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Ronald Spithout

SEAFARERS CLAIM CONNECTIVITY RIGHTS

- PH CREW CHANGE HUB
- CHINA IMPOSES RESTRICTIONS
- SPOT A CYBER ATTACK
- PHIL-NORWAY RELATIONS



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ABOUT THE COVER

Technology is not just a marketing come-on but an essential cog in the chain of health, safety and well-being of seafarers and allied workers. Indeed, this new paradigm is well declared, and solidly supported, by major players of the maritime world.

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PUBLISHER NOTE

BUILDING THE INFRA OF SUCCESS

Reassuring and courageous, the perspective of Transport Secretary Arthur Tugade that, “The Filipino seafarers carry with them the values of dedication, resiliency, discipline and excellence. No pandemic can ever dampen or stop us....”

And well-based on the scale our mariners are chartering blue waters in all continents; 350,000 of them, 25% of the global workforce of 1.5 million.

Our seafarers easily adapt, trait so elemental in shipping which is the world’s most resilient industry, performing 24/7 amidst storms and typhoons, wars and pirates, politics and pandemics --- to keep the logistical chain for the survival of peoples.

The Green Lane concept allows for safe and unimpeded travel of seafarers, important for crew

changes as our mariners comb the world to sustain operations, to replace tired colleagues, to answer emergencies.

The process works, as seen in the increase of deployment for our seafarers on merchant ships. (Yet unknown is the fate of a larger block serving cruise ships critically pinned by the havoc of the COVID-19 pandemic.)

For positive trends to be sustainable, the country must face herculean challenges, reform systems as we correct attitudes, instill better motives other than predatory practices.

Words and beautiful words are never lacking in our country steeped in partisan politics. Effective performance is something else, as immortality cannot be achieved alive.

Baby steps must begin, like the

policy on ease of doing business, simplified process sans red tapes and corruption. Cultivate true partnership between shipowners, shipmanagers, manning agencies, seafarers and government regulatory bodies.

Simply stated, we have to invest to expect profit. Be serious, institutionalize revamps and reforms. Short of these, we turn to petty politics and criminal practices as stress relievers, as in taking illegal drugs when facing shortfalls or failures.

But life must go on, the silver linings are real, most extrapolations are viable given Sec. Tugade’s assurance that, “... the Philippines believe on the importance of continuous capacity expansion through enhance seaport infrastructure and linkages...”



SEAFARERS CLAIM CONNECTIVITY RIGHTS

Ronald Spithout
President, Inmarsat Maritime

Anxieties and restrictions arising from COVID-19 have added new connectivity imperatives when it comes to crew welfare.

While COVID-19 has made global shipping's role in delivering vital supplies abundantly clear, new stressors have emerged for those working at sea, including unsought tour extensions, denial of medical assistance ashore and day-to-day confinement with untested colleagues.

The toll is measurable in the fatigue that can undermine operational safety, but the impact on mental well-being is also strong, given the stresses of extended confinement onboard and worries about the welfare of those left at home.

Understandably, one outcome of coronavirus has been a marked increase in demand for seafarer connectivity. Furthermore, while the focus for development in ship-to-shore communications over recent years has been on data and digitalisation, the pandemic has reinforced the power of the

voice call to cut through to sustain well-being in difficult times.

Given Inmarsat's position as the leading provider of maritime VSAT services at sea, it is hardly surprising that we have been alert to the direct connection between coronavirus and surging demand for crew calling. In fact, since the virus first became widespread in Asia we have been working across the company and with partners to keep seafarers connected.

As early as February, Inmarsat responded by offering free additional call time for existing ChatCard voice service users, which seafarers call upon for around 600,000 minutes every month.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has unfolded, we have consulted with increasing frequency with partners at ISWAN, Sailors' Society, Seafarers UK, Mission to Seafarers and Apostleship of the Sea, going on to develop a formal strategy to help seafarers stay connected without the burden of additional financial anxiety. In April, Inmarsat launched a

50% discount for crew voice calling services available for up to 40,000 ships. The discount was made available day and night to Inmarsat retail customers using FleetBroadband ChatCard voice services. The offer was also rolled through to wholesale partners via the Inmarsat Crew Calling (SQT) service and strongly recommend they pass on the full saving to crew.

Inmarsat also brought forward its launch of ChatCard services 8,500-plus Fleet Xpress-installed vessels, which already get unlimited high-speed data services. The service was also made available with an introductory discount.

In addition to continuing to offer free voice phone calls to the ISWAN SeafarerHelp service, crew can now also access the SeafarerHelp portal and live chat function via Inmarsat Crew Xpress, with its new onboard 'Fleet Hotspot' Wi-Fi portal. SeafarerHelp is ISWAN's free, confidential, multilingual helpline, which offers support and assistance to seafarers and their families around the world, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Inmarsat continues to provide satellite phones to Port Chaplains in ports where a number of seafarers are stranded and have no access to the internet. In addition, we already provide medical advice and assistance free of charge to seafarers over its Fleet One, FleetBroadband and F77 services – anywhere, anytime and for anybody in need.

Where Fleet Xpress services are concerned, Inmarsat had already made telemedicine a priority as an area for service development. This has also been reflected in our response to Covid-19. Inmarsat launched a free of charge COVID-19 video call service in April, developed in conjunction with crew health management solutions provider Vikand and software platform provider FrontM.

The pro bono COVID-19 service is offered via the dedicated bandwidth service Fleet Connect and allows the Master or Chief Officer to connect by video call to a trained health professional, offering real-time advice on the coronavirus, its symptoms and what to look out for. The service is now live and available on over 150 vessels with a further 1,000+ vessels in the pipeline. While not a clinical care or emergency service, this is a vital resource to help seafarers navigate COVID-19 related, medical questions and ensure that their right to be informed is given due respect.

Even before COVID-19, Inmarsat had commissioned research to investigate consistent but anecdotal evidence that safety and crew welfare has been left behind in any dividend resulting from shipping's digital revolution. A measure of the gap between operational and crew welfare investment commitments was established in the resulting 'Welfare 2.0: How can the next generation of technology enable better crew safety, health and wellbeing at sea?' report from consultancy Thetius.

The report shows that, while the maritime industry prides itself that seafarer safety and welfare is its highest priority, lower investment in

the digitalised technologies benefiting worker welfare undermines the narrative. On average, start-ups focusing on issues like crew wellbeing, welfare and safety have been attracting only \$2.25 million in investment since 2010. This compares to \$9.6 million for ship performance technology start-ups.

As the crew repatriation crisis continues to dog shipping, it is fair to say that – even with the benefit of hindsight – few positives will be associated with coronavirus. However, perhaps one will be that the modern seafarer can hope for connectivity to be perceived as a right rather than a privilege, as those drafting the Manila amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention always intended.

Another may come about after the impact

chest management and technical support part of crew management itself.

Hopefully, other positive lessons may follow. Technology cannot turn wilful corner-cutting into best practice, for example, but it can be used to embed policies and practices to enhance safety and wellbeing on board. Data-based tools supported by real-time connectivity can be used to test what does and doesn't work for the 'human element'.

Thetius, for example, suggests that fleet managers could usefully invest in digital seafarer monitoring and awareness tools specific to cardiovascular health. Again, the Welfare 2.0 report highlights how downloadable toolboxes that bridge the gap between seafarers and vessel safety are emerging. Scoutbase allows crew to

offer feedback anonymously to highlight safety issues, for example, while Big Yellow Fish uses gaming techniques to reinforce desirable behaviours.

Meanwhile, the report highlights that coronavirus may have important consequences for seafarer training. The closure of education facilities led Wallem, Anglo-Eastern and Star Bulk to deploy a virtual training package from OMS-VR on dangerous activities, for example. It remains to be seen whether reopened training classrooms will be as full as they once were.

to the Directorate General for Mobility and Transport, Directorate D-Waterborne, acknowledged by Directive 2008/106/EC2.

Calderon expects the party headed by Director for Waterborne Transport Magda Kopczynska who says more EU member

States want to join "to see for themselves the progress of implementation of EO 63..." based on the timeline submitted. They may come about the second week of April, this year.



video-enabled telemedicine solutions are making on crew welfare is fully digested. Inmarsat's belief is that solutions available and dedicated bandwidth via Fleet connect can make services such as regular/urgent doctor calls, 24/7 support hotlines, disease management, medical

Technology To Enhance Crew Safety, Health and Well-being

WELFARE 2.0 REPORT INVESTIGATES

Inmarsat has published a new report focusing on the way technology can benefit crew safety, health and wellbeing at sea, at a moment when COVID-19 has exposed the welfare of seafarers to global scrutiny.

“Welfare 2.0: How can the next generation of technology enable better crew safety, health and wellbeing at sea?” report, has been prepared by consultancy Thetius. It follows an earlier ‘Trade 2.0’ report focusing on the impact new technologies and start-ups can have on efficiency in vessel management.

“When we first discussed this report last year with the author and the welfare organisations and charities we work closely with, none of us could have foreseen the impact that COVID-19 would have on the world, shipping, seafarers and their families,” says Ronald Spithout, President, Inmarsat Maritime.

