

Replacement for Bohol's collapsed Clarin bridge opened to two-way traffic next month

A BRIDGE constructed as a replacement for the collapsed Clarin bridge in Loay, Bohol will be opened to two-way traffic next month, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) said on Thursday.

The department hopes to finish the paving of access ramps for the new bridge by June 7, it said in a statement.

"The construction of approach road for the new Clarin Bridge has reached the final stage with on-going laying of bituminous asphalt concrete finish after undergoing full compaction of base materials," it added.

On April 27, four people were killed, including an Austrian tourist, after the

old Clarin Bridge, also referred to as Loay Bridge, collapsed.

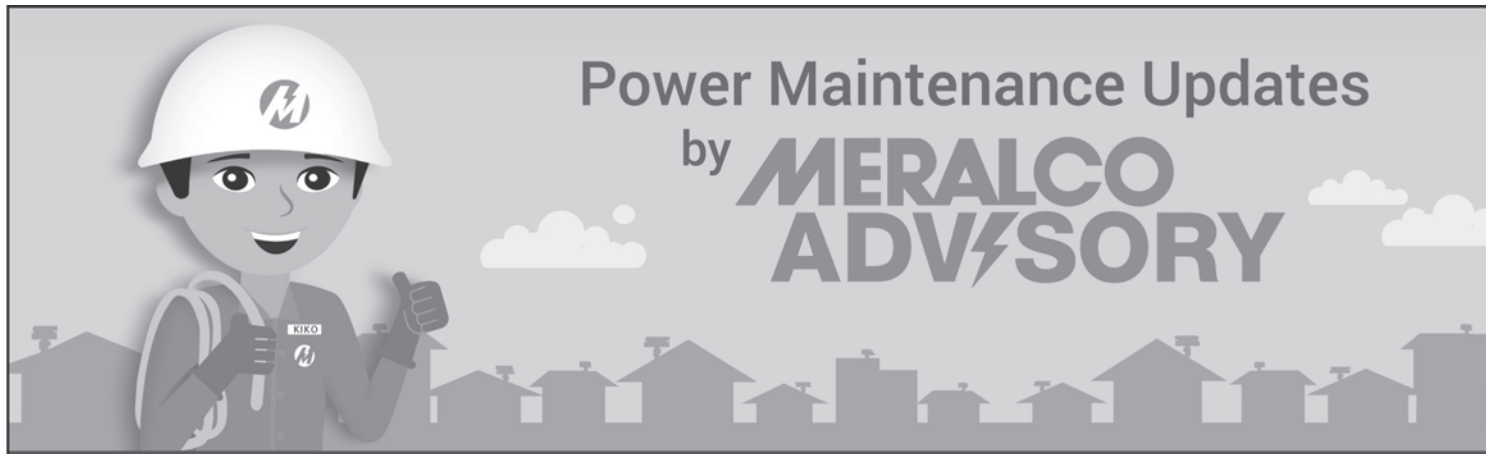
The old bridge, built in the 1970s, was reinforced after sustaining damage in the magnitude 7.2 earthquake that struck Bohol in 2013. Construction of the new bridge on a nearby site spanning the Loboc river started in 2018.

The new bridge is currently open for one-lane traffic, light vehicles only, with vehicles directed by flagmen and traffic aides.

"The Clarin Bridge Replacement Project costing P462 million is part of the Bohol Circumferential Road Contract Package 3 under the DPWH Road Upgrading and Preservation Projects

funded through a Japan International Cooperation Agency loan agreement," it added.

"Bohol's Loboc River is a major tourism destination and also offers alternate route to the province's Billar manmade forest as well as conservation areas for tarsiers and butterflies," the department said. — **Arjay L. Balinbin**



The following are scheduled power interruptions necessary for the regular maintenance and upgrade of our power distribution facilities, to ensure the delivery of safe and reliable electricity to your areas. Rest assured that Meralco is doing everything to quickly restore your electricity according to schedule.

