

31 March 2023 Friday



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Fishing ban in areas affected by oil spill should continue: BFAR

BY JED MACAPAGAL and VICTOR REYES

THE Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) has recommended that fishing bans in municipalities affected by the oil spill in Oriental Mindoro be continued, saying initial analyses on food safety in affected areas are not yet conclusive.

The agency said water samples collected and analyzed from the affected municipalities of Bansud, Bongabong, Bulalacao, Calapan, Gloria, Mansalay, Naujan, Pinama-

layan, Pola, and Roxas in Oriental Mindoro as well as in Caluya, Antique from March 9 to 12 showed minimal levels of oil and grease that is within the standard set by the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources.

Fish samples collected and analyzed from the same areas from March 4 to 5 showed that low-level contaminants or polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, which is deemed harmful to humans and other living organisms, may accumulate in the flesh of marine organisms over time.

BFAR said it is continuously analyzing and monitoring the affected areas to establish time-series results on the impact of the oil spill with regard to food safety.

"Succeeding analyses should be considered to ensure seafood is safe for public consumption. Rest assured that the Bureau is fast-tracking the laboratory analyses without compromising the accuracy of data, which serves as the basis for its recommendations," the agency said.

BFAR also said it has been assisting local government units, es-

pecially the provincial government of Oriental Mindoro, in terms of relief and livelihood aid since the onset of the oil spill.

The bureau has so far allocated P4.4 million of livelihood assistance in the form of post-harvest technology packages that will benefit ten fisherfolk associations and cooperatives or 689 families.

About P1.5 million has also been earmarked for food assistance to 5,000 affected fisherfolk in Mimaropa while P580,500 was spent to

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help displaced fishing groups in Western Visayas.

BFAR also deployed monitoring, control, and surveillance vessels as well as personal protective equipment and other materials for clean-up activities while additional interventions are also being prepositioned based on rehabilitation proposals from the oil spill-hit areas.

PCG CLEAN-UP

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) said it is making good progress in the clean-up of fuel oil that spilled from the sunken MT Princess Empress off Naujan in Oriental Mindoro.

However, PCG deputy commandant for operations Vice Adm.

Rolando Lazor Punzalan Jr. could not provide an estimate as to when they could completely clear the oil slick.

"Based on our accounting, our progress is at 60 percent. So this is a good progress in our effort to clear oil in the affected coastlines," Punzalan said during the Laging Handa public briefing.

MT Princess Empress sank last February 28 after encountering engine trouble due to overheating. It was transporting more than 800,000 liters of industrial fuel oil.

Officials said five of the eight cargo tanks of the vessel suffered structural damage and are already empty. The three other tanks did not suffer structural damage but are leaking oil.

Punzala assured the public that PCG personnel, in coordination with personnel from other gov-

ernment agencies, volunteers and residents, are working hard to address the problem.

"In the coming days, maybe we will have a clear picture as to when, more or less, we can hit what we call the endpoint that we are aspiring," said Punzalan.

"But as of now, as I have said, our operations on the ground are continuing," said Punzalan.

In a statement, PCG said it has collected a total of 13,383 liters of oily water mixture and 139 sacks of oil-contaminated materials during offshore cleanup from March 1 to 29.

In its shoreline cleanup, the agency said 3,937.5 sacks and 22 drums of waste have been collected in 13 barangays in Naujan, Bulalacao, and Pola towns in Oriental Mindoro during the same period.

Meanwhile, Oriental Mindoro

the oil spill.

DSWD said it is now in the process of downloading funds to the local government units in Batangas province for the implementation of the 15-day work under the Cash-for-Work (CFW) program.

As of yesterday, DSWD said 10,417 beneficiaries of the cash-for-work program (CFW) from Oriental Mindoro and Palawan have received financial assistance amounting to P41.6 million while 800 people from Antique benefited from the P5.053 million worth of financial assistance under the cash for Work program.

DSWD said it has also released P25.082 million in financial assistance under the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS), which benefitted 9,667 beneficiaries in Oriental Mindoro and Palawan. - With Jocelyn Montemayor

Gov. Humerlito Dolor said the oil spill has already reached the towns of Baco and San Teodoro.

Dolor said grease and oil have been detected in marine protected areas in Baco and San Teodoro.

"This means it's no longer safe to swim and it's not safe to fish (in these areas) for now," Dolor said.

DSWD AID

Around P1.5 million worth of assistance has been provided to communities in Batangas affected by the oil spill, according to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

This brings the total humanitarian assistance provided to 163 barangays affected by the oil spill in Oriental Mindoro and Palawan in Mimaropa, Batangas in Calabarzon, and Antique in Western

Visayas to P76.58 million.

A total of 36,658 families or 172,928 persons have been affected by the oil spill.

DSWD said that its Field Office IV-A Calabarzon, in coordination with the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) of Batangas City, facilitated the distribution of 1,762 family food packs (FFPs) to affected fisherfolks and tourism industry workers in six barangays of Isla Verde.

Before this, DSWD prepositioned 9,000 food packs to the local government units (LGUs) of Nasugbu, Calatagan, Balayan, Lemery, Lian, and San Juan.

Data from the DSWD-Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center (DROM-IC) showed that 1,767 families or 7,740 individuals in six barangays in Batangas have been affected by



Gov't eyes fishing bans in areas hit by oil spill

THE Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) has recommended fishing bans in oil spill-affected areas in Oriental Mindoro.

The government has been evaluating contaminant levels in water and fishery resources to determine if fish and other seafood in these areas are safe for public consumption, and if fishing bans should be lifted by the local government units (LGUs) concerned.

The results were consistent with the findings of the DA-BFAR in its first batch of analyses: that

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minimal amounts of oil and grease and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) levels were present in fish and seafood from the affected areas.

"Water samples collected and analyzed from the affected municipalities of Oriental Mindoro [Bansud, Bongabong, Bulalacao, Calapan, Gloria, Mansalay, Naujan, Pinamalayan, Pola, and Roxas] and Caluya, Antique on March 9 to 12 showed minimal levels of oil and grease, within the standard stated by the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources in Administrative Order 2016-08 for fishing areas [less than 3.0 mg/L oil and grease]," the DA-BFAR said.

Meanwhile, fish samples collected and analyzed from the same areas on March 4 and 5 showed low-level contaminants or PAH, it added.

PAH, which is harmful to humans and other living organisms, may accumulate in the flesh of marine organisms over time.