“However, even then, we all felt that safety and crew welfare was being left behind in the technology stakes and much more needed to be done to look at how it could help improve the lives of seafarers.”

The new report explores the underlying factors affecting crew safety, welfare and learning, and highlights those companies working to address the pain points. It shows that, while the maritime industry prides itself that seafarer safety and welfare is its highest priority, lack of investment in the digitalised technologies benefiting worker welfare, particularly compared to investment in other sectors, undermines the narrative.

“We are at a point in time when lack of shore leave, unplanned contract extensions, fear of job loss and separation from family are weighing heavily on seafarers worldwide”, said Spithout. “Technology cannot provide a “silver bullet”.

However, its role is vital in embedding policies and practices to enhance safety and wellbeing on board. Data-based tools test what does and doesn’t work for the ‘human element’ and track changes over time.”

The new report also represents the

first step in Welfare 2.0, Spithout adds. Inmarsat is already working towards the launch of a ‘Crew Welfare Open Innovation Challenge’ with Shell Shipping and Maritime and Thetius – a corporate startup collaboration to promote and nurture digital crew well-being solutions.

In a global workplace, wellness market was worth \$48 billion in 2018, reports author Nick Chubb of Thetius who also says that investments in crew welfare start-ups pale in comparison with vessel management technology.

While difficult to break-out, the \$3.8 billion spent on ship management software each year, Chubb identifies that startups focusing on issues like wellbeing, welfare and safety have on average attracted only \$2.25 million in investment since 2010. This compares to \$9.6 million for ship performance technology start-ups.

The report strongly recommends the value that data models capturing, storing and analysing factors contributing to seafarer health, welfare, and safety can have in shipping. The author cites one key insight as an alarming disparity between cardiovascular-related deaths at sea and available information, support and tools that minimise risks and deal with emergencies. The report shows how fleet managers could look to invest in various digital seafarer monitoring and awareness tools specific to cardiovascular health.

COVID-19 may itself have made maritime stakeholders more amenable to telemedicine services. Over 200 ships have already signed up to a new COVID-19 video consultation service from Vikand, facilitated by AI start-up FrontM and Inmarsat Fleet Connect bandwidth. Elsewhere, start-up Motion Ventures has repurposed a financial compliance tool to support secure healthcare monitoring for crews at home, on board or in transit.

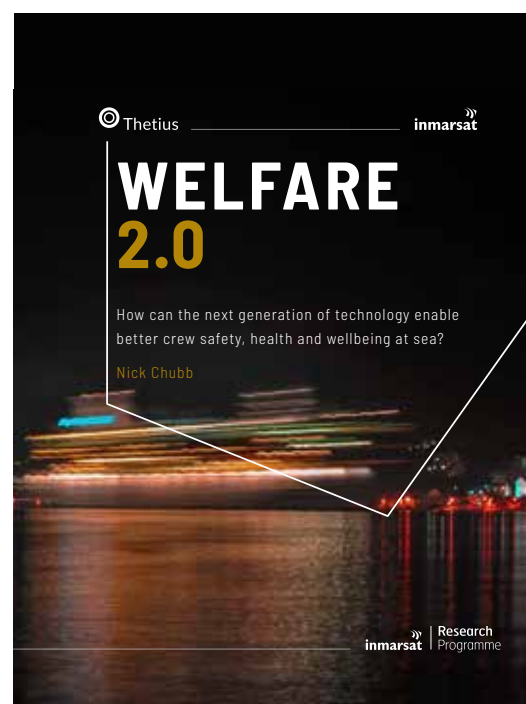
The report also explores possible consequences of the coronavirus for seafarer training, with the closure of education facilities

encouraging faster uptake of remote learning. Wallem, Anglo-Eastern and Star Bulk have deployed virtual training from OMS-VR to learn about dangerous activities, for example. UK-based Seabot XR is developing ship-specific VR and augmented reality training and familiarisation, accessible to seafarers via their smartphones.

Downloadable toolboxes bridging the gap between seafarers and vessel safety are also at last starting to emerge. The Scoutbase platform, for example, allows crew to offer feedback anonymously of life on board to build a picture of emerging safety issues and separately Maritime startup Big Yellow Fish creates a “net safety score” and uses gaming technology to reinforce desirable behaviours.

“Technology is not the only answer, but its development is vital if the industry is going to start to eliminate the issues we currently face with crew wellbeing,” says Spithout. “It is imperative that all stakeholders now come together to create and work on common platforms to collect data, anonymise it, share it and use it to identify wider welfare trends.”

The report can be downloaded at <https://www2.inmarsat.com/inmarsat-welfare-2.0>



CAN YOU SPOT A CYBERATTACK?

About half of seafarers are not confident they would know about a cyber issue onboard, a core conclusion of the Ship Operators Cyber Security Survey by Futureautics last September, 2017.

Ship owners must not ignore this risk; ships and seafarers are prime targets for cyberattacks.

Fleet Secure Cyber Awareness is an app-based e-learning tool for seafarers, developed by the MLA College, guided by the University of Sunderland; content within guidelines on Maritime Cyber Security published by the IMO (Intl

Maritime Organization), BIMCO (The Baltic and Intl Maritime Council) and Classification Societies.

The e-learning tool is available through Google Play and AppStore to download and install on devices before voyage. Simple training modules provide guidance and tutoring against potential digital threats, to stop threats before one gets onboard.

The app works offline; no need to utilise vessel bandwidth or personal time ashore.

Each 30-minute training module covers digital threats using personal information and IT devices, the physical and human threat and final competency test and completion certificate (from the University of Sunderland and a certificate of Continuing Professional Development from the Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology).

For Inmarsat referral discounts, email cybersafe@stapint.com or maritime.security@inmarsat.com.

CREW WELFARE OPEN INNOVATION CHALLENGE

This *Challenge* for start-ups and SMEs will fund and test application that helps improve the safety of deck operations, minimises fatigue on board, reduces administration on board and improves overall crew welfare.

Inmarsat, the world leader in global, mobile satellite communications, has joined forces with Shell Shipping and Maritime and maritime digital consultancy Thetius to launch a new 'Open Innovation Challenge' for start-ups and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

The *Challenge* aims to identify technology that can benefit crew safety, health and wellbeing at sea at a moment when COVID-19 has exposed the welfare of seafarers to global scrutiny.

The six-week Open Innovation Challenge is looking for novel solutions that have the potential to improve crew safety and welfare across four innovation challenge areas spanning deck safety, fatigue, administration reduction and overall wellbeing.

Thetius Managing Director Nick Chubb will run the Challenge, stressing "We are seeking applications for solutions from start-ups and SMEs who want to conduct a proof of concept onboard a vessel."

Shell Shipping and Maritime and Inmarsat also support the *Challenge*, and require a proponent to submit a pitch that details proposed solution and a proof of concept onboard a Shell vessel."

Promising solutions shall be shortlisted; and proponents invited by the end

of September to pitch their idea to a decision-making jury. Majority of the jurors are serving seafarers, with representatives from Inmarsat, Shell Shipping and Maritime and the welfare sector.

Top choice will be awarded a £10,000 GBP cash grant to test their idea by implementing a proof of concept onboard a vessel; plus support from Shell Shipping and Maritime, Thetius and Inmarsat.

"Shell is committed to improving the safety and wellbeing of seafarers," said Richard Holdsworth, Shell's Maritime Ventures Lead. "We are excited to learn more and help support new technologies that could make a difference to the welfare of crews."



Marketing Her Interest PH POSITIONS AS CREW CHANGE HUB

by Coca H. Strobar

The Philippines champions the Green Lane Agreement, a magnanimous thrust which benefits seafarers. In concept, they can travel seamless over foreign borders to and from crew change.

In pragmatic terms, it is for the country's seafarers huge enough to claim the Philippines as the "Manning Capital" of the world. Statistically, China has a larger force but her mariners serve only on China-flagged vessels.

Two mountains block the realization of the ideal:

- Foreign Port Administrations are unwilling to open their borders (as diminution of sovereignty and an opportunity to make money on the documentation.)
- Philippine facilities are suspect on COVID-19 testing accuracy, with unauthorized people milling, peddling as in a market,

"facilitation services" at areas of embarkation and disembarkation.

(Small wonder Australia is threatening to dishonour certifications from the Philippines as two vessels, *Patricia Oldendorff* and *Vega Dream*, called from Manila at Port Hedland, Western Australia, with 21 and 7 COVID-19 positives.)

The latter mess has been observed by many, prominently by an executive of a manning agency known in the industry for hands-on assistance on crew changes, even personally accompanying his seafarers at local piers and airports.

Fighting words.

Transport Secretary Arthur P. Tugade has beautiful pronouncement at the World Maritime Day webinar held September 24th, also United Nations' 75th Anniversary.

He was joined by heavyweights:

UNGC CEO and Executive Director Sanda Ojiambo, ILO Director General Guy Ryder, IMO Secretary General Kitack Lim, International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) General Secretary Stephen Cotton, and International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) Secretary General Guy Platten.

