

# MARINOWORLD

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Country Manager

**MR. LEO BOLIVAR**

International Registries (Far East) Representative Office

■ THE CHALLENGE WEB

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Being the “Manning Capital” of the world, Manila is well-chosen as a gravity point of the Marshall Islands shipping registry campaign. The long journey is challenging: that of finding one’s spot in the sun. Or, on the blue waters of the earth, at least.

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## PUBLISHER NOTE

# ONE WORD MORE.

The expression immortalized the romance between classical poet Robert Browning and the fragile Elizabeth Barrett who crafted the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, herself.

In our era of FaceBook, Twitter, Instagram and likes, there can be no final words but, most likely, the beginning of dissent and debate. For it is no longer of the substance but of the right to express. Not that it is wrong, only a wee bit draining. And confusing with data overload.

*The Challenge Ahead* webinar illustrates this new norm. National operations and international experts heeded the request to dialogue among themselves. No kidding, the organizer is just a mom-and-pop newsmagazine based in a third world nation in Southeast Asia.

An American statesman defended this “phenomena” with the assertion he may disagree with what one says but will depend to death the right to say it.

The thought carried on to our generation, unwittingly reenacting the chaos of the Tower of Babel; except we have now power points and linkedIns and viber groups catering to core interests and persuasions.

A Panelist at the webinar asserted the IMO does not practice “name and shame” tactics. This is a euphemism since that UN agency may administer Conventions and Agreements in force but cannot enforce over the sovereign will of Member States. Al contra, Governments declaring a Suggested Retail Price (SRP) must be adhered to under the sanction of law.

There seems to be a revival of the dictum might is right. China and the USA both agreed to the lowering of carbon emission spewed from their industries. Both never did, electing to donate big dollars (read, pay off) to nations at risk --- earning a sense of mission and votes at the UN.

Another Panelist has a refreshing outlook: the COVID-19 pandemic

is not a stumbling block but an accelerant to things the world should do. Almost all endorsed the view; except on the how-what-when-ad *in finitum*.

The MARINA has responded well despite limited resources. From just one in Manila, it built more facility for its commitment to be a Crew Change hub. But, numbers must be matched with creative management. Manila has a capacity for 2000 tests/day and did 17,418. Subic with the same capacity tested only 579. Sadder is Cebu, testing a measly 177 with capacity for 1500/day.

There are serendipities and epiphanies gathered from the webinar. It is a pleasant surprise that the Philippines is a focal point come the maritime industry and the logistics chain. It is humbling realization we are an essential cog in the movement of goods and people.

Have we matured to charter the future with sustained political will?



## Elephant in the Room

# THE PHILIPPINE MARITIME INDUSTRY

by Coca H. Strobar

### A meeting of eagles, *The Challenge Ahead* webinar on Philippine maritime plans and policies.

Three national organizations and seven international experts accepted as Panelists to react on the views of The Maritime Authority Industry (MARINA), the Sole Flag State Administration of the country.

This was held November 20, 2020 by zoom webinar application, broadcast simultaneously in various time zones of the world as part of the 15th Anniversary celebrations of *Marino World*.

It was a free-flowing dialogue on what ails, what promises and what could be solutions for the Philippine maritime industry, factoring the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Straight talk.

As host, Publisher Lyn Bacani set the tone by reminding the audience expect

the meat, not the broth. Power points were not allowed; “presentations” discouraged to connect to Millennials of limited attention span.

The Panelists are established experts known to inform rather than impress. They favor analytical prose than subliminal praises.

#### Primary guest.

MARINA Administrator Robert Empedrad gamely accepted as the focal person of the dialogue. The retired Vice Admiral comes with impeccable credentials: full trust of a very popular President and a reputation for integrity.

He laid the grid in a brisk enumeration:

- Six Crew Change Hubs are now operational nationwide from the single facility only in Manila before
- Extended validity of SIRBs, SRBs and STCW certifications

- Blended learning implemented, a combination of online learning and face-to-face for practical exercises
- Engaged foreign governments (like the European Union, Australia, Japan and Singapore) for a practical but controlled crew change
- Inter-regional cooperation on pandemic protocols so important to seafarers; with reasonable restrictions on crew changes so long as seafarers are “safe and hired.”

#### Opening reactions.

**Ms. Cristina Garcia**, President, Association of Licensed Manning Agencies (ALMA Maritime Group).

The Philippines is not doing enough to address deployment. Underlying problems are travel restrictions imposed by local government units (LGUs).



Blended training is not enough.

Time and releases of documents and certificates are delayed making hard to deploy seafarers. Having facility is not enough, improve on other aspects. Until when is the extension of the validity?

**Capt. Belal Ahmed**, Chairman of the Intl Maritime Employers' Council (IMEC).

No one really knows what to do at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. But we are learning slowly.

There are now various standards,

quota on what airlines may carry so that even foreigners may change crew in the Philippines. We can then fare better in the region.

**Mr. Roy Alampay**, Chairman of the Joint Manning Group (JMG).

Impressed by The MARINA on opening systems and facility for JMG to rotate their seafarers considering the last two months are major movements in replacing the crew.

Asian seafarers associations should lobby on Asian governments to open up ports for easier crew changes. USA and the European Union are lesser

While speeding up things, restrictions should be observed so as not to allow mingling which may infect the "seafarers lane."

He reiterated the push for blended learning.

Endure the restrictions of LGUs until the pandemic subsides.

**Added reactions.**

**Dr. Conrad Oca**, Pres., Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Phil (AMOSUP).

There will be more problems without



different rules and regulations. We need a Unified Standard, crafted with others and allied sectors of the maritime industry.

**Mr. Joost Mes**, President of the Dutch Chamber of Commerce in the Phil (DCCP).

Congratulates The MARINA for proactive move in Crew Change. Unacceptable two months earlier, backlog was addressed by October. He also noted other nationalities are now being chosen over Filipinos.

Lessen travel restrictions; raise the

strict than Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand.

There should be more One-Stop-Shops for crew replacement. Stakeholders (like manning agencies) should be consulted for best management practices.

**Reacts.**

Administrator Empedrad recalled Australia claims 17 COVID-19 positive Filipino were hidden in a ship calling at its port. The Philippines investigated and found loopholes.

our Government help, more so that foreign governments are strict on Filipino seafarers. Our Government should appeal, more so on difficulties encountered by our licensed manning agencies (LMAs).

Shipowners are worried when there are no Filipino seafarers board their vessels; we should be wary other nationalities are replacing Filipinos.

He scanned over AMOSUP accomplishments, the latest being a 90-square meter Molecular Laboratory (with ITF and IMEC) for 3,000 tests so essential in the watch against the

COVID -19. Being a medical doctor, Oca is first to realize the import of vaccination.

**Mr. Irfan Rahim**, Head IMO Special Projects, Maritime Safety Division.

He reviewed what the Intl Maritime Organization (IMO) has done to mitigate the havoc of the pandemic, such as Seafarers Action Team (SCAT) and Global Integrated Shipping Information System

increased costs for seafarers like that of better facility, isolation programs and vaccination.

**Mr. Carl Faannessen**, President of the Phil-Norway Business Council (PNBC).

Confirms Phil-Norway relations is “incredibly robust”.

It takes time to build alignment and agreement across multiple stakeholders.

into perspective the huge number of seafarers affected. The 19,000 processed is not good enough. Filipinos must help themselves; if not enough will go out, not enough will come home.

Romanians are replacing Filipinos being not available. This is not blackmail but a rally to check on realities.

**Mr. Roger Harris**, Executive



**ALMA Garcia**



**AMOSUP Oca**



**JMG Alampay**

(GISIS). That “name and shame” is never in the systems of IMO.

Defining what a “key worker” is essential for seafarers to be formally included.

It’s a mammoth job but can be done with collective efforts, as Asian nations are major suppliers of seafarers. The approach should be corrective but pragmatic.

Thousands at sea need repatriation, so stressed away from the family with jobs lost.

**Mr. Stephen Cotton**, Secretary General of the Intl Transport Workers Federation (ITF).

It is a challenge to the industry to find long-term solutions, with a cooperative outlook than fragmented ways. Frustrations may set in with too much interventions as the bureaucracy (of nations) and prejudices (at some ports).

We should move faster, accept the

Extending validity of documents and certificates is a right move for The MARINA.

COVID -19 is an accelerant rather than a stumbling block --- things that should be moved are getting momentum, like this webinar which should be face-to-face. A lot of good ideas may come if we focus on logistics and seafarers today and beyond.

