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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Marcos asked to probe dredging activities in Occidental Mindoro

THE Magsasaka party-list through its national chairman, Revor Lasay, wrote a letter to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. requesting immediate action on the petition of farmers and fishermen in Occidental Mindoro.

In a letter dated May 19, 2023, Lasay pleaded for immediate action in response to the reported negative effects of dredging operations on several rivers in the province.

The process of dredging involves clearing sand and other material from the bottom of lakes, rivers, harbors, and other bodies of water.

Lasay said that on the second week of April 2023, leaders of marginal sectors from Occidental Mindoro approached the Magsasaka party-list for assistance in taking action on the alleged negative effects of dredging activities which were fronted by the "company of Mr. Roberto Gerard Nazal Jr.," who happened to be the party-list's first nominee in the May 2022

elections.

"The dredging activity is the excavation of aggregates in the river," Lasay told *The Manila Times* on Saturday.

Lasay, citing DENR-Mimaropa Regional Executive Director Lormelyn Claudio, signed a memorandum of agreement (MoA) with the owner and operator of three registered companies that were eligible to execute large-scale flood control dredging and desilting activities in Occidental Mindoro.

The MoA was signed in response to Administrative Order 2020-12, which calls for the rehabilitation and dredging of heavily silted river systems throughout the province.

The petition signed by the leaders of Occidental Mindoro's marginal sectors called for a background and credentials check on the contractors in charge of the dredging activities, where Nazal is also linked with the Magsasaka party-list.

"We believe that the party-list represents our sector; however, it appears that the Magsasaka party-list's representative is a contractor and businessman," the petition said.

"His company's dredging activity could have a severe impact on the livelihood of farmers and fishermen in our province," it added.

Lasay brought the issue before the Magsasaka party-list national assembly on May 3, 2023. As a result, the assembly passed Resolution 2-23, "nullifying and invalidating the designation of Roberto Gerard L. Nazal Jr., et al., as nominees of the Magsasaka party-list for the 2022 national and local elections and electing a new set of nominees in place of the aforementioned individual."

The Times attempted to clarify the situation by reaching out to the Nazal camp via social media and email, but no one has answered as of press time. **MOISES CRUZ**

Mindoro oil spill cleanup in final phase

By ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS

The Presidential Communications Office (PCO) said it might take 30 more days before the government can finish the last phase of the cleaning operations on the oil spill in Oriental Mindoro.

Communications Secretary Cheloy Garafil said this after the Dynamic Support Vessel (DSV) Fire Opal that would extract the remaining oil from the sunken MT Princess Empress arrived at the Subic Bay Freeport Zone last Friday.

In a statement, Garafil, citing various reports from government officials, said DSV Fire Opal would finish the last phase of the cleanup which may last for a month.

"The DSV Fire Opal will extract and transfer oily waste to a tanker and then dispose of the collected oil. Officials said the siphoning operations may last up to 30 days," she said.

Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Commandant Admiral Artemio Abu said they expect to finish the extraction in 20 to 30 days. President Marcos hoped the cleanup would be done in under four months.

In a separate report, Office of Civil Defense (OCD) Administrator Ariel Nepomuceno said the last phase would last a month.

"The operations will last for 20 to 30 days if weather conditions are favorable, meaning the remaining

oil from the sunken vessel will be retrieved," he said.

The vessel was expected to arrive in Batangas yesterday. It will then proceed to the designated mission area.

The DSV was chartered by the Malayan Towage & Salvage Corp. and contracted by the Protection & Indemnity Insurance Club (P&I).

In an update to Marcos earlier this month, Defense Senior Undersecretary Carlito Galvez Jr. reported that, of the 74.71 kilometers of affected coastline, 62.95 kilometers, or 84.26 percent, have already been cleaned up as of May 10.

Galvez said the OCD recorded a total of 6,801 liters of oil waste and 300,603.60 liters of oil-contaminated waste that have been collected through the efforts of various agencies and organizations.



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF FISHERIES AND AQUATIC RESOURCES

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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Fishing ban in 3 more Oriental Mindoro areas lifted

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) on Monday recommended the lifting of the fishing ban in the municipalities of Bansud, Calapan and Gloria in Oriental Mindoro three months after the sinking of motor tanker *Princess Empress*.

