorists in the Sambisa Forest in northeastern Nigeria, claiming to have killed some of the Islamic extremist group's leaders. Boko Haram continues to threaten Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon. News emerged in South Sudan that on 11 July, South Sudanese soldiers invaded a hotel in the capital city of Juba and gang-raped foreign aid workers, who called in vain for assistance from nearby UN troops. The fighting between factions that broke out in Juba in July has now ceased but there is now a cholera outbreak in the city and malaria is on the rise. In South Sudan, 2.5 million people have been driven from their homes and millions more are dependent on international food rations.



Nigerian forces have recaptured swaths of territory lost to Boko Haram.

Myanmar

There is no news of a security nature this month.

India

Kashmir remains gravely disturbed after the outbreak there of violence in July, when five days of clashes between protesters and security forces followed the killing by Indian security forces of militant Burhan Wani. At least 36 people have died and over 1,500 people have been wounded.

The Americas

Brazil successfully held the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

Opponents of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, organized by the Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD), are demanding a referendum to force him to resign. Venezuela's population is shrinking as its citizens flee abroad, seeking work and in some cases now even looking for food. In the last two months, almost 300,000 Venezuelans flooded across the Colombian border to buy the food and medicines unavailable in Venezuela. Guyana, one of Latin America's poorest countries, is deporting Venezuelans seeking food. The number of Venezuelans asking for US asylum has soared 168 per cent since last year.

One good piece of news this month comes from Columbia, where it was announced on Wednesday 24 August that the Government and the left wing FARC guerrillas had come to an agreement at negotiations in Havana to end the conflict that has afflicted Columbia for 52 years, has cost the lives of an estimated 260,000 people and displaced millions from their homes.



The 2016 Olympics have been formally opened with a colourful and pulsating ceremony at Rio's Maracana stadium.



Proud of her heritage: Gaurika Singh.

Nepal News

The story of Gaurika Singh, the youngest athlete at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games

5 Aug- Gaurika Singh will go down as the youngest athlete of the 2016 Rio Olympics at 13 years and 255 days, but her place in history could have been vastly different.

The 100 metre backstroker, who now lives in London after leaving Nepal as a two-year-old, is also a survivor of the earthquake that shook Nepal to its core and killed almost 9000 people in April last year.

There she was, preparing to compete in the Nepalese national swimming championship with her family in Kathmandu, when she was forced to take

shelter under a table in a five-storey office building fearing for her life.

Needless to say there was no pool left to compete in after 3.5 million people were left homeless as a result of the earthquake.

There are few details Singh remembers of the natural disaster which also injured more than 20,000 locals, but she vividly recalls her mother Garima yelling at her brother Sauren for what she at the time thought was her son knocking over the cupboard.

“One of the cupboards had fallen and my mother was shouting because she thought my brother had tipped it over,” Singh told Fairfax Media.

“Luckily we were in a new office building, so it shook but nothing got damaged and it didn’t collapse. But the places around us were destroyed. I can’t really remember anything. It was just one big blur with everything shaking. There was water everywhere. There’s a pond out the front of our house and all the water had come out and there were fish all over the floor.

“There was a gate out the front of our house so we weren’t able to see anything. But we did take a drive to see everything and there were walls collapsed everywhere. I was so scared. My mum didn’t let me see any of the suffering. Mum thought it would be too traumatic and I didn’t want to see people dying. But I remember on the aeroplane leaving I was thinking ‘is it going to go again as we’re taking off?’”

Singh was stopped by security trying to enter the Olympic pool in Rio.

“Sorry, athletes only”, the politely spoken woman said to Singh before flashing her accreditation to gain access to the pool deck.

It’s hard to believe this baby-faced girl with braces, who will start the ninth grade when she returns to school in London next month, is an Olympian.



Gaurika Singh during her 100m backstroke heat at Rio 2016.

One of five, to be exact, who will march out on to the Maracana representing Nepal on Friday.

While those around her struggle to come to terms with her achievement, even Singh can't believe she is in the company of people she considers heroes - including two high profile Australians.

