

04 March 2023, Saturday



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Oil spill: Mindoro town under state of calamity

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Philippine Coast Guard commandant Admiral Artemio Abu joined the aerial surveillance in the waters off Naujan, Oriental Mindoro yesterday. Top photo provided by the PCG shows the general view of the oil spill caused by the sinking of a motor tanker. **REUTERS**



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OIL SPILL: MINDORO TOWN

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By ED AMOROSO

A town in Oriental Mindoro has been placed under a state of calamity due to the oil spill from the sunken motor tanker MT Princess Empress.

Polo Mayor Jennifer Cruz said the town is most affected by the oil spill, which caused the water and shoreline to turn black.

She said the livelihood of fisherfolk in the town has also been affected.

The *Princess Empress* was carrying 800,000 liters of industrial fuel oil when it sank.

Local government officials in other towns in Oriental Mindoro are also reportedly eyeing the declaration of a state of calamity due to the oil spill.

The oil spill had reached an area 25 kilometers long, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Latest reports from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council showed that the coastal areas of Pola, Pinamalayan, Naujan and Bongabong towns were affected.

Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga led an aerial inspection yesterday to determine the extent of the oil spill.

Loyzaga said a vessel of the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority would arrive today to help determine the location of the sunken tanker.

She said the DENR tapped the services of disaster forensics to minimize the impact of the oil spill.

Data from the Oriental Mindoro agriculturist office showed that there are 26 marine protected areas in 10 towns in the province. These are in Naujan, Calapan City, Pola, Pinamalayan, Gloria, Bansud, Bongabong, Roxas, Mansalay and Bulalacao.

PCG-Oriental Mindoro deputy commander Kennedy Ma-alat said the PCG can give a timeframe on the cleanup once the location of the sunken vessel is determined.

Petron Corp. clarified that the motor tanker was not carrying products from its Bataan refinery, adding that it is not the owner of the fuel oil the tanker was carrying.

"Nonetheless, the company is one with the industry in extending assistance in the oil spill,

heeding the call of Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla," Petron said in a statement.

Marcos: Affected families to receive aid

President Marcos gave assurance that various assistance will be extended to families and individuals affected by the oil spill in Oriental Mindoro.

"The government, through the @dswdserver, is prepared to provide various forms of assistance to families and individuals affected by the oil spill caused by the submerged *MT Princess Empress* in Oriental Mindoro," Marcos said in a post on Twitter.

Marcos said special attention would be given to fisherfolk who will lose their source of livelihood because of the oil spill.

He said the DENR is working with the International Maritime Organization and the Department of the Interior and Local Government to provide support to concerned local government units and determine their specific needs. - With Michael Punongbayan, Robertzon Ramirez, Richmond Mercurio, Helen Flores



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Oil spill puts Or. Mindoro town under calamity state

Contaminated water reaches 7 coastal villages in Pola, threatens marine protected areas spanning 590 hectares

By **Madonna T. Virola**
@mvirolaINQ

CITY OF CALAPAN—The coastal town of Pola in Oriental Mindoro province was placed under a state of calamity as authorities rushed to contain the spread of an oil spill from a sunken fuel tanker, local officials said on Friday.

In an interview, Pola Mayor Jennifer Mindanao Cruz said the municipal council held a special session on Thursday evening and passed a resolution containing the declaration.

Pola is among the 10 municipalities in Oriental Mindoro that have been affected by the oil spill that leaked from MT Princess Empress, which carried 800,000 liters of fuel when it capsized in the waters off Naujan town, also in Oriental Mindoro, on Tuesday.

According to Cruz, the local government of Pola would help restore the damaged marine ecosystems and support local fishermen, whose livelihoods would be affected by the spillage.

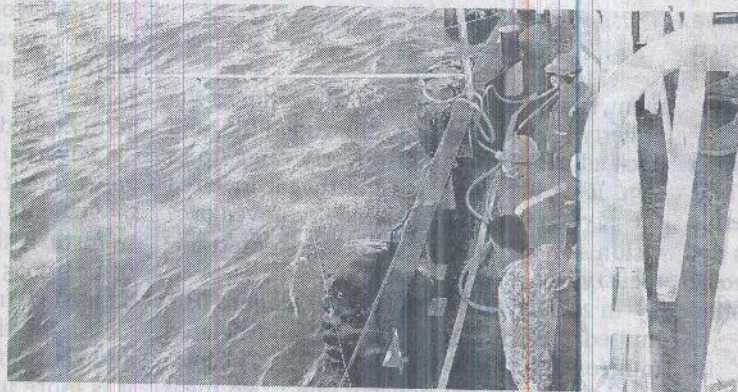
As of Thursday, the spill had reached the shores of seven of the 11 coastal villages in Pola, some 60 kilometers from Naujan, the mayor said. Pola has 23 barangays.

