



PBBM cites tourism as top-priority; orders infra development, enhancement of Filipino brand

Photo by: Bongbong Marcos Facebook Page

BATASAN PAMBANSA - President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. on July 25 emphasized the pivotal role of tourism as he bared his directions for the industry during the early part of his first State of the Nation Address (SONA).

Citing his plans for the country's tourism in the first few minutes of his SONA, just right after expounding on the economy and agriculture, the President expressed optimism for the sector noting that *"Tourism is not only an important economic development tool but the abundance of opportunities that the sector creates in terms of regular employment and even job creation at the grassroots level is undeniable."*

Basic improvements to roads, airports

To boost the country's tourism industry, President Marcos Jr. has directed the Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to jointly implement a program that would introduce basic infrastructure developments that will increase the convenience of travelers when going around the Philippines.



"To boost our tourism industry, we will first and foremost make basic developments such as road improvements for easier access to tourism spots. We will also upgrade our airports and create more international airports to help decongest the bottleneck at the Manila International Airport," President Marcos said.

These improvements, the President said, will be brought to remote areas to help promote undiscovered tourist spots in the country.

Enhanced 'Filipino' brand in tourism

In terms of promoting the country's tourism, President Marcos expressed the need to bank on an enhanced Filipino brand.

"They say, each brand has a story. As for the Filipino brand, ours is deeply rooted in our rich cultural heritage and the tourism sector plays an invaluable role in the promotion of the Filipino brand," President Marcos Jr. said as he opened his address on tourism. *(continue on page 16)*



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DOT to coordinate on quake-hit tourist destinations, heritage sites

Photo by: PIA Ilocos Sur

From President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr.'s directive to lend assistance to the areas affected by the earthquake earlier today, Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco has directed the DOT regional offices to coordinate with their respective local government units (LGUs) to determine the extent of damage, and extend assistance to tourism-related establishments (TREs) affected.

Frasco also directed the DOT's infrastructure arm, the Tourism Infrastructure Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), to explore the assistance that the agency can extend particularly on the cultural and heritage sites affected by the intense quake that rocked the northern part of Luzon.

Based on initial reports, at least 2 churches, declared "National Cultural Treasure" by the National Museum of the Philippines were affected while several heritage and ancestral houses also sustained notable damage due to the earthquake.

"We will request TIEZA to prioritize assessment of the cultural treasures affected by the recent earthquake recognizing the need to protect and sustain our heritage and cultural treasures for the benefit and welfare of our future generations," Tourism Secretary Frasco said.

Per the initial report of the DOT Regional Offices, particularly Region 1 and the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), damage in several tourist destinations as well as private properties were recorded in the following tourist destinations:

Abra

In Abra, where the epicenter of the earthquake was recorded, damaged tourism sites included the Sta Catalina de Alejandria Church, a 19th century baroque church and declared a National Cultural Treasure by the National Museum of the Philippines in 2001.

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Tourism Chief Frasco takes oath of office; PBBM bullish on tourism recovery

MANILA, Philippines - Multi-awarded local chief executive and Mayor of Liloan, Cebu Atty. Christina Garcia-Frasco formally assumed her new role as Secretary of the Department of Tourism (DOT) on June 30, during the Oathtaking of Cabinet Secretaries officiated by President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. that took place at the Malacañan Palace.

Frasco, who was joined by her family members mother Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia, husband Cebu 5th District Representative Duke Frasco, and sister Carissa Garcia, was sworn into office along with other cabinet members of the new administration.

In his inaugural speech as the 17th President of the Republic of the Philippines, Marcos Jr. expressed his optimism for the country's tourism industry, noting its bright prospects with Frasco at the helm of the DOT.

"The recovery of Philippine tourism, with its emphasis on accessing nature's beauty, I am sure, will exceed expectations," said President Marcos.

"Following these giant steps, we will continue to build. I will complete on schedule the projects that have been started. I am not interested in taking credit; I want to build on success that's already happening. We will be presenting the public with a comprehensive infrastructure plan. Six years could be just about enough time. No part of our country will be neglected. Progress will be made wherever there are Filipinos, so no investment is wasted," added the President.

Secretary Frasco echoed the President's vision, noting two essential building blocks in ensuring sustainable tourism: effective local government planning and implementation, and shared tourism governance by the public and private sector.

"Effective planning and implementation on the Local Government side necessitates focus on zoning and land use regulations that enhances rather than degrades the long term value of tourist attractions, proactive and aggressive infrastructure development that provides quality access to roads, bridges, water systems, providing access to various methods of



transportation by land, sea, and air, as well as heritage and environmental protection that ensures sustainable tourism development," she said, in relation to her experience as a local chief executive of Liloan town.

"The goal is to improve the overall tourism experience by both domestic and foreign tourists so that they not only enjoy the idea of the brand that is the Philippines but fully immerse in and keep buying into the product that is our beautiful country and the work of its people," she noted.

Secretary Frasco served as Mayor of the Municipality of Liloan from 2016 to 2022, and graduated from Ateneo Law School. Prior to entering public service, she practiced international arbitration and commercial litigation at the Romulo Law Firm and taught as a Professor at the University of San Carlos (USC) College of Law.

"It is my hope that by building bridges of collaboration, we can generate boundless opportunities for livelihood, employment, and business that puts the success of every Filipino tourism stakeholder front and center of our agenda," enthused the tourism chief. **DOT**

DOT Secretary Frasco attends Post-SONA Economic Briefing

Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco on July 26 served as one of the speakers during the Post-State of the Nation Address (SONA) Economic Briefing 2022 held at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC).

In the panel discussion on the infrastructure and industry priorities of the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., Secretary Frasco once again expressed her heartfelt gratitude to the President for his clear vision and confidence for the country's tourism industry recovery, which he expressed during his first ever SONA on July 25.

Secretary Frasco outlined the DOT's main objectives to achieve the President's specific directives for tourism, as she reiterated the need for stronger coordination between the national government, the local government, and the private sector stakeholders in the undertakings of the Department.

In terms of long-term strategies to promote sustainable tourism in the Philippines, the DOT chief first pointed out that the concept of sustainable development can be quite theoretical, hence, the concept has a tendency to be disconnected from the actual implementation on the ground. To address this, she proposes to: introduce sustainable development policies to a wider sustainable development that looks at economic policy, environmental policy, and social policy; incentivizes sustainable tourism policy implementation in the private sector; and enhances the Filipino brand to encourage Filipinos to have a sense of ownership in taking care and promoting their communities to the world.

"It's very important to continue to harness the relationship with the private sector, especially in the grassroots, for the adoption of sustainable development not only as a policy and theoretical notion, but rather

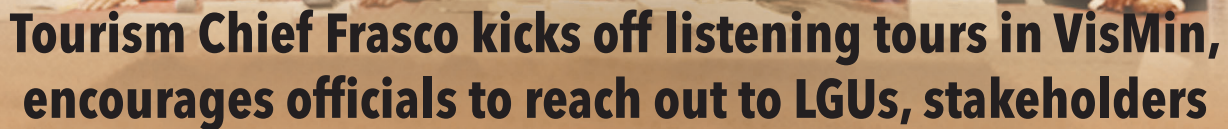


as a way of life so that eventually, sustainable tourism is not only a matter of government regulation but rather of self-regulation, in that the community takes an active part in the implementation of all of these policies," the DOT chief said.

