

04 November 2022, Friday



DENR

NEWS ALERTS

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



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Bill includes part of Benham Rise in list of protected areas

A SENIOR lawmaker is asking Congress to declare a large part of the Philippine Rise, a vast undersea region east of Luzon, as a protected area (PA) so it could be managed and explored for its marine resources.

In House Bill 5687, Cagayan de Oro City Rep. Rufus Rodriguez proposed that the area known as Benham Bank and its neighboring waters, be designated as a PA to be known as Philippine Rise Marine Resource Reserve under the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Law.

The bill indicates the geographic coordinates of Benham Bank, which is composed of 352,390 hectares. The Philippine Rise is believed to be more than 24 million hectares.

Rodriguez said most of Philippine Rise, including Benham Bank, is within the country's 200-mile exclusive economic zone.

He said while the undersea region is 3,000 to 3,500 meters beneath the ocean's surface, Benham Bank, the tallest seamount, is lying just 48-70 meters below the sea.

An all-Filipino group of research scientists discovered the proposed protected marine resource reserve in 2014, along with its diverse habitats and fish communities, he said.

He added that Filipinos actually do fishing activities in the area, "but the state of its habitats and biodiversity must be closely monitored to ensure the sustainability of the resources therein."

"Monitoring and maintaining the high biodiversity and near pristine habitats in the Philippine Rise Marine Resource Reserve will contribute to sustainable fisheries productivity and ecosystem services for present and future generations of Filipinos," Rodriguez stressed.

He noted that at present, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Philippine National Police Maritime Group,

Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) are patrolling the area, protecting Filipino fishermen and enforcing fisheries laws.

He said aside from designating Benham Bank as a protected area, his bill would provide additional funds for these agencies.

"Most importantly, passing the bill is an exercise of Philippine sovereignty over our waters and the resources therein," he said.

Under the measure, a Philippine Rise Marine Resource Protected Area Management Board would be created as the policy-making body for the management of Benham Bank.

The board is to be composed of the secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR); the chairpersons of the Senate Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change and the House Committee on Natural Resources and representatives from BFAR, National Economic and Development Authority, Department of Science and Technology, Department of National Defense-Office of Civil Defense, PNP Maritime Group, National Security Council, National Coast Watch Council Secretariat, Department of Foreign Affairs Maritime and Ocean Affairs Office, AFP, and PCG.

Four representatives from non-government organizations accredited by the DENR, four from academic institutions and one from the private fishing sector would also sit in the board.

The bill enumerates prohibited activities in the proposed protected area, including poaching, dumping of toxic waste, use of destructive gears, and hindering law enforcement.

Proposed penalties for violators include fines of up to P5 million and imprisonment of up to six years.

Jovee Marie N. Dela Cruz



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ASSERTION OF SOVEREIGNTY

PH RISE EYED AS PROTECTED MARINE RESOURCE RESERVE

By Jeannette I. Andrade
@jiandradeINQ

Cagayan de Oro lawmaker Rufus Rodriguez has proposed a measure that would declare as a protected area a large part of Philippine Rise.

Rodriguez said on Thursday that he filed House Bill No. 5687, which would make the 352,390-hectare Benham Bank and its neighboring waters a protected area to be known as the Philippine Rise Marine Resource Reserve.

The lawmaker pointed out that Philippine Rise, an undersea region east of Luzon believed to be over 24 million hectares, is within the country's 322-kilometer exclusive economic zone. He noted that while the undersea region is 3,000 to 3,500 meters beneath the ocean's surface, Benham Bank lies just 48 to 70 meters below the sea.

An all-Filipino group of research scientists discovered the proposed protected marine resource reserve in 2014, along with its diverse habitats and

fish communities, he said.

According to Rodriguez, Filipinos actually do fishing activities in the area, "but the state of its habitats and biodiversity must be closely monitored to ensure the sustainability of the resources therein."

"Monitoring and maintaining the high biodiversity and near pristine habitats in the Philippine Rise Marine Resource Reserve will contribute to sustainable fisheries productivity and ecosystem services for present and future genera-

tions of Filipinos," he stressed.

Apart from designating Benham Bank as a protected area, HB 5687 provides additional funding for security forces.

"Most importantly, passing the bill is an exercise of Philippine sovereignty over our waters and the resources therein," Rodriguez pointed out.

HB 5687 would also mandate the creation of a policy-making body, the Philippine Rise Marine Resource Protected Area Management Board, and includes penal provisions. INQ



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Solon files bill declaring PH Rise as protected area

By RAYMUND ANTONIO

A Mindanao lawmaker has filed House Bill (HB) No. 5687 declaring a large part of the Philippine Rise, formerly known as Benham Rise, a protected area.

The Benham Bank and its neighboring waters will be known as Philippine Rise Marine Resource Reserve when it becomes a protected area under the proposed Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act.

House Deputy Speaker Cagayan de Oro City Rep. Rufus Rodriguez said in a statement that the Philippine Rise could be managed and explored for its marine resources once the bill is passed into law.

"Monitoring and maintaining the high biodiversity and near pristine habitats in the Philippine Rise Marine Resource Reserve will contribute to sustainable fisheries productivity and ecosystem services for present and future generations of Filipinos," he said.

HB 5687 indicated the geographic coordinates of Benham Bank which is composed of 352,390 hectares. The Philippine Rise is believed to be more than 24 million hectares.

The lawmaker said most of the Philippine Rise, including Benham Bank, is within the country's 200-mile exclusive economic zone. He added that Filipinos conduct fishing activities in the area, "but the state of its habitats and biodiversity must be closely monitored to ensure the sustainability of the resources therein."



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Congress urged to declare Benham Rise a 'protected area'

By **RYAN PONCE PACPACO**

CAGAYAN de Oro City Representative Rufus Rodriguez has asked Congress to declare a large part of the Philippine Rise (previously known as the Benham Rise), a vast undersea region east of Luzon, as a "protected area" so it could be managed and explored for its marine resources.

In House Bill (HB) No. 5687, Rodriguez proposed that the area known as Ben-

ham Bank and its neighboring waters be designated as a protected area to be known as the "Philippine Rise Marine Resource Reserve" under the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Law.

The bill indicates the geographic coordinates of Benham Bank, which is composed of 352,390 hectares. The Philippine Rise is believed to be more than 24 million hectares.

Rodriguez said most of the Philippine Rise, including Benham Bank, is within the country's 200-mile ex-

clusive economic zone (EEZ).

He said while the undersea region is 3,000 to 3,500 meters beneath the ocean's surface, Benham Bank, the tallest seamount, is lying just 48-70 meters below the sea.