These samples were collected in the early days of March, making the current situation uncertain due to the possibility that the spill had spread further because of ocean current and wind direction, and more PAHs may have accumulated in marine organisms.

The DA-BFAR continuously analyzes and monitors the area to establish time-series results on the impact of the oil spill with regard to food safety. Succeeding analyses should be considered to ensure seafood is safe for public consumption.

"Rest assured that the bureau is fast-tracking the laboratory analyses without compromising the accuracy of data, which serves as the basis for its recommendations," the BFAR said.

Findings and recommendations will be shared with the public and concerned government offices as soon as data becomes available.

Moreover, the DA-BFAR notes that the Bureau has been assisting LGUs, especially the provincial government of Oriental Mindoro, in terms of relief and livelihood aid since the onset of the oil spill.

To date, the bureau has already allocated P4.4 million worth of livelihood assistance in the form of post-harvest technology packages which will benefit 10 fisherfolk associations and cooperatives or 689 families.

About P1.5 million was also earmarked for food assistance to 5,000 affected fisherfolk in Mimaropa, while P580,500 was spent to help displaced fishing groups in Western Visayas.

The bureau has deployed monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) vessels, as well as PPE sets and other materials for clean-up activities.

Additional interventions are also being prepositioned based on rehabilitation proposals from the oil spill-hit areas. *Raadee S. Sausa*



Addressing the impacts of the Mindoro oil spill



Sonny M. Angara

BETTER DAYS

IT has been over a month since the MT Princess Empress sunk off Oriental Mindoro, causing a massive oil spill that has reached parts of Batangas, Palawan and Antique. Around 9,400 liters of oily water and 3,514 sacks of oil-contaminated materials have been collected from the oil spill that has directly affected 34,000 families in MIMAROPA and in Western Visayas, including no less than 13,600 fishermen and farmers, based on data from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

We commend the quick response of all national and local agencies in addressing this catastrophe, particularly the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Labor and Employment and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to this environmental disaster. We earlier called on the DSWD and DOLE to immediately utilize the appropriate funds under their respective budgets to provide aid to residents affected by the incident, particularly in providing cash aid and cash-for-work programs so that they can put food on their tables and pay for the medical expenses resulting from the incident. Under the 2023 General Appropriations Act, which we sponsored as Chairman of the Committee on Finance, P37 billion was allocated to the DSWD's

Protective Services for Individuals and Families in Difficult Circumstances and Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation. Another P20 billion was allocated for the DOLE's Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers.

The task of cleaning up the spill and restoring the lives of the affected residents and businesses is undoubtedly very challenging considering that the oil tanker, which was carrying some 900,000 liters of industrial oil, was found to have suffered "extensive structural damage" before submerging with leaks found from all of its compartments.

In addition to the livelihood disrupted by this maritime incident, the oil leak has been severely detrimental to the country's Nature-Based Tourism (NBT) as the spill breached many



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critical marine habitats.

NBT is an emerging type of tourism that “builds on the draw of nature” encompassing activities that include leisure travel largely influenced by the purpose of enjoying natural attractions and engaging in a variety of outdoor activities.

Considered as the most diverse country on a per hectare basis, the Philippines has identified 247 key biodiversity areas—covering 7.8 million hectares, including 147 terrestrial and 100 marine sites.

One of the many marine sites affected by the oil spill was the Verde Island Passage in between Batangas, Mindoro, Marinduque, and Romblon. It is the prime center of the *Coral Triangle* or the world’s epicenter of marine biodiversity. Another destination at risk and being closely monitored for possible breach is the Tubbataha Reef Natural Park in Palawan that was classified as a Unesco World Heritage Site in 1993 and recognized as a top diving site in the world. The Department of Tourism already expressed its grave concern as the agency is expecting more areas to be hit by the oil leak and at least 34 cruise ships are expected to arrive in Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, and Palawan this year.

In relation to this threat faced by the country’s biodiversity, I filed Senate Resolution No. 472 to create policy reforms and budgetary expenditures aimed at developing the Philippines’s potential of becoming the leading country in the world for

sustainable NBT. It suggests that legislative frameworks that create incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources must be strengthened for the long-term success of the industry. Moreover, the resolution advocates for a sustainable management system in building a tourism industry aimed at promoting and capitalizing on the diverse environmental features and local biodiversity of the country.

According to a World Bank Group report, NBT holds a key role in sustainable development as it can aid in poverty alleviation, support economic growth, and promote biodiversity conservation. What we should focus on now is how to fully maximize and harmonize existing interventions that promote sustainable NBT such as the *Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System* and instruments like the *National Eco-tourism Strategy and Action Plan* and the *Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan*. While the oil spill’s full extent has yet to be determined, the country’s NBT would fully realize its potentials and be made resilient against unforeseen shocks if these frameworks are effectively in place.

Senator Sonny Angara has been in public service for 18 years—9 years as Representative of the Lone District of Aurora, and 9 as Senator. He has authored, co-authored, and sponsored more than 330 laws. He is currently serving his second term in the Senate.

E-mail: sonnyangara@yahoo.com | Facebook, Twitter & Instagram: [@sonnyangara](https://www.instagram.com/sonnyangara)



Oriental Mindoro to be placed under state of calamity

Oriental Mindoro Gov. Humerlito Dolor wants the entire province placed under a state of calamity due to the oil spill from the sunken motor tanker *Princess Empress*.

Dolor said he directed the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office to prepare a recommendation for the calamity declaration in view of latest situational reports from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Department of Health.

Parts of the province initially affected by the oil spill had earlier been placed under a state of calamity.

Dolor said the provincial government is giving priority to these areas to ensure that food and livelihood would be provided to affected residents.

He said just compensation should be given to affected communities.

"*Ang proseso pwedeng legal or amicable settlement. Ito ay as far as the people are concerned. Kaya individual ang claims, insurer at individual, hindi pa collective,*" Dolor said.

The provincial government will ensure that fisherfolk will receive compensation considering that it has been a month since fishing bans were imposed in affected areas, he said.

Coastal cleanup

Meanwhile, Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Vice Admiral Rolando Punzalan Jr. reported yesterday that cleanup of 60 percent of the shorelines affected by the oil spill had been completed.

"This is good progress *sa ating pagtatanggal po ng langis sa mga naapektuhan na mga coastlines,*" Punzalan said at yesterday's Laging Handa forum.

