

07 March 2023, Tuesday



DENR

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Sunken *Empress*' 'location' detected

A vessel of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) may have found the location of the oil tanker *M/T Empress*, which sank in the waters off Naujan, Oriental Mindoro with 800,000 liters of fuel on board last week.

The DENR said that its *BRP Hydrographer Ventura* may have detected the possible site of the *Empress*, although it said the information needs verification.

"We are pleased to report that through the efforts of the *BRP Hydrographer Ventura*, we may have detected the possible site where the vessel is actually located. That site is about 1,200 feet or approximately 400 meters below sea level. It is located about northeast of Pola town, but is believed to have moved southeast from its last known position, where it completely submerged," the DENR said in a report.

The *Ventura* is owned by the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority, an attached agency of the DENR. It arrived from Subic on Saturday night.

"This will require verification with the deployment of a remotely operated vehicle. The ROV will allow us complete visualization should the water current and weather permit," the DENR said, adding it was preparing to access an ROV to determine the actual location of the *Empress* and the trajectory of the oil spill.

The DENR said it relayed the development to President Marcos on Sunday night and was allowed to share the information with the public.

The agency said it is coordinating with local government units (LGUs) and the University of the Philippines-Marine Science Institute (UP-

MSI) on the possible location of the *Empress*.

The UP-MSI said the oil spill would reach Cuyo Islands and could get closer to Northern Palawan within a week.

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) said it has applied 1,000 liters of oil dispersant in Naujan to help remove the oil that has spread through the seawater.

Oil dispersants break oil into small droplets, making the oil easier to dissolve.

Marine protected areas in Pola and beach resorts in the province have been affected by the spill, according to the Department of Tourism.

Ten municipalities in Oriental Mindoro including Pola are affected by the oil spill.

Water, air quality monitoring

Department of Health (DOH) officer-in-charge Maria Rosario Vergeire ordered health officials in towns affected by the oil spill to coordinate with concerned agencies the results of the the monitoring of water and air toxicology in their areas.

Vergeire said that municipal health officers should actively work with all stakeholders in assessing the water and air quality in coastal communities.

"We will continuously cooperate with other agencies in order to protect the health of our citizens," Vergeire said in a statement.

Vergeire has discussed ways to strengthen the oil spill response with representatives of the



municipal and provincial health offices, the departments of environment and natural resources, and interior and local government as well as with health care workers in Pola town.

During the meeting, Vergeire stressed the need to swiftly implement quality health response. She said it could be done by ensuring strengthened surveillance of symptoms that may be experienced by affected people as well as transferring residents to safer areas while the government works to stabilize the situation.

Probe sought

A maritime labor union is seeking a thorough investigation by the Senate on the sinking of the *Empress*.

The United Filipino Seafarers said an investigation is necessary as the incident "poses serious threats to our marine protected areas."

"There was no storm when the vessel sank. *Force majeure* cannot be used as an excuse in this case," the group said in a statement.

They said the vessel was built only a year ago and was not heavily battered by the waves.

Meanwhile, although the oil spill may not reach the shores of Boracay Island, the municipal government of Malay in Aklan is monitoring the situation in coordination with the PCG and barangay disaster risk reduction and management councils.

The LGU said it has laid out oil spill booms in areas identified to be susceptible to oil spill.

It said it is using indigenous materials as a second defense against the spill. - Evelyn Macairan, Rhodina Villanueva, Ralph Edwin Villanueva, Jennifer Rendon, Mark Ernest Villeza



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ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD The shoreline of Pola, Oriental Mindoro, is covered with thick and black oil that leaked from the sunken MT Princess Empress as seen in this photo taken in one of the town's coastal villages on March 4. —PHOTO COURTESY OF POLA MAYOR JENNIFER CRUZ

8 more towns in Oriental Mindoro in calamity state due to oil spill

Area where the tanker sank has been marked, as containment efforts continue to avert wider damage to marine sanctuaries

By **Madonna T. Virola,**
Tina G. Santos
and **Krixia Subingsubing**
@Team_Inquirer

CALAPAN CITY—Eight more towns in the province of Oriental Mindoro were placed under a state of calamity on Monday by the provincial board to help authorities provide aid to communities affected by the oil spill from the sunken MT Princess Empress.

The declaration covered Naujan, Pinamalayan, Gloria, Bansud, Bongabong, Roxas, Mansalay and Bulalacao out of the province's 14 towns and one city. The town of Pola, one of the first to be hit by the oil spill, was previously placed under a state of calamity by its municipal council.

A total of 77 coastal villages in these nine towns were affected by the oil spill, accord-

ing to the resolution authored by Provincial Board Member Roland Ruga and unanimously approved by the board.

The sinking resulted in the spillage of emulsified black and thick industrial oil, which posed health hazards to affected residents and severely disrupted the livelihood of more than 15,000 fishermen, resorts and other business establishments, the resolution stated.

The oil spill also caused "serious damage" to marine protected areas in the province, it added.

On March 4, Pola Mayor Jennifer Cruz said the local government would press charges against RDC Marine Services Inc., the operator of the oil tanker.

Cruz said they have yet to get a response from the operator nearly a week after the tanker, which was carrying 800,000

liters of industrial oil, sunk off the coast of Naujan on Feb. 28.

Oriental Mindoro Rep. Arnan Panaligan on Monday said he would assist in filing a case against the operator.

Widespread harm

In Palawan province, the local station of the Philippine Coast Guard denied reports that the oil spill from the sunken tanker has reached one of its northern coastal villages.

At a press briefing on Monday, Capt. Dennis Labay, PCG Palawan district commander, said traces found by residents in Agutaya town were from waste materials that were carried by strong waves.

Last week, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute (UP MSI) warned that the oil spill could reach the

eastern and southern sides of Oriental Mindoro, including the Cuyo Island of Palawan.

According to the UP MSI, the oil spill might affect about 20,000 hectares of coral reefs, 9,900 ha of mangroves and 6,000 ha of seagrass in the provinces of Oriental Mindoro, Occidental Mindoro, Antique and Palawan, depending on its trajectory.

Found in Agutaya alone are more than 2,500 ha of coral reefs and 73 ha of seagrass, while Cuyo Island is host to 3,661 ha of coral reefs, 120 ha of mangroves and 156 ha of seagrass.

The Department of Tourism (DOT), at a briefing on Monday, said at least seven marine sanctuaries were affected by the oil spill, namely, the KingFisher Reserve, St. John the Baptist Marine Sanctuary, Song of the Sea Fish Sanctuary, Stella Maris Fish Sanctuary, Bacawan Fish Sanctuary, St. Peter the Rock

Fish Sanctuary and the San Isidro Labrador Fish Sanctuary, all in Pola town.

Beach resorts such as Bihiya Beach, 3 Cottage, Long Beach K. I. Aguada Beach Resort, Oloroso Beach Resort, Munting Buhangin Tagumpay Beach Resort and Buhay na Tubig White Beach Resort in Oriental Mindoro were also affected.

The DOT said none of the tourist attractions outside of Oriental Mindoro were harmed but even Boracay Island in the town of Malay, Aklan province, was already preparing for the possibility of the effects of the oil spill reaching its waters, the DOT added.

Sinking area

Tourism Secretary Christina Frasco stressed the DOT was seriously monitoring the oil spill and its "grave impact on the tourism industry, including

disruptions in the livelihood of the affected communities, tourism-dependent businesses, and recreational activities."

The sinking site of MT Princess Empress was estimated to be about 1,200 feet, or approximately 400 meters below sea level along the northeast waters of Pola town, the DENR said at a briefing on Monday.

The sunken vessel was believed to have moved southeast from its last known position but this has to be verified by a remotely operated vehicle to be deployed in the area, said Environment Secretary Toni Yu-lo-Loyzaga.

In a statement, the environmental group Protect Verde Island Passage called on the government to ensure that the owner of MT Princess Empress would be made accountable for the spill. —WITH A REPORT FROM GERALD FORD TICKE INQ



Oil spill affects Mindoro beaches, reefs

A sunken tanker wreaks havoc on marine sanctuaries

BY RAFFY AYENG
@tribunephil_raf

Some tourist sites in Oriental Mindoro and Antique have been affected by fuel leaking from a sunken tanker, the Department of Tourism said Monday.

The DoT identified the affected sites in Pola town as the KingFisher Reserve, St. John the Baptist Marine Sanctuary, Song of the Sea Fish Sanctuary, Stella Mariz Fish Sanctuary, Bacawan Fish Sanctuary, St. Peter the Rock Fish Sanctuary and the San Isidro Labrador Fish Sanctuary.

Affected beach resorts are the Bihiya Beach, 3 Cottage, Long Beach K. I, Aguada, Oloroso, Munting Buhangin Tagumpay and Buhay na Tubig White.

Coastal clean-up is now being done in the affected areas to prevent further damage, the department said in a statement.

Meanwhile, local government units, together with the Philippine Coast

Guard and the private sector, initiated clean-ups in the shores of Sitio Sabang, Barangay Tinogbo, Liwagao Island, Barangay Sibolo and Sitio Tambak in Barangay Semirara in the municipality of Caluya in Antique.

Boracay Island in Malay, Aklan is already preparing for the possibility of the oil spill reaching its coast.

Boracay Island in Malay, Aklan is already preparing for the possibility of the oil spill reaching its coast.

The PCG and the Malay Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office are conducting roving and monitoring along the coasts of Boracay and have prepositioned oil slick booms in strategic areas.

The DoT Western Visayas Office is also actively coordinating with the LGU of Malay on extending possible assistance to local tourism operators that will

be affected by the oil spill.

"Anent this, the DoT notes with seriousness the oil spill incident and its grave impact on the tourism industry, including disruptions in the livelihood of the affected communities, tourism-dependent businesses, and recreational activities," according to DoT Secretary Maria Christina Frasco.

"Scuba diving, beach, and cruise tourism depend on the region's coastal resources and are also its major tourism products. If unmitigated, the oil spill can have adverse impacts on three of the world-class dive destinations in the Philippines, specifically the Verde Island passage and Apo Reef in Mindoro, and Coron's World War II Wrecks and Philippine Dugong," she warned.

Frasco added that cruise tourism in the region could be affected, with 34 cruise ships expected to call in Mindoro, Romblon, Marinduque, and Palawan for the year.

"The DoT, in coordination with its regional offices, commits to continuously coordinate with agencies such as the DENR, EMB,

PCG and concerned LGUs on any update concerning the oil spill, and in searching for urgent mitigating measures to address the harmful effects of the incident to marine life, world-class dive sites, and tourist attractions," the tourism chief assured.

Meanwhile, the DoT reported that none of the tourist attractions in the municipalities of Naujan, Victoria and Pinamalayan in Oriental Mindoro have been affected so far by the oil spill from the M/T *Princess Empress*. The Naujan Lake, a major tourist attraction, has no connection with the ocean and will not be affected by the oil spill, according to the Department.