"There are two Australian swimmers I really like - Mitch Larkin and Emily Seebomh." Singh said.

"I was swimming today and I looked next to me and Mitch was just swimming next to me. I was staring at him and he was just looking at me like 'why is she staring at me'. I didn't speak to him, I was too scared.

"They are amazing backstrokers. I was in the same heat as Emily Sebohm in Dubai. I hadn't even started and she was at the other end of the pool. I've spoken to her before. She's really nice. She helped me get my straps on once."

Singh attends a prestigious school in London called Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls, settling in the English capital where her father Paras, who has joined his daughter in Rio, works as a urologist at the Royal Free Hospital.

As a result of her father's career, Singh has lived in Scotland and also spent time in Leeds and Preston in England before settling in London, where she has made friends who are no strangers to stardom at a young age.

"My friends are really happy for me but they are also good at stuff," she said.

"One of my best friends plays Matilda on West End and another one went to junior Wimbledon. So we're all good at different things. While I'm here I'd love to get a PB (personal best). But, oh God, that will be like nine seconds behind the best swimmers."

Despite living just two years of her life in Nepal, Singh is passionate

about her family's history and insists representing Britain wasn't something she considered despite being eligible.

"Eventually I could have represented England, but I'm not English so there's not much point being Nepalese and representing Britain," she said.

"I'm Nepalese, I'm not English or anything else."

After the Olympics she will head to Nepal with family, but this time she will return a national treasure.

Cabinet expansion

25 Aug- Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal is finally ready to give full shape to his cabinet this weekend.

Although he had been elected by Parliament as the new PM last month, Dahal has not been able to expand his cabinet due to an intra-party conflict between the NC President Sher Bahadur Deuba and senior leader Ram Chandra Poudel.

Dahal had agreed to give 12 ministerial berths to the NC. But Deuba had not been able to finalise the list of ministers from his party as Poudel demanded five cabinet berths for his faction.

Deuba had already selected six ministers from his faction, offering four to Poudel's

camp. He had allocated the remaining two seats for Krishna Sitaula and Khum Bahadur Khadka's camps. But Poudel rejected Deuba's offer.

Dahal on Thursday agreed to give one more berth to the NC, enabling Deuba to offer five seats to Poudel. The NC will now have 13 ministers in the Dahal cabinet, which already has eight ministers from the CPN (Maoist-Centre).

New ministers are expected to be sworn in on Friday.



Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'



NC President Sher Bahadur Deuba (left) and senior leader Ram Chandra Poudel at an event in Kathmandu on Thursday.



The record-breaking heat of the first six months has turned to severe seasonal flooding across Asia in one of the strongest monsoon seasons in many years

World weather: 2016's early record heat gives way to heavy rains

1 Aug- The record-breaking worldwide heat of the first six months of 2016 has turned to abnormally severe seasonal flooding across Asia with hundreds of people dying in China, India, Nepal and Pakistan and millions forced from their homes.

In India, the Brahmaputra river, which is fed by Himalayan snowmelt and monsoon rains, has burst its banks in many places and has been at danger levels for weeks. Hundreds of villages have been flooded in Bihar, Assam, Uttar Pradesh and other northern states. Some of the heaviest rains in 20 years have forced nearly 1.2 million people to move to camps in Assam. Floods have submerged around 70% of the Kaziranga national park, home to the rare one-horned rhino which was visited by Prince William earlier this year.

"The situation is still very bad. We are taking measures to help people in every possible way," the Indian forest minister, Pramila Rani Brahma, told Reuters.

In China, the summer monsoon which started in June after a series of heatwaves is said to have caused \$22bn of damage so far. State officials say it has killed more than 500 people, destroyed more than 145,000 homes and inundated 21,000 sq miles of farmland. Around 500,000 people were last week still displaced in the hardest-hit central Chinese provinces of Henan and

Hebei. According to the Chinese ministry of civil affairs, 125,000 people were in urgent need of basic assistance.