The BFAR retained the ban in Pola, Pinamalayan and Naujan due to traces of oil that have yet to be removed from these areas.

"Latest analyses of the BFAR showed that traces of oil and grease in water samples slightly increased in all sampling sites in comparison to the baseline data, but these were still within the standard limit or suited for boating and fishing activities as well as fish propagation," the BFAR said in its latest bulletin.

Earlier, the BFAR lifted the fishing ban in Baco, Bongabong, Bulalacao, Mansalay,

Puerto Galera, Roxas and San Teodoro.

It said the trend indicated that the amount of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons present in seafood sourced from Oriental Mindoro had stabilized to a much lower concentration.

"The waters of Bansud, Calapan and Gloria are now well within the standards for fishing activities," the bureau said.

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OIL SPILL AFTERMATH

FISHING NOW SAFE IN CALAPAN, 2 OTHER MINDORO TOWNS

By Jordeene B. Lagare
@jordeenelagare

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) now finds the waters of Calapan and two other towns in Oriental Mindoro safe for fishing after the oil spill from the tanker that sank in February.

"Based on the available data thus far, the fishing waters of Calapan, Bansud and Gloria are now well within the standards for fishing activities," said BFAR in a statement on Monday.

The BFAR said the fishing waters of Bongabong, Bulalacao, Mansalay, Roxas, Baco, Puerto Galera and San Teodoro remained safe for fishing activities.

However, the agency still recommends a fishing ban in Pola, Pinamalayan and Naujan, citing "risk of contamination from traces of oil that have yet to be removed from these areas."

Latest analysis from the BFAR revealed that traces of oil and grease in water samples had slightly increased in all sampling sites compared with baseline data. Still, these were within the standard limit of less than 3 milligrams per liter for bodies of water classified as suitable for boating and fishing activities, as well as fish propagation.

The trend indicated that the amount of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons present in seafood from the province "had stabilized to much lower concentrations."

"The agency will continue its time-series observation in the province, which will be the basis of its recommendations for concerned government agencies and local government offices," it added.

Around P117.86 million worth of emergency and relief assistance, early recovery

efforts and medium- to long-term recovery aid has been earmarked for coastal areas hit by the oil spill from sunken fuel tanker, MT Princess Empress.

Of these, the BFAR set aside P12 million for fuel assistance to affected fisherfolk in the Southern Tagalog region. It spent P4.4 million for post-harvest training for various fisherfolk associations and cooperatives, and more than P1.5 million for food assistance to more than 5,000 fisherfolk in the region.

The agency also funded the ongoing grant and capacity-building efforts of fiberglass-reinforced plastic boats with marine engines for affected fisherfolk in Oriental Mindoro.

Further, it deployed monitoring, control and surveillance vessels, as well as personal protective equipment sets and other materials for cleanup activities. INQ



Climate attitudes are a problem of scale

AS I admonish the students I occasionally lecture, in order to be a good writer — or to be competent in just about any field, really — one needs to spend more time reading than doing anything else, and to make one's reading consumption as varied as possible because there is a lesson in everything, even the badly written pieces. A good example is an essay posted on Medium that I read over the weekend, entitled, "Quit Obsessing About Climate Change. What You Do or Don't Do No Longer Matters."

The essay, written by Glen Hendrix, is pretentious dreck, employing what I call the Greta Thunberg Method (in fact, Hendrix mentions her in glowing terms) of shaming the audience for not keeping the climate emergency at top-of-mind for the sake of future generations at all times and in everything one does. That strategy does not work on normal people, no matter what the subject; if it did, we would all be vegans instead of mocking them for publicly virtue-signaling about their personal diets.

The irony of Hendrix's piece, and what redeems it from being a complete waste of five minutes, is that in the midst of castigating his audience for "whistling past the graveyard" on climate change, he actually identifies, at



ROUGH TRADE

BEN KRITZ

least in passing, the very natural reason why most people do not respond to climate change with the appropriate level of individual concern, or make all their everyday decisions and actions conditional upon their impact on the environment. "It is not really our fault," Hendrix explains. "Besides being stupid and greedy, we are genetically handicapped to deal with this situation. We simply don't live long enough to plan ahead. By 'planning ahead' I don't mean decades. I mean centuries." Even that is an incomplete explanation, and Hendrix doesn't trouble himself to try to suggest ways in which that bit of information could be used productively, but it is at least a hint to a chronic problem in messaging on climate change.

