

# GURKHA INTERNATIONAL GROUP

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

## Newsletter

Issue 282 – February 2021



### Shipping Companies And Ships Linked To Us

We are working with 12 shipping companies, and have 462 men and 66 women, a total of 528 crew and staff under management.

We managed to send only two crew back to sea this month, one to Cunard and one to Disney.

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### GI (HK) Business

We are providing security services for 29 Hong Kong Clients and have 89 security staff employed.

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### Editor of Newsletter

❖ *Mamta Gurung*



**QUEEN MARY 2**

We publish this month a photograph of The Queen Mary 2 of Cunard Cruise Line.

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

The delays to sailing continue, I very much regret, and it seems that we are looking now at the late summer or autumn before cruising really kicks off again. So we must wait. I know very well how hard this is for everyone. You all are not being paid, and our Companies are clinging on with no income. It is, as the well-known saying has it, always darkest before the dawn.

We will get through this and we are not giving up. We intend to be there when things get better and we will get you back to work. It is very good to see vaccines being rolled out in Nepal and Hong Kong, and that means that, when the ships are ready to sail, we should all be vaccinated and ready to go.

Until then, we grit our teeth and stick with it.

# ISO ACCREDITATION

We have been using the quiet period before we resume normal working to examine and improve our office work procedures in both Gurkha International Manpower Services Ltd. and Gurkha International (Hong Kong) Ltd.

We applied to the British Standards Institute in Hong Kong to audit us, and we have now been through the first and second rounds of inspection. We have been told that we have passed both, and we shall hear within six weeks if we have been accredited for the ISO9001 and ISO45001 standards, and then can use the BSI logo.

We shall let you know in due course if we have been judged to qualify.

# Covid 19 Protocol for return to Ship

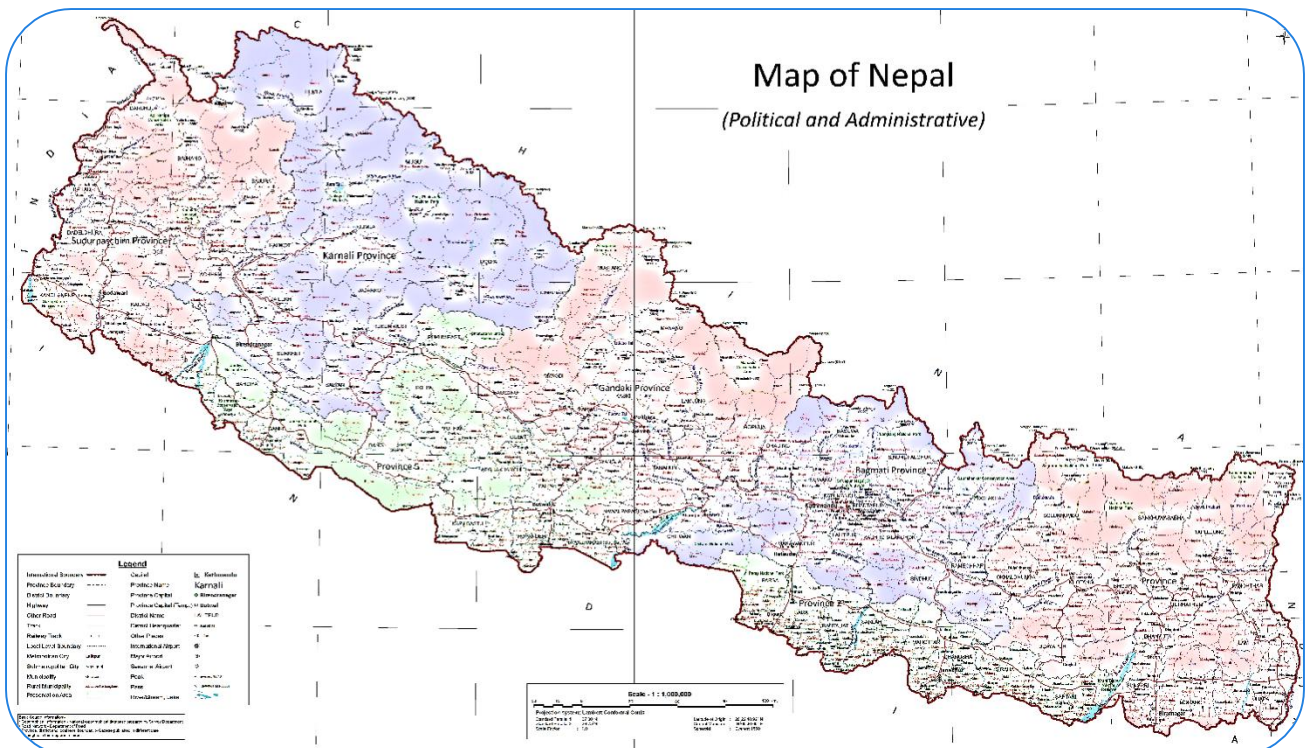
We repeat here our report on the protocols we have put in place to get you back to sea. These are important, as infections during joining journeys will lead to return home. Each shipping company has published its own protocols for crew joining their ships, and they will be briefed to you separately when necessary. These will cover action you must take in Nepal and on arrival at the port. Please take these very seriously and follow them carefully.