Danger of exposure

Data from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said over 590 hectares of marine protected areas (MPAs) in Pola alone could be in danger of being damaged by the oil spill.

In the entire province, more than 3,100 ha of MPAs would be at risk due to the spillage, the DENR said.

On Friday, the Oriental Mindoro Provincial Health Office (PHO) warned coastal villagers



CLEANUP Personnel of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) sprinkle chemicals to break down the oil that leaked from the sunken oil tanker Princess Empress in this PCG handout photo on Thursday. The tanker sank in the waters off Naujan town, Oriental Mindoro, on Tuesday. —PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD

against possible exposure to contaminated seawater.

In an advisory, the PHO said authorities were still trying to determine the chemical content of the industrial oil that leaked into the sea, but previous reports from the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) said it was emulsified fuel, or industrial fuel mixed with water.

Apart from Pola and Naujan, the DENR said the oil spill had already been reported in the other towns of Pinamalayan, Gloria, Bansud, Bongabong, Roxas, Mansalay and Bulalacao, and in Calapan City.

Villagers along the shorelines of the affected areas were cautioned against eating seafood gathered in their areas.

The PHO also advised residents along these coastal communities to temporarily transfer to other places to prevent respiratory illnesses.

Villagers in nearby Romblon province also reported seeing patches of oil slick near Sibale Island, some 62 km from Naujan.

The tanker, which came from Limay town in Bataan province, was heading to Iloilo province on Tuesday morning when it experienced engine trouble and capsized. It eventually sank about 450 meters below sea level the following day, but its 20-man crew was rescued by the foreign vessel MV Efes.

Extent of damage

According to the DENR, among the areas at risk of being damaged were seagrass beds, mangroves and dispersion pathways for spawned larvae.

Also at risk is the Verde Island Passage, a marine biodiversity conservation strait connecting Oriental Mindoro and Batangas province.

The DENR earlier formed Task Force Naujan Oil Spill to immediately contain its spread, conduct aerial surveillance and secure the shorelines of the affected areas.

Environment Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga visited Naujan on Friday morning

to determine the extent of the damage from the spillage.

After a briefing with local officials, Loyzaga said it would be important to find the exact location where the tanker sank to know which areas or communities would be directly affected by the spill.

The PCG had deployed oil spill booms to contain the spillage and a tugboat to spray chemicals to break down the oil.

At a meeting with local disaster response officials on Thursday, Oriental Mindoro Gov. Humerlito Dolor said the oil spill appeared to come from the diesel discharged from the tanker's engine and not from its cargo.

Dolor said the 800,000 liters of industrial oil the vessel carried "remained intact."

Petron's assistance

Meanwhile, Petron on Friday clarified that the oil tanker that capsized in Oriental Mindoro was not carrying products from its Bataan Refinery nor did it own the fuel oil cargo that the vessel was carrying, as it has not been producing fuel oil since 2016.

It said the oil firm has deployed equipment and its oil spill team to assist the PCG and the DENR in containing the spill. Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla earlier called on local oil firms to help contain the spill and minimize damage to the environment and livelihoods.

The company, in a statement, said its refinery and operations personnel in Bataan were trained in "operational safety, disaster preparedness and emergency response, including handling oil spills." —WITH A REPORT FROM MEG J. ADONIS INQ



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Town affected by oil spill declares state of calamity

By Charles Arvin Dantes,
Alena Mae Flores,
and Maricel V. Cruz

THE town of Pola in Oriental Mindoro has been placed under a state of calam-

ity after an oil spill from a sunken tanker carrying 800,000 liters of industrial fuel turned its seawater and shoreline black and resulted in fishkill, Mayor Jennifer Cruz said Friday.

In an interview on Dabol B TV, Cruz

said she and all the barangay captains declared a state of calamity after the tanker MT Princess Empress sank near the town's boundary with Naujan.