In a nutshell, it is a problem of scale: we humans personally have a very tiny scale, while the climate has a very large one. People do, in fact, have a very strong sense of self-preservation, and for most people, that extends to their children, and perhaps even their grandchildren, although progres-

sively less so for each future generation, and only if the individual and those future generations of his or her progeny coexist in the same time frame. My son and daughter are real people who exist in the same time as I do; their future children (notwithstanding that they are both adamant that they do not intend to have any) are an abstraction. While I realize that I should care for their survival, I have at best only a vague, general sense of how I should, since it is impossible to accurately visualize them or the world they will live in.

Even if we consider only ourselves, the specificity of our planning for our own well-being quickly degrades the longer the time horizon concerned. I have detailed ideas of what I will need to do to take care of myself in the next week, or next month, or through the end of the year. Those details become fuzzier, however, when I consider next year or the next five years. Ten or 20 years, at this point, is "I'll cross that bridge if I come to it" territory, mentally.

When it comes to Earth's climate, however, the smallest unit of measurement of time that makes any sense is perhaps a decade, and in some cases, even that is insufficient. The climate, without any intervention from people, is naturally variable. Man's impact on the climate, in terms of things

such as greenhouse gas emissions, is also variable. Patterns that lead to clear conclusions — i.e., the climate is steadily warming in correlation with a steady increase in GHG emissions — only become apparent when one looks at a large enough timescale, a decade, a century, to smooth out the year-to-year variations.

In a very real sense, it is beyond our comprehension; we could of course understand climate change and our impact on it if the effects we feel today are clearly associated with it, and most of us could probably still understand it if predicted effects were applicable to next month, or next season, or next year. Much beyond that, however, and we lose our ability to visualize our personal circumstances at that future time. Thus, we have a gap in our comprehension between what we do or don't do now and its consequences in the year 2100, or 2050, or perhaps even 2025.

How we might upgrade a couple hundred thousand years of evolutionary wiring is beyond my ken, but perhaps understanding the gap in our intellectual capacity can be helpful. For starters, it may make it easier for people to recognize when narrow-minded conspiracy theorists are manipulating public ignorance to make false claims that climate change

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■ KRITZ FROM A4

Climate attitudes are a problem of scale

is not happening. It may also help by encouraging climate scientists and policymakers to find ways to make the scientific evidence and what it means more relatable to normal people.

That will be a challenge, but I hope

it can be overcome in some way because if not, the frightening future we cannot quite imagine will eventually become an even more terrifying present we won't have to imagine.

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ALERT STILL UP

IN NORTH LUZON, EVACUATION ON EVEN AS 'BETTY' WEAKENS

By the Inquirer Luzon
@InqNational

TUGUEGARAO CITY—At least 152 families, or 528 people, were evacuated in the provinces of Cagayan and Ilocos Norte since Sunday in anticipation of the impact of Typhoon "Betty" (international name: Mawar), authorities said on Monday.

The state weather bureau, however, said the typhoon had slightly weakened and is expected to further lose strength on its way out of the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) through the Philippine Sea east of northern Luzon.

Nevertheless, Cagayan was placed under "red alert" status, as local officials monitored weather updates and prepared contingency plans for disaster response.

According to the provincial disaster risk reduction and management office, most of the evacuated families were from coastal areas and low-lying communities vulnerable to landslides in the towns of Sta. Ana and Gonzaga and Calayan Island. **A2**



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IN NORTH LUZON, EVACUATION ON EVEN AS 'BETTY' WEAKENS

FROM A1

Although there was still no reported flooding in Gonzaga as of Monday, the municipal disaster risk reduction and management office began evacuation in that town, amid strong winds and occasional rains.

As of noon Monday, a total of 486 people from 140 families were taken to temporary shelters, with most of them living in the villages of Caroan, Ipil, Cabiraoan and Sta. Clara in Gonzaga town.