We have instituted our own protocols at to add to what is required:

- a) Your PCR test will be taken inside the 72 hour period before departure; we shall book the test on the day before flight whenever we can, so that we get a result in 8-10 hours.
- b) You will be called for the test individually and will be asked not to travel to the clinic with others of our crew.
- c) After the test, you will be driven alone by our PCR-negative and PPE wearing driver to a quarantine hotel and remain there overnight, staying there in isolation.
- d) You will be driven alone to the airport by our PCR-negative and PPE wearing driver.
- e) You will be provided with a full set of Chinese PPE, including gloves. Please wear this for the flight.
- f) In the airport, we know that social distancing is difficult, so be careful to stay apart from people where you can, and when you touch anything (for instance passport and ticket) touched by others, or any surface, use the sanitizer you will be given to clean your gloves and any exposed skin.
- g) In the aircraft, wear the PPE and keep away from others as much as you can. Use the sanitizer after touching anything.

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# World Security

Conflict and many terrorist acts continue in Iraq, Afghanistan, in the border lands of Pakistan, and in Syria, Yemen, Libya, Somalia and South Sudan.

In Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, a car bomb killed five and wounded scores of people near an airport hotel. The Islamic extremist organization Al-Shabaab group claimed responsibility.

Violence is growing again in Iraq. In February, nine militant attacks killed at least nine Iraqis and wounded ten others. Between February 12 -22, operations by Iraqi security forces and the International Coalition killed at least 20 ISIS members, and left three dead and five injured among Iraqi forces. Three attacks involving a total of 21 rockets struck areas in Erbil, the Balad Air Base, and the Green Zone. The Erbil attack, claimed by a group called Saraya Awliya al-Dam, originated from an area just outside Erbil City. It killed a foreign civilian contractor and injured several U.S. service members and Iraqi civilians. In February, 20 IEDs and two remnants of war killed at least four Iraqis and wounded 15 others. Eleven of the bombings targeted local contractors working for the International Coalition, and businesses in Baghdad. Five attacks, including small arms fire and an attempted bombing, targeted activists in Dhi-Qar and Wasit. Escalating Turkish military operations in the Kurdistan region killed more than 50 PKK fighters and at least three Turkish soldiers. On February 18, NATO Defense Ministers voted to increase the number of NATO personnel in Iraq from 500 to 4,000 to support Iraqi forces in the fight against ISIS.

Tension continues between Russia and the West and between China and the states bordering the South China Sea and the Sea of Japan over islands disputed there. Also between China and India over their border regions. Relations between China and the USA remain poor; US policy towards China under the Biden regime is not yet clear.

Terrorism continues in parts of the Philippines, southern Thailand, and much of north and central Africa, where Islamic terrorist groups connected with ISIS plague a series of countries including Nigeria, Niger, Mali, the Central African Republic, Chad, Burkina Faso and Cameroon. Press reports say that the Covid-19 epidemic has given ISIS a breathing space to regroup and extend its activities in Africa.