This monsoon season has been one of the strongest in China's recent history, with 150 towns and cities reportedly suffering record rainfall. The Yangtze river basin has been particularly hard hit, with 22 inches of rain falling in 24 hours last month at Wuhan, the Hebei state capital.

The city, which is downstream of the Three Gorges dam and protected from flooding, was inundated after its drainage system and flood controls failed. Much of the damage is thought to have occurred because the city's rapid expansion in the past 20 years filled in many small lakes and wetlands which used to store water. Elsewhere, Nepal has been lashed by torrential monsoon rains, flash floods and landslides. The government says 14 of the mountainous country's 75 districts have been affected by floods, 54 people have died and many major rivers are running at dangerous levels. Tens of thousands of Nepalese are still living in tents following devastating earthquakes last year.

The army has been deployed to repair dams and helicopters are being used to distribute food and medicines to homeless people who have taken shelter on roads and in upland areas.

Meteorologists say that the 2016 Asian monsoon is one of the strongest in

many years, and has been intensified by the El Niño natural phenomenon which sees Pacific water temperatures rise and leads to droughts and severe weather worldwide.

The summer heatwaves that have affected much of the Middle East, north Africa and north America have slackened in the last few days. "At the [north American] heatwave's peak on July 22, almost 124 million people in north America were under heat-related warnings or advisories. Additionally, high overnight low temperatures meant little relief from the oppressive heat," said the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO).

The WMO has set up a committee to examine whether a 54C temperature recorded in Kuwait in July has set the new highest temperature for Asia, as well as for the entire eastern hemisphere.

Climatologists at the WMO said they expected more heatwaves because of climate change. "The length, frequency and intensity of heatwaves will likely increase further during this century, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change," said the agency.

But they said it was likely that only a weak "La Niña" will follow the strong El Niño phenomenon later this year. La Niña is the opposite of El Niño and is marked by cooler temperatures worldwide.



Hong Kong News

Protests shut down electoral commission briefing as Hong Kong Indigenous' Edward Leung disqualified from Legco elections

2 Aug- Hong Kong's election watchdog on Tuesday rejected localist leader Edward Leung Tin-kei's bid to run in next month's Legislative Council polls, setting off a chorus of complaints about political screening of candidates and raising doubts about the watchdog's neutrality.

With Leung's rejection, a total of six candidates for the September 4 polls have had their nominations invalidated by returning officers over their advocacy of the city's independence from China.

There were chaotic scenes at a briefing for validated candidates by the Electoral Affairs Commission on Tuesday night as protesting pan-democratic and localist hopefuls disrupted the session. The commission was forced to cut short the briefing, and police guarding the venue removed the protesters.

As protesters tried to storm the speakers' stage, Demosisto chairman Nathan Law Kwun-chung was seen being pushed to the ground. He later sought medical treatment at United Christian Hospital for leg injuries and planned to file a police report, suspecting he had been

manhandled by a plainclothes officer.

The election commission condemned the "violent acts" of the protesters. Leung, a member of Hong Kong Indigenous, was expected to have a high chance of winning a seat, considering his strong performance in a Legco by-election in February. He slammed the rejection of his candidacy as "a decision made under rule of man, not rule of law".

"The returning officer doesn't want to believe what I say in black and white and concluded that she simply doesn't believe that I am genuine in what I say," he said. "Is she a worm in my mind?"

He went on to claim the elections were being "manipulated" by the government, and that he would submit an election petition to challenge the rejection the day after the Legco polls.

He later went into the briefing as a guest and swore at election commissioner Barnabas Fung Wah as he spoke.

Leung, a philosophy student at the University of Hong Kong philosophy, openly advocated the city's independence until last week, when he was forced to clarify his stance before his candidacy was decided.



Independence advocate Edward Leung Tin-kei's bid to run in the Legislative Council elections has been rejected.

He made a complete U-turn to accept a controversial change to election rules and signed a “confirmation form” reinforcing his acceptance of Hong Kong’s status as an inalienable part of China. The form is an additional requirement to the standard declaration form to uphold the Basic Law.