The DoT is also in close coordination with officers of the Tubbataha Management Office for the monitoring of the area which is along the municipality of Cagayancillo in Palawan.

Based on the latest update from the Tubbataha Management Office, there are no reported effects yet of the oil spill in the area.



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Possible site of sunken oil tanker detected – DENR

By JEL SANTOS

The possible site of motor tanker (MT) Princess Empress has been located about 1,200 feet below sea level, a few days after the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) deployed the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (Namria) BRP Hydrographer BRP Ventura within the area of the oil spill site in Oriental Mindoro.

In a statement, the DENR

disclosed that the vessel is located about northeast of Pola, Oriental Mindoro but it is "believed to have moved southeast from its last known position where it completely submerged."

"We are pleased to report that through the efforts of BRP Hydrographer Ventura, we may have detected the possible site where the vessel is actually located. That site is about 1,200 feet or approximately 400 meters below sea level. It is located about northeast of Pola, Oriental Mindoro but it is believed

to have moved southeast from its last known position where it completely submerged," the DENR said in a statement on Monday, March 6.

Such information, on the other hand, still requires verification and complete visualization.

"This will, however, require verification which will be in the form of deployment of a remotely-operated vehicle (ROV) which will allow us complete visualization should the currents and weather permit. We are now preparing to access an ROV in order to fully determine where the

Hydrographer Ventura on March 2 to determine the location of the sunken vessel.

"We are closely coordinating with local government officials and with UP-MSI (University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute) on the possible use of this information in the modeling for the spread of the oil. We look forward to seeing an updated model from UP-MSI and to share that with the general public but most of all, with the local governments and the communities that will be affected."

The DENR vowed to continue to be in close touch with local communities, government agencies, and operations teams that are on the ground now in Mindoro Oriental and Antique.

"The DENR is here to assist in any way that we can. We have been receiving offers of service, goods, and technical expertise and we thank the private sector especially those that have recently come forward."

vessel actually is and to completely model the way the oil will be spilling from the vessel," the agency disclosed.

On Feb. 28, the Philippine Coast Guard reported an oil spill from MT Princess Empress which capsized off the coast of Naujan, Oriental Mindoro earlier that day and was reportedly carrying 800,000 liters of industrial fuel oil as cargo.

The DENR contacted Gov. Bonz Dolor on March 1 to coordinate with response teams in Oriental Mindoro and Manila and mobilized the BRP



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Sunken tanker located off Mindoro

By Willie Casas and Maricel Cruz

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources said it may have already located the sunken tanker, MT Princess Empress, that is leaking indus-

trial fuel and threatening nearby areas in Oriental Mindoro and the Visayas.

"We are pleased to report that through the efforts of BRP Hydrographer Ventura, we may have detected

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the possible site where the vessel is actually located. That site is about 1,200 feet or approximately 400 meters below sea level," the DENR said in its latest advisory.

It said the sunken tanker is located

about northeast of Pola, Oriental Mindoro but it is believed to have moved southeast from its last known position where it completely submerged.

"This will, however, require verification which will be in the form of deployment of a remotely-operated vehicle (ROV) which will allow us to complete visualization should the currents and weather permit it. We

are now preparing to access an ROV in order to fully determine where the vessel actually is and to completely monitor the way the vessel is spilling from the vessel," the DENR said.

Meanwhile, some of the residents in Oriental Mindoro are experiencing symptoms that can be associated with the recent oil spill, the Department of Health said Monday.

DOH officer-in-charge Maria Rosario Vergeire said that while only a couple of residents have shown symptoms, the health hazards posed by the oil spill are undeniable.

"We've noted these kinds of symptoms already. Stomachache, vomiting, heightened heart rate, difficulty in breathing, nausea, coughing, and aggravated asthma," she said.



13K families affected by oil spill off Mindoro

BY VICTOR REYES and PAUL ICAMINA

ORIENTAL Mindoro Gov. Humerlito Dolor yesterday said more than 13,000 families in the province, most of them fisherfolks, have been affected by the oil spill caused by the sinking of an oil tanker off Naujan town last February 28.

Dolor said the oil spill, which now has reached the shores of northern Panay and Palawan, has affected 90 coastal barangays of the province's nine municipalities.

"It's unfortunate; we already have more than 13,000 families (affected), these are the registered fisherfolks, this does not include those who are not registered," Dolor said, adding he has asked the province's social welfare officer to identify the families of unregistered fishermen affected by the incident.

"This morning, I issued a directive to our provincial welfare officer to revalidate the list because as of yesterday, the final list given to me was only 13,257, these are the registered fisherfolks and (fish) vendors. That doesn't include the unregistered," said

See 13K FAMILIES ► Page B5

13K FAMILIES

Dolor

Dolor also reported that authorities have located the tanker that was transporting 800,000 liters of industrial fuel oil when it figured in the mishap. The ship also had 10,000 liters of diesel fuel.

"In the middle of an inter-agency meeting, we received a call from DENR Secretary Loyzaga who said they've located the sunken vessel," Dolor said without giving further details.

A statement from the DENR said that BRP Hydrographer, from the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority, has located the site of the vessel.

"The site is about 1,200 feet or approximately 400 meters below sea level. It is located about northeast of Pola, Oriental Mindoro but it is believed to have moved southeast from its last known position where it completely submerged," the DENR said.

Dolor said authorities started distributing food assistance to families affected by the oil spill last Friday, adding more government assistance are underway.

"We need to submit supplemental (data) to the DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development) for assistance," said Dolor.

Dolor said the oil spill has affected the waters of nine municipalities.

"Seventy coastal barangays were affected by the oil spill that reached the shoreline of only 13 barangays," said Dolor.

Dolor said has issued a directive to fishermen not to go fishing due to hazards posed by the oil spill and asking people not to swim in affected areas.

"As of yesterday, we have already

recorded nine oil spill-related illnesses. They (illnesses) included severe headache, chest pain, vomiting, skin rashes. But they are already okay, they were given treatment by our rural health unit. They were brought to the hospital and all are now in good condition," said Dolor.

OIL SPILL TRAJECTORY

Marine scientists at the University of the Philippines (UP) Marine Science Institute (MSI), UP Visayas (UPV), and Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology are monitoring the trajectory of the oil slick, which has reached the shores of three villages in Northern Panay and Cuyo, Palawan.

MSI scientists estimated that 9,900 hectares of mangroves and 6,000 hectares of seagrass may be affected by the oil slick.

Among the coastal sites that may be at risk are several marine protected areas, including but not limited, to reefs in Bulalacao, Oriental Mindoro, amounting to some 1,100 hectares of coral reefs. Significant seagrass beds are present in several areas, including the coastal barangays of Pola, Mansalay, Bulalacao in Oriental Mindoro.

MSI scientists, with the concurrence of the DENR, warned coastal communities to prepare for the possibility the oil spill could reach their shores. This is especially true for communities on the eastern and southern sides of Oriental Mindoro, including Caluya Island (Northwestern Antique), and Cuyo Island off Northern Palawan.

Weather conditions have pushed the oil slick to the shores of three barangays in Caluya, Antique, affecting over 1,000 residents, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) reported.

Aerial surveys by the DENR and UP MSI last March 3 estimated the slick to be around 25 kilometers long and between 300 meters to 500 meters wide. It is roughly oriented northeast to southwest, with its tail end situated in Pola Bay, about 73 kilometers south of Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro.

The assessment was confirmed by satellite images released by the Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA).

Another computer simulation shows that the slick will likely move southwards and affect Caluya, Antique and Cuyo, Palawan.

TOURIST SITES AFFECTED

The Department of Tourism said the oil spill has affected several marine protected areas in the municipality of Pola in Oriental Mindoro, such as the KingFisher Reserve, St. John the Baptist Marine Sanctuary, Song of the Sea Fish Sanctuary, Stella Mariz Fish Sanctuary, Bacawan Fish Sanctuary, St. Peter the Rock Fish Sanctuary, and the San Isidro Labrador Fish Sanctuary.

Beach resorts such as Bihiya Beach, 3 Cottage, Long Beach K. I, Aguada Beach Resort, Oloroso Beach Resort, Munting Buhangin Tagumpay Beach Resort, and Buhay na Tubig White Beach Resort in Oriental Mindoro have also been affected.

Coastal clean-up is now being done in the affected areas as an immediate solution to prevent further damage.

The oil spill has also reached the municipality of Caluya in the Province of Antique, particularly along the shorelines of Sitio Sabang, Barangay Tinogbo, Liwagao Island, Barangay Sibolo, and Sitio Tambak in Barangay Semirara.



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SUNKEN VESSEL LOCATED

Mindoro oil spill

to reach Palawan

BY BELLA CARIASO

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said that an oil spill from the sunken vessel off the coast of Naujan, Oriental Mindoro will reach Cuyo Islands in northern Palawan in a week's time.

In its latest report from the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute (UP-MSI), the DENR forecasts that the projected spill will continue due southwest in the direction of northern Palawan.

"Using the modeled oil spill trajectories and looking at higher resolution data, we approximate that 20,000 hectares of coral reef, 9,900 hectares of mangroves and

6,000 hectares of seagrass may be affected by the oil slick in the following municipalities. More than half of potentially affected reefs (11,000 hectares) are found in the Cuyo group of islands," the UP-MSI said.

The DENR added that department and UP-MSI are performing disaster forensics to protect mangroves, seagrass, and over 36,000 hectares of coral reefs in Bulalacao,

Oriental Mindoro and Caluya, Antique that can be potentially affected by the oil slick.

Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga said that she is coordinating with Social Welfare and Development Secretary Rex Gatchalian, Interior and Local Government Secretary Benjamin "Benhur" Abalos Jr., and Labor and Employment Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma to finalize arrangements on the augmentation for the cash-for-work scheme for the cleanup teams in the local communities.

According to the DENR, the Environmental Management Bureau in Mimaropa continues its cleanup operations using locally available oil-absorbent materials.

"EMB is currently installing provisional spill booms made of



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cogon and sawali. These barriers are precautionary measures to prevent the oil spill from reaching the beach and mangrove areas of Pola, Oriental Mindoro," it added.

It added that DENR is coordinating with Semirara Mining and Power Corp. to help and assist in the cleanup operations in Caluya, Antique.

The members of the DENR Task Force MT Princess Empress conducted a site assessment on Sunday.

The DENR Biodiversity Management Bureau will conduct a concurrent site assessment of the 53-hectare mangrove area in Pola, Oriental Mindoro that may be potentially affected.

The DENR also said on Monday that BRP Hydrographer Ventura may

have detected the possible site of the sunken vessel off the coast of Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

"We are pleased to report that through the efforts of BRP Hydrographer Ventura, we may have detected the possible site where the vessel is actually located. That site is about 1,200 feet or approximately 400 meters below sea level. It is located about northeast of Pola, Oriental Mindoro but it is believed to have moved southeast from its last known position where it completely submerged," the DENR said in its latest report.

