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DSWD STARTS CASH-FOR-WORK PROGRAM

SUNKEN OIL TANKER MT PRINCESS EMPRESS FINALLY LOCATED

By Krixia Subingsubing
and Dexter Cabalza
@Team_Inquirer

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) has announced that it had located the sunken MT Princess Empress in the municipal waters of Pola town in Oriental Mindoro.

"The National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) has located the tanker. The NAMRIA just gave it to us. The actual depth of the ship's location is 389.1 meters and that is 13.89 kilometers northeast of Balisangan Point,

Pola, Mindoro," PCG Commandant Artemio Abu said.

On March 6, the tanker's owner, RDC Reield Marines Services, said it would comply with its obligation and tapped two companies under the vessel's \$1-billion protection and indemnity insurance.

The Princess Empress was carrying 800,000 liters of industrial fuel oil when it sank on Feb. 28.

Abu said at a news forum on Saturday that the government was employing an inter-agency approach to address the oil spill within the

four-month period prescribed by President Marcos.

But Abu explained that under the PCG's National Oil Spill Contingency Plan, small oil spills that can be handled by private companies are considered to be Tier 1, those between 10,000 liters but less than one million are deemed Tier 2 and those involving more than a million liters are Tier 3.

"This is one is less than 1 million, so right now we are at Tier 2. So the coast guard will oversee the oil spill response," the PCG commandant explained.

dant explained.

He admitted they did not have enough equipment but an eight-man team from Japan arrived on Friday and the Japanese government has also committed to provide equipment, such as oil blotters, oil snares, and oil-proof working gloves, to aid the clean-up of affected coastal barangays.

The United States and South Korea also committed to help the country.

"Whatever help they can give us, response equipment, anything ... Whatever they're

capable of giving us. They know what's needed at this time," Abu said.

Meanwhile, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is set to start a cash-for-work program on March 15 and has been distributing relief to 19,000 Mindoro Oriental residents affected by the spill.

Social Welfare Secretary Rex Gatchalian said the agency was also preparing to expand assistance to residents of neighboring Antique and Palawan who may be affected. **no**



Artemio Abu



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Oil spill heads for Verde Island Passage

By BELLA CARIASO

The oil spill from the sunken oil vessel off Naujan, Oriental Mindoro is threatening to reach the Verde Island Passage due to a weakening *amihan*, the University of the Philippines-Marine Science Institute (UP-MSI) warned yesterday.

In its latest bulletin, UP-MSI noted that with continuous seepage of oil from the alleged seepage

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location, most of it would end up along the Naujan coast and Pola Bay in Oriental Mindoro.

"Some of the oil may flow northwards towards the Verde Island Passage by March 16, affecting coastal areas of Calapan, Verde Island, and some parts of Batangas," said the UP-MSI.

Verde Island Passage (VIP), the body of water between Batangas and Mindoro, has the highest concentration of coastal fishes, corals, crustaceans, mollusks, seagrasses and mangroves.

The VIP is also home to endangered and threatened species including the critically endangered hawksbill turtle, whale sharks, manta rays, dugongs, humphead wrasses, giant groupers and giant clams.

"The oil spill threatens the global center of marine biodiversity located in the Verde Island Passage," the UP-MSI said.

"Damage from the oil spill may affect biodiversity, including endemic species only found in the Philippines as well as species yet to be discovered, tourism revenues, and food security in the area," it added.

Meanwhile, fisheries output in the first half of the year is feared to decrease following the oil spill, prompting fishermen in affected areas to ask government for economic support and measures to counter a looming crisis.

In a statement, fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) said the impact of the oil spill will likely bring fisheries production down in the first and second quarters of the year.

The oil spill from the sunken MT *Princess Empress*, which started off Oriental Mindoro and has reached the provinces of Palawan and some parts of Panay Island, has already adversely affected the livelihood of fishermen in these areas.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources said some 13,000 fishermen have been affected by the oil spill in Oriental Mindoro alone.

town, Palawan are already suffering from the oil slick, the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) reported over the weekend.

"When the farmers examined their seaweed farms, the oil slick was attached to the seaweed," PDRRMO Palawan head Jerry Allii said in a radio interview, noting that traces of the oil were first recorded two days ago in Barangay Casian, also in Taytay.

He said the local government is closely monitoring the situation as the next areas after Taytay are the municipalities of Araceli and Dumaruan, Palawan.

He said the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) conducted water analysis to determine if the marine resources in the area are still safe for human consumption.

"We are constructing an improvised oil spill boom, using coconut husks around the seaweed production areas to protect the farms from the oil slick," said Allii.

The DENR-EMB Region 4-B, Philippine Coast Guard and the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office installed spill booms and absorbent booms along Calinawawa and Casilagan Rivers and the coast of Barangay Misong in Pola, Oriental Mindoro in hopes of containing the oil spill.

The DENR added that simultaneous sediment collection and coastal cleanup were conducted to reduce the impact of the spilled oil to the marine environment in the municipality of Pola.

DSWD provides aid, jobs

The Department of Social Welfare and Development led by Secretary Rex Gatchalian has started to provide cash-for-work (CFW) program to the affected residents of the oil spill in Oriental Mindoro.



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Palawan, which has a significant number of fishermen and contributes to the country's fish production, has also been devastated, the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) said.

The FFF cited data from the Philippine Statistics Authority, which noted that Palawan and Oriental Mindoro contributed 86.79 percent and 2.57 percent to the regional fisheries production, respectively, in the second quarter last year.

The two provinces' shares in that period translated to 59,895.53 metric tons in local fisheries production.

The FFF noted that there are more than 1,200 fishermen in Semirara Island in Antique who have been unable to fish for more than a week now, as reported by the Save Antique Movement, an environmentalist alliance to which Pamalaka-ya-Panay belongs.

Seaweed farms suffer

As it stands, seaweed farms in Barangay Calawag, Taytay

As part of the CFW program, a total of 70 fisherfolk were deployed last March 10 in Barangay Batuhan, Pola to collect available materials in the community that will be used in making the improvised spill booms and oil absorbent.

Each beneficiary will receive the daily regional minimum wage every five days, for a total of 15 working days.

This was done by the DSWD through its Field Office Miraropa in coordination with the DENR.

The DSWD also provided financial assistance to the affected residents through the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation.

Some 1,116 affected families, 740 of which came from Barangay Algeciras and 376 from Barangay Concepcion, both in Aguyata town in Palawan, received P5,000 cash assistance with a total amount of P5,580.

As of March 11, the DSWD reported that a total of 30,042 families or 137,230 persons from 121 barangays in Regions 4-B and 6 have been affected by the oil spill. —With Danessa Rivera, Elizabeth Marcelo, Delon Porcalla



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Govt helpless, leaderless in Mindoro oil spill

THE term "oil spill" conceals the enormity of the disaster



RIGOBERTO D. TIGLAO

from the MT Princess Empress when it sank off the coast of Pola town in Oriental Mindoro. Oil wasn't just discharged from the vessel — it is still being discharged. There's still a lot of oil spilling to our seas, to our seashores.

➤ TiglaoA12

Other than the actual damage to the environment as well as to the health and livelihood of the residents of the coastal villages already affected by it, there could be another cost, as the oil slick could reach internationally known tourist beach resorts as Boracay and Coron in Palawan, as the tourism department tactlessly announced.

The damage to our economy could even be just because of perceptions. The respected British newspaper *The Guardian* published a long article replete with vivid photos of oil darkening a white-sand beach, while the *Washington Post* headline was: "A tanker sank and spilled oil. Then came reports of nausea, headaches." The Philippine-hater Agence France-Presse sent throughout the world its dispatch entitled, "Sunken Philippine tanker leaks industrial fuel oil into sea, concern for environment, tourism." The headline of Splash247.com, a popular website for the maritime industry, was cruel for us: "Tanker oil spill spreads far and wide in central Philippines."

With those kind of headlines, it is not unlikely that we'll be having a slump in tourist ar-

Tanker oil spill spreads far and wide in central Philippines

Seascapes: the state of our oceans

When an oil spill hits an island - in pictures

▲ The oil spill from the tanker that sank off the coast of Mindoro island in the Philippines has forced the area into a state of emergency, disrupting the marine environment, businesses and more than 15,000 fishers.

