



Newsletter

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We publish this month a photograph of Thomson Discovery of *Columbia Cruise Services Ltd.*

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

We Welcome

Norwegian Cruise Lines
 Dev Bahadur Gurung
 Kusum Thapa
 Man Prasad Roka Magar
 Bishal Gurung
 Uda Ram Vishnoi

Carnival UK
 Bimala Gurung
 Raju Kalpit Gurung
 Raju Chhetri

Columbia Ship Management
 Bhuwan Moktan

I shall be in Myanmar at the start of next month recruiting for NCL. It is good to see that that Company has decided to resume recruiting after a gap of about a year.

SHIPPING COMPANIES AND SHIPS LINKED TO US

We are working with 21 shipping companies, and have 734 men and 170 women on ships, a total of 904 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

The world's economy seems to be on a slight upturn at the moment. There are no major worries this month.

Nuclear

Tension has risen markedly in and around Korea, as North Korea has continue to test missiles and threatened to conduct underground nuclear tests. The United States of America is attempting to prevent this with the help of China, but North Korea s so far not showing signs of backing down. US naval task forces are on their way to the seas off Korea, and both China and Russia have reinforced their border areas with North Korea.

Europe

Tensions between Russia and NATO countries remain high. NATO continues to deploy forces to member countries bordering Russia: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania. Russian ships and planes continue to test the seas and air-space NATO countries, including Canada in the Arctic Circle. A Muslim militant used a hijacked lorry to mow down children in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, killing four and injuring fifteen. Another Islamic militant gunman killed a French policemen and wounded others in an incident in the Champs Élysées in central Paris.



The truck attack in Stockholm.

The Middle East and the Arab World

Syrian aircraft launched chemical attacks on the rebel-held town of Khan Sheikhoun in north-western Syria, killing over 80 people and injuring many hundreds. The United States of America launched cruise missile strikes on Shayrat Airfield, from which the Syrian planes operated, causing an immediate crisis in US-Russian relations. Iraqi forces have re-captured most of Mosul, which they lost to ISIS over two years before. The area of the ISIS 'caliphate' in Iraq and Turkey is being squeezed from by all sides.

Conflict continues in Libya and Yemen.

Afghanistan and Pakistan

The security situation in Afghanistan remains grave, but that in Pakistan now gives less cause for concern.

Somalia

There have been increasing reports of Somali piracy as foreign navies gradually exit the taskforce protecting merchant ships in the Indian Ocean. Fighting continues in the country between the government and its foreign allies and Islamic militant al-Shabaab fighters.

Asia

Tension continues in both the South China Sea and the Sea of Japan around islands claimed by China.

The Philippine military has resumed operations against left wing and Muslim guerrillas in the southern islands of the archipelago.



President Donald Trump decided to launch a military strike against the Syrian regime responsible for the horrific attack.



A Philippine military transport plane on Pag-asa Island, also known as Thitu, in the South China Sea.

Thailand and Malaysia

The Muslim insurgency in southern Thailand, near the Malaysian border, continues, and bombs exploded in many southern sites this month.

Palestine

There is no news at present.

Africa

Nigerian forces continue to attack Boko Haram Islamic terrorists in the north of the country. Civil conflict continues in South Sudan.

Myanmar

Fighting continues in Shan State between the army and several local militia.

The Malacca Straits

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

India

Kashmir remains disturbed.



Chadian Soldiers conduct a beach infiltration training exercise as part of Flintlock 17 March 8 in N'Djamena, Chad.

The Americas

Venezuela is facing mounting civil unrest as the left-wing government of President Nicolás Maduro attempts to prevent its overthrow by a popular revolt.



Thousands of white-clad protesters march in the Venezuelan capital, Caracas, following a week of deadly protests.



Liang Sheng-yueh in hospital in Kathmandu after being rescued from a remote mountainside.

Nepal News

Trekker found after surviving 47 days lost in Himalayas

27 Apr- Two Taiwanese trekkers who went missing in a remote area of Nepal seven weeks ago have been found – but only one survived the ordeal.

Liu Chen-chun, 19, died just three days before the rescue team located the couple in the Dhading region of central Nepal, but her boyfriend managed to survive despite running out of food.

