

GMA orders DOH to intensify information drive vs dengue

by MARVIN SY
Philstar.com

CONCERNED over the large number of cases of dengue in the country, President Arroyo has ordered the Department of Health (DOH) to step up its information campaign on how to prevent the spread of the disease.

Deputy presidential spokesperson Anthony Golez said the President wanted more public health education programs in

order to raise awareness on dengue "because it can be prevented and people can be empowered to combat dengue or to protect themselves from it."

He said the DOH was tasked to identify the areas where the dengue-carrier mosquitoes are originating as part of its search and destroy campaign.

The DOH was also instructed to find ways to protect communities, particularly students, which make up a significant portion of

confirmed cases in the country.

Among the measures cited by Golez were the installation of screens for schools and homes and the use of mosquito-repellent lotions.

"One of the most important things is for them (victims) to visit their doctor immediately. They should seek early consultation on the second or third day of high fever," said Golez, who is a doctor.

He also emphasized that defogging is discouraged by the DOH and that this should only be undertaken in areas where there are dengue outbreaks.

According to the DOH, close to 200 persons have died because of dengue and 16,000 others have been hospitalized this year.

Golez noted that another important aspect in the anti-dengue campaign is for all of the local government units and health officials to improve coordination and cooperation with each other.

"I would like to inform everybody that the President would like to stress and reiterate the need for cooperation among the LGUs, the different communities, the national health officials, in combating dengue in the country," he said.

Golez emphasized that the spread of dengue can be easily prevented if the people are properly informed about the disease and the local governments are more active in their efforts to combat dengue. ■

FOR SEA MISHAP

SuperFerry 9 captain blames strong winds

by KRISTINE L. ALAVE
Inquirer.net

THE captain of the doomed SuperFerry 9 said strong winds may have caused the sinking of the ship off the Zamboanga Peninsula on September 6, a claim rejected by the Philippine Coast Guard at the start of the investigation into the sea mishap on Monday.

In his testimony before the Board of Marine Inquiry (BMD), Captain Joel Yap said the vessel started to roll at around 11 p.m. on September 5, due to strong winds.

"The wind from the portside was getting stronger," said the skipper of the 7,000-ton vessel owned by Aboitiz Transport System Corp. He said the wind measured 10 knots, about 18.5 kilometers per hour.

He ordered his crew to transfer some water in the heeling tanks to stabilize the ship, but it continued to pitch.

By 2am of September 6, the vessel listed by two degrees. Aside from transferring the waters in the heeling tanks to balance the vessel, Yap said he also tried to slow down the ship but this did not stop it from tilting even further.

Half an hour later, SuperFerry 9 suddenly leaned 35 degrees to its right side and lost power, he said. Yap said he directed the crew to assist passengers into their life vests. By 3:10 a.m., Yap said he ordered everyone to abandon

the ship.

SuperFerry 9, which was carrying about 1,000 people, sank off the coast of Zamboanga del Norte. Ten people died from the sea tragedy, while the rest of the passengers and crew were rescued by nearby ships.

Asked by the panel if he had any idea why SuperFerry 9 capsized, Yap said: "I don't know." Yap said there was no explosion prior to the listing of the ship and its sinking.

Yap's assistant, chief mate Francis Garcia, said the weather when they left General Santos City on September 5 was unusual.

Although the sea was "fair," the wind "was gaining force," he said, noting that there was no storm signal raised in the area.

But some BMI officials did not buy the wind theory. BMI member Thomas Bains expressed doubts that the winds capsized the ship. According to Bains, 10 knots is not enough to bring a ship as large as SuperFerry 9 down. "Parang kurot lang yan (it's like a pinch)," he said.

Bains said the wind should be at least 35 knots to be able to tilt a vessel the size of SuperFerry 9.

BMI officials sought explanations from SuperFerry officials on how the cargo was placed inside the bottom decks as survivors reported hearing a loud thud from the bottom decks.

Coast Guard officials previously said that the cargos in the bottom decks may have moved, putting

the ship off balance.

Garcia said the container vans in the belly of the ship were "secured" when he inspected them past 2 a.m.

The captain said there were 186 container vans inside SuperFerry 9, which was on its way to Iloilo City.

"I saw the lashings. They were still intact, the chains were in place," he said. Like Yap, Garcia said he did not hear any explosions or loud sounds before the incident.