Read more: What happens when a large ship sinks? A step-by-step guide to averting disaster

Seascapes: the state of our oceans is supported by

the guardian org

South China Morning Post

Sunken Philippine tanker leaks industrial fuel oil into sea, concern for environment, tourism

The Washington Post

A tanker sank and spilled oil. Then came reports of nausea, headaches.

I say government is really helpless in addressing the Mindoro oil spill. It also doesn't even have the new technologies (not even the booms to isolate the oil spill) nor the materials for an oil spill cleanup at sea. All it can do is to manually clean up the oil on the shoreline — and threaten with suits the vessel owners, and demand it quickly undertake the oil-spill cleanup.

Second, there is no central body addressing the oil spill and its cleanup, an agency that puts the prime responsibility of addressing an oil spill and undertaking the cleanup on a specific department or agency.

Arroyo

The Guimaras oil spill happened Aug. 11, 2006. On August 22, President Gloria



■ **TIGLAO FROM A1**

Govt helpless, leaderless in Mindoro oil spill

rivals, just when the summer tourist season is starting.

The UP's Marine Sciences Institute reported that "approximately 20,000 hectares of coral reef, 9,900 ha of mangroves and 6,000 ha of seagrass may be affected by the oil slick in 22 municipalities in Mindoro, Antique and Palawan. More than half of potentially affected reefs (11,000 ha) are found in the Cuyo group of islands."

Indeed, those gloomy headlines would not be totally wrong because of, first, the government's helplessness in dealing with oil spills, and second, because there has been no central leadership running a task force to address the disaster, only a clown pretending to be.

Spilling

Industrial fuel oil — the product the vessel was carrying — didn't just spill on February 28. It is likely still spilling after 12 days now, based on the explanation of an executive of Harbor Star Shipping Services, which the owner of the vessel, RDC Reield Marine Service, contracted to stop the leak from the sunken vessel.

The executive gave that explanation in a meeting on

■ **Those international headlines certainly won't attract tourists. COLLAGE BY RIGOBERTO TIGLAO FROM PUBLICATIONS' HEADLINES**

March 6 presided by Oriental Mindoro Gov. Humerlito Dolor. (Strangely the vessels' ultimate owners haven't been identified, although Dolor said that he had met with the firm's vice president, Fritzie Tee, who told him, "We're not just children of the owner, we are the owners.")

Would you believe after 12 days now, the exact location of the sunken vessel is still unknown?

The Harbor Star executive said finding the vessel deep in the ocean floor and plugging the leak from it through which the oil is being discharged are the urgent problems to be addressed. After locating the vessel, a remote operated vehicle (ROV) would have to dive into the waters to stop the spilling, using robotic arms. Or else all of the 800,000 liters of oil the vessel had been carrying will spill out, a disaster.

Guimaras

By comparison, the Guimaras oil spill disaster — considered the worst such incident — leaked 500,000 liters. A worse disaster was averted when, four months

after the Petron-owned tanker MT Solar 1 sank, the Italian-owned Sonsub, a deep-water operations company, retrieved 13,500 tons of crude oil for its hull. The deep-water retrieval, however, cost \$6 million. The owners of the MT Princess Empress have not disclosed if they or the insurers have committed to spend whatever it costs to plug the leak in their vessel and siphon off the industrial fuel oil remaining in its hull.

There is an urgency to plug the leak and retrieve the oil as soon as possible, as this is an unknown. The rate at which the oil is spilling would be dependent not just on the size of the hole through which the oil has been spilling out but on the vessel's depth, since the deeper it is, the stronger the water pressure that pushes out the water. When will Harbor Star start to have its ROV plug the leak? At least a week, the Harbor Star executive said last March 6, and the ROV was located abroad — where, he didn't say. Our government nor any of its agencies don't have an ROV to stop further leaks from oil tankers after they sink. That is why

Macapagal Arroyo created an inter-agency task force called Task Force Solar I Oil

Spill to oversee both the cleanup of the oil spill and the retrieval of the 1.5 million liters of fuel oil still remaining inside the tanker.

In this current oil spill, a controversial undersecretary, Ariel Nepomoceno, issued last March 3 a memorandum ordering a "task force" to address the Mindoro oil spill, which includes such agencies as the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Social Welfare and Development, and Department of Health.

Jeez, how can an undersecretary order other departments to do something? Does his boss even know about his order appropriating the powers of the Philippine president?

We're not just helpless and leaderless in addressing the oil spill. President Marcos' people are plain stupid, or clowns trying to get media mileage out of a disaster.

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Japan PCG assessing oil spill damage

BY RAPPY AYENG AND LADE JEAN KABAGANI

An official of the Japanese Embassy in Manila confirmed Sunday the arrival of Japanese Coast Guard members in Pola, Oriental Mindoro to help in the oil spill cleanup two weeks after *MT Princess Empress* sank.

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Japan PCG assessing oil spill damage

From page 1

Composed of 11 experts, two teams from Japan were coordinating with the Philippine Coast Guard to visit and assess today the barangays affected by the oil spill.

Japanese Embassy economic affairs chief Nihei Daisuke said that "we are joining the Philippine authorities, especially the Philippine Coast Guard, to combat this oil spill incident."

MT Princess Empress was loaded with 800,000 liters of industrial fuel oil when it went under due to rough seas off the island of Mindoro. It is believed to be about 400 meters below sea level.

At least nine municipalities along the coast of Oriental Mindoro had been affected by the oil spill, along with more than 2,500 hectares of sea home to coral reefs, mangroves, and seaweed.

The Japanese team was welcomed Friday in Manila by Vice Admiral Ronnie Gil Gavan,

the PCG Deputy Commandant for Administration.

Meeting PCG

Aside from Japan, other countries have offered to help contain the oil spill that threatens the maritime ecosystem and the lives and livelihood of the residents of the affected provinces.

"On Monday, some countries want to have a meeting with the PCG to figure out how they could be of help," PCG Commandant Admiral Artemio Abu said on Saturday.

Composed of 11 experts, two teams from Japan were coordinating with the Philippine Coast Guard to visit and assess today the barangays affected by the oil spill.

In particular, these countries can provide remote-operated vehicles that are needed to locate *MT Princess Empress* 13.89 kilometers northeast of Balingawan Point in Pola, Mindoro,

he added.

Abu said that even though the PCG has a remote-operated vehicle, it cannot go down to a depth of 400 meters to where the vessel has descended.

"The vehicles would help by way of having this advanced equipment, technology, by way of getting the oil," Abu added.

The PCG revealed on Saturday that it has also sought the help of the United States in containing the oil spill.

South Korea and other nations are also inclined to share their expertise in containing the oil spill, according to Malacañang.

It said the foreign experts were set to meet with PCG officials today.

The environmental group Protect Verde Island Passage has said at least 18,000 fisherfolk in Oriental Mindoro have lost their livelihood as fishing activities have been put on hold.

People have also gotten sick due to the oil spill reaching coasts, according to authorities.



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PCG seeks US help in oil spill cleanup

THE Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) has formally asked the help of the United States in cleaning up the oil spill in Oriental Mindoro.

PCG commandant Admiral Artemio Abu said they sought the help of the US because "they have more experience and knowledge in this issue."

The request was made through a letter.

Abu said what they need are equipment such as remote-operated vehicles since they have determined the location of the sunken oil tanker.

He said although the PCG has these vehicles, it could not dive more than 400 meters deep.

"Whatever kind of help they can provide, response equipment and

everything. What is within their ability to give us. They know what we need at this time," Abu said in a media forum.

The Coast Guard chief said "many countries" had offered their assistance in containing the oil spill.

On Sunday, PCG spokesman Rear Admiral Armand Balilo said it is difficult to estimate the impact of the oil spill.

"We only see patches. Our suspicion is there is still no industrial fuel oil that has leaked," Balilo said.

"The timeline given to us by [President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.] is four months. The important thing is to get the oil and not spill it on different coasts," he added.

FRANCO JOSE C. BAROÑA



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SMPC helps in cleanup

Consunji-led integrated energy company Semirara Mining and Power Corporation and the Department of Energy have forged a partnership to help clean up and contain the oil spill from a sunken tanker in Oriental Mindoro.

Semirara and DoE collaborated with the Philippine Coast Guard, Office of Civil Defense, Department of Health, local government units, and the impacted residents in Semirara Island.

The hazardous waste first reached the shores of Semirara Island in Caluya, Antique on the afternoon of 3 March.

To date, the SMPC has devoted over 4,700 man-hours to the oil spill clean-up.