"It's also very important to our mind that President Marcos has very clearly laid out the importance of enhancing the Filipino brand, in that we inculcate among the Filipino people--and encourage among them--pride of place, that they may take ownership of taking care of their communities and projecting to the world the unique Filipino brand that is anchored not only on the beauty of our natural resources but also, most importantly, on our rich cultural heritage," she added.

Joining Tourism Secretary Frasco during the panel discussion on Infrastructure and Industry were Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Secretary Manuel Bonoan, Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) Secretary Ivan John Uy, Department of Transportation (DOTr) Undersecretary Cesar Chavez, Department of Agriculture (DA) Assistant Secretary Arnel De Mesa, and Department of Energy (DoE) Director Mario Marasigan. The session was moderated by Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Managing Director for Strategic Communication and Advocacy Antonio Lambino. **DOT**





Tourism Chief Frasco kicks off listening tours in VisMin, encourages officials to reach out to LGUs, stakeholders

CEBU CITY – Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco on July 7 encouraged the DOT regional offices in the Visayas and Mindanao to continuously reach out to local government units (LGUs) and stakeholders to ensure the alignment of tourism development initiatives.

In the first leg of her listening tours as tourism chief, Secretary Frasco met with the top officials of DOT Region 6 (Western Visayas), Region 7 (Central Visayas), Region 8 (Eastern Visayas) Region 9 (Zamboanga Peninsula), Region 10 (Northern Mindanao), Region 11 (Davao Region), Region 12 (SOCKSARGEN), and Region 13 (CARAGA) at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Cebu.

“Moving forward, I would want for us, in the same way, that I am reaching out to you, to continuously reach out to our local government officials and local stakeholders because I think that the model for that—which has been Cebu—has proven very successful that even throughout the pandemic, domestic tourism still flourished because DOT Region, the Provincial Government, local government officials, and private stakeholders were all aligned. And it is this alignment that we need across all regions that will spell the success of our endeavors in the Department,” said Secretary Frasco.

“The reality is that the success or failure of our industry rests in the success or failure of our regions because this is where our tourist destinations are,” stressed the tourism chief.

To recall, Frasco announced that she will embark on “listening tours” to hear for herself the challenges and problems that besiege the various regions and tourism stakeholders. Additionally, through the conduct of the tour, the Secretary hopes to start the process of assessing the contemporary challenges in the tourism sector. Fund availability and utilization, tourism infrastructure and transportation were

among the issues raised during the discussions with the regional offices.

Frasco has enjoined the consolidation and review of work and financial plans of the Department’s regional offices for the efficient utilization of the Department’s budget.

Pursuing her direction towards promoting better access to tourism destinations, Frasco also assessed the possibility of developing more air and seaports and additional routes to create more convenient connections for domestic and international visitors.

“I’m hopeful as well that you would be open to the innovations we wish to introduce to the Department, if only to fulfill our President’s vision to equalize opportunities for tourism promotion and development across the Philippines. On one hand, to maximize the potential of our already well-known tourist sites and, on the other hand, to further develop areas that have not necessarily been given equal attention,” the tourism chief enthused.

All officials who attended the meeting expressed their appreciation for the consultation process initiated by Frasco. *“We are optimistic under this administration seeing that our Secretary is paying close attention to the concerns on the ground. We can feel that she is serious and sincere about improving tourism governance and continuing collaboration with the LGUs,”* DOT-Region 10 Director Marie Elaine Unchuan added.

“We are ecstatic about this transition because we have a Secretary who listens. It is important for us to have a Secretary who supports and understands the issues faced by the regions,” said Director Tanya Virginia Rabat-Tan of DOT-Region 11.

Expressing hope that the DOT will be achieving more in terms of benefits for stakeholders, Director Karina Rose Tiopes of DOT-Region 8 stated, *“With Secretary Frasco at the helm of the DOT, we are certain that the future is rosy for the tourism industry”.* **DOT**

DOT chief takes Listening Tours to Luzon

CLARK, PAMPANGA - As part of her nationwide listening tours, Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco travelled to Clark, Pampanga on July 21 to engage in back-to-back dialogues with all heads of Department of Tourism (DOT) regional offices and key tourism stakeholders based in Luzon, completing the first leg of listening tours for all DOT regional directors across the country barely a month into her stint as Tourism Secretary.

Completion of Listening tours for DOT Regional Directors

The tourism chief addressed the heads of the DOT offices in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Region 1 (Ilocos Region), Region 2 (Cagayan Valley), Region 3 (Central Luzon), Region 4A (CALABARZON), Region 4B (MIMAROPA), and Region 5 (Bicol Region).

"I had conveyed my intention to extend my hand of collaboration to all of our regions across the country in order to be able to fully exercise the mandate of the Department of Tourism, whose efforts need not only be concentrated in areas near the Central Office but most importantly, in the farthest areas, to allow the expansion of economic and livelihood opportunities for LGUs across the country, as this has been the clear marching orders of President Bongbong Marcos—to let our fellow Filipinos feel the benefits of countryside development," Secretary Frasco.

Among the issues raised during the discussion revolve around the accessibility of landlocked

tourism destinations, lack of flights and/or airports and roads, difficulties in hiring of regional personnel, and other administrative barriers, among others.

As she acknowledged the recurring concerns of the Regional Offices, Secretary Frasco vowed to deliberate on the identified problems and provide guidance to the offices.

"Certainly, these are matters that we note with serious consideration, with the intention to extend better assistance from the central office to your regional offices recognizing that it's simply impossible for us to succeed as a Department, without the help, the input, and the success of our individual regions. And that is very important to me, recognizing that the success of each region will also spell the success of our country in general," Secretary Frasco assured the regional directors.

Meanwhile, the participants expressed their appreciation to Secretary Frasco for initiating her "listening tours" in a bid to better connect and steer the tourism industry towards recovery.

"We appreciate this effort as it opens the communication line between sub-national and national, thus will lead to more cooperation, coordination, collaboration and support towards the advancement of tourism as an economic driver. It's a good opportunity as well for us to align our strategies towards a clear directive coming from no less than the Secretary herself," DOT-CAR Regional Director Jovita Ganongan said. *(continue on page 7)*



DOT chief takes Listening Tours to Luzon

(continued from page 6)

“To be heard, acknowledged and be felt by our tourism chief is an honor and privilege which gives us regional offices a sense of assurance for a promising road towards tourism recovery,” DOT-3 Regional Director Carolina Uy added.

Director Herbie Aguas—who also served as a Mayor prior to his appointment as Regional Director—also thanked Secretary Frasco, noting that this is his first time to be recognized and heard by a DOT Secretary since he was appointed to lead DOT-Region 5 August of 2021.

“During our first meeting at the Central Office, I wanted to clap my hands when you said that you are a listening secretary—because that’s what we need right now. It’s really a good thing that whatever the dilemma is on the ground, it can be addressed right away,” enthused Director Aguas.

Meeting with Stakeholders from Luzon

In a separate event, the DOT chief also met with representatives of the following associations and organizations: Subic-Clark Alliance for Development (SCAD); Luzon International Premier Airport Development (LIPAD) Corporation; Association of Tourism Officers of the Philippines (ATOP); Clark Development Corporation (CDC); Pampanga Agents Travel Society (PATS); Hotels and Restaurants Association in Pampanga (HARP); Central Luzon Farm Tourism Association; Accredited Guides Association of Pampanga (AGAP); and Pampanga Bike Adventure Tour.