SUNDAY, MAY 29, 2022

CAVITE (IMUS CITY AND DASMARIÑAS CITY)

BETWEEN 4:30AM AND 5:00AM AND THEN BETWEEN 8:00AM AND 8:30AM – THE WHOLE OF CIRCUITS IMUS 34WK, 35WK AND 36WK

Portion of Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo Highway from Paredes Primary Care in Bgy. Bayan Luma IV, Imus City to near Jose Abad Santos Ave. (Salitran – Salawag Road) in Bgy. Salitran I, Dasmariñas City including Hausland Subd., Plaridel III Subd., Rita Sanchez Compound, Villa Celina Subd., Villa Leticia Subd., Villa Nicasia I Subd., New Imus Village, Palla Athena Classique Subd., Bayanihan Homes, Noble Hills Subd., Landtrust Homes, Santiago Subd., Villa Elisa Subd., Richlane Subd. and Dara Subd. in Bgys. Anabu I – A to D, Anabu II – A to F, Bayan Luma 2, 7 & 8, Buhay Na Tubig and Tanzang Luma V & VI in Imus City.

Portion of Palanas Road from Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo Highway to Malagasang Road including Sarreal Subd.; Bgys. Bayan Luma 8 & 9 and Bucandala I, II & III in Imus City.

Portion of Malagasang Road from Palanas Road to near Granville Homes Subd. including Grandiose South Subd., Hoteliers II Village, Montero Homes Subd., Sunnydale the Garden Ville Subd., Celina Plains Imus Phases 2A & 3, Dexterville Legacy Subd., Woodland Subd. 1-B, Woodlane Subd., Jade Residences Phase A, Savanna Ville Subd., Mallari Subd., Manela Subd., Silver Towne III & IV Subds., Green Estate Subd. Phase 3 and Jade Residences Phase A; Bucandala I & V, Malagasang I-A, I-B, I-C, I-D, I-E, I-F & I-G and Malagasang II-A & II-B in Imus City.

REASON: Upgrading of facilities and testing work inside Meralco - Imus substation.

MANILA (TONDO; BINONDO; AND STA. CRUZ)

BETWEEN 8:30AM AND 9:00AM AND THEN BETWEEN 4:00PM AND 4:30PM – PORTION OF CIRCUITS TUTUBAN 52VT AND 434VT

Portion of Recto Ave. from Sanchez St. in Tondo to near Alonzo St. including McDonald's, Japan Parts Trading Center Arraque Mall and Maynilad Sta. Cruz Lifting Station in Sta. Cruz.

Portion of Aguilar St. from Melling Tower Condominium and Gocheo Building in Tondo to and including Skyrise Condominium in Binondo.

Portion of Benavidez St. from Luzon St. to Recto Ave. including Jewell Realty Development Parking in Tondo.

Portion of Alonzo St. from Recto Ave. to Zacateros St. in Sta. Cruz.

Portion of Soler St. from Metrobank Arraque Center to Rizal Ave. including National Bookstore (First Store) and Cosmos Food Gallery in Sta. Cruz.

Portion of San Bernardo St. from Recto Ave. to Soler St. in Sta. Cruz.

Portion of Tomas Mapua St. from Recto Ave. to and including Tambacan St.; Premier Theater, Lido de Paris Hotel Ugc Tower and Manila Patriotic School in Sta. Cruz.

Portion of F. Torres St. from Recto Ave. to near Gonzalo Puyat St. including Katubusan St. in Sta. Cruz.

BETWEEN 8:30AM AND 4:30PM – PORTION OF CIRCUIT TUTUBAN 52VT

Portion of Narra St. from Padre Algue St. to Recto Ave. in Tondo.

Portion of Abad Santos Ave. from Hi-Q Commercial Inc. to Recto Ave. in Tondo.

Portion of Soler St. from Reina Regente St. to and including Alvarado St.; Golden Fortune Seafood Restaurant and Christian Gospel Center in Binondo.

Portion of Masangkay and Benavidez Sts. from Recto Ave. to Salazar St. including Liberty Hall Physical Therapy Clinic (Health Hub Binondo and RCBC in Binondo).

Portion of Sabino Padilla St. from Soler St. to Ongpin St. including Lee Tower in Binondo.

Portion of Paladar St. from Masangkay St. to Ongpin St. including First Hotel in Binondo.

Portion of Juan Luna St. from Reina Regente St. to Ongpin St. in Binondo.

Portion of Ongpin St. from Juan Luna St. to Sabino Padilla St. including Mandarin Square and President Grand Palace in Binondo.

Portion of Quintin Paredes Road from Ongpin St. to and including Plaza Cervantes, Dasmariñas and Carvajal Sts. in Binondo.

