



THE

# MARINA NEWSLETTER

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## PHILIPPINES, NETHERLANDS STRENGTHEN TIES ANEW IN THE FIELD OF MARITIME TRANSPORT



MARINA Administrator Robert Empedrad, together with MARINA officials, lead the Philippine delegation during the 21st Joint Committee on Maritime Affairs (JCMA) Virtual meeting.

The Philippines and the Netherlands strengthened anew their ties of understanding, cooperation, international exchange, and trade especially in the field of maritime transport during the 21st Joint Committee on Maritime Affairs (JCMA) Virtual meeting, which was conducted on 29 April 2021. MARINA Administrator Robert A Empedrad led the Philippine delegation while his counterpart, Mr. Paul van Gorp from the Netherlands Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management (MinlenW) headed the Dutch delegation.

The 21st JCMA served as an avenue for both the Philippines and the Netherlands to convene on the state of maritime affairs in both of the nations and the specific practices adopted in light of the circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

With MARINA, the Philippine delegation was composed of officials from the Department of Transportation (DOTr), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the Palompon Institute of Technology (PIT) and other government and private sector representatives. For the Netherlands, next to MinlenW, present were

were representatives from the Royal Association of Netherlands Shipowners (KVNR), the Scheepvaart en Transport College (STC) and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The Philippines' Department of Transportation (DOTR) Assistant Secretary for Maritime Narciso A Vingson prompted the discussion of the measures taken for crew change and the vaccination of Filipino seafarers, which are central components in ensuring continued employment of seafarers and unhindered flow of essential goods.

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MARINA Administrator Robert A Empedrad, as head of the Philippine delegation, expresses his appreciation for the active roles that both nations played in tackling pressing issues in the maritime industry over the course of more than two decades.

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*Members of the Editorial Board assume full responsibility for all articles and contributions published in this Newsletter.*

**PHILIPPINES, NETHERLANDS STRENGTHEN TIES...**

Mr. van Gulp of the Netherlands Delegation shared that "In good cooperation between the Philippines and the Netherlands in taking care of seafarers working on board of our ships, an estimated 22,000 seafarers from the Philippines will get vaccinated. It is of utmost importance to make sure seafarers are vaccinated timely, since otherwise they could encounter travel restrictions again when in due time vaccination is required when travelling."

Meanwhile, both countries discussed areas of mutual interest in the maritime industry. Several officials from the MARINA were tasked to discuss matters including updates regarding the European Maritime Safety Agency's (EMSA) findings, and the state of maritime training and education amidst the restrictions caused by the ongoing pandemic.

As head of the Philippine delegation, Administrator Empedrad expressed his appreciation for the active roles that both nations played in tackling pressing issues in the maritime industry over the course of more than two decades. "I hope that all of us will share the same passion in working towards the continued development of the maritime study and advancement of the competitiveness and welfare of our seafarers," he said during his opening remarks.

Mr. van Gulp of the Netherlands Delegation, on the other hand, expressed that "In order to take care of seafarers working on board of our ships and to minimize the impact of Covid-19 on seafarers of the Philippines, the importance of extensive cooperation between the Philippines and the Netherlands became increasingly clear again."

Both delegations expressed satisfaction on the positive and constructive exchanges in the virtual meeting which focused on concerns regarding compliance to the STCW'78 as amended; the welfare of seafarers and training of cadets in view of the prevailing COVID situation; and IMO cooperation. The JCMA fostered productive discussions between the Philippines and Netherlands that would further solidify the ties of the two countries. At the end of the meeting, the participating countries agreed to hold the 22nd JCMA meeting in Manila and were tasked to provide updates until then.

## MARINA, PHILIPPINE NAVY INK AGREEMENT ON TECHNICAL EXPERT EXCHANGES ON MUTUAL CONCERNS



*MARINA Administrator Vice Admiral Robert A Empedrad AFP (Ret) and PN Flag Officer-in-Command Vice Admiral Giovanni Carlo J Bacordo PN personally signs the MOA at the Philippine Navy Headquarters.*

The Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) and the Philippine Navy (PN) signed on 18 May 2021 a memorandum of agreement (MOA) cementing their cooperation in various related areas, such as training, subject matter exchanges, performance governance system, quality management and other areas that will benefit both Organizations and the country's maritime industry.