Each of the participants were enjoined to voice out their concerns and suggestions for their respective sectors, which revolve around request for additional government support and increased inclusivity in terms of promotions, trainings, and harmonisation of accreditation standards for the industry.

The DOT chief has given her directive to the Regional Offices to coordinate with the associations, and to ensure that measures and appropriate timelines will be devised to provide the needed support of the stakeholders.

Among the immediate directives of the Secretary included the easier renewal process for DOT



accreditation. Knowing first hand the difficulties of tourism stakeholders to submit the documentary requirements for the renewal of DOT accreditation amid the pandemic, she instructed for the Regional Offices to: waive the immediate submission of certain documentary requirements, provided that they sign an Sworn Statement of Undertaking that they agree to submit the lacking documents at a later time; and to shoulder the cost of the notarization of this undertaking.

Additionally, she also expressed the DOT’s plans to replicate the successful model of Cebu Travel Fair in destinations like Pampanga, to further promote accommodations and restaurants, noting the appeal of the HARP to help address the negative impressions that guests may have upon establishments that previously served as quarantine facilities.

LIPAD Corporation representative Noel Manangkil welcomed the listening tours, noting that “their organization is grateful I because, now, the plans are grounded on the operational implementing level. There is a sense of participation in the strategies that will be crafted by the national (government).”

Meanwhile, Danilo Cerdana of PATS commented that they are “relieved that the Secretary heard our sentiments. She is very focused; she addressed the issues and concerns of the stakeholders and we are very grateful,” he added.

“Having heard her today, I know we are in good hands,” remarked Matt De Castro of HARP.

Inspection

To cap her back-to-back meetings with DOT Regional Directors and tourism stakeholders in Luzon, Secretary Frasco also conducted an inspection of the Clark International Airport (CRK). **DOT**

DOT Listening tours commence



July 8, 2022 | Cebu Tourism Stakeholders



July 18, 2022 | Tourism Promotions Board



July 20, 2022 | Intramuros Administration



July 22, 2022 | Local leaders of Siargao



July 22, 2022 | National Parks Development Committee



July 22, 2022 | Duty Free Philippines

DOT Listening tours commence



July 22, 2022 | Philippine Retirement Authority



July 27, 2022 | Tourism Congress of the Philippines



July 27, 2022 | Travel and Tours Association



July 27, 2022 | Aviation Sector



July 28, 2022 | Nayong Pilipino Foundation



July 28, 2022 | Megaworld Corporation

DOT Chief affirms support to National Museum of the Philippines; proposes inclusion of museums in tourism circuits

Manila, Philippines - Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco on July 20 affirmed the Department's full support to the National Museum of the Philippines (NMP) during her attendance at the 3rd quarter regular Board of Trustees (BoT) meeting held at the National Museum in Manila.

Others present at the meeting were Evangelina Lourdes Arroyo- Bernas, NMP Chairperson; Jeremy Barns, Director General of NMP; Jorell M. Legazpi, Deputy Director for Museums; and Board of Trustees from the private sector Andoni M. Aboitiz, Dr. Jurgenne Primavera, and Dr. Rene R. Escalante. Senator Nancy Binay and other trustees also joined the meeting virtually.

The Tourism Secretary is joined, as members of the NMP BoT, by the Education Secretary, the Tourism Committee Chair of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Chairperson of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), the Director-General of the National Museum, and eight (8) representatives of the private sector in the National Museum Board. It may be noted that the NMP's mandate is to establish, manage and develop museums not only in Manila but also in key locations around the country.

During the meeting, Frasco expressed her gratitude to the members of the board, and offered the Department of Tourism's assistance in the marketing and promotions of museums across the country, as well as the establishment of tourism circuits for museums so public knowledge and access to these museums



could be in the mainstream.

"I wish to thank all of you for what you have done to push forward the preservation of our heritage. My personal presence here, today, I hope, signals my intention to give the full support of the Department of Tourism to the National Museum of the Philippines and to all of your projects nationwide. I wanted the support to be tacitly manifested by my physical presence and you can be rest assured that I will be your ally in the Department of Tourism," remarked Frasco.

An advocate of culture and the arts herself, the former Mayor of Liloan added *"All of your efforts deserve to be highlighted and the general public needs to really know about all the activities, because giving the general public access to all of these worthwhile endeavors would also benefit both the museum and the public in general, in that, we are able to provide a mainstream access to all that the museums have to offer."*

Frasco has earlier directed the officials of the Department to reach out to local government units all over the country to equalize marketing and promotions. This, she added, can also be executed for the properties managed by the NMP. *"I hope to have a similar effort done for the National Museum because I will be very interested to explore how we can assist in increasing engagement for its endeavors,"* said the tourism chief. **DOT**





DOT lauds Cebu-based group win in int'l dance competition

Photos By: Ricky Ballesteros and DOT 7

The Department of Tourism (DOT) lauds the performance of the Cebu-based Tribu Lumad Basakanon that has earned the top spot in the international category of The Powerful Daegu Festival in South Korea.

Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco, who hails from Cebu and a Sto. Nino devotee herself, is all praises for the group's impressive performance which features the Cebuanos' devotion to the Senor Sto. Niño through the Sinulog dance.

"The Tribu Lumad Basakanon has proven that, Filipinos, are indeed world-class performers. The group brings pride to the Philippines, and contributes greatly to our country's efforts to highlight the our rich cultural heritage through festivals," said Secretary Frasco.

"This recent victory of the Tribu Lumad Basakanon at the Powerful Daegu Festival provides a platform to further promote this Philippine heritage and time-honored tradition," the tourism chief added.

Sinulog is one of the grandest Philippine festivals that has been attracting tourists from all over the world who join in the street

dancing and festivities.

"Tribu Lumad Basakanon's accomplishment brings hope and inspiration to other Filipinos to aspire for honor and pride, not only for themselves, but for our country. The group's laudable performance will enjoin more tourists to visit Cebu and neighboring tourist destinations, to experience for themselves our rich history, culture, and heritage, and the pride of place and unwavering faith felt by Cebuanos," enthused the tourism chief. **DOT**



on the **DOT: Staff**

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DOT lauds Boracay's inclusion in TIME's 50 World's Greatest Places of 2022

Photo by: EON Group

The Department of Tourism (DOT) hails the inclusion of Boracay Island among TIME's 50 extraordinary destinations to explore in 2022.

"The DOT affirms its pride and honor as Boracay Island once again proved its allure as a tourist haven. Such recognition will surely help us attain our goal of regaining our position in the global market," Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco said.

"Surely, the Philippines has a multitude of sites and tourism activities that we could offer to the world. And, in addition to natural resources, we look forward as well to developing and promoting the talents of our people and the products that have potential for national and global marketability," she added.

Boracay Island joins other world-famous destinations and natural wonders on the list, including the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, Seoul in Korea, and Doha in Qatar, among others.

In 2018, a six-month closure of the island was imposed by the previous administration to make way for rehabilitation and redevelopment initiatives.