"You can see the oil spill in the waves.

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TANKER CATASTROPHE. The diesel oil that spilled from the motor tanker that sank at Balingawan Point in Naujan, Oriental Mindoro has reached at least three towns in the province, with up to 16 barangays affected, according to Governor Humerlito Dolor. Fishermen of Pola show some of their catch that have already died from the oil spill. **Philippine Coast Guard and Paul Hernandez of Balitang Southern Tagalog**

Fish were dying. Our white sand is now black sand," she said in Filipino.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said the government was prepared to provide aid to families affected by the oil spill.

In his social media post, President Marcos said the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is prepared to help the families and individuals affected by the Feb. 28 oil spill.

"We are closely monitoring the situation with the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) as the lead agency. Special attention will be given to the affected fisherfolk who will be losing their source of livelihood because of the oil spill," the President said on Twitter.

Oriental Mindoro Gov. Humerlito Dolor ordered the province's 18,000 registered fishermen to stay on shore until it was safe to fish. In the meantime, they would receive food packs, he said.

Mayor Cruz said thousands of fishermen in her town were affected because she has prohibited fishing due to the health risk posed by the oil spill.

Swimming in the affected waters has also been prohibited, as the oil spill is threatening the region's rich marine life and economy.

An estimated 591 hectares (1,460 acres) of coral reefs, 1,626 hectares of mangroves, and 362 hectares of seaweed could be "potentially affected" by the oil spill, Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Loyzaga said.



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PCG urges 4 Mindoro towns to stop fishing activities as oil spill spreads

By MARTIN SADONGDONG

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) on Friday, March 3, advised residents of four municipalities in Oriental Mindoro to refrain from conducting fishing activities due

to an oil spill currently wreaking havoc in the province following the sinking of motor tanker (MT) Princess Empress.

The PCG designated the towns of Naujan, Pola, Pinamalayan, and Bongabong as "exclusion areas,"

which means residents are prohibited from coming into contact with the coastline waters because of possible health hazards.

Admiral Artemio Abu, PCG commandant, joined an aerial surveillance in the vi-

cinity waters off Naujan to determine the extent of the oil spill as patches of emulsified oil were seen spreading in the coastal waters from the four municipalities.

"May exclusion areas na tayong nilagay, ibig sabihin may areas na hindi na dapat puntahan sapagkat delikado at maaaring maapektuhan ang kalusugan ng mga tao (We have established exclusion areas. This means that these should not be accessed because of possible risks to health)," Rear Admiral Armando Balilo, PCG spokesman, said in a radio interview with dzBB.

This would be a problem for the provincial government of Oriental Mindoro as the primary livelihood in the affected municipalities is fishing.

"Mahirap man itong mga bagay na ito pero kailangan nating gawin para mas lalong hindi magkaroon ng epekto sa mga kababayan natin na mangingisda (This is difficult to

do but it's a must to prevent adverse effects on our fishermen)," Balilo said.

Oil spill affects the marine ecosystem as it contaminates the resources and destroy their habitat, which could lead to health problems when consumed by humans.

According to the Coast Guard Aviation Force, they have observed oil spillage with an estimated area of two to three kilometers long. Containment operations are ongoing to prevent the spillage from further spreading.

The PCG had earlier confirmed that the 800,000 liters of industrial cargo fuel onboard MT Princess Empress have started spilling and mixing with the vessel's diesel fuel that also leaked when it sank on Feb. 28 in Naujan.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) reportedly warned that the oil spill threatens to harm at least 21 marine protected areas in the province.

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PCG naglagay ng 'off limit areas' sa Or. Mindoro oil spill

NI ZAIDA DELOS REYES

DAHIL sa banta ng oil spill, naglagay na ang Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) ng "off limit areas" sa ilang bahagi ng Oriental Mindoro para mabigyan ng proteksiyon ang mga residente sa lugar.

Ayon kay PCG spokesperson Rear Admiral Armad Balilo, sa kasalukuyan ay mayroon na silang

inilagay na "exclusion area" sa lugar dahil sa banta sa kalusugan ng mga residente na dulot ng nasabing oil spillage.

Ang mga lugar na ito aniya ay pansamantalang hindi muna dapat puntahan dahil delikado na umangrit para sa kalusugan ng isang tao.

Nauna na ring sinabi ni Balilo ang plano ng pamahalaan na maglagay ng oil spill boom sa mga apektadong katubigan ng oil spill.