Liang Sheng-yueh, 21, is being treated in hospital in Kathmandu where he was airlifted after being rescued from a valley 2,600 metres (8,500ft) above sea level, where the couple had been trapped for more than a month.

“He was sleeping when we found them,”

said one of the rescuers, Madhav Basnyat.

“He woke up after he heard us. We were very surprised to find him alive. He said that the girl died three days earlier.”

Basnyat said the couple, who were found near Tipling in northern Dhading, had followed a river downhill in the hope of finding a village but became stuck when they reached the edge of a waterfall and were unable to climb back up.

“They had been trapped there for 47 days when we reached,” he said.

Speaking haltingly as he sipped hot soup, Liang told AFP it had been “very cold” on the mountain, and difficult to sleep.

Doctors treating Liang said he had lost

30kg and maggots had infested his right leg.

“When he was brought in he had maggots and was starved because he hadn’t eaten,” said his doctor, Sanjay Karki.

The couple survived on potatoes and noodles until they ran out of food and had to keep going on water alone.

Liang’s father had travelled to Nepal after the couple went missing and chartered a helicopter to search for them.

Spring is peak season in Nepal’s snow-capped peaks, a popular hiking destination with about 150,000 trekkers visiting the Annapurna and Everest regions every year.



The annual Nepal Day Parade makes its way down the Pearl Street Mall on Sunday.

Local Nepalese community celebrates Nepal New Year with Boulder parade

16 Apr- Waving both distinctive, double-triangle Nepalese flags and American flags, the local Nepalese community celebrated the Nepali New Year this afternoon with a parade through downtown Boulder.

“It’s just wonderful,” said Boulder’s Narayan Shrestha, who founded the annual Nepal parade. “It’s a way to keep our culture no matter where we are. You don’t want to forget your roots, and we want people to know who we are.”

Since 2004, Boulder has declared a Sunday in April each year as Nepal Day, when the community also celebrates the Nepal New Year. According to the lunar calendar used in the Himalayan nation, it’s year 2074.

Before the parade, sponsored by Rocky Mountain Friends of Nepal, people representing several generations gathered at the bandshell in Central Park, listening to performers and speakers and connecting with friends.

Women wore brightly colored and often ornately decorated silk saris, while many men wore traditional patterned caps and tunics. Wearing a “devil” mask, a man also performed the country’s Lakhe dance to

scare away evil spirits.

“It’s a very rich, beautiful culture,” said Boulder’s Surendra Shrestha. “We want to share it with Boulder. Boulder welcomes the Nepalese.”

His wife, Ruby Shrestha, said the parade is one of her few opportunities to wear her traditional red sari.

“It signifies happiness,” she said. “Many married women wear red for good luck.”

Immigrants from Nepal first began settling in Boulder in the 1970s. Starting in 2008, the U.S. government began resettling Nepali-speaking Bhutanese from refugee camps, bringing in a new wave of immigrants.

The U.S. Census in 2010 recorded 2,751 Nepalese immigrants living in Colorado.

They came here, several local Nepalese immigrants said, because the mountains are a reminder of home and many people in the area have visited Nepal as tourists and appreciate their culture.

For the younger generation, the parade is a way to connect to what’s often an unfamiliar country and way of life.

Lasata Shrestha, a 14-year-old from Longmont, left Nepal when she was 14 months old, returning for the first time in 2015.

“It was culture shock,” she said. “It was so different there.”

The parade, she added, is an opportunity to “represent our country.”

Malaya Bhattarai, of Thornton, said he came here to attend college, then decided to stay.

Like many of the other Nepalese people who settled here, he said, he wanted a better future for himself and his family.

“Nepal is a third world country,” he said. “The better living standard here is the biggest driver.”

But with a 7-year-old son and 3-year-old daughter who were born here, he also wants them to learn about their roots.

“Every chance, we get together for these holidays,” he said. “We want to instill in them that we are Nepali. Today, we are here to celebrate a little bit of Nepali pride.”



Volunteers unload relief supplies after the 2015 earthquake. NGOs say the approvals system has become more difficult to negotiate since the quake

Aid agencies accuse Nepal government of hampering their work

19 Apr- International aid agencies in Nepal are paying the government hundreds of thousands of dollars in fees, and having to hand out stipends to bureaucrats, to get their projects approved and monitored. They accuse the government of hampering their work, citing year-long delays before aid projects are approved.