MARINA Administrator Vice Admiral Robert A Empedrad AFP (Ret) and PN Flag Officer-in-Command Vice Admiral Giovanni Carlo J Bacordo PN personally signed the MOA at the Philippine Navy Headquarters.

Administrator Empedrad was accompanied by VADM Rene Medina, Executive Director, Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Office (STCWO), Captain Jeffrey P Solon, Officer-in-Charge of the Office of the Deputy Administrator for Planning, former PN Vice Commander RADM Rey Dela Cruz PN (Ret), and Engr. Ramon C. Hernandez, Director of the Shipyards Regulation Service and Concurrent Director of the Maritime Safety Service. They were also joined by other representatives via videoconference, including Engr. Nannette Z. Villamor-Dinopol, Deputy Administrator for Operations of the MARINA.

Developed since last year through consistent

dialogues, the MOA provides a framework for partnership arrangement between the MARINA and PN for purposes of providing technical assistance, and training and consultancy services that aim to support the sustained development of the Philippine maritime industry.

Citing a passage from the Holy Bible, Vice Admiral Empedrad expressed his eagerness to give the attention and support needed by the maritime industry, further emphasizing that its advancement is just of equal importance with that of land-based industries.

The MARINA and PN shall collaborate on the formulation of technical standards and training on the design and construction of naval vessels, which would be a critical contribution to the Modernization Program of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. In addition, this initiative would capacitate more local shipbuilders in producing naval vessels and other floating assets that prioritize safety and functionality—a partial realization of several programs under the Maritime Industry Development Plan.

Aside from vessel design and construction, also covered by the agreement are capacity building assistance for the PN on mandatory international maritime instruments on maritime safety, security, and marine environment protection.



*MARINA Administrator VADM Robert A Empedrad AFP (Ret) and PN Flag Officer-in-Command VADM Giovanni Carlo J Bacordo PN during the signing of agreement technical expert exchanges on mutual concerns.*

# DOTR MARITIME SECTOR IN FULL FORCE IN ASSISTING COVID-19 POSITIVE FILIPINO CREW MEMBERS ABOARD VESSEL FROM INDIA

The maritime sector of the Department of Transportation (DOTr), consisting of the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), and the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), together with the agency members of the One-Stop Shop (OSS) Port of Manila, are currently in full force in assisting all Filipino crew members aboard a COVID-19 positive vessel "MV Athens Bridge" from India.

According to the vessel's shipping agent, MV Athens Bridge departed from India on 22 April 2021 and arrived in Haiphong, Vietnam on 01 May 2021 for the conduct of the crew's RT-PCR test. It was later on found that out of the 21 Filipino crew members onboard, 12 of them tested positive of COVID-19.

On 06 May 2021, the PCG received a request from the vessel's captain to execute a medical evacuation of the two (2) crew members who both needed urgent medical care. The vessel, at that time, was located 12 nautical miles west of Corregidor Island.

Upon securing clearance from the BOQ and the Department of Health (DOH), MV Athens Bridge was directed to the quarantine anchorage area designated by the OSS Port of Manila. Security is also provided by the PCG to ensure that no unauthorized vessel or banca will approach the vessel.

Early evening of the same day, BOQ doctors boarded the vessel to assess the condition of the crew and recommended the immediate medical evacuation of two (2) crew members in critical condition.

The crew members in critical condition have been safely evacuated and brought to the dedicated

medical facility for treatment. The rest of the crew are contained in the vessel and shall be provided with needed medical supplies, including oxygen tanks, with assistance from BOQ and PCG.

The national government, through the maritime sector of the DOTr, assures that the situation and the condition of the crew members will be consistently monitored. Health and safety protocols will also be prioritized throughout the entire process.



Bureau of Quarantine (BOQ) doctors and medical personnel safely evacuate the crew members who are in critical condition, bringing them to the dedicated medical facility for treatment.