Kabilang sa mga apektadong lugar ng oil spill ay ang Naujan, Pola, Pnamalayan, at Bongabong.

Matatandaang iniulat ng PCG na nahaluan na ng industrial fuel ang katubigan sa nasabing karagatan dahil sa paglubog ng MT Princess Empress na may kargang 800,000 litro ng industrialized fuel oil. Sinabi ni Balilo na hindi

nakalagay sa selyadong sisidlan o container ang mga langis pero naisakay sa loob ng motor tanker.

Sa paglubog ng barko, sinabi ng PCG na maaaring maapektuhan nito ang integridad ng istraktura at maaaring magkaroon ng butas at ang langis na laman nito ay posibleng bumulwak din dahil sa pressure.



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Sunken tanker in Mindoro leaks industrial oil: PCG

THE Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) on Thursday confirmed the spillage of industrial fuel oil in waters near Naujan town in Oriental Mindoro province following the sinking of MT Princess Empress on Tuesday.

In a situation update, the PCG said MTUG Titan, a tug boat equipped with equipment to deal with oil spills, continues to apply a dispersant in affected waters.

"Sa shoreline assessment na isinasagawa ng PCG sa Pinamalayan, na obserbahan ang patches of emulsified oil," it said.

According to the PCG, the oil spill has expanded to around one hectare of

the area in waters near the neighboring island of Sibale of Romblon province.

Earlier, MT Princess Empress was reported to carry around 800,000 liters of industrial oil, a type of oil used for industrial purposes such as heating or power generation and is heavier and less refined than diesel or gasoline.

PCG spokesperson Rear Admiral Armando Balilo said an industrial oil spill in such amounts can lead to an "environmental catastrophe."

Balilo assured that the PCG, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and partners in the private sector are working together

to address the incident.

MTUG Titan, BRP Melchora Aquino and other aquatic and aerial assets of the PCG, DENR and the Philippine Navy were earlier dispatched to the area to assess the scope of the oil spill and to recover the oil through mechanical oil spill recovery.

The incident occurred after MT Princess Empress experienced engine trouble brought by overheating while in transit to Iloilo from Bataan.

The vessel drifted towards Balingawan Point in Naujan and partially sank due to rough sea conditions until becoming fully submerged on Wednesday. (PNA)



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Task force nilarga sa Mindoro vs oil spill

Ipinagutos ng National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) ang pagbuo ng isang task force na tutuk sa magiging impact ng oil spill bunsod ng paglubog ng M/T Princess Empress sa karagatan ng Naujan sa Oriental Mindoro noong Feb. 28.

Ang task force ay magkakaroon ng team lead na Office of Civil Defense sa Mimaropa (Marinduque, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Palawan at Romblon).

"In a memo issued 3 March 2023, NDRRMC Executive Director and Civil Defense Administrator, Undersecretary Ariel Nepomuceno organized an inter-agency task force to monitor developments and implement measures that would contain the spread of the oil spill, recover the spilled fuel, as well as conduct emergency response activities to the areas that may be affected by the incident" sinabi ng NDRRMC sa isang pahayag nitong Bierynes.

Isinailalim na ang Pola sa Oriental Mindoro sa state of calamity dahil sa oil spill, ayon kay Mayor Jennifer Cruz.

"Kapag umaalon makikita mo talaga yung dami ng oil spill, ng langis. May mga namamatay na rin pong isda...Nalungkot nga po kasi yung white sand namin, black sand na po," pahayag nito.

Apektado na aniya ang pangkabuhayan ng mga naninirahahn doon na mga mangingisda.

(Catherine Reyes)



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PBBM pinasaklolo DSWD sa Mindoro oil spill

Tiniyak ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. na pagkakalooban ng gobyerno ng kaukulang tulong ang mga pamilyang apektado ng oil spill o pagkalat ng langis sa karagatan sanhi ng lumubog na barko sa karagatan ng Oriental Mindoro.

Sa kanyang Twitter post, sinabi ng Pangulo na nakahanda ang pamahalaan, sa pama-

magitan ng Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) na magbigay ng iba't ibang klase ng ayuda sa mga pamilya at mga indibidwal na maaapektuhan ng oil spill.

