

16 March 2023 Thursday



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



What's the penalty for spilling oil in PHL?

THE massive oil spill caused by the sinking of oil tanker MT *Princess Empress*, which was carrying 800,000 liters of industrial fuel, off the coast of Naujan, Oriental Mindoro on February 28 showed how unprepared we are to face this kind of disaster. It also exposed our inability to learn from the environmental damage caused by a similar accident in the past.

On August 11, 2006, an oil spill occurred in Panay Gulf when the oil tanker MT Solar 1 sank off the coasts of Guimaras and Negros, causing what is considered to be the worst oil spill in the country's history. The oil spill adversely affected marine sanctuaries and mangrove reserves in four municipalities in Guimaras. It also threatened 27 communities in Iloilo province and 17 others in Negros Occidental.

Unfortunately, the public outrage engendered by the spill was not enough to push the government to design a program that could help contain future oil spills. Despite the heavy damage caused by the oil slicks, we didn't create or identify a government agency manned by people who have the expertise to deal with these kinds of challenges. The oil spill nightmare in 2006 should have inspired the formation of a body tasked to prevent, prepare for, and respond to oil spills that occur in the country.

The massive oil spill in Mindoro continues to affect not only the livelihood of fisherfolk, but also the country's marine biodiversity and tourism as it heads towards the famous beaches of Coron in Palawan and in Boracay.

Marine scientists at the University of the Philippines said about 36,000 hectares of coral reef, mangroves and sea grass were potentially in danger of being affected by the oil slick.

At the Senate hearing on the massive leakages of oil on Tuesday, Sen. Cynthia Villar expressed dismay over the extent of the damage caused by the oil spill, noting that it "is emerging to have more extensive effects," compared to the 2006 Guimaras incident.

Citing the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council Situation Report dated March 12, 2023, Villar said the oil spill in the province affected 21,691 families in 117 barangays of Region 4-B; 7,616 families in four barangays of Region 6; a total of 13 marine protected areas and 61 tourist attractions; and about 8 kilometers of coastline in Caluya, Antique.

The Senate hearing also exposed grave regulatory lapses by the owner of the sunken tanker, dashing hopes that thousands of people impacted by the massive leak could promptly get financial help for the damage and lost livelihood from the \$1-billion indemnity insurance taken out by the owners.

Maritime Industry Authority representatives told the Senate panel that the ship didn't have the permit to sail. RDC Reield Marine Services (RDC) – the owner of MT *Princess Empress* – has yet to secure an amendment of its certificate of public convenience (CPC) for the ill-fated vessel; thus it should not have been allowed to sail.

Sen. Francis "Chiz" Escudero grilled Philippine Coast Guard and officials of the oil tanker over the incident, pointing out the failure of the PCG to check the ship's certificate of public convenience. In questioning Fritzer Tee, vice president of RDC Reield Marine Services Inc. that owns MT *Princess Empress*, Escudero found out that the vessel was newly acquired and has sailed nine times already even though it technically had no permit to operate yet. Tee said they applied for an amended CPC in November 2022. However, the senators learned that the ship was not issued an amended CPC because the owner did not apply for one.

Senator Francis Tolentino, who earlier spurred the Senate environment panel to demand an in-depth assessment of the huge damage brought by the Mindoro oil spill incident following his privilege speech last week, urged authorities and the owners of MT *Princess Empress* to hasten the distribution of compensation for those affected by oil spill. The Senate should also ask compensation from the company that owns the oil cargo for its failure to exercise due diligence when it chartered the sunken MT *Princess Empress*, which is now spilling 800,000 liters of highly polluting industrial oil into Philippine waters.



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ULTIMATUM

DENR, DAPAT MANGUNA LABAN SA OIL SPILL

SA gitna ng kontrobersya sa oil spill o tagas ng langis mula sa tunuhog na MT Princess Empress, dapat nang magkaroon ang pamahalaan ng ahensyang mangunguna laban sa ganitong problema.

Malawak ilang usapin sa gitna ng mga imbesigasyong isinasagawa ng Maritime Industry Authority, Philippine Coast Guard, Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, mga apektadong government local unit, National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council, Secretary's Office of Environmental and Natural Resources.

Naghanalo ang balat sa brakipan sa dapat na lead agency sa giyera sa oil spill.

SINO-SINO BA SILA?

Ang MARINA ang naglalabas ng Certificate of Public Convenience o CPC para sa mga barko. PCG naninang ang nagbe-check kung may CPC, ang isang barko.

Ang DA-BFAR, nagbe-check ng kalagayan ng itagay na langis daga.

Ang NARRMAC, nagko-ordinate o nagpapalit ng sa lahat ng ahensya ng gobyerno, nasyunal, panrehiyonal, LGU para sa re-sponse o lumaban sa kalamidad gayang oil spill.

Ang LGU, inarong kompletong inoperamanto o nasa partner sila sa kasabing mga komersiyal ahensya laban sa kalamidad para sa kasabing naging mga ang matamang sa kawalan o kakulangan ng budyet.

Ang Senado, para sa pagpapalawig ng kakulangan ng budyet sa anumang bagay ang pangunahing trabahito.

Sino dapat ang lead agency sa kalamidad ng oil spill?

ANG DENR

Para sa ULTIMATUM, sa lahat ng mababang ahensya, ang DENR meron ang pinakalaking ahensyang mangunguna laban sa oil spill.

Bakit?

Una, ito ang nagpapalawig ng batas sa pangangiektang basura gaya ng bumalagang ngayong langis at tamang pagtatapon ng basura.

Unang na may likidong basurang langis at tubig at may neging solidu makaraang dumapo ang langis sa mga lupa, buhangin at punto sa mga dalampasigan na dapat kolektahin at tapon sa lahat ng kasagayan.

Kalawa, may expertise ilang pag-aralan ang mga politiyong likidong kolektahin ng langis, nasa gitna natin ng daga o log o lupa man ang mga ito.

Katlo, ang mga batas sa basura at eksparte sa politiyon ay pinatral sa lahat ng LGU kaya may kaniy ito laban sa oil spill.

Eksperto rin ang DENR sa pagpapalit sa mga kapaligirang sinira ng mga kalamidad gayang oil spill.

ANG KAKULANGAN?

Nagkakaroon ang buong pamahalaan kung paano lalaban ang oil spill at mga kalamidad sa larangan, kalapangan at kapaligirang dukot nito.

Kaya naninang ang panawagan sa Japan at United States na tumulong laban, partikular sa oil spill.

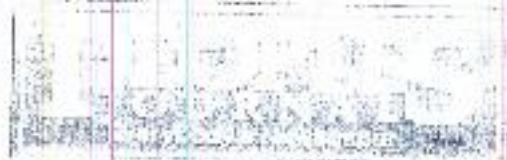
Para hindi tayo kailangang manikuhod at magkaroon sa paghating tubig sa iba, hindi ba pupwedeng palakasin ang DENR sa kanyang kaniy itong lumaban partikular sa lagas ng langis?

O mga senador at kongresman, magpali sa ng budyet para sa pagpapalawig o pambili ng mga gamit laban sa oil spill para magamit ng DENR bilang lead agency at mga concerned agency.

Tandaan, tyak na masakit sa ang MT Princess Empress tragedy sa rano ng banyang din royally sa bansa.

oDo

Anonang reklamo o puna, iparating lang sa www.remate.ph o i-text sa 092-14303333



Oil tax as fund source for Mindoro spill clean-up eyed

FRACTIONS of taxes collected from crude oil and other petroleum products could be used in financing the clean-up of the Mindoro oil spill and assistance to affected coastal residents.

This is according to Deputy Speaker Batangas Representative Ralph Recto as he disclosed that annually, the government collects more than P390 billion from the oil tax.

"Ang kataong nasawing lugar dapat gamitin panghina ng tagas sa tumubog na barko," Recto said in a statement.

The colon said a mere one day's worth of oil tax collections — P1 billion — would be enough to "start" "abatement and alleviation" measures in areas hit by the ecological disaster.

He is "gently reminding" the government of its huge revenues from oil and petroleum "to find it to spending needed for the containment of the oil spill."

"Ang paulitlabing ayaw natin ayon sa spending is just a mere drop in the barrel of oil tax collections. If the treasury were an oil tank, then it is only correct to siphon off from its contents to address a situation for which one particular tax was meant to alleviate," he stressed.

Recto said an excise tax is slapped on oil products because it is viewed as a harmful product, causing pollution and sickness, and contributing to global warming.

"The argument was that it is paid to compensate for damages to health and the environment. That was how previous administrations framed their justification for higher oil taxes. So can this principle be invoked in the Mindoro oil spill? Can collections of this specific tax be spent for the contingencies used to justify its imposition?" Recto added.

The BOC gets the bulk in collections based on the "pay as you use" principle when taxes on crude oil and refined products are collected upon loading to ports. *Jester Manalastas*



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Recto presses use of crude oil tax to clean up oil spill

By RYAN PONCE PACPACO

GOVERNMENT collects more than P380 billion a year from crude oil and petroleum products, a fraction of which can be used to finance the clean-up of the Mindoro oil spill and indemnify impacted coastal residents, Deputy Speaker Ralph Recto said Wednesday.

"Ang kolang burwis na laage dapat gamitin pang-ginang lagas sa hanabog na berso," Recto said.

Recto said a mere one day's worth of oil tax collections - P1 billion - would

be enough to jumpstart "abatement and alleviation" measures in areas hit by the ecological disaster.

Recto said he is "gently reminding" government of its huge revenues from oil and fuel products "to good use" in spending more for the containment of the oil spill.

"Ang puho ko lang ay whatever you are spending is just a mere drop in the barrel of oil tax collections," he said.

Recto believed that "if the treasury were an oil tank, then it is only correct to siphon off from its contents to address a situation for which one particular tax was meant to alleviate."

"Nature, when it is under threat, as in the case of the oil spill, is entitled to tax dividends," he said.

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"So can this principle be invoked in the Mindoro oil spill? Can collections of this specific tax be spent for the

contingencies used to justify its imposition?" Recto said.

Based on a study of a House of Representatives think tank, the Bureau of Customs collected P372 billion in duties and taxes on crude oil (P188.9 billion) and petroleum products (P233.5 billion) in 2021.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue added P7.4 billion in excise tax from petroleum products during the same year.

The EOC gets the bulk in collections based on the "pay as you enter" principle when taxes on crude oil and refined products are collected upon landing in ports.



MARINA ADMITS

No power to sanction SMC

BY RAITTY ATENG
Orinopolis ref

The Maritime Industry Authority said it has no power to sanction San Miguel Corporation

which is reportedly the charterer of the sunken oil tanker *MT Princess Empress* for the massive destruction to the marine ecosystem caused by the massive oil spill in Oriental Mindoro.

In an interview Wednesday, Marina spokesperson Sharon Alado said SL Harbor

Bulk Terminal Corp., a subsidiary of San Miguel Shipping and Lighterage, negotiated the charter of the *MT Princess Empress* with its operator, RDC Reind Marine Services, to transport 800,000 liters of industrial oil from Bataan to Hofile. It

'A loaded oil barge treading domestic waters is a "floating time bomb." If an accident happens, the oil spill will be exponentially harmful to our environment

From page 1

sank in rough weather off Naujan, Oriental Mindoro on 28 February.

Alado said they are not in a position to sanction SMC amid revelations during Tuesday's hearing of the Senate Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Climate Change that *MT Princess Empress* had no permit to operate since its owner RDC has yet to amend its certificate of public convenience or CPC after it added the new ship to its fleet.

"Under Marina's mandate pursuant to PD (Presidential Decree) 474 and Republic Act 9295, Marina is in no position to determine the liability of the charterer. Our mandate only relates to shipping certification and safe operations," she said.

She, however, said in a Senate inquiry that "the (Marina) administrator only confirmed that the *MT Princess Empress* had not yet been added to the company's CPC through a CPC amendment."

Alado said there is a process for screening the documents submitted, "and per the screening, they still lacked documents as confirmed by the administrator yesterday."

"We received no information from the shipowner, or any documents with regard

to who the charterer was so we cannot validate that," she added.

It was learned during the Senate hearing that it is Marina that issues the CPC while it is the Philippine Coast Guard's responsibility to clear the ship, based on a checklist, for the voyage.

A CPC is a license issued to domestic ship operators to engage in domestic shipping activities. The company needs to file an amendment to its CPC when it acquires a new ship.

Mandated to regulate the Philippine maritime industry, Marina is responsible to "lead a progressive maritime administration for safer people, safer ships, and cleaner environment."

Also bared during the Senate hearing is that the PCG reportedly did not tick off seven boxes in the pre-departure checklist of *MT Princess Empress* when it sailed thus, should not have allowed it to leave SL Harbor Terminal in Linau, Bataan.

An RDC official said *MT Princess Empress*, a new vessel that first sailed in December 2022, and even without an amended CPC was able to sail nine times before the sinking.

Floating bomb

Meanwhile, a reliable source, who has been operating shipping vessels, said that a domestic vessel carrying hundreds of thousands of liters of oil is a catastrophe on the sea.

"A loaded oil barge treading domestic waters is a "floating time bomb." If an accident happens, the oil spill will be exponentially harmful to our environment,

unlike cargo vessels," he told the *Daily Tribune*.

To mitigate this, the seasoned shipowner suggested to Marina that all tankers treading domestic waters, excluding bays and rivers, must be classed by international classification societies. He said that local classification is not acceptable.

"All tankers must carry protection and insurance that are recognized internationally. All documentation must be handled by the Marina head office," he added.

Further, the source said the *MT Princess Empress* "was built in Bataan but registered in the Legaspi branch of Marina, which is questionable."