Other transport ministers participated: Canada's Marc Garneau, France's Annick Girardin, Kenya's James Macharia and Panama's Noriel Araúz.

Tugade: "We have adopted policies that paved the way to strengthening the maritime industry and our seafaring activities (given Filipinos are about 25% of the 1.5 million seafarers worldwide).

He then recited accomplishments:

Established the Green Lane for safe and unimpeded travel of seafarers

Identified ports to serve as crew change hubs with One-Stop-Shops for the

uniformed processing of arrivals in all gateways.

- Extended for 1 year validity the Seafarer STCW certificates, the Seafarer Record Book, the Seafarer Identification and Record Book to ensure the unhampered deployment and crew change of Filipino seafarers
- Completed 360 port projects, inaugurated four notwithstanding this pandemic.

Increased deployment.

At the VCafe@DOLE webinar October 7th, Phil Overseas Employment Administrator Bernard Olalia observes that after the approval of the Green Lane system, some 50,000 deployments occurred in July, followed by 40,000 more in August and September.

While there is increase in commercial vessels (cargo, containers, tankers), POEA has no stats on the cruise ships deployment. POEA appears not ready for sector statistics as to type of skills, vessels deployed, the likes, these being excluded in its website.

Whispers.

Test results are suspect (like so many false positives). Yet, business mandarins continue to control the testings, in connivance with senior government bureaucrats. Australia's threat may lead to reforms, with Singapore and China also getting

frustrated.

The defence is that those tested positive picked the virus in transit. This is not credible as the seafarers go direct to the next port from homeport. More credible is the rumor test kits donated by a foreign source are being peddled as the test kits.

Expanding reach.

The government was criticized for setting only in a Manila airport a One-Stop Green Lane. In response, Green Lane hubs are being organized in Manila, Subic-Bataan, Capinpin-Bataan, Batangas, Cebu and Davao, all scheduled for test runs within October.

Under the Port Management Office of Bataan/Aurora, the Port Capinpin quarantine facility sits on a 1,271.6 square-meter area with a 124-bed capacity, 25 cubicles for high-risk cases separated by a Nursing Station. It was funded from a Php100-million donation of the Lopez Group of Companies.

GM Jay Daniel Santiago of the Ports Authority (PPA) expressed gratitude, even recalling the same donation funded a quarantine facility at Pier 15, South Harbor in Manila. Similar sentiment was shared by Bataan Governor Albert Garcia who was with his local officials.

Others include U/Sec for Defense Operations Cesar B. Yano, Transportation Security (OTS) Administrator Raul Del Rosario, DOTr U/Sec-Administrative Services and Inter-Agency Task Force



(IATF) Representative Artemio Tuazon, Jr., ASec-Maritime Narciso Vingson, Jr., ASec-Communications, Commuter Affairs Goddess Hope Libiran and PMO Bataan/ Aurora Acting Port Manager Allan Rojo.

More facilities.

Earlier on October 5th, Santiago led the formal commissioning of the new South Harbor Molecular Laboratory for seafarers at the PPA GAD Center, Port Area, Manila. This RT-PCR laboratory tests 2,000 daily, with a 24 to 48-hour turnaround time for results.

The facility also provides a One-Stop-Shop to assist seafarers in their travel requirements, in identifying possible isolation facilities for mandatory quarantine until certificates are released.

Foreign offsigners.

Undersecretary for Civilian Security and Consular Concerns Brigido J. Dulay announced starting September 7th, his department "will no longer issue endorsement letters for the entry/transit of foreign seafarers who will disembark for their repatriation, except for crew members whose vessels are already in the country before the said date."

Disembarking foreign seafarers should already possess 9c Crew List visas, which may be obtained by the



Eastmed Flores (left) supervises crew change protocols onboard

licensed manning agency (LMA), the ship's agent or their authorized representative, on behalf of the foreign seafarers at Philippine Foreign Service Posts (FSPs).

Some observers believe the re-imposition of the 9C Crew List Visa of arriving vessels is ill-timed with the raging pandemic, more so for foreign off-signers who are not familiar with the process, has very limited time at the port, pushing them not to call anymore at the Philippines.

Eastmed Manning GM Edgardo Flores thinks this hard to comply with as the 9C imprints the visa on the passport which seafarers get only on arrival of their vessels. This would mean delay and extra expenses for the ship owners; pushing them to just call off from Philippine ports.

Wary.

MARINO Party-list Representative Macnell Lusotan has requested the Department of Foreign Affairs

(DFA) to revisit its implementing guidelines on disembarking foreign seafarers as being counterproductive to the Philippines' ambition to be an international hub for crew change.

Lusotan cited Singapore and India that became lenient as to disembarkation of foreign nationals on their home turf. Singapore enhanced their crew change by considering compassionate grounds for allowing seafarers to disembark; India allowed disembarkation as long as the seafarer presents a temporary landing permit.

The lawmaker also believes the imposition of a valid 9(c) Philippine-issued visa upon arrival is impossible to comply with given that some ship owners decide to divert their ships to Philippine waters for crew change on abrupt notices.

Lusotan thinks when foreign seafarers disembark in the country, it opens employment opportunities to Filipino

seafarers. If crew change occurs, Lusotan said it will be win-win for both the seafarer and the country's economy.

He calculates for 90 ships per month to be diverted to our country by Japan's IMMAJ, it will generate at least Php 67.9M in regulatory fees alone, helping our economy grapple with the effects of the COVID-19.

Double-edged.

Some quarters disagree with Lusotan because other countries may follow suit. Filipino seafarers may then suffer as they are now the "foreigners" overseas.

The Philippines stand on feet of clay, given our testing processes are suspect; even PCG Commandant George V. Ursabia Jr. admits to about a thousand of them are infected, embarrassing the admiral since PCG handles health protocols at Pier 15.



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CREW CHANGE GETS MIXED REACTIONS

by Ligaya Caban

Sam Chambers wrote as early as July that Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia rein in crew change freedoms, with calls growing for a crackdown on Filipino manning agencies.

As part of restrictions, only Singapore-flagged ships can now change crews therein coupled with very tricky logistically and financially demands.

Singaporean authorities claim they had discovered a number of Filipinos had been flouting quarantine regulations, some even carrying tampered coronavirus tests (allegedly available in Manila for \$2).

Carl Martin Faannessen, a crewing specialist based in Manila, has called for the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) to step in.

“The manning agencies involved should be identified and lose their license immediately, with no right of appeal. Trust in local regulatory bodies will vaporize unless stern action is taken.”

Among supporters of Faannessen's view is **Carl Schou**, the president of Wilhelmsen Ship Management.

Restrictions.

Hong Kong now bans all crew changes for ships without scheduled cargo operations there. This southern Chinese city had been one of Asia's most open ports for crew changes. Gripped by a third wave of the pandemic, new regulations were implemented to try and halt the spread of the virus.

Malaysia has also decided to toughen up its stance on crew changes by imposing 14-day quarantine for foreigners arriving at Kuala Lumpur airport.

Elsewhere, due to the deteriorating Covid-19 situation in Oman and a spike in daily confirmed cases, all crew changes have been halted.

A Manila-based agency was offered PhP100k per head by unnamed shipowner if they could release

Covid-19 test results early in the morning. Ship demurrage will be costlier for the principal; but she politely declined even if commensurate with the principal.

Matthew O’Crowley suggests to stop using the term ‘agency’ for these crooks, just call them what they are-human traffickers. Faannessen disagrees as “There are many agents who do



excellent work in ensuring continued employment and development of seafarers in the Philippines”.

Joost Mes was circumspect: there's no proof the Agency nor the seafarers tampered the COVID certificates. He believes, “The only way to avoid this tempering is to arrange testing direct with clinic and let the result be send direct to the agency iso via the seafarer. Some agencies are booking tests at private clinics (as results are faster) but those clinics procedures are such that they email the result only to the patient (Seafarer).”

Cedric Caguioa of HSSE and Operations SI at Maersk Tankers agrees, “Weed out these unscrupulous operators who tarnish the good name of others.”

Marc Van Mael suggests the use of higher technology: Monitor the crew's actual health with Care4C wearable technology and analysis. Combined with other medical measured data, it will give a correct update of the crew's health status while at sea.

The crew will have at all times an up-to-date “virtual seamen's book” with correct verified health data upstreamed from the wearable to the cloud. These data can be verified by a local doctor or the vessels flagstate medical centre to give a “safe to travel” clearance.



Mockery of the Green Lane Agreement

CHINA IMPOSES ENTRY RESTRICTIONS

A joint announcement was made by the Chinese Ministry of Transport, General Administration of Customs and Ministry of Foreign Affairs “on strengthening the prevention and control of spread of COVID-19 pandemic for seafarers on international sea-going vessels.”

The protocols shall be in accordance with the Frontier Health and Quarantine Law of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), its Emergency Response Law, Maritime Traffic Safety Law and relevant PRC regulations.