Create the Department of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW), possibly next year as it has strong political support. Like *pinakbet* (traditional sautéed vegetable mix) we do not stir but gently assemble for a perfect mix of seafarers, stakeholders and government.

The MARINA should avoid extreme requirements at short notice for logistics to flow unhampered.

**Capt. Kuba Szymanski**, Secretary General of Intermanager.

Called for proactive action, putting

Director, Intl Seafarers Welfare & Assistance Network (ISWAN).

His agency promotes the well-being of seafarers worldwide. It used to address piracy at the Gulf of Guinea and adjacent blue waters by supporting the families of victimized seafarers.

Some 14 to 16 aboard have physical and psychological problems, frustrated by the stress on family finances, reflected on the increase in suicides.

ISWAN asks ITF for what is due, then augments what is overdue.

**Clears position.**

Administrator Empedrad announces about 30,000 Filipino seafarers are aboard with extended contracts but should be home soon.

He is grateful to AMOSUP’s Molecular Laboratory for RTPCR so needed.

The MARINA will study the extension of documents and certifications



beyond 2020.

Its digital system (MISMO) now allows online payment, among others. Australia had offered to help speed up procedures.

In a bit of witticism, the Admiral invites

people and the industry.

**Szymanski** thinks Empedrad gives good answers and wishes to clone the efficient MARINA staff. He takes a dig against Australia for zeroing on Filipinos but not on Romanians. He offered a working

stumbling blocks like Indonesian seafarers cannot be deployed in the US due to the closure of its embassy in Indonesia. The situation reflects the fragmented state of the maritime industry.

**Oca** looks forward to an open dialogue with everyone with open minds, humorously will wait for the *pinakbet* recipe from Faannessen.

### Wrap-up.

**Empedrad** believes visa restriction is a major concern; SID may solve this.

Crew change demands increased costs, as The MARINA investigates financial predators hanging around.

Government readies lot-and-house and scholarship packages for victims; even a 300 to 500-room condominium for the modern-day heroes.

### Jury's out.

In barely two hours, The MARINA

all to help cook a better *pinakbet*, spicy and delicious, in collaboration with stakeholders.

### More thoughts.

**Rahim** renewed calls to educate, train seafarers, be declared "key workers." They should be fast-tracked at airports similar to air crews. He notes some States do not have capability nor facility to handle the influx. He worries that due to climate change some "frozen region" may melt and sea level rises with new virus to contend with.

**Ahmed** compliments The MARINA, believes on positive things over problems. Seafarers are easy to identify and readily blame as in Hong Kong, Singapore and Australia. In any fora, the Philippines is always central to discussions due to her seafarers in the logistical chain. Shipping is the only industry on the move and Filipinos are easily 40% of the 300,000 seafarers onboard. Philippine policies could be a global model but for the problem LMAs do not have funds to underwrite the cost issue of reforms. Yet, any fault of LMAs is global news (like that in Australia). The Government should discern which advices are best for her

formula of *Think, Create, Execute*.

### On visas.

**Mes** notes governments are



**DCCP Mes**

unwilling to lift visa restrictions which prevent seamless crew change for both Filipinos and foreigners.

**Alampay** shares ILO had already recommended usage of the Seafarer Identification Document (SID) as compliant for the Schengen Visa (similar to UK's acceptance for those carrying Panama and Liberia visa).

**Faannessen** believes visas are



**PNBC Faannessen**

link registered 2000 hits; plus reactions and interest recorded from other group links. Figures cannot be collated, as yet. LinkedIns, vibers and likes are independent, with proprietary rights or expectations.

What is clear is that the maritime audience demands straight talk, tired of self-praise behind power points of marketing, glossy pronouncements of politicians and bureaucrats.

Empedrad appears pleased, messaging

“very well done Lyn” with Clap-Clap-Clap emojis.

Bacani feels relieved her hosting was acceptable: control of the flow, all Panelists able to express views. She did not editorialize on the dialogue between Empedrad and the experts, in respect of Panelists’ ability to connect and audience capacity to discern.

#### Downstream.

**Ms. Garcia** of ALMA thanked Empedrad “for sharing your initiatives and plans for the maritime industry, reiterating their support.

#### Source material.

**Nelson Prias**, PHD Chair, AIMS, is requesting a copy of the presentations for his reference in teaching. So does **John Dale Regio**, Recruitment Manager, Island Overseas Transport.

**C/E Mike Marasigan** of the Fil Assn of Marine Engineers (FAME) says he “learned a lot from your distinguished panelists” and “Am humbled to be invited.”

**Capt. Oscar Orbeta**, Chairman, Top Ever Marine Management Phil notes the “excellent handling of Webinar.” **Capt. Albert Aide**, VP

WHO, Administrations; with critical shortcomings on Visa and Quarantine protocols, among others.

- There should be collective protocol, a global synergy, including security and safety from perils of the sea.

#### Ho-hum.

**Gabriel Jimenez** of MPCF was not able to join and complains on *Internet* connectivity in the Bicol area. Not surprising, really.

What is, is that usual bashers and trolls are mum --- but too early to tell,



ITF Cotton



IMO Rahim



ISWAN Harris

She also commended Ms. Bacani, “Hats off to you for gathering the major maritime stakeholders in 1 forum.”

**Capt. Jeffrey Solon** reflected Ms. Garcia’s assessment, adding “the world needs ships and ships needs FILIPINO seafarers “

**IMO’s Rahim** sent congratulations for “a great job.”

**Capt. Antonio Palenzuela**, a Director of the Society of Filipino Captains (FILSCAPTS) says Bacani, “made a very impressive world-class webinar gathering the cream of the crop in the maritime industry”. That the outcome is positive. Everybody are into collaboration or cooperation.”

Training and Development, CF Sharp Crew Management, says, “It was really great having organized such an event!”

#### Complex.

**Capt. Abelardo Pacheco**, Management Level Course Director at MAAP, caught just the tail-end of the webinar due to Internet connectivity. The full text of his questions will be forwarded to The MARINA for a direct response on:

- Government intervention for the frontliners (seafarers) as center of gravity in the impact of the pandemic to the maritime industry
- Covid-19 is a biological disaster and lacks institutionalized framework from IMO, ILO,

actually.

#### Pleasant surprise.

That *The Challenge Ahead* webinar beams Friday, 17:00 PHST, SGT Singapore is quite logical, 5pm Manila local time.

What seems ambitious is the reach: 09:00 GMT London, 04:00 EST Miami, 13:00 GST UAE, 17:00 CST China, 18:00 JST Tokyo and 11:00 EET Greece.

Not surprising is the high response from Metro Manila and the Visayas since they are cores of our maritime strength. But global interest on Philippine maritime is awe inspiring, seen from a sampling of registered participants:

Gerry Buchanan, Managing Director, LISCR (*Hong Kong*); Capt. Naoki



Saito, General Manager, ClassNK (*Japan*); Nish Wijayakuthilaka, DPA, Shipping (*Sri Lanka*); Dr. Mohammed Ismail Russtam Suhrab, Senior Lecturer, University *Malaysia* Terengganu; Guillaume Drillet, Regional Manager, SGS/Global NetTest (*Singapore*); Anil Rao, General Manager, MSC Shipmanagement (*Thailand*); Kyaw Zeya, Pro-Rector (Administration), *Myanmar* Maritime University.

Cristiano Vattuone, Manager, Shipmanagement, Vroon Offshore Services (*Italy*); Georgios Pitaulis, Crewing Manager, ABC Maritime (*Switzerland*); Johan Roos, Director, Regulatory Affairs, Interferry (*Sweden*); Adam Lewis, Head of training and operations, IMEC (*United Kingdom*); Nikos Aslanis, Maritime training Executive, KCL

Group (*Greece*); Capt. Peter Grunau, Maritime Training Consultant, Marlow Navigation, (*Deutschland*); Naim Nazha, Executive Director, Navigation Safety & Environmental Protection, Transport *Canada*.

Khamis Buamin, Chairman, KBI-uae/DCMMI Emirates, (*Dubai*); Majid R. Pirkeh, Owner, Pars Nauran Kish (*Iraq*); Hocine Gouasmia, Consultant, BET (*Algeria*); Mohammud Hanif Dewan, Director of Education, *Liberia* Maritime Training Institute; Capt. HK Varma, Chief General Manager, Petronet LNG (*India*).

### Implications.

These boost sovereign pride and open opportunities for economic gains. But these demand rational and selfless approaches with sustained political

will and reduced partisanship.