The National Mapping and Resource Information Authority's (Namria) vessel BRP Hydrographer Ventura arrived at Oriental Mindoro from Subic.

Namria is an attached agency

of the DENR.

"This will, however, require verification which will be in the form of deployment of a remotely-operated vehicle (ROV) which will allow us complete visualization should the currents and weather permit. We are now preparing to access an ROV in order to fully determine where the vessel actually is and to completely model the way the oil will be spilling from the vessel," the DENR added.

According to the DENR, it has reported the development to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. Sunday evening.

"We have been given approval to share this with the general public," it added.

**WITH REPORTS FROM
IRE JOE V.C. LAURENTE**



Regional Updates

Mindoro oil spill could reach Palawan waters, says UP-MSI

THE OIL spill from motor tanker *MT Princess Empress* that sank off the coast of Naujan, Occidental Mindoro last week could possibly reach some vicinity waters of northern Palawan, according to marine experts.

In its latest bulletin on Monday, the University of the Philippines-Marine Science Institute (UP-MSI) showed images of projected oil slick from March 5 to 12 towards the southwest of Cuyo Islands and closer to northern Palawan.

The UP-MSI noted that the results are only model forecasts based on "prevailing weather patterns and conditions, and on recent information on the location of the slicks."

Its previous bulletin also reported that the oil slick could possibly affect over 36,000 hectares of coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass across Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Palawan, and Antique, all within the central-western part of the Philippines.

Fideles D. Sallidao, director of the Philippine Coast Guard's (PCG) National Operations Center for Oil Pollution, said they have found sightings of oil slick

in Cuyo Island and Caluya town in the province of Antique.

He noted, however, that they were yet to confirm from laboratory results if it was from the oil spill in Mindoro.

The motor tanker carried 800,000 liters of industrial fuel from SL Harbor Bulk Terminal in Limay, Bataan and was en route to Iloilo City.

The PCG initially reported that the oil spillage was from the diesel fuel that powered the vessel. Later on, it confirmed the presence of industrial fuel in the waters off Naujan.

According to Mr. Sallidao, the coast guard units under the Western Visayas district are already coordinating with local government units in the region to contain the spill.

"We will continue our response, we have sent a ship to conduct dispersal, and the sea condition would be favorable, they will install booms to contain the oil that is coming out," he added.

The same day in the afternoon, the PCG reported that its patrol vessel *BRP Bagacay* has applied 1,000 liters of oil dispersant in the waters off Naujan.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), meanwhile, said that it has divided the operation into three parallel workstreams: disaster forensic; clean up, mitigation and remediation; and actual protection activities.

DENR said these are jointly being undertaken by national and local government agencies, the UP-MSI, academe, and local communities.

Authorities may have already found the current location of the oil tanker, according to DENR.

The possible site was northeast of Pola town in Oriental Mindoro, the agency said, citing efforts of a state survey vessel. "That site is about 1,200 feet or approximately 400 meters below sea level."

DENR said it will deploy a remotely-operated vehicle to verify the location and "to completely model the way the oil will be spilling from the vessel."

"[It] will allow us to complete visualization should the currents and weather permit," it said. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera and Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

2 earthquakes rattle Davao de Oro early Monday morning

TWO earthquakes, with magnitudes 4.5 and 5.2 rattled Davao de Oro province in southern Philippine early Monday morning, prompting the local government to suspend physical classes.

The first tremor was recorded at 12:49 a.m. with epicenter at Compostela town,

followed by the stronger earthquake at 4:43 a.m., based on data from the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

Both of these are still considered aftershocks of the magnitude 6 earthquake that struck the province on Feb. 1,

School and work were canceled on Feb. 2 to give way to building inspection and damage assessment.

Monday's class suspension for all levels meant an automatic shift to online or modular learning schemes, the provincial government said.



Oil spill can set back tourism recovery of Mimaropa-DOT

By MA. STELLA F. ARNALDO

@akosistellaBM

Special to the BUSINESSMIRROR

THE oil spill in Oriental Mindoro will likely affect several tourism activities in the province and the Mimaropa region, which will again deprive stakeholders of their livelihood. Formerly the Southern Tagalog region, Mimaropa is composed of Mindoro Ori-

ental and Occidental, Marinduque, Romblon, and Palawan.

In a news statement, Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco said, "The Department of Tourism [DOT] notes with seriousness the grave impact of the oil spill on the tourism industry, including disruptions in the livelihood of the affected communities, tourism-dependent businesses, and recreational activities."

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She added, "Scuba diving, beach, and cruise tourism depend on the region's coastal resources, and are also its major tourism products. If unmitigated, the oil spill can have adverse impacts on three of the world-class dive destinations in the Philippines, specifically the Verde Island passage and Apo Reef in Mindoro, and Coron's World War II wrecks, and the Philippine Dugong."

She noted that 34 cruise ships are scheduled to drop anchor in Mindoro, Romblon, Marinduque, and Palawan this year. Close to 40,000 cruise passengers are expected in the country this year, generating a spend of \$100 per passenger. (See, "Cruise tourists sent to bring PHL P216 million," in the BUSINESSMIRROR, February 16, 2023.)

The DOT is also closely coordinating with the Tubbataha Management Office, which is monitoring the Tubbataha Reef, which is among the most popular dive sites in the country. So far, the oil slick has not yet reached the area, and the municipality of Cagayancillo in Palawan.

Prior to the pandemic, some 526,000 foreign and domestic tourists arrived in Mimaropa, the largest numbers going to Palawan (437,148), mainly to El Nido and Coron, and Oriental Mindoro (49,112), specifically to Puerto Galera.

Affected tourist areas

THE spill occurred after the oil tanker MT Princess Empress sank off the municipality of Naujan in Oriental Mindoro on February 28. The tanker was carrying some 800,000 liters of oil. Environmentalists and marine scientists have warned that the sludge could affect close to 36,000 hectares of verdant coral reefs in Oriental Mindoro and Antique.

The DOT has confirmed several tourist areas and beach resorts in the municipality of Pola have already been affected by the oil spill. DOT-Mimaropa reported that marine protected areas have been affected such as King Fisher Reserve, St. John the Baptist Maroñe Protected, Song of the Sea Fish Sanctuary, Stella Mariz Fish Sanctuary, Bacawan Fish Sanctuary, St. Peter the Rock Fish Sanctuary, and San

Isidro Labrador Fish Sanctuary.

Also impacted were beach resorts such as Bihiya Beach, 3 Cottage, Long Beach K. I, Agauda Beach Resort, Olorosao Beach Resort, Munting Buhangin Tagumpay Beach Resort, and Buhay na Tubig White Beach Resort. "Coastal clean-up is being done in the affected areas as an immediate solution to prevent further damage," said Frasco, as she advised tourists to avoid visiting these places in the meantime. She failed to mention if assistance was extended to any tourists already holidaying in those resorts.

She stressed though that tourist attractions in Naujan itself, as well as the municipalities of Victoria and Pinamalayan, have not been affected by the oil spill so far. Another major tourist attraction in the province, Naujan Lake, is also seen safe as it has no outlet to the ocean.

Boracay ready with booms

THE DOT chief ordered the regional offices in Mimaropa and Western Visayas to closely monitor developments and coordinate with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and



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its Environmental Management Bureau, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), and local government units (LGUs).

Frasco noted the oil slick has reached the municipality of Caluya in Antique, particularly along the shores of Sitio Sabang, Barangay Tinogbo, Liwagao Island, Barangay Sibolo, and Sitio Tambak in Barangay Semirara. "Although none of the tourist attractions have been affected," she said, "the LGUs together with the Coast Guard have been cleaning up the area, with support from private sector, who provided personal protective equipment."

Meanwhile, Boracay Island in Aklan is ready for any untoward effects from the oil spill. The PCG and the Malay Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office is monitoring the coastline of Boracay Island, "and has prepositioned oil slick booms in strategic areas around the island in anticipation of the oil spill," she added.

DOT-Western Visayas is also actively coordinating with the LGU of Malay on helping tourists in Boracay if the spill reaches the island's coast, she said.



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Tubig-poso ipinagbawal sa Oriental Mindoro

BAWAL munang gumamit ng tubig-poso sa Oriental Mindoro dahil sa oil spill mula sa lumubog na tanker sa bayan ng Pola simula nitong Linggo.

Sinabi ni Oriental Mindoro Governor Humerlito Dolor na isinailalim na sa state of calamity ang Pola dahil sa patuloy na paglawak ng tumagas na langis sa baybaying dagat na sakop nito.

Hindi aniya gagamit ng tubig-poso ang mga taga-Pola hanggang hindi lumalabas ang resulta sa pagsusuring gagawin sa tubig para maiwasan na madapuan ng sakit.

Nagpatupad na rin ang curfew sa Pola Mayor

Jennifer Cruz mula alas-otso ng gabi hanggang alas-kuwatro ng madaling-araw para sa mga residenteng may edad 15 hanggang 21 upang maiwasan ang kabataan na pumunta sa mga lugar na apektado ng oil spill.

Nauna rito, nababala ang Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) sa ilang lalawigan laban sa oil spill mula sa lumubog na MT Princess Empress na may kargang 800,000 litro ng industrial fuel oil.

Pinangangambahan rin ni PCG Western Visayas Chief of Staff Commander Jansen Benjamin na posibleng umabot ang oil spill sa isla ng Boracay sa Malay, Aklan.



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Mindoro oil spill kumalat pa, 14 katao bagsak

Aabot na sa 14 residente mula sa Pola, Oriental Mindoro ang nagkasakit bunsod na rin ng oil spill mula sa lumubog na MT Princess Empress.

"Meron na rayong isang dinala sa ospital na bata, and 'yung other 13 na kahapon, kasi kahapon lang naman tayo nagtanong tanong at pinapunta ko 'yong (municipal health officer) natin sa isang barangay na sobrang affected ng oil spill," sinabi ni Pola Mayor Jennifer "Ina Alegre" Cruz.

Pinayuhan naman ni DOH officer-in-charge Maria Rosario Vergeire, ang mga lokal na pamahalaan na ilayo ng lugar ang mga residente na malapit sa

karagatang apektado ng Mindoro oil spill habang binabantayang maigi ang "water and air toxicology" sa lugar.

Kapwa naman nagbabala ang DENR at UP Marine Science Institute na may posibilidad na makaabot pa sa coastal communities partikular sa mga nasa eastern at southern sides ng Oriental Mindoro ang oil spill mula sa lumubog na tanker.

Una ng ibinabala ng DENR ang pagtama nito sa Northern part ng Antique kabilang ang Liwagao Island, Caluya at Semirara island kung saan umabot na nga ito sa lugar noong Sabado. (Juliet de Loza-Cudia/Catherine Reyes)



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Site of sunken oil tanker in Or. Mindoro detected

By **CORY MARTINEZ**

THE possible site of the sunken MT Princess Empress has been detected at about 1,200 feet or approximately 400 meters below sea level in the Northeast of Pola, Oriental Mindoro.

