



Summer is here!

Photo by: DOT 2

As the Department of Tourism (DOT) continues to push for the reopening of more travel destinations in the Philippines, here is a rundown of reopened spots that you can already visit for your summer getaway. *(continue on page 2)*



DOT Launches Digital Travel Magazine "7641"



PHL says "All Systems Go for Full Reopening on April 1" Removes EED as Entry Requirement



DOT hails Sinulog citation among Asia's top festivals



Loboc boats cruising again

Summer is here!

Photos by: DOT 2, DOT3, Edgar Alan Zeta-Yap
(continued from page 1)

LUZON



1. Zambales

Summer in Zambales: With the recent lifting of the VisITA QR code requirement for tourists entering the Province of Zambales, now is the perfect time to bask in the sun and enjoy an island hopping tour around its many breathtaking beaches such as Nagsasa, Anawangin, Talisayin, Silanguin, Capones Island, and Camara Island, to name a few. Complete your summer getaway and connect with nature without compromising on your comfort by experiencing Glamping in San Narciso and San Felipe (Crystal Beach Resort and The Glamp Zambales). For more information, you may visit the official FB Page of Zambales Tourism at <https://www.facebook.com/zambales.tourism.official>



2. Palaui Island

If you are looking for an underrated destination, Cagayan Valley's pride—Palaui Island Marine Reserve—is already accepting tourists since March 8.

Declared as a marine reserve by virtue of Proclamation No. 447 on August 16, 1994, the island boasts of outstanding sceneries, a rich marine life, and well-preserved corals as refuge for more than 20 commercial species of fish. Tourists who wish to visit the island can go swimming, sightseeing, fishing, trekking, and camping.

For years, Palaui Island has drawn the attention of the travelling public when it hosted two seasons of the reality television show Survivor USA. It also served as the filming location for Cap Horn, the travel show of the World's Greatest Modern-Day Adventurer-Explorer, Mike Horn. The island was also recognized by CNN as among the Top 10 Best Raw Beaches of the World in 2013.



3. Mt. Pulag, Benguet

Mt. Pulag National Park, the Philippines' third highest peak, awaits travelers who are looking for a thrilling climb.

Tentatively listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Mt. Pulag has enchanted people for generations. The montane forests and the grassland summit with its "sea of clouds" phenomenon are highlights of the climb. Mt. Pulag's peak is carpeted in grass and dwarf bamboo bushes. The mountainside features a mossy forest with ferns, lichens, and moss at lower elevations, which is veiled in fog. The area is also marked by waterfalls, rivers, and small lakes.

The DOT has recently supported the conduct of eco-adventure activities to support the reopening of the park to visitors. Among these were the "Bike to the Highest Point" and "Philippine Highest Obstacle Race Course", where sustainable tourism practices were put in place and conscious efforts were exerted to reinforce preservation and conservation efforts on the park.

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Summer is here!

Photos by: DOT 6, DOT 8, IPG Mediterranean
(continued from page 2)

VISAYAS



4. Boracay Island, Malay, Aklan

As part of its efforts to further attract tourists to visit the world-famous Boracay Island, the DOT has turned over additional five promotional paraw sails to Malay Association of Sailing Boat Owners Inc. (MASBOI) - Multi-Purpose Cooperative in Station 1, Boracay Island, Malay, Aklan on March 26.

Paraw sunset sailing has been a popular activity in the island, providing a warm and welcoming ambience to visitors, especially during sunset. Recently, Boracay Island saw an uptick in tourist arrivals, which is expected to continue in the coming weeks.

But those who want to skip the fun under the sun may choose to go on one of the province's heritage tours, including the famous Loboc River Cruise, which has been rehabilitated after the Typhoon Odette which struck many parts of Visayas and Mindanao in December last year.

Now back in business, the cruise promises an enriched heritage experience for travelers, as the boats have been made wider with polished wooden floors, and with materials such as stained glass, capiz and callado details installed on the vessels. With each of the refurbished boats fitted with details in the Visayan vernacular architecture, guests will surely enjoy a more elegant, culturally-attuned journey through the waterway as they dine in the floating restaurants serving a mouthwatering lunch buffet.



6. Southern Leyte

While it is no secret that Visayas is home to many popular diving spots, the province of Southern Leyte's Sogod Bay is slowly gaining attention among divers and diving enthusiasts. Dubbed as a "Rising Star of Philippine Dive Destinations", Sogod Bay hosts over 20 marine protected areas, world-class dive sites, and is home to 350 of the 520 coral species. Whale sharks can also be seen from November to May in Pintuyan and San Ricardo—both within Sogod Bay—making the area one of the richest showcases of marine biodiversity.

MINDANAO

Heading to the country's southern islands, Mindanao also offers interesting places that are commonly not under the radar of traditional leisure travellers but are truly astounding and worth paying a visit. *(continue on page 4)*



5. Bohol

Boracay's neighboring tourist destination, Bohol, offers almost the same beach vibes with the Island.

Summer is here!

Photos by: DOT 10, DOT CARAGA, Dapitan City Tourism Office

(continued from page 3)



7. Mantigue Island, Camiguin

A favorite spot among divers and underwater photographers, Mantigue Island, is adjacent to the country's "Island Born of Fire"—Camiguin. It is a four-hectare slice of tropical wonderland with a lush mini forest at the center.

This island is a diver's dream teeming with colorful and rare marine creatures such as the endangered hawksbill turtle, nudibranchs, frog fish, sharks and dense schools of fish against a backdrop of amazing gardens of corals and seascapes. Tourists can also experience eating sea urchin (uni) offered by the locals on the beach right out of the ocean.



8. Surigao Del Sur

Meanwhile, the Surigao Del Sur Ecotourism Loop is probably one of the province's trendy trips

in recent times. It features a wide array of beautiful destinations such as white sand beaches, majestic waterfalls, and enchanting rivers where one can enjoy and relax. Travellers are also in for a thrilling time with the loop's water activities as well as farm tourism visits.

Among the tourist magnet destinations included in the loop are Tinuy-an Falls in Bislig City; Enchanted River in Hinatuan; Britania Group of Islets in San Agustin; Alameda Farmin San Agustin; and Cagwait White Beach in Cagwait.



9. Zamboanga Peninsula

Aside from its stunning white sand beaches, falls, farms, and eco-parks, Mindanao also takes pride in tourism that is anchored on its rich and diverse arts and cultures.