Ours is a shameful journal of disunity and self-interests: the deadly intramurals of *Katipuneros* convened to end Spanish colonization; *Ilustrados* pawning on the double talk of American Imperialists; *Statesmen* collaborating despite indignities by the Japanese conquerors, to post-war graft and corruption by *Oligarchs* and *Politicians* of reparation funds and relief goods.

Maritime leadership is our second wind towards a tiger economy. We must put our acts together. We must rise heroic to this communal challenge.

Shall we procrastinate or rush with sleeves rolled for the long haul?

## “Together, lets make DISTANCE LEARNING possible”

### ONLINE Payments

It the current status of the pandemic tuition fees can be paid safely and conveniently online through a unique payment gateway.

### eLEARNING Payments

With this sudden shift, the “New Normal of Education” will always persist. The move to online learning can be the catalyst to create a new more effective method of educating students.

### AUGMENTING Realities

AR applications both uses of information and the access to knowledge improving digital and info-inclusion. Augmented Reality apps create an interactive, intuitive and user-friendly educational environment.

### BLOCKCHAIN Credentials

Blockchain-based Credential Storage and Verification System shall be generated to allow issues from the Academic Professional and Government Agencies to issue e-credentials with ease and highest standard of protection preventing any false certificates/claims from happening.

### ONLINE Enrolments

Students will most likely go online search for schools and courses that they want to take. Schools offering online enrolments will have an advantage because enrolment processing will be easy and quick as there's no need to fill out forms manually.

### CLOUD Simulations

KiSim aims to create a new simulation based on existing simulators for ease of use and enhanced user experience.

### CONTROLLED Student Intake

Due to the requirements of Maritime Industry that proficiencies shall be conducted in laboratories and simulators controlling the number of students allowed to go inside the institutions are part of taking necessary precautions.

### PARTNERS







Led by Singapore Shipping Association

# SINGAPORE-STAR FUND CREWSAFE FACILITIES

by Coca H. Strobar

## Singapore remains committed to facilitate safe and successful crew changes.

As best practice, the Singapore Shipping Tripartite Alliance Resilience (SG-STAR) Fund was established by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA), Singapore Shipping Association (SSA), Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU), Singapore Organisation of Seamen (SOS).

It was joined by the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), the International Maritime Employers' Council (IMEC), and the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), to work with stakeholders in seafaring nations on crew holding facility and PCR testing centres.

### And more.

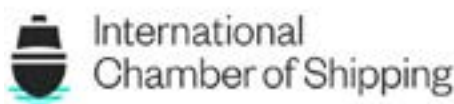
The initiative gathered more adherents like the Global Maritime Forum Maritime Industry Crew Change Taskforce, INTERTANKO, Norwegian Shipowners' Association, and World Shipping Council, as well as seven port authorities from Abu Dhabi, Antwerp, Barcelona, Hamburg, Rotterdam,

Sines, and Vancouver.

SGD\$1.6 million has been committed, SG-STAR Fund being the first global tripartite initiative of like-minded partners from the industry, unions and government to facilitate safe crew changes.

IMEC-St. Giles Makati Hotel, Makati Avenue, Corner Kalayaan Avenue, Makati.

The SFTF will keep the industry updated. Companies interested to get their facilities CrewSafe audited, contact Siti at [siti@ssa.org.sg](mailto:siti@ssa.org.sg).



Based in Singapore, SG-STAR will be disbursed for use upstream in countries such as the Philippines and India where seafarers come from through the SG-STAR Fund Taskforce (SFTF).

In turn, SFTF has developed a CrewSafe audit program to assist crew source nations to bring a higher level of confidence and quality control checks into crew change processes such as quarantine/holding, medical and swabbing facility.

SFTF Chairman Nitin Mathur says two are already operational as CrewSafe: (1) ITF/IMEC-Manila Marriott Hotel, 2 Resorts Drive, Manila and (2) ITF/

### POEA approves.

The Phil Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) has issued Advisory 157-2020 which addresses concerns over the authenticity of COVID-19 tests from the Philippines, over the efficacy of pre-embarkation quarantine protocols undergone by joining Filipino crews.

POEA Administrator Bernard Olalia says the practices are being shared to the public to encourage partners in the manning and seafaring industries.



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**Fleet Hotspot**





## Pushed and Pulled by Politics

# THE MAGNA CARTA OF FILIPINO SEAFARERS

by Coca H. Strobar



Marino Party-list Cong Macnell Lusotan

**Passage is delayed by too many supporters: House Bill 8057 has 14 versions by 29 congressmen, original filed by Cong Michael Edgar Aglipay on July 1, 2019.**

In the Senate, SBN-1745 was filed on July 28, 2020 by Joel Villanueva; SBN-1369 filed on February 19, 2020 by Nancy Binay; SBN-357 filed on July 11, 2019 by Risa Hontiveros; SBN-300 filed on July 8, 2019 by Ramon Revilla Jr. and SBN-135 filed on July 2, 2019 by Sonny Angara.

The updates or differences are triggered by provisions which may “answer” critical issues of the COVID-19 pandemic like Section 28 on *Sickness Benefits During Public Health Emergencies*; Section 30 on *Repatriation*; and, Section 31 on *Emergency Repatriation/or Seafarers Onboard Foreign Registered Ships*.

Section 32 on *Quarantine and Medical Expenses in Repatriation* hits hard on the shipowner or manning agency as they “... shall cover the following expenses until the seafarer is considered duly repatriated to the point of hire”:

- Medical care, board and lodging for periods spent by a seafarer in quarantine or self-isolation, whether or not the seafarer has symptoms or has been exposed to any infectious diseases, virus or bacteria - until declared as free of any infection, virus or ailment by the DOH Bureau of Quarantine or any DOH-accredited clinic; and
- Hospitalization and medical treatment when the seafarer is sick or infected - until declared as fully recovered.

OWWA will pay should the seafarer need further quarantine or medical care.

Crew Change has been defined in Section 37, seems preparatory to the Green Lane, a bid by the country to be an international hub for crew change.

### Point of hire.

The Senate and House versions may not have critical differences except for the insertion by Senator Villanueva of Section 42, *Repatriation Destination*, Chapter XI of Senate Bill 1745:

“SEC. 42. *Repatriation Destination*.

- The repatriation destination, at the option of the seafarers, may either be the place indicated in the SEC as the point of hire, or the place stipulated under the collective bargaining agreement.”

It created an angry buzz in a recent maritime conference where licensed manning agencies echoed complaints of shipowners against escalating costs. Somehow, “point of hire” becomes an issue of whether upon landing in any Philippine airport or arrival of the seafarers in their home.

Also, Section 43 is on *Emergency Repatriation for Seafarers On-board Foreign Registered Ships* in cases of war, epidemics, abandonment of ship by shipowners, natural or manmade disasters or calamities. The Dept of Foreign Affairs (DFA) acts, in coordination with the POEA and OWWA, and international agencies.

While DFA shall draw from the Emergency Repatriation Fund (ERF) under the General Appropriations Act (GAA) to defray the expenses, the POEA shall require manning agencies to effect repatriation within forty-eight (48) hours, unless prevented with valid reasons. Failing, the manning agency





Senator Villanueva

A maritime viber group is frustrated on the snail phase of Firstaide which reveals it is unprepared for its exclusive snatch for the Green Lane requirement, to point just an aspect.

Some 300 seafarers are locked at NAIA Terminal 3 for failure of Firstaide to release test results.

#### **Pay to be free.**

Firstaide service appears free, funded by Philhealth. But really, it is not free because users pay premium at Philhealth. PRC was replaced for publicly airing its disgust with Philhealth for not paying obligations to PRC bill breaching over billion pesos over time.

assistance to subsidize the fees to be collected from domestic shipping owners, specifically, dockage (domestic) and lay-up fee (domestic).

For shipping companies/operators must be a holder of a valid Certificate of Public Convenience (CPC), Provisional Authority (PA), or Special Permit (SP) issued by the MARINA and holder of a valid accreditation certificate issued by PPA.

Only returning Filipino seafarers who have disembarked through Philippine ports and airports are entitled to avail of the free COVID-19 testing.

shall suffer suspension or cancellation of license.

OWWA gets to pick the costs, subject to the reimbursement of the manning agency within sixty (60) days from notice. This is a financial dagger at the throat of the manning agency.