This was revealed Monday in a press statement issued by Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Antonia Lozaga, saying that the BRP Hydrographer Ventura deployed in the area has detected the said site but the sunken vessel believed to have moved Southeast from its last known position where it completely submerged.

Lozaga, however, said that this report still requires verification through the deployment of a remotely-operated vehicle (ROV) which will allow them to complete visualization should the currents and weather permit.

"We are now preparing to access an ROV in order to fully determine where the vessel actually is and to

completely model the way the oil will be spilling from the vessel," Lozaga added in her statement.

She further disclosed that the DENR continues its interventions as the agency has three parallel work-streams in response to the oil spill.

Lozaga added that there is a need for actual protection activities since these habitats, ecosystems, and the communities themselves require anticipatory action, protection, and regeneration where possible.

"We reported this to the President immediately as soon as the analysis was released yesterday evening, and we have been given the approval to share this with the general public," Lozaga added.

She disclosed that they are closely coordinating with local government officials and with UP-MSI on the possible use of this information in the modeling for the spread of the oil.



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DOT: Tourism sites not affected by oil spill

By **CRISTINA LEE-PISCO**

THE Department of Tourism (DOT) on Monday (6 March) said tourism sites near the oil spill in Naujan, Oriental Mindoro remain unaffected but revealed it has already spread to several marine protected areas and beach resorts.

Immediately following the incident, Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco ordered the DOT Regional Offices in MIMAROPA and Western Visayas to closely monitor the situation and coordinate with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), and concerned local government units (LGUs).

Based on information gathered by the DOT, the oil spill has affected several Marine Protected Areas in the Pola, Oriental Mindoro, such as the KingFisher Reserve, St. John the Baptist Marine Sanctuary, Song of the Sea Fish Sanctuary, Stella Mariz Fish Sanctuary, Bacawan Fish Sanctuary, St. Peter the Rock Fish Sanctuary, and the San Isidro Labrador Fish Sanctuary.

Beach resorts such as Bihiya Beach, 3 Cottage, Long Beach K. 1, Aguada Beach Resort, Oloroso Beach Resort, Munting Buhangin Tagumpay Beach Resort, and Buhay na Tubig White Beach Resort in Oriental Mindoro have also been affected.

Coastal clean-up is now being done in the affected

areas as an immediate solution to prevent further damage.

"Anent this, the DOT notes with seriousness the oil spill incident and its grave impact on the tourism industry, including disruptions in the livelihood of the affected communities, tourism-dependent businesses, and recreational activities," Secretary Frasco said.

"Scuba diving, beach, and cruise tourism depend on the region's coastal resources, and are also its major tourism products. If unmitigated, the oil spill can have adverse impacts on three of the world-class dive destinations in the Philippines, specifically the Verde Island passage and Apo Reef in Mindoro, and

Coron's World War II Wrecks and Philippine Dugong," she added.

According to Secretary Frasco, cruise tourism in the region could also be affected, with 34 cruise ships expected to call in Mindoro, Romblon, Marinduque, and Palawan for the year.

"The DOT, in coordination with its regional offices, commits to continuously coordinate with agencies such as the DENR, EMB, PCG, and concerned LGUs on any update concerning the oil spill, and in searching for urgent mitigating measures to address the harmful effects of the incident to marine life, world-class dive sites, and tourist attractions," the the tourism

chief assured.

Meanwhile, the DOT reported that none of the tourist attractions in Naujan, Victoria, and Pinamulan in Oriental Mindoro have been affected so far by the oil spill. The Naujan Lake, a major tourist attraction, has no connection with the ocean and will not be affected by the oil spill.

The DOT is also in close coordination with officers of the Tubbataha Management Office who are monitoring the situation in Tubbataha Reef, which is along the Municipality of Cagayancillo in Palawan. Based on the latest update from the Tubbataha Management Office, there are no reported effects yet of the oil spill in the area.



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Oil spill sa Oriental Mindoro, posibleng umabot hanggang Northern Palawan

Posible anyang umabot ang oil spill hanggang Northern Palawan kaugnay ng paglubog ng barko sa Oriental Mindoro.

Ito ang naging babala ng University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute na sa pagsapit ng March 12 ay maaaring maabot ng pagkalat ng in-

dustrial oil sa malaking bahagi ng nasabing karagatan.

Sa ngayon ay nasa Cuyo Island na ang oil spill at patuloy pa itong lumalawak bunsod na rin ng malakas na alon dulot ng hanging amihan.

Malaki rin ang paniwala ng unibersidad na maaaring maaapektuhan

ang ilang bahagi ng tourist island sa naturang probinsya kaya't dapat agad na tumalima sa problema sa oil spill ang DENR, Philippine Coast Guard at iba pang ahensya ng gobyerno para mapigilan ang malawakang pinsala ng oil spill sa karagatan. **-Angie dela Cruz-**



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Oil Spill sa Oriental Mindoro, aabot sa Northern Palawan

Nagbabala ang University of the Philippines-Marine Science Institute na posibleng lumala ang oil spill hanggang Northern Palawan kaugnay ng paglubog ng barko sa Oriental Mindoro.

Ayon sa UP-MSI, na sa pagsapit ng March 12 ay maaaring maabot ng

pagkalat ng industrial oil ang malaking bahagi ng Palawan.

Sa ngayon anila ay nasa Cuyo Island na ang oil spill at patuloy pa itong lumalawak bunsod na rin ng malakas na alon dulot ng hanging amihan.

Malaki rin ang panipaniwala ng UP na maaaring

maaapektuhan ang ilang bahagi ng tourist island sa naturang probinsya kaya't dapat agad na tumalima sa problema sa oil spill ang DENR, Philippine Coast Guard at iba pang ahensya ng gobyerno para mapigilan ang malawakang pinsala sa karagatan. *(Angie dela Cruz)*



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Editorial

Natapong langis dulot ay hinaggis

MARAMING mamamayan sa Pola, Oriental Mindoro ang nagdurusa ngayon dahil sa natapong langis sa karagatan na kanilang pinagkukunan ng ikinabubuhay. Bakas sa mukha ng mga residente ng Pola ang hinaggis sapagkat saan sila kukuha ng ipantutustos sa kanilang pangangailangan gayung ang kanilang pangisdaan ay nakulapulan ng langis. Natatakot na rin sila sa maaaring idulot ng natapong langis sa kanilang kalusugan. Masama ang amoy ng karagatan dahil sa langis na nakahalo sa tubig. Sabi ni DOH officer in-charge Ma. Rosario Vergerie, pinapayuhan niya ang mga residente na magsuot ng face mask upang hindi malanghap ang masangsang na amoy. Delikado ito sa kalusugan. Dumalaw si Vergerie sa Pola noong Biyernes.

Habang marami ang naghihinaggis, nagtulong-tulong pa rin ang mga residente ng Pola na salukin ang mga natapong langis na halos ay matakpan ang dalampasigan. Sabi ni Pola Mayor Cruz, apektado rin ng oil spill ang kanilang turismo. At ang ikinadidismaya ni Cruz, wala umanong ipinadadalang tulong ang mayari nang lumubog na *MT Princess Empress* sa kanila. Ayon pa sa mayor, hindi biro ang tumapong langis sa karagatan at ang kanyang bayan ang napuruhan.

Lumubog ang *MT Princess Empress* noong naka-raang Martes sa baybayin ng Naujan, Oriental Mindoro habang patungo sa Iloilo. Galing Bataan ang tanker at may kargang 800,000 litro ng industrial fuel oil. Malaki umano ang alon sa baybayin ng Naujan dahilan para lumubog. Nailigtas ang mga crew ng tanker.

Bukod sa Naujan at Pola, kumalat na rin ang langis sa mga bayan ng Pinamalayan at Gloria sa Oriental Mindoro.

Sa report ng Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) kama-kalawa, umabot na sa Marinduque at Caluya, Antique ang oil spill. Pinayuhan ng PCG ang mga residente sa apat na bayan sa Oriental Mindoro na iwasan munang mangisda. Delikado umano ang mga isda sa mga lugar na may kumalat na langis.

Obligahin naman ng Department of Transportation (DOTr) ang *MT Princess Empress* na tumulong sa mga naapektuhan ng oil spill. Hindi sila dapat tumakas sa responsibilidad. Pagbayarin ang kompanya sa nangyaring ito. Marami silang pinerwisyo. Unang-una, hindi dapat nila biniyahe ang tanker na dispalinghado. Delikado ang kanilang kargang langis kaya dapat siniguro kung ligtas at hindi ito lulubog. Mayroon silang pananagutan.



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Mga residente sa Mindoro nagkakasakit na sa oil spill

HINDI bababa sa 14 residente sa bayan ng Pola, Oriental Mindoro ang nakaranas ng panakit ng tiyan, pagsusuka at pagkahilo kasunod ng nangyayaring oil spill bunsod ng lumubog na oil tanker sa kanilang karagatan.

Ayon kay Pola Mayor Jennifer "Ina Alegre" Cruz, kabilang dito ang isang bata na dinala sa ospital.

Hinikayat naman ng health department ang paglikas sa mga residente sa mas ligtas na lugar habang inaayos ng gobyerno ang sitwasyon.

Una nang nagdeklara ng 'state of calamity' sa Pola dahil sa epekto ng oil spill.

Maliban sa bayan ng Pola, apektado narin ng oil spill ang bayan ng Naujan, Pinamalayan, Gloria, Basud, Bongabong, Roxas, Mansalay at Bulalacao.

(RONALD BULA)



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8 pang bayan sa Oriental Mindoro isasailalim sa state of calamity dahil sa oil spill

HINDI bababa sa walo pang bayan sa Oriental Mindoro ang nakatakdang isailalim sa 'state of calamity' simula nitong Lunes kasunod ng oil spill mula sa lumubog na oil tanker sa dagat na sakop ng probinsya.

Layon nito na magamit ng mga local government unit ang calamity funds para sa mga apektadong komunidad.

Ayon kay Oriental Mindoro Governor Bonz Dolor, wala pang detalye sa kung anong mga bayan ang isasailalim sa state of calamity.

Pero nabatid na apektado narin ng oil spill ang kabuhayan ng mahigit 10,000 mangingisda sa mga bayan ng Pinamalayan, Gloria, Bansud, Bongabong, Roxas at Mansa-

lay.

Pangamba ng gobernador, posibleng maapektuhan din ang suplay ng isda sa mga pamilihan dahil apektado na ang breeding ground ng mga isda sa mga nabanggit na bayan.

Nababahala rin si Dolor na maapektuhan maging ang turismo sa probinsya lalo na ngayong papalapit na tag-init.

Samantala, nasa 10,000 pamilya mula sa bayan ng Pola ang nahatiran na ng food packs.

Ayon kay Social Welfare Secretary Rex Gatchalian, inihahanda narin ng ahensya ang cash-for-work program para matulungan ang mga residente na kumita habang nagpapatuloy ang coastal clean-up.