The country's public officials can earn \$2,500 (£1,996) a year just for attending meetings to approve aid projects, said aid groups, in a country where the prime minister's salary is \$750 a month.

Nepal is still struggling to recover from the 2015 earthquake, which killed almost 9,000 people. Tens of thousands of earthquake victims are still living in temporary shelters, while less than 1% have received more than the first tranche of compensation from the government of \$475.

Fees to secure project approval and cover monitoring and evaluation range from \$6,000 to \$15,000 per project – which can be a sizeable slice of the project's budget.

"Governments all over the world charge service fees but it's very clear and everyone is charged the same amount. Here it's a bit more opaque," said one NGO director, speaking on condition of anonymity. "When you have an environment that is opaque, it's a lot easier for people who want to abuse that system to do so."

The director of another organisation said some agencies are pressured to host meetings attended by officials in

upmarket hotels, with dinner and drinks included. "I feel so strongly that our resources have to get to people in need ... and to see this money leaking out the edges is so unethical," the director said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Aid workers who spoke to the Guardian said they are repeatedly asked for bribes. They also face demands for "donations" from political parties and pressure to partner with Nepalese charities favoured by bureaucrats and politicians.

"We were told we had to pay bribes and exactly how to pay those bribes," said one. "Not only do I have to pay each of them a stipend, but I also have to pay their drivers. One of them couldn't attend the meeting so he asked me to bring him the meeting minutes to sign, along with the stipend. If they turn around and refuse to come, you're non-compliant, so what do you do?"

Aid organisations in Nepal must convene multiple meetings with central and district level bureaucrats and up to 11 government ministries. According to a government directive, these meetings should take place out of office hours, which allows government employees to demand payments to attend.

Dilli Prasad Bhatta, the head of the Social Welfare Council (SWC), the government body that oversees the work of local and international NGOs, insisted aid groups are not required to pay. "It's not necessary ... [but] if someone offers you something, you can't reject it," he said.

NGOs said the approvals system has

existed for decades, but has become more difficult to negotiate following the earthquake, when 100 new agencies came to work in the country, bringing an influx of money and people.

A consultant working for a major donor agency said the practice is unsurprising. "They see the conditions in which we [foreigners] live, and they think, 'Where's my share?'"

Prabin Manandhar, chairman of the Association of International NGOs, which represents 145 Ingos in Nepal, said the project approvals process is designed to exercise control over civil society organisations and create opportunities for political patronage. "Nepal has had 22 governments in the past 26 years ... Creating many layers [of bureaucracy] gives space to all the different political parties and creates loopholes for the possible misuse of resources," said Manandhar.

Bhatta denied his organisation was to blame for delays. "We do the approval much faster than before, but for a few organisations we may need some justification [for their projects]."

The consultant for a donor agency said that in some cases local bureaucrats are right to question Ingos' activities. "Why do we get to complain about lengthy approval processes? They can't just let us run amok," the consultant said. "You'll find the district government officials often have quite good instincts around fairness ... The coordination of this is a nightmare for them.



Hong Kong News

Commuters left stranded as power failure stops MTR services on Kwun Tong Line

10 Apr- Road traffic in east Kowloon was plunged into chaos on Monday night after a power fault halted MTR trains for 2-1/2 hours, forcing stranded passengers to walk along rail tracks in the dark and line up with hundreds of others for shuttle buses or other public transport.

The standstill began at about 6pm when a power failure suspended services in both directions at eight stations along the Kwun Tong Line between Kowloon Tong and Kwun Tong. The problem was not rectified until 8.25pm.

MTR operations director Adi Lau Tin-shing said the shutdown was caused by a device on an overhead cable on the track linking the Kowloon Bay depot and Choi Hung station. The corporation apologised for the chaos.

A spokesman for the Transport and Housing Bureau said the MTR should submit a report on the incident to the Transport Department and Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, which would report to the bureau if needed.

During the disruption, the frequency of

trains running between Kowloon Tong and Whampoa was lengthened to 10 minutes, while services between Tiu Keng Leng and Kwun Tong were running at 12-minute intervals.

MTR staff at the eight affected stations shut the entrances and turnstiles, leaving impatient commuters waiting outside.