"Why? All tankers must be approved beforehand by the oil majors (Shell, Chevron and Petron). This is practiced internationally. We can't have another disaster. Time for the government/Marina to be strict. Rules must not be changed unless there is a wide consultation with the private sector. The government should not be moved by the lobby of politicians or by small tanker owners, which has happened in the past," the source said.

Although the recent Senate hearing did not mention who the charterer of the 800,000 liters of fuel oil is, the environmental protection group Protect Verde Island said San Miguel Corporation must be held responsible and pay up.

"SMC must pay at least a P70,000,000 cash bond — P50 million for the cleanup and containment and P20 million for damages and payment to impacted communities," Protect VIP lead convener Fr. Edwin Gariguez said.



BOYPOC SAYS TANKER HAS CPC ISSUED BY MARINA

GREEN GROUPS OUTRAGED AMID SENATE REVELATION SUNKEN SHIP HAD NO GOV'T PERMIT

By the Inquirer Staff
and James Ramirez
@Inquirer

MANILA, CITY—An environmental group was outraged over the revelation that MT Princesa Express, which is bound to spill its oil into the bay of Indang, grade oil tank, did not have the required government permit to do so.

"We are outraged by this revelation," said Eder Guevara, executive director of the Manila-based Friends of the Earth (FOE), on Wednesday. "We are deeply troubled by the fact that the maritime industry, including the Philippine Navy, is not following the law. It is a disgrace that a ship of this size, which is already being allowed to operate in the bay, did not have the required permit to do so."

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), which was ordered to stop the ship from leaving the bay, found the ship in violation of the law. The ship was found to be in violation of the law because it did not have the required permit to do so.

Princesa Express is a 1,000-ton oil tanker that is bound to spill its oil into the bay of Indang, grade oil tank, did not have the required government permit to do so.

The PCG said it had applied for a CPC (Certificate of Permit to Carry Oil) from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) but was not given one.

FOE spokesperson Remy Samson said the DENR is not following the law. He said the DENR is not following the law because it did not give the required permit to the ship.

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PCG probes sunken oil tanker's permit

By ROBERTZON RAMIREZ

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) has found some irregularities in the franchise granted by the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) to the sunken *M/V Princess Empress*.

PCG spokesman Rear Admiral Armand Balilo said the PCG has been instructed to investigate the Certificate of Public Convenience (CPC) granted by MARINA to *Princess Empress*, which caused a massive oil spill when it sank in the waters off Oriental Mindoro on Feb. 28.

"Initially, there seemed to be a denial from the MARINA, and yesterday the owner of the vessel told the Senate panel that its CPC has yet to be approved."

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PCG From Page 1

Balilo said.

He said there was no valid CPC granted to the *Empress*. He stood firm that the motor tanker was allowed to sail as the PCG was given a CPC from the MARINA.

Balilo's statement came after the Senate committee on environment on Tuesday discovered that the *Empress* was allowed to operate even without an updated CPC.

The PCG and the MARINA are attached agencies of the Department of Transportation (DOTr) for the maritime sector.

Balilo said the *Empress* was allowed to sail based on a copy of the CPC available at the PCG-Central Luzon sta-

tion, which has jurisdiction over Batangas and the National Capital Region.

He said the PCG relied on the "presumption of regularity" when it allowed the *Empress* to sail.

"Now, if this CPC is not valid, it's up to the company to prove otherwise. When this was given to us, we trusted that it was approved by the MARINA, authentic and valid," Balilo said. "We used it as basis to allow the vessel to sail."

He said the PCG could only implement the CPC granted to vessels, which means that these were properly checked by the MARINA and were approved to operate at sea, noting the PCG does not allow vessels to operate without proper documents.

As part of the investiga-

tion, Balilo said the PCG was instructed to conduct its own probe and coordinate with the DOTr and the maritime cluster, including the MARINA, to determine the reasons why the *Empress* was granted a CPC.

Meanwhile, Deputy Speaker Ralph Recto suggested that the government could utilize a portion of the P380-billion annual tax collected from crude oil and petroleum products to clean the Mindoro oil spill and indemnify affected coastal residents.

Recto said that P1 billion alone, which is only "one day's worth of oil tax collections," would be enough to jumpstart "abatement and alleviation measures in areas hit by the ecological disaster."

- With Delon Porcalla, Cecille Suerte Felipe, Paolo Romero



ON WEDNESDAY, the Coast Guard said 5,603 liters of oily water mixture and 50 sacks of oil-contaminated materials had been collected during its cleanup from Mar. 1 to 14.

Coast Guard belies Marina claim sunken vessel had no permit

By Kyle Aristophere
T. Atienza and Alyssa Nicole
O. Tan *Reporters*

THE PHILIPPINE Coast Guard (PCG) on Tuesday night released a document showing that the sunken oil tanker that spilled 800 liters of oil off the waters of Oriental Mindoro last month had a permit to operate, contrary to a Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) finding presented at a Senate hearing earlier in the day.

In a Facebook post, the Coast Guard shared six pages of the certificate of public convenience supposedly issued by Marina to RDC Reifel Marine Services, Inc., the owner of sunken *MT Princess Empress*, in November.

In the document, Marina approved the inclusion of *MT Princess Empress* in RDC's fleet since it was "financially capable to maintain its operations."

The certificate issued on Nov. 16, 2022 also indicated that the permit will expire on Feb. 6, 2023.

On Tuesday, Marina Administrator Hernan N. Fabia told the Senate environment committee the sunken vessel was excluded from RDC's certificate.

In response, RDC said it bought the vessel last year and applied for a certificate change in November to include the tanker in its fleet. It said it had completed the docu-

mentary requirements on Dec. 2. The vessel was on its ninth voyage when it sank.

The Philippine Coast Guard did not mention the November 2022 certificate supposedly issued by Marina to RDC. It insists its workers had inspected the ship, but said there could have been lapses.

Coast Guard oil spill response incident Commander Geromino B. Tuvilla told News 5 on Wednesday they were unable to fully explain their side during the hearing due to "pressure in communication." "There was just no opportunity to explain further, you saw the situation there."

At the Senate hearing, Senator Ana Theresa "Risa" N. Hontiveros said Coast Guard authorities should not have allowed *MT Princess Empress* to leave a harbor terminal in Balabac province in central Luzon on Feb. 28 since they did not tick seven boxes in the pre-departure checklist.

"[Coast Guard] officers who checked the ship should be jailed for dereliction of duty," Senator Rafael T. Tulfo said at the hearing.

Coast Guard spokesman Armando A. Basilo told a news briefing the vessel had used the permit four times in its transactions with the Coast Guard — once each in Manila, Cebu, Misamis Oriental and Iloilo.

"As far as we are concerned, we relied on this document. That's why we allowed the vessel to operate," Mr. Basilo said.

FULL STORY



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or by using the link
\$164/PES02M21

PCG: Sunken vessel had permit to operate

Validity of submitted papers being checked

BY VICTOR REYES

OFFICIALS of the ill-fated tanker MT Princess Empress presented a certificate of public convenience (CPC) to the Philippine Coast Guard before it set sail for Ilcilo and sank off Oriental Mindoro last February 28, according to the PCG.

PCG spokesman Rear Adm. Armand Ballico said their personnel checked the documents of the

vessel, loaded with 800,000 liters of industrial fuel oil, before it left Bataan.

The vessel, also carrying 10,000 liters of operational fuel, encountered engine trouble due to overheating and subsequently sank, causing a massive oil spill that has reached as far as Taytay, Palawan.

"As far as we are concerned, they submitted to us (a CPC). Whether that's valid or if they made a misrepresentation, we are looking

into that," said Ballico. "There is a presumption of regularity so we allowed it to depart. What we are trying to say is we relied on that document."

In a Senate hearing last Tuesday, Sen. Cynthia Villar said the tanker had no CPC and should not have been allowed to operate.

The CPC is a license issued by the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) to domestic ship operators so they can engage in domestic

shipping. Once a shipping company acquires a new ship, it needs to file an amendment to its CPC to include the new vessel.

Reacting to Villar's revelation, Sen. Ruffy Tulfo said the PCG was remiss in its job, adding PCG commanders should be held responsible for the lapses of its personnel.

Sen. Francis Escudero said it was the ninth time the PCG had

See VALIDITY > Page B2

DSWD aid. Personnel from the Philippine Coast Guard, PNP, Bureau of Fire Protection, the provincial government of Antique and Cebu's local government help load food packs from the Department of Social Welfare Development that will be brought to residents of Cebu, Antique who have been affected by the oil spill.

DSWD PHOTO





EDITORIAL

Environmental disaster

As the sunken motor tanker *Princess Empress* continues to spill toxic industrial oil into the country's western seaboard, threatening the Verde Island Passage in Batangas as well as the pristine waters of Palawan, the government is belatedly verifying if the vessel was even authorized to set sail.

Yesterday the Philippine Coast Guard said it was investigating the authenticity of a document presented to PCG personnel, which allowed the *Princess Empress* to sail at least four times from the ports of Manila, Bataan, Iloilo and Misamis Oriental before it sank off Naujan town in Oriental Mindoro on Feb. 28. Search teams believe the vessel has settled in a spot about 400 meters deep, making recovery and plugging of any oil leak challenging.

Officials of the Maritime Industry Authority had told the Senate, which is conducting an inquiry into the environmental disaster, that the *Princess Empress* did not have a permit to operate. The PCG, on the other hand, said the vessel's owner, RDC Reield Marine Services, had presented a document that made the Coast Guard clear the vessel for sailing.

Apparently, the document presented by the ship owner was not a certificate of public convenience that the Marina issues, but a decision of the agency dated Nov. 16, 2022, allowing the amendment of

the CPC issued to RDC Reield Marine Services so the *Princess Empress*, which was commissioned last year, would be included in the company's fleet. Is this document valid for sailing and transporting cargo?

PCG officials said they presumed regularity in the document in clearing the motor tanker several times for sailing. The Marina said the document is not the valid permit.

Determining the validity of the authorization to sail will have to be added to the issues that must be addressed in holding the company accountable for one of the country's worst environmental disasters. The Office of Civil Defense estimates that over 108,000 people in 118 barangays in Oriental Mindoro and Palawan have now been affected by the oil spill. As of yesterday, nearly 32,000 families in 68 areas in MIMAROPA and Western Visayas have been affected, according to the OCD.

The black gunk has ruined fishing and tourism in coastal communities, and has affected public health, with at least 122 residents reporting respiratory and skin problems as well as eye infections. It could cause serious damage to marine life in the Verde Island Passage, which is recognized as the center of global shorefish biodiversity. The government must ensure that there will be accountability in this environmental disaster.



EYES WIDE OPEN

IRIS GONZALES

Oil spill and clean energy

No photograph or video could fully capture the extent of the damage of the oil spill and yet the images we've seen are already so alarming – coastlines drenched in black sludge, water covered with oil and workers in PPEs.

It's like an apocalyptic movie but sadly it's the real thing, right here in our very own waters.

The air in the affected areas, I can only imagine, must be so toxic which is why many have fallen sick with dizziness and cough.

This is an absolute emergency and President Marcos and his government must consider it as such. But I don't sense the urgency from the administration. The President's social media posts are filled with other matters – which of course may be important too, but perhaps not as urgent as this disaster.

Affected areas are in a state of calamity after a tanker sank last Feb. 28 some 400 meters deep in the waters of Oriental Mindoro, spilling the 800,000 liters of industrial oil it carries.

Most of the slick swathed that province's northeastern shores. By March 10, the black slick reached the shores of northeastern Palawan, *Time* has reported.

During a Senate hearing on Tuesday, Dr. Cesar Villanoy from the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute said that based on scientific modeling, local monsoon winds were able to limit the coverage of the slick but those winds are bound to stop in a few weeks, and may cause further spread of the spill, *Time* also reported.

As I write this, 140,000 people, including some 13,000 fisherfolk, have been affected by the spill across several municipalities, the Philippine Office of Civil Defense has reported.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources said 21 marine protected areas can be potentially affected due to oil spillage. Some 2,200 hectares of coral reefs and 1,600 hectares of mangroves may also be damaged.

The spill may harm the waters and coral reefs at popular diving destinations in the region, including the Verde Island Passage and Apo Reef in Mindoro and World War II shipwrecks in Palawan.

Accountability

Against this backdrop, those responsible must be held liable. These include the tanker, the Maritime Industry Authority or Marina and the Philippine Coast Guard which either allowed the tanker to operate or failed to stop it despite not having the necessary permits, as was revealed during the Senate hearing.

As for the cargo owner which has yet to be named or identified by the government, under the Oil Compensation Act of 2007, a charterer can't be made to pay for pollution damage but I believe it is morally obligated to help in the clean-up and the long-term rehabilitation of the affected areas.

San Miguel Corp. has neither confirmed nor denied a report saying that it was its subsidiary that chartered the tanker. In any case, SMC through its oil refiner Petron has committed to assist in the clean-up efforts as did other oil firms.



Again, I reiterate this is a disaster of epic proportions; the government must treat it as such. Affected communities, our hapless fishermen, must be provided assistance and calamity funds; those responsible for what happened must be held accountable and perhaps it's time to tighten regulations over potentially dangerous cargo.

And while we're at it, we must also ask ourselves – why is it that we never seem to learn from oil spills and sea disasters of decades past; why is it that accidents like this just keep on happening over and over, again and again?

Green capitalism

Despite choppy markets, a renewable energy company is braving the stock market.

Alternergy priced its upcoming initial public offering (IPO) at P1.28 per share and is all set to list on March 24.

I've been hearing from brokers that demand is strong despite the market rout triggered by concerns over the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank.

Perhaps it's because Alternergy is unique unlike the earlier renewable IPOs, because of its triple play renewable portfolio in wind, solar, run-of-river and battery storage, with an experienced team led by former energy secretary Vince Perez whom I've had the chance to cover during his stint at the energy department.