"Then the pandemic struck, and the Philippines

closed its borders, halting even domestic tourism to Boracay. It took a severe toll on the local economy, but the silver lining was that this 4-sq.-mi. speck in the Visayas island chain had proper time to truly recover. As of February 2022, international visitors can finally revel in this revamped, recuperated, natural playground after what was effectively a three-year convalescence. Locals report the return of flora and fauna, like sea turtles, and hospitality has come back just as spectacularly," wrote Charlie Campbell of TIME.

"Through collaboration between the DOT central and regional offices, relevant national government agencies, the local government units, and the private sector, we will exert all efforts to put in the limelight not only the country's premier tourist destinations like Boracay, but also other places of interest in the country which may not have been given equal focus and attention in the past," Secretary Frasco said.

In coming up with its list of 50 World's Greatest Places for 2022, TIME solicited nominations from its international network of correspondents and contributors, putting focus on places "those offering new and exciting experiences." **DOT**



Boracay, Palawan and Cebu hailed World's Best Islands; DOT celebrates back-to-back accolades for PHL destinations

Photos By: Erwin Lim, IPG Mediterranean, Christian Sangoyo

The Department of Tourism (DOT) applauded the naming of the country's three island destinations among "The 25 Best Islands in the World" of the New York-based travel magazine Travel + Leisure (T+L).

Boracay Island featuring its postcard perfect sunset ranked 9th in the T+L World's Best Island list, followed by the Palawan at 11th with a photo of an idyllic lagoon in El Nido, and Cebu at 16th with Taoist Temple, in Cebu City. According to T+L, readers were asked to *"weigh in on travel experiences around the globe — to share their opinions on the top cities, islands, cruise ships, spas, airlines, and more. Readers rated islands according to their activities and sights, natural attractions and beaches, food, friendliness, and overall value."*

"The Philippines is truly blessed with the unrivaled beauty of our natural resources coupled by the warmth and endless talent of the Filipinos manifested in this citation of Travel + Leisure that included our Cebu, Palawan, and Boracay in their prestigious list," Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco said.

Boracay and Palawan also topped T+L's 5 Best Islands in Asia alongside Phuket, Thailand, Bali, Indonesia, and The Maldives. "Travel + Leisure readers fondly recalled pre-COVID-era visits to the best islands in Asia. Now that the region is reopening, they're surely eager to return to these five ports of call, including the islands of the Maldives, as well as those found in Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines," stated T + L.

"We express our heartfelt gratitude and congratulations to all tourism stakeholders from the public and private sector, the national and local government units, the efforts of the previous

administration included, and all the hardworking employees and officials of the Department across the country for forging forward amidst the challenges of the pandemic and contributing in their own ways so our country may earn the title as one of the most beautiful in the world. The natural beauty of a country can truly shine through when we are united in heralding our best qualities," Frasco added.

Philippines among the 40 Most Beautiful Countries in the World

The Philippines concurrently was named among "The 40 Most Beautiful Countries in the World" by lifestyle travel magazine Condé Nast Traveler (CNT).

The country is accompanied in the list by other countries such as Brazil, France, Italy, Japan, and United States of America, among others.

Manila among top cities in the World

Meanwhile, TimeOut.com also ranked Manila among the top cities in the world. The ranking comes as a result of a survey among city-dwellers worldwide. The choice is a result of several criteria that include aspects like walkability, good public transport, safety, and sustainability other than a thriving nightlife, amazing food and drink, and art and culture. It should be noted, nonetheless, that Manila is usually in reference to Metro Manila or the Philippines' National Capital Region.

"May this global recognition of the beauty of our natural resources inspire our efforts to raise the Philippines' standing in the tourism industry by introducing tourism infrastructure development and improvements that would enhance connectivity and convenience in reaching our destinations," enthused Secretary Frasco. **DOT**

Marcos push for Tourism Infra strengthens industry, raises PHL global position – DOT Chief

Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco on July 14 welcomed the recent pronouncement of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on the need to improve tourism infrastructure and introduce proactive policies to boost the country's tourism industry.

During the Cabinet Meeting held Tuesday (July 12) at the Malacañang, President Marcos Jr. said that local tourism-related infrastructure must be at par with top tourist destinations such as Singapore.

"We just have to support the plan to develop all of these enabling environments—the policy, conditions, and infrastructure," President Marcos Jr. said during the meeting.

Thanking the President for making the tourism sector a priority under his administration, Frasco expressed the DOT's commitment to the full development of the enabling environment—the policies, conditions, and infrastructure—that will further boost the revitalization of the tourism industry.

"Certainly, to benchmark their policies in this regard would be the direction that we would take per your instructions," Frasco told the President.

"Many measures could be improved as far as policy regulations, both on the national and local level, and proper coordination to be able to focus on the overall tourist experience from the time that he arrives to the point of entry to the time that he gets to his point of destination," she added.

Targets and objectives

Marking her second week as DOT Secretary, Frasco laid down the targets and objectives of the Department in keeping with the President's earlier directive to revitalize the tourism industry and transform it into a major pillar for economic growth in the Philippines.

The specific objectives of the DOT include the following: the improvement of tourism infrastructure and accessibility; a cohesive and comprehensive digitalization and connectivity; enhancement of the overall tourist experience; equalization of tourism product development and promotion; diversification of portfolio through multi-dimensional tourism; maximization of domestic tourism; and strengthening tourism governance through close coordination with LGUs and stakeholders.

She stressed on the need to anchor these objectives on three focus points taking into consideration the Philippines' current ranking of 6th in Southeast Asia in terms of tourist arrivals and preference vis-a-vis leaders such as Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore, and recognizing the country's potential to improve its rankings considering the quality of its offerings in terms of natural resources.

"These three focus points which take into consideration the perspective of a traveler are connectivity, convenience, and E(quality)," Secretary Frasco said.

Connectivity

According to the tourism chief, per the President's direction, the DOT shall work towards improving connectivity of tourist destinations through convergence with tourism-enhancing government agencies such as the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) for infrastructure, and Department of Transportation (DOTr) for transportation.

Further, efforts will be made towards tourism clustering or establishment of Regional tourism circuits for there to be more tourist offerings connecting bigger provinces and more well-known destinations to smaller islands.

Also, attention will be given to improving end-to-end transportation by land, sea, and air from arrival to departure, reducing as much as possible the number of legs a tourist has to take to arrive at his destination, and reviewing the availability and affordability of these routes.

"While it's true that we do have available international airports at certain gateways across the Philippines, the reality is that many of these airports are simply not yet of the global standard that would put us at par with our direct competitors in the ASEAN member nations. Second, there's also a need to revisit the capacity of these airports as that will greatly determine whether or not there would be an addition of direct flights to our tourist destinations. And finally, the availability of seaports and so there is also a necessity to identify and study which particular tier one and tier two tourism destinations are still in need of ports of entry or need of improvement as far as ports of entry is concerned," the DOT chief explained. **(continue on page 15)**

Marcos push for Tourism Infra strengthens industry, raises PHL global position – DOT Chief

Photo by: Beautiful Destinations

(continued from page 14)

Convenience

The convenience of the traveler, according to Frasco, is of utmost priority to the Department especially as President Marcos deems this an essential component of travel to the country. Efforts will be made towards pushing for uniformity of protocols through inter-agency collaboration with national agencies such as Bureau of Immigration (BI), Department of Health (DOH), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), as well as Local Government Units (LGUs), to name a few.

The Department will also work on the enhancement of tourist experience through the establishment of tourist service centers and rest areas across the Regions.