An all-Filipino group of research scientists discovered the proposed protected marine resource reserve in 2014, along with its diverse habitats and fish communities, he said.

He noted that at present, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Philippine Nation-

al Police Maritime Group (PNP-MG), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) are patrolling the area, protecting Filipino fishermen and enforcing fisheries laws.

He said aside from designating Benham Bank as a protected area, the bill would provide additional funds for these agencies.

"Most importantly, passing the bill is an exercise of Philippine sovereignty over our waters and the resources therein," he said.



Declare undersea region protected area -- lawmaker

By Jester Manalastas

A lawmaker filed a measure seeking to declare a large part of the Philippine Rise (formerly Benham Rise) as a protected area.

House Bill 5687 author Cagayan de Oro City Representative Rufus Rodriguez said this is needed so that the government can manage and explore the vast undersea region for its marine resources.

The proposal is that the area known as Benham Bank and its neighboring waters, be designated as a protected area to be known as Philippine Rise Marine Resource Reserve under the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Law.

The bill indicates the geographic coordinates of Benham Bank, which is

composed of 352,390 hectares. The Philippine Rise is believed to be more than 24 million hectares.

Rodriguez said most of the Philippine Rise, including Benham Bank, is within the country's 200-mile exclusive economic zone.

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He added that Filipinos actually do fishing activities in the area, "but the state of its habitats and biodiversity must be closely monitored to ensure the sustainability of the re-

sources therein."

"Monitoring and maintaining the high biodiversity and near pristine habitats in the Philippine Rise Marine Resource Reserve will contribute to sustainable fisheries productivity and ecosystem services for present and future generations of Filipinos," Rodriguez stressed.

He noted that at present, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Philippine National Police Maritime Group, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) are patrolling the area, protecting Filipino fishermen and enforcing fisheries laws.

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cise of Philippine sovereignty over our waters and the resources therein," he said.

Under the measure, a Philippine Rise Marine Resource Protected Area Management Board would be created as the policy-making body for the management of Benham Bank.

The board is to be composed of the secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR); the chairpersons of the Senate committee on environment, natural resources and climate change and the House committee on natural resources; and representatives from BFAR, National Economic and Development Authority, Department of Science and Technology, Department of National Defense Office of Civil Defense, PNT Maritime Group, National Security Council, National Coast Watch Council Secretariat, Department of Foreign Affairs Maritime and Ocean Affairs Office, AFP, and PCG.

Four representatives from non-government organizations accredited by the DENR, four from academic institutions and one from the private fishing sector would also sit in the board.

The bill enumerates prohibited activities in the proposed protected area, including poaching, dumping of toxic waste, use of destructive gears, and hindering law enforcement.

Proposed penalties for violators include fines of up to P5 million and imprisonment of up to six years.



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DENR leads drive to check settlers in Calabarzon PAs

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

✉ @jonlmayuga

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Calabarzon launched on Wednesday a crackdown against illegal occupants structures within Protected Areas (PA) and forestlands in the region.

DENR Calabarzon Regional Executive Director Nilo Tamoria led key regional officials and representatives from the Department of the Interior and Local Government, Philippine National Police, Department of Public Works and Highways, National Intelligence Coordinating Agency, Army, National Bureau of Investigation, and local government units in issuing "show cause" orders against illegal occupants of structures in Marikina, Rizal, Laguna, and Quezon or the so-called Marilaque Highway.

Tamoria said as early as October 27, these same agencies collaborated to execute the massive operation, which aims to address numerous

complaints against illegal occupants and structures built in supposedly "no-build" zones or buildings without the necessary permits from concerned government agencies.

"This is to ensure the protection and conservation of our Protected Areas which serves as our natural defense against climate change," said Tamoria.

On Saturday, October 29, tropical storm "Paeng" devastated Luzon and parts of Mindanao, causing massive flooding and landslide that resulted in the tragic loss of lives.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. blamed the disaster on massive tree-cutting activities.

According to Tamoria, the illegal construction of buildings and other structures is one of the major causes of forest degradation, particularly in PAs.

Section 24 of Department Administrative Order 2019-05 states that the Protected Area Management Board or PAMB shall conduct an inventory of facilities within a PA.



Regional Updates

Governor says 'man-made problem' of flooding can be addressed by protecting the Cagayan River

THE GOVERNOR of Cagayan, one of the areas hit hardest by the recent series of typhoons in the Philippines, on Thursday called on national government agencies to act on longstanding recommendations to avert flooding by protecting the Cagayan River.

"This has been our perennial problem and this is the cause of poverty and destruction in Cagayan," Governor Manuel N. Mamba said in a statement.

The flooding problem, he said, is "man-made" and widespread such that the provincial government alone could not address the contributing factors to the repeated disasters.

The Cagayan River Basin, located in northern Philippines, is the biggest in the country with an area of 27,493.49 square kilometers. It traverses nine provinces across three regions, based on data from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The river empties out into the Babuyan Channel through Aparri town in Cagayan.

"We suffer the most," the governor said.

He said one of the immediate actions that can be taken is to desilt the Magat Dam, one of the river's main tributaries.

Other issues that require long-term and multi-sectoral solutions are extensive deforestation and changing climate patterns.

The Cagayan River Basin covers 10 critical watersheds. It is also home to five declared protected areas. Its ecosystem supports some 700,000 hectares of farmland, more than half of which are planted to the staple rice.

In February 2021, the DENR formed an alliance with 22 national government agencies to continue the river's rehabilitation under what it called a "Build Back Better" program.

"Let us hope that what this administration has started to build back better, the mighty Cagayan River will be built upon by the next administration," then DENR chief Roy A. Cimatu said during the alliance signing ceremony.

In the wake of this year's worse flooding and landslide incidents, Mr. Mamba said stakeholders across northern Luzon need to sit down and earnestly discuss the implementation of solutions. — MSJ



Most mining, logging concessions seen potentially infringing on ancestral domain

ABOUT half of all approved large-scale mining contracts and 87% of logging projects are within or are in close proximity to registered ancestral domains, according to a study by the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC).

The LRC reported in its 2022 State of the Indigenous Peoples Address that 49% of the land certified as ancestral domains are near environmentally destructive projects.

Efenita May M. Taqueban, executive director of LRC, announced the findings in a statement.

According to the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act, ancestral domain is defined as land traditionally occupied, possessed and used by individuals and families belonging to Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples (IPs).