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# DOTR MARITIME SECTOR CONTINUES TO EXTEND AID TO 21 AFFECTED FILIPINO SEAFARERS ONBOARD MV ATHENS BRIDGE

The national government, through the maritime sector of the Department of Transportation (DOTr), consisting of the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Office for Transportation Security (OTS), and other agency members of the One-Stop-Shop (OSS) Port of Manila, continues to extend its aid to the 21 Filipino crew members who were aboard the vessel MV "Athens Bridge", which came from India.

The affected seafarers were promptly evacuated from the ship last Friday, 07 May 2021, after the PCG was informed of the critical state of the two (2) Filipino seafarers who needed urgent medical attention.

All 12 Filipino crew members who tested positive for COVID-19 have been extracted from the vessel and transferred to their BOQ-assigned facilities. Four (4) seafarers, including the two (2) that were reported to be in critical condition, have been hospitalized and are receiving appropriate medical treatment. The remaining eight (8) crew, who are currently staying in a quarantine facility monitored by the BOQ, are in stable condition.

Meanwhile, the nine (9) crew members who tested negative will remain on the ship until the replacement crew is scheduled to board the vessel on 14 May 2021. MV "Athens Bridge" will be thoroughly disinfected before the boarding of the on signers.

On 12 May 2021, the MARINA expedited the processing of the issuance of Certificates of Proficiency (COPs) of five (5) on signers or replacement crew for the said vessel.

The BOQ reported that the COVID-19 specimen that has been collected from the crew members has already been submitted to the Philippine Genome Center (PGC) to identify the COVID-19 variant that



*COVID-19 positive vessel MV Athens Bridge, which came from India, carrying Filipino seafarers. (Photo courtesy of Philippine Coast Guard)*

has caused their infection. The results from the laboratory are estimated to arrive within three weeks. Presently, the vessel MV "Athens Bridge" remains at the quarantine anchorage area, where it is well-guarded by designated personnel from the PCG. Meanwhile, the BOQ personnel present during the disembarkation, and other individuals with possible exposure have been placed under quarantine as part of the measures taken to prevent the further spread of the COVID-19 virus.

The maritime sector of the DOTr urges its stakeholders to exercise and promote strict health protocols during shipping operations and to closely follow established quarantine measures, as a way to deter the possible transmission of the COVID-19 disease among seafarers.

The Philippine government assures the public that it will continue to manage the situation through the initiatives of various agencies under the maritime sector, ensuring the health and welfare of the crew members involved. Additionally, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) will be providing assistance to the 21 seafarers together with the MARINO Party-list which has also pledged to extend its support.

# DOTR MARITIME SECTOR IMPLEMENTS STRICT MEASURES ON MV HILMA BULKER UPON ARRIVAL IN MANILA

The maritime sector of the Department of Transportation (DOTr), consisting of the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), and the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), together with the agency members of the One-Stop Shop (OSS) Port of Manila, has implemented strict health and security measures upon the arrival of "MV Hilma Bulker" in the Port of Manila on 26 May 2021 at around 09:00 AM.

"MV Hilma Bulker" which sailed from Indonesia carried 18 all Indonesian to temporarily replace its original 20 all Filipino crew. The ship arrived in Manila today to employ another batch of all Filipino crew for takeover.

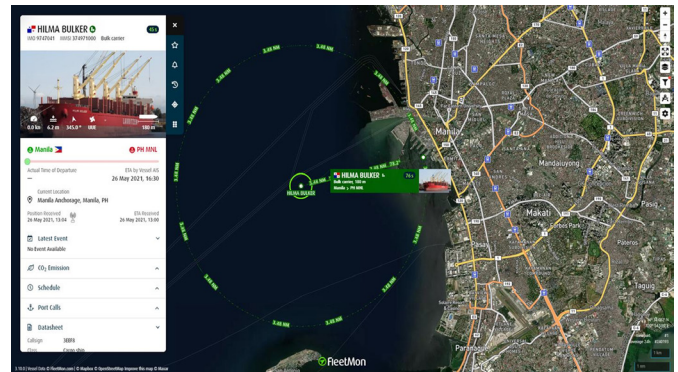
Out of the 20 original crew, 14 tested positive for the Indian variant of COVID-19. Seven (7) have fully recovered and have been given clearance by Indonesian authorities to return to the country, six (6) remain in a hospital awaiting clearance, and unfortunately, one (1) succumbed to the disease.