# Nepal News

## 700,000 apply for prime minister employment scheme that aims to employ 200,000

Social Protection : Constitutional Rights

Guaranteed Employment Skill Development Unemployed Allowance

**Prime Minister Employment Programme**

268 JOB VACANCIES ALL OVER NEPAL | ALL PROVINCE JOBS

APPLY BEFORE 23 MARCH

Government of Nepal  
**Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security**  
Singha Darbar, Kathmandu

More than 700,000 have applied for employment opportunities under the Prime Minister Employment Programme, which provides a minimum 100 days of wage-employment for jobless citizens. This reflects the unemployment scenario in the country in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic.

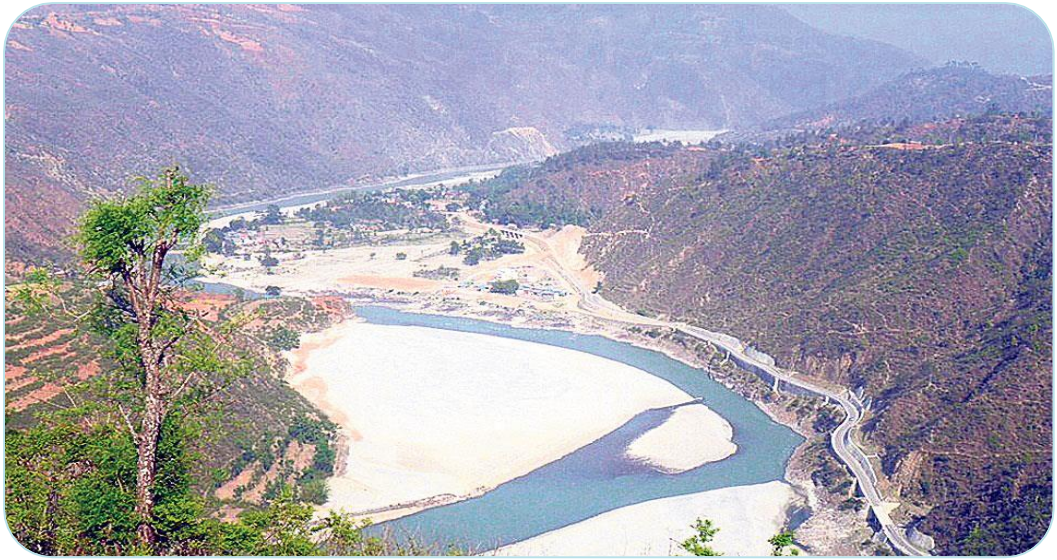
A whopping 743,160 unemployed citizens registered under the programme for accessing wage-employment in the current fiscal year. The number is double the number of candidates who applied for similar opportunities in the fiscal year 2019-20. Last fiscal year, a total of 370,734 were registered for temporary jobs in their respective local units.

According to experts, such a high number of job-seekers shows the shortage of jobs in the country. The situation was further exacerbated by the pandemic. “The Covid-19 pandemic shook the foundation of employment in the country the way the earthquakes had rattled the ground,” Ganesh Gurung, a labour and foreign employment expert, told the Post.

“While the rich could stay home for several months with all their luxuries, the pandemic affected those at the lower strata of the society. Daily wage workers and those without savings were affected the most.”

According to Gurung, although Nepali workers, who had returned from India and other labour destinations in the Persian Gulf and Malaysia, have started migrating again, such a large number of people still applying for temporary opportunities shows that people desperately need work within the country.

# Chinese firm wins Rs10 billion contract to build Sunkoshi Marin diversion tunnel



China Overseas Engineering Co won the contract for the construction of a tunnel for the Sunkoshi Marin Diversion Multipurpose Project by offering to do it for Rs10.05 billion, nearly Rs6 billion less than the price quoted by the government.

The proposed 13.3-km diversion tunnel will redirect part of the flow of the Sunkoshi River to the Bagmati River to irrigate farmlands in the Tarai. The construction site is located in Sindhuli district, about 120 km southeast of Kathmandu on BP Highway.