For Sec. Vince, doing a public listing is returning to his comfort zone. Before he was energy secretary, Sec. Vince was a seasoned investment banker taking several companies public in London, New York and Singapore.

Alternergy has been planning for this IPO for the past two years, and during this time, Vince and his team have quietly reached out to their network in the financial industry.

His team believes that renewable energy is the legacy they can bequeath to the next generation, and the next and so on.

They believe that a Filipino family should be a participant in what they call "green capitalism" or individual participation in clean energy.

Unique for an owner of a company going public, Sec. Vince has personally approached old friends in stock brokerage firms to ensure wide participation by retail investors, the young professionals and the families investing for their children. I learned from industry sources.

I also heard that because Alternergy's mantra is to grow a triple play renewable portfolio for the next generation, Vince and his partners plan to bring their children to witness the listing ceremony on March 24.

Actually, Sec. Vince became a father just four years ago and perhaps he's made it his mission to leave a lasting legacy for his four-year old daughter – renewable energy as the dominant fuel source for the country.

Against this backdrop, many have been predicting the end of the oil era. Are we there yet? Not quite, but hopefully, it will happen.

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Oil spill affects 61 tourism sites, DOT raises alarm

By Macon Ramos-Araneta, Charles Dantes and Maricel V. Cruz

THE Department of Tourism on Wednesday raised the alarm over 61 tourism sites—including beach resorts—that are affected by the massive oil spill in Oriental Mindoro.

Tourism Secretary Christina Frasco raised this concern during the Tourism Stakeholders' National Summit on Wednesday.

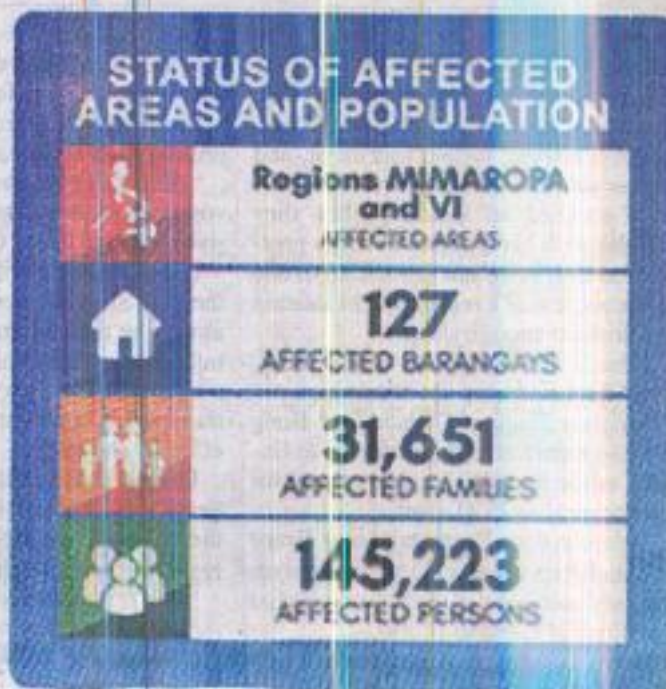
"It's an ongoing collaborative effort to manage the situation that is led by the DENR (Department of the Environment and Natural Resources) and we are here to assist our tourism workers," she added.

The oil spill from the sunken tanker MT Princess Empress, which was carrying 800,000 liters of industrial fuel, has already affected 70 barangays in the region, and will surpass the devastation caused by the 2006 Guimaras oil spill, said Senator Cynthia A. Villar.

She pushed for assistance to residents who are affected by the oil spill of the coast of Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.

Presiding the Committee on environment, natural resources, and climate change hearing, Villar asked resource persons from various government agencies what

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Oil... From A1

assistance they have provided so far for the cleanup and containment of the oil spill, as well as the assistance given to affected residents, especially those who have lost their livelihoods.

National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) Assistant Secretary Bernardo Alejandro updated the committee on the oil spill.

Villar said the oil spill will definitely damage the marine ecosystem and biodiversity; fisheries and food supply; livelihood of the people, especially fishers; the health of the people; and tourism.

Furthermore, the oil spill threatens around 21 locally-managed marine protected areas, including the Verde Island Passage, which is poised to become a legislated protected area as "the center of the global-shore fish biodiversity," Villar said.

Senator Francis Escudero asked the Office of the Civil Defense and the NDRRMC to simplify their process to expedite the release of calamity funds to local government units (LGUs) that need immediate relief.

He noted the bureaucratic red tape cannot go on and the LGUs affected by the oil spill should not suffer the same fate of Sorsogon when it was devastated by Typhoon Tisoy in December 2019 when he was still governor.

The province, he said, received financial assistance from the calamity fund only in 2022, three years after the typhoon struck.

The NDRRMC met on Wednesday with its member agencies and local government units to reinforce the ongoing response operations following the oil spill from the sunken MT Princess Empress in Oriental Mindoro.

During the meeting, Oriental Mindoro Gov. Humerito Dolor raised concerns about the impact of the oil spill in the region.

As of Tuesday, the oil spill has affected 31,497 families in Mimaropa and Western Visayas, and hurt the livelihood of 13,654 farmers and fishers.

House Deputy Speaker Ralph Recto, meanwhile, said that a portion of the government's P380 billion a year collection from crude oil and petroleum products can be used to finance the clean-up of the Mindoro oil spill and indemnify impacted coastal residents.

Recto said a mere one day's worth of oil tax collections – P1 billion – would be enough to jump start "abatement and alleviation" measures in areas hit by the ecological disaster.

Recto said he is "gently reminding" government of its huge revenues from oil and fuel products "to goad it to spending more for the containment of the oil spill."

"Whatever you are spending is just a mere drop in the barrel of oil tax collections," he said.

Recto believed that "if the treasury were an oil tank, then it is only correct to siphon off from its contents to address a situation for which one particular tax was meant to alleviate."

"Nature, when it is under threat, as in the case of the oil spill, is entitled to tax dividends," he said.

Recto said an excise tax is slapped on oil products because it is viewed as a harmful product, causing pollution and sickness, and contributing to global warming.

"The argument was that it is paid to compensate for damages to health and the environment.

That was how previous administrations framed their justification for higher oil taxes," he said.

"So can this principle be invoked in the Mindoro oil spill? Can collections of this specific tax be spent for the contingencies used to justify its imposition?" Recto said.

Based on a study of a House of Representatives think-tank, the Bureau of Customs collected P372 billion in duties and taxes on crude oil (P138.9 billion) and petroleum products (P233.5 billion) in 2021.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue added P7.4 billion in excise tax from petroleum products during the same year.

The BOC gets the bulk in collections based on the "pay as you enter" principle when taxes on crude oil and refined products are collected upon landing in ports.



122 fall sick due to oil spill — DOH

By ANNA D. VALERA / PUG/PHOTOGRAPH

Over 100 people were reported to have gotten sick due to the oil spill caused by the sinking of the tanker MT Princess Empress (MTEPE) in the west of Oriental Mindoro, the Department of Health (DOH) said.



Oil spill — The Princess Empress tanker sank off the coast of Oriental Mindoro, spilling 5,603 liters of oily water mixture. The spill has affected 100,000 residents in the region. The DOH said that 122 people have fallen ill due to the spill. The DOH is monitoring and providing assistance to affected communities to prevent symptoms, said Vergara.

122 fall sick due to oil spill — DOH 14

of Health (DOH) said.

Undersecretary Nacia Baraso Vierge, DOH officer-in-charge, said 122 people have fallen ill—most of them experiencing headache and respiratory symptoms like cough and colds.

"Maraming pang mga anak, 16. Maraming mga sumasakop ng mga Nangangailangan, maraming mga tao ng mga rash, around seven. (Many of them experienced dizziness, about 16 of them. Some had stomach ache, 10 experienced breathing difficulties, and around seven had skin rashes," added Vergara. "And maraming mga nag-agrivate dahil nga nal-inhalon na nag-agrivate ang kanilang astma (The asthma problems of five individuals got aggravated after inhaling toxic fumes)."

If those sickened by the oil spill, only one was hospitalized, said Vergara.

"All in all, bakit hindi namin concern. Kanilang nga ng sabi ko hindi, isa lang pa ang nasagustad dahil sa ospital, kasi nag-asthma attack, but after one day nailabas na rin (All in all, most of them have recovered. As I've said, only one was hospitalized due to asthma attack but was discharged the next day)," she said.

Currently, the DOH is monitoring and providing assistance to affected communities to prevent symptoms, said Vergara.

103,000 residents affected

The massive oil spill caused by the sinking of MT Princess Empress on Feb. 28 off Naujan, Oriental Mindoro has already affected 10,497 families (43,733 individuals) in Regions 4–8 (Mindanapo) and 6 (Western Visayas), the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) said on Wednesday, March 15.

The tanker was carrying 800,000 liters of industrial fuel oil when it sank.

The affected areas include the municipalities of Naujan, Pola, Pinarobyan, Banaad, Bongabong, Busua, Mansalay, Gloria, and Balabac (San Pedro) in Oriental Mindoro; Agutaya and Taytay in Palawan; and Caluya in Antique.

PUG presents
sunk vessel's CPC

Conveniente (CPC) of the sunken MT Princess Empress to debunk reports the agency allowed the vessel to operate without the necessary permit.

Rear Admiral Armando Ballo, POC spokesman, presented the CPC of MT Princess Empress to media on Tuesday, March 14. The POC also updated the document online via its official Facebook page, "Philippine Coast Guard."

According to the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), a CPC is an authorization to allow a vessel "for a domestic water transportation service, for commercial/public use for which no franchise, either municipal or legislative is required by law."

"Apat na bases nang gumamit ito ng kasalungat na mga transaksyon niya sa Philippine Coast Guard—one in Manila, one in Cebu, one in Misamis Oriental, at isang base rin sa Iloilo (and one in Hollo) Pina-check pa manin yang ibang mga bryan kung saan siya dumoang, kung may inspeksyon na ginawa or kung may statement na CPC (The vessel used this [document] four times already in its transactions with the Philippine Coast Guard. We are still checking what other areas the vessel docked, if there were inspec-

tions conducted, and if there was a submitted CPC)," Ballo said in an interview on Wednesday, March 15.

The document released by Ballo included a MARINA decision dated Nov. 16, 2022 which amended the CPC of KDC Field Marine Services, Inc., owner of MT Princess Empress, and allowed the sunken tanker "to effect the permanent addition of the ship/tanker, MTEPE, Princess Empress, to the company's fleet."

"As far as we are concerned, we relied on this document kaysa gamit (as far as we are concerned, we relied on this document that's why we allowed the vessel to operate)," said Ballo, who added that the document will still be further investigated.

CPC pending — MARINA

The move is in reaction to the testimony of MARINA administrator Hernani Fabia during a Senate inquiry on Tuesday, March 14, that the agency has yet to issue an amended CPC to BDC Field Marine Services, Inc. following the addition of MT Princess Empress to its fleet.

According to BDC Field Marine Services, Inc., the tanker was commissioned in 2022.

During the inquiry, Ballo said the BDC Field Marine Services, Inc. still has a pending application with MARINA, which the agency was supposed to hear. The company, according to Fabia, has six missing documents for their application for an amended CPC to be granted. BDC Vice President Britize Thee said during the inquiry that their company applied for an amended CPC and submitted all the required documents in November 2022.

Cleanup efforts

Meanwhile, 5,603 liters of "oily water mixture" have so far been collected by the POC as efforts to contain the massive spill affecting Oriental Mindoro and other areas entered its second week.

The POC said that from March 1 to 12, it collected 50 sacks of oil-contaminated materials during its offshore oil spill response operations.

Offshore oil spill response operation refers to the cleanup done in the vicinity of the affected wa-

ters using sea vessels, POC public affairs officer Joy Diane Gamatay explained.

Seven hundred liters of such mixture and six sacks of oil-contaminated materials were gathered on March 10, alone, by POC tugboat (MORU) Lidagstard (MILUG) Titan-1. The POC said 140 sacks of oil-contaminated materials were also pulled from the shore.

Further, the POC also collected 1,091 sacks and 20 drums of waste during its shoreline response operations at 13 affected barangays in the municipalities of Naujan, Balabac, and Pola in Oriental Mindoro in the same period.

Villar pushes gov't aid

As more people are affected by the oil spill, Senator Cynthia Villar has pushed for assistance for their affected parties.

The oil spill in Oriental Mindoro would likely surpass the devastation caused by the 2006 Guimaras oil spill, considered as the worst oil spill in the country's history, Villar, chairwoman of the Senate environment, natural resources, and climate change committee, said.

During a Senate committee hearing she presided on Tuesday, Villar asked resource persons from the OCD, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Social Welfare and Development, the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (NDRRMC), POC, MARINA, Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) what assistance they have so far provided for the cleanup and containment of the oil spill, as well as for affected residents, especially those who have lost their livelihood.

NDRRMC Assistant Secretary Berengue Alejandro told the committee that a task force headed by the regional director of OCD-Mindanapo was created to support efforts of DENR and the POC in oil spill containment, cleanup, and emergency response.

Alejandro also updated the



61 tourism site sa Mindoro apektado ng oil spill

Nabebisala na ang Department of Tourism sa oil spill sa Oriental Mindoro dahil apektado pa nito ang 61 tourism site, partikular ang mga beach resort.

Agon kay Tourism Secretary Christine Frasco, sa pagseon ng 61 tourism site na ang apektado sa Oriental Mindoro kung gayon makikipag-ugnayan pa rin sa mga ahensya tulad ng Department of Labor and Employment para tulungan ang mga

tourism worker.

Sinabi ni Frasco na indahan na rin sa mga tourism destination tulad ng Bontoc na may sleep-out ng mga oil spill koun sa maligid ng isla.