Tourists can sign up for the Dapitan Heritage Tour, where they can get a glimpse of Dr. Jose P. Rizal's life when he was exiled. The city preserved all the historical trail and significant sites of the place such as the Rizal Park and Shrine, the Punto del Desembarco de Rizal, Old City Hall, St. James the Greater Church, Casa Real, Don Aniano Adasa Heritage House, and the Hamoy Heritage House.

Visitors may also enjoy paying a visit to the City's premier theme park – Glorious Fantasyland, as well as its newest attraction called "Lakbay Pinas", a mini museum train ride featuring tourism icons from Region 1 to BARMM, depicting a magnificent culture and rich heritage of southern Philippines. **DOT**

DOT launches Digital Travel Magazine "7641"

In a bid to further promote the various destinations in the country and fast track tourism recovery, the Department of Tourism (DOT) launched "7641 Islands of the Philippines", a digital magazine that will provide readers travel inspiration and information.

The tourism circuits that the different regional offices of the DOT have developed, as part of the tourism recovery program, take center stage in the digital magazine. Among the featured circuits are the Bike Trails of Bicol and Central Visayas, Camiguin and Misamis Oriental's Green Adventure Loop, Davao's Dive Tourism, Boracay Food Crawl, SOCCSKSARGEN's Farm Tours, and the Interregional Cuisine and Culture of Ilocos, Central Luzon, and Cordillera.

7641, which is part of DOT's philippines.travel website, supplies travel information through feature articles that provide detailed itineraries, suggested activities with accompanying reminders for a safe adventure, and interesting stories for each place.

"In 7641, we go in-depth

into the stories of a destination, a cultural tradition, a dish, a personal affiliation to a place, while also providing the basic information you need as a traveler," said Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat.

This will also feature more of those destinations that are lesser known but are equally stunning as the country's popular tourist sites, like Marinduque's white sand beaches, the healing island of Siquijor, the caves and paragliding sites of Nueva Vizcaya, the pink sand beaches of Zamboanga City, among others.

"We want to promote all tourist destinations in the archipelago that have already reopened to visitors. Each month, we will highlight different places so that the public can discover the marvelous sites that our 7,641 islands can offer," said Puyat.

The DOT invited feature and non-fiction writers, some of whom traveled to the destinations themselves, for more immersive writing. The DOT also collaborated with regional creatives, including SinoPinas and Playground Films of Zamboanga City, to document

the sites and motivate people to travel through images and videos.

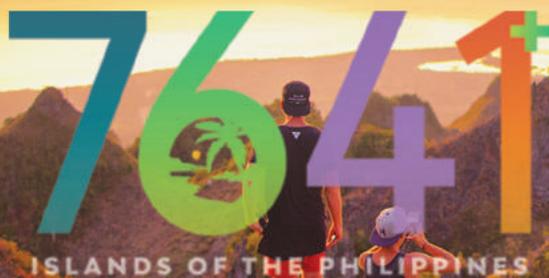
Also featured are collaborations with writers like multi-awarded poet and novelist Edgar Calabia Samar, author of *Janus Silang*; Palanca awardee Joyce Roque; and MJ Tumamac, Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino's 2019 Poet of the Year.

7641 Islands of the Philippines

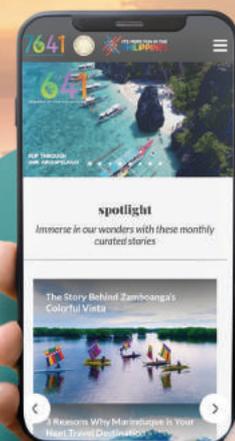
The microsite's name was inspired by the number of islands in the Philippines. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA), has an ongoing islands inventory.

Based on the preliminary results of the inventory conducted by NAMRIA in 2013, the latest islands count that was announced is 7,641.

Everyone is invited to discover the country's islands and be updated on your next travel inspirations and bucket lists. Visit 7641islands.ph. **DOT**



7641
ISLANDS OF THE PHILIPPINES





DOT reminds accommodation establishments of occupancy guidelines

The Department of Tourism (DOT) reminded hotels and other accommodation establishments (AEs) on the relaxed guidelines on room occupancy in areas under Alert Level 1, 2, and 3.

The DOT issued the reminder upon receiving reports that several hotels insist that, based on DOT guidelines, guests are unable to share rooms if they are from different households.

Based on Administrative Order number 2022-001 or the Guidelines on the Operations of Hotels and Other Accommodation Establishments under the Alert Level Systems for Covid-19, which states that regular hotels in areas under alert levels 1, 2, and 3 may accommodate leisure and business guests. The hotels are also allowed full room occupancy, regardless of whether the leisure guests are from the same household or not, subject to minimum public health standards.

Moreover, the DOT has already given the green light for daily

housekeeping, room service, and food delivery for the comfort and benefit of hotel guests.

Any violation of these guidelines, which may include making any false, deceptive, or misleading claims for the purpose of soliciting business from guests and clients will subject the AEs to penalties and fines, depending on the gravity of offense.

The Department urged all stakeholders to observe the guidelines for a fun and seamless travel experience, especially with the anticipated influx of guests who wish to enjoy the summer season in the Philippines.

To view a copy of AO no. 2022-001, please visit: <https://beta.tourism.gov.ph/publications>. **DOT**



on the DOT: Staff

On the DOT is published by the
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND ADVOCACY
*Department of Tourism,
3rd Flr., DOT Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati*

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DOT inks partnership with PNP, PDEA to beef up security in tourist destinations

QUEZON CITY – As Philippine tourism moves towards its much anticipated recovery, the Department of Tourism (DOT) joined hands with the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) to beef up security in tourist destinations across the country.

Tourism Development Planning Undersecretary Woodrow C. Maquiling, Jr. represented Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat, who was on official business, in a ceremony at the PDEA Head Office, Quezon City last 14 March 2022. Together with Usec Maquiling, Jr. are Director General Wilkins Villanueva and Chief PNP Dionardo B. Carlos who co-signed the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the PDEA and PNP, respectively.

“We welcome this latest collaboration with our country’s police force and drug enforcement agency in an aim to provide greater deterrence and protection against the illicit trafficking of dangerous drugs in tourist destinations,” said Secretary Puyat, in her message conveyed by Usec. Maquiling



Branded as Tourism Operation Protection Against Illegal Drugs or the TOP-AID, this latest partnership between the DOT, PDEA and PNP is a follow through to the Tourism Oriented Police for Community Order and Protection (TOPCOP) program, the tourism security force assisting in maintaining peace and order within areas of high tourism traffic. TOPCOP was established in 2011 and has trained 5,457 tourist police and put up 365 Tourist Police Assistance Centers (TPAC) in strategic locations across the country.