The DOT chief also hailed President Marcos' desire to improve healthcare facilities particularly in key tourist destinations across the country, noting that *"this can be done in coordination with LGUs as well as private hospitals providers to ensure availability of high quality emergency and tertiary care when needed"*.

E (Quality)

With the President's desire to spread economic opportunities to LGUs across the country, the tourism chief emphasized the importance of enhancing E (Quality) with focus on the equalization of overall tourism product development and promotion across the Regions, and encompassing tourism standards, accreditation, and inclusive development.

The Department, Frasco said aims to accomplish this through the Diversification of the country's portfolio through multi-dimensional tourism harnessing the country's potential in Nature-based tourism, Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE), heritage and culture, food tourism, health wellness

and retirement, and the arts, noting the necessity as well to benchmark already successful tourism programs in various LGUs and in neighboring countries.

"There is no question as to the richness of our heritage and the vastness of our culture, but, there is definitely still a need for national government assistance to local govt assistance as far as technical expertise on how we can harness these aspects of our country so we can package it in a manner that is at par with the finest that is being offered by other countries, and make our offerings in our country characteristically Filipino," Frasco explained.

Meanwhile, Frasco echoed President Marcos, Jr.'s pronouncement that the country should bank on domestic tourism and explore this simultaneously with international tourism to yield better economic returns.

"From our experience in Cebu it was really domestic tourism that helped Cebu in its recovery from the ravages of the pandemic and typhoon Odette. The President's recognition of the need to maximize domestic tourism simultaneously with International tourism would surely raise our regional and global standing because his vision is very clear on the elevation of all the elements constituting the Philippine tourism industry as a whole."

The tourism chief announced that the DOT will facilitate cross province collaboration and the establishment of tourism circuits across the regions, conduct an extensive site and product mapping particularly on areas not yet given equal opportunity for attention and development. **DOT**



PBBM cites tourism as top-priority; orders infra development, enhancement of Filipino brand

(continued from page 1)

“To foster the Filipino brand is to spark our sense of pride and reaffirm our strong sense of identity. It is time to welcome the rest of the world with an enhanced Filipino brand that is unique, attractive, and creative,” he explained.

Transforming The Philippines into a Tourism Powerhouse

DOT Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco expressed her gratitude towards President Marcos for his mention of tourism as one of the core programs for the economic development of the country under his term, and has accepted the challenge to elevate the industry to become a powerhouse in Asia and in the world.

“With no less than The President of the Philippines rallying for the recovery of the Philippines’ tourism industry, together, the national government, the local government units, the private stakeholders, the industry players, and most importantly, the Filipino people that drives this industry forward amid various challenges- we will propel the Philippines to exceed its current global standing and tourist arrival numbers, and transform it into a tourism powerhouse in Asia,” Secretary Frasco remarked.

The Secretary likewise conformed with the President’s assertion as regards the undeniable strength, resilience and creativity of the Filipino that are truly world-class.

“Indeed, the Filipino identity

and strength of spirit is unlike any other in the world. With the President’s vision, we hope to be able to not only reclaim our standing in the global stage but to exceed it as that is the birthright of every Filipino,” she enthused.

The DOT chief had earlier announced the priorities of the Department, echoing the President’s directives such as the improvement of tourism infrastructure and accessibility; enhancement of overall tourist experience through connectivity, convenience, equality of promotion and development of tourist destinations across the country; and uplifting the quality of products and services to reflect a distinct Filipino brand.

“The President’s pronouncements will bring much needed hope to all of the tourism stakeholders that have suffered gravely because of the pandemic and various calamities. I’m very happy to note that the President’s vision is very clear as far as setting a strong foundation for the tourism industry by strengthening tourism infrastructure and gateway access, as well as giving equal opportunities to tourist destinations across the country,” the tourism chief enthused.

To fulfill the President’s directives for the industry, Secretary Frasco vowed to continue the multi-dimensional and shared tourism governance approach in implementing the DOT’s plans and programs,



sharing the importance of involving stakeholders—particularly those at the local level—in coming up with effective strategies to address industry barriers.

In the first month of her role as the head of the DOT, Secretary Frasco has successfully launched her “listening tours” across the country, initiating meetings with the various regional offices and attached agencies of the Department across Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, as well as public and private sector stakeholders in order to better connect and understand the needs and concerns of the industry, and come up with workable solutions in the short, medium, and long term, towards the objective of strengthening the foundation for the industry and enhancing the overall tourist experience. **DOT**

DOT to coordinate on quake-hit tourist destinations, heritage sites

Photos by: Damdamag ABRA, Vigan City PH Facebook Page

(continued from page 2)

Also heavily damaged was the San Lorenzo Ruiz Shrine in Bangued, one of the oldest churches in Abra that was built in the early 1920s. It is a heritage structure with red clay brick details on its facade, nave and twin belfries.

Ilocos Sur

The Heritage City of Vigan, known for its Spanish colonial and Asian architecture, recorded damage in popular tourist destinations such as the Vigan Cathedral.

The Syquia House, an ancestral home turned museum in Vigan, reported having a collapsed side wall and windows. The Hotel Linda also reported minor damage as well as several heritage and ancestral houses along the Vigan Heritage Village.

The Bantay Bell Tower in Bantay, Ilocos Sur almost collapsed during the intense quake. The St. John The Baptist Church in San Juan, Ilocos Sur recorded damage to its façade and ceiling.

Meanwhile, multiple ground faulting is visible in the Santa Ana Beach Area, also a favorite tourist spot among visitors.

Baguio City

In Baguio City, two accommodation establishments, the Lafaayette Luxury Suites Hotel and Crown Legacy reported minor cracks in their buildings. In the meantime, both hotels will not accept visitors to ensure the safety of guests and personnel.

TIEZA properties

Two properties managed and owned by the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), DOT's infrastructure arm, sustained damage as well. The riprap and ceiling of the Banaue Hotel and Youth Hostel in Ifugao partially collapsed according to the initial report of the agency.

Meanwhile, the earthquake caused the ceiling in the fireplace and lobby area of the Mt. Data Hotel in Bauko, Mt. Province to collapse, while several hotel decorations were also damaged. According to



TIEZA, all bookings will be canceled in both hotels until a thorough assessment has been undertaken.

"My concern and sympathy are one with those who have been affected by the recent earthquake in Northern Luzon. The Department will extend whatever help it can to tourism stakeholders and establishments that have been directly affected by this incident. I have requested the DOT Regional offices in Northern Luzon to continue with the assessment of the extent of the damage and to immediately submit the report for our appropriate actions and assistance," Secretary Frasco said.

"Our resilience as a nation has already been tried and tested in the past. I am certain that this can be strengthened by the essential collaboration between our national agencies, local governments, and crucial stakeholders as we conquer our challenges," she added.

No tourists were reported harmed but those with travel plans to the Northern Luzon area are advised to practice extra precautions. **DOT**

DOT honors Eid'l Adha through educational game

By: Office of Undersecretary Myra Paz Valderrosa-Abubakar

Makati, Philippines - To commemorate Eid'l Adha or the Feast of Sacrifice, the Department of Tourism (DOT) on July 8 conducted a short quiz game related to Muslim heritage, culture, and tourism to its employees.