Inilahad din ng Pangulo na nakikipagtulangan na ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa International

Maritime Organization at sa Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) para maalalayan ang mga lokal na pamahalaan sa mga lugar na apektado ng oil spill.

Noong Pebrero 28 iniulat ng Philippine Coast Guard ang pagkalat ng langis sa baybayin malapit sa Naujan, Oriental Mindoro matapos lumubog ang

cargo ship na MT Princess Empress na may kargang 800,000 litro ng industrial fuel oil.

Samantala, nagpasalamat din si Pangulong Marcos sa Petron at Shell dahil sa pag-alok ng tulong ng mga naturang kompanya para sa mga kinakailangang kagamitan upang maibsan ang epekto ng pagkalat ng langis sa dagat. **(Prince Golez)**



OrMin folk asked to refrain from fishing due to oil spill

By **MARTIN SADONGDONG**

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) yesterday advised

residents of four municipalities in Oriental Mindoro to refrain from fishing due to an oil spill currently wreaking havoc in

the province due to the sinking of motor tanker (MT) Princess Empress.

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OrMin ...

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The PCG designated the towns of Naujan, Pola, Pinamalayan, and Bongabong as "exclusion areas" which means that residents are prohibited from coming into contact with the coastline waters because of possible health hazards.

Admiral Artemio Abu, PCG commandant, joined the aerial surveillance in the vicinity waters off Naujan

to determine the extent of the oil spill as patches of emulsified oil were seen in the coastal waters from the four municipalities.

"May exclusion areas na tayong inilagay, ibig sabihin may areas na hindi na dapat puntahan sapagkat delikado at maaaring maapektuhan ang kalusugan ng mga tao (We have established exclusion areas so this means that these should not be accessed by the people because there are possible dangers to their health)," Rear Admiral Armando Balilo, PCG spokesperson, said in a radio interview with dzBB.

This would be a problem for the provincial government of Oriental Mindoro as the primary livelihood in the affected municipalities is fishing.

"Mahirap man itong mga bagay na ito pero kailangan nating gawin para mas lalong hindi magkaroon ng epekto sa mga kababayan natin na mangingisda (This is difficult to do but it's a must so as to prevent further damage on our fishermen)," Balilo stated.

Oil spill affects the marine ecosystem as it contaminates the resources and destroys their habitat, which could also lead to health problems on humans

when these are consumed.

According to the Coast Guard Aviation Force, they have observed an oil spillage with an estimated area of two to three kilometers in length. Containment operations were ongoing to prevent the spillage from further spreading.

The PCG earlier confirmed that the 800,000 liters of industrial cargo fuel onboard

MT Princess Empress have started spilling and have mixed with the vessel's diesel fuel that also leaked when it sank last Feb. 28 in Naujan.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) reportedly warned that the oil spill threatens to harm at least 21 marine protected areas in the province.



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Dahil sa oil spill ng lumubog na barko

State of calamity idineklara sa Pola, Oriental Mindoro

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna – Isinailalim na ang bayan ng Pola sa Oriental Mindoro sa state of calamity dahil sa nararanasang oil spill sa kanilang karagatan matapos ang paglubog ng motor tanker Princess Empress malapit sa boundary ng Naujan.

Ayon kay Pola Mayor Jennifer Cruz, ang kanyang bayan ang isa sa mga tinamaang lugar ng oil spill, sanhi upang mag-ing kulay itim ang kanilang tubig-dagat at baybayin,

at apektado rin ang kabu-hayan ng kanilang mga mangingisda.

Nabatid na ang MT Princess Empress ay may kargang 800,000 litro ng industrial fuel oil nang lumubog nang hampasin ng malalaking alon habang naglalayag sa karagatan ng Oriental Mindoro. Nasagip naman lahat ang mga crew at ilang pasahero ng nasabing barko.

Kasunod nito, kinumpirma ng Philippine Coast Guard ang malawakang pagtagas ng langis mula

sa motor tanker na lumubog ng may 400 metro sa ilalim ng dagat.

Nabatid na plano na rin ng iba pang lokal na pamahalaan na apektado ng oil spill na magdeklara ng state of calamity.

May 14 munisipalidad ang Oriental Mindoro na kinabibilangan ng Puerto Galera, San Teodoro, Baco, Naujan, Victoria, Socorro, Pola, Pinamalayan, Gloria, Bansud, Bongabong, Roxas, Mansalay at Bulalacao. (Ed Amoraso)