#### **Delay expensive.**

The Red Cross (PRC) had been replaced at all ports and airports by Firstaide Diagnostics, being the only accredited Molecular Microbiology Diagnostic laboratory (Biosafety Level 2) COVID-19 Testing Facility by the Ports Authority (PPA), commissioned by the Dept of Transportation (DOTr) to be a One-Stop-Shop for inbound and outbound travel requirements for seafarers.

It claims to be equipped with abGenix - Automated Nucleic Acid Purification System for rapid extraction via streamlined work processes utilizing Magnetic Pillar Rod technology while promoting reliable results fit for sensitive downstream applications; and abCyclerQ (real-time PCR system) to ensure accurate data analysis.

PPA will wave collection of some port fee for shipping companies/operators and returning seafarers be given free coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) testing.

These initiatives started 01 December 2020 under RA 11494, also known as the "Bayanihan to Recover as One Act" (Bayanihan 2).

#### **Breathing space.**

To reduce the adverse effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the shipping industry, the amount of P250 million will be utilized as financial

An advertisement for Pag-IBIG Online services. It features three panels: 
 1. Top panel: A man sitting on a couch using a laptop. Text: "FEEL Pag-IBIG Online", "Apply for a Short-Term Loan", "File your Multi-Purpose Loan or Calamity Loan via Virtual Pag-IBIG by simply uploading clear photos of your application and its requirements."
 2. Middle panel: A woman holding a tablet. Text: "Save with Pag-IBIG and pay your loan even while at home", "Top-up your Pag-IBIG Savings or pay your loans, anytime, anywhere."
 3. Bottom panel: A woman looking at her smartphone. Text: "View your Pag-IBIG Savings and Loan Records", "See how your Pag-IBIG Savings grow and manage your loans safer, easier and more conveniently."
 At the bottom, it says "Register for a Virtual Pag-IBIG Account today! visit www.pagibigfund.gov.ph" and features the "VIRTUAL Pag-IBIG" logo.



## On Global Shipping Registry

# THE MARSHALL ISLANDS SERVICE EDGE

by Ligaya Caban

**In a world enamored with size, the story of small David defeating giant Goliath comes as a refreshing breeze. In global economic competitions, nations with huge resources often dominate the sharing, taking the larger chunks, the prime cuts.**

But not when a nation is smart; using its agility to move quickly and effectively, leveraging on what the Big Boys are unable to do.

This truism finds proof in the continuing success of International Registries, Inc. and its affiliates (IRI) which provide administrative and technical support to the Republic of Marshall Islands Maritime and Corporate Registries. The registry boasts of more than 178-million gross tons of 4,819 vessels at the tail end of November 2020. And continues to grow.

IRI serves one of the top ship registries of the world, assisting clients and prospects in 28 offices located in major maritime and financial centers, operating 24/7 with

local specialists in house, even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Marino World* was granted an in-depth interview by Mr. Leo Bolivar, Country Head, Intl Registries (Far East) Limited Representative Office operating in Manila. We consider the gesture not much of a marketing ploy but of clinical analyses of issues. There were formalities but the overarching marks are clarity and candor.

### **Flexible.**

**MW:** *At the CrewConnect Global Session On Demand, Flag State Forum on Crew Supply virtual conference of 24 Nov 2020, Mr. John Hafner—IRI VP, Seafarers' Manning and Training—stated, "From the Marshall Islands perspective, we don't typically get involved with the logistics of crew changes. Though with this, we've had to increase our flexibility, increase our cooperation with organizations we normally don't cooperate with: other flag States, the ITF, and the IMO." Would you elaborate, please?*

**BOLIVAR:** Crew change is not typically something that requires the involvement of the flag State.

However, the COVID-19 situation created unprecedented issues with respect to crew change and crew welfare, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Maritime Administrator (the "Administrator" got involved to support, guide, and assist owners and operators.

As a flag State, we have access to other flag States, the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and International Maritime Organization (IMO) to pursue and influence solutions to facilitate crew change on a global scale, and the relationships to address the needs of individual seafarers and vessels on a case-by-case basis.

This is a very difficult situation, but in the spring, the Administrator urged governments to identify seafarers as key workers, and urged stakeholders to treat this as a *force majeure* situation that necessitated flexibility. Flexibility requires cooperation, and as one of the largest flag States in the world, we're able to connect and draw on relationships worldwide.

Although the situation is not resolved, it has improved, thanks to the industry-wide focus on seafarer welfare. There is, of course, room for



***“Crew change is not typically something that requires the involvement of the flag State. However, the COVID-19 situation created unprecedented issues with respect to crew change and crew welfare, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Maritime Administrator got involved to support, guide, and assist owners and operators.”***

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improvement, and the industry will need to find permanent solutions to address future challenges to crew change.

On 1 December 2020, the United Nations (UN) adopted a resolution urging governments to identify seafarers as key workers and calling on all governments to implement measures to facilitate crew changes and travel and repatriation for seafarers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Respond.**

**MW:** *How did the Marshall Islands Registry’s local office in the Philippines responded to the seafarers’ documentation requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic?*

**BOLIVAR:** Despite the COVID-19 related lockdowns and restrictions imposed by the government of the Philippines in March which ended just recently, the RMI representative office in Manila has been able to issue all the necessary International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) documents to Filipino seafarers joining RMI vessels.

The Manila office has also addressed the constant demand from the ship operators for the approval of crew change plans whose crew have extended beyond their contract duration due to the difficulties in repatriation brought about by the crisis. During the peak of the lockdown, our Manila office adapted the work-from-home and skeletal work plans to make sure there is no interruption of service to our clients, while still observing health and safety protocols, which are paramount.

Together with other regional office’s seafarers’ documentation departments, we worked as one big production line round the clock, tapping our local resources to compliment those of others. All of our regional production offices, including Manila, have proactively adapted to the changing norms, not only in terms of internal production processes but also in recalibrating our logistical strategies to ensure that the much-needed seafarers’ documents can be connected to the crew and the vessel in a timely fashion.

of the first industry stakeholders to urge all governments to recognize seafarers as “key workers.” As one of the world’s leading registries, with more than 4,800 vessels and nearly 100,000 seafarers serving on RMI-flagged vessels, we are encouraged by the recent UN resolution, and support the United Kingdom and other countries in designating seafarers as key transport workers.

#### **Qualship 21.**

**MW:** *How does the Marshall Islands Registry strengthen its position as*



**IRI VP Hafner (middle) with IRI SVP Bob Fay and Anglo-Eastern Managing Director Pradeep Chawla at Global CrewConnect 2019**

Lastly, our close coordination with local staffing agencies makes life a great deal easier for everyone involved in these challenging times. As always, good communication is key.

#### **Keyworkers.**

**MW:** *Does IRI support RMI’s push for the treatment of seafarers as “key workers?”*

**BOLIVAR:** (We)... were some

*a quality organization amid the COVID-19 crisis? How does it fare with the US Coast Guard’s (USCG) QUALSHIP 21 roster?*

**BOLIVAR:** In addition to the normal activities of protecting life, the environment, and resources, the COVID-19 pandemic means that the RMI Registry must now, more than ever, focus on ensuring that RMI registered ships continue trading safely to keep the global supply chain moving.



The COVID-19 situation does not change the Registry's focus on quality, safety, and security. In fact, many of the changes we've implemented to our processes and procedures as a result of COVID-19 will serve to strengthen our high-quality inspections and safety processes in the future. We expect to continue to use virtual inspections and technology in the future to support onboard inspections.

For an unprecedented 16 consecutive years, the RMI Registry has achieved Qualship 21 status with the USCG. More than 30% of vessels with Qualship 21 certification are flagged with the RMI, a number unsurpassed by any other foreign flag registry.

### Standards.

**MW:** How does RMI reflect on the Tokyo Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Annual Report in terms of the best quality and safety standards? Was RMI recognized at this year's Tokyo MoU's Annual Report on Port State Control (PSC) in the Asia-Pacific Region?

**BOLIVAR:** In the most recent Tokyo MoU Annual Report (2019), the RMI had the lowest detention ratio of any of the top three registries, with a three-year rolling average detention ratio of 2.19%. This underscores the value and popularity of the RMI Registry in the region.

The success is largely due to our proactive approach in supporting owners, which has continued despite the COVID-19 pandemic: our inspectors are, and have always been, in daily contact with PSC personnel. Over the past six months, our teams in Hong Kong, Singapore, China, Korea, and Japan, and our

extensive network of in-house inspectors and contractors across the region, have been working even more closely with PSC authorities.