Inutusan pa rin ang mga office ni Frasco sa kaniyang mga regional office sa Mindoro at Western Visayas na i-monitor ang sitwasyon at maldag-ugnayan sa mga ahensya ng government sa kamatagan sa oil spill. (Bethel Julian)



HIGIT 30K PAMILYA APEKTADO SA OIL SPILL

PEMAIDanan 2149; pamilya mula MIMAROP- EA at Western Visayas ang apektado ng oil spill mula sa lumabog na M1 Hinocan Express sa Oriental Mindoro.

Ayon sa Office of Civil Detouse (OCD), apektado rin ang kabuhay ng 13,654

magsasaka at mangl- agida ng oil spill.

Ayon sa rin sa P23.9 milyon halaga ng lalong ang nabigay ng panal- lagan sa non-govern- ment organizations sa rita apektadong resi- dente.

Nauna nang sinabi ni Pola, Oriental Min-

doro Mayor Jennifer Cruz na Lunes 130 na ang nagkakasak sa ha- bang masa 4,800 na pamilyang inaapekta- do ng oil spill sa kani- lang lugar kung saan apektado rin ang mga mangangitana.

Unaon naman sa 47 silindras ng labing isang coastal barangay sa Pola ang inaaman na ng oil spill habang 533 ekarya ng mangroves ang napu- sa.

Inamin rin Cruz na hindi babala siya sa posibilidad worst case scenario kung ang magsasaka na may lamang 800,000 litro ng indus- trial oil sa Naujan, Oriental Mindoro.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

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Calapan City naghahanda sa posibleng pagpasok ng oil spill



HINDI pa man nabayan at direktang nasapektuhan ng oil spill ang Calapan, mayroon nang nilahandang preventive plans at counter measures ang Inagood at maraming volunteers na rin ang nakalaro sa posibleng mag-

ing epekto ng oil spill sa ating inilangatang katubigan.

Ayon kay Calapan Mayor Malou Morillo, na sa tulong ng Philippine Coast Guard, Blue Alliance Philippines, mga ahensya at iba pang organisasyon, isi-

nasagawa ang masakit masyang pagtatangka sa dagat na nakapalibot sa lungsod upang alamin ang sirkumisyon nito.

"Naghanda ng mga floaters, improvised spill boom ang ating lokal na pamahalaan upang harapin ang

posibleng pagkakarag ng lampa," pahayag ni Morillo.

Sa dalit, panatili sa nagbabayani sa ang mga residente ng ilang coastal communities gaya ng Brgy. Novena, upang magragnawa ng mga pangalagaan.

"Kuna resulta na rin tayo sa mga eksersisyo at nakipag-ugnayan sa mga konsernang ahensya sa nasayunang para sa kakailanganang katatagan ng ating, dingag pa sa Mayor Morillo.



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P33M ibubuhos sa linis oil spill

INAASAHANG mairang-
gay ang Philippine
Coast Guard ng sahoi
sa P33.637 milyon
para magamit sa clean
up drive sa kurtakalar
na oil spill sa Oriental
Mindoro.

Sinabi ni Maritime
Industry Authority
(Mia) Administrator
Atty. Hernani Pabla,

na makukaha ng PCG
ang pondo mula sa Oil
Pollution Management
Fund alinsunod sa Re-
public Act 9453 o ang
Oil Pollution Compens-
sation Act.

Sinasabing ang Oil
Pollution Management
Fund ang ayusag da-
hilan kung saan nag-
lakaroung ng mga sum-

pinasyon ang mga
shipping company na
magbibigay ng langis.

Sa ilalim nito
ang bawat litro ng
langis na ibinabi-
yaha sa karagatan ay
bibibayaran ng mga
kompanya ng langis
ag sampung sentimo.

Paliwanag ng Ma-
rine sahoi na sa P62
milyon ang nakolek-
tong pondo.

Ang rasabing ha-
lap ang ibihagay base
sa sinamanting ilang
lalaga ng claim.
(Catherine Reyes)



Ayuda sa mga apektado ng oil spill iginili

ITINILAK ni Sen. Cynthia Villar ang tulong sa mga residente appektado ng oil spill mula sa lumabog na MT Princess Empress sa karagatan ng Aduyan, Oriental Mindoro noong Pebrero 28.

Sa pagling ng Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change, inhayag ni Villar na lamposan ng Mindoro oil spill ang pinsalang dulot ng 2006 Gambaran ng oil spill na pinakaglabang oil spill sa kasaysayan ng Pilipinas.

Kinuwesyon ni Villar ang resource persons mula sa Office of Civil Defense, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Dep't of Labor and Employment, Dep't of Social Welfare and Development, National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council, Philippine Coast Guard, Maritime Industry Authority, Philippine Ports Authority at Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources na ilang na malibog sa mga apektadong residente partikular sa mga nawalan ng kabuhayan.

Sinabi ni NDRMMC Asst. Bernardo Alejandro na bumuo ng Task Force na pinamumunuan ng regional director ng OCD MIMAROPA (Mindoro Occidental, Mindoro Oriental, Marikouge, Romblon at Palawan) para suportahan ang DENR at POC sa oil spill containment, clean up at emergency response.

Inihayag din ni Alejandro na 70 lugar sa rehiyon at 21,000 pantayer mula sa 118 barangay sa Oriental Mindoro at Palawan, kabilang ang 13,885 residente sa Oriental Mindoro, ang appektado na ng oil spill.

May 122 korapora ng ang nagkasakit. Appektado na ng oil spill ang marine ecosystem at biodiversity, fish and shellfish supply, livelihood panloob at pang-ibaba, kaulagan at turismo.

Blaker oil spill sa 21 justice-managed marine protected areas, kabilang na ang Verde Island Passage na rekambing magina legislative protected area dahil sa sentral na global-shore fish biodiversity.

Bumabangon pangang amana ang mga mamamayan sa lugar mula sa pandemya at hindi dapat madaig-dadaig sa ating sariling paghikop, sinabi ni Villar.

Kosmosista Senador President Pro Tempore Lorna Legarda, inhayag ni Villar sa mga kawalang anahya ng pamamayan, magpapalig ng lahat ng kinakailangan tungod ang mga akbira.

ERNIE REYES



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533 ektarya ng bakawan sa Mindoro binalot ng oil spill

NAKAPINSALA na ng taas 47 kilometro ng coastal barangays ng Pola, Oriental Mindoro ang oil spill mula sa humuhog na motor tanker Princess Empress.

"Yung water area natin hindi ko alam kung gaano kalaki. Pero sobrang laki na ang damage dahil hindi makapangisda ang mangingisda. Hindi rin makasasid dahil namanatay na ang mga pusit. Ang mga turtle umalis na rin," paghohabagi ni Mayor Jennifer Cruz nitong Miyerkules, Marso 15, sa

panayam sa radyo. "Yung 11 barangays natin sa coastal area, yun ay 47 kilometers," dagdag pa niya.

Maliban dito, ainabi ni Cruz, nasa 533 ektarya na ng bakawan ang naapektuhan ng oil spill maliban pa sa 4,800 pamilyang apektado.

Dagdag pa niya, kanselado natin ang lahat ng reservations sa mga resort na naapektuhan ng oil spill.

Dahil dito ay nagaplano ang local government unit (LGU) na magmooon ng sustainable alter-

native (iveliboud para sa mga apektadong residente lalo pa't matatagalan bago makarekober ang baysa sa epekting oil spill.

Ang Cruz, mayroon lamang na P600,000 quick response fund ang lokal na pamahalaan ng Pola.

"Balatag nila sa akin by Monday at makikipag-escape ako sa fisherfolks natin. Ito ang hihingnan namin ng budget para hindi kami laging nakausap," aniya.

Hindi na umasa si Cruz na tutulong ang may-ari ng MT Princess Empress dahil hindi ito

sama saugat sa kamalit, dagdag pa ang sakulangan ng permit ng natin ang burko para mairakina ng ito saausa benefits.

Ayon kay Cruz, mayroon na lama ng 10 araw ang may-ari ng MT Princess Empress na unang-ugot sa patawagan nila, kung hindi ay maghahain na nila ng kasalihan sa nagmamay-ari nito.

Maalam din na Pebrero 28 lumuog ang nabanggit na motor tanker matapos makaengkwetro ng malalakas na alon. May carga itong 800,000 litro ng industrial fuel oil.

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Blame greed

“The charterer is generally considered the spiller and owner of the vessel involved and should not deny its role in the environmental nightmare.”

Philippine big businesses which portrayed themselves as good Samaritans during the pandemic are revealing their dark side in the rush to recoup what was lost during the two-year disruption.

Environmental groups are up in arms against a conglomerate that has been caught in one too many controversies that indicated greed. This time it was tied to the recent sinking of a tanker carrying 800,000 metric tons of industrial oil.

To cut costs, the company used an unlicensed vessel to carry the lethal cargo across the resource rich Verde Island Passage, which is known for having the most abundant concentration of marine life in the world.

Environment watchdog Protect VII wants immediate reparation from all involved in the tragedy, saying the government should exhaust all means to make the private companies





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accountable.

Compensation is needed for the living expenses of the communities affected by the oil spill.

Penalties should also be applied for the environmental backlash caused by the spreading pollutant.

A hearing of the Senate committee on environment, natural resources, and climate change the other day revealed that the owner of the star-crossed tanker, RDC Reifel Marine Services Inc, had not secured sufficient requirements before sailing.

The lack of legal documents for the vessel, according to shipping experts, may make it hard for the owners of the tanker and its cargo to claim insurance payments, which earlier reports placed at around \$1 billion.

The government is relying on insurance payments to foot the bill for food subsidies and the massive cleanup that may last for years.

It was found that the vessel is new, having been built just last year, and had thus far made nine trips.

Its final voyage was allowed despite the company still being in the process of updating its Certificate of Public Convenience.

“
For instance, how could the tanker have sailed without a license if not for the company behind it pulling the right strings?”

“Ensuring the seaworthiness of ships that would pass through extremely rich and socio-ecologically important waters like the VIP, including necessary papers like inclusion in the CPC, should have been basic due diligence,” Fr. Edwin Gariguez, lead convener of Protect VIP, said.

“These violations of maritime rules, according to the environmentalists, all the more point to the accountabilities of RDC and its charterer. “We assert that any insurance claim challenges they may face due to this in no way excuse them from having to pay up,” Gariguez said.

SL Harbor Bulk Terminal Corporation, a subsidiary of a corporate giant, chartered RDC Reifel Marine Services to ship industrial oil carried by the tanker that sank off the coast of Oriental Mindoro.

The charterer is generally considered the spiller and owner of the vessel involved and should not deny its role in the environmental nightmare.

Rules governing oil spills say the companies must pay a cash bond of at least P70 million, of which P50 million will be used for cleanup and containment and P20 million for damages and payment to impacted communities.

There were several infractions committed indicating that those involved in the epic accident are used to flaunting rules.

For instance, how could the tanker have sailed without a license if not for the company behind it pulling the right strings?

Giant conglomerates should be reminded that looking after the welfare of the people should go beyond mere slogans and sound bites.



PH trying to clean up an oil spill by talking about it

In the column last Monday, my fellow columnist, Bobi Tigzon, threw the government straight into the bushes for its appallingly poor response to the still-unfolding oil spill disaster that is fouling the waters of large areas of the coasts of Misamis Oriental and Polillo. He was also fairly correct about everything he said, but as far as I'm concerned, he was probably too kind.

One interestingly maddening thing I have noticed about the Philippines in the past few years is that the government has gotten better at fixing the obvious when a natural disaster occurs, but when the disaster is man-made, regardless of its scale, it's sucking time to spend in the drains. The news stories from Wednesday morning about the Mindanao oil spill perfectly illustrate that.

But, it should not be the case that the more rapid response to an emergency comes from the Senate in the form of one or more committee orders launching an "investigation in aid of legislation" which really means an investigation in aid of burning up some half-billion budget to print a report that says "this incident is a bad thing, so if someone ought to do something about it," but someone is going to the Senate, I guess, so we may as well try to squander some value out of it and see if there's anything useful in the information that emerges from their public proceedings.

A couple of deeply disturbing points were revealed during the hearing on Tuesday, the first being that the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) at first, as far as this Manila-based reporter related to it, is concerned, is notoriously bad at its job. Information critical to actually stopping the disaster, such as the exact location and disposition of the tanker oil tanker, how much of its cargo of 600,000 liters (just over 6,700 barrels) of fuel oil has spilled from the ship, and how much remains on board will remain to be missing two weeks after the accident.



ROUGH TRADE
BEN KRITIZ

The availability of personnel and equipment capable of finding out — assuming that the Filipinos, presumably a machine nation, might already have set it down, as Tigzon pointed out — may be weeks away.

The PCG does, however, have exact data on how much oil and oil-laden debris have been collected so far, and presented those figures in the Senate hearing as though that was some kind of achievement. As of Monday, the PCG said it has 45 kilograms of solid waste and 2,206 liters of oil-water mixture had been cleaned up, mostly in Oriental Mindoro.

The other disturbing revelation, which made the PCG look even worse because in this case it cannot claim doing its job is hindered by a lack of expensive resources, is that no one on Tuesday seemed to know who was the registration status of the tanker, owned by RDC Sea & Marine Services. The vessel seems to have been owned by the shipping company for only a few months, and it was required to have the required certificate of public convenience (CPC) to operate, which is issued by the PCG.