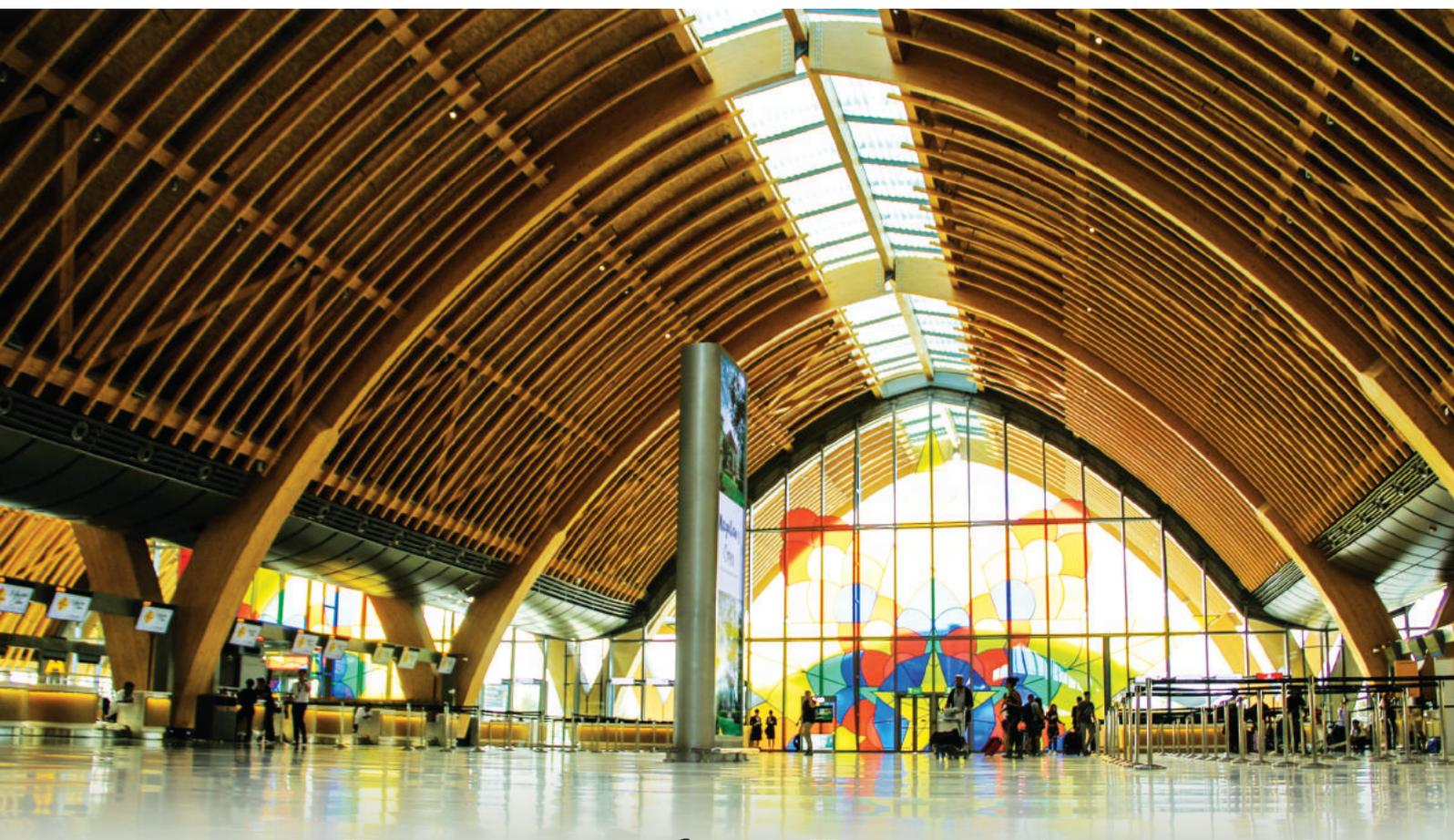
Under the new TOP-AID MOA, between the DOT, PDEA and PNP, the parties agree to cooperate and render assistance to ensure further protection, safety, and security of tourists in DOT identified tourist destinations.

On the part of PDEA,

they have agreed to deploy appropriate manpower to TOP-AID centers in DOT identified tourist destinations. These tourist assistance and complaint desks will focus on drug related concerns. They will also lead information drive on “Drug Free Workplace Program”, while assisting in drug clearing operations including apprehending any person engaged in illegal drug activities in coordination with the PNP and concerned local government units.

Meanwhile, other than identifying key tourist destinations with high-tourism traffic where TOP-AID centers may be put up, the DOT will also spearhead the training of these personnel on tourism awareness and the signature Filipino brand of service and hospitality that is world renowned. **DOT**





PHL says "All Systems Go for Full Reopening on April 1" removes EED as entry requirement

MANILA, Philippines – The Philippines Department of Tourism (DOT) announced last March 25 that it's all systems go for the country's much awaited reopening to fully-vaccinated tourists from all countries starting April 1, 2022.

Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat says the Department is optimistic on more inbound arrivals with the further simplification of entry requirements to the Philippines as the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID), under Resolution No. 165, has approved the entry of foreign nationals starting April 1, without the need of an Entry Exemption Document (EED)—provided

they comply with applicable visa and immigration laws, rules, and regulations.

Imposed during the pandemic, the EED thus far had been the first requirement for foreigners from visa-required countries to enter the Philippines; with this document, foreigners could then acquire a short-term 9(a) visa to enter the country. But beginning April 1, there is no longer any need for an EED before foreigners apply for visas.

Puyat expressed support to the IATF-EID's decision, saying it will encourage more foreign nationals to visit the country and, in turn, help bring back revenues to tourism businesses and boost the economy.

"We thank our colleagues in the IATF-EID and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), as well as our public and private sector partners who have been working with the DOT since the onset of the pandemic to ensure that the country's reopening is carefully planned and carried out with health and safety in mind," Puyat said.

The DOT chief pointed out that the new IATF-EID guidelines will restore in particular the country's English as a Second Language (ESL) sector, as it will enable foreign nationals to travel to the country visa-free or using their 9A visas and apply for their special study permit upon entering the country.

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PHL says "All Systems Go for Full Reopening on April 1" removes EED as entry requirement

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"Visitors who come for our education tourism—ESL in particular—stand to benefit from this development as this will grant foreign nationals who wish to study in the country an interim process to remotely secure their visas," added Puyat.