The company has also provided the responders from PCG and DoH with accommodation, transport services, and personal protective equipment, including hazardous material suits, N95 masks, boots and safety gloves.

The oil spill currently covers almost three kilometers of shoreline stretching from Sitio Sigayan and Sitio Toong of Barangay Semirara and Sitio Sabang of Barangay Tinogboc, affecting 341 households that mainly rely on fishing for livelihood.

Responders from the multi-stakeholder group have so far recovered 4,590 kilograms of oil-contaminated wastes.

An oil spill containment boom has also been installed one kilometer from the shoreline to protect the receded giant clams in Semirara Marine Hatchery in Tabunan.

Likewise, the SMPC Infirmary has deployed a medical team to the clean-up sites to serve as on-site medics and to conduct a community health survey among the impacted households.

SMPC relief operations are ongoing, benefitting all 341 affected households who were given food packs with rice, canned goods, noodles, and produce from the company's agro model farm and poultry model farm projects.



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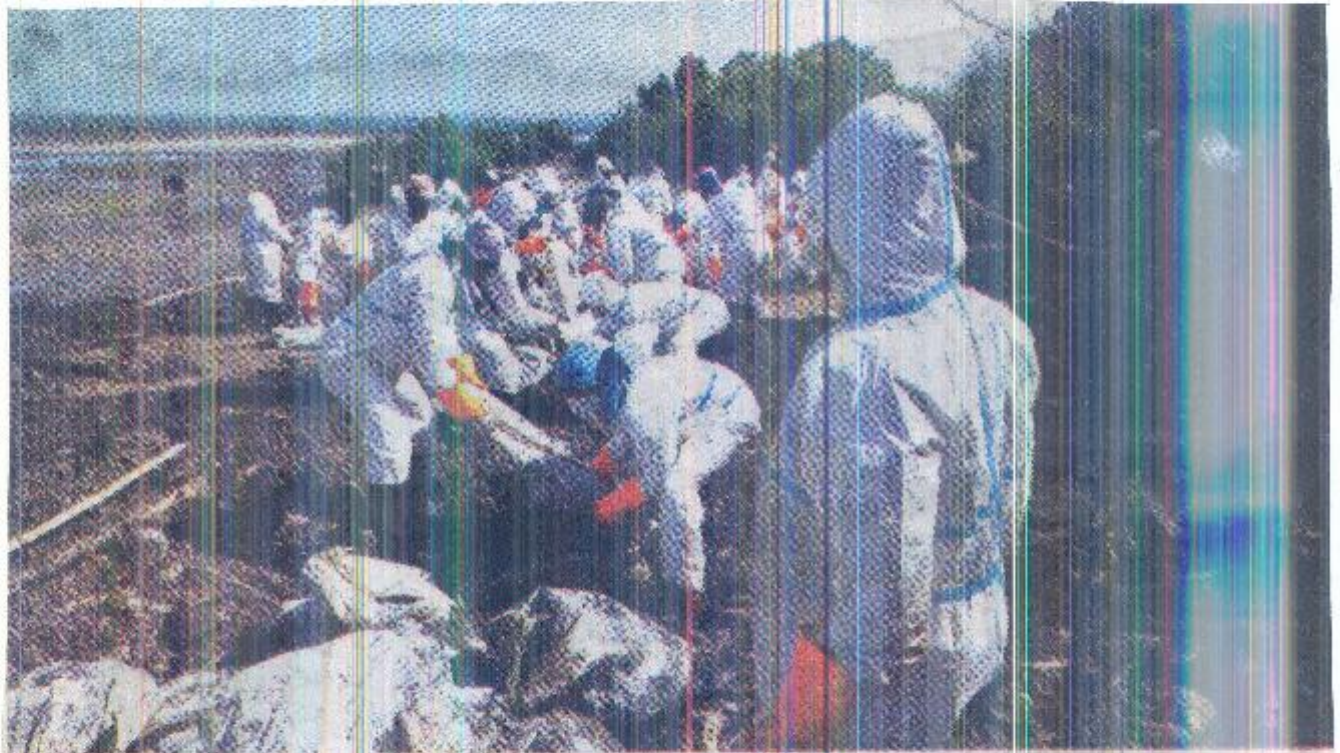
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF CEED
OIL spill-affected fisherfolk Jennifer Jaqueca says: 'While there were restrictions, we were able to make a living during the pandemic. Unlike now, we're banned from fishing because of the oil spill. What will happen to us?'





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OIL SPILL CLEAN-UP. Semirara Mining and Power Corp. emergency response team and Barangay Semirara responders work to clean-up and contain the Mindoro oil spill that reached Semirara Island. The hazardous waste first reached the shores of Semirara Island in Caluya, Antique afternoon of March 3. The oil spill covers almost 3 kilometers of shoreline stretching from Sitio Sigayan and Sitio Toong of Barangay Semirara and Sitio Sahang of Barangay Tinogboc, affecting 341 households who mainly rely on fishing for livelihood. SMPC ERT has devoted over 4,700 man-hours to the oil spill clean-up.



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MINDORO OIL SPILL



ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS

GOVT URGED TO STOP ALL RECLAMATION, QUARRYING IN MANILA BAY

By Jane Bautista
@janebautistaINQ

Experts and environmental advocates have called on the government to stop all land reclamation and seabed quarrying projects in Manila Bay, saying the activities threaten the marine ecosystem and survival of the people in the area.

Based on the data from the Philippine Reclamation Authority, a total of 22 reclamation projects were in Manila Bay and half of these were already "underway" as of Feb. 28.

There are also 30 reclamation projects outside of Manila Bay—15 were approved and 15 were applications under Executive Order No. 74 with memoranda of understanding.

At a recent press briefing, conservation group Oceana said the projects were approved even though Manila Bay was identified as a key biodiversity

area by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and other groups.

"We have come together, Oceana, Pamalakaya and scientists led by Dr. Kelvin [Rodolfo] to call for help because reclamation, while it sounds like a good developmental idea, may not be as sound as we think. It affects the already dwindling source of food for all of us," said Emily Abrera of Save Our Shores.

Rose-Liza Elisma Osorio, legal and policy director of Oceana, pointed out that there were many environmental laws but these were not being implemented or enforced properly.

Among the laws she cited were the Amended Fisheries Code, Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act, Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act and the Clean Water Act.

Osorio said they tried to ask the Supreme Court to issue a

writ of *kalkasan* to contest the construction of New Manila International Airport in Bulacan for violations of various environmental laws.

Former Chief Justice Diosdado Peralta in dismissing the petition said it was "not sufficient in form and substance."

"Lately, what we're doing is we wrote the DENR to request the environmental impact assessment documents that became the basis of issuing environmental compliance certificates to the 22 Manila Bay reclamation projects," she said.

If the DENR would not respond, Osorio said they plan to take legal remedies to stop the projects.

In the same press briefing, Mia Catenza, a fisherfolk from Cavite province, lamented the damaging impact of seabed quarrying in their area.

"We have been suffering for almost two years. We used to

make a living somehow from fishing, but now, it's really difficult because we can't catch anything, we always lose money," she said.

In a statement, the *Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas* (Pamalakaya) urged the DENR to revoke the environmental permits of two dredging projects in the southern area of Manila Bay.

According to the fishers' group, Silverquest Mining Resources Inc. was able to secure an environmental certificate compliance in 2021 to conduct a seabed quarry that covered 2,124 hectares of municipal waters of Ternate and Naic in Cavite.

"Since the beginning of dredging in the municipal waters of Naic in 2021, fishermen's income has dramatically decreased to only an estimated P300 for two days of fishing, which is equivalent to P150 per day," said Fernando Ilicap, chair of Pamalakaya. [na](#)



COA to Cotabato City: Close dumpsite, build sanitary landfill

BY PETER TABINGO

COTABATO City has a stinking problem: it is still using an open dumpsite to get rid of its trash 18 years since the practice was banned under the Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

In a 2022 report released last March 9, state auditors revealed that the city remains dependent on the Biniruan Dumpsite because the local government has failed to put up a sanitary landfill for the proper disposal of garbage generated by city residents, businesses, and office establishments.

The audit team warned that the continued improper disposal of solid waste is making the city's flood problems worse since trash had blocked drains and waterways, causing water runoff to back up during the rainy season.

It added the absence of proper waste disposal represents a threat to public health and the environment.

Even efforts to reduce the volume of solid waste generated daily by the city have failed, with 80 percent of 35 material recovery facilities (MRFs) already built but non operational.

