



GURKHA INTERNATIONAL  
[Website: gurkha.com.hk](http://www.gurkha.com.hk)



# NEWSLETTER

Number 200 for April 2014

## THE LAST MONTH IN BRIEF

This is our 200<sup>th</sup> Newsletter, something of an incredible number, and it indicates our Company is nearly 20 years old (we shall be in August). I thank all of you who have contributed to it over the years and Wesley for cheering it up by putting it in its current shape over the last year. The Newsletter is now on our website [www.gurkha.com.hk](http://www.gurkha.com.hk), at the Seatank Limited page, where we have started to post urls for articles that you may find interesting or useful about world, maritime and particularly Asian security.

I was in Nepal this month and was very pleased to be able to meet over 30 of our crew who were home on leave. It was very good to meet and be able to spend time with so many of you together and to hear how your lives at sea are going. I thank those of you who were there for coming to the party.



We publish this month a photograph of **Seven Seas Voyager**.



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

## SHIPPING COMPANIES AND SHIPS LINKED TO US

We are working with 21 shipping companies, and have 734 men and 139 women on ships, a total of 873 crew and staff under management.

We welcome:

### **Star Cruises**

Milan Lama  
Purushottam Gurung  
Laxman Tamang  
Dasharth Kumar Sharma

### **Norwegian Cruise Lines**

Dudha Bahadur Gurung  
Bijendra Pradhan  
Indra Bahadur Thapa Kaucha

### **Disney Cruise Lines**

Chandra Kumar Tumbahangphe  
Bikash Pun  
Padam Bahadur Gurung

### **Aida Cruises**

Man Bahadur Budha Magar  
Ram Bahadur Gurung

### **Inter Department Transfer**

Sanjay Madhikarmi

## HONG KONG OFFICE PROMOTIONS

I am delighted to announce the following promotions and appointments in Gurkha International (Hong Kong):

## CONGRATULATIONS



**Mr Hem Chandra Thapa** – promoted from Manager, Sales, to General Manager.

**Mr Tahir Khan** – promoted from Day Controller to Operations Executive.

**Ms Topkumari Ale** – promoted from Security Guard to Day Controller/Receptionist.

I congratulate all three on their well-deserved promotions.

We also congratulate **Surya Pun** for receiving an award from Disney.



## WORLD SECURITY

**Economics** – There is little new to report at present about the world's economy. There are some fears that there is a growing problem with debt in China that may lead to slowdown, but this is so far not accepted universally.

**Nuclear** – Negotiations continue concerning the nuclear programme in Iran. There is no news about the North Korean nuclear programme.

**The Arab World** – The disastrous civil war continues in Syria, though the Government seems to be slowing pushing



back the rebels, and is now announcing Presidential elections soon. Iraq continues to be devastated by car and other bombs in its vicious civil conflict between majority Shia and minority Sunni Muslims factions. Hundreds are killed in some of the incidents which barely get news cover in the world. Violence in Egypt and the Government's attack on the Muslim Brotherhood, which has now been forced completely underground, continue. Bahrain continues to be tense due to the oppression of the Shia population and Yemen continues to see factional violence. Libya continues to be violent and unstable.



**Palestine** – Peace talks between Israel and Palestine seem likely to end soon with no result except more bitterness on both sides.

**Afghanistan and Pakistan** – Afghanistan has successfully held a presidential election, the results of which are awaited. Taleban violence was insufficient to deter people from voting in most areas. Pakistan continues to experience acts of violence by extremist Muslim groups.

**Asia** – Relations between Japan and China have worsened as the American President has declared the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, disputed by both countries but held by Japan, to be covered by the United States –Japanese defence treaty. China has allowed its courts to begin hearing cases for compensation for Japanese war damage and atrocities in the Second World War (now seventy year ago), and this has already resulted in the Chinese seizure of a Japanese owned ship, the *Baosteel Emotion*, in Shanghai. The ship is owned by the Japanese company Mitsui O.S.K. Lines (MOL), current owners of the Japanese company which seized two Chinese ships of the Chung Wei Steamship Company in the 1930s. One of the ships hit a reef and sank in 1938 while another was destroyed by a mine in 1944. This opens a financial aspect to the Sino-Japanese quarrel, which threatens Asian trade. Japanese-South Korean relations are also bad due to disputes over the Second World War and a group of islands held by South Korea but claimed by Japan. Justin Bieber, the American singer, entered the dispute when his Japanese hosts took him unawares to the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, where Japanese war criminals remain commemorated; he has lost a lot of Asian fans as a result.

**India** – India went to the polls this month in a general election to elect the new national government, in the biggest democratic election in the world. Over 800 million voters may vote over a period of a month from April to May. So far, there are no reports of major violence or disturbance.

**Myanmar** – The census planned for the country continues to cause unrest, as the Rohingya Muslims of Rakine State have been excluded, as the Government and many in Myanmar claim that Rohingyas are illegal Bangladeshi immigrants. There are fears of renewed violence. There has also been an increase in suppression of the press which is critical of the government, and several reporters who have offended the ruling junta have been jailed.



**Thailand** - The political situation in Thailand continues to give cause for concern. The caretaker government of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, sister of the exiled former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, is unable to hold the remaining elections to legitimise the half-elected parliament, and there are fears of a judicial coup as cases have been brought against her and her party by the opposition. If the courts rule against her, her government will fall and the country's split between her supporters in the north and her opponents in the south, who are largely backed by the army, will worsen. The Muslim insurgency in southern Thailand, near the Malaysian border, continues.