The owners said that they had applied for one in November 2022, but claimed that they had not received it yet. In the meantime, the ship had operated at least nine voyages before sinking. The PCG representative blustered that it "may recommend the filing of appropriate charges" against the shipping company for operating the ship without a CPC, but that was not enough to deflect the well-deserved condemnation delivered by Sen. Francis Escudero, who appropriately demanded to know what exactly the PCG had been doing at that time in allowing the ship



Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) personnel and volunteers collect debris covered with oil during a cleanup along the coast in Pola, Oriental Mindoro province, on March 8, 2023, days after an oil spill from a sunken tanker. PHOTO VIA AFP

to sail without the certificate. The absence of the CPC should have turned up by the customary inspection carried out by local PCG personnel on all commercial vessels before every trip.

On Wednesday morning, however, it emerged that the PCG had in fact issued a CPC for the ship, and provided a photocopy of it as proof. Thus, neither the PCG nor the ship owner seems to have been aware that, at least in terms of paperwork, the ship was actually sailing legally. This is bad for the PCG, because, without discharging the shipowner's responsibility for the accident, it now puts the focus on the PCG to explain its breakdown in inspection and oversight that allowed the defective ship to sail on its last, disastrous trip.

The last disturbing piece of information to come out of the Senate hearing, the blame for which may not be laid at the PCG's feet, at least not entirely, but goes on unduly spotlighting on the Maritime Industry Authority (MIA) is the admission of the shipowners that, as a small firm, it "is incapable of complying with the insurance claims of the local government of Davao Mindanao, amounting to \$1 billion in damages," as the news report put it.

Now, I will happily admit that I do not have deep knowledge of

the business workings of the maritime shipping business, but this disclosure raises what I think is an obvious question: If a shipper is unable to provide adequate insurance — either through purchasing it, or with its own financial resources — to cover damages that may be caused by a ship's discharging, how, why, and how is it allowed to carry that cargo in the first place?

It is not just a matter of assigning liability, or filing a suit or "file appropriate charges," but a real matter of being able to respond to and recover from damage to the environment, property, or human lives. Government agencies, local government units, and business pointing fingers at each other and quibbling over the correctness of paperwork do not remove so much as a single molecule of oil pollution from the seas and seas and beaches, nor do senators making dig-bat Captain Oban's pronouncements such as "the oil spill is bad for the environment and livelihoods," and "there should be someone in charge of the cleanup." Judas in local government units and local residents' children will feed, and the coal- and fire-PCG personnel who are doing their best to help clean up the mess, but their leadership is letting them down in a shameful and infuriating way.

ben.kr@manilatimes.net



Because we never learn

THE tons of industrial oil from the sunken MT Princess Empress, which occurred last February 28, has become a major environmental disaster.

Spilling off the waters of Palu in Mindoro Oriental, the oil slick has gone beyond Palu, into Nauyas, and across the entire eastern seaboard of Mindoro.

Now the swift currents of the Tablas Strait is bringing the dirty, sticky black oil all the way beyond Cebu into the Verde Island passage, which is the most bio-diverse marine area in the country, even Asia.

If we are unable to find the spot where the vessel sank, and plug the spot where the oil is gushing out, even Batangas may be in danger of dirty slick touching its shores.

Recently, international news reports have shown the location where the oil tanker sank, and the neighboring areas which happen to be prime tourist destinations.

Expect travel cancellations in the immediate future, despite more life in the Philippines, or wherever new marketing slogan the DDT is cooking up.

We never learn. We had a similar disaster in Cebu when the tanker MT Solar 1 was carrying some half a million liters of oil that sank in shallower waters.

The MT Princess Empress has 800,000 liters inside its hull, and the waters where it sank are deep, the currents faster and wider.

Two weeks after the accident, the ship owners are still waiting for the remote operated vehicle (ROV) they contracted from a supplier abroad to be able to ascertain the source of the leak, and patch it up.

Because we never pro-act and only react when the problems have mounted, and because we never learn from past experiences, we are where we are today.



of Transportation and Communications was headed by Hermandino R. Perez of Huesgas City.

Being a consultative measure, Nam Poma, who later served as congressman for the 7th district of Batangas, and later as Secretary of Justice under PCMA, had all of the agency heads under his supervision attend regular meetings where they could directly interact with him on problems as well as offer suggestions for improvement of our transport and communication systems.

Though I was then vice-master-general, and communications was not yet removed from the department, we were all free to suggest measures even beyond our respective turf, as long as they were within the MOC's realm.

I recall two suggestions which, if acted upon then, or in the later years of the Cory administration, would have prevented the transport mess we face these days.

First, we foresaw the potential traffic congestion in the metropolis once the integrated computer terminals were opened in Manila Bay.

High container tracks, still relatively novel in 1986, would hog so much road space as they travel from the port to factories or warehouses also situated in NCR.

Why not move the container ports to Batangas City, where there was a completed international terminal which could be expanded as container shipping increased, leaving over break bulk cargoes?

This would also decrease NCR air factor as what would likely relocate to Batangas, Laguna, and other parts of Calabarzon areas proximate to the container port.

The other suggestion was, and this was quite politically controversial, gradually phase out the jeepneys, by asking DTPRB not to give new franchises for operations in Metro Manila, so their operators could sell their units to provincial operators while LTO would stop renewing registration of dilapidated jeepneys.

Meanwhile, the department should proceed to plan and implement even modern transport systems, whether in rail or road.



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COMMUNICATION
AND
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Manila Standard

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Two lessons should have been learned from the Quimama disaster.

One, vessels plying our waters should have double hulls, which have the ability to prevent or reduce oil spills.

The ship is designed and constructed in such a way there is a separator between the outer bottom and an inside hull, so that unless there is a huge collision between two vessels, the cargo is protected from spillage.

I recall there was a move during the second Aquino administration by some businessmen to import double hull vessels from Japan, but I am unaware if MARINA or such other government agencies that license vessels have implemented the same.

In the wake of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, way back, the US government required all new oil tankers for use in the US to be equipped with full double hulls.

The other lesson we failed to learn from the Quimama disaster is how unprepared government is in reacting to such oil spills.

It distresses people no end that two weeks after the MT Princess Empress sank, the shipowners are still waiting for an ROV to detect the source of the leak in the vessel.

Why did our government not purchase such ROV equipment after Quimama, given the fact that oil is transported from Limay or Datangas to all parts of the Visayas and Mindanao?

Surely, that amount would be a minimal fraction of the tonnage of the pork barrel and millions of identifications made by legislators in the government expenditure program?

But no. We never learn.

We always relearn too late. We never progress.

Take the resistance of our jeepney drivers to the modernization of public transport.

At the beginning of the Aquino I administration, it was under what was called a "revolutionary" government where nothing revolutionary transpired other than the replacement of duly elected local officials by then Minister of Local Government Aguilin Pitotuel Sr., the Ministry

Some of us may say this was a risky political move, considering the number of voters relying on jeepneys for livelihood.

Still there was unanimity that we needed more modern transport systems, and could not rely on the diesel-powered, limited space jeepneys which our esteemed colleague, Atty. Tom Juarez described as a pioneering post-war venture of the late Don Emilio Yap.

Nothing happened to those suggestions, and Sen. Perez moved on to reprise his legislative duties in the newly-formed House of Representatives.

Three secretaries succeeded Nana Pineda during the Cory administration, and nothing changed.

We are still where we are, and now the jeepney drivers and operators are rightly worried as the full implementation of the jeepney modernization plan which, if started by a gradual phase-out some 35 years ago, could have been smoothly rolled out.

Because we never progress and only react when the problems have mounted, and because we never learn from past experiences, we see where we are today.

I have to apologize for a serious error in the previous column titled "Where bullets fly."

In my haste to send my column to our opinion editor, I failed to delete my previous draft portions of which came through the articles that I normally post on my laptop to remind me of writing on the same topic.

I actually ended my column with a quote from former president, Rodrigo Raa Duterte, who kept telling us during his 2015-16 campaign for the presidency, that "I hold it as my chief article of faith, that without peace and order, there can never be progress."

Incidentally, I was invited by Atty. Alfredo Lim, chairman of the Lex Talions Eastern Inc. to a book-launching event last Monday, where the former president was guest of honor.

Still preferring to be addressed as "Nayco," Duterte mingled with his fraternity brothers, looking more relaxed and in good health despite the many problems he faced head-on and hands-on in the previous six years.



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Gov't hit over slow response on oil spill

A lawmaker lamented what she described as the government's slow response to the oil spill from the sunken motor tanker *MT Princess Empress*.

House committee on ecology head Laguna Rep. Marilyn Alonte said concerned local government units, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) were "inadequately equipped to respond to oil spill."

"Our government agencies on the frontlines as first responders to oil spills do not have booms and other containment equipment, supplies and measures," she said.

Alonte reminded the DENR and PCG to ensure that their budget for next year will have an allocation for oil spill containment equipment, supplies, measures and training.

"By equipment, I mean booms and skimmers. The Coast Guard and major ports should also have their own oil spill booms and skimmers," she said.

Alonte said the oil slick spread to other areas because it took days before the booms were installed.

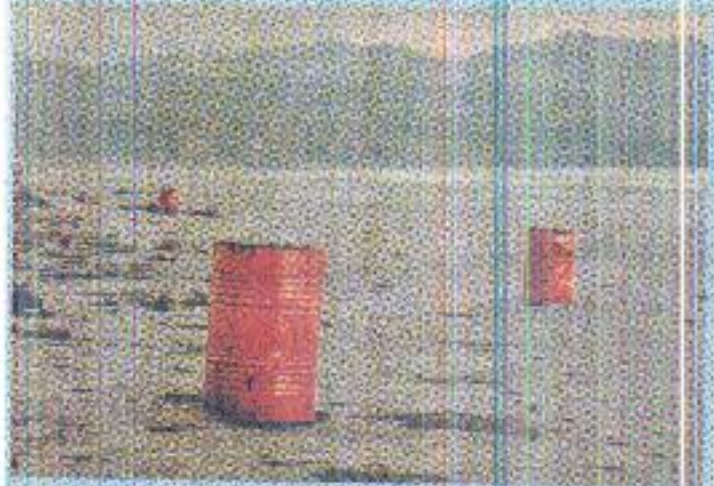
- Sheila Cristostomo



03-18-23

Hey!

Red drums containing retrieved oil from the clean-up drive dot the once pristine coasts of Pola, Oriental Mindoro. The massive cleanup has a huge bill that the responsible private firms must foot.



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tribune.net.ph and conceptnewscentral.com



Cebu town bans single-use plastics two days a week

By Nestle Samilla
@nestleINQ

CEBU CITY—Officials of the coastal town of Cordova on Mactan Island, Cebu, have started to implement an ordinance barring commercial establishments from providing single-use plastic and Styrofoam packaging when they sell their items to customers two days a week.

The ban is being enforced every Wednesday and Saturday, and is intended to reduce plastic pollution in the municipality.

Exceptions are made for certain liquid products or food items that can melt.

"While this may inconvenience people, we need to do it for the love of Cordova and the environment," Mayor Cesar Suan said.

To further achieve the goal set by the ordinance, Suan said, children and teenagers should be taught how to properly dispose of single-use plastics or reduce their reliance on such packaging materials.

The ordinance applies to "all persons who live and sojourn within the town, including the owners, partners and corporations who are operating department stores, hotels, restaurants, stalls in the public/private markets, ranteens, convenience stores, "sari-sari" stores and



The ban is being enforced every Wednesday and Saturday, and is intended to reduce plastic pollution in the municipality

other similar establishments."

During the two "no plastic days, everyone in the town engaged in retail—whether selling dry or wet goods, appliances and other commodities—may only use biodegradable or reusable packaging or containers, such as paper bags, rattan baskets or net bags.

Some exceptions

Single-use plastics may still be used on those two days for sauces, ice water or ice candy.

The use of plastic drinking straws is also "absolutely prohibited in all stores, restaurants and other business establishments within the municipality."

Violators face fines from P500 to P5,500 per violation, as

well as the revocation of their business permit.

"Plastic pollution is both an environmental and social justice issue since the ones who are most adversely affected, especially during heavy downpours, are poor communities and settlements," read the ordinance authored by Councilor Lemuel Pagoy.

Based on data from the Environment Management Bureau of the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources, the Philippines has become the third largest source of marine plastic pollution, next only to India and China. The country generates up to 47 million tons of plastic per year, a volume projected to swell to 97 million tons by 2025.

Based on another estimate made in an October 2022 report of the World Wide Fund for Nature, Filipinos use a total of 215 million tons of plastics every year, with only 9 percent of the waste (83,000 tons) being recycled.

Another study, done by the environment group the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (Gaia), said 163 million plastic sachets are used in the country every day, or 60 billion sachets each year, enough to blanket 130,000 football fields. —WITH A REPORT FROM INQUIRER RESEARCH INC.



A call to action to address the plastic situation

BUSINESS MATTERS

MARIA ANGELA ESQUIVEL

Recently, a graphic showing that the Philippines is the purported biggest ocean polluter has been circulated in social media. Whether this is true or not, data-based or not, one thing is certain, there is a PROBLEM and something needs to be done collectively in order to create an impact.

Admittedly, food manufacturers, such as Alaska Milk Corp. (AMC), utilize plastics which are necessary in order to thrive in what is dubbed as a "sachet economy." In the absence of any viable alternative, the sad reality is—the use of plastics will persist in order to be able to provide affordable nutrition to the consumers. However, AMC recognizes its correlated obligation in detracting the perils caused by these plastics to the environment.

AMC's AlasKalkasan (Alaska + *kalkasan/nature*) is its umbrella term for the company's initiatives to offset its plastic footprints. Since 2019, AMC has been partnering with big local government units (LGU) in joint wrapper redemption programs. LGUs redeem single-use plastics (SUPs) straight from the communities, while AMC provides kilos of milk in exchange for SUPs. LGUs, on the other hand, partner with recyclers and upcyclers. This is a two-pronged approach which encourages both a sense of responsibility toward protecting the environment, as well as promotes nutritional awareness within the community. Through these partnerships, AMC has neutralized almost 450 metric tons of SUPs it has generated in the market.