He cited the assistance provided by coast guards from Japan, South Korea and the United States as well as experts from France and the US Navy, who arrived in the country on Wednesday.

He said it has yet to be determined when the coastal cleanup will be finished even as he gave assurance that the PCG and other stakeholders are working double time.

- Romina Cabrera, Robertzon Ramirez



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Or. Mindoro to be placed under state of calamity amid oil spill

By Othel V. Campos

THE entire province of Oriental Mindoro will be placed under a state of calamity, Governor Humerlito "Bonz" Dolor said Thursday, as it continues to suffer the effects of the massive oil spill from the tanker that sank off the coast of Naujan town last month.

"Last night, based on the latest report I got from the DOH (Department of Health) and the DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources), I asked our PDRRMO (Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office) to prepare their recommendation to declare a state of calamity in the whole province,

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not just for the area first affected by the oil spill," Dolor said.

Meanwhile, as recent tests yielded minimal traces of oil and grease in the province's spill-affected areas, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) recommended Thursday to keep the fishing bans in the affected municipalities.

The agency, in a statement, believes the initial analyses are not yet conclusive evidence as far as food safety is concerned since the samples were collected during the early days of March.

Large parts of Oriental Mindoro were affected by an oil spill caused by the sinking of motor tanker Princess Empress which was carrying 900,000 liters of industrial fuel oil.

Thousands of fishermen and their families are now part of the government's cash-for-work program after fishing bans were imposed in the affected waters.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development said it has given at least P38.1 million in aid to affected families.

BFAR has been monitoring the situation in areas affected by the oil spill, with regular evaluation of the contaminant levels in water and fishery resources.

These determine if fish and other seafood in these areas are safe for public consumption and if fishing bans should be lifted by the local government units (LGUs) concerned.

It said that water samples collected and analyzed from the affected municipalities of Bansud, Bongabong, Bulalacao, Calapan, Gloria, Mansalay, Naujan, Pinamalayan, Pola, and Roxas, and in Caluya, Antique on March 9 to 12 showed that the levels of oil and grease were within the standards approved by the DENR.

Meanwhile, fish samples collected and analyzed from the same areas on March 4 to 5 showed low-level contaminants or polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH). (See full story online at manilastandard.net)



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National News

Oil slicks moving to Naujan, Pola

Oil slicks from the sunken M/T Princess Empress were seen moving toward the coasts of Naujan and Pola, Oriental Mindoro.

"The slicks floating in the area around the sunken tanker show that oil was still leaking out as of yesterday, March 28," the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute said in a bulletin on Wednesday evening, March 29.

"Oil spill trajectories for March 25 to April 3 forecast that the spill may be headed for Pola, Naujan, and along the coast to Calapan, Oriental Mindoro," the institute added.

This prediction was according to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration report and on satellite images taken at 10:15 a.m. on Tuesday, March 28.

Meanwhile, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)-6 (Western Visayas) has extended ₱4.78 million in aid to residents affected by the oil

slick in an island town in Antique province.

Claud Jan Marquez of the DSWD-6 Disaster Response Management Section said the assistance for people living in three island-barangays of Caluya was composed of financial and food packs.

Bulk of the assistance was in cash, which, as of Wednesday, March 29, has reached ₱38.15 million and covers three DSWD programs - emergency cash transfer (ECT), cash for work (CFW) and aid in crisis situation (AICS).

"The amount will rise as we still have not finished the distribution to our target beneficiaries," Marquez said.

The DSWD-6 also released 8,300 food packs worth ₱4.38 million and 85 non-food items worth ₱189,150.

A total of 7,195 families or 27,145 persons were affected by the oil slick from the sunken tanker M/T Princess Empress in four barangays in Caluta - Alegria, Semirara, Sibolo, and Tinogbok (Luisa Cabato and Tara Yap)



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The slow violence of oil spills

Roxas City, Capiz—To characterize environmental disasters and how people and governments respond to them, environmental humanities scholar Rob Nixon coined the term “slow violence,” which he defines as “violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all.” Nixon offered various examples of this kind of violence—from the toxic pollution from petrochemical infrastructure to the construction of mega dams—noting that these kinds of slow violence cannot match the political and emotional power of “falling bodies, burning towers, exploding heads, avalanches, volcanoes, and tsunamis.”

I cannot help but be reminded of this concept when I think of the oil spills in our country.

The Guimaras oil spill in 2006 is surely the most notorious among these. Sinking in Panay Gulf, with over 2.1 million liters of oil, the demise of MT Solar 1—operated by Sunshine Maritime Development Corp. and hired by Petron Corp.—remains one of the country’s worst environmental disasters. Environmental and socioeconomic devastation ensued within weeks, with various species and habitats—from mangroves to coral reefs—affected, and many livelihoods—from fishing to ecotourism—lost. After a few months of public attention, the Guimaras spill quickly faded away in public consciousness, even as the process of recovery and rehabilitation lasted for over a decade.

Meanwhile, the Mindoro oil spill, which happened just a month ago—Feb. 28—off Mindoro, is an illustration of slow violence taking place in real time. Like MT Solar 1, where initial inquiries implicated overloading and incompetence as contributory to the sinking, the “engine problems” that led to



SECOND OPINION

GIDEON LASCO

the sinking of MT Princess Empress, as well as its reported lack of permit, raises questions of why the ferry carrying 800,000 liters of industrial fuel and oil sank—and why it was allowed to operate in the first place. As in Guimaras, catastrophic damage ensued—and is still spreading—across Mindoro, Palawan, and Batangas, compromising the Verde Island Passage, a critical waterway both for commerce and biodiversity.

In fairness to then President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, she herself led the recovery effort in Guimaras, visiting the island and forming an interagency task force within two weeks of the spill. In contrast, President Marcos has not shown the same commitment and sense of urgency that matches the gravity of the situation. Indeed, it’s been over a month since the spill but demands for assistance, accountability, and reparations remain largely unmet—and the cleanup itself has been described by environmental advocates as “slow” and “lackluster.”

Correspondingly, the media and public attention also hasn’t been commensurate with the magnitude of the spill.