Celebrated on the 9th of July this year, the meaning of Eid'l Adha is one of the five Muslim-related questions asked during the game. It is one of the two main holidays celebrated in Islam. It honors the willingness of Ibrahim to sacrifice his son Ismail as an act of obedience to Allah's command. In the Islamic lunar calendar, Eid'l Adha falls on the 10th day of Dhu al-Hijjah, with the dates varying from year to year in the Georgian calendar.

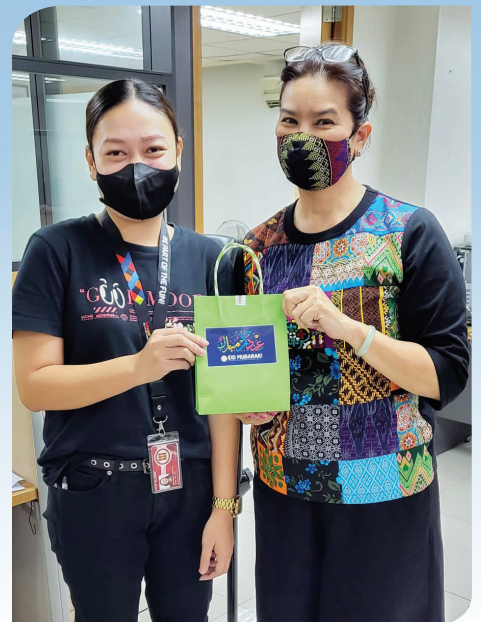
In her message, Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco joined the Muslim communities in observing the auspicious occasion.

"The tourism that we foster is one of inclusivity, sustainability, and social responsibility. As we move towards also highlighting lesser-known communities and parts of our beautiful country, our Muslim

brothers and sisters can count on the Department to increase opportunities for progress and prosperity," the tourism chief enthused.

Other question asked by the DOT Office of Mindanao Affairs headed by Undersecretary Myra Paz Valderrosa-Abubakar is the meaning of "Bismillah," to which the office affirmed as "in the name of Allah." It can be recalled last year that the same office produced a coffee table book titled, "Bismillah Before Eating: The Mindanao Halal Food Culture Experience" to promote the unique Halal culinary finds of Mindanao Island. Winners received a small token of various Halal-certified products from each of the Mindanao regions.

Meanwhile, on December 11, 2020, the DOT issued Memorandum Circular No. 2020-010 or Guidelines Governing the Operations and Recognition of Muslim-friendly Accommodation Establishments to ensure quality and appropriate service to the growing Muslim market in the country. **DOT**



ON THE GROUND NEWS

Regional News Updates

DOT revalidates intra-regional tourism belt Soul Circuit

By: DOT-NCR

In a bid to strengthen domestic tourism in the new normal, the Department of Tourism (DOT) Regional Offices National Capital Region (NCR), Central Luzon, and CALABARZON conducted a revalidation trip to the proposed intra-regional tourism belt called Soul Circuit.

As an initial foray in the tourism developmental work, the three regional offices joined hands and assessed destinations in the island of Corregidor and in Bataan such as Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar, La Jolla, Port of Capinpin, and Mt. Samat. This is to finalize the areas and attractions for inclusion in the tourism product.

During the assessment, the participating DOT regional offices underscored the importance of having tourism investors to spruce up the destinations, especially the island of Corregidor. The Corregidor Foundation, Inc. (CFI) aired the need to find a suitable ferry transport partner, as this is crucial in providing seamless travel experience to both foreign and domestic tourists coming from Metro Manila and Bataan.

FINDINGS

Megaworld Properties, as a possible private partner, emphasized the need for CFI and DOT to

ready the island in terms of clean water supply and electricity as well as ensuring that tourist arrivals to the island will be at the same level as pre-pandemic. This was following the investment presentation of Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) on what possible investment opportunities it can offer Megaworld Properties, Inc.

A check with Capinpin Port was also done to check on possible connectivity between the island of Corregidor and Bataan to ensure where possible docking opportunities can be done when public transport and tour offerings are done

AGREEMENTS REACHED

The invited Shore Excursion Handlers were enjoined to sell the Circuit to their respective cruise guests upon completion and official launching of the Soul Circuit.

The agreement included the involvement of the DOT Regional Offices cluster when TIEZA opens up the island for investment proposals and presentation as well as coordination with stakeholders

CFI requested for them to be involved in every step of the way when it comes to investment and any tourism development plan for the island. **DOT**



DOT-2 implements Cultural Tourism Development Workshop for the Province of Batanes

By: DOT-2 | Photos by: DOT-2 and George Tapan

Basco, Batanes - The Department of Tourism, Cagayan Valley Region implemented a four-day Cultural Tourism Product Development Workshop on July 12-15, 2022. The workshop responds to the mandate of the DOT to encourage activities and programs which promote tourism awareness, preserve the country's diverse cultures and heritage, and instill a sense of history and a culture of tourism among the youth and the populace under Republic Act 9593, Section 3.b.

The product development workshop was attended by 37 tourism industry stakeholders from the local government units of the six municipalities of the Island Province of Batanes, travel agency operators, legislators, academe, officers of tourism and cultural related enterprise organizations and tour guides.

Provincial Tourism Officer Hegel Valones said that this is the most represented gathering of tourism industry workers attending a workshop in the Province of Batanes.

The DOT Regional Office 2 tapped Professor Eric Zerrudo as a Resource Speaker whose expertise lie in establishing the importance and awareness of culture and heritage as a tourism



product. Aside from culture and heritage, Batanes is also famous for its exceptional picture -perfect landscapes and seascapes.

Regional Director Fanibeth Domingo explained that in order to establish the authenticity and consistency of tour packages being sold by the region's tour operators, the regional office is implementing a Product Development Cycle. The cycle is a process aimed at creating an inclusive and participative gathering of tourism industry practitioners for a series of workshops, capacity development trainings and assessment trips.

The region's product development initiatives has been proven successful through the launching of various tourism circuits like the Feel the Vibe Vizcaya! for the Province of Nueva Vizcaya; Quirino Your Basket of Happiness for Province of Quirino; Santa Ana: Your Adventure Paradise for the Municipality of Sta. Ana, Cagayan and Tuguegarao City Heritage Tour for Tuguegarao City, Cagayan, the regional center of Region 2.

Director Domingo shared that Tourism Product Development initiatives in the country is presented and discussed in the LGU Tourism Guidebook composed of eleven materials and supplemental readings which is a framework for development initiatives under the National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP).

She added that the LGU Tourism Guidebook is a downloadable material or tool provided for the LGUs who desire to develop tourism industry as an economic activity in their area. The guidebook also gives a step by step procedure in crafting their Local Tourism Development Plan. **DOT**





CSCCII, DOT-5 stage first Bicol Tourism Expo

By: Faye Codia

To pave the way of the long-awaited comeback of regional tourism, the Camarines Sur Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (CSCCII), in partnership with the Department of Tourism (DOT) Region 5, staged the 1st Bicol Tourism Expo on June 16-18, 2022 at the Convention Hall, Capitol Complex, Cadlan, Pili, Camarines Sur.

With the theme: "Recovery through Innovation and Collaboration", the CSCCII teamed up not just with DOT-5, but also with the Provincial Government of Camarines Sur, Department of Agriculture (DA) RFO 5, Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) and the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB). Featuring exciting attractions and activities, strengthening the partnership between private and public sectors toward recovery, and sharing best practices to help local business prepare a safe and uniquely enjoyable Bicol tourism experiences—these are their common goals to which their

collaborative efforts were set upon.