Long queues for shuttle buses and other public transport tailed back outside the stations while road traffic was thrown into chaos as commuters sought out alternative ways to reach their destinations. Northbound traffic along Princess Margaret Road near Mong Kok was severely congested while westbound traffic along Kwun Tong Road was seriously jammed up to 8.45pm.

Three passengers were sent from Kowloon Bay station to United Christian Hospital while five were sent there from Choi Hung station after being overwhelmed in stuffy trains after the air conditioning shut down.

At Choi Hung station, passengers were forced to leave a stranded train inside a tunnel and walk along the track after the electricity supply was cut.

Lau said passengers on a train which had stopped inside a tunnel 50 metres from Choi Hung station were evacuated at around 6.50pm, 50 minutes after the malfunction.

Dozens of other passengers gathered at the customer service centre, many asking for a certificate to prove to employers that their journeys had been involuntarily delayed.

A woman surnamed Chan who was heading to work in Wong Tai Sin said: "Now I'm definitely late. Can't the MTR do a better job and provide more stable services?"

Hours before the evening chaos, a train with failing equipment on the Tung Chung Line disrupted services to Lantau for over an hour from about 9.30am.

That disruption caused trains to operate at 12-minute intervals between Hong Kong and Sunny Bay station – the interchange for the Disneyland Resort Line.

At about 10.35am, the MTR said the faulty train had been removed from the line.

Bike-sharing service offering rental anywhere through mobile app rides into Hong Kong

19 Apr- Hong Kong is finally jumping on the bandwagon – or bicycle – of the bike-sharing trend which has taken the mainland by storm. Starting Thursday, cyclists can use more than 400 smart bicycles in the New Territories by simply scanning a QR code.

Start-up Gobee.bike, founded by Hong Kong-based entrepreneur Raphael Cohen two months ago, aims to offer busy people an easy option for short distance commute. The service works by allowing cyclists to rent and drop off bicycles around the city.

Following the success stories of mainland counterparts such as Ofo, which runs in 50 Chinese cities and has a market value that jumped to US\$2 billion (HK\$15.5 billion) in less than two years, Cohen said Hong Kong also had a huge potential for the business model.

“We are here to make transportation

convenient and affordable,” he added. A ride on a Gobee bike will cost HK\$5 per half hour. Currently, bike rentals for leisure purposes cost HK\$40 per day in Tai Po.

Cohen said that there was a great demand for bike-sharing in a city like Hong Kong, where people walked considerable distances between public transport stops. Bicycles would ideally fill this gap.

To rent a Gobee bike powered by solar panels, users will need to log into a mobile application, register their credit card and pay a deposit of HK\$399. An active map will locate the nearest bicycle which can be unlocked by scanning a QR code.

Currently, the mobile application is only accessible on Android devices, but an iOS platform for Apple users will be launched next week.

The company has 400 bikes along tracks in Sha Tin, Tai Po, and Ma On Shan. The number is expected to reach 1,000 by the end of the week, and 20,000 by July. Unlike existing bike rental services in Hong Kong, cyclists riding Gobee bikes

will not have to pick up and drop their bicycles at designated locations.

“Technically, you can park them anywhere as long as it is legal,” Cohen said, referring to public racks across the city.

He said the service could also be a solution for people who had very limited living space to store their own bikes.

But commuters on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon – two regions which are more crowded – will only have access to the service by the end of the year, partly due to the lack of cycling tracks and supporting infrastructure.

The Hong Kong Cycling Alliance welcomed the launch of the first bike-sharing service in the city and expected high usage rates.

“App-based bike sharing is about to conquer the world, and it’s fantastic that Hong Kong has this new programme ahead of so many other places,” Martin Turner, chairman of the alliance, said.



A Gobee.bike staff member demonstrates the use of QR code scanning on the mobile phone to unlock the service.

Conclusion

The slow fall of the ISIS/ISIL 'caliphate' in Iraq and Syria is likely to cause a series of terrorist outrages across the world as ISIS/ISIL lashes out to revenge its loss and as its fighters disperse back to their homes and elsewhere. We can, sadly, expect to see more violence over the next few years from that source. We have our work cut out for us to protect those in our charge. As always, we need to remain vigilant.



Nigel Collett
Managing Director



Rugby Seven in Kong Kong.