

[News story: Defence Minister presents Nepalese President with Gurkha Annual Report](#)

The Minister for the Armed Forces – who served with the Queen’s Gurkha Engineers himself – handed the document, which provides an update on the state of the Brigade and their work, to the Right Honourable Bidya Devi Bhandari on Monday.

It shows that the Brigade currently boasts more numbers than ever before, and this year commemorated Gurkha troops reaching the summit of Everest for the first time in their history.

His visit coincided with the completion of local, provincial and parliamentary elections under a new constitution, helping to secure a more peaceful, united and democratic Nepal.

Minister for the Armed Forces, Mark Lancaster, said:

Britain has long supported Nepal’s stability and prosperity, and I am delighted to be here at such a pivotal moment in its history. I look forward to continuing the strong bond between our nations, which is underpinned by the magnificent work of our Gurkha troops.

For more than 200 years, Gurkhas have been an integral part of the British Armed Forces – fighting in the First and Second World Wars, the Falklands, Afghanistan and Iraq and winning 13 Victoria Crosses, the highest British award for gallantry.

They were also among the first on the scene when Nepal was hit by a devastating 7.8 earthquake in 2015, helping to rebuild communities and provide aid to those left homeless.

As well as President Bhandari, the Minister also met Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, Defence Minister Bhimsen Das Pradhan, and other senior military and political figures to strengthen defence and bilateral ties.

[John Redwood visits Reading University](#)

John Redwood visited Reading University on Friday and gave a talk on the constitutional and legal background to Brexit to a Politics class. He set out the two sides in the referendum, the positions taken by the three main

parties in the 2017 General election, and the result of votes on leaving and on the Customs Union in the Commons.

Press release: Nationwide waste crime investigation: two arrested in London

In a joint operation by the [Environment Agency](#), [the Metropolitan Police Service \(MPS\)](#) and Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN), a 29-year-old man and a 46-year-old man were arrested for questioning in relation to waste crime, fraud and money laundering offences across the country.

The pair are believed to be involved in organised crime across the country, including in Lancashire, Middlesbrough, Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire and Kent.

Organised crime

Both men were arrested at their homes in Chelsea and Hampstead Heath. The properties were also searched as part of the investigation.

Environment Agency team leader Mark Rumble said:

These arrests are part of extremely serious organised crime activity, which involves the dumping of illegal waste, fraud and money laundering across the country. We are working closely with partners to share intelligence on illegal waste activity to ensure the culprits are brought to justice.

We need everyone to play their part in the fight against waste crime – an issue that blights communities and drains valuable resources. Property and landowners are encouraged to be vigilant and report suspicious illegal activity to the Environment Agency.

Multiple agencies involved

The London GAIN co-ordinator said:

Working in partnership, sharing intelligence lawfully and efficiently, the GAIN aims to ensure that government agencies along with law enforcement will help reduce serious and organised crime, in the most cost effective way. This action is an excellent example of adopting a multi-agency approach.

Detective inspector Tim Court, Metropolitan Police Organised Crime Command, said:

Organised crime has many forms but always exploits and undermines individuals, businesses and society for financial gain. It is critical that different parts of the government work together to tackle organised crime, holding offenders to account and removing the financial incentive for their offending. Today's activity has proven that the MPS and organised crime advisors will take action against those involved in any organised criminal activity in order to protect London.

To report illegal waste activity, please call the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to [Crimestoppers](#) on 0800 555 111.

Advice to land and property owners

- Check any empty land and property regularly, and make sure it is secure.
- Carry out rigorous checks on prospective and new tenants. Land and property owners have a responsibility to ensure anyone leasing their land/property complies with regulations. They may be committing an offence by allowing waste to be stored on land or property without the relevant permissions, leaving them liable to prosecution.
- Be vigilant and report any unusual behaviour.

[Press release: Anglers caught illegally fishing to pay £1,700](#)

On 12 February 2018, at Guildford Magistrates court, Lee Grant, 38, of Eton Road, Southsea, and James Black, 29, of Heathyfields Road, Farnham were each fined £660 for fishing without a fishing licence, with costs of £127 and a victim surcharge of £66 imposed after a prosecution by the Environment Agency. The total penalty was £853 each.

Magistrates heard that on 23 September 2017, an Environment Agency enforcement officer found Lee and James fishing at Badshot Lea Ponds, Badshot Lea. A valid fishing licence is required to fish all waters in England. Neither were able to produce a valid fishing licence and were reported for that offence.

James and Lee were each convicted in their absence.

David Brain, of the Environment Agency said

The majority of anglers fish legally and purchase a fishing licence. We invest the money from fishing licences back into fisheries improvements, fish stocks and fishing, this is essential for the future of the sport.

The minority of anglers that fail to buy a fishing licence are cheating their fellow anglers and the future of the sport. In addition fishing licence cheats risk a criminal conviction, a significant fine and could lose their fishing equipment.

During 2015-16 the Environment Agency checked more than 62,000 fishing licences and prosecuted more than 1,900 anglers for rod and line offences resulting in fines and costs in excess of £500,000.

Anyone witnessing illegal fishing incidents in progress can report it directly to the Environment Agency hotline, 0800 80 70 60. Information on illegal fishing and environmental crime can also be reported anonymously to Crime stoppers on 0800 555 111.

You need a valid Environment Agency Fishing Licence if you are aged 12 or over and fish for salmon, trout, freshwater fish, smelt or eel in England.

Junior fishing licences (aged 12-16) are now free, but you must still get a fishing licence online at www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence.

Notes:

Try fishing. There are lots of events for spring and summer 2018 listed at www.getfishing.org.uk.

All media enquiries: 0800 141 2743.
Please ask for the duty press officer.

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National Geoscience Data Centre **awarded the CoreTrustSeal** **Accreditation**

The National Geoscience Data Centre (NGDC) is now certified as a trustworthy

repository and has been awarded the CoreTrustSeal accreditation by the joint World Data Systems (WDS) and Data Seal of Approval (DSA) repository certification bodies.