Since 2018, there has been a focus on increasing capacity and quality within the region. Accordingly, the Administrator has increased the number of inspectors, enhanced onboard training where possible, and deployed an in-house inspector



to oversee operations in Australia.

### Remote programs.

**MW:** The RMI Registry focuses on enhancing resources to sustain its 2019 best ranking ever from PSC authorities like the Paris MoU, the USCG's Qualship 21 program, and the Australian Maritime Safety Administration (AMSA). Is your remote inspection program helpful for more effective communication between crew and operators? Do statistics support RMI's Critical Items Checklist as a tool for optimizing efforts during the pandemic, providing added value to operators and the crews on board?

**BOLIVAR:** Unable to maintain normal shipboard operations and inspection schedules due to COVID-19 restrictions, and with regulatory and compliance changes, the Registry has looked to proactively enhance resources

to maintain its exemplary level of quality and safety.

The RMI Registry quickly enacted guidance on remote inspections, virtual closings, and crew safety, while seamlessly transitioning operations between our 28 worldwide offices. In some cases, where superintendents cannot board vessels, flag State inspectors and technical operations teams have served as the eyes and ears of the operator in terms of monitoring compliance. The implementation of a remote inspection program has led to positive results with more effective communication between crew and operators.

Statistics on past performance and the RMI Critical Items Checklist have proven to be excellent tools for optimizing these efforts and have provided additional value to operators and the crews on board during this uncertain time.

With the goal of providing real value to the fleet, the Registry has focused on strengthening and expanding technical resources worldwide to enhance local expertise.

### Annealed.

Leo M. Bolivar opened the Manila operations in 2015 as Office Manager, was promoted as Country Head the following year.

Prior, Bolivar worked for Navis Maritime Services with the Board of Directors, then Senior Executive VP, and GM, honing him in the management of day-to-day administrative operations, internal and external audits and the development and implementation of compliance with key corporate, legal, and regulatory requirements.

These supplemented insights gained from four other maritime firms he served earlier.

Bolivar is a member of the Phil-Norway Business Council, the

***“The RMI Registry quickly enacted guidance on remote inspections, virtual closings, and crew safety, while seamlessly transitioning operations between our 28 worldwide offices.”***

Filipino Association for Mariners’ Employment, and Chairman and Co-founder of Maritime Stakeholders Alliance Asia.

### Services.

International Registries, Inc. and its affiliates (IRI) provide administrative and technical support to the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Maritime and Corporate Registries, the latter one of the leading registries in the world.

IRI’s network of offices in major

shipping and financial centers throughout the world, are able to register a vessel or yacht, including those under construction, record a mortgage or financing charter, incorporate a company, issue seafarer documentation, and service clientele.

### Credentials.

The RMI is White Listed with the Paris and Tokyo Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), meeting the flag criteria for a low risk ship scrutinized by the New Inspection Regimes.

For 16 consecutive years, it has maintained QUALSHIP 21 status with the United States Coast Guard, a feat unprecedented.

IRI provides full service from any office, 24/7. By continuing to strengthen the team worldwide, it ensures a high level of customer service and continuous improvement of registry-related services for the growing number of RMI-flagged vessels.



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# Delists Red Cross

## CHINA FLEXES MUSCLE ON CREW CHANGE

by Coca H. Strobar

**The People's Republic of China (PRC) has restricted entry of foreign seafarers with disturbing consequences on Filipino merchant mariners.**

Rubbing salt on the wound, PRC accredited only those laboratories in the Philippine into her favor, even surprisingly authorized nationwide by the Philippine Government. And more, China delisted the Phil Red Cross (also PRC).

Licensed manning agencies (LMAs) have cried out their difficulties in Chinese ports, even at other ports influenced by China. Net effect, Filipinos are being changed by Chinese seafarers as our nationals are barred entry on health protocols.

### **Leverage.**

Another subterfuge is China labeling Australian coal worth \$500m as poor quality, resulting into 66 bulk carriers with 5.7m tons and over 1,000 seafarers left stranded off the Chinese ports of Jungtang and Caofeidian.

This is another of Beijing's response to Australia's leading the charge to investigate the origins of the coronavirus. Earlier, China has banned a host of Australian products.

In 2019, China's global purchases of coal totaled \$18.9bn, almost 50% from Australia. Now, China says Australian coal had failed to meet local environmental standards.

A crew of *Knightship* bulk carrier stuck at Jingtang over five months issued a public letter they are "...like political hostages and slaves owned by charter and cargo owners. This is a violation of human rights. We are humans and have rights for our freedom..."

Russia may serve an increased market but does not have the production. US and Canada may supplement with long-hauls

Mongolia's overland deliveries.

As political ploys continue, left agonizing are seafarers stranded, sick and stressed.

### **Sabre rattling.**

Senator Richard Gordon was agitated by data provided by the Phil Retirement Authority (PRA) showing 27,678 mainland Chinese availed of the Special Resident Retiree's Visa (SRRV); South Koreans 14,144; Indians 6,120; Taiwanese 4,851; Japanese 4,016; Americans 3,704; Chinese from Hong Kong, 1,870; British 1,595; Germans 792; Australians 752; Others, 4,498.

The legislator fumed finding out the minimum age of mainland Chinese retirees was 35 years old, and the minimum requirement for retirement here is an investment of \$50,000, just enough to purchase a condominium unit. "35 (years old) is too young!" he exclaimed, and stressed, "27,000 (people) is equivalent to 27 (military) regiments."

He recalls before World War II, Japanese sleeper agents have posed as construction workers. "This is now a national security issue," referencing to soft diplomatic policy towards Beijing.

On top, he has been critical of the Chinese vessels illegally fishing in Philippine waters, and the increasing number of illegal Chinese workers in POGOs, whom he had accused of spying.

### **Backed-up.**

Senator Nancy Binay, had expressed concern about the large bulk of mainland Chinese retirees. She asked pointblank PRA CEO Bienvenido K. Chy whether there is monitoring "these retirees aren't

illegally working in POGOs (Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators)?"

Chy side-stepped Binay, stressing the SRRV policy was in place prior to his appointment. This infuriated Gordon even further, saying, "That's not an excuse!" Chy was formerly head of the Bureau of Immigration's Legal Division.

Gordon stressed, retirees are usually "between 50 and 60 years old," and strongly suggested to Chy to "woo" more retirees from Taiwan, Korean, Japanese, Australia, and the United States.

Maria Anthonette Velasco-Allones, COO of the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB), had promised to share information on foreign retirees so PRA could revamp its retirement policy. The TPB is the marketing arm of the Tourism Department.

### **Red Cross and ALMA.**

The Association of Licensed Manning Agencies (ALMA) Maritime Group Corp forged with Red Cross (PRC) for faster conduct of COVID-19 testing of Filipino seafarers to be deployed onboard.

ALMA's over 100,000 seafarers from 49 manning agencies may have confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests and related services at a much expedited and reduced cost.

The agreement accommodates a maximum of 1,300 crew members per day with results released within 72 hours for regular tests, 24 hours for stat tests, and 6 to 8 hours for super stat tests, from the time of swabbing.

### **Two methods.**

Two primary testing methods are: The IgM/IgG Rapid Test and second, 7 the



# 核酸检测机构名单

(2020年8月27日更新, 机构有关信息来自菲律宾卫生部)

## LICENSED COVID-19 TESTING LAB LIST

(UPDATED on August 27, 2020. SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH OF THE PHILIPPINES)