REASON: Replacement of poles, line reconducting work and installation of additional lightning protection devices along Soler, Masangkay, Benavidez, Sabino Padilla and Ongpin Sts. in Binondo and Sta. Cruz in Manila.

LAGUNA (BIÑAN CITY)

BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 2:00PM – PORTION OF CIRCUIT STA. ROSA II 432WF

Portion of East Science Ave. from North Main Ave. to and including Laguna METTS Corp., TDK Electronics Phils. Corp., Surtec Phils. Inc. and Sidel Sales & Conveyor Industries in Laguna Technopark Phase 3, Bgy. Malimg, Biñan City.

REASON: Reconducting of primary lines along East Science Ave. in Laguna Technopark Phase 3, Bgy. Malimg, Biñan City, Laguna.

PASIG CITY (PINAGBUHATAN) AND RIZAL PROVINCE (TAYTAY)

BETWEEN 9:30AM AND 3:30PM – PORTION OF CIRCUIT TAGUIG 492L

Portion of A. Sandoval Ave. from Camachile St. to and including Eusebio Ave. in Bgy. Pinagbuhatan, Pasig City.

Portion of Eusebio Ave. from A. Sandoval Ave. in Bgy. Pinagbuhatan, Pasig City to and including Lupang Arinda, Bgy. Sta. Ana, Taytay, Rizal Province; Esguerra Compound, Green Valley Hilltop Subd., Monte Villas Subd., Nagpayong Subd., Pasig Borderline, Rodman Ville and Villa Grandimar Subd. in Bgy. Pinagbuhatan, Pasig City.

REASON: Line reconducting work along A. Sandoval Ave. and Eusebio Ave. in Bgy. Pinagbuhatan, Pasig City; and Bgy. Sta. Ana, Taytay, Rizal Province.

SUNDAY TO MONDAY, MAY 29 - 30, 2022

QUEZON PROVINCE (LUCENA CITY)

BETWEEN 11:00PM (SUN., 05/29/22) AND 4:00AM (MON., 05/30/22) – PORTION OF CIRCUITS LUCENA 422LCN AND 424LCN

Portion of Quezon Ave. from BDO – Lucena Gulang-Gulang Branch to and including P. Gomez, Barcelona, Trinidad, Hermosa Fausta, Granja Daleon, Osmeña, Enriquez, Merchan and Santolan Sts.; Landbank, Quezon Medical Center, Sacred Heart College (Lucena City) and Mormon Church; Zaballero Subd. and Mt. Carmel Subd. in Bgys. Gulang-Gulang and Lucena City proper.

Portion of P. Gomez St. from Allarey St. to and including St. Peter Chapels and House of Halina in Lucena City proper.

REASON: Replacement of poles and line reconducting work along Quezon Ave. in Bgys. Gulang-Gulang and Lucena City proper in Lucena City, Quezon Province.

MONDAY, MAY 30, 2022

BULACAN (SANTA MARIA; PANDI; AND BUSTOS)

BETWEEN 1:00AM AND 1:30AM AND THEN BETWEEN 5:30AM AND 6:00AM – PORTION OF CIRCUIT STA. MARIA 435YU

Portion of Santa Maria – Pandi Road from Santiago St. to near Talipapa Ng Barangay including Amaia Scapes Bulacan Subd., Glendale Residences Subd., Santiago Subd., Rafael Compound, Sitio Pag-Asa, Sonoma Residences Subd., Sonoma Residences Ext. Subd. and Sta. Cruz Village; Kalye Onse, Brigino, Ipil, Pino, Sagad, Bukid, Pag-Asa, Centro, Gulod, Housing Project, Kalapatihan, Maligaya, Matimays and Sulucan Sts. in Bgys. Manggahan, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz in Santa Maria.

BETWEEN 1:00AM AND 6:00AM – PORTIONS OF CIRCUIT STA. MARIA 435YU

Portion of Santa Maria – Pandi Road from near Talipapa Ng Barangay in Bgy. Manggahan, Santa Maria to and including Dominique Subd. and Villa Tierra Subd. in Bgy. San Roque, Pandi; and Gulod Subd. in Bgy. Manggahan, Santa Maria.

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Marcos signals go-slow stance on joining RCEP

PRESIDENT-ELECT Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. will review the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) to determine whether the agriculture sector is adequately protected.

Mr. Marcos said in a news conference on Thursday that he wants to ensure that the agriculture industry is not unduly disadvantaged by the trade deal.