Manifold activities were prepared to achieve the agencies' goals during the said tourism expo, such as Plenary Sessions tackling significant issues and topics regarding tourism, Bicol Regional Updates and Announcements delivered by DOT Regional Director Herbie Aguas, familiarization tour and site visit of new tourism sites, success stories, live selling and raffle draws, among others.

Over 70 exhibitors composed of tour operators, travel agencies, hotels and resorts, DOT-accredited accommodation establishments, airlines, and government agencies set up their booth at the venue offering various tourism products and services to the public, not just on-site but also through a virtual platform. More than a thousand attendees who visited both the actual venue and the virtual booths during the three-day tourism expo attest to the event's success. **DOT**



DOT-7 launches DIVE7 Negros Oriental

Zamboanguita, Negros Oriental - The Department of Tourism (DOT) Region 7 made waves yet again as it kicked off the second leg of DIVE7 Central Visayas Festival from the coastlines of Zamboanguita town all the way to Dauin on July 28-31, 2022.

Participants from all over the world, both scuba divers and enthusiasts alike, plunged into the underwater world of Negros Oriental with its sought-after activities including the Underwater Photo Competition as one of its main highlights, Mermaiding, Coastal and Underwater Clean-up

drives, and Full Face Mask Scubadiving.

Cooperating with the DOT 7 for the dive festival are the Philippine Commission on Sports SCUBA Diving (PCSSD), Tourism Promotions Board Philippines (TPB), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), the Province of Negros Oriental, Zamboanguita Diving and Leisure Resorts Association (ZDLRA), Negros Oriental Dive Association (NORDA), Dauin Resorts Association, and the DIVE 7 Negros Oriental. **DOT**



DOT-8 eyes safer travel in Eastern Visayas with revival of tourist police program

Photos By: DOT-8

The Department of Tourism Region 8 Office (DOT-8) in partnership with the Police Regional Office 8 (PRO-8) and local government units (LGUs) on July 18 launched the Enhanced TOPCOP Program at the Matapat Hall, Camp Kangleon, Palo, Leyte.

According to DOT-8 Director Karina Rosa S. Tiopes, the launching of the Enhanced TOPCOP program seeks to spur tourism activity in the region, especially with the country's eased requirements for travelers.

In her remarks as the Guest of Honor and Speaker (GOHS) during the launch event, Tiopes shared that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Eastern Visayas received 1.7 million arrivals. In 2021, arrivals to the region finally started to pick up, reaching as high as 723,000. She says DOT-8 is expecting a "healthy growth" in tourist arrivals this year, considering travel restrictions have now been eased in the region.

As part of the enhanced TOPCOP program in Region 8, DOT-8 and PRO-8 shall conduct an inventory and provide necessary retooling of the 423 police personnel in the region that received the TOPCOP training since 2011.

The Integrated TOPCOP training will also be provided to newly-designated TOPCOP personnel in the region. Areas where the presence of TOPCOP



personnel is needed, will also be determined by DOT-8 and PRO-8 based on visitor count.

It may be recalled that TOPCOP is a program jointly developed by the DOT and the PNP in 2011 to provide basic tourism concepts and overview to PNP personnel who are designated as tourist police. Through a comprehensive training, the program also seeks to inculcate values among future tourist police in order to help them become effective tourism frontliners.

Since the rollout of the program, close to 5,000 PNP personnel have received training and were deployed as TOPCOP personnel. In Eastern Visayas, 439 police personnel have graduated from the TOPCOP training. In addition to roving TOPCOP personnel, Tourist Assistance Centers and Tourist Assistance Desks were also established all over the country.

"With the launching of the Enhanced TOPCOP program, we, the DOT-8 family, look forward to a stronger partnership with PNP-8 for a safe, secure and fun infinite escapes in Eastern Visayas," enthused Tiopes. **DOT**





DOT-9, SSS ink partnership for KaltaSSS-Collect Program

By: DOT-9

The Department of Tourism (DOT) Region 9 and Social Security System (SSS) signed a Memorandum of Agreement to provide social protection to DOT-9's job order personnel through SSS' KaltaSSS-Collect Program.

DOT-9 Regional Director Crisanta Marlene P. Rodriguez, together with SSS Zamboanga Branch Head and concurrent Acting Head of Mindanao West Division Ma. Salvacion F. Alam, officially signed the MOA, with the DOT-9 Job Orders and regular employees, and SSS Account Officers in attendance to witness the event at the DOT-9 office in Zamboanga City.

The KaltaSSS-Collect Program provides social security protection of all self-employed persons and other qualified Filipino workers regardless of trade, business, or occupation against hazards of disability, sickness, maternity, old age, death and other contingencies. **DOT**



DOT-10 launches NorthMin Dive Festival

By: DOT-10

With the goal to catapult Northern Mindanao as one of the choice dive destinations in the country, the Department of Tourism (DOT) Region 10 on July 22 launched the first-ever Northern Mindanao Dive Festival at Kai Azul Beach Resort in Gingoog City.

The launching of the NorthMin Dive Festival opened the Misamis Oriental Dive Festival, first leg of the celebration, which will run from July to September 2022. The second leg of the festival will happen in Camiguin this September.

Some of the events to look forward in the NorthMin Dive Festival are the Underwater Photography Contest, the Scubasurero Underwater and Coastal Cleanup drive, and the Dive Awareness Seminar.

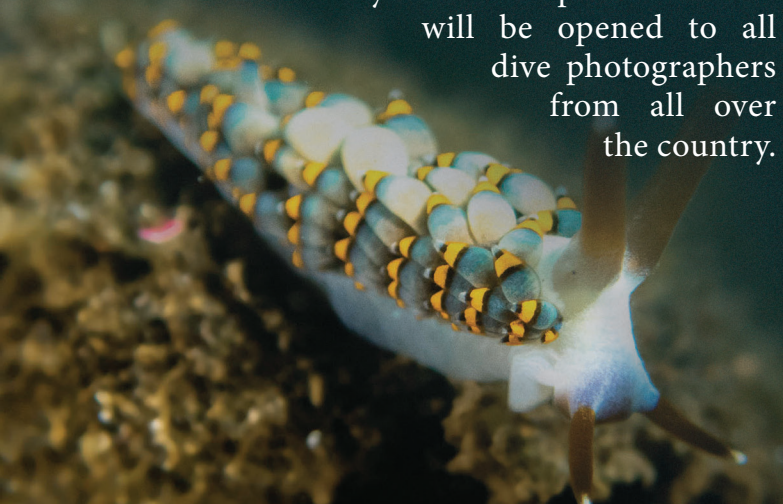
The underwater photography contest is a three-day event in September which will be opened to all dive photographers from all over the country.



"This is the first time this has happened in Misamis Oriental and Northern Mindanao. This will be bringing dive tourists from all over the Philippines because this can attract our well-known photographers to visit our dive sites," DOT-10 Regional Director Marie Elaine S. Unchuan said.

Also joining the program were Executive Director of Philippine Commission on Sports Scuba Diving (PCSSD) Mr. Marco Angelo Ancheta, world-renowned dive photographer Ram Yoro, marine biologist Fra-And Quimpo, and dive master Dodong Uy of Mantangale Alibuag Dive Resort.