序号 #	地区 REGION	省份 PROVINCE	城市 MUNICIPALITY/CITY	机构名称 NAME OF FACILITY	检测手段 TYPE OF TESTING	联系电话 CONTACT NUMBER	检测资质有效期 LICENSE VALIDITY
驻菲律宾使馆 EMBASSY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN THE PHILIPPINES							
1	NCR	Metro Manila	City of Manila	Chinese General Hospital	rRT-PCR	(02) 8711-4141	04/15/2020 - 12/31/2020
2	NCR	Metro Manila	Makati City	Makati Medical Center (HCB)	rRT-PCR	(02) 8888-8999	04/11/2020 - 12/31/2020
3	NCR	Metro Manila	Mandaluyong City	Philippine Red Cross Logistics and Multipurpose Center	rRT-PCR	(02) 8790-2300	12-31-2020
4	NCR	Metro Manila	Bonifacio Global City	St. Luke's Medical Center - BGC (HB)	rRT-PCR	(02) 8789-7700	04/11/2020 - 12/31/2020
5	NCR	Metro Manila	Quezon City	Hi-Precision (QC)	rRT-PCR	(02) 8741-7777	05/27/2020 - 12/31/2020
6	NCR	Metro Manila	Pasay City	Philippine Airport Diagnostic Laboratory	rRT-PCR	0996-7917788; (02)82515868	07/09/2020 - 12/31/2020
7	Region 3	Pampanga	San Fernando	Green City Medical Center	rRT-PCR	0919-068-8862; (045) 649-8701	06/13/2020 - 12/31/2020
8	Region 3	Zambales	Subic	Philippine Red Cross - Logistics and Training Center	rRT-PCR		06/17/2020 - 12/31/2020
9	Region 3	Pampanga	Clark City	Philippine Red Cross - Clark Molecular Laboratory	rRT-PCR		06/30/2020 - 12/31/2020
10	Region 3	Bulacan	San Jose Del Monte	Qualimed Hospital - San Jose Del Monte	rRT-PCR		07/09/2020 - 12/31/2020
11	Region 4A	Cavite	Dasmarinas Cavite	De La Salle University - Cavite	rRT-PCR	(046) 481-8000	05/08/2020 - 12/31/2020
12	Region 4A	Quezon	Lucena City	Lucena United Doctors Hospital and Medical Center	rRT-PCR	(042) 373-6161	05/14/2020 - 12/31/2020
13	Region 4A	Laguna	Sta. Rosa	Qualimed Hospital Sta. Rosa	rRT-PCR		06/22/2020 - 12/31/2020
14	Region 4A	Batangas	Batangas City	PRC- Batangas Chapter Molecular Laboratory	rRT-PCR		07/06/2020 - 12/31/2020

polymerase chain reaction test (RT-PCR), with these characteristics setting the two apart:

**IgM/IgG Rapid Test Kits** produce fast results; not identifying the genetic materials making up the novel coronavirus, but detect antibodies in a person's system. It reads two types of antibodies: the immunoglobulin G (IgG) (delayed immune response) and the immunoglobulin M (IgM) (the early immune response).

One positive for both antibodies despite showing no symptoms, must self-isolate

for 14 days before taking another IgM/IgG rapid test. If you test negative for IgG and positive for IgM without any symptom, you are infected. It is best to take an RT-PCR test to confirm.

If you test negative for both antibodies while showing no symptoms, your probability of infection is unlikely. To be sure, take another antibody test after seven days.

Although IgM/IgG rapid testing kits produce quick results, the test's preciseness still depends on the sensitivity of the testing kit itself. There

is a high chance of errors in the results. False negatives and false positives are common.

Antibodies only progress a few weeks after the infection. Thus, rapid coronavirus test kits may miss it in the earliest phases of the disease. A confirmatory RT-PCR test is needed on those who with a positive result in the rapid test.

**RT-PCR Testing.** The Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) is a technique used for about 30 years in medicine and research to identify genetic information.

驻宿务总领馆 CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN CEBU							
15	Region 7	Cebu	Lapu Lapu City	Allegiant Regional Care Hospital	rRT PCR	(032) 493-4248	05/11/2020 - 12/31/2020
16	Region 7	Cebu	Mandaue City	University of Cebu Medical Center	rRT PCR		07/17/2020 - 12/31/2020
17	Region 7	Cebu	Cebu City	Prime Care Alpha Covid-19 Testing Laboratory	rRT PCR	(032)2322273; (032)2610367; 0966-4993587; 0927-9555624	
18	Region 6	Negros Occidental	Bacolod City	Philippine Red Cross-Negros Occidental Molecular Laboratory	rRT PCR		
19	Region 7	Cebu	Cebu City	Chong Hua Hospital	rRT PCR		08/06/2020 - 12/31/2020
20	Region 6	Iloilo	Mandurriao	Qualimed Health Network-Iloilo	rRT PCR	(033)5014843 . (033)5084000, (033)5084004	
21	Region 6	Negros Occidental	Bacolod City	Bacolod Queen of Mercy Hospital	rRT PCR	(034)4312559	
22	Region 6	Negros Occidental	Bacolod City	The Doctors Hospital, Inc.	rRT PCR	(034)4682100	

An improved version is the reverse-transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR).

RT-PCR tests are reliable and sensitive and can produce accurate results within three to four hours. But, it will take more hours if the samples are to be sent to an external laboratory.

Licensed medical workers collect samples from a patient. Chemicals will be used to get rid of fats, proteins, and other molecules leaving RNA strands which are a combination of a person's genetic material and the viral RNA that may be present in the system. The RT-PCR copies the RNA to DNA and is increased in size to detect viruses through a PCR machine.

Fluorescent markers are usually used to secure the amplified DNA and supply light. If the light's intensity hits a certain threshold, it means the sample tested positive. Otherwise, is negative.

RT-PCR testing won't be able to identify if an individual had contracted the virus and recovered from it. It only detects an active infection in a person's system.

### China allows.

Chinese media report foreign crew change operations will resume in 10 Chinese ports of Dalian, Tianjin, Qingdao, Shanghai, Ningbo, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Haikou.

Shanghai issued a *Notice* for allowing change and disembarkation of foreign seafarers, like:

- Treatment of ill/injured crew members – file an application for rescue to the search and rescue center (maritime department) which shall notify the Customs, Border Inspection and Health where the ship is moored.

1. If not life-threatening, Customs shall complete the inspection and sampling on board. After receiving the test results, the shipping company shall securely transfer the ill/injured members to the relevant medical institutions for treatment. For those not in need to disembark, remote health guidance can be adopted.

2. If life-threatening and urgent medical treatment required, the

shipping company should immediately transfer the ill/injured crew members to the isolation ward of the medical institution designated by the Health Department for treatment. If the Customs fails to take samples on board in case of emergency, the Health Department may arrange for joint sampling and joint testing at the hospital along with the Customs.

3. After the crew's treatment is completed, the crew member should return to the ship in time after completing treatment. If not possible to return: Chinese crew members should complete the 14-day quarantine; Foreign crew members' shipping company shall arrange repatriation by air. If flight not available, the crew member should be quarantined. If the flight is difficult to be confirmed and the disembarkation period exceeds 14 days, the shipping company may arrange the crew member to stay at a suitable site and wait for the flight at its own will if the nucleic acid test is negative.

4. If the ill/injured crew members are examined to be the "four categories of personnel", the Health Department shall take measurements according to

prevention and control plan. Customs shall immediately arrange testing of others on the ship, with further arrangement carried out according to the results.

The four categories of personnel refer to: aa. the COVID-19 confirmed patients bb. suspected COVID-19 infected patients cc. fever patients who cannot be excluded from COVID-19 infection dd. close contacts of COVID-19 confirmed patients.

• **Change of Chinese crew:**

1. The shipping company shall contact the crew member's dedicated isolation point in advance following the requirements and provide the port supervision department with materials such as the log record, the crew member's health information and the confirmation letter of booking the isolation room.

2. Pass the Customs quarantine and the first nucleic acid test is negative.

3. Signed off crew members shall receive centralized quarantine and health observation in this city and make up for the 14 days of quarantine. If the ship had crew change abroad within 14 days, the signed off crew member shall be quarantined for 14 days.

4. Nucleic acid test (the second nucleic acid test) shall be conducted two days prior to the end of the isolation. If the test result is negative, the isolation shall be relieved.

5. After the crew member has made up the isolation time and the second nucleic acid test is negative, the green health code could be provided.

6. The signed on crew member should have normal body temperature and green health code. Shipping companies are encouraged to arrange nucleic acid testing for sign on crew members to reduce the risk of cross-infection between ship and shore.

• **Change of foreign crew:**

Signing off crew members:

1. The foreign crew members on board

need to change shifts in this city and leave the country due to the expiration or termination of the contract or humanitarian reasons.

2. International ships that have left the last overseas port for more than 14 days, and no crew members have changed their shifts within 14 days before arriving at the port.

3. The shipping company shall formulate the shift plan in advance, submit to the Office of the Municipal Leading Group of Epidemic Situation for approval and book the outbound flights and special vehicles for transshipment.

4. The shipping company shall instruct the crew members to take personal

## As political ploys continue, left agonizing are seafarers stranded, sick and stressed.

protection measures and check their body temperature at least twice a day. The crew members shall fill in the health record and sign to affirm the information is true, the Master shall review and sign for confirmation. The Master's health record should be reviewed by the Chief officer or other senior officers for confirmation. The shipping company should report crew members' health information to Maritime and other port departments 48 hours before the ship arrives at the port.