In 2022, AMC has also invested in a technology that converts SUPs into WoW boards. It has partnered with D&G Pacific Corp. to establish a multilayered plastic

upcycling facility to help minimize pollution caused by SUPs catalytically. The five-hectare facility, situated at the heart of Anipolo City, Rizal, is estimated to have the capability and capacity to upcycle 900 MT of SUPs yearly. These plastics are processed into WoW boards, which are similar to plyboards and phenolic boards but are eight times more reusable. These panels are completely recycled and do not use chemicals or additives during manufacturing, ensuring that the product is recyclable, termite-proof, and water-resistant, which can be used in furniture production or as a construction material.

To complement the above initiatives and widen its reach, AMC, likewise, partners with Plastic Credit Exchange (PCX), which has its own redemption, recycling, and upcycling programs. Through this partnership, an estimate of almost 800 MT of SUPs were recycled and upcycled last year. Through the above initiatives, AMC has been certified as a net-zero plastic waste brand in 2022 by PCX for neutralizing 100 percent plastics generated and released to the market in the preceding year.

With the recent enactment and implementation of Republic Act No. 11898 or the Extended Producer Responsibility Act of 2022, companies are held responsible for the plastic packaging they use throughout the lifecycle of their products and need to demonstrate recovery and diversion of 20 percent of their 2023 plastic packaging

footprint, 20 percent by 2024, with 20 percent annual increase up to 80 percent by 2028 and onwards. Therefore, it is imperative that equally responsible companies adopt similar initiatives to address the surmounting problem of SUPs.

On top of these and as part of its overall commitment to sustainability, AMC also commits to reduce its carbon emission by putting up 15,000 solar panels on its rooftops, with each module having a capacity of 400 watts at peak hours. It is expected to achieve 8.2 million kilowatt-hour of power per year. This is equivalent to around 1,000 tons of carbon dioxide emission. Moreover, AMC has also partnered with Isla LPG Corp. to switch from low sulfur fuel oil to a cleaner liquefied petroleum gas. This will reduce around 2,700 tons of CO₂ emission per year.

This is a call for other companies to adopt and share best practices, and inspire others to join this collective action to undertake positive measures needed to protect our environment. Makati Business Club, through their partnership with the Netherlands Embassy, is one organization that can facilitate public-private partnerships to help solve our country's plastic waste problem. Small steps when taken together cast a bigger shadow.

Maria Angela Esquivel is legal, corporate affairs, and sustainability lead of AMC, an operating company of Royal FrieslandCampina. You may contact her at MAEsquivel@alaskamilk.com

Business Matters is a project of the Makati Business Club (makatibusinessclub@mbc.com.ph).



Taking lead in PUV modernization

Local government units taking the side of drivers and operators seemingly averse to the Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program of the government could perhaps take a cue from Davao City which will soon rid its streets of old, dilapidated jeepneys.

As the local government implements the modernization of its public transportation system, the city is preparing to bid goodbye to PUVs that are over 15 years old, according to a Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board official there.

The official, in a report, said owners of jeepneys that will be scrapped will be paid per unit based on their appraised value as the city prepares to shift to the High Priority Bus System.

The amount that will be received by owners of old jeepneys for every scrapped unit will be on top of the financial, technical, and livelihood assistance that the government will provide as part of the social development package for affected drivers and operators.

Under the HPBS scheme, low-floor city buses will replace jeepneys. A "scrapping facility" will be established to fast-track the transition which sees the HPBS already up and running in the last quarter of next year.

Drivers of the scrapped jeepneys will be prioritized for hiring

66
Major urban areas such as the National Capital Region seem to be handicapped to convince drivers and operators of the benefits modernization brings.





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by operators of the HPBS buses but they will be required to undergo training with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority to equip them with skills before they can qualify to be bus drivers.

Affected drivers can also work as mechanics and other related positions for the maintenance of the units at the terminal depots. The HPBS will employ around 1,000 bus drivers.

According to the Department of Transportation, HPBS will have 29 bus routes divided into four tiers: MetroDavao will form the core services that will connect all major commercial centers along five routes; DavaoInter will run along eight routes connecting the inner urban areas directly to the Davao Central Business District; DavaoFeeder will run along nine routes linking smaller centers and areas of more dispersed populations to the MetroDavao services; and DavaoLocal will provide a link between the outer rural areas of the city and the main transport system or the integrated terminals.

While Davao already has a blueprint for what it intends to do, major urban areas such as the National Capital Region seem to be hard-pressed to convince drivers and operators of the benefits modernization brings.

The DoTr has already clarified that the PUV modernization does not seek to erase the iconic King of the Road. It pointed out that the jeepney design is not covered by the Philippine National Standards which only include dimensional limits, engine requirements, and safety features that modern public utility vehicles must have.

It emphasized that it has no restrictions regarding the design or the look of jeepney units. More so, this does not seek to erase the iconic jeepney designs ingrained in Philippine culture.

The DoTr said the PNS only seeks to ensure that PUVs comply with the Euro 4 emissions standards, in line with an Administrative Order by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources as mandated by the United Nations.

PUV groups held a transport strike last week to express their opposition to the program, as operators appealed for more time to shift to modern jeepneys beyond the 30 June deadline.

The transport strike was initially set to last a week but was cut short after representatives of transport groups met with President Communications Office Secretary Cheloy Garafil and Office of the Executive Secretary Undersecretary Roy Cervantes, who represented President Ferdinand Marcos.

Malacanang thanked representatives of the transport groups for lifting the strike and vowed to review the modernization program. The extended deadline till the end of the year, he said, would give the Palace time to address the concerns of the group.

Come to think of it, the Davao blueprint could very well assuage both the government and the transport groups that modernization, indeed, is possible if only all sides listen to reason.

“Under the HPBS scheme, low-floor city buses will replace jeepneys.”



Mud flats dotting the shoreline

BACOLOD—Most beachfront property owners here opt for an uncluttered view of their sunset, a neat unbroken sweep of the horizon facing the Guimaras Strait smack on the western end of Negros island.

Shore settlement dwellers take a similar view that has tempted down any attempt to dab a bit of green in the coastal marshes and mud flats dotting the shoreline. However, enterprising marginal fisherfolks have studded the shallow portions with fish corrals called baklad while others are content to grab for various species of clams, oysters, and crabs among the sludge.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) endemic tree species conservation scheme noted that "mangrove forests once fringed Negros island's coastal marshes and mud flats in the 19th century. We find these mangrove-grown coastal parts defined in maps of the 1800s. The remaining bakawan species are now confined to estuaries and mud banks of rivers flowing into the Ciduanas Strait."

Castor related that local conservationist groups have made quackish attempts to bring back pockets of such dead-end saline mangrove forests but "beachfront property owners, indifferent local officials and coastal settlers have thwarted these attempts to re-green the shoreline."

However, a beachfront property owner — an oil industry giant — in Bacoted's southern skirts has begun a modest initiative to bring back a whit of green to a slice of the straits coast covered by the property.

As prevailing laws have it, public domain or government property boundaries begin after five meters off the water's edge. So the property owner could do what ever he desires with that five meter shoreline margin which legally accretes to the beachfront property. Nobody would take the owner to court for taking liberties and inflicting far-

MANGKOKOLUM
Kulamnista.blogspot.com



Dong delos Reyes

etched schemes (like raising the Swamp Thing) in that five meter margin — not a beach front but a slice off a mushy mud pie sprinkled with barnacle-patched rocks and debris chunks.

With legal nabobes duly considered, it took little convincing for the current property steward and installation chief Efren V. Domingo to put to work a scheme that would be a throwback to the 19th century, a quackery by putting back dabs of green on that slime-and-mud backyard adjacent to the 1.6-hectare property. Fenced in by a sturdy seawall, the property neatly houses a cluster of fuel tanks, several rocket gardens, a smattering of palms and trees and huge dots of manicured lawns and a group of squat buildings — a Shell installation.

As he pointed to a patch of mud and helme, Domingo outlined an arrow-straight 1.9-kilometer fuel pipeline leading out to the Guimaras Strait. Except for shrewd-scent fishing boats and scattered bamboo baklad, only the hunched figures of shellfish gatherers broke the horizon.

"Shellfish gatherers pry off the rocks a species of oysters. It's called *sisi*. *Tinutagkab nla pati 'yong mga rakadit sa pipeline*. That can wear out the pipeline's outer protective coating," he explained.

Aside from a longer pipeline, over-

playing an provision of "new look" for the mudflats off the installation coastline would be a line of mangrove trees — dabs of growing green or an otherwise dreary backdrop. This writer broached the bakawan idea to Domingo.

An unorthodox Panabique resident who has moved with his family to this general Western Visayan outpost, Domingo learned that the mangrove stand cultivated at the Gaudan, Panabique-Las Pallas coastline had helped curb the worsening level of Manila Bay's water pollution. Bakawan roots absorb and neutralize water pollutants while providing a natural sanctuary and nursery for fish, crabs, lobsters and other aquatic denizens. Prized as fuelwood for firing stoves and bakery ovens and as timber material for railroad ties, the sturdy mangrove grows no slow like most hardwood trees — even five-year-old trees stand less than a meter.

Besides, a line of mangrove — with spread out roots taking on the look of legs wandering on lush ground — somehow look like a saraband of beauty contestants displaying their charms. Thus convinced, Efren picked out a most appropriate day to plant mangrove propagules, the mature fruit seedlings. This writer procured two dozen propagules from an existing stand in a spatter of lily beside one of the rivers flowing into Guimaras Strait.

A Niña-induced rains poured in the next few days. When rain clouds cleared up, the daytime high tide turned the mud flats waist-deep to spoil our plans. We finally got the mangrove planting rites done after several foiled attempts. Shaking our heads and chagrin, we watched subsided in the dark to plant the seedlings as the tide ebbed beginning at 7 p.m. Thursday night.

"Are we doing it right?" Efren wondered aloud.



DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT AND
NATURAL RESOURCES
DENR

Abante



Parang laruan? Endangered ibon natagpuan sa Cagayan

USAP-USAPAN ang isang ka-kalibang ibon na natagpuan ng isang ketol sa highway sa Cagayan de Oro City.

Siya si Teodoro Borden ang nakaranal sa isang endangered na ibon na tinatawag na Brown Booby, uri ng large seabird. Nangga-ling ang pagkaka-iba nito sa ibon sa Spanish word na 'bobo' o mupid dahil ang pangalang uri ng ibon ay karamitang malunaw n' di nag-ingat.

Dagdag pa dito, ay 'rare' maa-rita ng ganitong ibon dahil sa ngay-un ay maliit ang bilang ng ibon ang kanilang lahi.

Sama-sama, mapag-alaman na pagkaraanang mahuli ito ni Borden ay ito ni Borden (to sa laruan

upang
ala-
gaan at
pakainin.

Makikita sa ibinanggit na laruan ang Brown booby na may dark brown na inday ng balalubo tung sa kulay puti sa bandang tyan at mawilaw-wilaw na mga paa at ruka.

Sa ngayon ay nai-surrender na ito sa City Local Environment and Natural Resources Office (CLENRO), (Moltes Caleon)



Teodoro Borden
Facebook



STRATEGIC
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Mining must ensure gender fairness – DENR

An SDMP, as required by the Philippine Mining Act, lays down the comprehensive five-year plan of a mining firm on how it would conduct its actual mining and milling operations

The mining sector should prioritize actions to end gender inequality as part of the effort to promote responsible mining, Environment Secretary Antonia Loyzaga has underscored.

"There's a need to ensure that women's representation in the mining industry is both meaningful and substantive in all levels of decision-making," Loyzaga told mining industry leaders at a luncheon hosted by the Philippine Mining Club last 9 March to celebrate the International Women's Day 2023.

The environment chief discussed pressing issues affecting women, including indigenous women, in the mining sector and the impacts of the industry on communities.

She pointed to a 2020 scoping study commissioned by the Philippine-Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, which listed key issues women face in the mining industry, such as gender inequalities in the workplace, challenges they face as a result of environmental problems due to mining operations, lack of livelihood outside employment by mining firms, and absence of guidelines on the inclusion of gender-responsive projects in the Social Development and Management Programs.

5-year plan laid down

An SDMP, as required by the Philippine Mining Act, lays down the comprehensive five-year

plan of a mining firm on how it would conduct its actual mining and milling operations toward the sustained improvement in the living standards of the host and neighboring communities.

Loyzaga lamented that women constitute the minority in the sector's workplace and only a few women occupy technical and leadership positions, prompting her to call for "an enabling and empowering environment for women."

"We hope that this will include the upscaling, strengthening STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education to motivate women to pursue careers that are very important and related to the industry," she said.

Loyzaga also noted that women are most affected by degradations linked to mining operations, such as pollution of rivers and drying up of water sources, and that "these have

added pressures on women as household managers and also as providers."

The FITI-commissioned study likewise said that there are gaps in the context and implementation of policies and frameworks to address gender dimensions in the mining industry.

Loyzaga also noted that women are most affected by degradations linked to mining operations.

Loyzaga said this is one area that can be looked into when revisiting the Philippine Mining Act of 1995. "We will be looking at this in tandem with the Magna Carta for Women," she added.

In closing, Loyzaga stressed that women should be recognized "not because they are women, but for the merit that they bring to the purpose of their organizations."



COMPANY CITES BUSINESS PERMIT OBTAINED IN PARANAQUE,

GROUP VOWS MORE PROTESTS VS PALAWAN MINE LACKING MAYOR'S PERMIT

By Geraldford Ticker
and Jordeano B. Lagara
@Team Inquirer

The farmers and indigenous people protesting the operations of Ipihan Nickel Corp. in Brooke's Point, Palawan, since Feb. 18 have vowed to stage more rallies against mining activities in their area despite the issuance of a temporary restraining order (TRO) against them.