Aside from the inevitable desensitization

to any event, what can explain the relative lack of attention toward the Mindoro oil spill? Are we affected by a “land-based thinking,” that sees water not as a matter of concern; a domain outside our everyday lives? What are the factors that constrain our people’s ecological consciousness? I am reminded of what Kuya Jun-Jun, a guide in Masungi, told me weeks ago: “The problem with Filipinos is that people don’t care about water, they just throw things in the river without thinking where it would end up in.” And what urban geographer Kristian Saguin wrote of Laguna de Bay: that people imagine it as “convenient frontier, a ready and pliable source of fish and domestic water, and as a sink for wastes and floodwaters”: Something that may be said of our bodies of water.

Part of it, too, is that people’s attention and outrage is directed elsewhere; even environmentalists are spread thin with so many issues to raise—from the construction of Kaliwa Dam to the still-uncertain fate of Sibuyan Island. For many Filipinos, too, the mayhem in Metro Manila—whether in Ninoy Aquino International Airport or the Manila Metro Rail Transit System—are far more pressing problems.

But the president remains the chief driver of popular and political attention—just look at Duterte’s inordinate focus on drugs—which is why his (in)action matters even more so. While he and much of the nation can afford to keep the Mindoro oil spill, in Nixon’s words, “out of sight,” the same cannot be said of more than 34,000 families (and counting)—and countless species—that are suffering the consequences of an ecological and governmental mess that we ought to call out for what it is: violence.

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METRO CLARK WASTE MANAGEMENT CORP. PROPOSAL

BCDA BACKS \$250-M NEW CLARK CITY WASTE-TO-ENERGY PROJECT

The top executive of state-run Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) voiced support for a \$250-million waste-to-energy project near the New Clark City in Tarlac.

The unsolicited proposal was earlier made by Metro Clark Waste Management Corp., which operates the 100-hectare landfill in Clark, Pampanga.

During the company's recent 20th anniversary celebration, BCDA CEO Aileen Zosa described their proposal as the "best fit" for New Clark City.

"We want to make New Clark City a livable, walkable, sustainable and efficient community. We want to ensure that our garbage are efficiently collected and disposed," Zosa said in a statement on Thursday.

The proposed power project is designed to reduce waste at the landfill by up to 70 percent.

The unsolicited offer had been submitted in 2019 but approvals were delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Metro Clark Waste Management earlier partnered with

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

"We would like to see more of Metro Clark's projects take off because this would mean more green investments pouring into our country. Apart from creating jobs, we are also looking at lengthening the lifespan of sanitary landfills and improving our environmental outlook," a speech that was attributed to

Environment Secretary Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga showed.

Loyzaga also recognized Metro Clark Waste Management for its "pioneering waste management system in the Philippines."

The company's sanitary landfill is the only facility in Southeast Asia that is internationally certified in environmental management system, occupational health and safety and quality management system, she added. —MIGUEL R. CAMUS INQ



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Proposed waste-to-energy facility a 'good fit' to New Clark City's sustainability thrusts: BCDA

CLARK FREEPORT CITY—Amid a looming garbage crisis, the proposed \$250-million waste-to-energy investment project is a "good fit" to the sustainability thrusts of New Clark City, said Aileen Zosa, president and CEO of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA).

"We want to make New Clark City a livable, walkable, sustainable, and efficient community. We want to ensure that our garbage are efficiently collected and disposed," said Zosa at last week's 20th anniversary celebration of Metro Clark Waste Management Corp. (MCWMC), operator of the first and largest engineered sanitary landfill in the Philippines.

Zosa's statement was in reaction to the announcement of MCWMC and its international partner, Plambeck Emirates, of their plan to upgrade their current solid-waste management system into a waste-to-energy facility before their sanitary landfill reaches its full capacity in a few years.

Zosa said Metro Clark's unsolicited proposal for a waste-to-energy facility has the potential to become a demonstration for other environment-friendly

initiatives in the country.

Secretary Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) agreed with Zosa and also welcomed the plan for a trash thermal treatment plant in Central Luzon.

"We would like to see more of Metro Clark's projects take off because this would mean more green investments pouring into our country. Apart from creating jobs, we are also looking at lengthening the lifespan of sanitary landfills and improving our environmental outlook," Yulo-Loyzaga said in her message read by the DENR Undersecretary Juan Miguel Cuna.

The DENR chief applauded MCWMC for its "pioneering waste management system in



Metro Clark Waste Management Corp's sanitary landfill in Clark, Pampanga.

the Philippines."

She noted that MCWMC's sanitary landfill is the only facility in Southeast Asia that

is internationally certified for environment management system, occupational health and safety, and quality

management system.

Yulo-Loyzaga said DENR's National Solid Waste Management Commission

already allows the operation of waste-to-energy facilities after the Department issued in November 2019 Administrative Order 2019-21. She said the AO contains guidelines on the establishment of waste-to-energy facility that comply with the emissions standards under the Clean Air Act of 1999, and the regulations under the Clean Water Act of 2004 and the Toxic Substances, Hazardous and Nuclear Waste Act of 1990.

The DENR chief cited the permit granted to the waste-to-energy facility in Puerto Princesa, Palawan, which generates 5.5 megawatts of electricity from 110 tons of municipal waste.

Sanitary engineer Holger Holst of Plambeck Emirates said that the Philippines is in the middle of a solid waste crisis. He said that as the country generates solid waste at the rate of 40,000 tons a day, its existing landfills are fast reaching their limit.

Once installed, the MCWMC waste-to-energy plant would become the first such facility in Clark, New Clark City, and the Philippines.

MCWMC serves over 150 local government units (LGUs) and 1,000 industrial clients in Central Luzon.





No car wash, swimming pools to save water

By **BELLA CARIASO**

Suspending the operation of car wash establishments and prohibiting the use of swimming pools are among the options being considered by the government in managing water supply from Angat Dam amid threats posed by El Niño, according to National Water and Resources Board (NWRB) executive director Seville David Jr.

In an interview with *One News*' "The Chiefs" aired on Cignal TV/TV5 on Wednesday night, David said the suspension of car wash operation was among measures imposed in 2019, when the water level in Angat dropped to 116 cubic meters due to the dry spell and fewer typhoons.

"These are among the measures that we can implement in case we will need to manage the demand because of limited supply. At present, we are considering this as an option to lessen the demand," David said.