As of July, about 449,576.81 hectares of land covered by approved mineral production sharing agreements out of a total of 916,474.08 hectares are in conflict with registered ancestral domains, the report said.

About 87% or 635,095 hectares out of a total of 732,203 hectares of forest tenements operated as timber plantations are situated near registered ancestral domains.

According to the report, at least 1.2 million hectares or 21% of all land covered by Certificate of Ancestral Domain Titles is in actual or potential conflict with miners and loggers.

"Protecting ancestral domains... is urgently needed if we are to rise above the climate emergency we are already experiencing now," Ms. Taqueban said. — **Kyanna**

Angela Bulan

FULL STORY



Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or by typing the link bit.ly/Mining10422



Report shows vast tracts of PHL ancestral domain lands tied to destructive projects

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

[@jordmayuga](#)

A LEGAL and policy research institution on Wednesday revealed that half of all Certificate of Ancestral Domain titles (CADTs) in the Philippines are embroiled in environmentally destructive projects.

In its 2022 State of the Indigenous Peoples Address (SIPA) Report, the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC) said the threats were found to cover at least 1.25 million hectares or equivalent to 21 percent of the total area of all CADTs.

"We found that half of all approved large-scale mining contracts and a whopping 87 percent of all large-scale logging projects are within or close to registered ancestral domains. Protecting an-

cestral domains and their natural defenses to extreme climate impacts is urgently needed if we are to rise above the climate emergency we are already experiencing now," Atty. Mai Taqueban, executive director of LRC said in a news release.

The report further showed that despite their territories having an estimated forest ecosystem value of P1.1 trillion annually, three in every four indigenous persons (IP) remain among the poorest 40 percent of Filipinos.

IPs were also found to be facing significant socioeconomic gaps in accessing education, public health, water and electricity, and other public services.

"The exploitation and commoditization of nature is sadly an enduring framework to managing our natural resources. This

is contrary to indigenous peoples' conception of development. Not only has this marginalized them, it has also worsened their human rights situation, for many of them naturally oppose these projects. What they have been clamoring for is support for their own development plans, anchored in their right to self-determination," Taqueban said.

The report highlighted the ongoing struggles of IP communities against extractive projects, such as the water woes experienced by the Tawali people during the operations of the Oceanagold copper-gold project in Barangay Didipio, Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya. Protesting the depletion and pollution of water and its impacts on their farmlands, they have been repeatedly met with a history of violence and human rights violations.



Stop raping our forests and watersheds

“**D**estroying rainforest for economic gain is like burning a Renaissance painting to cook a meal.”

This famous quote from the late American biologist and Pulitzer winner E. O. Wilson brings to mind the massive denudation and degradation of the country's forests and watersheds through rapid urbanization, illegal logging, illegal mining, slash-and-burn farming, and even poaching.

According to the European Environment Agency (EEA) report, “Water-retention potential of Europe's forests,” forests can soak up excess rainwater, preventing run-offs and damage from flooding. The report shows that water retention potential tends to increase along with the extent of forest cover in a water basin.

In the recent flooding, triggered by Severe Tropical Storm Paeng, President Marcos blamed deforestation for the flash floods and landslides in Maguindanao. Thus, he called on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and non-governmental organizations to help in reforestation efforts in Maguindanao and urged residents to care for the trees.

Shortly after Typhoon Ulysses struck in November 2020, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) conducted a study and came up with a conclusion that the massive flooding in Metro Manila and neighboring areas was caused by rapid urbanization and increased build-up areas in the Marikina River Basin Land Cover. The Philippine Statistics Authority

defines build-up areas as spaces of intensive use, with much of the land covered by structures. It includes cities, towns, villages, strip developments along highways, transportation, power, and communication facilities, and areas occupied by mills, shopping centers, industrial and commercial complexes, and institutions that may, in some instances, be isolated from urban areas.

All these studies and findings underscore how important forests and watersheds are in our ecosystem. Devastate it or abuse its use and we are in for a disaster.

With unabated forest devastation and incursions in our watersheds, no doubt the country continues to experience massive flooding whenever a storm strikes. Remember the catastrophic effects of flashfloods brought about by Tropical Storm Ondoy in September 2009, Super-Typhoon Rolly and Ulysses in November 2020, Severe Tropical Storm Maring in October 2021, and Typhoon Odette in December 2021?

With tropical storms becoming stronger and more frequent, it's now time for all stakeholders—the government, the business sector, non-governmental organizations, and the public—to get their acts together in preserving our forests and watersheds to mitigate flooding and avoid further loss of lives and properties.

While it is necessary to keep the economy afloat, sustainable use of resources to attain progress is equally important for the future of the next generation.

We have to act responsibly now for tomorrow might be too late.



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Requirements for reforestation

COMMENTARY

ERNESTO M. ORDOÑEZ

In view of recent disasters due to massive forest denudation, we identify three requirements for successful reforestation. One, secure the area from unscrupulous individuals; two, ensure that people in the area feel ownership of the initiative; and three, plant the most appropriate species in the targeted sites.

If these are not met, the country's reforestation plan will just suffer from failures anew. The government's planting efforts have shown a disappointing 61-percent survival rate.

Last Nov. 2, Inquirer's Jerome Aning reported: "President Marcos on Monday said good trees should be planted in the denuded uplands of the two Maguindanao provinces to prevent a repeat of last week's deadly landslides, after seeing for himself what environmentalists had been warning the government on what would happen not only in Mindanao, but also in other parts of the country." The issue is in connection with the destruction left by tropical storm Paeng, which left more than 100 dead.

The Movement for Water Security, composed of private sector members who contributed to the National Water Roadmap direction that produced seven

volumes on different water governance aspects, identified the three reforestation requirements. These are recommended by experts with extensive experience.

The first is from Billie Dumaliang, co-founder of the Masungi Georeserve Foundation (MGF). At the weekly forum of the Management Association of the Philippines-Agribusiness and Countryside Development Foundation (MAP-ABCDF), Dumaliang explained that the biggest reforestation obstacle was not being able to secure the targeted reforestation area. This was because unscrupulous individuals, in connivance with the local government and other officials, engage in illegal quarrying, logging and other activities, often using violence for intimidation.

MAP-ABCDF followed this up with Senate agriculture and environment committee chair Cynthia Villar. The senator provided a van for regulation use by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)

and the Philippine National Police. However, little support was given, thus illegal activities continued, two rangers were killed and several more were mauled.

Last Sept. 26, MGF bested more than 2,000 entries from 150 countries in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Action Award. After five years of perceived inadequate government support, MGF recently commended the Department of Interior and Local Government and the DENR for confiscating weapons from illegal trespassers and acting against 30 armed men whom they alleged harassed them last month.