Nanawagan si Dolor sa Philippine Coast Guard na bilisan ang pagtunton sa eksaktong lokasyon ng oil tanker upang hindi ito matulad sa 2006 oil spill sa Guimaras na itinuturing na pinakamalalang environmental di-

saster sa bansa.

Base sa projection ng marine experts mula sa University of the Philippines, posibleng umabot sa karagatan ng Palawan ang oil spill sa mga susunod na araw.

(RONALD BULA)



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DENR chief hinahanting sa Mindoro oil spill

KINUMPIRMA ng alkalde sa Oriental Mindoro na hindi pa bumibisita sa kanilang bayan ang kalihim ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na si Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga kaugnay ng oil spill mula sa lumubog na tanker.

Sabi ni Pola Mayor Jennifer "Ina Alegre" Cruz, tanging undersecretary lamang ng DENR ang nagtungo sa kanilang bayan upang mag-usisa sa epekto ng oil spill.

Aniya ang ibang kalihim tulad nina Social Welfare Secretary Rex Gatchalian at Health officer-in-charge Undersecre-

tary Maria Rosario Vergeire ay personal na bumisita sa kanilang bayan.

Pinangasiwaan ni Gatchalian at pamamahagi ng food packs at iba pang tulong sa mga appektadong residente, habang si Vergeire naman ang nagbusisi sa kalusugan ng mga nakatira sa bayan.

"Meron na tayong isang dinala sa ospital na bata, and 'yong other 13 na kahapon, kasi kahapon lang naman tayo nagtanong-tanong at pinapunta ko 'yong (municipal health officer) natin sa isang barangay na sobrang affected ng oil spill," paglalahad ni Cruz.



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Environment Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga and French Ambassador Michèle Boccoz led the groundbreaking for the new Shark Fin Environment Center in Palawan on March 2. The center will serve as a venue for scientific innovations and research in enhancing the conservation and protection of the island's coastal and natural resources. Photo shows (from left) French embassy political counselor Thomas Rollet, Sulubai Environmental Foundation chairman Frédéric Tardieu, Boccoz, Yulo-Loyzaga, AFD Philippines director Bénédicte Gazon and SEA Academy project manager Laure Thierry de Ville d'Avray.



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DENR cites BOC's help in campaign vs. wildlife trade

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has recognized the Bureau of Customs (BOC) for its assistance and support to the government's campaign against illegal wildlife trade.

BOC port of Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) collector Carmelita Talusan and her team received plaques of commendation from the DENR - Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB) over the weekend.

NAIA Customs agents foiled a series of attempts to smuggle wildlife species such as poisonous spiders, tarantulas, snakes, marine animals, in coordination with the Enforcement Security Service—Environmental Protection and Compliance Division—NAIA (ESS-EPCD-NAIA) and DENR.

The awards were given in line with the celebration of the 2023 World Wildlife Day with the theme "Partnership for Wildlife Conservation" held at the BMB Training Center Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center, Diliman Quezon City. **Joel E. Zurbano**



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BOC-NAIA cited for drive vs illegal wildlife trade

THE Bureau of Customs Ninoy Aquino International Airport (BOC-NAIA), under the leadership of District Collector Carmelita M. Talusan and team received commendation from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources - Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB) for the Port's invaluable assistance and support in curbing illegal wildlife trade.

The Plaques of Commendation were awarded to officers and personnel of the enforcement agencies during the 9th Wildlife Law Enforcement Awarding Ceremony in line with the celebration of the 2023 World Wildlife Day with the theme "Partnership for Wildlife Conservation" at the BMB Training Center Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center, Diliman Quezon City.

The event was attended by Sen. Cynthia A. Villar, Chairperson, Environmental Natural Resources and Climate Change, Cong. Elpidio F. Barzaga Jr., Chairperson of Committee on Natural Resources, Dir. Kelia Cummins, Director, US Embassy International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Jenna Dawson-Faber, Regional Coordinator for Southeast Asia, UNODC Global Programme on Crimes the Affect Environment, DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, top officials of DENR and other national governments, non-government organizations and other private stakeholders.

Jun Legaspi



Marine biodiversity meet held in Palawan

By JOSEPH PEDRAJAS

The United States concluded last week a first-ever three-day summit in Palawan that aimed at equipping local stakeholders with knowledge in conserving marine biodiversity and protecting the coastal areas.

US Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission Director Ryan Washburn led the summit that involved 60 civil society organizations during his visit to the province from March 1 to 3 to express Washington's commitment of environment support to areas facing the West Philippine Sea, such as Northern Luzon, Mindoro, and Palawan.

"This visit highlighted the US government's continued commitment to supporting local stakeholders in conserving biodiversity and protecting marine resources from illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities of domestic and foreign fleets," the US Embassy in Manila said in a statement on Monday, March 6.

As an enduring friend, partner, and ally, Washburn said the US will continue to

collaborate with local stakeholders in the western Philippines to support sustainable fishing practices, strengthen food security, and advance the conservation of marine ecosystems.

This, as "we work toward achieving our shared goal of inclusive growth and a free, prosperous, and secure Indo-Pacific region," he added.

According to the embassy, the summit was organized following the November 2022 historic visit of US Vice President Kamala Harris to Palawan where she stressed the importance of the US-Philippines partnership in creating economic opportunities and protecting coastal ecosystems throughout the region.

While in Puerto Princesa, Washburn and Senior Adviser Booker-Veloz turned over freezers and other fish drying materials worth ₱300,000 to women associations in Barangay Tagbueros, a fishing community Harris also visited.

The donation will help the local fishing community reduce post-harvest losses, the embassy noted.



Adoption of oceans treaty welcomed

THE Philippines welcomed the adoption of the first international treaty on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas "beyond national jurisdiction."

Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo said the treaty adoption proved once again the "importance of multilateralism in finding common ground amid competing interests."

"This international legally binding agreement will provide holistic and equitable management of human activities impacting ocean life beyond national boundaries to safeguard global ocean health," he said.

"It will also contribute to climate resilience, increased food security for millions of people," Manalo said on Twitter on Monday.

Manila also underscored the importance of giving "due regard to the rights and jurisdiction of adjacent coastal states and archipelagic states, which are heavily dependent on the sea," Manalo said.

On March 3, the United States government, in partnership with 60 civil society organizations, convened the first CSO Summit in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan to coordinate action for marine biodiversity conservation and protection in the coastal areas of Northern Luzon, Mindoro and Palawan that face the South China Sea, the US Embassy said.

The embassy on Monday said US Agency for International Development (USAid) Mission Director Ryan Washburn led the CSO Summit during his visit to Palawan from March 1 to 3.

This visit highlighted the US government's continued commitment to support local stakeholders in conserving biodiversity and protecting marine resources from illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing activities of domestic and foreign fleets, the embassy said in a statement.

"As an enduring friend, partner and ally, the United States will continue to collaborate with local stakeholders in the western Philippines to support sustainable fishing practices, strengthen food security, and advance the conservation of marine ecosystems as we work toward achieving our shared goal of inclusive growth and a free, prosperous and secure Indo-Pacific region," USAid Philippines Mission Director Washburn said.

BERNADETTE E. TAMAYO



Masungi and its complex legal landscape

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THE complexity of the land-

scape being confronted by the different stakeholders in the Masungi Georeserve conflict is not just biophysical, or in terms of its biodiversity and the ecological services it renders not only to the Greater Manila Area, but even to neighboring regions. It also applies to the complex legal landscape, one that can ultimately lead us to conclude that the problem is largely the creation of government itself.



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Masungi and its complex legal landscape

The history of legal declarations relevant to Masungi started as early as 1904, when Executive Order (EO) 33 was issued establishing the Mariquina Watershed with an area of 27,980.22 hectares. The area was enlarged by EO 14 signed on Feb. 19, 1915, to now include portions of San Rafael and Wawa in Montalban in addition to the original parcels located in Teresa and Baras, all in the province of Rizal.

On June 26, 1969, the Kaliwa River Forest Reserve, covering an area of 27,608 hectares, was established by virtue of Proclamation 573. On Oct. 29, 1973, President Ferdinand E. Marcos, using his legislative powers, issued Presidential Decree (PD) 324, which excluded 1,729 hectares from the Mariquina Watershed Reservation, thereby rendering it as alienable and disposable (A and D), which meant it could be subjected to exploitation and use under the provisions of the Public Land Act.

However, on April 8, 1977, Marcos issued Proclamation 1636 which effectively converted the 1,729 hectares previously declared as A and D by PD 324 back to a protected area as part of a larger area declared as a national park, wildlife sanctuary and game preserve. While Proclamation 1636 declared the area covered as 46,310 hectares, the actual area when plotted using the technical metes and bounds is much larger at 146,311.14 hectares.

On June 1, 1992, Republic Act (RA) 7586 establishing the National Integrated Protected Area Systems (Nipas) became law. The law provided for the inclusion of the protected area established by Proclamation 1636.

One year after on May 10, 1993, and pursuant to RA 7586, Angel Alcala, who was the secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), signed DENR Administrative Order (DAO) 1993-33 which proposed that the Masungi Rock and its surroundings be declared as a Strict Nature Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary. As such, the area would be managed strictly for protection purposes, and would not be used for mining and other activities that could have adverse environmental and ecological impacts.

On Sept. 28, 2011, the DENR Regional Office in Calabarzon (Region 4A) entered into a memorandum of agreement (MoA) with the municipality of Tanay in connection with the co-management of the Masungi Rock, which was then named as lot 10. Two months later, on November 24, President Benigno S. Aquino 3rd issued Proclamation 296 which declared the Marikina Watershed Reservation as Protected Areas pursuant to RA 7586, henceforth to be named the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape (UMRBPL).

A year after in 2012, the municipality of Tanay issued Order 2012-02-01 which created the Masungi Rock Management Council (MRMC). The Blue Star Construction and Development Corp. (BSDC) was designated as the private sector partner in the undertaking. A year after in 2013,



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Tanay issued Municipal Ordinance 1 which declared Masungi Rock as a local protected area.

In 2017, the DENR, through then Environment Secretary Gina Lopez, signed a MoA with the Masungi Georeserve Foundation Inc. (MGFI), an entity whose organizers were associated with BSDC, granting the latter rights to manage the protection, conservation and sustainable development of 2,700 hectares of land, which included Masungi Rock or Lot 10.

On June 22, 2018, RA 11036, or the E-Nipas Law, expanded the coverage of Nipas, and has tacitly included UMRBPL as a legislated protected area.

Ordinary readers of this column who are not used to reading laws and their acronyms can be overwhelmed and intimidated by this plethora of policy statements from the executive and the legislative branches of government, and even from a local government unit, for good reason. But what can be reasonably asserted despite the relative diversity of policy statements is the glaring fact that the DENR entered into a valid agreement with MGFI in 2017. A MoA was executed in good faith and must be presumed to have legal cover under the presumption of regularity.