The MRFs are supposed to encourage segregation of waste so that recyclable materials are recovered and only the biodegradable portion end up in the landfill but in Cotabato City, they only served as halfway dumpsites.

"Based on the list submitted by the CENRO, there are 35 existing MRFs ... as of October 2022.

As alleged, there are seven MRFs that are operational and compliant based on their evaluation. They admitted that most of the MRFs are non-operational and not being used for the intended purpose," the audit team noted.

The City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) admitted that the previous plan to build a facility to convert biodegradable waste to fertilizer would no longer materialize after talks with the Davao Thermo Biotech Corporation (DTBC) fell through.

It said conditions for the project changed which rendered it "no longer doable" after the former DTBC chief executive officer passed away in November 2022.

Auditors noted that as of 2000, the city was supposed to have already completed three projects for solid waste management, including the P174 million construction of Bio Medical and Solid Waste Management Facility, the P24 million installation of septage management facility, and the P10 million acquisition of a lot for bio-medical and solid waste facility.

An immediate solution is nowhere in sight as city officials admitted that identifying a suitable site for a sanitary landfill remains the main challenge since neighboring municipalities have refused to cluster with Cotabato City for this purpose.

Cotabato officials said they are coordinating with the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Energy-Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (MENRE-BARMM) on possibly locating the proposed landfill within the city.

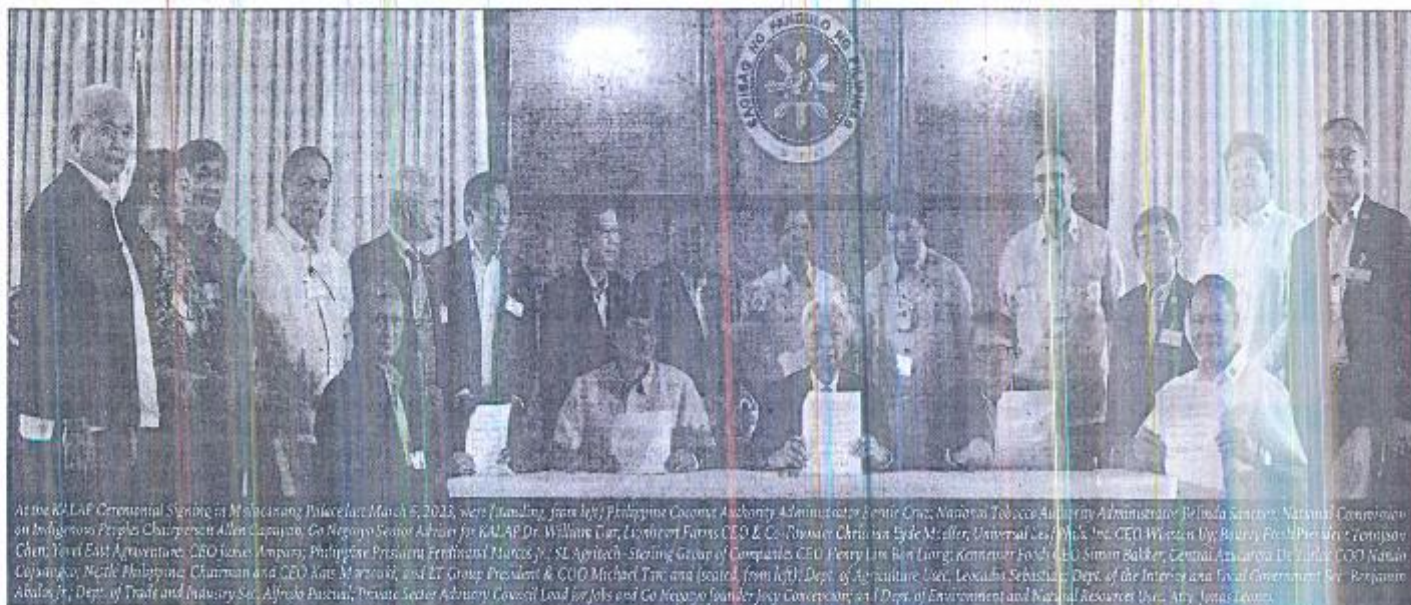


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SMALL FARMERS TO BENEFIT FROM PPP AS GO NEGOSYO LAUNCHES KALAP



At the KALAP Ceremonial Signing at Malacanang Palace last March 6, 2023, were (standing, from left) Philippine Coconut Authority Administrator Benito Cruz, National Tobacco Authority Administrator Melinda Sarmiento, National Commission on Indigenous Peoples Chairperson Allan Cayajob, Go Negosyo Senior Adviser for KALAP Dr. William Dar, Lionheart Farms CEO & Co-Founder Christian Eyde Moeller, Universal Leaf Philippines CEO Wenzon Uy, Bounty Fresh President Romjay Chen, Yovel East Agriventure CEO Rene Ampay, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., SL Agritech-Sterling Group of Companies CEO Peary Lim, Kenner Foods CEO Simon Bakker, Central Azucarera de Tarlac COO Nicanor Capanza, Nestlé Philippines Chairman and CEO Arie Mariani, and LT Group President & COO Michael Tan and (seated, from left) Dept. of Agriculture Undersecretary Leocadio Sebastian, Dept. of the Interior and Local Government Sec. Benjamin Abalos Jr., Dept. of Trade and Industry Sec. Alfredo Pascual, Private Sector Advisory Council Lead for Jobs and Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion and (Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary) Arny Jimenez.

Go Negosyo's Kapatid Angat Lahat Agri Program (KALAP), an initiative for private sector to help small farmers across the Philippines, was formalized with the signing of several Memorandums of Agreement and Memorandums of Understanding with several government agencies last March 6 at the Malacanang Palace. KALAP is seen to transform the country's agriculture industry by integrating small farmers into the value chain of large agribusiness companies. The ceremonial signing was led by Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion, and was witnessed by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

In his speech, the President noted how big corporations can help small farmers. "No one sector can manage it by itself," he said. Private sector help, he said, will "enable MSMEs to become profitable, sustainable, and globally competitive." He also emphasized the importance of giving back profit to the farmers. "In the end, this is about giving a decent living to our farmers, so they can live by the virtue of their hard work," he said.

He also commended Concepcion, who he said, has "brought together this partnership, bringing together the synergies in our economy especially to help our MSMEs and



President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. addresses the audience at the KALAP Ceremonial Signing.

Environment and Natural Resources, the Department of Trade and Industry, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, the National Irrigation Administration, Philippine Coconut Authority, and the National Tobacco Administration.

"KALAP is the platform where we hope to employ as many Filipinos as possible, and it will do so where our job creation efforts can have the most impact: in the agriculture sector," Concepcion said.

According to its proponents, which includes former Agriculture Secretary and now KALAP senior adviser Dr. William Dar, KALAP will promote inclusive growth, sustainability, competitiveness, and development in the Philippines by leveraging the potential of MSMEs, small-holder farmers, and fisherfolk.

KALAP will focus on primary agricultural commodities and industries, namely rice, coconut, tobacco, coffee, cacao, sugarcane and corn/feeds/livestock. Following Go Negosyo's advocacy, KALAP will provide MSMEs access to the three M's of successful entrepreneurship, namely mentorship, access to money, and market. Moreover, it will build partnerships with large companies (referred to as "big brothers"), and will emphasize government's role of providing the enabling environment. KALAP will become part of the larger Kapatid Angat Lahat initiative, which was first conceived by Go Negosyo in 2016.

During the ceremonial signing of KALAP, Lionheart Farms CEO and co-Founder Christian Eyde Moeller presented his model for sustainable transformation for KALAP, which included focusing on productivity and upskilling farmers, as well as improving both income and output. Lionheart Farms successfully implemented its inclusive model in coconut farming in Palawan. Ninety-eight-year old Maman Buano Layson—one of the farmers who benefited from its model—was present at the Ceremonial Signing.

Other companies have also implemented Inclusive and



The President Marcos talks to 98-year old coconut farmer Maman Buano Layson, one of the beneficiaries of KALAP agribusiness company Lionheart Farms.

sustainable models, such as Universal Leaf Philippines Inc. in Ilocos. The company is among the first to become big-brother companies, along with SL Agritech, Bounty Fresh, The LT Group, Yovel East Research Development Corporation, Kenner Foods, Nestlé Philippines, Central Azucarera de Tarlac, and Metro Pacific Agroventures.