He said the NWRB needed to study the request of Maynilad Water Service Inc. and Manila Water to increase their water allocations in the wake of the rotating water interruptions being experienced in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

"They requested for additional allocations. We are currently studying the request as based on the pronouncement of the PAGASA, El Niño will be felt during the second half of the year. We expect a few typhoons starting June, July," he said, referring to the Philippine Atmospheric,

Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System deputy administrator Jose Dorado Jr. on Wednesday said the two water concessionaires urged the MWSS to ask the NWRB to increase the current water allocation of 50 cubic meters per second by two cms.

"We are still looking at the projections. We will also consult with PAGASA to be able to determine if we can afford to increase their allocations," David said.

Maynilad warned that the duration of the rotational water interruption would take longer should the NWRB reject the request.

At present households in Caloocan, Las Piñas, Makati, Malabon, Muntinlupa, Manila, Navotas, Parañaque, Pasay, Quezon City and Valenzuela as well as areas in Cavite such as the cities of Bacoor and Imus and the towns of Kawit, Noveleta and Rosario are experiencing at least eight to 14 hours of water interruption daily.

David said the government is eyeing the development of Marikina River as an additional source of water for Metro Manila.

"The current administration is actively pursuing the development of alternative sources like the Kaliwa Dam. The development of the Marikina River will also help. There is an ongoing development by the private sector starting this year or next year and it is expected to be operational in the next five years," he said.

- With Rhodina Villanueva



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REDUCED SUPPLY FOR MANILA WATER, MAYNILAD EYED

THE National Water Resources Board (NWRB) is considering reducing the water allocations for Manila Water and Maynilad according to sources.

Each concessionaire receives an allocation of 50 cubic meters per second.

However, the NWRB is reportedly looking to lower it to 48 cubic meters per second, the opposite of what the Metropolitan Waterworks

and Sewerage System (MWSS) has been asking.

Maynilad earlier announced that consumers might have to endure longer service interruptions starting next month, as their cross-portal arrangement with the Manila Water Company will no longer be extended.

"This development will mean less supply for Maynilad to distribute, resulting in longer daily

service interruption schedules starting April 1," Maynilad said in a statement.

NWRB Executive Director Sevilla David Jr. said they are studying the situation and looking for the best alternative to keep the water supply stable.

The MWSS, on the other hand, said it is prepared to do cloud seeding to induce rain.

FRANCIS EARL CUETO



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CLEANUP DAY Members and volunteers of Haribon foundation, in coordination with FitFlop Philippines, remove trash from the Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park on Thursday, March 30, 2023.
PHOTO BY MIKE ALQUINTO



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EFFORTS TO INCREASE BIRD POPULATION PAY OFF

IN TUBBATAHA, FAMILY OF MASKED BOOBIES GROWING WITH 2 NEW EGGS

By **Geraldford Ticke**
@InqNational

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY— The pair of masked boobies (*Sula dactylatra*) produced two eggs on Thursday, raising hopes that efforts to increase the population of the bird, which reappeared at the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park (TRNP) seven years ago, are paying off.

According to the management of TRNP, park rangers have been monitoring “Amihan” and “Alon” at the Bird Islet in the north atoll of the park since they were first spotted there. The birds got their names—Filipino terms for northeast monsoon and wave, respectively—following an online poll conducted by TRNP last year.

“We have some ‘egg-citing’ news to share with you all. Our beloved masked booby family has expanded once again, this time with the addition of some freshly laid eggs,” the TRNP said in a post on its official Facebook page.

“It seems that Alon and Amihan have been busy during their downtime, and we couldn’t be more thrilled about it. Seeing our feathered friends grow their family and perpetuate the species is such a joy,” it added.

In July 2022, Amihan successfully hatched her first chick.

The bird was deemed extinct until it reappeared on the islet back in 2016, after around 20 years since it was last seen.

Raising more

The masked booby, also called the masked gannet or the blue-faced booby, is a large seabird with a long, pointed yellowish bill, a long neck, an aerodynamic body, long, slender wings and a pointed tail.

The adult booby is bright white with black wings, a black tail and a dark “face mask.”

They nest in colonies on islands and atolls far from the mainland and close to deep water required for foraging.

Amid declining populations, the masked booby is still consid-

ered a “least concern species” by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

The TRNP said its target is to raise the number of masked boobies in Tubbataha to 150.

As of now, there are only three masked boobies in Tubbataha: Amihan, Alon and their first baby, a female that park rangers named “Roxana,” hatched last year.

“The masked boobies in Tubbataha lay one or two eggs on average four times a year. Since 2020, the bird in the islet has laid eggs nine times,” Retch Alaba, TRNP research officer, told the Inquirer in a phone interview on Thursday.

According to Alaba, the first seven were, however, unsuccessful. The first six eggs did not hatch while the seventh egg hatched, but the juvenile bird died after five months.

The masked booby eggs undergo an incubation period of 38 to 45 days.

Reserve

Tubbataha Reef lies in the middle of the Sulu Sea, some 50 kilometers southeast of this city.

According to the website of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco), the TRNP covers 96,828 hectares, including the North and South Atolls and the Jessie Beazley Reef.

“It is a unique example of an atoll reef with a very high density of marine species; the North Islet serves as a nesting site for birds and marine turtles. The site is an excellent example of a pristine coral reef with a spectacular 100-meter perpendicular wall, extensive lagoons and two coral islands,” Unesco said.

The TRNP, according to Unesco, is home to a great diversity of marine life, including whales, dolphins, sharks, turtles and Napoleon wrasse.

The reserve supports over 360 species of coral and almost 700 species of fish. It also protects one of the few remaining colonies of breeding seabirds in the area. INQ



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Maria Edralyn L. Benedicto

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER



PARENTAL DUTY The pair of masked boobies named "Amihan" and "Aion" watch over their new eggs on the Bird Islet at Tubbataha Reefs in Palawan on Thursday. The bird, which reappeared at Tubattaha in 2016 after 20 years, lays one or two eggs four times a year, rangers at the national park say. —PHOTO COURTESY OF TUBBATAHA REEFS NATURAL PARK MANAGEMENT



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COMMONSENSE

MARICHU A. VILLANUEVA

Wanted: 'Climate warriors'

As the United Nations (UN) winds down the observance of the International Women's Month, activities to mark April as the Earth Month kicked off last Saturday. With the ceremonial switching off simultaneously of all electric lights, the resulting darkness simulated efforts to help cool down Planet Earth from the effects of the global warming.



The UN has been supporting the "Earth Hour" campaign initiated by the World Wide Fund for Nature starting in 2007. Since then, the "Earth Hour" is observed every last Saturday of March each year to encourage individuals, communities, and businesses to turn off non-essential electric lights for 60 minutes only, or one hour.