Garcia said he was supposed to conduct another heeling process to stabilize the ship, but at the time, the ship was tilting in such a way that made it hard for them to walk straight.

Garcia, who oversaw the cargo loading, said he did not compute the load. He noted that he based the distribution of the cargo vans based on the "assumed computation" in the manifest.


Garcia said he could not explain why SuperFerry 9 encountered stability problems. When a ship listed, Garcia said the problem was likely to be "internal."

"Until now I don't have any idea why the ship listed," he said.

BMI officials said the September 6 sinking was not the first time that the vessel encountered problems. On May 4, SuperFerry 9 was stranded in Camiguin Island with 900 passengers.

"At the time, there was a minor repair on the engine," Garcia said. ■

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Allow 4 nat'l artists' proclamation, SC asked

by NORMAN BORDADORA
Inquirer.net

THE Cultural Center of the Philippines has asked the Supreme Court to order the proclamation of its four original choices as this year's national artists.

In a 31-page comment to the petition against the proclamation of Malacañang's four choices for the award, the CCP, through counsel, said the Palace's candidates were either outrightly disqualified or were rejected early during selection process.

"[The] proclamation of the four other 2009 National Artists not recommended by the CCP and

the [National Council for Culture and Arts] and the dropping of one of the National Artists named by the CCP and the NCCA was a surprise to the CCP as well," the CCP said in its comment.

Following the selection process by the CCP and the NCCA, the two groups submitted the names of the following artists to Malacañang for its consideration—filmmaker Manuel Conde, visual artist Federico Alcuaz, novelist Lazaro Francisco, and composer Ramon Santos.

Malacañang, however, dropped Santos and proclaimed Conde, Alcuaz and Francisco and its choice NCCA executive director Cecile Guidote Alvarez, fashion designer Jose Moreno, architect Francisco Manosa and comics novelist and filmmaker Carlo Caparas.

The CCP argued that Guidote was disqualified because of her position in the NCCA while Moreno, Caparas and Manosa fell by the way side during various stages of the selection process.

"The list submitted by the CCP and the NCCA Joint Board was always regarded as the final list for confirmation and proclamation. There were very few exceptions to this," the CCP petition read.

"However, never was an artist's name removed from the list submitted by the CCP and the NCCA Joint Board until now," it added. ■



President Arroyo unveils a marker during the inauguration yesterday of the newly constructed Padada Bridge at Barangay Guihing, Hagonoy, Davao del Sur in this photo provided by palace close-in photographers. Behind her is Davao del Sur 1st District Rep. Douglas Cagas IV.

'God save RP from Erap'

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task force.

Lacson said he sensed something could be wrong with Estrada's character when he reneged on his campaign promise to appoint

then Gen. Joselin Nazareno as Armed Forces of the Philippines chief.

Before his appointment as PNP chief, Lacson recalled meeting with Estrada a number of times during which the former president asked him to go easy on jueteng.

It was during his stint as commander of the defunct Task Force Habagat when he became close with Estrada, then chief of PACC.

Lacson said his unit's accomplishments against organized crime including then neutralization of the dreaded Red Scorpion Group on Feb. 17, 1993 that helped propel Estrada to the presidency in 1998.

"Modesty aside, but without mental reservation, I can dare say our performance helped chart Mr. Estrada a road to presidency," Lacson said.

He also said he helped Estrada in his presidential campaign by urging his colleagues at the Armed Forces and the PNP to "mount an organized strategic effort" to thwart possible election fraud.

Flawed logic

Lacson lamented Estrada's "flawed logic" for believing that no corruption is involved if it does not involve government funds.


"Following his flawed logic, it is not corruption to accept bribes—from jueteng and shady deals that involve using the power and influence of the presidency," he said.

"He has not heard of conflict of interest or taking advantage of one's position to amass wealth. He has not changed that loose definition of corruption," Lacson added.

"Now, he is presenting himself again to the Filipino people, for one more chance at the presidency," Lacson said.

"At this juncture of our history, after suffering eight years under the regime which succeeded the Estrada presidency, I would be remiss in my sworn duty as an elected member of the Senate, as a nationally elected official of the land, if I did not unburden myself of my insights into the character of Mr. Estrada," he added. ■

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