"KALAP is public-private partnership at work, and perhaps the most important PPP that we will undertake," said Concepcion. "It is in agriculture that we find a large number of the micro entrepreneurs – the micro farmers, and it is they who need the most help. It is where a multiplier effect of jobs and enterprises, growth in communities away from the urban centers, can happen," he added.



Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion was lauded by President Marcos for his efforts to help small Filipino farmers through KALAP.

in the process strengthening our middle class."

Among the signatories for the MOAs and MOUs were Go Negosyo, the Department of Agriculture, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of



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PROTECTING MANGROVES: One Meralco Foundation President Jeffrey O. Tarayao (center) leads the community launch of the One for Trees environmental program for the Bakhawan Eco Park together with members of KASAMA led by their Chairman and Executive Director Allan Angelo L. Quimpo, representatives from the provincial government of Aklan, local government unit of Kalibo and the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (MENRO) of the province.

ONE MERALCO FOUNDATION BREATHES FRESH LIFE TO KALIBO MANGROVE FOREST BY DONATING 100,000 TREES

Nearly three decades since the Bakhawan Eco park in the heart of Kalibo in Aklan opens its life, the One Meralco Foundation (OMF) breathes a fresh air of hope for the rehabilitation of the mangrove forest that has become a symbol of community perseverance and environmental preservation through its reforestation initiatives.

Through the One for Trees program, OMF pledged support to the Kalibo Save the Mangroves Association, Inc. (KASAMA) – the caretaker of the Bakhawan Eco park – by planting 100,000 Bacuan and Api-Api trees to help rehabilitate the mangrove forest.

The mangroves, which will cover a 10-hectare site within the Eco park, will be cared for by some 200 members of KASAMA who have been persistent in the reforestation of the Bakhawan Ecopark since

the 1990s. Planting of the trees started in late January and once completed, will subsequently be maintained and cared for by members of KASAMA for the next three years.

"It is essential that the community act as the messenger of the mangroves as they have a direct stake in the area," Allan Quimpo, head of KASAMA, said.

"Through OMF's One for Trees program, we are turning another page in our milestones, and this is because the community is with us. The mangrove reforestation provides a vital benefit to us all – food to eat, security during typhoons, and a coastal forest park that holds many of nature's beauty," he added.

In 2014, strong typhoons and heavy rains severely damaged the mangrove plantation which prompted the renewed need for its rehabilitation, according to Medelyn Quilra, a forest technician from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. More than a mangrove forest, the Bakhawan Eco park is also home to a rich marine life, is an eco-tourism site, and a source of livelihood for members of KASAMA who tirelessly maintain the productive wetlands.

"It is our aim to protect, rehabilitate and nurture critical watersheds and vulnerable forests. The mangrove plantation started by KASAMA necessitates a reforestation support that integrates community inclusion and climate action at its core," Patrick Famisaran, who manages the One for Trees program of OMF, said.



A PARTNERSHIP for the mangroves. Representatives from One Meralco Foundation, KASAMA, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the local government of Kalibo are seen during the community launch of the One for Trees project.

The One for Trees program of OMF is implemented nationwide and contributes to the preservation and protection of Philippine forests through reforestation and agroforestry.

Currently, the OMF has forged partnerships with various organizations such as the Green Earth Heritage Foundation in San Miguel in Bulacan, the Partnering Education and Environmental Development Organization for Silliman It. Laguna, and various local government units in the provinces of Bukidnon, Bukidwan, and Agusan del Norte among others.

"At One Meralco, we believe that nurturing the environment is everyone's job. In the years to come, we will see and experience the importance of protecting and developing these mangrove areas," Jeffrey O. Tarayao, OMF President and Meralco Chief Corporate Social Responsibility Officer, said.

PART of the Kalibo Bakhawan Eco Park is a common fishing ground for the communities residing near the area.



MANGROVE seedlings. With the need for rehabilitation, One Meralco Foundation grants support to KASAMA. The organization started preparing these Bacuan and Api-Api tree seedlings for planting.



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Health impact added to nuclear plant objections

HEALTH impacts have been added as another potential objection to nuclear power plants, with an Australian anti-nuclear advocate and doctor calling such facilities "cancer factories."

"Nuclear power plants are cancer factories. Nuclear power plants (using) uranium produce over 200 radioactive elements, some which last seconds, and some which last millions of years," according to Helen Mary Caldicott, founder of Physicians for Social Responsibility and Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament, speaking in a Zoom interview with *BusinessWorld*.

Ms. Caldicott, an Australian who has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, added that radioactive waste, which needs to be isolated from the ecosphere for one million years, will also come up as an issue, she added.

Ms. Caldicott said that "as we put (radioactive waste) in the Earth, ... the containers that hold radioactive elements will rust, break, and the radiation and elements will leak into the water supply," thereby affecting the food chain.

"It only takes one beta particle, an electron or gamma radiation to kill you," she added.

Genetic mutations also have the potential to affect reproduction, passing on mutations to future generations of humans, plants and animals.

A South Korean company has offered to rehabilitate the nuclear power plant in Bataan within five years for a cost of \$1.19 billion, Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI) Director Carlo A. Arcilla said early in February.

The 621-megawatt Bataan Nuclear Power Plant was constructed as a response to the 1973 oil crisis. It was completed in 1984 at a cost of \$1.9 billion but never loaded with fuel or operated due to financial issues and safety concerns.

"When they recharge the reactor and take out the spent fuel, there's always a huge release of radioactive elements into the air and water. The water that is used to cool reactors goes back into the lake, the river, or the sea relatively radioactive, and as I've told you, it re-concentrates back in the food chain," she said.

"You don't want to increase the incidence of cancer in your country," she added. "We're talking about life and death now, and how sacred life is. Nuclear power plants are anti-thetical to the sanctity of life."

The Catholic Church has posed its own objections, with Ruperto Cruz Santos, Bishop of Balanga, writing a pastoral letter calling the repurposing of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant "neither right nor good."

"We do not want to put life on the brink of danger, and we do not want a future without the certainty of goodness, safety and beauty," he said. "We do not want our sea to be made uninhabitable for marine life, resulting in the destruction of our ecosystem."

"We do not want our soil to be poisoned and no longer cultivable. We do not want our livelihoods destroyed," he added.

The Department of Energy has estimated a timeline of 10 years before nuclear power can be integrated into the Philippine energy mix.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. has expressed interest in exploring the feasibility of adding nuclear power to the grid.

"He's wrong," Ms. Caldicott said, saying that he needs to learn more about the impact of nuclear power.

She recommended that the Philippines focus on growing its renewable energy industry.

"You are one of the hottest countries in the world, so why don't you cover all your buildings with solar panels and make solar farms so that huge areas of the country are covered with solar panels," she said.

"It's never been operated, and it's very old now in terms of technical (specifications). I would be very hesitant to open it up, and I would have to know everything about it from the structural capacity, the physics, are there any fuel rods there?" Ms. Caldicott said.

"But anyway, you don't want a nuclear reactor because... studies have shown that children under the age of five living within five kilometers of nuclear power plants have doubled the incidence of leukemia."

She said proximity to spent radioactive fuel rods for even a few seconds can be deadly.

"You should have windmills everywhere," she added.

She added that these two energy sources have become more affordable over the years, with the developing energy storage technology addressing the problem of intermittency plaguing solar and wind.

"The money that you put into a nuclear power plant could be billions and billions; it's up to I think nearly \$20 billion to build one," she added.

—Alyssa Nicole O. Tan



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Ozone pollution linked to increased heart disease – study

PARIS, France (AFP) – Ozone air pollution is linked to a higher rate of hospitalizations for heart diseases, according to a large study released Friday, the latest warning of the health dangers posed by greenhouse gases.

While a layer of ozone in the upper atmosphere helps block harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation from reaching Earth, at ground level it is a major component of the smog polluting most big cities.

Scientists have warned that a different kind of air pollution, fine particulate matter known as PM2.5, causes 8.8 million premature deaths a year, but ozone's full impact on health is still becoming clear.

Ozone is created in the atmosphere by a chemical reaction when two pollutants, often emitted by cars or industry, combine in the presence of sunlight, and has been shown to interfere with plant photosynthesis and growth.

The new study said it was the first to evaluate the risk of hospitalization for heart disease when ozone levels rise above the World Health Organization's daily guideline of 100 micrograms per cubic meter of air.