According to Puyat, local ESL schools, mainly in the country's leading destinations for ESL such as Baguio and Cebu, have already expressed their readiness to accept foreign students, and commitment to follow IATF-EID guidelines, as well as introduce additional measures that will ensure the safety of educators and students. During the pandemic, the DOT has continually promoted the country as a hub for ESL and piloted initiatives such as the Master Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language (TESOL) to upskill and certify teachers from all over the country.

Data from the Bureau of Immigration (BI) showed that Special Study Permits (SSP) applications have continuously increased prior to the pandemic. From 22,561 in 2013, SSP applications in 2018 have reached 59,428. SSP is issued by the BI for foreigners who wish to engage in short-term study in the Philippines.

Nevertheless, the DOT clarified that under the latest resolution, foreign travelers will still be required to be fully

vaccinated, and to undergo pre-departure RT-PCR or antigen testing prior to their entry. On the other hand, those who are unvaccinated and who are not compliant with applicable visa and immigration laws, rules, and regulations shall be subject to exclusion proceedings.

Meanwhile, Puyat hailed President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's Executive Order (EO) 166 which states that "The National Government shall endeavor to further relax requirements relating to international travel and provide quarantine exemptions for vaccinated individuals coming into the country, in order to boost international tourism, increase foreign investments, and restore jobs in the tourism sector". The said EO also orders the reduction of restrictions on domestic travel, and the streamlining and standardization of requirements for domestic travel and local tourism."

Puyat noted that with these developments, the Department is optimistic that better tourism numbers could be seen in the coming months.

"As we move towards a more relaxed entry regulation for foreign tourists, the DOT sees a brighter perspective for the country's tourism industry in the near future. We will ensure that this transition will be done in careful accordance to the prescribed health and safety measures," Puyat said. **DOT**





Nayong Pilipino, eyes transformation of 9.5-ha property into an urban green space

By: **Nayong Pilipino**

Paranaque City - In its effort to create an urban green space within the Entertainment City in Parañaque City, the Nayong Pilipino Foundation (NPF) organized a tree planting activity last, March 25, on the occasion of National Women’s Month.

In her speech, NPF Executive Director Gertie Duran-Batocabe emphasized that creating more green spaces should be part of the new normal.

“As you all know, the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered important conversations about the importance of urban green spaces and how those should be designed to benefit the health and well-being of the populace,” she said.

Last year, NPF has opened its doors to host the Inter-Agency Task Force for the management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) quarantine facility and a mega vaccination facility to support the national government’s COVID-19 pandemic response.

“While we are more than happy

to contribute to the pandemic response, it is our dream to transform this 9.5-hectare property into a Cultural Park and Creative Hub nestled within an urban forest, incorporating the 30% built space and 70% green space design scheme,” Duran-Batocabe added.

Under “Project Sambayanihan”, a series of activation projects for the physical development of the said property will commence throughout the year, including a series of planting activities that aims to plant 446 trees.

During the activity, seedlings of flowering trees namely Palawan Cherry and Bolong Eta were planted to honor women.

“Trees provide a foundation for life to flourish. They’re life-giver and sustainers. In the same way, we, women, provide a foundation for our families and communities with our innate ability to nurture and protect,” said Duran-Batocabe.

With these efforts, the NPF Executive Director feels confident, that in no time, with each and everyone’s hard work, Nayong Pilipino will be open to the public again. **DOT**



WORLD TRAVEL & TOURISM COUNCIL
GLOBAL SUMMIT
 ◆ PHILIPPINES ◆



MELATI WIJSEN

YOUTHTOPIA & Bye bye Plastic Bags

WTTC bares speakers for its 21st Global Summit in the Philippines

By: WTTC | Photos by: WTTC & Beautiful Destinations

London, UK: The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) unveils its speakers for its upcoming Global Summit in Manila, which includes Indonesian/Dutch activist Melati Wijsen.

At just 12 years old, activist Melati Wijsen founded Bye Bye Plastics – a global movement powered by youths around the world to end the use of plastic bags, and in 2018 alongside her sister, was named one of the “World’s most influential teens” by Time magazine.

Taking place in Manila, Philippines from 20-22 April, the global tourism body’s highly

anticipated 21st Global Summit is the most influential Travel & Tourism event in the calendar.

Industry leaders will gather with more than 20 government representatives in Manila, to continue aligning efforts to support the sector’s recovery and move beyond to a safer, more resilient inclusive, and sustainable future.

South Korean diplomat Ban Ki-Moon who served as the eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations between 2007 and 2016, will also address delegates virtually at this prestigious event.

Also taking to the stage at the Global Summit will be the Tourism

Ministers from around the world including Spain, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Thailand, Japan, Maldives, and Barbados amongst others.

Julia Simpson, WTTC President & CEO, said: “We are delighted to have such influential speakers already confirmed for our Global Summit in Manila.

“Melati is an inspiration to us all. A real changemaker, who from such a young age, has been instrumental in raising awareness of the damage caused by plastic and has inspired young people around the world to lead change.

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WTTC announces speakers for its 21st Global Summit in the Philippines

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“After more than two years, the region is perfectly positioned to post the losses caused by the pandemic. WTTC’s Global Summit will act as a catalyst to drive forward the recovery of a sector that is critical for both the economy and jobs.”

Berna Romulo-Puyat, Philippine Tourism Secretary, said: “Preparations are underway to ensure the success of WTTC’s Global Summit in Manila, which serves as the light at the end of tunnel following a long period of darkness for global tourism.”

“It is heartening that these inspiring individuals have joined our efforts to bring the industry onward to full recovery” Puyat added.

Other notable speakers taking to the stage during the Global Summit will be international business leaders such as Arnold Donald, President & CEO Carnival Corporation and Chairman at WTTC; Craig Smith, Group President International Division Marriott International; Maria Anthonette Velasco-Allones, COO Tourism Promotion Board Philippines; Federico Gonzalez, CEO Radisson; Hermione Joye, Head of APAC for Travel at Google Inc, and Greg O’Hara, Founder and Senior Managing Director Certares and Vice Charman at WTTC.

A hybrid event, WTTC’s Global Summit will also feature Kelly Craighead, President & CEO CLIA; Jane Sun, CEO Trip.com, Ariane Gorin, President

WORLD TRAVEL & TOURISM COUNCIL
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 Hosted by: **IT'S MORE FUN IN THE PHILIPPINES**

Expedia for Business; and Darrell Wade, Chairman Intrepid Group; amongst others.

More speakers will be announced over the coming weeks.

The WTTC Global Summit is taking place in the Philippines at a time when the country and the region begins to recover from the pandemic and will showcase the importance of Travel & Tourism in the region.