5. After the ship arrives at the port, if there is no abnormality in the Customs quarantine and the nucleic acid test is negative, it shall be notified to the Frontier Inspection Department, which shall handle the temporary entry and disembarkation formalities.

6. Foreign crew members that being disembarked should "depart immediately after disembarkation" and detention in this city is not permitted.

The shipping company shall arrange point-to-point transfer by special vehicles (cannot take public transportation) to directly transfer the sign off crew members from the vessel to the airport and depart taking the transfer flight or to other international ships in this port for departure.

7. Before the crew member's repatriation, the ship shall wait at the port and may shift to the anchorage designated by the Maritime Department. The ship may leave the port after the crew member leaves the country. Container ships with tight shipping schedule may leave the port first subject to the approval of the Group for the Prevention and Control of Epidemics. The shipping company will transfer the sign off foreign crew to the crew isolation point with reception capacity to wait for the transfer flight, and then repatriate the crew to his own country.

8. If the entry nation or exit flights require nucleic acid testing reports for the foreign crew, the shipping company should contact qualified testing institutions in advance to conduct nucleic acid testing for foreign crew and issue reports.

Signing on crew members:

1. If the foreign crew members need to enter the country and change their shifts in the city, the shipping company shall formulate a plan in accordance with the requirements and apply to the Foreign Affairs Office of the Municipal government through the Municipal Communications Commission. Visa invitation letters can be issued for foreign crew members who meet the requirements and liaise with our embassies abroad to issue Visas.

2. Shipping company should confirm the crew's health condition is normal 14 days before boarding the ship and make sure of personal protection, body temperature should be taken twice a day. The crew member shall fill in the health record and sign for confirmation. The shipping company shall sign and seal the record for confirmation.

3. The sign on crew members shall arrive in Shanghai by flight as required. After arriving in Shanghai, the crew member shall join the ship after passing the entry



驻拉瓦格领事馆 CONSULATE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN LAOAG							
23	Region 1	La Union	San Fernando	Ilocos Training and Regional Medical Center	rRT PCR	(072) 607-6418; 607-6422	05/20/2020 - 12/31/2020
24	Region 1	Ilocos Norte	Batac	Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital	Cartridge - Based PCR	(077) 600-8000	06/13/2020 - 12/31/2020
25	CAR	Benguet	Baguio City	Parkway Medical and Diagnostic Center	rRT PCR	09175006139; 09155603867; 09293525988; 09165951712	07/08/2020 - 12/31/2020
驻达沃总领馆 CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN DAVAO							
26	Region 9	Zamboanga del Sur	Zamboanga City	Zamboanga City Medical Center- Department of Agriculture	rRT PCR		05/13/2020 - 12/31/2020
27	Region 9	Zamboanga del Sur	Zamboanga City	Ciudad Medical Zamboanga	rRT PCR	(062) 992 7330	07/07/2020 - 12/31/2020
28	Region 10	Misamis Oriental	Cagayan De Oro City	Polymedic Medical Plaza, Inc.	rRT PCR	(088) 858-5242	06/27/2020 - 12/31/2020
29	Region 11	Davao Del Sur	Davao City	Southern Philippines Medical Center (SPMC)	rRT PCR	(082) 227-2731	03/27/2020 - 12/31/2020
30	Region 11	Davao Del Sur	Davao City	Davao One World Diagnostic Center Incorporated	rRT PCR	09177220101	05/28/2020 - 12/31/2020

quarantine. The shipping company shall arrange special vehicles (cannot take public transportation) from centralized isolation and inspection points to the ship. If it is necessary to postpone the sign on procedure, under special circumstances, the crew member shall wait at the centralized isolation point and transfer to the ship through the point-to-point secure transfer by special vehicles.

#### Circuit-breaker mechanism.

If the total number of crew members from one shipping company whose nucleic acid tests are positive on international sailing ships reaches the relevant provisions of the country, these shall be implemented:

**aa.** For the same shipping company's international ships, if a total of 5 people found positive for nucleic acid test, all foreign crew shift-changing for this shipping company will be suspended for 15 days.

**bb.** If a total of 10 persons are positive in nucleic acid test, all foreign crew shift-changing for this shipping company will be suspended for 30 days.

cc. If there were more than 10 persons are positive in nucleic acid test, all foreign crew shift-changing for this shipping company will be stopped. Operation will not be permitted until the shipping company pass a fresh assessment.

#### • Foreign crew landing:

1. Foreign crew members who need to stay in Shanghai for a long time due to ship repair or other reasons and have stayed in Shanghai for more than 14 days.

2. The crew members from Russia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Poland or the foreign crew members holding other entry-exit certificates within the scope of the agreement on mutual exemption of visas with China have left the last overseas port for more than 14 days, and the ship has no crew change 14 days before arriving at the port.

#### Procedures

1. Upon the approval of the Office of the Leading Group for Epidemic Prevention and Control where the shipyard is located, if there is no abnormality in the Custom's quarantine

and the nucleic acid test is negative, it shall be notified to the Frontier Inspection Department. The crew member shall be allowed to temporarily disembark for rest after the Frontier Inspection Department completes the crew's boarding and disembarkation formalities.

2. During the landing period, the activities of the crew shall be limited to the area where the shipyard is located. Details shall be specified by the Office of the Leading Group for Epidemic Prevention.

3. Crew members who have been landing for rest shall leave the country with the ship, and shall not leave the country in other ways without approval.

It is known that Qingdao has issued a similar *Notice* on dealing with foreign crew change. Ships planning to have crew change in China are suggested to contact local agent or local offices for the latest requirements by the port in question.



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- Updating Training for DIC of a Navigational Watch - Parts A and B
- Updating Course for Management Level Marine Deck Officers - Functions 1 and 3
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- Safe Navigation and Collision Regulation (SNCR)
- Cargo Handling and Care of Cargo (CHCC)
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- Refresher Course on SCRB
- Consolidated MARPOL 73/78 (CONSO-MARPOL)
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- Training Course for Instructors (IMO Model Course 6.89)
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# Back Front Again EMSA AUDIT REARS ITS HEAD

by Ligaya Caban

**There's talk The MARINA Administrator Robert Empedrad has been informed by an official of the Danish Shipowners Association that the Philippines is most likely to be banned by the European Union (EU). That, the big wallop has just been delayed by urgencies of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

It appears Empedrad even furnished maritime groups of The MARINA's comprehensive report to address EMSA, seeking inputs to even raise standards per STCW Conventions.

## **Teaming.**

In a live FB media briefing on December 17th, Empedrad said they received the Draft Report of EMSA on December 1st and has submitted MARINA's Response December 16th content of which is yet confidential.

He expects EU's assessment by April or May next year and the Philippines to respond in two months to "correct" shortfalls EU may list down. Vice Admiral Miranda is on top of things, bearing in mind Empedrad's 10-Point program.

In another meeting, Empedrad assures he will be open and share EMSA findings to the stakeholders who have been kept in the blind for years. He also solicits inputs from them, being the experts and frontliners of the industry.



DFA Locsin

## **From the top.**

The Administrator also shared he had met with Magda Kopczynska, Director for Waterborne Transport, DG Move, who seems to project EU's lost of trust on the Philippine resolve to upgrade standards. But they will still allow two months for a respond. After two months of assessment, EU will vote on the dis-accreditation or not of the Philippines.

If dis-accredited, those on board may work yet for five years but will not be renewed. 50,000 Filipino seafarers on board EU-flagged vessels will lost their jobs, sending shock waves to the Philippine economy.

The EMSA audit listed 35 deficiencies and 42 shortcomings over the years. While the tempest builds up, The MARINA and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) are on a turf war on which should regulate maritime schools, the epicenter of EMSA and EU's frustration.

## **Foreign policy.**

The matter of reforms was echoed

by Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr., speaking last November 23 at a virtual conference, *CrewConnect Global Session On Demand*, where he raised three points:

1. Seafarers are key frontline workers who continue to captain and steer ships to bring essential cargo like food, basic commodities, medical supplies and transportation services
2. Now, more than ever, our seafarers need our support, cooperation and creative thinking so they can continue to be deployed and offer their essential services.
3. As an archipelagic nation, seafaring is our competitive advantage. And then there is the Filipino affinity for the sea, it is part of our DNA. Spanish records tell that we were good at only two things: fighting and sailing.

Locsin spoke with candor: our 400,000 seafarers may be dis-accredited "Because our maritime schools are not up to European standards." But EU principals told Locsin they'd missed our seamen who learn very fast, adopt quickly to new technologies.