Having said this, the DENR has every right to question the implementation of the MoA, as it has done so officially in congressional hearings conducted for the said purpose. DENR has alleged that MGFI now appears to privilege its commercial interests in ecotourism over its commitment to conservation advocacy. It is even alleged that the MoA is legally infirm, and could even be voided since it was bereft of legality, as it may have ran afoul not only of RA 7586 but even with the Constitution, with the grant of perpetual trust being the main bone of contention. MGFI is even now accused of violating the rights of indigenous peoples and of tenured migrants residing within the UMRBPL.

However, the burden to prove not only the legal infirmities of the MoA, but also the alleged violation committed by MGFI, lies with those who assail the legality, and compliance with the terms, of the agreement. A perusal of the 2017 agreement reveals, as stipulated in item 7, that only a final judgment by the court can cause its termination. As a party to the MoA, the DENR, when it agreed to this provision, may have undermined its unilateral power to rescind the agreement without judgment of a court. Even the claim that the contract was void ab initio because it is constitutionally infirm cannot be made unilaterally by the DENR without judicial intervention, considering that final determination of constitutionality and legality is the province of the judiciary, and not the executive branch.

The DENR can opt to unilaterally rescind the contract, but it will not solve but instead create more problems. But certainly, there are other options that it can explore, including submitting to a mediation process.



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EYES WIDE OPEN

IRIS GONZALES

Garbage emergency

That the Philippines emerged as the ocean's biggest plastic polluter in the world is alarming and embarrassing.

Just a few weeks ago, Visual Capitalist came out with a pie graph on the highest ocean plastic waste polluters and the Philippines accounted for the biggest share of the pie with 356,371 metric tons annually, even beating India with 126,513 metric tons.

It is indeed alarming that we emit 35 percent of the ocean's plastic.

But this comes as no surprise. Our country, which has 4,820 plastic emitting rivers, has such a poor record in waste management.

We all know that most of the plastic found in the water comes from the litter in our streets, beaches, shantytowns, our very own households.

And this is so much more than the Philippines being an international embarrassment.

It's really about our country, our environment and our people – today's generation and the succeeding ones.

If we don't address this emergency, we may actually find much of our land buried in tons and tons of garbage — literally, with very little space left for us to live and move about freely.

We may reach a point of no return in a span of 10 years or less if we don't act now.

What to do then?

First of all, it is important to adopt a drastic change in lifestyle because waste is a function of the population.

We need to reduce our consumption of anything and everything because the more we consume, the more waste and garbage we leave behind.

We can start right in our very own homes – by segregating our waste, recycling and reusing what can be recycled. We can likewise shift to more sustainable products.

Waste management

The more important solution is serious waste management as I learned recently when I sat down with long time executive Rufo Colayco and his son JV.

I've known Mr. Colayco from way back as head of the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA). Now, he is no longer in government but is instead back in the private sector running his own company, the Metro Clark Waste Management Corp. (MCWM).

MCWM, which is celebrating its 20th year this year, is the biggest and most modern and professionally run engineered sanitary landfill covering an area of almost 100 hectares in Clark, Pampanga. No other Philippine landfill comes close.

At present, the company serves some 150 LGUs in Central Luzon, picking up their waste and bringing this into the landfill. It also serves industrial users.

For its LGU clients, MCWM does not do house-to-house trash collection. Instead, the waste is picked up from designated points where the waste is segregated. The company only accepts "residual waste" from LGUs, and treats hazardous waste.



Rufo beams with pride in explaining how MCWM landfill works. It's world-class, he says, even challenging me to see other landfills in the country for comparison.

Permitted and closely monitored by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the MCWM accepts medical and industrial waste, which must first be treated by accredited treatment facilities that employ specialized techniques before these can be accepted at MCWM's disposal site.

So far, MCWM is the only facility in Southeast Asia certified with different ISO quality certifications.

It's no doubt an important facility and we need to see more companies do this.

Waste to energy

The next project for MCWM is a waste-to-energy project, which is in partnership with a German company.

This project is aligned with the country's sustainability efforts and would bring to the Philippines total investments of \$220 to \$250 million.

This would be at no cost to the government as it would be funded by MCWM, together with its partner Plambeck-Emirates.

Plambeck-Emirates is a joint venture between Plambeck Germany, a publicly listed firm with extensive experience in renewable energy projects, and the Royal Family of Abu Dhabi.

The consortium has already submitted its unsolicited proposal to BCDA in 2019. It is designed to reduce by up to 70 percent the volume of waste to be disposed of in MCWM's landfill in Clark.

BCDA has yet to respond to the proposal but proponents are hoping to commence with the project as soon as possible, as part of a comprehensive waste management solution that MCWM said is already proven elsewhere in the world as an effective strategy to minimize waste.

"MCWM is ready and eager to start groundbreaking on a WTE facility as soon as the concession is renewed, having previously submitted a proposal for the same in 2019," the company said.

A key feature of the proposed Integrated Waste Management System is a waste-to-energy power plant that will utilize waste as fuel.

Indeed, burning waste is not necessarily cheap; even controversial, too; but it gets things done – it reduces waste and produces electricity.

Circular economy

At the end of our meeting, Rufo and his son talked about the circular economy; of how we really need to embrace changes in the way we consume things if we want to see a sustainable future for us, our children, and our children's children.

A circular economy is one that stops producing waste and instead makes use of that waste to create usable goods.

Ideally, no waste is produced but I personally think this is next to impossible, so while we continue to produce waste, we should do what we can to recycle it or turn it into energy.

Otherwise, as the world's top ocean plastic polluter, we may find our archipelago of 7,000 islands literally buried in trash — sooner than we could ever imagine.

* * *

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Japan pledges financial support to help Asean decarbonize

TOKYO- Japan pledged financial and technological support on Saturday to help Asean countries accelerate their efforts to decarbonize their economies and combat climate change.

Energy-poor Japan hopes to become the world's leading hydrogen economy to reduce dependence on traditional polluting fossil fuels such as coal and oil.

As the chair of the Group of Seven nations (G7) this year, Japan will hold a ministerial

meeting on climate, energy and environment in Sapporo on April 15-16, ahead of the G7 summit in Hiroshima on May 19-21, to promote what it calls realistic energy transition.

"Japan will take a lead in providing generous support in finance, technology and personal resources to help Asia's decarbonization," Industry Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura told the first ministerial meeting of the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC).

The AZEC was proposed by Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida last year with the aim of sharing the philosophy of promoting decarbonization in Asian nations and cooperating to push forward energy transition.

At the meeting, attended by several Asean members and Australia, Nishimura said the push for collaboration will include renewable power, natural gas, hydrogen and ammonia among other areas.

AZEC, in a joint statement,

called for the group to financially support investments into decarbonization infrastructure and creation of clean energy supply chains.

Neither the statement nor Nishimura provided a potential amount of the spending.

"As many countries have expressed wishes for support from Japan, we would like to take a strong leadership in supporting them in technology, finance, including investment from private sector, and human resource

development," Nishimura told a briefing.

The AZEC members - Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam - could consider creating a master plan for hydrogen and ammonia in Asia as a next step, he added.

As a first concrete step under the AZEC, Japanese companies, including Iwatani Corp and Electric Power Development, have agreed

to jointly create Japan's first hydrogen supply chain between Australia's Victoria state and Kawasaki, an industrialized city near Tokyo, to advance energy transition toward a cleaner society, Nishimura said.

Japan will stress the importance of investment in gas, liquefied natural gas as well as hydrogen and ammonia during its presidency of the G7 this year but would keep it clean to meet 2050 carbon neutral goal, a source said this week.

Reuters



PHL leads in SEA plastic upcycling facility

THE Philippines has been leading in pioneering new solutions that involve the whole community in becoming plastic-neutral, a dairy company official said on Monday.

"Globally, Royal FrieslandCampina is very strongly committed to making our packaging recyclable and more circular by 2023," Corine Tap, senior vice president of Royal FrieslandCampina (RFC) said.

"This is also important as the Philippines has been leading in pioneering new solutions that involve that whole community in becoming plastic neutral," she said when asked how the upcycling facility can impact the company's sustain-

ability goal.

This environmental initiative is forward-thinking and while it is a small start, it serves as a big inspiration for other companies, especially for the different operating companies of RFC, Tap added.

RFC is a Dutch multinational dairy cooperative based in Amersfoort, the Netherlands.

Tap visited the Multi-Layered Plastic (MLP) Upcycling Facility of Alaska Milk Corp. (AMC) and D&G Pacific Corp. as part of her business review trip in the Philippines.

"There is a big opportunity for this multi-layered plastic upcycling facility to be replicated by other operating companies in the Asian

region. To do that, we must look locally at the specific issues because plastic problems differ from country to country. But this is a benchmark for all RFC companies in the region and beyond," she said.

The site, she added, should be run and managed optimally to make this venture even more effective.

Since it is relatively new, ideas on optimizing the capacity, processes and flows should be focused on.

"With the great cooperation we have here from the community and the government, especially with RePurpose Inc. and D&G Pacific, we are sure that we can generate more impact to make this even better in achieving a more circular economy

ultimately a greener future," Tap added.

The upcycling facility was inaugurated on February 1 and jump-started its commercial production.

The facility is a first in Southeast Asia, which processes and converts single-use plastics into WoW boards.

AMC and D&G have formally opened their P45-million MLP.

The inauguration of the facility signaled the start of the venture's commercial operations, which involve the processing and recycling of single-use plastics into boards. The boards, in turn, can be used in furniture production or as construction materials. *Raadee S. Sausa*



ANG NWRB o National Water Resources Board ang natatanging ahensya ng pamahalaan para sa lahat ng mga yamang-tubig ng Pilipinas na naatasang mag-isyu ng water permits. Ibinibigay ang water permits sa mga indibidwal o grupong nagaplay ng water permits para sa: domestikong gamit, patubig, suplay ng kuryente, pangangisda, pang-industriya, nag-aalaga ng hayop, libangan at komersyal na nakasaad sa

Presidential Decree 1067 o kilala bilang **Water Code** ng Pilipinas noong 1976, kung saan binibigyang karapatan o water rights ang water permittee sa naangkop na paggamit niya ng tubig.

Kasabay ng muling pag-sigla ng turismo ng Boracay islands, nakatakdang gastusan ng Manila Water Company ng halagang Php 291 million para matiyak ang pagkakaroon ng malinis na tubig doon sa susunod na tatlong taon sa pamamagitan ng Bo-

MALINIS NA TUBIG PARA SA BARANGAY

racay Water, ang subsidiary ng Manila Water Philippine Ventures at siyang concessionaire ng TIEZA o ng Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority.

Nakatakdang sumailalim sa upgrading and rehabilitation ang Nabaoy at Caticlán pumping stations at ang Caticlán water treatment plant para matiyak ang suplay ng malinis na tubig.

Sinimulan na rin nitong January 2023 ang programang "Tubig para sa Barangay" kung saan unang nakinabang ang 160 kabahayan sa Barangay Yapak sa nasa-bing isla.