Since securing the area is a major issue in reforestation efforts, the DENR and Department of the Interior and Local Government must now act consistently against these powerful individuals.

The second requirement is that the people in the area must be active reforestation participants who will also benefit from the project. Alberto Malvar, multi-awarded developer and chair of Mount Purro Nature Reserve, said: "You must begin by knowing and understanding the people who live there. Together with them, you must develop a plan that they will own and commit to. This must provide

livelihood opportunities that will enable their survival. Otherwise, reforestation will not work."

The third requirement is that the choice of what to plant has to be practical. Fruit and native tree species are best. However, these will not survive without nurturing.

Dulce Punzalan, UN Global Impact representative and MAP-ABCDF corporate secretary, suggests bamboo. First, it grows in relatively infertile land. Second, it requires little attention, because bamboo is a grass that can overcome the cogon that destroys other plants. Third, it provides livelihood opportunities for those with low income due to its fast gestation.

In order for President Marcos planting directive to be successful, the government must support these three requirements. Otherwise, reforestation will remain just a rhetoric, as has happened so often in the past. No



The author is Agriwatch chair, former secretary of presidential flagship programs and projects, and former undersecretary of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Trade and Industry. Contact is agriwatch_phil@yahoo.com.



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EDITORIAL

Stop raping our forests and watersheds

"Destroying rainforest for economic gain is like burning a Renaissance painting to cook a meal."

This famous quote from the late American biologist and Pulitzer winner E. O. Wilson brings to mind the massive denudation and degradation of the country's forests and watersheds through rapid urbanization, illegal logging, illegal mining, slash-and-burn farming, and even poaching.

According to the European Environment Agency (EEA) report, "Water-retention potential of Europe's forests," forests can soak up excess rainwater, preventing run-offs and damage from flooding. The report shows that water retention potential tends to increase along with the extent of forest cover in a water basin.

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and institutions that may, in some instances, be isolated from urban areas.

All these studies and findings underscore how important forests and watersheds are in our ecosystem. Devastate it or abuse its use and we are in for a disaster.

With unabated forest devastation and incursions in our watersheds, no doubt the country continues to experience massive flooding whenever a storm strikes. Remember the catastrophic effects of flashfloods brought about by Tropical Storm Ondoy in September 2009, Super Typhoon Rolly and Ulysses in November 2020, Severe Tropical Storm Maring in October 2021, and Typhoon Odette in December 2021?

With tropical storms becoming stronger and more frequent, it's now time for all stakeholders—the government, the business sector, non-governmental organizations, and the public—to get their acts together in preserving our forests and watersheds to mitigate flooding and avoid further loss of lives and properties.

While it is necessary to keep the economy afloat, sustainable use of resources to attain progress is equally important for the future of the next generation.

We have to act responsibly now for tomorrow might be too late.



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STOP MAKING OUR FORESTS...

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MGA BUNDOK NG BASURA SA MGA SEMENTERYO

TUMAMBAD ang bundok ng basura dahil sa patuloy na pagbayo ng bagyong "Paeng" kaya agad namang nagbigay ng panukala ang Department of Finance na buwisan ang single-use plastics para kumita ang pamahalaan.

Malaki kasi umano na kikitain kapeg ipinatupad ito. Napag-alaman na kikita ang gobyerno sa pagbubuwis sa single-use plastics pero wala pang linaw na nakikita kung paano masusuluyonan ang plastic pollution.

Tiyak na patuloy ang produksyon ng plastic kahit pa taasan ng buwis.

Unang dapat daw gawin ay magkaroon din ang pama-

halaan ng kampanya kung paano maitatapon ng maa-yos ng ating mamamayan ang mga plastic upang maiwasan ang pegkasira ng kapaligiran.

Pangalawa ay ibawal ang pagtatapon sa kung saan-saan at ipatupad ang recycling ng basura.

Nitong nakaraang Undas, nabatid na hindi pa rin natututo ang mga taong bumibisita sa sementeryo dahil hang-gang ngayon ay wala pa rin silang disiplinang pagtatapon ng kani-kanilag mga basura sapagkat bagaman may mga nakapaskil sa mga gate ng sementeryo na huwag iwanan ang basura sa mga bisitahing puntod, matigas pa



rin ang ulo ng mga ito at iniwan pa rin ang kanilang mga basura sa mismong puntod ng kanilang dinalaw na namayapang mahal sa buhay.

Ginawa nilang malaking basurahan ang sementeryo.

Sa totoo lang bayan, maraming sementeryo sa buong bansa na makikita ang namumulaklak sa plastic na basura at naka-amba ang lalo pang paglubha ng plastik pollution.

Dalawang taon na nama-

hinga ang mga sementeryo dahil bawal ang pag-tungo ng mga tao bunga ng pandemya dulot ng COVID-19 pero ngayong balik na naman ang pagtungo ng mga tao sa sementeryo ay nakaririmirin na ang lanawin dito dahil sa bundok ng basura.

At omang puna o reklamo i-text sa 09189274764, 09263719269 o i-email sa juandasabog@yahoo.com o juandasabog48@gmail.com.



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Editorial

Basurang plastik namumutiktik

KAHAPON, maraming basura ang nakuha sa mga sementeryo sa buong bansa. Pinakamaraming basura ang nakuha sa mga sementeryo sa Metro Manila. Naulit ang tanawin bago magpandemya. Napahinga lang ng dalawang taon sa basura ang mga sementeryo at ngayon ay balik na naman sa dating tanawin. Nagpapakita lamang ito na wala pa ring disiplina sa pagtatapon ng basura ang nakararami. Kahit malinaw ang nakasaad na paalala sa mga gate ng sementeryo na huwag iwanan ang basura sa mga bibisitahing puntod, hindi rin nasunod at naging basurahan na naman ang mga sementeryo.

Pawang plastic na basura ang nakolekta kahapon at ayon sa report aabutin pa ng ilang araw bago tuluyang mahakot ang mga basura. Nakadagdag sa basurang plastic ang mga face masks na itinapon din sa loob ng sementeryo. Hindi na nakapagtataka na tataas ang bilang ng kaso ng COVID-19 dahil sa walang ingat na pagtatapon ng face masks. Balik sa dating nakaririmarim na tanawin ang mga sementeryo dahil sa iniwang basura.