Like the rest of other countries that participated in this annual event, electric lights all over the Philippines were turned off from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. last March 25. On the Earth Hour website, the WWF for Nature declares: "Earth Hour aims to increase awareness and (to) spark global conversations on protecting nature, tackling the climate crisis, and working together to shape a brighter future for us all." Through this, the WWF credits the "Earth Hour" campaign as having led to other global actions related to curbing climate change.

In a video statement released last Saturday, President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. (PBBM) exhorted every Filipino throughout the country to participate and support the Earth Hour. "It only takes 60 minutes to do good for our future. 60 minutes to take notice and commit to saving Mother Nature to be united and take action," the President cited. "Because together, nothing is impossible. Let's switch off and give mother nature 60 minutes to breathe," the Chief Executive made this impassioned appeal.

At the *Kapitan sa Manila Bay* news forum last Wednesday, Senate president pro tempore Loren Legarda welcomed the "Earth Hour" report of the Department of Energy (DOE) that it generated as much as 62.69 megawatts (MW) of electricity/power saved. "The Earth Hour symbolizes and simply reminds us to commune with Mother Earth," enthused Sen. Legarda, a UN champion for Climate Change initiatives.

Since 2008, the Philippines has been a participant to this global campaign to save the Planet Earth. The electricity savings in this year's "Earth Hour" in the Philippines, however, were lower than the 65.32 MW recorded last year by the DOE.

"Those savings (in electricity use) are equivalent to like building a new power plant. (But) It is just a drop in the bucket," Sen. Legarda mused.

A staunch supporter of environment-friendly

**Sen. Legarda
practically begged:
"Let's make all our
laws work."**

supply electricity from Renewable Energy (RE)

sources like solar and wind-powered electric plants, Sen. Legarda underscored much more could be done to reduce the carbon footprints and greenhouse emissions as among the causes of the global warming.

Like her mother who walks the talk, the Senator's eldest son, Leandro Leviste is actively engaged in RE and founded Solar Philippines in 2013. It is now Southeast Asia's largest solar company and integrated solar developer, and power generator that boasts of selling cheap, reliable and universally accessible electricity. The Senator declined to talk or comment about her son's private business pursuits but she oozes the mother's pride to a son's achievements.

Sen. Legarda authored the landmark law on Climate Change under Republic Act (RA) 9729. It became a law in 2007 when many people could not care more on the subject of climate change. On her fourth term at the Senate (with breaks in between terms) and now a veteran lawmaker, she last guested at the *Kapitan sa Manila Bay* in July, 2021 when she was Deputy Speaker at the House of Representatives from the lone congressional district of her home province Antique.

She showed off to media the simple ways any one of us can put into practice a lot of household and even activities at the work places that can help reduce land, water and air pollution, all of which contribute to global warming and climate change. For one, she cited, refrain from using non-biodegradable plastics. If not avoidable, she pointed to do a waste segregation to separate garbage bins for recyclable plastics and food leftovers that can be turned into non-chemical fertilizers for plants.

"In a sense, these things are really commonsense only," Sen. Legarda quipped.

An international advocate also for disaster risk reduction and resiliency measures, Sen. Legarda principally authored and sponsored a number of other Congress-approved laws in the protection of the country's environment, mandated nature conservation measures and the preservation of the Philippine culture and heritage, among her legislative output as a prolific lawmaker.

She called out for the stricter, if not the widest implementation of the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2000 (RA 9275); the Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (RA 9003); among these laws. She conceded there are more than enough laws already in place but have been little and hardly implemented laws. She cited as an example RA 6716 that took effect since 1989 mandating various agencies of the national government as well as the local government units (LGUs) to develop rainwater collectors and harvesting facilities.

Sen. Legarda practically begged: "Let's make all our laws work."

The UN General Assembly on Wednesday adopted by consensus a Resolution calling the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to lay out the State obligations of countries in protecting Earth's climate and the legal consequences they face if they don't. As the world body's top court, the Resolution - cosponsored by more than 130 Member States, including the Philippines - "would assist the General Assembly, the UN and Member States to take the bolder and stronger climate action that our world so desperately needs."

Sen. Legarda could not agree more. She vows to include in the proposed law to revive the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) that will develop "climate warriors" among the Filipino youth. After all, she is a Reserve Officer in the Philippine Air Force as Colonel.



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The National Association of Philippine Newspapers

Ticking climate time bomb

EXPERTS all around the globe have time and again aired the warning that the world faces massive environmental and economic problems which are all induced by global warming and climate change.

Scientists continue to warn of more extreme weather, the rapidly melting Arctic ice that contributes to rising sea levels, catastrophic typhoons, heavy rainfall and drought in some places on earth. They also said nearly half of the world's population is already vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

The latest to sound the alarm is United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres who warned that the "climate time bomb is ticking" as he urged industrialized nations to slash emissions.

'To make the necessary cuts in emissions, peoples of the world should be disciplined by their respective governments to tweak their eating habits, even as the authorities strictly adopt green energy policies and sustainable agriculture and fisheries.'

Quoting recent scientific findings, the UN official said the rate of temperature rise in the last half century is the highest in 2,000 years and that concentrations of carbon dioxide are at their highest in at least 2 million years. Guterres stressed the sixth "synthesis report" from the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as "a survival guide for humanity" and urged developed countries to commit to reaching net zero emissions by the earlier date of around 2040.

The synthesis report summarized findings from three expert assessments published between 2021 and 2022 that looked at the physical science, impacts, and mitigation of climate change, and sought to guide policymakers.

The report is considered timely because under the 2015 Paris Agreement, nations are also expected to update climate pledges by 2025. As this international meeting nears, leaders and governments will need authentic and verified information on the real status of global warming and other climate change issues such as climate finance and climate justice, which shall be provided by the scientific community.

The IPCC study warns that the planet's emissions must be halved by the middle of the 2030s if the world is to have any chance of limiting temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels. This is the level of global temperature increase that is acceptable to the signatory nations of the Paris accord.

To make the necessary cuts in emissions, peoples of the world should be disciplined by their respective governments to tweak their eating habits, even as the authorities strictly adopt green energy policies and sustainable agriculture and fisheries.

It is admittedly a long way to go for nations across the globe to fulfill promises in connection with climate change mitigation, but it is well that the Philippines under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is fully committed to this worthy endeavor.