These shall apply to the vessels which the change of seafarers has been conducted at the previous port or place, or the change of seafarers has been conducted within 14 days before the vessels come to China. The signing-on seafarers shall conduct nucleic acid amplification technique (NAT) tests for COVID-19 showing negative results within 3 days before boarding.

The NAT test should be conducted in an institution designated or approved by the Chinese embassies or consulates overseas.

These shall apply to vessels which are entering the first visiting port in China for arranging the entry formalities. Copies of the NAT test certificates showing negative results shall be presented, through the vessels or owners or ship agencies, if the change of seafarers has been conducted at the previous port or place, or the change of seafarers has been conducted within 14 days before entry to China.

A violation may cause the vessel from being banned from departing or operating at PRC ports. Entry into China without or with false NAT COVID-19 negative certification is considered severe violation and may be criminally liable.

For the original Chinese announcement, visit http://xxgk.mot.gov.cn/2020/jigou/gjhzs/202009/t20200924_3470186.html.

In the Philippines, 18 NAT testing laboratories were approved as updated Sept.25th by the Dept of Health (DOH)-Philippines.

These are administered by the PRC Embassy in Metro Manila, by its Consulates in Davao, Cebu and Laoag

for a nationwide spread.

Exact locations and details of the testing laboratories are herein published.

核酸检测机构名单 (2020年9月25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 September 25, 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	Mandaluyong City	Philippine Red Cross Logistics and Multipurpose Center	rRT PCR	(02) 8790-2300	12-31-2020
3	NCR	Metro Manila	Bonifacio Global City	St. Luke's Medical Center - BGC (HB)	rRT PCR	(02) 8789-7700	04/11/2020 - 12/31/2020
4	NCR	Metro Manila	Quezon City	Hi-Precision (QC)	rRT PCR	(02) 8741-7777	05/27/2020 - 12/31/2020
5	NCR	Metro Manila	Pasay City	Philippine Airport Diagnostic Laboratory	rRT PCR	0996-7917788; (02)82515868	07/09/2020 - 12/31/2020
6	Region 4A	Cavite	Imus City	Ospital ng Imus, City of Imus Molecular Laboratory	rRT PCR		06/04/2020 - 12/31/2020
驻宿务总领馆 CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN CEBU							
7	Region 7	Cebu	Lapu Lapu City	Allegiant Regional Care Hospital	rRT PCR	(032) 493-4248	05/11/2020 - 12/31/2020
8	Region 7	Cebu	Manduae City	University of Cebu Medical Center	rRT PCR		07/17/2020 - 12/31/2020
9	Region 7	Cebu	Cebu City	Prime Care Alpha Covid-19 Testing Laboratory	rRT PCR	(032)2322273; (032)2610367; 0966-4993587; 0927-955624	
10	Region 6	Negros Occidental	Bacolod City	Philippine Red Cross-Negros Occidental Molecular Laboratory	rRT PCR		
11	Region 7	Cebu	Cebu City	Chong Hua Hospital	rRT PCR		08/06/2020 - 12/31/2020
12	Region 6	Iloilo	Mandurriao	Qualimed Health Network-Iloilo	rRT PCR	(033)5014843, (033)5004000, (033)5004004	
13	Region 6	Negros Occidental	Bacolod City	Bacolod Queen of Mercy Hospital	rRT PCR	(034)4312559	
14	Region 6	Negros Occidental	Bacolod City	The Doctors Hospital, Inc.	rRT PCR	(034)4682100	
驻拉瓦格领事馆 CONSULATE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN LAOAG							
15	Region I	La Union	San Fernando	Ilocos Training and Regional Medical Center	rRT PCR	(072) 607-6418; 607-6422	05/20/2020 - 12/31/2020
16	Region I	Ilocos Norte	Batac	Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital	Cartridge - Based PCR	(077) 600-8000	06/13/2020 - 12/31/2020
17	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							
18	Region II	Davao Del Sur	Davao City	Davao One World Diagnostic Center Incorporated	rRT PCR	09177220101	05/28/2020 - 12/31/2020

IMO UPDATES CREW CHANGE PROTOCOLS

by Coca H. Strobar

At a Manila port



The Intl Maritime Organization (IMO) of the United Nations has issued updated protocols to ensure safe crew change and travel during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a 61-page Circular Letter No.4204/Add.14/Rev.1 (*Circular Letter*) of 5 October 2020, IMO's "Recommended Framework of Protocols" are detailed emphasizing the need for compliance and strict adherence with COVID-19 testing and quarantine requirements the pandemic being now a reality in almost all national jurisdictions.

The changes also reinforce the importance of seafarers not commencing or continuing to travel if they feel unwell or suspect that they may have COVID-19 symptoms.

Some additional recommendations have also been included to prevent infection on board when seafarers join their ship. But, except for a few minor editorials, no other substantive changes have been made.

Endorsed.

IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim expressed support for these Protocols and urged Member States and international organizations to make use of the Circular Letter among their relevant authorities for maritime issues, health, customs, immigration, border control, seaport and civil aviation authorities.

The protocols were first issued May 5,

2020 as Circular Letter No. 4204/Add. 14. Circular Letter No. 4204/Add. 6 has recognized seafarers as "key worker" in the global logistics chain.

The Circular Letter of October 5th is a product of exhaustive consultations with established relevant bodies like ICS, IAPH, BIMCO, IFSMA, INTERTANKO, P&I CLUBS, CLIA, INTERCARGO, INTERMANAGER, IPTA, IMCA, INTERFERRY, FONASBA, ITF, WSC and IATA.

Mandatories.

Aside from compliance with documents and certifications, IMO advises seafarers that local authorities may often be preeminent over Conventions nor Agreements. Worth noting are two provisions, viz:

1.1.5 - Comply with all standard infection protection and control precautions related to social distancing, self isolation, hygiene (e.g. hand washing, avoid touching face, etc) and safe food handling practices in accordance with WHO, national or local guidance.

1.1.14 – Companies must provide seafarers with personal protective equipment (like masks, gloves, hand sanitizers, thermometer, etc) or PPE which may be made available by third parties for a specific time or use.

Cyberattack.

Meanwhile, a number of IMO's web-

based services became unavailable on last September 30th due to an unexpected cyber-attack.

Systems impacted included the IMO public website and other web-based services. IMO's internal and external email systems continued to function, so did the KUDO platform (used for virtual meeting sessions with simultaneous interpretation).

The interruption of web-based services was caused by a sophisticated cyber-attack against the Organization's IT systems that overcame robust security measures.

IMO has ISO/IEC 27001:2013 certification for its information security management system. IMO was the first UN organization to get this certification in 2015.

The IMO Headquarters file servers are located in the UK, with extensive backup systems in Geneva. The backup and restore system is regularly tested.

The Secretariat is working with UN International Computing Centre (UN ICC) and security experts to restore systems as soon as possible, to identify the source of the attack, and further enhance security systems to prevent recurrence.

Service has been restored to the GISIS database; IMODOCS; and Virtual Publications. Other web-based services will be online as soon and as safe as possible.



ENHANCED QUARANTINE, TESTING FACILITY LAUNCHED

By Atty. Iris Baguilat
President, Döhle Seafront Crewing (Manila)

In what is seen as a major response to the Crew Change dilemma, the Intl Maritime Employers Council (IMEC) and the Intl Federation of Transport Workers (ITF) jointly launched an enhanced quarantine and testing facility in Manila under the auspices of the Associated Marine Officers and Seamen's Union of the Phil (AMOSUP).

When the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic impacted the global economy, one of the hardest hit was shipping, the lifeblood of a massive network of men and ships that make sure the global economy is moving.

It draws into the national consciousness the role of the more than 400,000 Filipino seafarers play in an industry that carries 90 % of the global economy via ship and with more than half of these men belonging to one single nationality.

When borders restrict and nations close doors to arrest the massive rise of Covid-19, seafarers, and ships, were caught in between with most not able to come home nor join ships to relieve those who have been overstaying onboard to the detriment of health and mental well-being.

The call for governments of flag states signatory to the Intl Maritime Organization (IMO) lead to ease on restrictions and let the movement of seafarers come through was met with feet dragging forcing some of the biggest shipping organizations and labor unions to call out for

intervention to avoid a massive humanitarian crisis that was fast taking shape.

For the Philippines, maritime stakeholders had to double their efforts in trying to relay to the government the urgency of the problem. This is not just a matter of a few jobs lost, but a huge chunk off the country's economic coffers from an industry that annually contributes more than US\$7-billion in remittance.

Thus, the "Green Lane" was born created by the Phil government led by the MARINA to ensure seafarers are accorded speedy and safe travel, subject to health protocols mandated by the Philippine government, including

safe and swift disembarkation and crew change during the COVID-19 pandemic. This also intends to prevent the spread of COVID-19 for both Filipino and foreign seafarers whether inbound, outbound or transiting during crew change or repatriation.

Rising cases.

It is pointed out that some foreign ports are putting ships on a two-week hold before being allowed to berth when they learn that it just had a crew-change in the Philippines.