WTTC’s recent research shows the forecast for the Asia Pacific region could be its Travel & Tourism sector approaching pre-pandemic levels this year.

According to the research, the sector’s contribution to the region’s GDP could reach USD 2.9 trillion, near pre-pandemic levels, while employment could reach

over 190 million jobs, surpassing 2019 figures and providing an additional five million jobs to the sector.

To reach close to pre-pandemic levels this year, WTTC says governments across the region and around the world must continue focusing on the vaccine and booster rollout - allowing fully vaccinated travellers to move freely without the need for testing.

The WTTC Global Summit in Manila is sponsored by Resorts World Manila, Global Rescue, Okada Manila, Hilton Manila, Turkish Airlines, Cebu Pacific Air, Etihad Airways, Philippine Airlines, Tourism Promotion Board Philippines, Tieza, SSI Group, UBE Express, Inc., Nissan Philippines, Inc., and Xpansiv. **DOT**

ON THE GROUND NEWS

Regional News Updates

Palau Island now open to tourists

By: DOT 2

The Department of Tourism (DOT) welcomes the reopening of the famous Palau Island in the town of Santa Ana, Cagayan for tourism activities starting March 8.

The reopening of Palau Island is the result of a series of deliberation and discussion among various concerned agencies and stakeholders of the Palau Island Protected Landscape and Seascape (PIPLS). The crafting of new rules and regulations as well as health and safety protocols to govern the operation of tourism activities in the island is the top priority for the islands reopening.

During the program, the new guidelines were shared to the public to stress the importance of protecting the environment, the people in the community and the tourists.

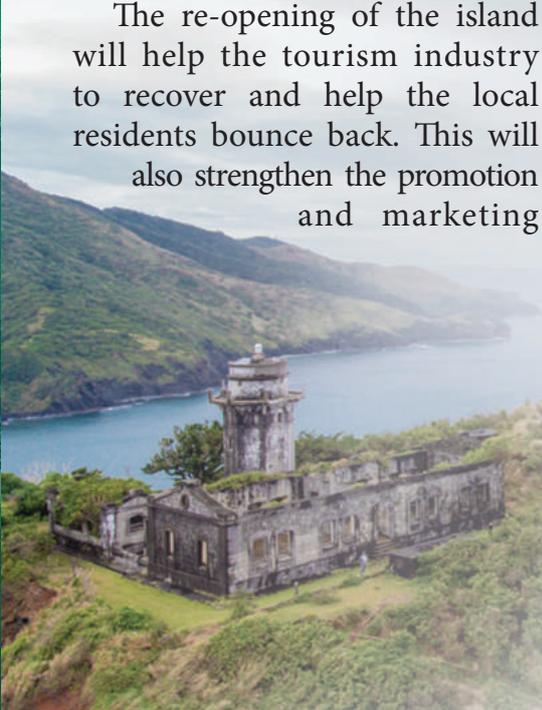
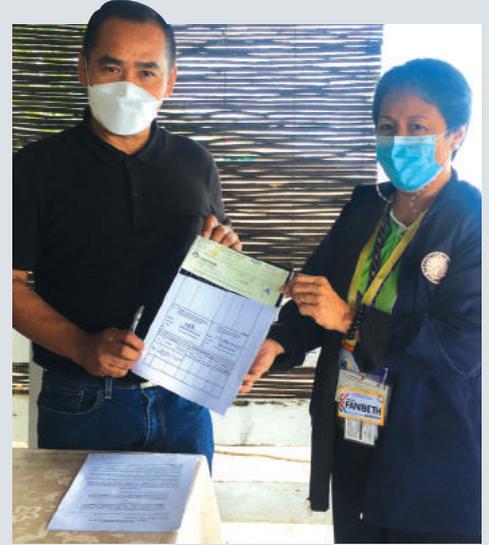
The re-opening of the island will help the tourism industry to recover and help the local residents bounce back. This will also strengthen the promotion and marketing

of the newly created Santa Ana: Your Adventure Paradise tourism circuit which promotes Palau Island as an adventure destination and which will also be launched this month.

It was noted that all ecotourism activities at the PIPLS were suspended since the declaration of a public health emergency in March 2020 due to the threat of COVID-19.

The reopening program was graced by DOT Regional Director Fanibeth Domingo, Department of Environment and Natural Resources Regional Executive Director Gwendolyn Bambalan, Cagayan Economic Zone Authority Head of Technical Assistance and Officer In-Charge-Cagayan Offices Leonardo Cruz, Local Chief Executive Nelson Robinion and other local officials.

The event was also witnessed by members of the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB), members of the Philippine National Police, Philippine Coast Guards and Philippine Navy, members of the San Vicente Motor Banca Association (SAMOBA), the Palau San Vicente Motor Banca Association (PASAMOBA), and the members of the Palau Environmental Protectors Association (PEPA), Officials and personnel from the Local Government Unit of Santa Ana and the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority, and members of the media. **DOT**



"It's More Fun paraw" set sails in Boracay

By: DOT 6

The Department of Tourism (DOT) Region VI turned over five promotional paraw sails last March 26 to the Malay Association of Sailing Boat Owners Inc. (MASBOI) - Multi-Purpose Cooperative in a short ceremony in front of the iconic Boracay Rock along Station 1, Boracay Island, Malay, Aklan.

The sails carry the "It's More Fun with You", "Have a Safe Trip Pinas" and "It's More Fun in the Philippines" tourism campaign brands.

DOT Region IV Director Cristine Mansinares led the turnover of the sails, which aims to provide a warm and welcoming ambience to the growing tourist arrivals, to MASBOI President Mike Siñel.

Also present during the event were Malay Acting Mayor Frolibar Bautista, Sangguniang Bayan Committee Chairman on Tourism Nenette Graf, Malay Chief Tourism Operations Officer Felix delos Santos Jr., Boracay Foundation Inc. Chairman Dindo Salazar, Boracay Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions Alliance president Elmar Lina, Boracay Island Travel Agencies Tour Operators Association Inc. President Claribel Casimero and Boracay Water Sports Association president Russell Cruz. **DOT**



DOT hails Sinulog citation among Asia's top festivals

Photos by: DOT 7

The Department of Tourism (DOT) welcomes the inclusion of Cebu City's Sinulog Festival as among the Top Three Ocean Cities' Festivals of the International Events and Festivals Association (IFEA) Korea.

"The Department is proud of the Sinulog's feat as we acknowledge the major impact of festivals and community-oriented events to the country's cultural and economic development as well as the tourism industry recovery," Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat said.