Karaniwang mga single-use plastics ang basurang nakakalat sa mga sementeryo—sache ng 3-in-1 coffee,

plastic cup ng noodles, plastic wrapper ng biskuwit at iba pang pagkain, shopping bags at mga plastic cover ng bulaklak. Nagmistulang malaking basurahan ang mga sementeryo. Kung kailan lilinis ang gabundok na basura sa mga sementeryo ay walang makapagsabi.

Kapag ang mga basurang plastic sa sementeryo ay inabutan ng panibagong bagyo, at nagkaroon na naman ng pagbaba, tiyak na sa log at mga sapa sanurin ang mga ito at saka hahantong sa dagat. Maraming maapektuhan kasama na ang mga lamandagat.

Sinabi minsan ni President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ang problema ng Pilipinas ukol sa plastic pollution kung saan, ikatlo ang Pilipinas sa nag-aambag ng mga basurang plastic sa karagatan. Sinabi ni Marcos na tutulong ang Pilipinas sa paglilinis sa mga basurang nasa karagatan. Hindi umano tatalikuran ang responsibilidad sa basura sa karagatan.

Ipinanukala naman ng Department of Finance na buwisan ang single-use plastics para kumita ang pamahalaan. Malaki umano ang kikitain kapag ipinatupad ito. Wala pang linaw kung magkakaroon ng katuparan ang panukala.

Kikita ang pamahalaan sa pagbubuwis sa single-use plastics subalit walang maiuaw na nakikita kung paano masosolusyunan ang plastic pollution. Tiyak na patuloy ang produksiyon ng plastic kahit pa taasan ng buwis. Dapat magkaroon din ng kampanya ang pamahalaan kung paano maitatapon nang maayos ng mamamayan ang mga plastic upang maiwasan ang pagkasira ng kapaligiran. Ibawal ang pagtatapon sa kung saan-saan at ipatupad ang recycling ng basura.





EDITORIAL

Only 4 calamity regions

AFFIRMING his assessment that the damage wrought by Severe Tropical Storm Paeng was "highly localized", President Marcos Jr. has approved and signed a circular declaring a state of calamity over Regions 4-A, 5 (Bicol), 6 (Western Visayas), and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Calabarzon is Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon.

As stated on Proclamation 84, the declaration would be in effect for six months "unless earlier lifted" by the President.

"The onslaught of Severe Tropical Storm Paeng from Oct. 26 to 29, 2022 caused the loss of lives, destruction of property, damage to agriculture and critical infrastructures, and disruption of means of livelihood and normal way of life of the populations in the affected areas," part of the document, already published on The Official Gazette, read.

"All government departments, agencies, and instrumentalities concerned are hereby directed to continue implementing and executing rescue, recovery, relief, and rehabilitation measures in accordance with pertinent operational plans and directives," it added.

Therefore, no need to declare a national state of calamity after Severe Tropical Storm Paeng ravaged different parts of the country.

Earlier, the President assessed the damage as "highly localized".

He made this remark a day after the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council announced on Sunday that it has submitted a resolution recommending a declaration of a national state of calamity which would trigger a price freeze and allow the release of emergency funds.

"I don't think it's necessary. I came to that conclusion in consultation with DENR [Department of Environment and Natural Resources]. They said it wasn't extensive. The damage is highly localized," Marcos told reporters in a press briefing in Noveleta, Cavite.

Citing government reports, he said only three provinces — Quezon, Cavite, and Maguindanao — suffered the most damage to infrastructure.

"We're talking about the east coast Quezon, dito sa Cavite, and then Maguindanao. Those are the areas. It does need to have...like in the Visayas there's no need for a national calamity. For Region 1, 2, it doesn't warrant a national calamity," he said.

The President said it was enough for the NDRRMC to implement the state of calamity status in specific areas only.

Paeng weakened into a tropical storm status on Sunday but re-intensified into a severe tropical storm on Monday as it continues to move over the West Philippine Sea, according to Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.



EDITORIAL

Lessons from 'Paeng'

With 18 to 20 typhoons making landfall and wreaking havoc in the country every year, you'd think we would have mastered the drill by now. Foresight borne of repeated experience would have guided preparations on the ground and enabled us to survive each onslaught with the least number of casualties and damage to crops and property. But Severe Tropical Storm "Paeng"—with at least 150 dead, 36 missing, at least P2.74 billion worth of crops lost, and hundreds of thousands affected across 64 provinces—proved otherwise, with even President Marcos Jr. asking "Why were they (people) not evacuated? Why were there so many casualties?" upon hearing the extent of the typhoon's devastation.

True, there were mitigating factors behind the calamitous impact of Paeng, with disaster officials pointing to "a tragic combination of continuous rains from the approaching tropical storm, deforestation, and silted rivers for the floods and landslides that swamped many parts of the country." Local officials also deflected blame, saying they were not warned early enough; the information given was insufficient; the typhoon veered and changed course, and their area was seldom visited by storms so the flash floods and landslides caught them by surprise. As for the lives lost, they protested that many families had refused to leave their homes for fear of losing what little they had. There were no safe shelters for the evacuees either, as entire barangays were inundated.

Not that we haven't heard all these before in the wake of previous typhoons just as powerful. If anything, Paeng's unacceptably high death toll and extent of destruction have underscored once more how previous recommendations from calamitous events have gone largely unheeded, only to be resurrected amid the hue and cry following another disaster.

Foremost among the lessons from Paeng is how information is key to adequate preparation.

In the face of Paeng's fury, people have been asking, "Whatever happened to Project NOAH?" Launched in 2012, the Nationwide Operational Assessment of Hazards, which the Duterte administration defunded in 2017, "generates initial assessment reports for seismic, volcanic, and hydro-meteorological hazards to help the public prepare for possible impacts," notably by identifying sites that present geographical risks. Tools such as hazard mapping that Project NOAH and the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology's HazardHunterPH provide are a life-saver, as they inform locals which areas to avoid and which routes to take if they need to evacuate.

To disseminate other crucial information, local government units (LGUs) can also enlist younger community members to create flyers and graphic materials that offer tips on best practices during disasters. LGUs should keep communication lines open as well, with hotlines and emergency numbers that can link residents to police, hospitals, and local disaster and rescue groups.

The Marcos Jr. administration should also restore its budget cut to the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), whose proposed P44.17-billion allocation for 2023 was slashed by P20.11 billion. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration weather bureau, which is under DOST, can certainly use more funds to upgrade its forecasting tools for more accurate reports.

Another lesson from Paeng is how investing in permanent shelters for evacuees is crucial to minimize casualties. Setting up facilities with enough privacy, working toilets and kitchens, as well as space to store relief goods, tents, rescue boats, and other disaster-related materials, can go a long way to encourage people to evacuate early. As would roving community patrols to guard against looting and other crimes of opportunity.