**Somalia** – Piracy seems to have resumed in the waters off Somalia, with the hijacking in January of the merchant ship MV Marzooqah in the Red Sea.

**Malacca Straits** – piracy is resuming in the waters of the Malacca Straits between Malaysia and Indonesia. The Japanese tanker Naninwa Maru was boarded at 1 am at night off the coast of west Malaysia and the pirates pumped out more than half of the 5m litres of diesel carried by the tanker into two waiting vessels. They left taking three Indonesian crew members with them.



**Africa** –Islamic militants continue to cause violence in northern Nigeria. The security situation in the Central African Republic, Mali and South Sudan remains bad.

**Ukraine** – Russia appears to be destabilising Eastern Ukraine with a view to annexing it. It has infiltrated its forces into most of the towns in the eastern region of the country and is assisting local Russian ethnic resident activist groups to eject government officials and set up local administrations of their own. Ukrainian attempts to recover territory have so far failed embarrassingly. Russia is also demanding large sums of money from bankrupt Ukraine to pay for gas imports. The derisory sanctions imposed on Russia by the United States and the European Union have had no effect. The situation is grave and very dangerous.



**The Americas** – Venezuela continues to see violence with protests against the government of President Nicolás Maduro.

## GI (HK) BUSINESS

We are providing security services for 30 Hong Kong Clients and have 98 security staff employed.

Our employment agency placement service found 1 Bodyguard/Driver post position over the last month.



## HONG KONG MATTERS

**17 March:** The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stood at 3.1% in December-February, matching the November-January figure, while the underemployment rate dipped from 1.3% to 1.2%, the Census & Statistics Department announced. An increase in the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) was observed in the construction sector, while a decrease was seen in the information and communications sector. A decrease in the underemployment rate was seen in the construction sector. Total employment decreased by around 32,900 to 3,731,900. The labour force also decreased by around 33,400 to 3,844,300. The number of unemployed people, not seasonally adjusted, was 112,500 and the number of underemployed people was 46,900.

**22 April:** Overall consumer prices rose 3.9% year-on-year in March, the same as in February, the Census & Statistics Department announced. Netting out the effects of the Government's one-off relief measures, the underlying inflation rate was 3.6%, also the same as in February. Year-on-year price increases were recorded for alcoholic drinks and tobacco (7.2%); housing (5.4%); electricity, gas and water (4.8%); food excluding meals bought away from home (4.8%); meals bought away from home (4.4%); miscellaneous services (2.8%); clothing and footwear (2.5%) and transport (1.5%). A year-on-year 3% price decrease was recorded for durable goods in March.

**23 Apr:** The overall Comprehensive Social Security Assistance caseload in March dropped to 259,422, down 0.1% on February, the Social Welfare Department announced today. Low earnings cases fell 1.6% to 8,613, and unemployment cases fell 1.1% to 20,536. Ill-health cases dropped 0.2% to 25,111. Permanent-disability and old-age cases both grew by 0.1%, to 18,362 and 151,183. Single-parent cases increased 0.7% to 29,852.



## NEPAL MATTERS

**17 Mar:** The government is set to amend the existing laws to provide passports to sexual minorities mentioning their gender-identity. It has so far been issuing passports mentioning either “male” or “female”, though citizenship certificates for the sexual minorities specify their gender as “others”. “We have proposed an amendment to the Passport Regulations 2010 so that we can issue passports to sexual minorities specifying their gender identity,” said, Director General at the Department of Passport. The proposal is now under consideration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which, after due consultations, will table it before the Cabinet for its approval. Last year, the Supreme Court had directed the government to bring necessary changes in passport regulations so as to issue machine readable passports to sexual minorities mentioning their gender in accordance with their citizenship certificates. The MoFA is consulting experts and stakeholders, including the Ministry of Home Affairs, to amend the regulations, said an official.

**24 Mar:** Yogesh J Karan, Fijian ambassador to Nepal and India, inaugurated the Consulate Office of Fiji in Kathmandu with a flag hoisting ceremony. The Consulate, located at BLC Mansion in Thapathali, will look after bilateral issues between Nepal and the Republic of Fiji,

according to a statement issued by the Consulate of the Republic of Fiji. Newly appointed Honourary Consul of Fiji to Nepal Parash Shakya expressed his confidence that the Consulate will try to further enhance the existing bilateral relations between the two countries. Divided into four major divisions and 14 provinces, the total current population of Fiji is 876,000; the Republic is situated in Oceania between Hawaii and New Zealand. Fiji's current GDP is US\$ 4.218 billion with per capita income of US\$ 4,900. Bilateral relations between Nepal and Fiji were established in 1986. Addressing a ceremony, envoy Karan stressed on the prospects of mutual cooperation between Nepal and Fiji in the future.

## CONCLUSION

There are some very disturbing situations developing in the world at the moment. The situations in the Ukraine and East Asia could lead to war if not properly handled. Islamic terrorism remains a huge threat and piracy is showing signs of resuming. Now is not the time to relax. Keep vigilant!

I close by wishing you all a very happy and prosperous Myanmar and Nepal New Year!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Collett', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Nigel Collett  
Managing Director