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UN votes to ask world court to rule on nat'l climate obligations

WASHINGTON — The United Nations (UN) General Assembly voted on Wednesday to pass a resolution asking the world's top court to define the obligations of states to combat climate change, a legal opinion that could drive countries to take stronger measures and clarify international law.

The historic resolution seeking an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice was inspired by Pacific island law students and passed with a consensus vote, after a four-year campaign led by the Republic of Vanuatu.

"Such an opinion would assist the General Assembly, the UN and Member States to take the bolder and stronger climate action that our world so desperately needs," UN Secretary General António Guterres said. An advisory opinion would not be binding on any jurisdiction but could influence future negotiations.

Vanuatu Prime Minister Ishmael Kalsakau said it "will have a powerful and positive impact on how we address climate change and protect present and future generations."

"Together we will send a loud and clear message not only around the world but far into the future that on this very day, the

people of the UN acting through their governments decided to leave aside differences and work together to tackle the defining challenge of our time," he said before the General Assembly.

Vanuatu pushed for the resolution, leading a core group of 18 countries ranging from Costa Rica to Germany.

It could take the court around 18 months to issue an advisory opinion that could clarify financial obligations countries have on climate change; help them revise and enhance national climate plans submitted to the Paris Agreement; and strengthen domestic policies and legislation.

Vanuatu and other vulnerable countries are already grappling with powerful impacts of a heating planet. The south Pacific island nation has been slammed by powerful climate-fueled cyclones, including two this month that left 10% of its population still in evacuation centers.

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong said Australia was among 130 countries to co-sponsor the resolution, which was "a key example of Pacific Island leaders driving global climate action".

On the eve of the vote, Vanuatu diplomats were still trying to win

support from China and the US, the two biggest greenhouse gas emitting countries.

The United States did not support the resolution at the General Assembly.

"We believe that diplomacy — not an international judicial process — is the most effective path forward for advancing global efforts to tackle the climate crisis," a senior Biden administration official said.

The latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned that to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, greenhouse gas emissions must be nearly halved by 2030.

Bangladesh's foreign secretary called the resolution's passage a "defining moment" that can help bridge the gap between climate finance promises made to vulnerable countries and what is delivered.

"Despite better needs for financing, we see growing expenditure in military budgets or armaments of funding wars and conflicts or even bailing out companies during a financial crisis," he said. "We hope this resolution and consequent advisory opinion will provide a better understanding of the legal implications of

climate change under international law."

The resulting advisory opinion could be a vital input to the burgeoning climate-driven lawsuits around the world. There are upwards of 2,000 cases pending worldwide.

"A decision from the ICJ could be very influential with courts around the world that are faced with the growing number of climate change cases," said Michael Gerrard, director of Columbia University's Sabin Center for Climate Change Law.

Other international courts and tribunals are also being asked to clarify and define the law around climate obligations, including the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea.

The Pacific island law students celebrated the vote, four years after they suggested an ICJ resolution to Vanuatu officials.

"We are just ecstatic that the world has listened to the Pacific Youth and has chosen to take action" on the idea that "started in a Pacific classroom four years ago," said Cynthia Houniuihi, Solomon Islands based President of Pacific Island Students Fighting Climate Change. — Reuters



Editorial

A big step in the quest for climate justice

THE United Nations General Assembly has adopted by consensus a resolution introduced by Vanuatu to request the International Court of Justice to define the "legal consequences" for states which "have caused significant harm to the climate system and other parts of the environment."

The resolution, co-sponsored by more than 130 member-states, has been hailed as a giant step in determining the legal responsibility countries have for the changing climate and its impacts.

The resolution reflected the frustration not only of Vanuatu but other vulnerable countries over the huge disparity between the rhetoric and action on climate change.

The climate summit in Glasgow in 2021 had held out a lot of promise for a global effort to finally limit warming to manageable levels. That goal eventually proved to be overambitious. Unable to reach a consensus, the participants settled for a watered-down agreement to submit a more viable plan the following year to cut emissions in 2030, and pledged faster reductions in coal use and fossil fuel subsidies.

The summit also dodged the sensitive issue of making rich polluters pay reparations to countries that sustain heavy losses from extreme weather events.

The plan was for developed countries to pay poorer ones \$100 billion a year for climate change mitigation by 2023. That amount turned out to be paltry, after studies showed the costs of climate change running into the trillions.

The unfulfilled pledges only fueled the disillusionment in island nations like Vanuatu, which is threatened by sea-level increase by as much as a meter.

Adding to Vanuatu's woes are two cyclones that devastated the country earlier this month and affected 80 percent of its population.

The inconvenient truth is that the most climate-vulnerable countries contributed the least greenhouse emissions that cause climate change and yet suffer the very worst of its impacts.

And economic giants like the United States and China, the two biggest emitters of greenhouse gases, go scot-free.

The Vanuatu resolution has been worded in such a way that it does not implicate anyone. It instead requests the court's opinion on "what are the obligations of states... to ensure the protection of the climate system and other parts of present and future generations" based on international treaties and principles of international law.

It also asks: "What are the legal consequences under these obligations for states which, by their acts and omissions, have caused significant harm to the climate system and other parts of the environment?"

According to the lead counsel for Vanuatu, the resolution "strikes a careful balance between a climate justice-focused dimension and a forward-looking dimension. It recognizes that we must draw lessons from the past to build a just and sustainable future and that international law has a role to play in correcting our current trajectory."

The International Court of Justice will have two years to come up with an opinion. It will be nonbinding, but Jorge Viñuales, a law professor who helped draft the resolution, believes "it's going to shape the discourse" on assigning accountability for climate change. For Harjeet Singh of Climate Action Network, an international NGO, the ruling "will serve as an important accountability tool," and sees it as "potentially one of the biggest climate diplomacy and multilateral successes in the recent past."

Vanuatu's ambassador to the UN is urging the global community to act now. "Extreme weather events are becoming the new normal in our country as a result of climate change. For low-lying countries, it's an existential threat," he said.

Jotham Napat, Vanuatu's minister of foreign affairs, international cooperation and external trade, looks at international law as "a vital tool in establishing and delivering climate justice. In the most vulnerable parts of the world, it is often all that stands between climate resilience and catastrophe, between prosperity and destitution."