Unchuan stressed that DOT would never cease in promoting Misamis Oriental and Camiguin's dive riches and dive potential. She also hopes that this initiative can inspire other provinces in the region to explore and develop their own dive sites. **DOT**





Siargao's Tourism Recovery Combines Luxury & Adventure: 1st Dapa Siargao National Dragon Boat Regatta 2022

By: Mitzi Rica A. Palima, DOT-13

More than two years after the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns and six months after Super Typhoon Odette, Siargao is back on track, as it remains to be one of the country's premier tourist destinations for adventure-seekers, kicking-off with the launching of the 1st Dapa Siargao National Dragon Boat Regatta 2022 last July 8-10.

The Department of Tourism (DOT) Caraga showed its full support throughout the entire duration of the activity, which was a resounding success with 21 entries from all over the country participating in the event. Increased tourist arrival was highlighted with a considerable number of tourists witnessing the event and enjoying the other adventures that the island has to offer.

DOT Regional Director Nelia R. Arina noted that supporting Local Government Unit's tourism activities is one of the main goals of the new administration and that the regional office has long been working hand in hand with the LGUs. The department invited media partners such as the Philippine News Agency (PNA), Philippine Daily Inquirer, and MindaNews to cover the competition for media mileage as part of its promotional support for the event.

The race's Chief Technical Official and President of Bugsay Pilipinas, Priscilla Pinky Castillo, stated that since the pandemic lockdowns, the Dapa National Dragon Boat Regatta is this year's first national dragon boat competition and the first in Mindanao.

Mayor Elizabeth Matugas praised all the participating teams, spectators, as well as guests, and hoped they would come again the following year.

Of the 21 dragon boat teams that participated in the competition, five are from Luzon: the Philippine Army Dragon Warriors, Maharlika Drakon, Speed Devilz, United Paddlers Club PH, and UP Dragon Boat Team.

Meanwhile, participants from the Visayas include Umagu Dragon Boat Team, Sugbu Mighty Dragons, Bohol Paddlers Association, Black Manta Warriors, and Survivors Leyeteños Paddling Team.

Among the eleven teams from Mindanao are Ricspeed Dragon Boat Team, Amihan Dragon Boat Team, Samal Dragon Boat Team, Gladiators Davao, Hydra Dragon Boat Team, Kujaw Tiger Dragons, CGY Oro Dragons, Braveheart Dragon Boat Team, Bugsay Marajao, Cantilan Red Dragons, and CBDRP Dragon Boat Team.

The rowers from the Philippine Army Dragon Warriors emerged victorious in this year's Siargao dragon boat race after besting CGY Oro Dragons of Cagayan De Oro City, Black Manta Warriors of Cebu, and Speed Devilz of Manila with a tallied 63 points in all three categories — mixed, open, and women's.

Only recently has Siargao been making a comeback after two of its major island events (international game fishing and international surfing) were stalled due to the pandemic. DOT Caraga expressed its commitment to work hand-in-hand with Siargao to help the island rise again. "The department also expects that this event will continue in the coming years and hopes that it will carry on better, more adventurous health and wellness opportunities for all Caraganons, especially for the Surigaonons, as well as for new and returning tourists." Said DOT Regional Director Arina. **DOT**

DOT BEYOND BORDERS

Foreign Offices Updates

DOT-Frankfurt reintroduces PHL in a roadshow

By: DOT Frankfurt

The Department of Tourism (DOT) Frankfurt Office embarked on its own roadshow to conduct one-on-one business meetings with over 35 tour operators and new and old travel trade partners across its areas of jurisdiction. This roadshow includes the cities of Düsseldorf, Cologne, and Munich for the German market, Paris for the French market, and Zürich for the Swiss market.

The foreign office also partnered with Singapore Airlines to mount a Philippines workshop in Paris for French product managers of key tour operator companies, which engaged attendees from nine companies.

Key talk points of the meetings included the reopening of Philippines to tourists, the ease of travel-related regulations, latest tourist arrival statistics, new tourism products and destinations, and its continued thrust for sustainability. **DOT**



NEWLY APPOINTED OFFICIALS



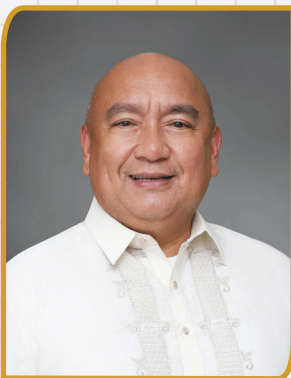
Atty. Mae Elaine T. Bathan
Undersecretary for
Legal and Special Concerns
and Chief of Staff



**Atty. Shereen Gail
Yu-Pamintuan**
Undersecretary for
Administration and Finance



Shahlimar Hofer Tamano
Undersecretary for Tourism
Regulation, Coordination and
Resource Generation



Ferdinand C. Jumapao
Undersecretary
to report directly to the
Office of the Secretary



**Atty. Reynaldo
L. Ching**
Assistant Secretary
for Administration
and Finance



**Kristine Vanessa
T. Chiong**
Assistant Secretary
for Special Concerns



Ronald P. Conopio
Director under the
Office of the Secretary

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

TO OUR AUGUST BIRTHDAY CELEBRATORS

2	Rey Losañes	12	Jacqueline Anne Reposar	22	Roqueza Palmes
2	Rhodelia Cifra	13	Socrates David	22	Lady Pearl Mabansag
4	Ramil Basuel	13	Merlyn Baal	22	Ernie Buanjog
4	Rose Anne Ama	13	Ivannovich Agote	23	Gay Nora Marie Gapas
4	Maria Janina Gonzales	14	Roche De Los Reyes	23	Carminah Garcia
4	John Stephen Dumpit	14	Charles Anthony Rotoni	23	Almira Pagaduan
5	Camelia Amita	16	Gladys Quesea	24	Reynaldo Gesmundo
7	Sherwin Renzo Ramirez	16	Ma. Cristina Ochangco	24	Jennifer Factora
7	Shiela Villabroza	17	Maria Elizabeth Viray	24	Roy Dando
8	Merleen Co	18	Kurt Russel Tanael	25	Lawrence Alcantara
8	Villarico Flores	18	Koski Aguipo	25	Mylene Talana
9	Herbie Aguas	19	Arisa Mary Bajana	25	Mary Karlyn Subaldo
9	Blessy Grace Tansingco	20	Ricardo Rosel	27	Janice Esmane-Maldonado
9	Kim Denise Mendoza	20	Claudie Aquino	27	Paul Brian Lao
9	Ernesto Ayson	20	Arturo Borja	28	Agustina Isip
10	Warren Palacio	20	Angelica Mae Arenas	28	Pamela Denise Cababasay
10	Faye Angeli Reyes	20	Ocheek Yekeya Kapa	29	Agustin Esclamado
10	Glenn Lorenzo Aquino	21	Raymund Glen Agustin	30	Ena Irene Hall
10	Val Raymund Cervantes	21	Allan Alcid	31	Ramon Rebulado
11	Kristine Tarreila	21	Roger San Cruz	31	Manette Reyes
12	Clara Buscano	21	Allen Gonzales	31	Jocelle Valera
12	Alex Lazaro	21	Edward Bullecer	31	Christy Barrameda
12	Ezrah Grace Bayuga	21	Alkid Hatosa		