The DOT chief added that the recognition from IFEA Korea signifies the warm relationship of the Philippines and South Korea. South Korea was the country's top tourist source market prior to the pandemic with 1,989,322 arrivals in 2019. (Source: http://www.tourism.gov.ph/industry_performance/Dissemination_forum/2019_Tourism_Industry_

Report.pdf)

A cooperative arrangement for knowledge-sharing towards further developing Cebu and Tonyeong, a coastal city in South Gyeongsang Province, South Korea as tourist destinations is also among the interest of IFEA Korea President Gang Hoan Jeong.

Cebu Province - which houses many tourism destinations including Cebu City - is the most visited province in the Philippines in 2020 with a total of 1,414,048 tourists. Domestic travelers comprised the most of the province's tourists with 906,955, followed by 504,439 foreign travelers, and 2,654 Overseas Filipinos.

The award of recognition was received by DOT Korea Office Director Ma. Corazon Jorda-Apo at the Ocean Tourism Festival City Forum in Tongyeong City, Korea last March 25.



"We look forward to the grand street parade of the ritual prayer-dance honoring the Señor Sto. Niño back in the streets of Cebu soon as the country welcomes more foreign tourists with the relaxed arrival requirements starting April 1," Puyat added. **DOT**





Loboc boats cruising again

By: Jingjing Mariño-Farrarons | Photo by: DOT 7

Bohol's popular Loboc River Cruise is again receiving guests after intensive post-typhoon Odette rehabilitation.

Department of Tourism (DOT) Central Visayas Regional Director Shahlimar Hofer Tamano announced that the Loboc River Cruise is among various tourism activities "restarting" as the country re-opens borders on the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Last March 1, four cruise vessels were launched at their maximum 50% passenger capacity of 30-35 guests per boat following protocols prescribed by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF).

According to Lourdes Sultan, Manager of Travel Village Tours, a Loboc River Cruise operator, the floating restaurants have also resumed the buffet lunch service.

The cruise promises an enriched heritage experience. The refurbished boats are fitted with details in the Visayan vernacular architecture. Guests will enjoy a more elegant, culturally-attuned journey

through the waterway. The boats are now wider. Polished wooden floors, stained glass, capiz and callado details have been installed on the vessels.

Cruise operators, says Sultan, saw the opportunity to implement the aesthetic enhancement with the repair of the twin-hulled motorized vessels. The upgrade is in keeping with the Bohol Provincial Tourism Council's direction for tourism facilities to adopt the Visayan vernacular theme.

They began with assigning separate entrance and exit buildings within the river cruise complex. The two-storey air conditioned entry facility houses ticket booths and waiting areas seating up to 150 guests with consideration of the IATF distancing protocol.

Sultan says an average of 150 daily visitors have gone on the river cruise on its first four days of operation. About 25% of this number are non-Filipinos.

As tourism activities ground to a halt with the declaration of the pandemic in 2020, the local government of Loboc and cruise

operators hankered down to masterplan the conduct of the well-loved river trip.

Sultan explained that the cruise had a brief resumption in the last quarter of 2021 as pandemic restrictions slowly eased. However, the super typhoon severely damaged the vessels as it lashed through parts of the region in mid-December. Other vessels are currently in rehabilitation. Four more boats are serviceable by the end of March.

"DOT 7 reiterates its commitment to industry players all over the region. We congratulate the Province of Bohol, local government unit of Loboc and our floating restaurant operators for the initiative to enhance the Loboc River Cruise and for the successful reboot," Tamano said.

Operators are accepting forward bookings for the river cruise. Bookings are also being accepted for other sites within the province. Visitors need to present proof of vaccination - vaccine cards, certificates or passports - upon entry. **DOT**

DOT 8-trained lifeguard saves drowning child

By: DOT 8

TACLOBAN CITY - The Department of Tourism (DOT) Region 8 salutes the bravery of Jeric Alconaba, a DOT trained lifeguard, of Borongan City, Eastern Samar province who saved a drowning child while on-duty at the Baybay Boulevard.

Baybay Boulevard in Borongan is a top destination among beachgoers, surfing enthusiasts, and visitors who want to learn surfing, and was the venue of Philippine Surfing Championship Tour leg in 2019 and 2022.

“Every time we hear or read about a person saving someone else’s life, our first reaction is to applaud the heroic deed, admire the brave person and give a sigh of thankful relief that someone was saved from harm’s way. This was how I reacted when I saw the post on how Borongan City surfer and lifeguard Jeric Alconaba saved a drowning child,” DOT-8 Regional Director Karina Rosa Tiopes said.

Alconaba was the duty lifeguard at the Baybay Boulevard on March 3, Thursday when he saw several children swimming along Zone 1.

He shared that while at the Surf Tower he noticed that one child was having a hard time swimming, then he realized that the kid was already drowning.

He immediately went to help and rescue the drowning child.

Last year, Alconaba was one of the 34 surfers in the region who were selected to be part of the 4-day surfing instructor training in Guiuan town sponsored by

the DOT Eastern Visayas in partnership with the Academy of Surfing Instructors (ASI).

Prior to the training they have undergone basic first-aid, basic water life support, and water safety rescue. These emergency response trainings were rolled out under DOT’s Tourism Industry Skills Training Program of the Office of Industry Manpower Development, with the support of concerned Local Government Units.

“As one of the DOT-trained surf instructors, we salute Jeric for being fearless and quick to action. We also feel great pride at the thought that we may have contributed to his life-saving skills through the trainings we provide our Eastern Visayas surf instructors,” Tiopes added.

Tiopes also lauded the City Government of Borongan, through its City Tourism Office, for making sure that their beaches are safe by having well-trained lifeguards stationed on a daily basis.

She said that this a best practice

for beach areas frequently visited by guests and other sites offering water activities that should be followed by destination managers and tourism site operators.

Under the Philippine Coast Guard Memorandum Circular No. 03-14 dated April 16, 2014, having life guard is mandatory in all beach resorts, swimming pool, or water park to supervises the safety and rescue of swimmers, surfers and other water sport participants.

“Safety should always be a top-of-mind concern for those managing these kinds of places. Putting in place safety measures and training personnel to respond to accidents and emergencies should be given utmost importance,” she said.