While optimistic, Locsin is wary things can change. China announced all incoming seafarers from or passing through the Philippines be COVID tested three days before boarding. Still, COVID positive seafarers get in, possibly with unqualified or crooked testing.

China further compounds the problem by insisting on Chinese crew for



vessels made in China. But this is standard cabotage law which demands for local crew for vessels plying on its waters.

#### **Glimmer.**

Guy Platten, now Intl Chamber of Shipping Secretary General (ICS), said at the Interferry Conference in October 2016 that "... the UK Chamber's relationship with the Philippines is stronger than ever. Many of our members employ Filipino crew, and I am delighted to say our Merchant Navy Training Board... is now working more closely than ever with Filipino agencies to help boost training standards further still."

Whichever the Brexit Issue is resolved, good words for the Philippines by UK to EU has some weight, given "They want to live up to the mantra that the EU is losing



ICS Platten

a bad tenant, but gaining a good neighbor."

More significantly, EU is losing its second biggest member, arguably one of its most globally influential member, most well-funded military.

#### **Fair hand.**

Further, Locsin highlighted the

country has implemented the **Green Lane** to facilitate safe, swift crew change and repatriation of seafarers --- a first in the world which covers movement of seafarers, licensed manning agencies, shipping companies, airlines, and ancillary services.

The Philippine consulate has resumed issuance of Crew List Visa (9C) to allow crew change and repatriation process of foreign seafarers in the Philippines. This is supplemented by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) allowing the entry of foreign seafarers for crew rotation.

While details of implementation may vary with other nations, the crux of Philippine protocols is to be fair to all, instead of juicing foreigners to the max.

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## RELIEF FROM DÖHLE SEAFRONT-MANILA



**Döhle Seafront Crewing (Manila)** Pres. Iris Baguilat mobilized a relief campaign for typhoon victims, like Ulysses, deadliest tropical cyclone to hit the Philippines. Atty. Baguilat worked with the United Filipino Seafarers (UFS) and the Coast Guard (PCG).

PCG RAdm Ronnie Gavan received for distribution packages of rice and canned goods, drinking water, toiletries, and PPEs like masks, shields and bunny suits. On top, Döhle Seafront helped UFS prepare homemade meals for PCG field personnel.

## PHILCAMSAT VENTURES WITH SIMWAVE

The **Philippine Center for Advanced Maritime Simulation and Training (PHILCAMSAT)** and **Simwave B.V.** signed December 11th a Joint Venture Agreement for a 'new era of continuous development' in the maritime industry like the customizable learning management system using the Simwave Maritime Assessment Program.

PHILCAMSAT CEO Gerardo Borromeo says the partnership sets a new standard in Asia, "better enabling us to not only meet but also anticipate the evolving demands."

Simwave CEO Marcel Kind sees the joining of forces, "will boost our footprint of our in-house developed LMS, VR- solutions as well as our Simwave Assessment Program."



*Simwave Kind, PHILCAMSAT Pol Haboc and Borromeo*

**Social distancing, yes;  
but be nearer in faith & peace --**

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## Build-up Continues

# FASTCAT TO GET TWO NEW VESSELS



**In what is seen as a major response, Archipelago Philippine Ferries Corporation, brand owner of FastCat, expects the arrival of two more brand-new vessels (FCM17 & FCM18). These bring to 16 its vessels, right on target, for a fleet of 30 by end of 2021.**

FCM17 and FCM18 are set to serve the islands of Palawan, Mindoro and/or Zamboanga- Basilan, supplementing the nine routes in Batangas-Calapan, Bulalacao-Caticlan, Iloilo-Bacolod, Dumaguete-Dapitan, Cebu-Tubigon, San Carlos-Toledo, Matnog-Dapdap, Matnog-San sidro and Liloan-Lipata.

The two new vessels feature:

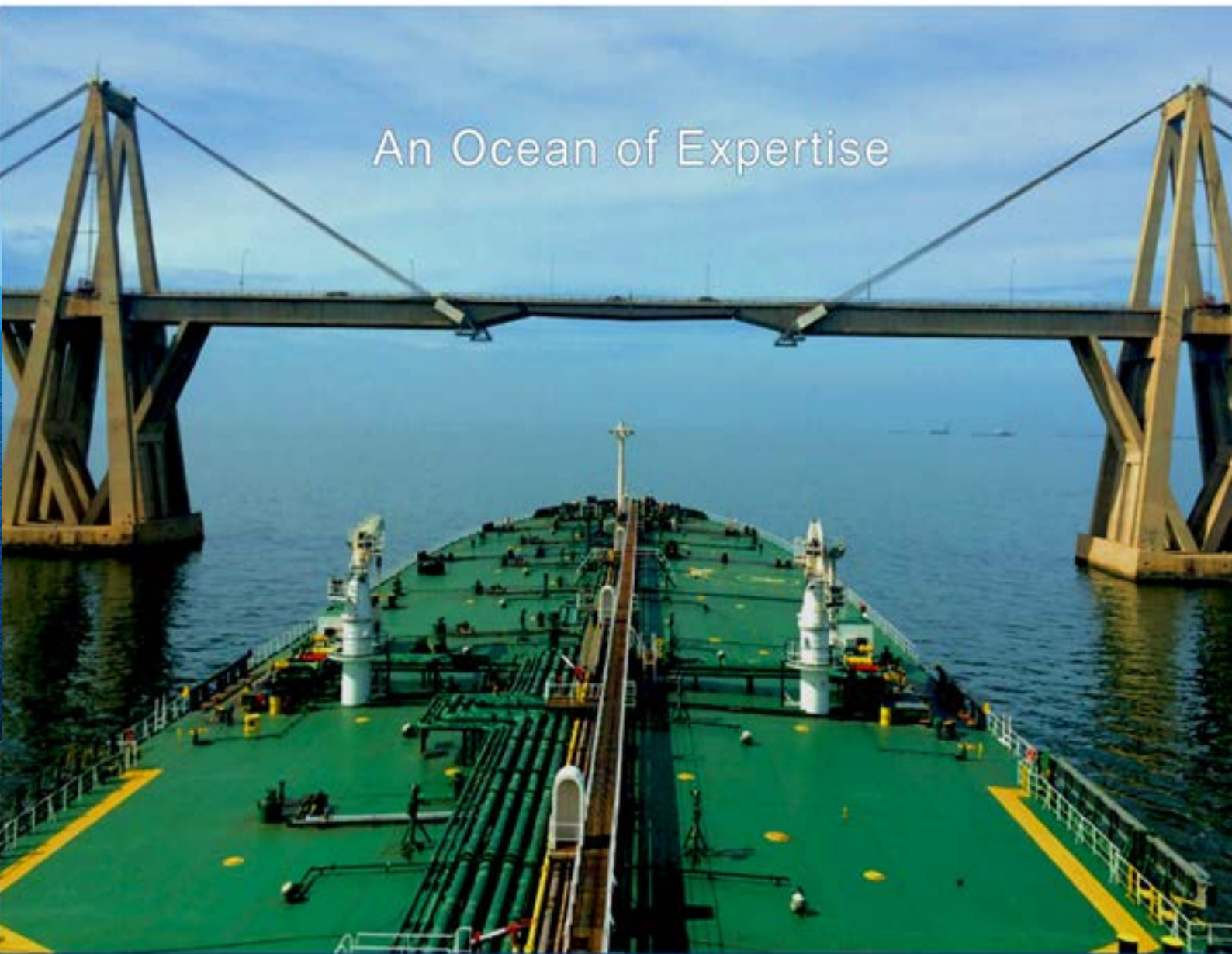
- Engines upgraded with a higher horse power for better performance
- Air conditioning uses water-cooling system, emitting less Carbon Dioxide (CO2)
- Dedicated accommodation area with an exclusive rest room; tv set and air conditioning at the main deck for People with Disability (PWD), the elderly and the pregnant. Those more physically capable can stay at the upper sections with accommodation options.
- *Sunbrella* roofing material used reduces the heat at the sundeck, this amenity popular in Australia and tropical countries.
- Bridge control system is improved with more equipment for additional safety in navigation.
- Bow thrusters enhance maneuverability for docking and undocking, more so during strong winds and current ensuring safety.
- Comfort rooms have been improved, luggage compartments added in the main and upper deck for ease.
- Seating has been increased to 360 from 325; with capacity for 34 cars, 7 trucks or buses, at least.
- It is certified and compliant with local and international safety standards to ensure the safety of its passengers and the rolling cargo it carries.

And more innovations:





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