The Manila Times reported the Maritime Port Authority (MPA) of Singapore's statement revealing that test results among seafarers who are to



Crew arrival in Manila from Hamburg on a flight chartered by Peter Döhle Schiffahrts-KG, Menzell & Döhle Group, and BTH Business Travel.

join their vessels in Singapore have been tampered. The MPA did not mention the home country of seafarers who tested positive for the disease. However, a Filipino manning agency application for a crew change was recently rejected by the MPA.

As per IMEC, the project just launched started with the specific aim of addressing concerns raised by a number of crew change hubs in recent weeks over the authenticity of COVID-19 negative tests obtained in

AMOSUP fund will provide financial support to the initiative and cover a number of ancillary costs.

The group has initially block-booked 200 single occupancy rooms from two hotels. These facilities can offer more if there is demand.

Both facilities will be open for joiners to check-in from 28th October. Members are strongly encouraged to book early, as rooms are allocated on a first-come-first-serve basis.

and quarantine certificates will be made tamper-proof using blockchain technology so that they can be verified by the local authorities of the receiving country.

- The facilities are in the process of being “white-listed” by the Singaporean authorities and we hope this will be in place by the time they start operating. We are also in discussions with other governments.



IMEC Ahmed



ITF Cotton



AMOSUP Oca

the Philippines and over the efficacy of pre-embarkation quarantine served by joiners before being deployed.

The working group made up of IMEC and ITF representatives include local maritime stakeholders like the AMOSUP, Western Shipping, Döhle, Marlow Navigation, Bernard Schulte, and Career Shipping.

The group has now contracted two separate hotels that will act as a one-stop-shop for swabbing and quarantining of joiners from IMEC-member companies as well as a third party security company that will assist with the monitoring of the quarantine phase.

ITF affiliate AMOSUP is contributing its government-approved testing facility to process the tests, to provide administrative support for the process whilst a grant from the IMTF.

When activated the project guarantees the following:

- Seafarers will be tested upon arrival and again at the end of the quarantine period, swabbing will take place in their rooms. Results will be provided within 24 hours.
- Meals will also be served in the rooms and temperatures monitored twice daily by project personnel.
- Members will be responsible for transportation of the seafarers to the facility and their transfer from the facility to the airport or seaport at the end of quarantine, a specific protocol on how the post-quarantine transfers must be effected will be provided.
- Covid negative test certificates

For the costing, Members will only be responsible for payment of hotel rooms (inclusive of 3 daily meals + water and free Wifi) and the PCR-RT tests conducted by the AMOSUP hospital.

All other costs will be shouldered by the IMEC and ITF.

(Author is exemplary in Negotiation, Corporate Strategy, Manning, International Shipping, Risk Assessment, Policy Development and Legal Writing. Holds a Masters of Laws focused in marine and the environment from Dalhousie University - Schulich School of Law. Was Chairperson, Maritime Law Association of the Phil (MARLAW)).

Just on the 8th Anniversary GMTC EXPANDS AMID CHALLENGES



GMTC Valenzuela

The pandemic can't stop the growth of Globe Maritime Training Center (GMTC)!

Even the stars seem to favor GMTC with double "8" as symbols of eternity: last Sept. 8th is its 8th Year Anniversary. Yet, GMTC celebrated with Spartan simplicity with a Roman Catholic mass at GMTC-Manila office attended by staff and seafarers.

Observing government health protocols, Management shared before a limited audience that, *"We want you to know that your trust and support has always been the biggest drivers for our continued growth."*

Prime mover and majority stockholder is Chief Engineer Gilbert Milana who organized fellow seafarers to partner in a venture to raise competence of merchant mariners while reducing costs of training. The formula worked magic and propelled GMTC to continuous growth.

Walking the talk.

Profit has never inspired C/E Milana; instead, he is deeply motivated in

pursuing excellence for trainees at minimum costs. He knows the pitch and roll of blue water sailing. He wants, then, to give value to hard-earned pay, not covet what should be for their families and dreams.

Some competitors even badmouthed Milana for his very reasonable rates, egging him to cooperate sack seafarers with atrocious rates. Milana stood firm against the ploy, started using net proceeds to hire more competent staff and teachers, build better facilities and provide state-of-the-art equipment.

Training ship.

GMTC now owns *FB Peninsula I*, a fishing vessel converted as a training ship and officially listed at the Register of Philippine Ships last August 25, 2020.

Its fiberglass hull supports the MARINA campaign against wooden hulls. The Peninsula is 69 gross tonnage, 21.00 net tonnage, 17.40 meter length, 4.53 meter breadth, 2.06 meter depth and 536.91 Kw.

The *Peninsula* is key to GMTC's Fish Capture Training Course, awaiting for



GMTC Pres Milana

TESDA official accreditation but for lack of Assessors of this technical-vocational public agency.

More for less.

GMTC continues to invest on

renovation, improvement of facilities, acquisition of more equipment to serve better, even open more courses for seafarers.

Ground-breaking was recently done for installing a poop deck mooring station freefall lifeboat. *M/V Survivor* is a mock-up ship (made of rock) now being refurbished for full mission bridge simulator onboard, with real ship ramp being prepared to offer new courses soon.

Trainees use real equipment and appliance as teaching aid to gain applicable knowledge onboard ship. Among expensive equipment are open lifeboat for rowing, partially enclosed with gravity davits and enclosed gravity davits and freefall lifeboat.

Recognition.

Capt. Juan Maltez, Director-General, General Directorate of Seafarers of the Maritime Authority of Panama recognized GMTC for excellent and efficient service. Then for Panama, GMTC is duly accredited as a maritime training center authorized in Asia to provide programs and training courses, to issue Previous Documentary Evaluation certificated and perform Assessment of Competence as of September 3, 2020.

Two courses were approved: *Elementary First Aid* and *Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities* to prepare students for certification and work onboard ships worldwide.

Transportation.

GMTC had arranged for vehicles to service students to and from the office and training sites. As a partner/stakeholder of the electric shuttle operation in Metro Manila, students may now avail by October of the convenience. COMET (Community Optimized Managed Electric Transport) terminals are nearby GMTC-Manila and GMTC-Valenzuela. This is the latest innovation on e-vehicle technology that produce zero emission from Spain.

Like beehive.

GMTC-Manila classes are very active, almost always full, more so that capacity is restricted by government protocols against COVID-19 infection and transmission.

The spillovers also occur at the practicum site at GMTC-Valenzuela; so does at GMTC in-house courses via zoom app.

For all these patronage, GMTC strictly

follows health protocols in all sites. Protective items are always handy (masks, sanitizers, thermal scanners, etc. with proper signage to remind all of the need to be vigilant and cooperative.

All callers are required to fill-up the Health Symptoms Questionnaire (HSQ) form ready for contact tracing, when needed. GMTC is also linked with Valenzuela City's *Valtrace* QR Code, a monitoring system for all enclosed establishments in the city.





**Pres Orquiza
leads the
ribbon
cutting**

Worldwide Maritime Operations Co.

WMOC OPENS NEW FACILITY, SERVICES

Auspicious as “Double 10” (October 10), WMOC inaugurated a new 278-sqmtr office, almost tripling present facilities, combined with its offices at Marc 2000 (inaugurated June 15th last year with Manila Mayor Francisco “Isko Moreno” Domagoso as principal guest.)

The new offices are at the second floor of the 1963 Minerva Building, Taft Avenue, Malate Manila. Ribbon-cutting ceremonies were headed by WMOC Pres. Rachelle Orquiza, VP Noli Lopez and MW publisher Lyn Bacani.

Holy Mass followed, then blessings of facilities. Prominent guests include C/E Artemio Serafico President, TSM Maritime Services Phils; Capt. Gregory Nick Sevilla, Avior Marine Managing Director and Mr. Russel Baja, Fastcat Project Manager; MMS Phil Maritime and Multinational Maritime (MMI) of Meiji Shipping Group sent flowers.

More services.

WMOC Documentation Services is essentially still on for Panama flag state license and endorsements; Marshall Islands flag state license/endorsements; Accreditations for Maritime Training

Centers and Shipboard training for cadet internship.

It is now under Worldwide Maritime Operations Co. (WMOC) Group of Companies, with WMOC Medical and Diagnostic Clinic (for RT-PCR Covid19 swab test).



WMOC Pres Orquiza

The clinic is accredited by St. Luke’s Medical Center – Global City; Lung Center of the Philippines; Asian Hospital and Medical Center and Delos Santos Medical Center. It conducts on-site swab testing, aboard vessels with its

mobile van.

The WMOC Molecular Center will soon be operational as a molecular laboratory COVID-19 testing facility.

Always the best.

Pres. Orquiza is aware some seafarers are victimized by unethical operations on swab testing, as pedestrian as those doing home service like manicure and pedicure. She demands accurate results, like those used in Washington USA of 99.9% accuracy and results released in 1 to 2 hours even on a batch of 90 specimens.

This may be as the *GeneXpert Instrument Systems* which automates and integrates sample preparation, nucleic acid extraction and amplification, and detection of the target sequences in simple or complex samples using real-time PCR assays.