What’s causing confusion is that 42 lists of candidates from the pan-democrat and localist camps have been approved even though they refused to sign the new form.

In a 12-page reply, returning officer Cora Ho Lai-sheung, with the advice of the Department of Justice, attached media reports on Leung’s past remarks about independence and even his own Facebook posts. She included a transcript of remarks Leung had made at a press conference after signing the confirmation form.

“What Mr Leung means should be: in order to enter Legco, he would take whatever means, including stopping advocating Hong Kong independence; and once he becomes a lawmaker, he will continue to advocate independence,” she wrote.

“I therefore do not trust Mr Leung genuinely changed his previous stance for independence.”

A government spokesman denied political censorship, insisting that returning officers were acting lawfully to ensure the elections would be run in accordance with the Basic Law.

The justice department said it had taken into account candidates’ right to stand for elections when advising returning officers.

The Civic Party condemned the disqualification of the six pro-independence candidates, calling it “political screening” and accusing the election watchdog of deviating from the principle of political neutrality.

Moderate Tik Chi-yuen, who is also

running for Legco, said he was shocked at Leung’s rejection and urged the watchdog to reconsider.

But Tam Yiu-chung of the pro-establishment Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong said he respected the rejections because legislators were required by law to uphold the mini-constitution.

The election watchdog was also accused of acting arbitrarily over validated candidates’ promotional materials.

While it approved localist Lau Siu-lai’s leaflets, it still has not given the go ahead to the brochures of two other candidates who are her allies, even though all of them contain controversial phrases such as “self-determination”.

“It’s very clear from this that [the commission] is engaging in political screening and that they are picking on certain candidates,” she said.

Hong Kong bookseller Lam Wing-kee says he wants to return to a ‘normal’ life, as police protection set to end

26 Aug - The bookseller who made explosive revelations that he was kidnapped by mainland law enforcement agents has said his police protection may end soon as he wishes to return to a normal life.

Speaking on an online radio programme, Lam Wing-kee also said he supports the campaign for Hong Kong’s independence, as long as it’s done in a peaceful and non-violent manner.

Lam was one of the five associates of the Mighty Current publishing house and Causeway Bay Books who went missing one after another last year and later resurfaced under mainland custody.

The bookseller was offered around-the-clock police protection in early July after he felt threatened by strangers following him.

Lam, who’s been staying at a safe house, said he wishes to return home despite the fact that he still did not feel entirely

safe.

“Even after I go home, I will still have to be careful. I will have less freedom than before,” he said.

“This is the price I have to pay after I spoke to the media [about the kidnapping].”

Lam added that he may return to work after the police protection ends.

The bookseller was scheduled to attend the July 1 march this year but pulled out at the last minute fearing his personal safety.

When asked whether he was disappointed with the low turnout at the march, Lam said the number of people who showed up was not significant.

“I think more people will come out [to protest] in the future as things will worsen,” he said.

During the show, the bookseller said he sees the only way for the city to protect its freedoms is by splitting from China.

“As long as it’s peaceful and non-violent, I support [independence],” he said.

The bookseller added that he expects Beijing to be even more heavy handed in the way they govern Hong Kong in light of calls for independence.

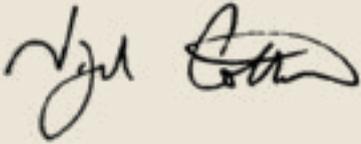
“Hongkongers are only calling for independence [to protect] their freedom. They are not demanding it for its own sake,” he said.



Hong Kong bookseller Lam Wing-kee

Conclusion

I hope you all had a chance to watch at least some of the Olympic Games in Rio. Despite all the unhappy events around the world that we report every month in our Newsletter, there are occasions when the peoples of the world can come together in peace and equality, and these games were a prime example of what can be achieved when we turn our backs on conflict. When the Greeks started the Olympics in 776 BC (BCE), now 2792 years ago, they gave us a gift that remains a lesson to us all.



Nigel Collett
Managing Director



The precious moments of Rio 2016