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Landslide hurts travel, commerce in Mt Prov

Economic activities and travel to the capital town of Bontoc in Mountain Province and its environs are affected by a huge mountainside along the stretch of the Halsema Highway in Barangay Gonogon, Sabangan town.

The mountain slide which is more than 100 meters in height damaged 80 to 90 meter of the highway during incessant rains last Aug. 7.

Department of Public Works and Highways assistant regional director, Engr. Alexander Castañeda, said Friday that government crew and personnel of OCDC, a

private construction firm, are working round the clock (except during heavy rains) to clear the road from the slide.

"We are doing all our best to open up the road but we also appeal to the motorists to bear with us," Castañeda said, adding that he was instructed by DPWH central office not to leave Bontoc until the work is done.

Castañeda, who is also the regional project head of SONA flagship projects in the Cordilleras, added that they hope to finish the work the soonest possible time

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although he clarified that the bad weather is delaying the clearing operations.

The site of the mountain slide form part of the phase 2 of the Halsema Highway rehabilitation, a project of the Arroyo government.

When the mountain slide occurred, stranded commuters coming from Bontoc and its environs have to use other routes like travelling first to Ifugao via the Bontoc-Banaue Road then traverse Region 2 before coming up to Baguio via Kayapa, Nueva Vizcaya.

But thousands of commuters riding mass transport vehicles have to walk pass an alternative foot trail to be able to ride a waiting vehicle in Gonogon.

Economic activities are also being hampered reason why traders and sales agents have a hard time transporting goods to the capital town of Bontoc, the one of the major economic sites in the province.—

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