Sumasailalim din sa reha-

bilitasyon ang sewerage treatments plan ng Boracay Water sa Barangay Balabag at Barangay Manoc-Manoc bilang pagsunod sa mga panuntunan ng DENR o Department of Environment and Natural Resources kaugnay sa pagkontrol ng antas ng ammonia, fecal coliform at phosphorous sa katubigang nakapalibot sa isla.

Patuloy na isinasagawa ang free mandatory sewer connection ng 1,860 kabahayan at mga establisimiyentong nasa malapit sa 100 meters sewer network alinsunod sa itinatadhana ng Republic Act No. 9275 o ang Clean Water Act.

Bahagi rin ng plano ang proteksyon ng Nabaoy river and watershed na siyang tanging pinagkukunan ng malinis na tubig ng buong Boracay island.

Nakatakdang tamnan ng aabot sa 33,320 na tree seedlings ang 40 hectares na watershed sa susunod na limang taon.

Kung nais ninyo malaman ang **TAMANG IMPORMASYON, TAMANG SERBISYO** ni **AGARANG SERBISYO LADY**, i-search sa **YOUTUBE CHANNEL, "HILDA ONG"** at sa **Facebook Fanpage "TV RADIO HILDA ONG"**, Huwag kalimutan i-click ang salitang **"SUBSCRIBE", "LIKE"** at **"SHARE"**.



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Tacloban watershed reforestation funded

A total of 1,934 hectares of land within the Leyte Sab-a Basin abutting Tacloban City and the Sta. Fe, Alangalang and San Miguel towns will be planted with trees

BY ELMER RECUERDO

PALO, Leyte – The Community Environment and Natural Resources Office here will embark on a massive reforestation activity in Tacloban City's watershed to stabilize the water supply amid a fast-increasing population.

Forester Josephine Agustin, conservation and development specialist of CENRO-Palo, said their office has received funding of P35 million from the office of House Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez and the Tingog Partylist for the reforestation project.

"Tacloban is not sufficient in freshwater. We get our water from Pastrana town and we cannot satisfy the need of the increasing population of the city," Agustin said.

The plan is to reforest 1,934 hectares of land within the Leyte Sab-a Basin, a catch basin that abuts Tacloban City and the municipalities of Sta. Fe, Alangalang and San Miguel, where 3,088 hectares of peatland lie at the center.

Agustin said the area will be planted with trees indigenous to the area, including on land that had been distributed to farmers under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

"The project will not only help stabilize the water supply to the city, but will also improve the air quality, as well as provide a livelihood to the residents of the communities that will be covered by the reforestation program," Agustin said.

She said the project will be implemented under the National Greening Program of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, whereby a barangay-based people's organization will enter into a contract with the DENR to implement the project.

Consultation up

She added that consultations are already ongoing in the different communities while studies are also being done to determine the most appropriate trees that will be planted.

Agustin said that based on initial consultations with the communities, reforestation in the area has been intensified in recent months.

"We have to protect and preserve the Sab-a Basin area. There is increasing pressure on our remaining forest cover because people are using wood as a fuel due to high prices of LPG and kerosene," she said.

The Leyte Sab-a Basin area was identified in 1974 as the food basket of Leyte and Eastern Visayas, long before the presence of the peatland was discovered and studies of its importance in the ecosystem were done.

Then-President Ferdinand Marcos Sr. signed Presidential Decree 625 creating the Leyte Sab-a Basin Development Authority that would have made the area "a model for the development of an agricultural estate."

The program, however, failed as the peatland was found unsuitable for agriculture as the soil and sediments stored were acidic.

Later studies show that peatlands store up to 30 percent of the world's carbon, and, if degraded, it becomes a significant source of greenhouse gas, releasing almost 5 percent of global carbon emissions caused by human activities.



AFP Cavaliers gain share of UNTV Cup lead

Games Sunday
(Novadeci Convention
Center, QC)

2 p.m. - Senate vs Judiciary

3:30 p.m. - OP-PMS vs NHA

5 p.m. - DENR vs AFP

Three-time champion Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) clobbered National Housing Authority (NHA), 93-66, and gained a share of the lead in the 9th UNTV Cup on Sunday at the Novadeci Convention Center in Quezon City.

In posting their fifth win in seven games, the AFP Cavaliers

leaned heavily on their stifling final quarter defense that saw them hold the Home Masters to just nine points to draw level with the Judiciary Magis.

More than extending their winning run to three games dating back the first round eliminations, the Cavaliers boosted their bid for an outright semis berth - thanks largely to Romeo Almerol and Jerry Lumungsod.

In other games, the OPS-PMS Trailblazers kept their quarters bid alive with a 97-91 win over the PNP Responders while the GSIS Furies outlasted the Senate

Defenders, 76-66, to grab solo third at 5-3.

The Cavaliers, who face the defending champions **DENR Warriors** on Sunday, got a double-double of 22 points and 11 boards from Almerol. Lumongsod also had 22 points and seven rebounds.

With the win, the Trailblazers, who got 29 points from Jhon Kenneth Aljard, 27 from Cris Dalaten, and 26 from Robert Jan Faundo, forged a four-way tie for fourth to seventh places with Senate, NHA, and DENR with similar 4-3 records.



Negotiations for Laguna Lakeshore Road project on

THE Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) has started negotiations for financial support for the construction of the Laguna Lakeshore Road Network (LLRN), a government flagship infrastructure project.

Public Works Secretary Manuel Bonoan made the disclosure on Monday after a meeting with an Asian Development Bank (ADB) mission to plan and assess the way forward for the realization of the LLRN Project-Phase 1.

"With 85.1 percent of the detailed engineering design (DED) for LLRN already complete, DPWH has started negotiations to gather support from possible financing institutions crucial in the realization of this flagship infrastructure project," he said.

Senior Undersecretary Emil Sadain, the LLRN team head, said the phase 1 of the project will connect the southern province of Laguna to Metro Manila via Laguna Lake. It will provide a safer, faster alternative and reliable transportation link.

LLRN Project-Phase 1 will connect Lower Bicutan, Taguig City and Calamba City, Laguna with a main alignment of 37.60 kilometers.

Sadain said the proposed third highway going south will ease the traffic congestion, especially during

rush hour at the Manila South Road and South Luzon Expressway. This will also boost the economic development and growth potential of Laguna, Batangas, Quezon and Rizal in the Southern Tagalog region.

The Laguna Lakeshore Road Network-Phase 1 involves the construction of a 21.5-kilometer viaduct and a 15.9-kilometer embankment along the west shoreline of Laguna Lake, starting from Barangay Lower Bicutan in Taguig to Calamba City in Laguna.

It will also cover the construction of eight interchanges to connect municipal boundaries to the nearest public road along Lower Bicutan, Sucat, Alabang, Tunasan, San Pedro/Biñan, Santa Rosa, Cabuyao and Calamba, for a total project cost of P175.3-billion.

Bonoan, Sadain and other top DPWH officials and ADB Country Director Kelly Bird earlier met in a three-day reconnaissance mission where they discussed strategic plans and financial assessment for the 37.4-kilometer road network and viaduct.

Discussions focused on funding schemes and loan application process, construction method, preparation of resettlement plan, gender action plan and environmental impact assessment.

WILLIAM DEPASUPIL



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CLASSES SUSPENDED IN THE PROVINCE

TWO STRONG QUAKES IN DAVAO DE ORO DAMAGE HIGHWAY, HOUSES

DAVAO CITY—Two earthquakes of magnitude 4.9 and 5.2 that jolted Davao de Oro province barely five hours apart at dawn on Monday destroyed a major highway and prompted the suspension of classes throughout the province.

Vice Gov. Jayvee Tyron Uy said the national highway connecting New Bataan and Maragusan towns was impassable after part of the road collapsed during the earthquake.

"The continuous shaking caused the road to collapse," he told the Inquirer by phone. "But roads in elevated portions of the highway, such as this one, should have included slope protection as part of its program," he added.

Gov. Dorothy Montejo Gonzaga on Monday suspended classes at all levels in private and public schools in the province but decided to proceed with the opening of its three-day Bulawan Festival.

Still aftershocks

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said the magnitude 4.9 quake that struck at 12:49 a.m. on Monday was still an aftershock of the magnitude 6 quake that shook the province on Feb. 1. Phivolcs traced the recent quake's epicenter some 9 kilometers southeast of New Bataan town, with depth of focus at 5 km.

At 4:43 a.m., another quake of 5.3 magnitude again jolted the area, with its epicenter traced 22 km south-



COLLAPSED ROAD A portion of the national highway that links the towns of New Bataan and Maragusan in Davao de Oro collapses after strong earthquakes rocked the province at dawn on Monday. —PHOTO COURTESY OF RUEBIL GARCIA

east of New Bataan town.

Some houses in Maragusan reported cracks on the floor and on their concrete wall while in Nabunturan town, the ceiling of the classroom inside Nabunturan National High School also fell during the quake.

Outdoor events

Phivolcs reported that both quakes were tectonic in origin but Uy said they were trying to alert Phivolcs about reports by some villagers who reportedly saw flashes from the crater of Mt. Leonard Kniasseff in Maco town, shortly before the 12:49 a.m. quake. Mt. Leonard is an active volcano.

Although the governor suspended all classes, the celebration of Bulawan Festival, a three-day event that culminates in the province's 25th founding anniversary on March 8, pushed through despite the shaking.

Gonzaga did not call off the festival, saying that the events that celebrate the province's creation were to be held outdoors.

Davao de Oro was also struck by a magnitude 6 quake in February this year, which damaged a portion of the Davao de Oro provincial hospital building. —REPORTS FROM GERMELINA LACORTE AND CARMELITO Q. FRANCISCO INQ



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Republic of the Philippines
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Certificate No. 66632
RAC Code 38

**NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR
EXPLORATION PERMIT OF MYED-NIKKEL
RESOURCES CORPORATION**

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 76 of Department of Environment and Natural Resource (DENR) Administrative Order (DAO) No. 2010-21, the Consolidated Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 7942, otherwise known as the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, that Myed-Nikkel Resources Corporation with address at 1051 North Bay Boulevard, Novotas City 1485 has filed an application for Exploration Permit particularly described, as follows:

- I. Application No.** : EPA-IVA-147
II. Date of Filing : July 31, 2019
III. Area Location : Municipality of Maragondon, Cavite City Province of Cavite

IV. Description of the Applied Area

A. Geographical Coordinates

CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
1	14° 13' 30.00"	120° 34' 00.00"
2	14° 15' 00.00"	120° 34' 00.00"
3	14° 15' 00.00"	120° 31' 00.00"
4	14° 14' 00.00"	120° 31' 00.00"
5	14° 14' 00.00"	120° 30' 30.00"
6	14° 14' 30.00"	120° 30' 30.00"
7	14° 14' 30.00"	120° 30' 00.00"
8	14° 15' 30.00"	120° 30' 00.00"
9	14° 15' 30.00"	120° 29' 30.00"
10	14° 16' 30.00"	120° 29' 30.00"
11	14° 16' 30.00"	120° 29' 00.00"
12	14° 17' 00.00"	120° 29' 00.00"
13	14° 17' 00.00"	120° 28' 30.00"
14	14° 18' 00.00"	120° 28' 30.00"
15	14° 18' 00.00"	120° 28' 00.00"
16	14° 19' 00.00"	120° 28' 00.00"
17	14° 19' 00.00"	120° 31' 30.00"
18	14° 16' 00.00"	120° 31' 30.00"
19	14° 16' 00.00"	120° 35' 00.00"
20	14° 15' 00.00"	120° 35' 00.00"
21	14° 15' 00.00"	120° 34' 30.00"
22	14° 13' 30.00"	120° 34' 30.00"

Sketch Plan: Please refer to "Annex A"
Size: The applied area covers Five Thousand One Hundred Thirty Nine and 9623/10000 (5.139.9623 hectares) hectares.