The six (6) who tested negative in Indonesia already arrived via air in Clark last 18 May 2021 and are completing their mandatory quarantine and testing procedures for returning overseas Filipinos.

Prior to its arrival in Cilacap, Indonesia on 25 April 2021, the ship had previous travel history in Cochin and Kandla in India from 25 March to 17 April for various bunkering and cargo operations.

The Bureau of Quarantine (BOQ) has prepared the necessary measures to handle the disembarkation as a medical evacuation. Once the ship has been thoroughly disinfected, crew change will be conducted and fresh Filipino crew will then be allowed to board.

All disembarking Indonesian crew from the "MV Hilma Bulker" will be considered as individuals that have been exposed to the virus, despite testing



*Exact location of MV Hilma Bulker in Manila Anchorage (Photo courtesy of Philippine Coast Guard)*

negative for COVID-19. They will then be ushered to a stringent quarantine facility where they will undergo a quarantine period of ten (10) days. Those seafarers who will exhibit symptoms or test positive of COVID-19 will be transferred to a dedicated hospital assigned by the BOQ.

The Philippine government, through the DOTr maritime sector, assures the public that it is fully-equipped and always in full force to handle the proper conduct of crew changes in the country. The OSS Port of Manila members are also on alert to provide support and to ensure that health and safety procedures are followed.

## MARINA RELEASES VALIDATED, AUTHORIZED ASSESSMENT CENTERS AS OF MAY 2021

The Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) released the list of Assessment Centers (ACs) are authorized to conduct practical assessments of Officers under the new system.

The practical assessment scenarios of the following Assessment Centers (ACs) have been validated by the MARINA Board of Examiners and are compliant with the revised competency mapping issued under MARINA Advisory 2020-87.

*see page 7*

## MARINA RELEASES VALIDATED...

As of 26 May 2021, the below listed ACs are authorized to conduct practical assessments of Officers under the new system.

Effective 01 July 2021, ACs not included in the list must cease conducting assessments of Officers under the new system and may only resume once granted the required approval.



### NOTICE TO SEAFARERS AND ALL CONCERNED

The practical assessment scenarios of the following **Assessment Centers (ACs)** have been validated by the **MARINA Board of Examiners** and are compliant with the revised competency mapping issued under MARINA Advisory 2020-87.

As of 26 May 2021, the below listed ACs are authorized to conduct practical assessments of Officers under the new system.

**Effective 01 July 2021, ACs not included in the list must cease conducting assessments of Officers under the new system and may only resume once granted the required approval.**

Name of Assessment Centers	Level of Responsibility					
	ML-Deck	ML-Engine	OL-Deck	OL-Engine	ETO	GMDSS for Radio Operator
<b>National Capital Region</b>						
1. ASSESSMENT & RESEARCH CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES, INC.						✓
2. EXCELLENT STAR MARITIME CENTER, INC.						✓
3. FAR EAST MARITIME FOUNDATION, INC. - MANILA		✓		✓		
4. MARIANA ACADEMY OF MARITIME STUDIES, INC.					✓	
5. NAVIGATOR INTERNATIONAL MARITIME TRAINING & ASSESSMENT CENTER, INC.	✓	✓	✓	✓		
6. SEA QUEST MARITIME TRAINING INC.		✓		✓	✓	
<b>Region VII</b>						
7. INTEGRATED MARITIME PRACTICAL ASSESSMENT AND TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS (IMPTS)						✓



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[marina.gov.ph](https://www.marina.gov.ph)

13 May 2021

*Eid' l Fitr  
Al-Mubarak!*

The MARINA wishes our Muslim brothers and sisters a joyous Feast of Ramadan.