“This way, we can always assure both locals and guests that Eastern Visayas is visitor-ready, where guests feel secure knowing that there are people who have been trained not just to provide excellent service but also to look after their safety and wellbeing,” she added. **DOT**



DOT BEYOND BORDERS

Foreign Offices Updates



DOT meets with Japanese tourism execs to boost inbound tourism arrivals

TOKYO, Japan - The Department of Tourism (DOT) continues its marketing and promotional efforts a month after reopening to international leisure travelers, this time setting its sights on potential visitors from a major source market Japan.

Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat led the Philippine delegation to Japan to engage with the latter's tourism stakeholders and promote the country as a safe travel destination in the new normal.

Japan has consistently been the Philippines' fourth-biggest tourism source market prior to the pandemic. In 2019, the country recorded 682,788 tourists from Japan. Since the country's reopening last February 10, the Philippines welcomed 2,125 leisure travelers from Japan as of March 20, 2022.

During the delegation's official trip in Japan, Puyat met with Japanese travel agents, tour operators, tourism organizations, English studies operators, economic federations, as well as Japanese media from Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka.

Some of the notable participants included STWorld; Japan Association of Travel Agents; JTB Corp; Japan Travel and Tourism Association; Hankyu Travel International Co., Ltd; Kansai Economic Federation; and the Japan Philippine Tourism Council. *(continue on page 19)*

DOT meets with Japanese tourism execs to boost inbound tourism arrivals

(continued from page 18)

The tourism chief highlighted, among others, the country's low COVID-19 cases, the high vaccination rate of tourism workers, compliance with global safety and hygiene protocols, and simplified entry requirements and process. She assured Japanese tourism stakeholders that the DOT will continue to provide marketing support including that of chartered flights to the Philippines.

Secretary Puyat also introduced a program to entice fully vaccinated Japanese travelers who have yet to receive their booster jabs by providing COVID-19 vaccine booster shots at popular tourist destinations in the country. This will enable Japanese tourists to go back to Japan without having to do quarantine.

"Like other tourism ministries, the Philippines Department of Tourism exhausted all possible efforts to revive the industry, primarily to restore jobs and rebuild revenue streams. Now, we are glad to see the fruits of our labor after nearly two years of preparations to push for the

recovery of the sector," the tourism chief said.

Puyat emphasized that the Philippines is by far the first country in Southeast Asia to have the simplest travel process with no quarantines nor testing upon arrival.

"We are aware that the pandemic is still here and health should always be the priority. We strive to balance public safety and economic recovery by crafting policies that safeguard our citizen's well-being as well as revive the tourism sector," she stressed.

Puyat also met with the DOT's counterpart, the Japan Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MOLIT) to discuss the resumption of two-way tourism traffic between the two countries.

"The Philippines and Japan share a common goal for the tourism sector, that of promoting our respective destinations and thereby contributing meaningfully to the growth of our nations' economies.," said Puyat

The tourism chief took the opportunity to invite Japanese tourism players to the much-

anticipated World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) Global Summit, which will be held in Manila, Philippines for the first time from April 20 to 22.

The upcoming Philippine-hosted WTTC Summit will "open discussions between industry stakeholders, organizations, and governments to support economic recovery through the restarting of travel and tourism and attracting investments centered on the safe and secure reopening of the industry," she disclosed.

The tourism chief earlier said that such hosting is an advantage to the Philippines, as it is a way to showcase what the country could offer more in the global arena in terms of boosting investments.

"Through this event, we aim to stimulate discussions on how to solve the social, environmental, and economic challenges faced by the global travel and tourism industry. Likewise, we aim to increase the public's appreciation for the travel and tourism industry's role as a driver of economic growth, livelihoods and employment, and sustainable development," she said. **DOT**



National Women's Month Celebration

WE MAKE CHANGE WORK FOR WOMEN



POSTER MAKING CONTEST



LOGO MAKING CONTEST

Newly Appointed Officials

REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Jovita A. Ganongan

DOT Cordillera Administrative Region

With almost three decades of life work and government service for the Cordillera Administrative Regional (CAR) Office of the Department of Tourism (DOT), Regional Director (RD) Jovita A. Ganongan surely know the tourism industry of the region.

From serving the regional office as the Clerk III, RD Jovy rose from the ranks as a Tourism Operations Officer (TOO) II, then as Senior TOO, to Supervising TOO, to Chief TOO and the Officer-In-Charge (OIC) of the region in the span of 28 years.

She took helm of the region as the OIC from 2019 before being appointed as the Regional Director last March 11.

RD Jovy is also proud of her humble beginnings as a teacher for the St. Louis College Tuguegarao and as a clerk processor for Camp John Hay under Philippine Tourism Authority and Bases Conversion and Development Authority before joining the DOT Cordilleras.

The Kalinga native from Tabuk City, has a Masters in Public Administration (MPA) PHD in Management degree together with her Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education, Major in



Mathematics and English degree.

RD Jovy is currently a member of the Baguio Tourism Council and Kalinga Professionals Organization (Baguio-Benguet Chapter) as well as an officer of the Cordillera Association Regional Executives. **DOT**

REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Sharlene Z. Batin

DOT National Capital Region

“Life is too short for what-ifs”, that’s the life philosophy of newly-appointed Regional Director (RD) for the Department of Tourism (DOT) National Capital Region (NCR) Sharlene Zabala-Batin.

RD Sha, as she is fondly called by her friends and her team, started in the DOT as a Tourism Operations Officer II of the CALABARZON Regional Office where she served as the officer-in-charge budget officer, Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), and head of the statistical training program.

She then qualified for the Supervising Tourism Operation Officer post of the NCR office as the Data Privacy Compliance

Officer and head of the Tourism Development Planning Research and Information Management Unit. RD Sha also facilitated the training of private and public tourism stakeholders on tourism development planning and tourism statistics as well as managed the DOT - Metro Manila social media accounts.

Before her DOT stint, RD Sha served as a faculty member of the Lyceum of the Philippines Cavite teaching tourism, travel services, and events management courses. She first ventured in the tourism industry as the Officer-in-Charge of the City Tourism and Information Office of her hometown in Trece Martires City, Cavite where she developed the city tourism strategic plan and tourism communication plan.



RD Sha, who is a proud wife and mother of three, is a master in Public Administration Major in Local and Regional Governance graduate from the University of the Philippines and is currently undertaking her Doctor in Public Administration degree.

As the Regional Director of the Capital of Fun, RD Sha is also tasked as the Deputy Secretary General for the Philippine Hosting of the World Travel and Tourism Global Summit 2022. **DOT**

Newly Appointed Officials

DIRECTOR

Paulo Benito S. Tugbang

Medical, Health and Wellness Tourism

Director Paulo Benito S. Tugbang is a health policy professional with years of experience in health governance, including health policy development, and planning, program management, and crisis management.