The systems consist of an instrument, computer, and preloaded software for running tests and viewing the results. The systems require the use of single-use disposable cartridges that hold the RT-PCR reagents and host the RT-PCR process. Because the cartridges are self-contained, cross-contamination between samples is minimized.

Verify.

To ascertain things, one may call the WMOC hotlines: +(63) 920-5033408, +(63) 915-8454289, +(63) 2-5310-1375. Its mission is to bridge the gap among Sea-work professionals, Manning Agencies, and Flag State authorities.

The aim is "... to help Filipino seafarers in every possible way we can through our existing and envisioned services and to provide career opportunities and expedite the process of acquiring them."

Prime mover.

Pres. Orquiza is skilled in Operations Management, Maritime Operations, Inspection, International Shipping and Maritime. She holds a degree from Far Eastern Univ-MassComm where she published articles.

Orquiza was Managing Director for Worldwide Maritime Operations Company, four years providing Onboard Security for vessels transiting high risk areas.

In 2005, she transferred to WMOC Documentation Services which facilitates Licenses and Endorsements for seafarers for Panama, Marshall Islands, Liberia and other flag states, documentations for Change of Flag, Inspections and related services.



Clients testify to Ms. Rachelle's quick solutions to their problems; she is always on call. Small wonder that in a male-dominated industry as maritime is, she holds her own at the top.

For not only ready to serve, she can also pierce through opportunities. Like when piracy was the bane of seafarers, she established the business of armed guard aboard vessels. Now with the pandemic demon, she invests on expensive but accurate (with fast results) equipment to help seafarers obtain health certifications in record time.

CSR practitioner.

Orquiza's core is best appreciated looking at WMOC's corporate social responsibility (CSR). There is no politics nor hidden agenda in her charity, just the goodwill to help:

- As the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) pushes the poor, Ms. Rachelle had arranged with Capt. Gregory Sevilla and Coast Guard complement to deliver relief goods, mostly canned food, to the

- With Coast Guard Commandant George V. Ursabia Jr., she distributed packed relief goods at the Navotas Fisheries Port Complex. The retired Vice Admiral was glad to authorize the use of the vessel, CGSS Navotas, to carry the goods.
- Instead of celebrating her 44th birthday, she decided to give out over 1,000 packs of necessities for the urban poor.
- (But, she is frank and livid against politicians who practically grab food from hungry constituents by unconscionable acts of graft and corruption.)

Pride at work.

The staff is also inspired working in an environ of excellence. They are unrecognized "assets" of seafarers who are heroes keeping the logistics chain humming. The personnel are patient and cooperative, more so to seafarers stranded during repatriations and community quarantines.



WMOC even leased a half-way facility near the office to shelter staff during community quarantines to continue operations serving seafarers and the industry. The impact of this gesture may be seen in the solid patronage of WMOC by grateful beneficiaries.

CHARTERING AMID CHALLENGES

As part of its 15th Anniversary, *Marino World* has organized *The Challenge Ahead*, a webinar on Friday, November 20, 2020 PHST, 17:00 SGT Singapore, 09:00 GMT London, 04:00 EST Miami, 13:00 GST UAE, 17:00 CST China, 18:00 JST Tokyo.

The webinar is open and transparent to recognize problems and consider solutions, even possibly critique and criticize national maritime direction.

Marino World has always participated in like webinars, including in the three recent US-sponsored global projects to espouse its sovereign advocacy. But *Marino World* has noticed these have shortfalls on particular interests of Philippine maritime.

The Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) is the sole Maritime Administrator of the Philippines. Administrator Robert Arugay Empedrad may lead the agency in the discussions, basically on Question and Answer (Q&A) format between the MARINA and maritime industry majors.

Reach out.

The Challenge is between regulators and stakeholders, on policy and implementation, of protocols and alternatives, even a national *Bayanihan* for the international market as Filipino seafarers compose a third of the global force, at least.

Retired Vice-Admiral Empedrad as main guest is the best authority to present plans, updates and actions of Government on quarantine protocols, Green Lane and crew change in Manila, SBMA, Bataan, Batangas, Cebu and Davao ports, too.

The man.

While the MARINA leadership has been a revolving door, Empedrad appears to hold the three imperatives: presidential trust, management skills, incorruptibility. And more, he believes it better to “take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man” (Psalm 118.8).

Born February 3, 1964 in Tuguegarao City, son of an official of the Bureau of Forestry whose career suffered for adamantly refusing to allow illegal loggers to operate, in spite the direct orders of higher executives and politicians.



MARINA Administrator Empedrad

Robert dreams of being an Electronic Engineer but was enrolled in Chemical Engineering; graduated in 1986 from the Phil Military Academy (PMA), with the “Sinagtala” batch. His then co-cadet Ronald Dela Rosa egged him to exchange pingpong balls which designated their service assignment. Dela Rosa did not like his pick, the Navy, while Empedrad really did not care. But, they exchanged, the rest is history: Dela Rosa became Chief of PNP, Empedrad, Chief of the Navy.

Empedrad earned a Masters degree from the Phil Christian University (PCU-Dasmarias City); took the US Naval Staff Course at the US Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island; the Senior Executive Course at the National University; the Senior Strategic Leadership Program at the Defence Academy of Britain.

Postings.

He commanded five ships of the Naval fleet, and task forces in Western Mindanao, battle-tested in the Moro conflicts in Mindanao and decades of Communist rebellion.

He was with the Navy for 34 years (1986 to 2020), became the 37th Flag Officer in Command (FOIC) and retired as Vice Admiral in February 03, 2020. Pres. Duterte appointed him Administrator of the MARINA on March 2nd, assumed office in March 16th, his first civilian task.

Teaming.

Some reactors may come from IMEC, ICS, InterManager, Intertanko, Intercargo and similar international organizations. But unless formally confirmed, *Marino World* is being discreet, yet.

Among early major sponsors of *The Challenge* are AMOSUP, Globe Maritime, WMOC, OSM, Dohle Seafront, Poseidon, Pag-ibig Fund with web seats for shipowners/shipmanagement, licensed manning agencies (LMAs), seafarer unions, auxiliaries & charities.

Select media may observe muted but may pose questions via the chatroom.

The Challenge Ahead

MMQA 2020

**A webinar between regulators and stakeholders
For policy and implementation, of protocols and alternatives
A National Bayanihan for the International Market**

**The MARINA and Government
Meet Majors of the Maritime Industry**

**In open dialogue, to critique or criticize
to recognize problems and consider solutions**

BE THERE. BE HEARD

Be with Leaders, in the Command Bridge

Organized by **MARINOWORLD**

November 20, 2020, Friday, PHST UTC+8 hours

**17:00 SGT Singapore, 09:00 GMT London, 04:00 EST Miami
13:00 GST UAE, 17:00 CST China, 18:00 JST Tokyo**

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IATF OKAYS TESDA FACE-TO-FACE

by Ligaya Caban

Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque announced October 9th that the government through the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for Managing Infectious Diseases has allowed face-to-face training and assessments of OFWs.

IATF Resolution 78 now allows Technical Vocational Institutions (TVIs) and TESDA Technology Institutions (TTIs) in areas for outbound overseas Filipino workers under General Community Quarantine (GCQ) or lower.

Previously, the IATF Omnibus Guidelines only permits face-to-face assessment under modified general community quarantine (MGCQ) for up to 50% assessment site capacity.

Appeal.

Earlier, Pres. Glenn Mark Blasquez of the Association of Technical Schools in Manila (ATSMI- Manila) and VP of Southern Institute of Maritime Studies (SIMS), implored TESDA that accredited training centers be assessed, especially for outbound seafarers with job contracts and have completed training.

Blasquez explains it's just a one-day assessment by TESDA for a National Certificate (NC) to document the OFW is competent. Waiting are some 600 from SIMS and about 3,000 more from

other centers. On top, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), lists some 16,000 regular cooks. If half of them were for maritime, 8,000 are yet pending while so needed by ships.

NC is issued after assessment as proof of competence for courses on



Ships Catering NCI Messman, Ships Catering NCIII, Ship Cooks, Domestic Workers and Caregivers; Messman Course & Housekeeping Services (with TESDA assessment NC I) and Ships' Catering NC III (for Ships' Cooks, Training with Assessment) are among TESDA courses offered by SIMS, apart from those maritime training courses accredited by the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA).

On-site.

On October 12, TESDA Secretary Isidro Lapena, DDG Lina Sarmiento, Regional Director Florencio Sunico, Jr., Manila Director Archie Grande, Director Juliet Orozco and Cynthia Gamos TESDA Rep. witnessed the actual conduct of training at the SIMS premises.

TESDA said, the face-to-face assessment under GCQ requires:

- Applicants must present overseas employment certificate (OEC) and employment contract to TESDA;
- Accredited Assessment Centers may only operate at 50% site capacity; and
- Observe strict compliance to minimum public health standards and TESDA guidelines and consultation with local government units.

SIMS was also granted by TESDA on August 28, 2020 a Certificate of Recognition to conduct Ships Catering NCI for Messman. SIMS is an Accredited Training Center and approved by TESDA Central Office to conduct Flexible Learning Online.