A third lesson in saving lives is to enforce building standards even among homes to prevent strong waves from toppling concrete walls and other structures—including river barriers—that lack reinforcement. Appropriate land use is just as crucial, as flood plains and coastal areas have often been converted into homestead—with disastrous results.

Probably the most important lesson is the need for constant, consistent, and vigilant environment protection, given that the Philippines has been identified as one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change and other natural hazards, given its geographic location.

✓The President himself noted during his aerial survey of areas devastated by Paeng how balding mountains have made landslides inevitable after torrential rains. Tree planting and reforestation are an urgent priority, he said.

✓Indeed, unchecked logging and mining activities are the main culprit behind the mass graves in the aftermath of Paeng. Can the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) identify and sanction the logging companies involved, and monitor their compliance with the law? Can the agency also pressure LGUs into dredging silted rivers and come up with innovative ways to discourage those living in coastal areas from throwing their trash into waterways and clogging them?

✓Instead of funneling limited resources to such useless beautification projects like the dolomite beach on Manila Bay, the DENR should start an intensive tree-planting project in denuded areas, and work with LGUs to ensure that reforested areas thrive and multiply.

Let's not wait for another Paeng to set our priorities right. We've been on this road before, with too many lives lost and too few lessons learned.



World falling short on funding for climate adaptation - UN report

LONDON -- The world is falling far short at rounding up money to help struggling nations adapt to the increasingly dangerous impacts of climate change, according to a report released Thursday.

As well as finding the money and political will to slash emissions and contain global warming, hundreds of billions of dollars are needed to protect countries from changes that have happened much faster than scientists had anticipated.

Current international finance flowing to developing countries is between 5 and 10 times below what is needed, the United Nations Environment Program report said.

In 2020, money from donor nations set aside for helping poorer

countries adapt to climate change was just \$29 billion — far below the \$340 billion per year that could be needed by 2030.

"It's time for a global climate adaptation overhaul," said United Nations secretary-general Antonio Guterres in a media statement, noting he had asked green climate funds to work with public and private financiers to pilot a new accelerator for adaptation investment.

The accelerator will help financiers work with developing countries to invest in their adaptation priorities and specific projects.

Adaptation funds are often put into programs like improving food security by planting crops that are resilient to heat and drought, or in

infrastructure, such as sea walls to help keep rising waters at bay.

At the UN climate summit in Glasgow last year, developed countries agreed to double support for adaptation financing to \$40 billion per year by 2025.

At COP27 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, beginning Nov. 6, countries "must present a credible road map with clear milestones on how this will be delivered — preferably as grants, not loans," said Guterres.

Africa, in particular, has struggled to respond to worsening weather extremes. Current annual adaptation spending on the continent is \$11.4 billion — or about 40 percent of all climate finance, according to a report by the Global Center on Adaptation,

an international solutions broker hosted in the Netherlands. Meeting countries' emissions pledges would require an additional \$41 billion a year.

"Adaptation finance is scaling too slowly to close the investment gap in Africa," said Patrick Verkooijen, CEO of GCA. One of the key programs to combat the shortfall is the Africa Adaptation Acceleration Program which seeks to raise \$25 billion for countries in the next three years.

It's "the best vehicle we have to ensure the adaptation investment shortfall in Africa is met with action from all available sources including the private sector," said Verkooijen. — Reuters



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Climate action bolstered

THE LAST MOHICAN



By **MARIO FETALINO JR.**

A SUBSIDIARY of San Miguel Corporation recently bolstered its climate action initiatives.

SMC Global Power Holdings Corp. (SMCGP) disclosed the successful planting and growing of over five million new trees and mangroves from 2019 to date, under its multi-year, nationwide reforestation and carbon capture program.

The company said it is also expanding the scope of the project to reforest areas around its new Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facilities—the first and largest such network in the Philippines and Southeast Asia.

SMC President and Chief Executive Officer Ramon S. Ang said that as of October 2022, SMCGP's "Project 747" initiative has yielded a total of 5,010,116 upland and mangrove trees, across some 1,500 hectares of land.

The project's goal is to

plant seven million trees on some 4,000 hectares of land, in at least seven provinces.

Thus far, SMCGP has planted in eight: Albay, Bataan, Bulacan, Davao Occidental, Negros Occidental, Pangasinan, Quezon province, and Zambales.

The list is however being expanded to cover areas where SMCGP's battery storage facilities are installed or are being put up. These include Albay, Bohol, Cagayan, Cebu, Davao del Norte, Davao de Oro, Isabela, Laguna, Leyte, Misamis Oriental, Pampanga, Pangasinan, and Tarlac.

SMCGP is building a total of 31 BESS facilities with a total capacity of 1,000 MW.

The battery facilities, which will minimize power wastage and redirect otherwise unused capacity to remote areas, are regarded as the best and most sustainable technical solution to the country's power quality and reliability issues.

They are seen to balance and improve access to power nationwide.

More importantly, it will make viable use of intermittent renewable sources such as solar and wind by efficiently storing the energy for electricity when the sun is not shining or the wind is not blowing.

"Reforestation is one of the major sustainability priorities of the entire San

Miguel Group. While we have had many similar efforts initiated by our various subsidiaries in the past, SMCGP has taken it to another level, planting a record 5 million trees in just under three years, with consistently high survival rates," Ang said.

He credited SMCGP's partner communities and people's organizations, local government units, and employee volunteers, with the success of the initiative so far.

He said that to ensure high survival rates for its trees—currently at around 90% for both upland and coastal projects—SMGP partners with local communities to identify and plant needed indigenous tree species.

Community members are also engaged to take care of, and ensure the healthy growth of forests, under the program's livelihood component.

"With our continued partnership with communities and local stakeholders, we are confident that not only will we reach our targets, but the trees we are planting today will grow to full maturity and benefit their surrounding environment for generations to come," Ang said.

He added that foresting the areas around its new BESS facilities also makes sense because the facilities themselves are a major step to strengthening the entry

of renewable energy capacities in the future.

The major challenge of renewable power everywhere in the world is intermittence. With renewables, the ability to generate power is always limited. You cannot generate solar power at nighttime, or when weather conditions block sunlight. You cannot produce wind power when there's no wind. When there's a drought, you also can't produce hydropower. Battery storage is key to mitigating all these issues," Ang said.