For the study, published in the *European Heart Journal*, a team of China-led researchers looked at data on hospital admissions from 2015 to 2017 in 70 Chinese cities collected for health insurance purposes.

The data covered 258 million people across 70 cities, representing roughly 18 percent of China's population.

The researchers compared the hospitalizations to air quality data tracked in real-time across the cities.

It found that — independent of other pollutants — ozone was associated with more than three percent of hospitalizations for



A GENERAL VIEW shows hazy conditions due to air pollution in Chiang Mai in northern Thailand on March 10, 2023. (AFP)

coronary heart disease, heart failure and stroke.

Also, each increase of 10 micrograms of ozone per cubic meter of air was linked to a 0.75 percent rise in hospitalizations for heart attacks, and to a 0.40 percent increase for stroke.

"Although these increments look modest," the impact would be "amplified by more than 20 times" when ozone levels soar above 200 micrograms in the summer, study author Shaowei Wu of Xi'an Jiaotong University and his colleagues told AFP.

In this extreme example, ozone exposure would be linked to 15 percent of heart attacks and eight percent of strokes, the researchers said.

Key for health, climate

The researchers called for more aggressive action to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels, as well as a warning system so people could limit their exposure on high ozone days.

Because the study was observational, it was not able to directly show that ozone pollution causes heart disease.

But Chris Malley, an air pollution researcher at York University in Britain, who was not involved in the study, said it added to a growing "weight of evidence that there is a causal relationship."

In 2017, research led by Malley estimated that ozone pollution was linked to more than one million deaths a year from respiratory disease.

"If cardiovascular disease were added to this total, then the health burden would be substantially higher than we estimated," Malley told AFP.

"Ozone is not just a threat to human health, it also has a large part to play in climate change," he added.

"Taking action to reduce ozone is therefore a key way to improve public health and combat climate change at the same time."



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Panibagong oil spill pinangangambahan sa Cebu

NI ZAIDA DELOS REYES

BINABANTAYAN ngayon ng mga tauhan ng Philippine Coast Guard-Marine Environmental Unit ang posibleng pagkakaroon ng panibagong insidente ng oil spill kasun-

od ng paglobog ng isang tugboat na may lulang 60 litro ng diesel oil sa karagatan ng Cebu City.

Ayon sa PCG District Central Visayas, lumubog ang MTUG Nagasaka habang lumihala ang LCT Jana Juliana sa may katubigang sakop ng 200 yards south ng Colorado shipyard sa

Cebu nitong Biyernes.

Ang insidente ay nagresulta din sa pagkakiwala ng isang crew ng MTUG Nagasaka na mabilis na tumalon sa dagat.

Agad namang ipinadala ng PCG ang mga divers ng BRP Cape San Agustin (MRRV-4408) at Special Operations Group (SOG) Central Visayas upang magsagawa ng search and rescue operation.

Dakong bilang tangha-

li ay natatagpuan ng mga mangingisda ng Barangay Ibo, Lapu-Lapu City ang lumulutang na katawan ng lalaki na kinumpirmang ang nawawalang crew.

Napansin na rin sa lugar ang minimal oil sheens kaya naman agad na maglalag ang PCG ng isang segment ng oil spill boom.

Sa kasalukuyan, patuloy ang pagbantay ng PCG sa situasyon ng katubigan sa lugar.



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Coast guard seeks US help in finding oil spill

THE Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) on Saturday confirmed it sought the assistance of the United States to contain an oil spill in Oriental Mindoro that is fast spreading to other coastal communities.

The M/T Princess Empress carrying 800,000 liters of industrial fuel oil sank off the coast of Naujan on Feb. 28.

PCG Commandant Admiral Artemio Abu said the oil slick has already reached more municipalities, with the farthest recorded in Caluya Island, Antique.

On Friday, it was reported that the oil spill has reached Hararigay Casian, Taytay, Palawan, which is approximately 159 nautical miles or 295 km. from the Naujan accident site.

"I have sent a letter to the Embassy of the United States through the Coast Guard na nangangailangan tayo ng tulong (that we need help)," he said at the Saturday News Forum in Quezon City.

"Generic naman ayon, kung anong maibabagay nila, like equipment, kung ano nasa kanilang kakayahan (The content of the letter is generic, requesting only what they could provide)," he added.

Abu said the tanker had sunk at least 389 meters beneath the water's surface but the country's available equipment to contain oil leaking from the vessel itself has "limited depth coverage."

"(We need a) remote(ly) operated vehicle (ROV). Ito ang pinakamahalaga. Ang first objective natin is to contain the oil from the source (This is the most important thing. Our first objective is to contain the oil from the source)," he said.

He said the Philippines has a new ROV but it could not go that deep.

Admiral Artemio Abu, Philippine Coast Guard commandant at the Saturday News Forum in Dapo Restaurant, Quezon City (PNA photo by Robert Oswald Alfiler)

More assistance

A team from Japan arrived on Friday and had already met with the PCG and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The DENR earlier said South Korea had expressed its intention to help control the spill, aside from other foreign experts and coast guards willing to assist the Philippines.

Representatives from various agencies will meet with PCG officials on Monday.

"Magtutulung-tulong po tayo (We will help each other out). This is not just about the effort of the Coast Guard but this is a whole-of-government approach," he said.

PNA



DENR diskarte sa oil spill pinatoto

Bukod sa paglilinis sa tumagas na langis, dapat umanong atupagin na ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang estratehiya upang malimitahan ang epekto nito

sa mga appektadong lugar. Ayon kay Camarines Sur Rep. LRay Villafuerte dapat sabayan ng DENR ang paglilinis nito ng paggawa ng isang risk management strategy upang malimitahan ang

epekto ng oil spill sa kalikasan, ekonomiya, at kalusugan.

Suportado rin ni Villafuerte ang pagkuha ng tulong ng mga sundalong kalahok sa Balikatan exercise at ang pagtanggap sa alok na tulong ng Japan at South Korea sa clean-up drive.

Sa pagtataya ng University of the Philippines-Marine Science Institute makakaapekto ang kumalat na langis sa may 20,000 hektarya ng coral reef, 9,900 hektarya ng bakawan, at 6,000 hektarya ng seagrass sa Oriental Mindoro, Occidental Mindoro, Antique, at Palawan.

Samaantala, dumating na sa Pilipinas ang ipinadalaang team ng Japan

para tumulong sa paghugas sa epekto ng oil spill mula sa lumubog na barko sa Oriental Mindoro.

Ito ang inihayag ni Philippine Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Artemio Abu matapos tanggapin ng PCG nitong Biyernes ang Japan team na tumulong para maalutas ang problema sa oil spill.

Bukod aniya sa Japan ay nag-alek din ng tulong ang Coast Guard ng ibang mga bansa para sa clean-up operations ng oil spill sa lugar.

Baray sa report, nasa 80,000 litro ng industrial fuel oil ang sakay ng barko nang lumubog ito habang patungo sa Iloilo mula sa Bataan.

(Billy Begas/Aileen Tatiping)



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Phil. Coast Guard nagpapasaklolo sa US sa oil spill cleanup drive sa Oriental Mindoro

KINUMPIRMA ni Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Commandant, Admiral Antonio Abu, na pormal na silang humingi ng tulong sa Amerika kaugnay sa paglilinis sa oil spill sa karagatan ng Oriental Mindoro.

Sinabi ni Abu na sumalat na sila sa Amerika at ang kanilang hiling ay "generic" ang content.

Ibig sabihin kung ano ang kanilang maibibigay na tulong ay malaking bagay lalo na ang response equipment.

"They have more experience and knowledge in this issue. It's just a matter of making known to them that we are asking assistance from them," pahayag ni Abu.

Aniya, sa US pa lamang sila nagsulat para humingi ng tulong.

Una nang nagpahayag ng kahandaan na tumulong ang Japan at South Korea.

Una nang inihayag ni Abu na mayroon silang contingency plan para tugunan ang problema ngayon sa oil spill.

Gayunpaman sinabi ng Coast Guard Chief na kanilang dito ang whole of government approach dahil hindi ito kategorya ng coast guard.

Sa ngayon, malaking humon sa PCG ang pagkakaroon ng remote-operated vehicle para makita ang ilalim ng dagat na siyang maludaga para na contain ang oil spill.

Ayon kay Abu, may ROV ang PCG subalit hindi ito kaya ang ganuonang katatipin.