"Sa *aking pananaw* (in my view), let's have another look at it because the RCEP is a very fine thing. *Ako talaga ang* great proponent/believer in trade. (I am a great believer in trade) *Walang yumaman na bansa na hindi maganda ang kanilang* trade, (No country grew rich without taking care of trade)," Mr. Marcos said.

"Let's have a look at it again and make sure *na hindi naman malulugi ang ating* agriculture sector (that the agriculture sector does not get put out of business). *Pagka na-ratify na natin 'yan, dapat handana 'yung system natin na makipag-compete dahil kung hindi makipag-compete, masasapawan sila. Mawawala 'yung ating local and panay nalang ang import natin* (Once it is ratified, we must make ready measures that will help the industry compete, because if we don't, our farmers will be overwhelmed. Our local goods will disappear and all we will do is import) and we don't want that," he added.

RCEP started taking effect on Jan. 1 for countries that have completed their ratification process. Its members are Australia, China, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. It is touted as the world's biggest trade agreement since it represents 30% of the world's gross domestic product.

The Philippines has yet to finalize its participation in RCEP after the Senate failed to act on it before adjourning on Feb. 3 for the election break. President Rodrigo R. Duterte signed the trade deal on Sept. 2.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chair Senator Aquilino Martin L. Pimentel III has said that discussions on RCEP are due to be held on May 30. The Senate is due to adjourn sine die on June 3, ahead of the entry of the newly-elected contingent of Senators.

Mr. Marcos said he is unsure whether agriculture is "sufficiently robust" to take on the competition resulting from the opening of markets under RCEP.

"*Pag kaya ng ating magsasaka o suportahan natin, ng gobyerno, at kaya nila mag-compete, eh di i-ratify na natin 'yan.* (When farmers are able to compete on their own or with government support, let's ratify it) But let's protect our farmers," he added.

Asked to comment, Trade Secretary Ramon M. Lopez said that the Department of Trade and Industry will brief Mr. Marcos on how safe domestic agriculture will be under RCEP.

"With due respect, we will assure the President-elect that RCEP is safe for the agriculture sector, mainly because no new sensitive agriculture products were included in RCEP," Mr. Lopez said in a Viber message.

"We need to nurture our local production capacity, not delay RCEP. We hope that the next administration will recognize that stopping the RCEP will not do any good," he added.

Mr. Lopez said the issue at hand is missing trade and investment



PRESIDENT-ELECT Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.

opportunities the longer RCEP participation remains in doubt.

He added that the Philippines and Indonesia are the only countries that have yet to finalize their participation.

"If we don't ratify, some investments will also shift towards RCEP participating countries because those countries will enjoy market concessions in other RCEP countries. This will affect our very good foreign direct investment (FDI) growth momentum and job generation goals after the pandemic," Mr. Lopez said.

Raul Q. Montemayor, agricultural group Federation of Free Farmers national manager, said that the Senate should defer any action regarding the RCEP and let the incoming administration handle the trade deal.

"The Senate should defer any action and give Mr. Marcos' administration the leeway to handle RCEP in accordance with his policy and vision for agriculture," Mr. Montemayor said in a Viber message.

"What will benefit agriculture is not RCEP per se but the steps that the government will take to prepare our farmers to compete. In this way, they will benefit from trade agreements like RCEP and will not be unduly harmed by it," he added.

Foundation for Economic Freedom President Calixto V. Chikiamco said in a mobile phone message that a mechanism under RCEP allows the suspension of imports if there is an import surge that poses a threat to the domestic industry.

"A review would reveal that tariff protections for sensitive agricultural products, such as rice, corn, swine and chicken meat, garlic, etc. would remain in place," Mr. Chikiamco said.

"The negative impact of not joining RCEP would be most felt by industry, rather than agriculture, as it would lose to other manufacturers based in RCEP in other countries. To assess the overall impact of joining or not joining RCEP, one has to look not only at the impact on agriculture, but on industry as well," he added.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael L. Ricafort said in a Viber message that a review of RCEP would be "prudent."

"A review... would be prudent, in view of the country's existing free trade agreements (FTAs) that offer some reasonable level of production to rice farmers by maintaining comfortable levels of import tariffs due to the highly sensitive nature and vulnerability of the industry in terms of the importance of food security and to prevent dumping of cheaper agricultural imports with subsidies from their home countries," Mr. Ricafort said. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/BONGSONMARCOS