"That is why we have prioritized putting up the country's first battery facilities and first and largest battery network to date. It is key in enabling the use of more renewable capacities in the grid, and a critical part of our phased transition and expansion to cleaner and renewable power," he added.

Ang emphasized that SMCGP's transition away from coal power towards cleaner Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) power and renewable energy, is being pursued responsibly, "without compromising our developing economy's growing need for reliable and affordable power, and while also continuing effort to bring basic electrification to the entire country."

For comments, please call or text 09569012811 or email enmanai@lastmohican2004@yahoo.com.



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Resetting SE Asia's climate agenda

WORLD VIEW

AZIZ DURRANI

Singapore—High inflation, rising interest rates, falling currencies, and volatile oil prices, on top of an economic slowdown and post-pandemic budget woes, may increase pressure on the Asean+3—the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, together with China, Japan, and South Korea—to scale back efforts to mitigate climate risk. While this policy shift may make fiscal sense, it is a mistake that could have grave repercussions for the region and, ultimately, lead to slower economic growth and greater financial instability.

If not addressed, the risks climate change poses to Asean+3 countries could have far-reaching implications for the region's agricultural production, water availability, energy security, transport and infrastructure, tourism industries, and coastal resources. Over the past two years, flooding, cyclones, droughts, rising sea levels, and landslides have become increasingly frequent, making Myanmar, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand among the world's 10 most climate-vulnerable countries. These countries suffered some of the highest fatalities and biggest economic losses from weather-related disasters between 1999 and 2018.

However, the transition to a low-carbon economy carries risks of its own. For starters, industries heavily reliant on fossil fuels are facing greater regulatory burdens. A large portion of the region's oil, gas, and coal reserves may end up being left in the ground and discounted or entirely written off. Shifts in energy policy are also likely to increase banks' credit risks. If Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam meet their commitments under the 2015 Paris agreement, for example, coal-fired power plants valued at \$60 billion will become stranded assets in 15 years, rather than 40.

The green transition would most likely also affect the profitability of coal mines elsewhere in the region, such as in Indone-

sia. And the European Union's efforts to shift away from palm oil biofuel and encourage the use of deforestation-free products may turn land banks in Malaysia and Indonesia into stranded assets. Despite these transition risks, doing nothing would ultimately be costlier for Asean economies.

To be sure, Asean countries have taken some steps to mitigate climate risks. Brunei has implemented coastal protection structures. Indonesia has promoted mangroves and climate-tolerant crop varieties. Laos has developed sustainable crop-management techniques. And Malaysia has pursued climate-adapted technology and organic farming.

Notwithstanding such efforts, more must be done to meet the Asean+3 countries' renewable energy goals. Several initiatives could support these: the Asean Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation, for example, aims to increase renewable energy to 23 percent of the region's energy supply by 2025, compared to 14 percent in 2017. And the 2021 forum on the carbon neutrality goals of China, Japan, and South Korea has outlined concrete ideas for achieving net-zero emissions through trilateral cooperation on innovation and technology.

Carbon pricing is essential to the green transition. Asean+3 countries have held discussions on balancing pricing schemes against the need to stimulate economic growth. In July 2021, China launched the operation of its national emissions trading system (ETS), designed to be an "important market-based instrument," to help China achieve its climate goals. One year on, though still dealing with data-quality issues, China's ETS is the world's largest in terms of covered emissions, and

prices are rising steadily. While there have been calls for a regionwide carbon tax, this idea seems unlikely in the short term, given differences in tax regimes. Nonetheless, a carbon tax will likely remain a key focus of discussions among the Asean+3 in the next few years.

Promoting sustainable finance will also be essential to a successful transition, as the financial sector could drive an economy-wide shift. In the past few years, many central banks and financial supervisors in Asia have implemented, or have begun to implement, such measures despite ongoing capacity and resource constraints.

In the short term, there is significant scope for Asean+3 central banks and financial regulators to incentivize the transition to a low-carbon economy, by directing firms and lenders to reduce carbon usage and focus on renewable energy and green technologies. Such measures would encourage a similar shift across the economy, leading companies to price climate risks into their products and services.

By promoting low-carbon policies and encouraging green finance, policymakers could spur new renewable energy sectors and stimulate economic growth. Moreover, reducing reliance on dollar-denominated fossil fuels would enable Asean+3 countries to shift government revenues from maintaining large foreign-exchange reserves toward domestic policies.

To minimize the damaging effects of climate change on their population and economies, Asean+3 policymakers must implement risk mitigation policies that help prevent regional spillovers, and encourage the emergence of new industries and technologies. Doing so would also boost energy security. Shutting down the sun and the wind is much harder than blowing up a gas pipeline. *Project Syndicate*

Aziz Durrani is a capacity development expert at the Singapore-based Asean+3 Macroeconomic Research Office.



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Project Noah — penny-wise and pound-foolish

WHILE many of us are safe and sound after Tropical Storm "Paeng," we are disturbed and upset that despite a National Risk Reduction Management Council, a weather bureau (Pagasa) that has supposedly upgraded its instruments for more accurate forecasting and local government agencies mandated for evacuation, there were still too many deaths, too many missing and wholesale destruction in certain hazardous areas that had no warning of what could befall them.

Yes, we live in a country prone to natural calamity — earthquakes, floods, landslides, volcanic eruptions, storm surges. We have been living with them and dying from them for centuries. Along the way, should we not have learned some lessons to mitigate the effects of these natural disasters?

Climate change is one of the culprits but so is deforestation, silted rivers and living in hazardous areas. Include here the detritus that modern life has inflicted on the environment which has



AMBIENT
VOICES

MA. ISABEL
ONGPIN

bit it back with climate change.

Yet there could have been a better response, one of which would have been Project Noah, a government initiative in 2012 after Typhoon "Sendong" devastated parts of Mindanao causing 1,200 deaths and 180 missing. Project Noah was a Department of Science and Technology program that was geared to help government, particularly local governments, warn communities of danger up to six hours in advance through a nationwide assessment of hazards that would be given to the public through them. Dr. Mahar Lagmay of the University of the Philippines, an expert in disaster mitigation, was Project Noah's executive director who assembled a competent staff

of young scientists to gather hazard-specific, area-focused and time-bound warnings of dangers about to happen so as to alert the people in harm's way to take the necessary defensive steps, whether evacuation, reinforcement of dwellings, medical alert, putting concerned government agencies at the ready and whatever else was deemed necessary to forestall death and destruction.