Siniguro naman ng Presidential Communications Office na maki-kipagtungan ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa US na bukas mag deploy ng mga sandalo para tumulong sa clean up drive sa nangyaring oil spill.

Sa ngayon ayon sa Coast Guard umabot na sa Caluya, Antique ang oil spill.



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Japanese experts sa oil spill nasa bansa na

Dumating na sa bansa kahapon ang mga ekspertong miyembro ng Japanese Coast Guard (JCG) upang tumulong sa pamahalaan para mapigilan ang pagkalat pa ng oil spill dulot ng lumubog na MT Princess Empress sa Oriental Mindoro.

Dumating sa bayan ng Pola sa naturang probinsya ang mga Hapones para magkasa muna ng site visit at assessment sa problema, may dalawang linggo makaraan ang paglubog ng tanker.

Sinabi ni Nihei Daisuke ng Japanese Embassy Minister for Economic Affairs, na binubuo ng dalawang grupo ang 11 eksperto na dumating na agad munang nakipagkoordinasyon sa Philippine Coast Guard (PCG).

Ito ay makaraang humingi ng tulong ang Pilipinas sa Japan at United States of America para masugpo ang oil spill at malinis ang bahagi ng karagatan na naapektuhan nito.

May deklaradong kargang 800,000 litro ng industrial fuel ang MT Princess Empress nang lumubog ito sa karagatan sa may Mindoro. Matapos ang dalawang linggo, hindi pa naaabot ng PCG ang barko dahil sa wala silang kapabilidad na sumisid ng 400 metro na kinalubugan nito.

Pinangangambahan na maapektuhan ng malapot na langis ang nasa 2,500 ektaryang coral reefs, mangroves at seaweed beds na tinitirhan ng sari-saring lamang dagat sa naturang bahagi ng karagatan. (Danilo Garcia)



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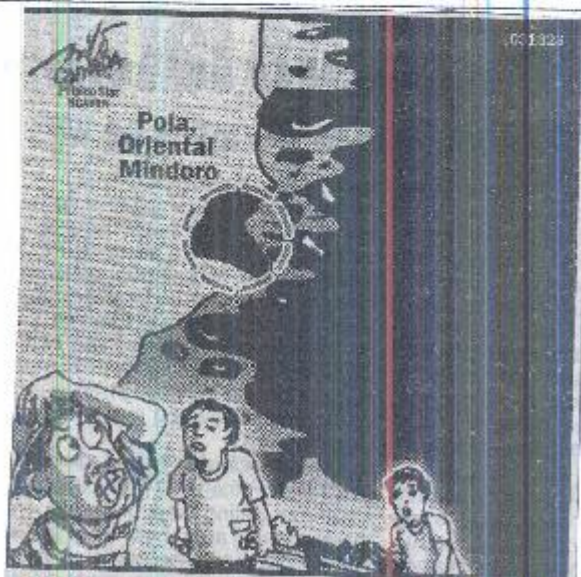
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Editorial

Pagbayarin ang may-ari ng MT Princess Empress

MALAWAK na ang perwisyonang dinulot ng oil spill na nagmula sa MT Princess Empress. Hindi lamang ang karagatan ng Oriental Mindoro ang napinsala kundi umabot na rin sa Palawan at Aklan. Dahil sa lakas ng hangin, posibleng tangayin ang natapong langis sa Boracay Island. Hindi biro ang pinsalang idudulot sa kabuhayan ng insidenteng ito na masari namang naagapan kung naging maingat at responsible lamang ang may-ari at namamahala sa motor tanker. Sa simula pa lamang, alam na nilang kapag nagkaroon ng problema sa tanker habang naglalayag ang kasunod na nito ay ang pagtagas ng langis. At marami nang nangyaring ganito sa nakaraan. Marami nang naperwisyo dahil sa pagtagas ng langis. At sa kabila nyan, hindi pa rin nag-ingat ang mga may-ari namamahala ng tanker.

Lumubog ang MT Princess Empress sa karagatang malapit sa Naujan, Oriental Mindoro noong Pebrero 28. Galang umanong Bataan at patungong Iloilo para mag-deliber ng 800,000 litro ng industrial fuel oil. Grabeng napuruhan ang Pola, na katubing bayan ng Naujan. Sa leang iglap, napadpad sa baybayin ng Pola ang maraming langis na nagparumi sa beach resorts ng nagabing bayan. Manu-manong sinalok ng mga residente ng Pola ang langis sa dalampasigan. Subalit walang pagkaubos ang langis sapagkat patuloy sa pagtapon mula sa tanker. Dahil sa malalaking alon, walang tigil ang pagtagas ng langis.

Maraming residente ng Pola ang nagkakasakit na dahil sa natalanghap na masangsang na amoy mula sa karagatan. Pinayuhan ng Department of Health (DOH) ang mga residente na mag-face mask. Nagpadala naman ng mga kagamitan ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) para mabilis ang paglilinis sa tumapong langis sa dalampasigan.

Ang Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) ay namamahagi ng ayuda sa mga appektadong residente. Halos walang makapangisda sapagkat delikado sa kalusugan ang natapong langis. Kung magtatagal pa bago tuluyang makontrol ang oil spill, maraming magugutom. Humingi na ng tulong sa Japan para mapabilis ang paglilinis sa oil spill.

Habang marami ang tuliro sa perwisyonang dulot ng oil spill, wala namang marinig sa may-ari nang lumubog na MT Princess Empress. Naghihintay ng tulong ang mga taga-Pola mula sa may-ari ng tanker subalit wala umanong dumarating.

Nararapat nang kumilos ang Senado para mag-imbestiga at puwersahing tumulong ang may-ari ng tanker sa mga naapektuhan ng oil spill. Pagbayarin din. Ayon sa Oil Pollution Compensation Act (RA 5483) papanagutin ang mga magdudulot ng pinsala dahil sa oil pollution at nag-uutos na bigyan ng kabayaran ang mga naapektuhan.



Green group seeks urgent action on oil spill

A PRIEST-LED coalition that seeks to protect the Verde Island Passage (VIP) is calling for accountability and deeper look into the oil spill that wreaked havoc in the waters of Oriental Mindoro.

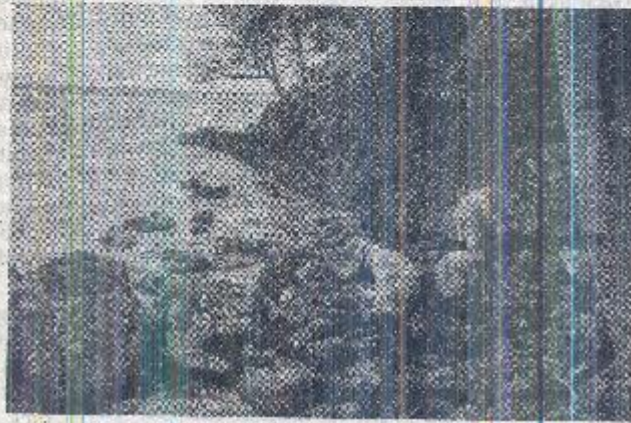
The Protect VIP campaign network said the incident must serve as an "eye opener" to the neglect the Verde Island Passage has long suffered despite its socioeconomic and ecological significance.

VIP is a strait that separates the islands of Luzon and Mindoro, connecting the South China Sea with the Tayabas and the Sibuyan Sea beyond.

The devastating oil spill occurred after MT Princess Empress capsized on Feb. 28, bringing down 800,000 liters of industrial oil.

"We call on the Philippine government for the most urgent action to contain the spill, assess the severity of damage, and prioritize the welfare of impacted communities who must receive livelihood support and protection from health impacts," said Fr. Edwin Gariguez, lead convenor of Protect VIP.

"We also demand accountability from the owner of MT Princess Empress, RDC Reield Marines Services, and the fuel supply it contains," he said. The oil spill has put at risk more



VOLUNTEERS join a coastal clean up drive in the town of Pola in Oriental Mindoro, which is among the towns hit the hardest by the oil spill. Photo courtesy of CENTER FOR ENERGY, ECOLOGY, AND DEVELOPMENT

than 30 of Oriental Mindoro's marine-protected areas, and has affected other provinces like Antique in Western Visayas. The province of Oriental Mindoro has placed at least 76 coastal villages across nine out of its 14 towns.

The faith-based group said at least 18,000 fisherfolk in Oriental Mindoro alone have been robbed of their livelihood as fishing activities are forcibly put on hold.