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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.

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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.

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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 at highest standard of protection preventing any false certificates/claims from hapening.

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

K-Sim 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



PHIL-NORWAY RELATIONS EXPANDING

by Coca H. Strobar

Positive expectations are generated with the installation of Carl Martin Faannessen as president of the Philippines-Norway Business Council (PNBC). Faannessen was formerly with SN Power and Aboitiz-Jepsen, now an individual member of PNBC.

He assumes with bullish optimism, buoyed by larger Norwegian investments in maritime, energy and industrial products. He also encourage Filipino entrepreneurs to evaluate opportunities to do business in Norway.

From the Embassy.

Norwegian Ambassador to the Philippines, H.E. Bjørn Jahnsen, send in a message on Faannessen installation reiterating commitment on strengthening relations between the two countries.

“Despite the challenges with the pandemic, I am encouraged by several Norwegian companies pursuing projects and investments in the Philippines. Undoubtedly this is more difficult in these circumstances, but the Embassy provides assistance when possible.

Norway’s presence in the Philippines has traditionally been focused on shipping and energy. Covid’s impact on the maritime sector is of great concern to all of us. As you know, the Norwegian Shipowner’s Association has recently opened a “quarantine hotel” for its members in Manila to ensure the safe boarding of Filipino seafarers on Norwegian ships.

In the energy sector we are confident that since the need for energy in the Philippines is widely distributed, demand will continue to grow.”



Norway Ambassador Jahnsen with PH shipping giant Salinas

Prime choice.

More importantly, Ambassador Jahnsen says, “...(W)e remain optimistic for the Philippines as a country. The population is young, and the fundamentals for continued growth are in place. I recently read a forecast predicting that those who are in their 50s today, may live to see a Philippine economy larger than that of Spain! A highly capable population, beneficial demographics and proximity to rapidly developing countries – all will help propel the Philippines forwards.”

Steady partnership.

PNBC President Faannessen responded with bullish optimism, citing positive strides since 2011 between the two countries.

Key elements are the support of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in the Philippines and PNBC’s Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, both historically been built on the sea..

Aside from Filipino seafarers on Norwegian ships, Faannessen ticked off a portfolio of Norwegian businesses operating locally, viz:

- SN Power which invested early, and heavily, in renewable energy assets; bigger than Norwegian maritime companies.
- Jotun, one of the world’s premier developers and manufacturers of surface coatings has set up production here.
- Yara Fertilizers have long been present here.
- Norwegian seafood is beginning to enter the market.

Faannessen made it clear the business relations is both ways for Norwegian and Filipino entrepreneurs, able to help business in both directions.

“Please feel free to contact us; we treat all business-requests on a confidential basis”.

Training, Testing, Quarantine.

To ensure safety from virus infection, the Norwegian Training, Testing and Quarantine Center was established at the Manila Marriott Hotel, located at the heart of Pasay City, to welcome seafarers for their quarantine and testing period.

The project is in partnership with the Norwegian Shipowners' Association (NSA) to assure a virus-free seafarer before on-boarding based on guidelines by Norwegian medical experts.

A protocol in onboarding is to be parted from their families earlier to be quarantined and complete RT-PCR

swab tests as negative. But some still come across as positive. To prevent this, the Center partnered with other centers to conduct two swab tests for the seafarers within the facility to increase the chances of detecting potential carriers while lessening the risks of moving in and out of quarantine.

Delectable meals are served from the hotel kitchen.

Curricula.

The Center offers via on-line learning method these courses:

- Mental Health Seminar
- Resilience Program

- Social Skills Awareness
- Behavior Based Safety
- Preparation for Port State Control Inspection
- Bunker Management
- Cyber Security Awareness for Maritime Industry
- Vetting Inspection Course
- Class and Statutory Surveys

All courses will be done through workshops, mentoring and instructor-led of NTC's Subject Matter Experts (SMEs).

Greetings



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CATANDUANES, THE HAPPY ISLAND

by Ligaya Caban



Challenge the waves at Puraran, Baras

Like Baguio and Boracay, Catanduanes has also opened her tourist spots but only to residents of the province, the *Catandunganons*. Yet, Catanduanes is really still undiscovered, its natural beauty by-passed due to the commercial hype of established tourist destinations.

While others recover, Catanduanes needs to be discovered.

Root word.

A legend explains Catanduanes comes from *tandu*, a native click beetle was once abundant throughout the island and katanduan means where tandu abound. The Spaniards hispanized it to *Catanduanes* to become pluralist.

Another story says the name comes from *samdong*, a tree which similarly abound in the island. Again it was hispanized, the phonological error traces to the Spaniards' difficulty to pronounce words ending in "ng". Thus, from *kasamdongan* and *katandungon*, it changed to *Catanduanes*.

Still some historians say katandungon is a Malay word that means "a place of refuge in time of danger," as this island has always been the refuge of mariners during stormy weather.

Where at what.

The island province is in the Bicol region, south eastern of the Luzon archipelago with 11 municipalities, together boast of one of the longest list of tourist spots acknowledged by the Dept. of Tourism (DoT).

To accelerate local development, the Tourism Alliance and Green Travel Tourism Circuit was established composed of:

SANCAPA Circuit

- *San Andres* – Powdery white sand Amenia Beach, kayaking, swimming, camping, beach bumming
- *Caramoran* – Toytoy beach, swimming, snorkelling, shoreline stretching forever waffled by calm and sparkling ocean waters
- *Pandan* – Hiyop Highlands. Hill-to-sea ecosystem, white sand beaches and coves, camping, trekking, biking, sunset, pre-nuptial sites rivalling far away Batanes

PAVIBA Circuit

- *Panganiban* – Lolong Point Lighthouse at the edge of a cliff, trekking a backbone of greens, camping
- *Viga* – Summit View Park, a 360 degree panorama of the area, sea of cloud in the morning, trekking.
- *Bagamanoc* – Palestina rolling hills, the Pacific Ocean yawning wide at Podeo Point. Beaches on both sides.

GIBBSAM Circuit -

- *Gigmoto* – Nupa Lagoon and Tidal Pools, huge boulders on incredibly blue-green waters, trek down to reach the magic.
- *Bato* – Batalay Mangrove Eco Park,



Serene moment at Soboc Cove in Viga



Sunset at Hiyop Highlands, Pandan

the thrill of a river ride contrasts with the calm of endless mangrove, home and breeding of fresh water creatures.

- *Baras* – Puraran Beach and its majestic barrels of waves for surfing, skimboarding, photography, camping, stargazing.
- *San Miguel* – Solong Falls, trekking, cliff-jumping, swimming, photography

VIRAC is the central service hub, gateway that cuts across the circuits.

- Igang Beach or Twin Rock Beach, southwest and one of the best known and developed resorts in the island. Shoreline has cream, fine sand for relaxing. The name comes from the stunning rock formation jutting

seaward, while islets and rocks bulge off shore.

Food trips.

Bounty of the sea are fresh and cheap at market places: lobster, crabs, prawns, fish, even clams and shells (*suso*). These, complimented by local classics as the spicy Bicol Express (meat sautéed with coco cream) and *laing* (of yam leaves and coconut cream, sometimes with spikes of meat).

For desserts and snacks, there is an infinity of sweets, crunchies and tidbits for happy times with the *barkada* (gangmates) or moments of serenity to munch.

Inspired and bullish.

Virac Mayor Sinforoso “Posoy”

Sarmiento admits the island needs more development but is blessed with clear rivers, sparkling seas, waterfalls and mangrove forests. People are very accommodating, with much goodwill, creating a Happy Island.

Investments are welcome, not just for profit but for government programs in protecting the environment while fulfilling basic social and welfare needs of the people.

Talino Galing ng Pinoy (TGP) Partylist Rep. Jose “Bong” Teves takes it as a duty to protect the environment as the seas against pollution, coral reefs against illegal fishing, the mountains and ridges against garbage and degradation.