The group of protesters refused to receive and recognize the TRO served by court sheriff Clodualdo Levita of the Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 165 of Brooke's Point last Monday.

Brooke's Point Mayor Cesario Benedito Jr., who has been giving extensions to the permits of the rallyists, has appealed to them to abide by the court order.

"They should just follow what is written in the TRO,"

Benedito said in an interview on Tuesday.

On Wednesday, however, he signed a new memorandum for the extension of the rallyists' permit up to March 21, after the last one expired on Tuesday.

Not a requirement

"Since I have not received a report of an untoward incident from the police regarding the rally, I will continue to give them a permit in accordance with *Baras Pambansa* Bg. 880 (or the Public Assembly Act of 1985)," the mayor said.

The group's members have been staging a protest rally in front of the mining firm's office in Barangay Maasin to fight the company's operation, saying the mining firm had no mayor's permit.

In an email to the inquirer on Wednesday, Ipihan Nickel

resident mine manager Alex Arabis pointed out that the company does not need a mayor's permit from Brooke's Point for it to continue with its mining operations in the area, although he noted that the renewal for such a mayor's permit remains pending.

Arabis also noted that the company has obtained a mayor's permit from the local government of Paranaque City, where the firm's head office is located, and this "technically affirms our operations." The firm's parent Global Ferromineral lists its principal office as the Penhouse of Platinum Tower on Asean Avenue corner Fuentes Street, in Aseana, Paranaque City.

"However, a mayor's permit is not a requirement for us to continue with our operations. So we have not stopped," Arabis told the inquirer.

"Even though the mayor has not yet approved the renewal, it is not within his power to stop or cancel our MPSA (mineral production sharing agreement) with the Republic of the Philippines, represented by the President/DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) secretary. This fact is acknowledged by the MGB (Mines and Geosciences Bureau/DENR)," he said.

Ipihan Nickel already sought the Anti Red Tape Authority's (ARTA) intervention to move ahead with operating its mine site in Palawan town by filing a complaint against Benedito and municipal environment and natural resources officer Rennie Mustierec "for excessive demands and intentional delays in the renewal of its 2023 business permit."

The company maintained that it already provided more

than what was asked of it to renew its license yet the local officials still have not issued the certification and the business permit more than two months after receiving the necessary documents on Jan. 10.

Business as usual

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange dated March 14, Ipihan Nickel's publicly listed parent firm Global Ferromineral Holdings Inc. said it is "business as usual" for the mining operations in Brooke's Point given the TRO.

The order prohibits the protesters from stopping, apprehending, searching, obstructing or even approaching the vehicles of individuals making use of access roads, including the main road, the barangay roads parallel to it, and access road to Sitio Paaday going in and out of

Ipihan Nickel's mine site in the municipality of Brooke's Point.

The disclosure said that Ipihan Nickel has urged the mayor of Brooke's Point to lead the court personnel and the Philippine National Police contingent "in implementing the court order peacefully and promptly" in end the disruption to the company's mining operations.

Following the issuance of the TRO on March 10 by the RTC, Arabis said they would now seek both a preliminary injunction (a court-issued stoppage order while the case is ongoing) and a permanent injunction against the protesters. The next hearing is scheduled on March 17.

"By the way, the leaders and organizers of the protest and barricade were a no-show during the TRO hearing, practically abandoning their cohorts and causes, if they have any," Arabis said. (w)



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Brooke's Point RTC issues TRO vs mining project protesters

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

Special Correspondent

A TEMPORARY Restraining Order (TRO) was issued by a local court in Brooke's Point, Palawan against an ongoing protest on the operation of the Iplian Mining Corporation in the municipality. RTC Branch 155 Presiding Judge Ramon Clito R. Mierdoza issued the TRO in favor of Iplian, which is now calling on the local government of Brooke's Point to act against the harassment allegedly perpetrated by the protesters.

The protesters, led by Pastor Job Lagrada, Dominador Magdalyo, and Marcelo Palmones who were named respondents to the civil case, were accused of blocking the mine haul roads of the company for weeks, prohibiting the company from conducting its nickel mining operation.

The TRO, essentially, prohibits the protesters from stopping, apprehending, searching, obstructing, or even approaching miners entering or exiting the mine using the access roads in the area.

In a statement, Iplian maintained that as a company that adheres to the scientific, ethical, and regulatory framework, INC welcomes the court's ruling that it says reinforces its core values.

"As such, INC Iplian Nickel Corporation is urging Brooke's Point Mayor Cesar E. Benedicto, Jr. to demonstrate his sworn duty by leading the court personnel and the Philippine National Police contingent in implementing the court order peacefully and promptly," Alex Arabis, resident mine manager said.

"As a good corporate citizen, we are complying with legal procedures and exploring all lawful and peaceful options against the threats and intimidation tactics used by propagandists and saboteurs," he added.

Arabis said INC continues to remain dedicated to fostering private productive relationships with all of its stakeholders.

A joint undertaking between the government and INC, the Iplian Nickel project in Brooke's Point is critical to achieving sustainable economic recovery and genuine environmental protection, said INC.

INC currently provides employment to over 4,500 workers, wherein 90 percent are residents of Brooke's Point.

INC added that Indigenous Peoples are also well represented as they make up 28 percent of the total workforce.



Palawan mining firm urges Brooke's Point mayor to act on TRO

A MINING unit of listed Global Ferronickel Holdings, Inc. urged Brooke's Point Mayor Cosme R. Benedicto, Jr. to prevent protesters from hindering operations in its mine site in the Palawan town as set in a court-issued temporary restraining order (TRO).

In a statement, the holding firm's unit, Irian Nickel Corp., has secured a TRO from Brooke's Point Regional Trial Court Branch 165. The order prohibits protesters from stopping, apprehending, searching, obstructing, or obstructing vehicles going in and out of the mine site.

Irian Nickel called on Rt. Benedicto to "confer with his sworn duty by leading the court personnel and the Philippine National Police contingent in implementing the court order peacefully and promptly."

On Feb. 2, residents of Brooke's Point formed a human blockade to block trucks transporting minerals from the mine site, claiming the mine's operations affected their land and livelihood.

The local government of Brooke's Point and its residents earlier urged the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to issue a cease-and-desist order, saying as they said the mining firm failed to renew its permit for this year.

"As a good corporate citizen, we are complying with legal procedures and exploring all lawful and peaceful options against the threats and intimidation tactics used by propagandists and saboteurs," said Irian Nickel Resident Mine Manager Alex Rabos.

He added that the company "continues to remain dedicated to fostering positive and productive relationships with all its stakeholders."

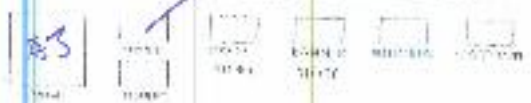
Global Ferronickel has four subsidiaries with business interests in nickel ore mining, building, cement and steel production, and port operations.

On Wednesday, its shares at the stock exchange rose five centavos or 2.1% to close at P242 apiece. —
Sheldene Joy Talavera



PHILIPPINE
MINING AND
GEOLOGICAL
ENGINEERING BOARD
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Messages
Business Insights



03-18-23

Iplan Nickel secures TRO vs protesters

BY JED MACAPAL

IPLAN Nickel Corp. (INC) secured a temporary restraining order (TRO) from the Brooke's Point Regional Trial Court Branch 165 against protesters blocking the mine haul of the company in Palawan.

The company said the TRO prohibits protesters from stopping, apprehending, searching, obstructing or even approaching in and all the vehicles of individuals making use of access roads including the main whole roads, the barangay roads parallel to the main whole road and access road in Sitio Pazy going in and out of the INC mine site.

INC urged Brooke's Point mayor Cesarat Benedicto, Jr. to cooperate with court personnel and the Philippine National Police contingent in implementing the court order peacefully and promptly.

"As a good corporate citizen, we are complying with legal procedures and

exploring all lawful and peaceful options against the threats and intimidations tactics used by propagandists and saboteurs. INC continues to remain dedicated to fostering positive and productive relationships with all of its stakeholders," said Alex Arbis, INC, assistant mine manager, in a statement.

INC also said the TRO helps the company to operate the nickel mining resource which provides employment to over 1,500 people wherein 90 percent are residents of Brooke's Point and 20 percent made up of indigenous people.

Protesters are questioning INC's operations as its business renewal application has remained pending at the local government of Brooke's Point.

However, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau earlier said the Mineral Production Sharing Agreement between the Philippine government and INC remains in force and valid until April 30, 2025 despite the protests.

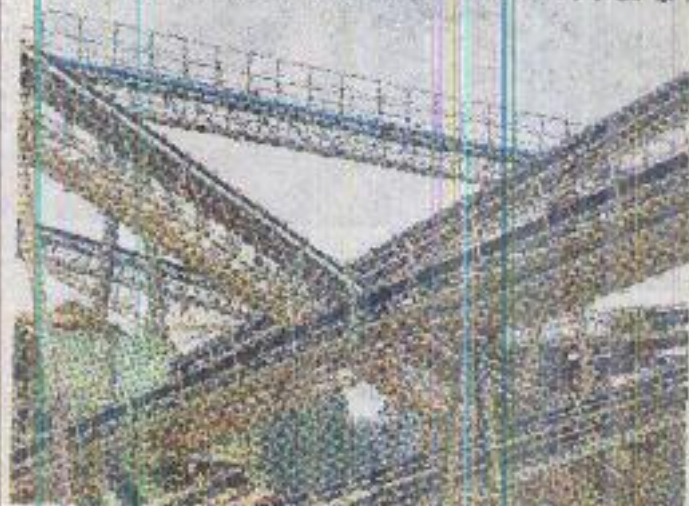


Philippine miners not keen on Indonesia

A PLAN by top nickel miner Indonesia to create an OPEC-like group to coordinate supply would not benefit the Philippines, the No. 2 producer, according to an industry group.

The Philippines mined a 10% of the in-demand metal that's used in electric vehicle batteries last year, according to the US Geological Survey, and mainly exports nickel ore to China. That's well behind Indonesia, which accounted for almost half of global output, and floated the idea of a producer alliance late last year.

"If prices of raw materials go up, then they will feed into prices of finished products, which we import, and it will hurt us so much," Dante R. Bravo, president of the Philippine Nickel Industry Association, said in an interview. "I'm



JACOBS SCHWENK/GETTY IMAGES

not a believer in a controlled market."

Indonesia's Investment Minister Bahil Labadalia said last month that he plans to travel to major nickel producers including Australia, Brazil,

and the Philippines to promote the alliance. He may face an uphill battle though, given that a major mining association in Australia and Canada's trade minister have also said they're not keen on the idea. The other

nickel alliance plan

main miners of the metal are a diverse bunch including Russia, New Caledonia, and China.

Indonesia's nickel plan is part of President Joko Widodo's goal of adding more value domestically and becoming a key part of the battery supply chain. The country, along with Australia, also has the largest reserves of the metal, with Brazil not far behind. Prices for nickel, which is also used to make stainless steel, have risen by around two-thirds so far this decade as electric vehicle demand surged.

Jakarta's ban on exports of metal ores in 2020 boosted the value of its nickel shipments to \$30 billion from \$3 billion in two years as Chinese companies built refineries and smelters there. The Philippines is considering following in In-

donesia's footsteps by taxing nickel ore exports to lure investment in processing plants.

However, the Philippines' nickel is of a lower quality than Indonesia's and it has far smaller reserves, meaning it would be more difficult to attract funds, Mr. Bravo said on Monday. The country should instead focus on enhancing cooperation between its mainly small-scale miners to set up processing facilities, and expanding the areas where companies are allowed to explore, he said.

The alliance being promoted by Indonesia would only be of interest to the Philippines if it was focused on sharing best practices and technology and deploying resources more efficiently, Mr. Bravo said. —

Bloomberg



STRATEGIC
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After quakes, now floods, landslides

TAGUM CITY—It was heroming another week of hardship for Davao de Oro residents as rain-induced landslides and floods hit several villages on Tuesday while the province was still reeling from a series of strong earthquakes last week. At least 526 families, or 1,379 persons, have been affected by the latest disaster, the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office reported on Wednesday. —STORY BY FRINSTON LIM

A7

Residents flee floods, slides in Davao de Oro

Double whammy for province already under state of calamity due to series of earthquakes that destroyed infra, private properties

By Frinston Lim
@InqNational

TAGUM CITY—It's a week of misfortune for Davao de Oro as rain-induced landslides and flooding hit several villages there on Tuesday, even as the province is still reeling from the devastation brought by a series of strong earthquakes last week.

At least 526 families or 1,379 persons have been affected by the latest disaster, the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRMO) said on Wednesday, with the figure expected to rise as assessment continues.

New Bataan and Nabunturan towns were the hardest-hit in landslides triggered by an overnight downpour on Monday as a low pressure area moved southeast off Davao City.

Lynne Dollolasa, municipal disaster risk reduction and management officer of New Bataan, said assessment of damage and number of families affected by flooding and landslides in several villages was still ongoing.

Landslides were reported in the villages of Camanlangan, Andap and Magangit, Dollolasa said.

In Barangay Patina, flooding scoured a portion of a road

near a bridge, rendering it impassable to traffic.

Rock, soil slides

The portion of the provincial road in Magangit, New Bataan, was also closed to traffic as boulders blocked it following a rock slide.

In Nabunturan town, landslides also struck the upland portions of barangays Bukal, Mainit, Taguocan and Katipunan.

Several families were preemptively evacuated as flooding occurred in the villages of Magading and Magsaysay.

Nabunturan Mayor Myrcel Balli has ordered the suspension of classes in all levels in the town.

Classes were also suspended in Maragusan town.