Residents, it added, are also robbed of their seafood supply — "a heavy blow for a province in which over 50% of households already suffer various

levels of food insecurity".

"We thus join local residents in lamenting what would be a prolonged suffering of the local fishing industry — valued at Php 11.80 billion across the 5 provinces of VIP in 2021 — as impacts of the oil spill are expected to be felt for years to come," said Gariguez, who is also the former executive secretary of Caritas Philippines.

He also stressed the need for the government to take into account the bigger picture and what is at stake in the oil spill incident in biodiversity-rich VIP.

The group has been raising

alarm on the issue of having more heavy industry development around the VIP area — especially fossil fuel power plants and LNG terminals which would receive shipped cargoes of liquefied natural gas or LNG. "More plans for LNG terminals means more stopping vessels passing through the marine corridor. This increases the possibility of a similar situation happening in the future," Gariguez said.

"The Verde Island Passage must be afforded no less than the greatest protection due to a global treasure for marine biodiversity," he added.

Meanwhile, a church eco-group mounts fund drive for relief of oil spill-affected areas

The Eco-Convergence national hub launched the campaign on Wednesday as authorities scramble to contain the spill.

The funds raised will be used for the relief and clean-up efforts not just in Mindoro but also in other dioceses affected by the tragedy.

Eco-Convergence was launched in 2019 to further promote the teachings of Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment, *Laudato Si*.

One of its partner organizations, Caritas Philippines, is also sending support for the most needy coastal communities in the Diocese of Calapan.



DENR nganga sa tapunan ng expired COVID bakuna

HANGGANG ngayon ay wala pang alam ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) kung paano idispansa ang mga expired bakuna kontra COVID-19.

Ito ang tabasang sinabi ni Senador Francis Tolentino matapos makulang sa paliwanag ng mga opisyal ng DENR sa nakaraang pagdinig ng Senate Blue Ribbon committee.

"Sa hearing nakita na hindi sapat yong kakayahan ng DENR. In-outsource nga nila sa isang private company ang pagsusunog nito," paglalahad ni Tolentino sa radio interview

nitong linggo.

"Wala pa silang datos at pag-aaral tungkol dito. Yan po ang nakakalungkot," dugrong pa niya.

Sa inisyal na pahayag ng DENR sa komite, susunugin ang pinaggamitang vials kasama ang mga-expired na COVID-bakuna sa Trece Martires, Cavite saka ibibiyahin patungong Tarlac upang ibasortin doon.

Nangangamba naman si Tolentino sa paglilibingan ng mga nagamit na bote pari ang mga na expired bakuna dahil baka makontaminado ang tubig sa Tarlac.



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RAINBOW RIVER AGAW ATRAKSYON SA ANTIQUE

SIKAT ngayon ang Antique dahil sa kanilang 'Rainbow River' na kung saan makikita ang multi-colored precious stones na kumukitap at komukitap kasabay ng agos ng tubig sa ilog ng Mau-it sa loob ng Sibalom Natural Park (SNP).

Ayon kay Park Protected Area Supt. Anrhany Evangello, isang writer ng United Nations Development Program-Biodiversity Finance initiative (UN-DF-BIOPIN) ang namangha sa ganda ng ilog dahil sa makukulay na bato sa paligid nito kaya pinangalanan niyang Rainbow

river na ngayon ay nagtrending na at marami na ang naging bisita at nais makita na bagong tourist attraction ng parke.

Payo nila na mainam na pumunta kapag dry season dahil doon mo mismo makikita ang mga semi-precious stones sa Rainbow River lalo na kung ito ay mababaw at maaari namang magpicture.

Mahigpit namang ipinagbabawal ang pumulot o kumuha ng bato sa Rainbow river bilang souvenir dahil naka-protected na ang lugar sa ilalim ng Republic Act 7586 o mas



kilala bilang National Integrated Protected Areas System Act (NIPAS) at RA 11038 o Expanded NIPAS Act of 2018 na naka-

preserved sa loob ng SNE. Ang kahabaan ng Mau-it River ay mula sa Barangay Aningalan, San Remigio ng Indaga Creek

flora species, Visayan warty pig, Visayan Tardigrade, Walden's hornbills at Visayan spotted deer. (Wick Aquino)

sa Barangay Im-parayan, Sibalom at makikita ang mga semi-precious stones na tulad ng quartz, jade, at onyx na ginagawang alahas.

Bukod sa Rainbow River makikita rin sa parke ang pamumukadkad ng rare largest flowers na Raflesia speciosa, Visayan warty pig, Visayan Tardigrade, Walden's hornbills at Visayan spotted deer.



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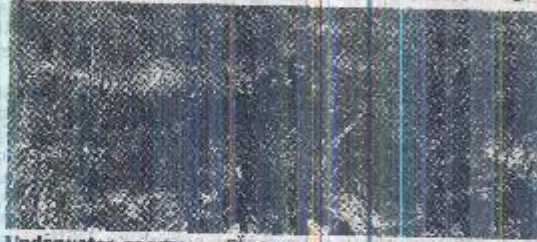
DATE

PGB marks World Seagrass Day

BATANGAS Capitol — The provincial government of Batangas joined the celebration of "World Seagrass Day" which is marked every year on the first day of March to raise awareness on the preservation and conservation of seagrass worldwide to ensure a healthy and prosperous ecosystem and protection caused by climate change.

This is in accordance with the declaration of the United Nations General Assembly on May 22, 2022.

In line with this, Governor DoDo Mandanas, and through the Provincial Government Environment and Natural Resources Office (PCENRO), has continued the establishment and management of marine protect-



Underwater seagrass. Photo courtesy of Batangas PIO

ed areas, including the seagrass beds.

In order to further promote the maintenance of a healthy, orderly, and clean environment and rich oceans throughout the province, regular monitoring and assessment of water quality from seas, rivers, and lakes are also carried out; distribution and planting of forest and fruit-

bearing tree seedlings and mangroves, cleaning of beaches and roadsides, teaching proper waste disposal and other activities, in collaboration with coastal local governments, national government agencies, academe, non-governmental organizations, private organizations, and communities.

Jojo Cesar Magsombol



TITLE:

PAGE

DATE



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICE
Fiscal L.D. Badalis St. (formerly Ohio St), Upper Kalaklan, Olongapo City
Telefax: 047-224-2869/email: cenroolongapo@gmail.com

NOTICE OF BIDDING

Notice is hereby given that the DENR-CENRO Olongapo City will accept oral or written bids not later than 10:30 am of May 15, 2023 for the lease of the land herein described below:

Location : Brgy. Lower Kalaklan, Olongapo City

Description : Plan MLJ 03-000012
Beginning at Point Marked as "1" of Plan MLJ 03-000012 being N01°48E, 1,013.98m from Kalaklan Lighthouse to corner 1:
Thence:
Line 1-2, S63°54E, 25.63m; Line 2-3, S30°51E, 46.99m;
Line 3-4, S45°36W, 91.95m; Line 4-5, S58°08W, 57.12m;
Line 5-6, S06°39W, 34.11m; Line 6-7, S45°51W, 57.75m;
Line 7-8, S62°32W, 42.92m; Line 8-9, S22°52E, 286.52m.

Boundaries : North : Property of Jose Yee
East : MSI - (X-4) 5647-D Lot 1
South : MSI - (X-4) 5647-D Lot 1
West : Accretal Area

Area : 14,349 square meters

Appraised value of : Land: 46,777,740.00
Proposed/Existing Improvements: 102,595,350.00

Applied for by : Rosenda Ann Ocampo

Approved Appraisal Rental: PhP2,429,265.70

The right to lease the land will be awarded to the person offering the highest annual rental, which shall not be less than three percent centum (3%) of the value of the land plus one per centum (1%) of the value of the proposed and/or existing improvements. In order that a person may be entitled to participate in the bidding, he must be a qualified public land applicant, and must, before commencement of the same, make a deposit equivalent to at least three (3) months rental. Only deposit in cash, money order, treasury warrant, certified check or manager's check can be accepted. A person bidding in representation of another may do so under a duly executed power of attorney. During the bidding, the bidder has to make an additional deposit every time his bid is raised, to complete the three (3) months rental, otherwise, such bid raised shall not be accepted. The right is reserved to reject any or all bids.

(SGD.) JOWELL P. DELLOSA
CENR Officer

MT - Mar. 13, 20 & 27, April 3 & 10, 2023