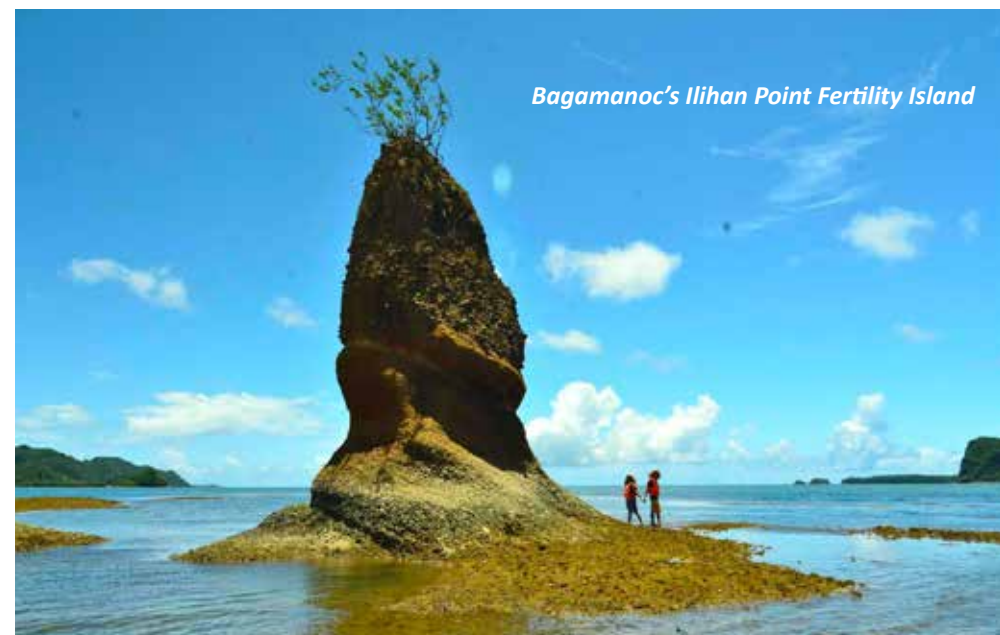
He takes pride in the virgin beauty of Catanduanes, development he started in 2001 but stunted by the COVID-19 global pandemic. But his town Baras managed to excel in surfing, reign as surfing capital of Region 5, hosted national and international competitions.

Alongside, Catanduanes is now criss-crossed by concrete roads for easy access to spots and services, with a One-Stop-Shop in Manila to coordinate things. Before, visitors are almost stranded at the only port without facility nor services.

Continuous.

Despite the pandemic, the *Catandungan Festival* goes on, commemorating the 75th Foundation of the province from October 21 to the 26th, digital for this year with updates from the Tourism Promotion page.

Bagamanoc's Ilihan Point Fertility Island





Cong. Teves



Baras Mayor Teves



Virac Mayor Sarmiento

A feature on Oct. 23rd is a Cultural Mapping Orientation via zoom app conducted by the Tourism Office of the province.

For September, DoT Tourism Region 5, with the Bureau of Fire Protection Region HQ 5, conducted the “Safety First Tourism: Decontamination Skills Training for Accommodation Establishments” via Zoom on-line platform.

For October, there was a triple “C” circuit webinar of Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur and Catanduanes held August 26th. This is for establishments to disinfect premises to prevent and minimize the transfer of contaminants spread by vehicles and guests. There was demonstration on the use of equipment for decontamination as well as donning and doffing of PPE.

Infras.

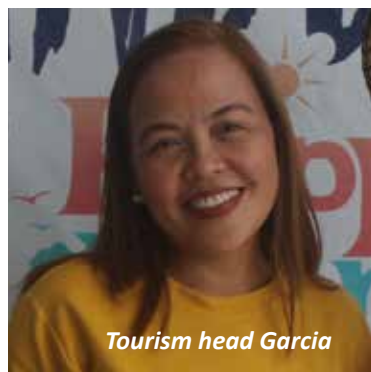
Baras Mayor Paolo Teves’ FaceBook posts the construction of the Kaladapan Bay Esplanade, Baywalk, Children’s Park and Sports Center.

Preparing for the national *Balik Probinsya Program* (Return-to-the-Province) Baras added equipment and quarantine facilities for returnees to be secured and comfortable. A meeting was conducted to strengthen the *Balik Happy Island Program*, aligning to protocols of the “New Normal” like wearing face masks and shields, social distancing and health practices as mandated by the Dept. of Health (DOH) and the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF-COVID-19).

Preserve and protect.

Tourism Promotion head Carmel Bonifacio Garcia guards to preserve the pristine environment of Catanduanes. They go for quality tourism rather than mass, never permitting to sacrifice the environment for predatory business.

Under the campaign *Responsible Tourism*, the province advocates green tourism along all the communities, more so on tourism sites. Continuous Information and education are given, the love for their environment instilled, particularly by proper waste disposal.



Tourism head Garcia



CSU Pres Morales

Misunderstood.

There is a perception that typhoons are prevalent in Catanduanes. This is wrong, Catanduanes is essentially calm and pleasant.

The island is **just a point-of-reference** in the east-south-west area weather forecasts of the Phil Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

Academe fuels.

The Catanduanes State University (CSU) visualizes a Green university, globally engaged in island research and

innovation for societal advancement. Faculty and students are encouraged to protect the environment, help in coastal clean-up, constantly assist in efforts of the Bureau of Fish and Aquatic Research (BFAR).

CSU Pres. Minerva I. Morales even launched a unique and complimentary product, a hand sanitizer enhanced with abaca extract. Dr. Morales says the extract has anti-microbial properties and follows standards of the World Health Organization (WHO).

Mass-produced, the hand sanitizers were distributed to Catanduanes local government units (LGUs) and medical frontliners to assist in the fight against the deadly Corona Virus -19.

Implication.

Technically, Catanduanes’ optimism is merely a speck on the framework of doables. But it gives courage to our

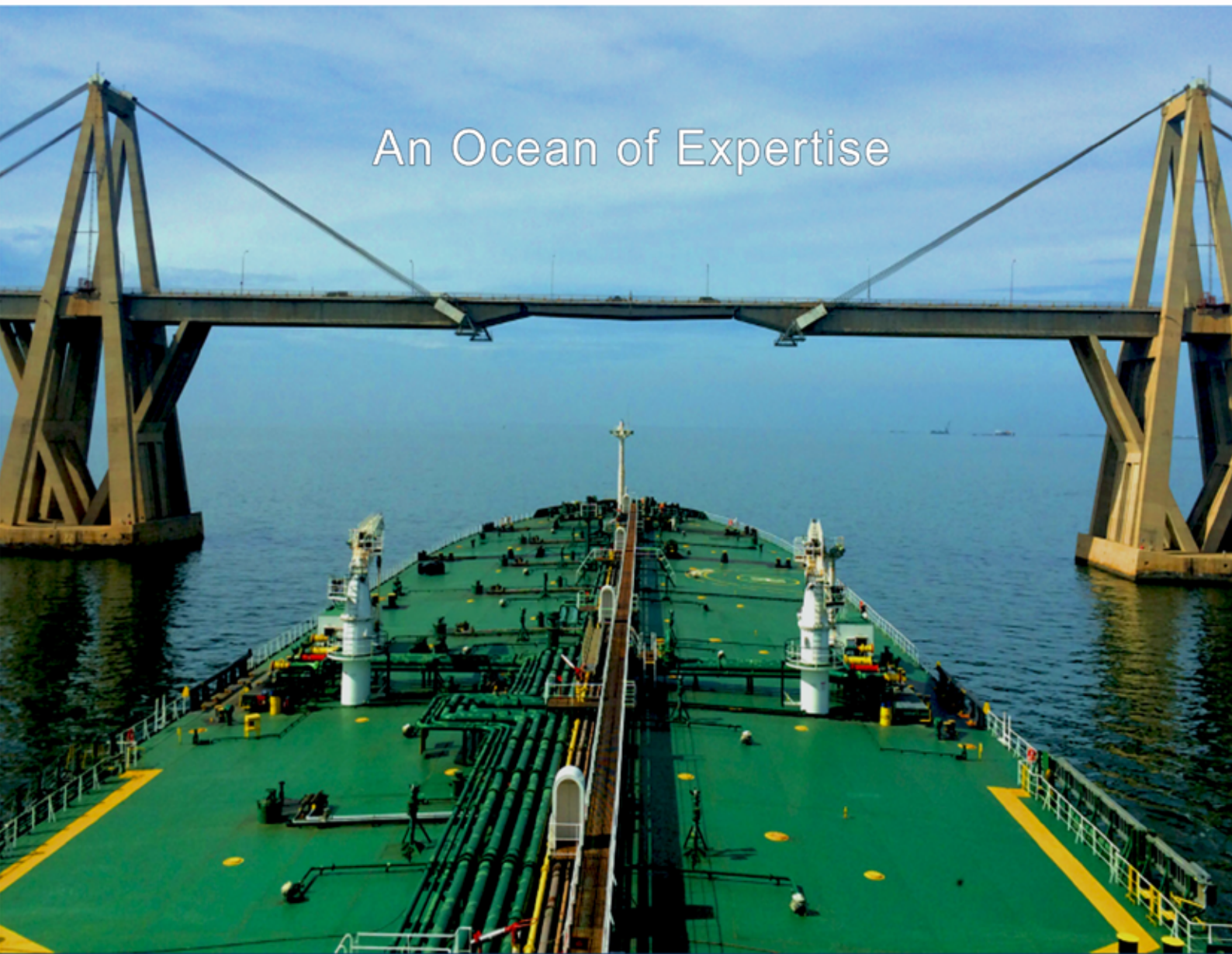
merchant mariners as global shipping is on a downturn, hope to our overseas workers on cruise ships debilitated by the pandemic, assurance to our local roll on-roll off (Ro-Ro) operators stymied by quarantine restrictions.

In pragmatic terms, the Catanduanes faith not only energizes the interest of the province --- but also the fate of our national maritime industry.

(Nota bene: The editors notice partiality on this coverage of Catanduanes, discovering our publisher was born at Tilod, Baras some secret years ago.)



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