“We have issued a letter of intent to the lowest bidder. We are expecting to sign the contract next week,” said project chief Sushil Acharya. “Work will begin immediately after the contract is signed.” The tunnel has to be completed in 27 months, said Acharya.

According to Acharya, the Chinese company will use a tunnel boring machine to cut through the hills, which will make Sunkoshi Marin the second project after the Bheri Babai Diversion Multipurpose Project in Surkhet to do so.

The 12.2-km Bheri Babai tunnel was also constructed by China Overseas Engineering Co to irrigate 51,000 hectares of land in Banke and Bardia districts in south-western Nepal.

The Rs83.51 billion Sunkoshi Marin project located in Sindhuli and Ramechhap districts envisages taking water from the Sunkoshi River and directing it into the Bagmati River to irrigate 122,000 hectares of farmland in Rautahat, Dhanusha, Mahottari, Sarlahi and Bara districts in the southern plains.

According to project officials, the irrigation scheme is estimated to cost Rs37.3 billion and the hydropower component Rs46.19 billion. The tunnel is part of the irrigation component.

The water from the Sunkoshi will first be diverted to the Marin River in Sindhuli through the 7-metre-wide tunnel before being channelled into the Bagmati River. The water will then be collected at a barrage and distributed to irrigate fields.

Source: [The Kathmandu Post](#)

# Hong Kong News

## Hong Kong minister promises to strive for a balanced development of Lantau Island



Hong Kong's development minister has promised to strive for a balanced expansion of the city's biggest outlying island of Lantau, with an aim to preserve the natural beauty of its southern region while pushing for more growth in the north.

In a piece on his official blog on Sunday, Michael Wong Wai-lun provided an update on the progress of a green living project on the island, by the Sustainable Lantau Office and the Lantau Conservation Fund.

While a reclamation project has been planned to expand Tung Chung, Wong said land would also be reserved for a 4.9km-long promenade in the new town extension, along its eastern and western flanks.

"An eco-shoreline will also be built to boost marine biodiversity by creating natural habitats for marine creatures," Wong wrote.

"A park is to be built at Tung Chung River to improve the living environment and promote water-friendly culture as well as eco-education," he added. The government announced the Sustainable Lantau Blueprint in 2017, with the principle of "development in the north, conservation for the south".

Based on the blueprint, the Sustainable Lantau Office worked out the Lantau Conservation and Recreation Master Plan in December last year, under which five themed projects are being planned.



## HK\$5,000 vouchers scheme could be changed to improve flexibility for residents, finance chief says



Changes such as varying the number of instalments could be made to Hong Kong's HK\$5,000 vouchers scheme to enhance flexibility for residents and spur consumption, according to the finance minister.

Paul Chan Mo-po said the government was listening to public opinion and considering adjustments to the implementation of the digital scheme, which was unveiled in this week's annual budget and would hand spending coupons to every adult resident in Hong Kong.

The initial plan, according to Chan, was to disburse the sum in five monthly instalments with recipients required to spend the entire HK\$1,000 before receiving the next tranche. But he revealed on Saturday the specifics of the scheme's operation were not set in stone.

"There is room for fine-tuning the implementation details, including the number of instalments ... some people said they will use it to buy daily necessities, while others may use it to replace daily expenses. The government will try to set a wider range of scope for consumption," he told a radio programme.

"If we distribute a big amount of money in one-go, it might only benefit some big companies or merchants."

The government would also elaborate before implementation on what stored-value payment tools could be used for the scheme, Chan said. The minister added he would urge payment card provider Octopus to offer small retailers discounts for installing its system.

"It would definitely be better if there is a wider scope of consumption, and with fewer restrictions," he continued.

Chan earlier said he wanted to make the digital vouchers available to as many consumers and merchants as possible so they could be spent at wet markets, fast food outlets, restaurants, and shops both physical and online, while making clear they could not be used with overseas retailers.

# Conclusion

I send you all my hopes that you and your families may receive the vaccination for Covid-19 soon and that you all remain free of the virus. Keep social distancing, stay safe, and survive till the dawn comes!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Collett', written in a cursive style.

Nigel A. Collett  
Managing Director