Some 34 families or 111 people were evacuated from the villages of Poblacion, Dadao, Babuyan Claro and Naguilan on Calayan Island.

The provincial boards of Cagayan and Isabela had earlier imposed a liquor ban in their respective areas starting Sunday.

Classes at all levels, both in public and private schools, were suspended on Monday in Cagayan.

Typhoon signals

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) hoisted Signal No. 2 over parts of mainland Cagayan, the eastern part of Babuyan Islands (Babuyan Island, Camiguin Island, Didicas Island, Pamuktan Island), and the islands of Batanes province.

Areas in northern Luzon placed under Signal No. 1 were the rest of the Babuyan Islands, the rest of mainland Cagayan, Isabela, Quirino, and parts of Nueva Vizcaya, Apayao, Abra, Kalinga, Mountain Province, Ifugao and Ilocos Norte.



TYPHOON BETTY (MAWAR)
• @ 10AM: 19.1 N, 126.0 E
• 475 KM E OF CALAYAN, CAGAYAN
• WINDS/GUST: 155/190 km/h
• Moving NW @ 15 km/h

KEEPING TRACK A state weather bureau forecaster briefs reporters on the track of Typhoon "Betty" on Monday morning. —DOST-PAGASA PHOTO

Also under Signal No. 1 were the northern and central parts of Aurora, Polillo Islands, the northern part of Catanduanes, the northeastern part of Camarines Sur, and the northern part of Camarines Norte.

In Ilocos Norte, 12 families, or 42 people, from Barangay Lanao in Bangui town were evacuated in anticipation of flooding and landslides, while classes from preschool to secondary levels in public and private schools were suspended in Batac City and Pasuquin town.

In Batangas province in southern Luzon, sea travel among small vessels was suspended due to rough sea conditions, according to the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG).

The PCG also cited a forecast by Pagasa that a strong gale and rough to very rough sea conditions would be experienced in the seaboard of southern Luzon.

All trips by small seacraft with 250 gross tons or less, such

as motorized passenger and fishing boats, were suspended.

Also suspended, in the Bicol region, were sea trips as well as classes in public and private schools.

'No longer a supertyphoon'

But Esperanza Cayanan, officer in charge of Pagasa, said Betty was "no longer [a] supertyphoon anymore, but of typhoon intensity and we see that it will continue to weaken."

"It can weaken into 140 kilometers per hour (kph) wind intensity as it departs northwards. And before it leaves PAR, we see that it could be of storm intensity or simply a tropical storm with wind strength of 110 kph by Thursday night to Friday," she said at Monday's Laging Handa briefing.

Pagasa anticipates the storm to leave the country by Friday at the latest, not Thursday as earlier reported.

As of the state weather bureau's bulletin on Sunday afternoon, Betty packed max-

imum sustained winds of 165 kph, well below the supertyphoon level of 185 kph and above—the storm's previous category early on Saturday when it entered PAR.

Pagasa's bulletin by Monday afternoon said Betty was last spotted 445 km east of Calayan, Cagayan, packing maximum sustained winds of 155 kph near the center with gustiness of up to 190 kph.

Betty was still expected to enhance the southwest monsoon. But Cayanan said this would "not [be] that strong."

At any rate, she said residents in the western sections of the Visayas, Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan) region, and central and southern Luzon, including Metro Manila, should expect rains until Wednesday, although this would "not be too heavy."

Meanwhile, more than 27,000 disaster response personnel from the police nationwide have been assembled to assist in possible preemptive evacuation, and rescue and relief operations in areas threatened by the typhoon, Philippine National Police chief Gen. Benjamin Acorda Jr. said on Monday.

Police at the municipal, city, and provincial levels were also ordered to keep all national highways and thoroughfares clear of debris and obstruction to ensure unhampered passage of emergency vehicles, rescue equipment and relief aid convoys to disaster-hit areas. —WITH REPORTS

FROM JEROME ANING, ABBY BOISER, DELFIN T. MALLARI JR., FRANCES MANGOSING, MA. APRIL MIER-MANJARES, JOHN MICHAEL MUGAS AND VILLAMOR VISAYA JR. INQ