Approving the resolution may be "history-making," as UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres jubilantly described it. But no one should be lulled into believing that the task ahead will be an easy one.



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House launches book on water resource laws

THE House of Representatives on Wednesday launched its latest publication entitled "Laws, Executive Issuances and Jurisprudence on Water Resources (1901-2022)," to serve as reference for policy researches on water.

Tingog party-list Rep. Yedda Marie Romualdez, in a message read by Davao de Oro Rep. Maria Carmen Zamora, described the book launching as "a crucial step towards fully implementing our laws and allowing our people to take part in our efforts for the preservation of our country's water resources."

"It is our hope that this collaboration spearheaded by the Legislative Information Resource Management Department (LRIMD) and the Legal Affairs Department (LAD) will open up more discussions and interests in the topic and therefore promote public participation," Romualdez said.

Romualdez was principal author of House Bill 21 calling for the "National Framework for Water Resource Management and Creating the Department of Water Resources and the Water Regulatory Commission," along with Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez and Tingog party-list Rep. Jude Acidre.



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PCG reports more WPS intrusions

BY FRANCO JOSE C. BAROÑA

THE Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) on Thursday said several foreign vessels were spotted in the vicinity of Kalayaan Island Group (KIG) in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) from March 16 to 21.

The PCG said that its BRP Malapascua identified Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) vessel 5201 while patrolling Ayungin Shoal.

The PCG added that the Chinese ship tailed BRP Malapascua at a distance of approximately 1,600

yards, ignoring warnings from the Philippine vessel.

"The vessel came as close as 1.2 nautical miles from the grounded Philippine Navy vessel BRP Sierra Madre during the encounter," the PCG said.

In Sabina (Escoda) Shoal, the same PCG patrol ship spotted the presence of at least 20 Chinese and Vietnamese vessels.

The PCG also issued warnings via radio against two CCG vessels with bow numbers 5304 and 5305.

Off Pag-asa (Thitu) Island, BRP Malapascua encountered a People's Liberation Army-Navy Type 056A Jiangdao 2 Class Missile Corvette with bow number 649 within the island's 12 nautical mile territorial waters.

The PCG said the Philippine

vessel issued multiple radio challenges. In return, the Chinese vessel issued its own radio challenges against the PCG ship.

Ayungin Shoal, Sabina Shoal and Pag-asa Island are all inside the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone.

"PCG and Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Area Task Force-West's maritime patrol missions remain invaluable in protecting and securing the country's rights and interests in the [West Philippine Sea]," PCG Commandant Admiral Artemio Abu said.



Melting Antarctic could impact oceans 'for centuries'

SYDNEY: Rapidly melting Antarctic ice threatens to dramatically slow deep-water currents in the world's oceans, scientists say, impacting the spread of fresh water, oxygen and life-sustaining nutrients for centuries.

New modeling points to faster Antarctic ice melts driving a "substantial slowdown" of water circulation in the ocean depths if global carbon emissions remain high, researchers said in a study published in *Nature* on Wednesday.

The "overturning circulation" of waters in the deepest reaches of the oceans would slow by 40 percent by 2050 in a high-emissions scenario, according to the study, which warned of impacts that would last "for centuries to come."

If the model holds true, the deep ocean current will be "on a trajectory that looks headed towards collapse," said University of New South Wales (UNSW) climate professor Matthew England, who coordinated the study.

Trillions of tonnes of cold, highly salty and oxygen-rich water sink around Antarctica each year, sending a deep-water current northwards to the Indian, Pacific and Atlantic oceans, scientists say.

The greater volumes of melting ice make the Antarctic waters less dense and salty, however, slowing the deep-water circulation with consequences for climate, sea level and marine ecosystems.

"If the oceans had lungs, this would be one of them," England said.

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03-14-001-2018



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

On the ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REPORT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN (EPRMP) of the proposed AQUACULTURE EXPANSION PROJECT of the ALSONS AQUACULTURE CORPORATION located in BARANGAY MARIBULAN, ALABEL, PROVINCE OF SARANGANI.

Notice is hereby given to all parties who wish to give their opinion regarding the implementation of the proposed AQUACULTURE EXPANSION PROJECT to attend the Public Hearing scheduled on:

Date	Time	Venue
13 April 2023	9:00 AM (Registration starts at 8:00 AM)	Barangay Hall, Barangay Maribulan, Alabel, Province of Sarangani

The Public Hearing is being conducted in connection with the review of the EIS of the aforementioned project by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The following is the project information:

Project Name	Proposed Aquaculture Expansion Project
Project Location	Barangay Maribulan, Alabel, Province of Sarangani
Project Type	Inland-based Fishery/Aquaculture Project
Project Rationale	Food security has long been a concern of the majority of the world's population. The concerns on food, health, and nutrition are issues the Philippines, especially its government, is ideally focusing. Fish has always been a staple food for most Filipinos next to rice. According to the Comprehensive National Fisheries Industry Development Plan (CNFIDP), aquaculture is one of the approaches next to municipal fisheries and commercial fisheries that serve as reliable source of fish food to the increasing national and local market.
Project Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aquaculture Ponds • Natural Food • Sabalo Ponds • R & D TSD FRS Building • Lift Pump House/Mixing Box • Packing House • Power House • Salt Water Intake Structure • Salt Water Channel • Domestic Water Tank and Pump • Biopond
Proponent	Alsons Aquaculture Corporation

All interested parties who wish to attend or participate in this Public Hearing should preferably confirm their attendance/participation and may give their opinion(s) in a concise position paper to the ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION (EIAMD) of this Office through email at eia@emb.gov.ph, three (3) days before the Public Hearing schedule. Those who will not be able to register or submit written positions may be given the opportunity to share their issues on the day of the hearing itself.

The project's EPRMP and Executive Summary for the Public are downloadable on our website: (*kindly access the Notice of Public Hearing Consultation link found in our website*) while copies will be available in the following offices:

- **EMB REGION XII**
DENR EMB XII Regional Government Center, Barangay Carpenter Hill, City of Koronadal, South Cotabato
Tel. No. (083) 228-1071 / (083) 228-1071
- **Alabel Municipal Hall**
Alabel, Province of Sarangani
Tel. No. (083) 892-5176

For more details, please contact the EIAMD Division at this Office at telephone number (02) 8539 4378 local 116 and look for the project case handler **Engr. Jose Paolo Aragoncillo** and **Ms. Joena-Marie Pagulayan**.