B. Restrictions

The applied area shall be subject to Section 15 ("Areas Closed to Mining Applications"), Section 16 ("Ancestral Lands") and Section 105 ("Entry to Lands") of DAO No. 2010-21, and Section 4 of DAO No. 2012-07, as amended, which provide, among others, that:

a. The following areas are closed to mining applications: areas covered by valid and existing mining rights/applications, old growth/virgin forests, proclaimed watershed forest reserves, protected areas and other areas expressly prohibited by law;

b. The following areas shall also be closed to mining applications except upon written consent/prior clearance by the concerned government agency or private entity: areas near or under public or private buildings, cemeteries, archeological and historical sites, bridges, highways, waterways, railroads reservoirs, dams and other infrastructure projects, public or private works, including plantations or valuable crops;

c. In cases of areas occupied by Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and/or covered by Certificates of Ancestral Domain/Land Claims/Titles (CADC/CALC/CADT/CAL), the Free and Prior Informed Consent shall be secured from the concerned IPs;

d. In cases of surface owners, occupants and concessionaires that may be covered by the applied area, their permission shall be obtained prior to entry into their lands by the eventual Permittee for purposes of undertaking sand and gravel extraction therein;

e. Prime agricultural lands, in addition to land covered by RA No. 667 or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988, as amended, including plantations and areas devoted to valuable crops, and Strategic Agriculture and Fisheries Development Zones and fish refuge and sanctuaries declared as such by the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture;

f. Tourism development areas, as identified in the national and local tourism development plans; and

g. Other critical areas; island ecosystems, and impact areas of mining as determined by current and existing mapping technologies, that the DENR may hereafter identify pursuant to existing laws, rules, and regulations, such as, but not limited to, the National Integrated Protected Areas System;

V. Activities to be undertaken

Per the submitted Exploration Work Program the following activities will be conducted:

- 1. Research Work**
All available data on previous regional work such as thematic maps, geological/geochemical data, lithological data, and all other data that is useful in the implementation of a newly proposed exploration program will be compiled, collated and carefully studied and reviewed.
- 2. Reconnaissance/Regional Survey or Studies**
Surveys to be conducted shall be in deep waters offshore, wherein in which the safest from is by remote sensing. It shall consider a number of geological factors such as: coastal evolution, landform development,

stratigraphy, and lithology. This shall involve regional seismic survey (subbottom profiling) and preliminary surficial (grab) sampling.

This phase shall result into the identification of probable sand patches. This shall provide an indication of the characteristics of the local geological sequence to be expected and should be considered when planning the forthcoming surveys. All surveys and the majority of dredgers will utilize GPS navigation systems for positioning. The potential mineral prospects and areas showing anomalies identified during the regional assessment survey will be further investigated by semi-detailed to detailed geological/geophysical studies.

It is expected that the Seismic Survey will cover about 10,000 hectares in size 1km apart, or 10 seismic lines for a total of about 100km. The time to complete the ground survey will be two (2) months, including the set out and ground preparation, and the time to review and prepare all data will take one (1) month.

The target area will be tested using a form of Echo Sounding. This system uses two primary frequencies to generate difference frequencies. The high frequencies can be used to determine the water depth, the low frequencies are able to penetrate the bottom and can give information about the bottom structure and layering and also about embedded objects. The actual ship movement including the heave is measured with a motion sensor. By understanding the geology and the form of the response, areas that may contain sand deposits can be highlighted and targeted.

A geophysical map and cross sections at a scale of 1:50,000 will be produced at the end of the survey and subsequent analysis of the data. These will show subbottom profiles of the area.

3. Semi-Detailed Survey or follow-up Studies

This shall be continuation of the previous reconnaissance survey wherein seismic lines will be in between previously surveyed lines (infill) that showed potential for sand deposits. It is expected that the Seismic Survey will cover 4,000 hectares in size about 250m apart, or 15 seismic lines for a total of about 120km. The time to complete the ground survey will be three (3) months. Work schedule may be affected by weather conditions. The time to review and prepare all data will take two (2) months.

A geophysical map and cross sections at a scale of 1:10,000 will be produced at the end of the survey and subsequent analysis of the data. The map will document seabed surficial characteristics, hydrographic features, rock types, and other potential sand features. These information are important for the determination of the location of possible sand and other borrow materials deposit, including geometry, size and probable volume.

4. Bathymetric Survey

The bathymetric survey will potentially cover 4,000 hectares in size. The time to complete the survey will be five (5) months simultaneous with the reconnaissance and semi-detailed seismic surveys. The time to process all data and process the map will take one (1) month. This survey will be done with the use of multibeam system.

5. Detailed Survey or Studies

Planned drilling and unconsolidated sediment sampling by vibrocoring shall be a combination of semi-detailed and follow-up drilling. This will be done the use of a hydraulic vibrocorer which has a capacity to penetrate about 6m into the seabed. Target area will depend on the results of the subbottom profiling. If the results of this drilling is encouraging, a follow-up drilling program will be undertaken.

6. Interpretation of Results

Interpretation of results of the geophysical surveying and vibrocore drilling will be presented in a report. Depending on the results of drilling, a preliminary resource estimate of any defined sand (borrow material) deposit shall also be presented in the report.

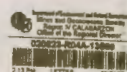
7. Laboratory Testing

The vibrocore samples shall be split and sampled. All samples that will be gathered will be placed in sample bags and properly labeled before direct transport to the laboratory for analysis. The remaining cores shall be secured in core trays and properly labeled/covered before storing for reference purposes. Laboratory tests may include particle size analysis; hydrometer test; particle specific gravity; min/max density; and carbonate content.

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For further particulars, please course your inquiries to the Regional Director, MBG RO No. IV-A (CALABARZON) located at 8th floor, DENR by the Bay Building, 1515 Roxas Boulevard, Ermita, Manila.

EDGARDO D. CASTILLO
Chief, Mine Management Division and
OIC, Regional Director in Consultant Capacity





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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
MINES AND GEOSCIENCES BUREAU
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Website: region4a.mgb.gov.ph



Certificate No. 68823
EAC Code 36

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR EXPLORATION PERMIT OF MYED-NIKKEL RESOURCES CORPORATION

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 76 of Department of Environment and Natural Resource (DENR) Administrative Order (DAO) No. 2010-21, the Consolidated Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 7942, otherwise known as the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, that **Myed-Nikkel Resources Corporation** with address at **1051 North Bay Boulevard, Novotas City 1485** has filed an application for **Exploration Permit** particularly described, as follows:

- I. Application No.** : EPA-IVA-147
II. Date of Filing : July 31, 2019
III. Area Location : Municipality of Maragondon, Cavite City Province of Cavite
IV. Description of the Applied Area

CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
1	14° 13' 30.00"	120° 34' 00.00"
2	14° 15' 00.00"	120° 34' 00.00"
3	14° 15' 00.00"	120° 31' 00.00"
4	14° 14' 00.00"	120° 31' 00.00"
5	14° 14' 00.00"	120° 30' 30.00"
6	14° 14' 30.00"	120° 30' 30.00"
7	14° 14' 30.00"	120° 30' 00.00"
8	14° 15' 30.00"	120° 30' 00.00"
9	14° 15' 30.00"	120° 29' 30.00"
10	14° 16' 30.00"	120° 29' 30.00"
11	14° 16' 30.00"	120° 29' 00.00"
12	14° 17' 00.00"	120° 29' 00.00"
13	14° 17' 00.00"	120° 28' 30.00"
14	14° 18' 00.00"	120° 28' 30.00"
15	14° 18' 00.00"	120° 28' 00.00"
16	14° 19' 00.00"	120° 28' 00.00"
17	14° 19' 00.00"	120° 31' 30.00"
18	14° 16' 00.00"	120° 31' 30.00"
19	14° 16' 00.00"	120° 35' 00.00"
20	14° 15' 00.00"	120° 35' 00.00"
21	14° 15' 00.00"	120° 34' 30.00"
22	14° 13' 30.00"	120° 34' 30.00"

Sketch Plan: Please refer to "Annex A"
Size: The applied area covers Five Thousand One Hundred Thirty Nine and 9623/10000 (5.139.9623 hectares) hectares.

B. Restrictions

The applied area shall be subject to Section 15 ("Areas Closed to Mining Applications"), Section 16 ("Ancestral Lands") and Section 105 ("Entry to Lands") of DAO No. 2010-21, and Section 4 of DAO No. 2012-07, as amended, which provide, among others, that:

a. The following areas are closed to mining applications: areas covered by valid and existing mining rights/applications, old growth/virgin forests, proclaimed watershed forest reserves, protected areas and other areas expressly prohibited by law;

b. The following areas shall also be closed to mining applications except upon written consent/prior clearance by the concerned government agency or private entity: areas near or under public or private buildings, cemeteries, archeological and historical sites, bridges, highways, waterways, railroads reservoirs, dams and other infrastructure projects, public or private works, including plantations or valuable crops;

c. In cases of areas occupied by Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and/or covered by Certificates of Ancestral Domain/Land Claims/Titles (CAD/CALC/CADT/CAL), the Free and Prior Informed Consent shall be secured from the concerned IPs;

d. In cases of surface owners, occupants and concessionaires that may be covered by the applied area, their permission shall be obtained prior to entry into their lands by the eventual Permittee for purposes of undertaking sand and gravel extraction therein;

e. Prime agricultural lands, in addition to land covered by RA No. 667 or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988, as amended, including plantations and areas devoted to valuable crops, and Strategic Agriculture and Fisheries Development Zones and fish refuge and sanctuaries declared as such by the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture;

f. Tourism development areas, as identified in the national and local tourism development plans; and

g. Other critical areas, island ecosystems, and impact areas of mining as determined by current and existing mapping technologies, that the DENR may hereafter identify pursuant to existing laws, rules, and regulations, such as, but not limited to, the National Integrated Protected Areas System.

V. Activities to be undertaken

Per the submitted Exploration Work Program the following activities will be conducted:

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