Before being named as the Director of the DOT Medical, Health, and Wellness Tourism last March 11, Director Paulo led the Medical Travel and Wellness Tourism Program of the Department of Health (DOH) as the Program Manager and served with the Interagency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) Secretariat as the Technical Lead.

Director Paulo also was at the helm of DOH working in concurrent capacity as the Executive Assistant to the DOH

Secretary involved in three policy-related work stream from 2018 to 2022.

The faculty preceptor and faculty adviser of the Ateneo School of Medicine and Public Health and Development Academy of the Philippines respectively, was a former Municipal Health Officer for the DOH Doctor to the Barrios Program for three years.

He led the Municipality of San Rafael, Iloilo Province during his Doctor to the Barrios Program stint to multiple citations for zero open defecation, highest contraceptive prevalence, community deworming coverage, voluntary blood donation, TB-DOTS facility evaluation and reaccreditation, and the Municipal-Level Service Delivery Network Manual.

Director Paulo is a registered physician, a registered midwife placing 1st during the November



2010 Midwife Licensure Exam, and also a registered nurse ranking 10th during the July 2009 licensure exam.

As the Director for DOT's Medical, Health and Wellness Tourism, Director Paulo is assigned to oversee its development and implementation as well as assist the DOT Secretary in the IATF-EID. **DOT**

Newly Appointed and Promoted Employees



SUPERVISING TOURISM OPERATIONS OFFICER

Marissa Victoria C. Claustro

Standards Development Division



SUPERVISING TOURISM OPERATIONS OFFICER

Consuelo L. Gestopa

Standards Monitoring and Enforcement Division



SENIOR TOURISM OPERATIONS OFFICER

Bayani D. Malicdem

DOT- Cordillera Administrative Region

Newly Appointed and Promoted Employees



INFORMATION OFFICER III
Rae Marrie L. De Mesa
Public Affairs
and Communications
Management Division



**TOURISM
OPERATIONS OFFICER II**
**Marc Ramiro
R. Ortiz Luis**
Regional Office IV-B



**ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICER IV (HRMO II)**
Raquel C. Cheng
Human Resource Division



**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
III (RECORDS OFFICER II)**
Ghieanne Loren
Human Resource Division



**ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICER V**
Andrea J. Oca
General Services Division



**TOURISM
OPERATIONS OFFICER II**
Emie Chloe B. Mejala
Regional Office XIII



**ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICER III**
**Zennina Rechille
C. Pariñas**
Human Resource Division



**TOURISM
OPERATIONS OFFICER I**
**Joane Krizzia
M. Delariarte**
Regional Office IV-B



**ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICER II (HRMO I)**
**Lyka Angelika
B. Lucas**
Human Resource Division



**TOURISM
OPERATIONS OFFICER I**
**Collins Karla
E. Telmo**
DOT-National Capital Region



**CHIEF TOURISM
OPERATIONS OFFICER**
Ronsan M. Pelariza
Regional Officer III



**TOURISM
OPERATIONS OFFICER I**
**Bon Jovi
A. Cabreros**
Regional Officer XI



ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT III
Marjorie Mae S. Mandate
Internal Audit Service



ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT III
Bill P. Salazar
Accounting Division



ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT II
Kim Denise P. Mendoza
Accounting Division

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

TO OUR APRIL BIRTHDAY CELEBRATORS

- | | | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|----|----------------------------|----|------------------------|
| 1 | Cecilio Cruz | 10 | Maricris Agustin | 19 | Irene Buenavidez |
| 1 | James Carlo Barbierra | 10 | Michelle Gonzales | 19 | Mara Louise Caña |
| 1 | Christine Dimapilis | 10 | Nathan Obie James Abinguna | 20 | Genevive Tagarao |
| 1 | Maria Katrina Vanessa Duka | 10 | Marc Maio Judicpa | 21 | Meralyn Ibanez |
| 2 | Elizabeth Andal | 11 | Exequiel Erfelo | 21 | Norjannah Lucman |
| 2 | Orlando Bryan Du | 11 | Rhea Ison | 21 | Everyl Rosalada |
| 2 | Edmund Tecson | 11 | Woodrow Maquiling Jr. | 21 | Primalee Tuvilla |
| 4 | Pedro De Guzman Jr. | 11 | Katherine Patawaran | 22 | Joycelyn Barlomento |
| 4 | Eric Jay Espiritu | 11 | Lorry Ann David | 22 | Ernest John Ola |
| 4 | Jocelyn Gamilla | 11 | Vivian Rebulos | 22 | Rowenah Marie Roberto |
| 5 | Roldan Pineda | 12 | Allan Nepomuceno | 23 | Glenn Nhel Umandal |
| 5 | Chryslyr Tener | 12 | April Love Colarte | 23 | Winabelle Magsino |
| 6 | Marizel Flores | 13 | Francisco Franco | 23 | Nikka Nulud |
| 6 | Lillian Maunes | 14 | Warner Andrada | 23 | Hycenth Grace Tuhao |
| 6 | Elaine Villanueva | 14 | Micahel Ron Carlos | 24 | Ghienel Gustilo |
| 7 | Imelda Basto | 15 | Josephine Faustino | 24 | Lois Apphia Cayanan |
| 7 | Myra Paz Valderrosa-Abubakar | 15 | Ghieanne Loren | 25 | Mark Gregorio Samonte |
| 7 | Denison Manuel | 15 | Stephen Roy Argosino | 26 | Ildefonso Pascual Jr. |
| 7 | Keneth De Gracia | 15 | Jeromehiah Castro | 26 | Romeo Caranguian Jr. |
| 7 | Riza Angeles | 15 | Faye Codia | 26 | Pearl Dency Batiancila |
| 7 | Antonio Marie Siddayao II | 15 | Djamal Nour Marohombosar | 27 | Veronica Reyes |
| 8 | Maria Janina Gonzalez | 15 | Jerome Romero | 27 | Cristine Mansinares |
| 8 | Maria Dalisay Legaspi | 16 | Esther Reyes | 27 | Ryan Tapayan |
| 8 | Lara Denisse Yerro | 17 | Artemio Ticar | 29 | Frederick Castro |
| 9 | Cris Domingo | 17 | Khemille Zerine Alterado | 30 | Liliosa Libosada |
| 9 | Hiyasmin Yalong | 18 | Stephen Dumpit | 30 | Erlita Val Gumpal |
| 10 | Regielyn Dayag | 19 | Kristane Ray Caducio | 30 | Jericho Delfin |