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DOTr tasks BLTO to issue guidelines for license recognitions; BARMM takes over two LTO district offices

By Majid Nur

COTABATO CITY—The Department of Transportation (DOTr) recently issued a Memorandum, dated Feb. 20, 2023, addressing the issue of the non-recognition of Bangsamoro Land Transportation Office-issued driver's licenses outside BARMM.

Secretary of Transportation Jaime Bautista advised thru the said memorandum that all Land Transportation Offices outside BARMM and other concerned agencies must recognize the BLTO-issued licenses provided that these are in accordance with BLTO's guidelines in the identification and verification.

However, this is just a temporary measure to avoid further confusion and inconvenience to motorists and LTO personnel while awaiting for the pending decision of the Department of Justice (DOJ) on BLTO's jurisdiction and authority.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Transportation and Communications (MOTC) officially took over the management and operation of the Land Transportation district offices in Maguindanao and Marawi.



Photo by Faisal Camsa Jr.

This was after a simultaneous turnover was held on Wednesday, Feb. 22, in Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao del Norte, and Marawi City, Lanao del Sur.

MOTC Minister Atty Paisalin Tago said that the turnover was by the provisions of Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), stating that all offices and premises belonging to BARMM should be turned over to Bangsamoro Government.

"It is a great honor and it is a historic moment in the history of BARMM, noon pa ito, kaya lang may mga legal and technicalities involved hindi na-turn over. BASULTA and Cotabato City were turned over earlier," said Tago.

"We are thankful for the reception of our neighbor Region-12 employees. The collaboration and coordination between our agencies should continue to tackle the

emerging issue like non-recognition of our issuance of license among others," he added.

LTO-12 representative Elmer Obhelidhon said, "pursuant to the memorandum issued by the Regional Director, implementing the memorandum issued by the Assistant Secretary in compliance with the directive of the secretary of DOTC, we are very grateful because our turnover was successful." (Majid Nur/BIO)



BARMM remains PH's highest fish producer in 2 years

By Kasan Usop, Jr.

COTABATO CITY—Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said in a report released on Feb. 16, 2023, that BARMM is still the highest fish producer in the country.

Photo by Comenei Ali

Based on the Fisheries Situation Report, in the last 2 years, BARMM produced a volume of 1.319 million MT, equivalent to 30.41% of the total volume of fisheries production for Fiscal Year 2022.

This was followed by the Zamboanga Peninsula with a 59.89% difference, the MIMAROPA region with 71%, and other regions with 72% and 74%, respectively, as the top-producing regions in the entire country.

BARMM maintained its status since 2021, recording a total fisheries production of 4.25 million metric tons. This grew to a total of 4.34 million metric tons for the year 2022.

MAFAR Minister Mohammad Yacob congratulated the Bangsamoro fisherfolk for their significant contribution to the region.

"I would like to extend my gratitude to our grateful fisherfolk, and we are more than compensated by this achievement of remaining the rank 1 in the country," Yacob said.

"This manifested that the Ministry from the regional office down to the provincial and municipal level is committedly performing its mandate to fulfill every responsibility that rests on their respective shoulders so that our farmers, fisherfolk, and ARBOs can feel the services of this government," the Minister added.

Yacob also assured to continue to sustain fisheries production in the region through different means of assistance, including the strengthening of technical staff in partnership with the government, and fisheries research institutes, among others.

The Ministry also recognized the collective support of the Local Government Unit of the Provinces of Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Maguindanao, and Lanao del Sur along with the development partners and stakeholders that contributed to the fisherfolk through technology transfer and training.

"We are delighted with your unwavering support to boost the economic growth in the Bangsamoro region," Yacob said.