In Maco town, landslide and flooding severed a portion of Tagburos Mainit road, prompting the evacuation of several families near the area on Wednesday morning.

In Compostela town, several families also fled due to flooding, local officials said.

The province is currently under a state of calamity as a result of the March 7 quakes.

That series of tremors—with magnitude 5.9 and 5.6 just over two hours apart—damaged over 3,000 homes and 160 schools, and has affected over 229,000 families, the PDRMO has earlier reported.

THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2023
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Photo
By: Jovard L. Abate

PHOTO BY JOVARD L. ABATE
ENCOUNTER
REGIONS

PHOTO BY JOVARD L. ABATE. There used to be a road here, but this portion of Tagburos-Mainit road in Maco, Davao de Oro, is now closed to traffic. It is photo taken Tuesday after a landslide triggered by heavy rain hit the Maragusan area. —ENCOUNTER/PHOTO BY JOVARD L. ABATE



STRATEGIC
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THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
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THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Maynilad spending ₱178 B for wastewater management

West Zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services, Inc. is spending ₱178 billion from 2023 until 2046 for its wastewater management program which will expand sewer coverage and manage pollution loading in tributaries of water.

In a statement, the firm said this ₱178 billion spending plan will go toward the construction of 18 new Sewage Treatment Plants (STP) in different areas within its concession and the installation of around 360 kilometers of new sewer lines that will catch and convey used water from households to STPs.

It also includes the upgrade of 17 existing wastewater facilities to meet the revised effluent standards (DAO 2021-29) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, among other wastewater-related projects.

"Besides improving the distribution of drinking water supply, our investment program also includes the laying of essential infrastructure to collect and treat the wastewater generated by households so we can ensure environmental sustainability," said Maynilad Chief Operating Officer Randolph T. Estrellado. Maynilad is currently constructing new STPs and laying sewer conveyance systems in Valenzuela, Caloocan, Las Piñas, and Tunasan and Oring in Montinlupa.

Once operational, these new facilities combined will have the capacity to treat 419 million liters of wastewater per day, serving around 1.75 million residents. The company's long-term plan also includes the construction of a 140-MLD capacity STP and installation of sewer lines in Manila.

Since 2007, Maynilad has already spent ₱41.2 billion in capital expenditures for its wastewater management projects alone, enabling it to add 21 STPs to the existing two, as well as expand sanitation service with its construction of new Septage Treatment Plants and purchase of new vacuum trucks for septic tank desludging activities. (James A. Layola)



Maynilad earmarks P178b to expand sewer coverage, manage water pollution

By Othel V. Campos

WEST zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services Inc. said Wednesday it earmarked P178 billion from 2023 to 2046 for its wastewater management program, which aims to expand sewer coverage and manage pollution ending into bodies of water.

The water firm said in a statement the latest spending plan involves the con-

struction of 18 new sewage treatment plants in different areas within its concession, installation of around 360 kilometers of new sewer lines that will collect and convey used water from households to STPs and the upgrade of 27 wastewater facilities to meet the revised effluent standards of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

"Besides improving the distribution of drinking water supply, our invest-

ment program also includes the laying of essential infrastructure to collect and treat the wastewater generated by households so we can ensure environmental sustainability," said Maynilad chief operating officer Raul Sison Gurel-jado.

The company announced P3.2 billion in capital expenditure for the construction of four modular treatment plants that will serve customers in Cavite.

The four ModTPs in the cities of Bacoor and Imus in Cavite province will have a combined water output of 47 million liters per day—enough to supply the daily needs of some 200,000 customers in the area.

The investment will also cover the cost of pipelines that will distribute treated water to nearby areas. The plants are expected for completion by 2023 and 2024.



Manila

Manila



08-16-23

RAJ

Water firm sets P178B wastewater management program

BY JED MACAPAGAL

WEST Zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services Inc. plans to spend around P178 billion from 2023 until 2046 for its wastewater management program which will expand sewer coverage and manage pollution loading into bodies of water.

Maynilad said the amount will fund the construction of 18 new sewage treatment plants (STPs) in different areas within its concession and the installation of around

360 kilometers of new sewer lines that will catch and convey used water from households to STPs.

The money will also be used to upgrade 17 existing wastewater facilities to meet the revised effluent standards of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, among other wastewater-related projects.

"Besides improving the distribution of drinking water supply, our investment program also includes the laying of essential infrastructure to collect and

treat the wastewater generated by households so we can ensure environmental sustainability," said Randolph Estrella, Maynilad chief operating officer, in a statement.

Maynilad is constructing new STPs and laying sewer conveyance systems in Valenzuela, Caloocan, Las Piñas and Tuguegarao and Cupang in Marikina.

Once operational, these new facilities combined will have the capacity to treat 418 million liters of wastewater per day, serving around 1.75 million residents as

the company's long-term plan also includes the construction of a 140 million liters per day capacity STP and installation of sewer lines in Manila.

Since 2007, Maynilad has spent P41.2 billion in capital expenditures for its wastewater management projects alone, enabling it to add 20 STPs to the existing two, as well as expand sanitation service with its construction of new septicage treatment plants and purchase of new vacuum trucks for septic tank desludging activities.



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Maynilad allocates P178 billion for wastewater spending plan

MAYNILAD Water Services, Inc. targets to spend P178 billion for its wastewater management program from 2023 to 2044, the company announced on Wednesday.

In a media release, the west zone water concessionaire said that it plans to expand its sewer coverage and manage water pollution.

"Besides improving the distribution of drinking water supply, our investment program also includes the laying of essential infrastructure to collect and treat the wastewater generated by households so we can ensure environmental sustainability," Randolph T. Estrillado, chief operating officer of Maynilad, said in a statement.

Maynilad said it also plans to construct 18 new sewage treatment plants within its concession area.

The company said the installation of 300 kilometers of new sewer lines will catch and convey used water from households to sewage treatment plants.

Maynilad also plans to upgrade its existing 17 wastewater facilities to meet the amended effluent standards set by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The company is also constructing new sewage treatment plants and laying sewer conveyance systems in Valenzuela, Caloocan, Las Piñas, and Muntinlupa's Tandang Sora and Cupang areas.

The new facilities will have a combined capacity to treat around 419 million liters per day (MLD) of wastewater, which covers around 1.7 million residents.

Maynilad said the company is also planning to construct a 140-MLD capacity sewage treatment plant and install sewer lines in Manila.

The company said that since its re-privatization in 2007, it has spent around P41.2 billion in capital expenditures for its wastewater management projects, which resulted in an additional 20 sewage treatment plants to its only two existing sewage treatment plants.

Maynilad, a concessionaire of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, serves the cities of Manila, except portions of San Andres and Sta. Ana. It also operates in Quezon City, Makati, Caloocan, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Navotas, and Malabon. It serves the cities of Cavite, Bacoor and Imus, and the towns of Kawit, Noveleta, and Rosario in Cavite province.

Metro Pacific Investments Corp., which has a majority stake in Maynilad, is one of three Philippine units of Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd., the others being Philex Mining Corp. and PLDT Inc.

Hastings Holdings, Inc., a unit of PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund subsidiary MediaQuest Holdings, Inc., has an interest in *BusinessWorld* through the Philippine Star Group, which it controls. — Ashley Refika O. Jose



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Maynilad eyes P178-B capex for waste control

West Zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services Inc. is planning to spend approximately P178 billion until 2046 to fund its wastewater management program to help manage water pollution.

The Pangasinan-led company said the allocation will cover the construction of 18 new Sewage Treatment Plants across its concession area.

Likewise, it will finance the installation of around 360 kilometers of new sewer lines that will catch and convey used water from households to STPs as well as the upgrade of 17 existing wastewater facilities.

"Besides improving the distribution of drinking water supply, our investment program also includes the laying of essential infrastructure to collect and treat the wastewater

generated by households so we can ensure environmental sustainability," Maynilad chief operating officer Randolph T. Estrellado.

Revised effluent standards

Maynilad, thus, committed to meeting the revised effluent standards of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in implementing all its wastewater-related projects.

Currently, Maynilad is constructing new STPs and laying sewer conveyance systems in Valenzuela, Calocan, Las Piñas and Muntinlupa.

Once operational, the combined capacities of these new facilities can treat 419 million liters of wastewater per day - serving around 1.75 million residents.

MARIA ROMERO



MANILA WATER TAKES STEPS TO ENSURE AMPLE SUPPLY

MANILA Water gave assurances on Wednesday that measures are being implemented in the East Zone to ensure continuous water supply during the dry season.

In a statement, Manila Water said that in support of the call of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) to ensure water supply during the dry months, it has started carrying out initiatives to meet demand while ensuring adequate water supply reserves for its 7.4 million customers in eastern Metro Manila and Rizal.

While a majority of the raw water supply comes from Angat Dam, Manila Water said that it undertook operational adjustments in the Cardona Water Treatment Plant in Rizal to maximize daily water treatment capacity and supply high-quality water to residents of several towns in Rizal Province.

Currently, the plant treats 106.2 million liters per day, which is a

30.9-MLD increase from last year's 75.24 MLD average.

The two water treatment plants in Balara, Quezon City, have also maximized their backwash recovery program, which involves re-treating the by-product of the water treatment process.

The program has led to the plant treating an average of 24.7 MLD from January to February 2023, higher than the 11.6 MLD for the same period last year.

On top of the regular and preventive maintenance activities, the company also pursues reduction in water losses, or non-revenue water, through the immediate repair of leaks and rehabilitation of pipes.

As a result, water losses had a low level of 12.69 percent in 2022.

The water company also lined up additional water sources such as the Marikina River through the 20-MLD Marikina Portable Water Treatment Plant and the newly

rehabilitated Wawa Dam through the first phase of the Wawa-Calawis Water Supply System in Antipolo, which can supply up to 80 MLD.

Once fully operational, the Wawa-Calawis Water Supply System will provide 518 MLD of water to over one million customers in Antipolo City, Baras and Teresa.

"These measures are part of Manila Water's commitment to ensure that our customers continue to receive 24/7 water services, especially during the summer season where demand normally spikes by 15 percent due to higher temperatures. We continue to work closely with the MWSS, NWRB, DPWH, DENR, MMDA, and other government agencies and local government units to always find ways to provide our customers with 24/7 uninterrupted water supply," Manila Water Chief Operating Officer for East Zone Arnold Mortera said.

FRANCIS EARL CUETO



Department of Environment
and Natural Resources
DENR



IPPF seizes illegally cut wood, chainsaws

By HECTOR LAWAS

THE Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm (IPPF) in Puerto Princesa City has seized illegally cut wood and chainsaws during a recent crackdown on illegal activities in the vicinity of the prison's forest reservation area.

The IPPF team, together with the Kabala Foundation Inc., the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and the Philippine National Police (PNT) Maritime Group, identified and dismantled at

least 18 makeshift houses occupied by individuals who illegally claimed a portion of the reserved land.

Moreover, the operation led to the discovery of an estimated 100 illegally logged timbers belonging to endangered species such as Diak, Apitong, Kamagnog, Amogis, Nabo, and Ipil.

The authorities also seized four (4) chainsaws and two (2) axes, which are now under the custody of DENR.

Legal action is underway against the illegal settlers, as the IPPF strives to eliminate unlawful activities within its jurisdiction.

SUICIDE SA DOLOMITE BEACH!

HIINDI na nagawang maisalita pa ng mga manggagamot habang inoobserbahan sa Ospital ng Maynila ang isang hindi pa nakikilalang biktima, makaraan umangong tumalon sa Manila Bay sa Dolomite Beach Linggo ng unaga.

NI JON-JON
C. REYES

SUICIDE

Pasado alas 3:24 ng madalng araw nang idalawang wala nang bulaw ni Dr. William Azarcon, attending physician ng Ospital ng Maynila.

Base sa ulat ni Police Captain Dennis Turda, hepe ng Manila Police District Homicide Section, niling nakalipas na Linggo ng unaga, Marso 12, bandang 10:30, nang makatanggap sila ng tawag mula sa

alibing papa-mulan kaugnay sa isang lalaki na nahinod sa nasabing lugar.

Dito na nangyayari sa Police Senior Master Sergeant Boy Nino Baladajay, may hawak ng kaso, at agad itong naglinggo sa nasabing ospital.

Sa imbestigasyon ni Baladajay, nakapantayan pa rito ang taxi driver na si nakyari ng biktima.

Ayon sa taxi driver, naikawento umano ng biktima, na may problema ito sa asawa.

Pagaspit sa Dolomite

Beach, bumaba ang biktima at pagigawa umano nito ng salit na "Magpapakamagay ako," sabay na dumayo sa Manila Bay.

Isang Reanelyn Corzales, na babang nakalalang security guard ng Dolomite Beach ang bumitang ng tulong at sa misinong sinakapang taxi ang nag-ugod sa naturang ospital.

Gayundina, patuloy ang kinasagawa ng pulisya sa paghahakildan sa biktima habang nasa pangangasap pa ito ng Ospital ng Maynila.



STREET
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NEWS IN A FLASH

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■ **SLUMMING** houses are seen along Naxras River connecting Manila Bay yesterday. (A. V. City)



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Baha, landslide sa ilang bayan sa Davao de Oro

NAGKARON ng pagbaha at landslide sa ilang lugar sa Davao de Oro dahil sa pag-ulang dulot ng isang Low Pressure Area (LPA).

Ayon sa ulat, umapaw ang isang sara sa bayan ng Compostela na nagng sanhi ng pagbaha sa mga kalapit na kalsada.

Inilikas naman ang 28 pamilya sa bayan ng Marabai na nawasak din ang isang LPA ayon sa ulat.

Nalahinang makapal na puak ang mga bahay at ilang kalsada sa New Breaa matapos ang paguhong lapa sa isang lugar sa ibabang baybay.