## MARINA ISSUES ADVISORY ON REGISTRATION OF FILIPINO SEAFARERS SCHEDULED FOR DEPLOYMENT WITHIN THE NEXT 90 DAYS TO THE VACCINATION PROGRAM OF THE GOVERNMENT

All registered shipping companies and licensed manning agencies are advised to prepare and submit their deployment plan for the period covering July to September 2021 to the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), the Agency announced on 25 May 2021.

All submissions must be sent through email at [miss@marina.gov.ph](mailto:miss@marina.gov.ph) with copy to [odap@marina.gov.ph](mailto:odap@marina.gov.ph) not later than at the close of business on Wednesday, 26 May 2021.

For qualified seafarers due for inoculation in June 2021, and whose schedule of deployment is July 2021, the designated and primary vaccination center shall be the AMOSUP Seamen's Hospital Manila with address San Jose St. Intramuros, Manila.

For those whose deployment is scheduled beginning August 2021, seafarers, through their Licensed Manning Agencies, shall be given the option to choose their vaccination sites, as follow:

1. AMOSUP Seaman's Hospital in Manila for seafarers staying in Metro Manila;
2. AMOSUP Seaman's Hospital in Davao for seafarers residing in Davao;
3. AMOSUP Seaman's Hospital in Iloilo for seafarers residing in Iloilo;
4. AMOSUP Seaman's Hospital in Cebu for seafarers residing in Cebu;
5. Local Government Units for seafarers whose residential location is more practical and convenient for their inoculation.

It shall be the responsibility of LMAs to remind their seafarers of the schedule and venue of their vaccination. Any amendment to their deployment plan shall be communicated electronically to the MARINA through the email address mentioned above.

## MARINA RELEASES ADVISORY STATING MLC, OLC NOT MANDATORY FOR SEAFARERS

Pursuant to STCW Circular No. 2018-02 entitled "Standards for Mandatory Training Courses Under the STCW Convention, 1978, as amended", the Maritime Industry Authority states that the following courses are not included in the Mandatory Training Courses:

1. Management Level Course (MLC) for Marine Deck and Engine Officers
2. Operational Level Course (OLC) for Marine Deck and Engine Officers
3. Electro-Technical Officers (ETO)
4. Electro-Technical Ratings (ETR)

However, the Agency reiterated that based on the Minimum Requirements in the Assessment of Competence of Seafarers, MLC, OLC, and ETO are only required for seafarers who have failed thrice in their examination or assessment on the said functions.

This provision was specified at the STCW Circulars 2018-08 and 2018-09.

MLC for deck officers is the approved education and training for master mariners and chief mates on ships of 500 gross tonnage or more under Regular II/2 of the 1978 STCW Convention, as amended. Its counterpart for engine officers applies to chief engineers and second engineers on ships powered by main propulsion machinery of 3,000 kW propulsion power or more.

In 2014, the said ship officers were mandated to take MLC courses under the 2010 STCW Manila Amendments.

## MARINA STARTS DRAFTING PROTOCOL FOR SEAFARERS' VACCINATION



Live online program of DJ Surdo Radio which MARINA Administrator Robert Empedrad and STCW Deputy Executive Director Capt Jeffrey Solon guested. (Screenshot courtesy of FAS Maritime)

The Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) has given the go signal to the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) to draw a blueprint on how it intends to conduct the vaccination program for Filipino seafarers in collaboration with the crewing agencies.

MARINA Administrator VAdm Robert Empedrad disclosed during a Live program online of DJ Surdo Radio Program that he, along with some leaders of the manning groups, met last May 4 with National Task Force (NTF) Vaccine Czar Secretary Carlito Galvez to discuss the vaccine rollout among seafarers, who moved up from B3 and B5 to A4 in the government priority list for vaccination.

Right after the meeting initiated by VAdm Empedrad, a technical working group (TWG) composed of volunteers from the manning groups chaired by Capt. Jeffrey Solon, Acting Deputy Administrator for Planning of MARINA, was formed to draft the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the vaccination program.

Capt. Solon said that licensed manning agencies have a very important role in the TWG in developing the IRR. "Mayroon nang ibinigay ang ALMA, may mga volunteers na tayo. I am just waiting now sa ibang LMA para well-represented lahat sa TWG," he said. (courtesy of FAS Maritime)

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