While Project Noah went to work and through field research, scientific use of instruments (putting real-time sensors in crucial areas, mobile phone apps for communication, a website with specific locations for public view of hazards), municipal risk assessments for the entire country, it only reached 60 percent of its flood maps and other hazard assessments because the program was defunded in 2017. Apparently whoever funded it (legislature?), gave it funds with the idea that by 2015 the work would be completed and everyone would have the

necessary knowledge and tools to meet natural calamities. This was over-optimistic in a country prone to natural disasters of which we are on top of the list, so an extension was requested but in 2017, it was denied and Project Noah was defunded. Not only was this decision a mistaken attempt to save money, it was also erroneous because work on natural disasters in a country like ours can never end. Lessons always unfold and have to be recorded for the future to know. There is always something new to learn so as not to repeat mistakes. Clearly the defunding of Project Noah was a mistake. It not only left the work incomplete, it disbanded an expert staff of scientists that went off in various directions. One wonders how the Balik Scientist programs that the government keeps announcing can attract the needed scientists if this is what happens when scientists commit to work.

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■ ONGPIN FROM A4

Project Noah — penny-wise and pound-foolish

The University of the Philippines came to save Project Noah by adopting it. It continues with Dr. Lagmay at the Resilience Institute. But with modest resources and government inattention, the pace of work and the quality of research will be too modest for the needs at hand.

Before Project Noah left, it transferred its technology to Pagasa, Phivolcs and Namria as well as the Mines and Geosciences Bureau for these agencies to continue using. Obviously, focus has scattered as none of these agencies were able to critically and successfully

help in mitigating Paeng's fury.

Time to regroup, to live and to learn, to be humble and to stop being penny-wise and pound-foolish. There is much consciousness-raising to be done, particularly with local government units towards prevention of death and destruction over relief and rehabilitation.

Meanwhile, the extent of deaths, missing persons and destruction is heart-rending. Relief and rehabilitation will help but the damage is done and for some the loss they bear will change their lives forever for worse.



SMC completes planting of 5M trees

San Miguel Corp. (SMC) said its subsidiary SMC Global Power Holdings Corp. (SMCGP) planted over 5 million new trees and mangroves from 2019 to date, under its multi-year, nationwide reforestation and carbon capture program.

The conglomerate said it is also

expanding the scope of the project to reforest areas around its new battery energy storage system (BESS) facilities.

Ramon Ang, SMC president and chief executive officer, said as of October, SMCGP's Project 747 initiative has yielded 5,010,116 upland and mangrove trees across

1,500 hectares of land.

The project's goal is to plant seven million trees on some 4,000 hectares of land in at least seven provinces. So far, SMCGP has planted in Albay, Bataan, Bulacan, Davao Occidental, Negros Occidental, Pangasinan, Quezon province and Zambales.



SMC Global Power plants over 5M trees, targets battery storage project sites for forestation

BOLSTERING its climate action initiatives, San Miguel Corporation (SMC) power subsidiary SMC Global Power Holdings Corp. (SMCGP) reported the successful planting and growing of over five million new trees and mangroves from 2019 to date, under its multi-year, nationwide forestation and carbon capture program. The company said it is also expanding the scope of the project to reforest areas around its new Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facilities—the first and largest such network in the Philippines and Southeast Asia.



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Envirotech forges plastic waste joint venture

Envirotech founder Winchester Lemen explained that several companies took the opportunity to strike a partnership following the Extended Producers Responsibility Act lapsed into law last July 2022

BY TELIANA CELINE PIATOS

EXCLUSIVE

Envirotech Waste Recycling Inc. has partnered with different multinational companies to improve the management of plastic waste.

In an interview during *Daily Tribune's Gising Na!* segment, Envirotech founder

Winchester Lemen explained that several companies took the opportunity to strike a partnership following the Extended Producers Responsibility Act lapsed into law last July 2022.

Republic Act 11898 requires large-scale companies to establish the EPR program for plastic waste reduction.

"That is like the actual tooth of the government in making sure that producers of fast-moving consumer goods or the packaging we use every day will not go to landfills," Lemen said.

Established in 2010, the Davao-based firm offers different kinds of plastic-made products such as chairs, tables, food canisters, plant pots and food canisters.

Recycling pays dividends

Lemen said Envirotech could recycle thousands of plastic wastes every month.

"Recycling 2,100 sando bags will produce one plastic desk that can be donated to a public school," Lemen said.

He added that 10,000 candy wrappers or 300 pieces of 500 ml pet bottles can make one recycled chair.

The plastic garbage is collected, shredded, cleaned, melted, and molded. After that, these are assembled, sanded, and painted.

According to its website, EWRI "has been geared towards active involvement in the pursuit to regain the world's ecological intelligence and balance."



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Undas garbage almost double this year

BY MICHAEL PINGOL
@tribunephil_kiel

Manila's Department of Public Service hauled a total of 196 metric tons of garbage equivalent to 78 truckloads in the city's two major public cemeteries Thursday, almost double that of the amount during the celebration of *Undas* in 2019.

The haul is more than 18 truckloads or equivalent to 71 metric tons than the 2019 figures before the Covid-19 pandemic struck.

At the Manila South Cemetery, 42 truckloads were collected, equivalent to 88 metric tons of garbage, according to the Manila Public Information Office.

From 28 October to 2 November, up to 36 truckloads or 108 metric tons of garbage were collected at the Manila North Cemetery, it added.

The city government said, one of the reasons for the increase in garbage is the recent typhoon "Paeng," which felled many trees over the weekend.



Exeter, Alternergy team up for Ifugao hydropower project

EXETER Portofino Holdings, the holding company of civil society leader Sara Soliven de Guzman, has partnered with Alternergy Holdings Corp. for its run-of-river hydropower project in Ifugao.

The Lamut-Asipulo hydropower project will harness the flow of water from the Cawayan River to convert to clean and environment-friendly renewable power. The project site is within the Ancestral Domains of the Kalanguya, Ayangan and Tawali Indigenous Cultural Communities.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the indigenous peoples have been signed and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) En Banc has issued the Certification Precondition.

With the entry of Exeter as co-partner, the Lamut-Asipulo hydropower project is in an advanced stage of development and is expected to issue Notice to Proceed to early construction works in the coming months.

The Lamut-Asipulo hydropower project forms part of Alternergy's goal of building 1,370 MW of renewable energy capacity in the next five years.

"Exeter and Alternergy share the same commitment to sustainabil-

ity and improvement of the local communities and cultural heritage. The Lamut-Asipulo Hydro Power Project is also an opportunity for us to continue and expand the work our family has started in Ifugao," said de Guzman, chairperson of Exeter.

Her family through Dr. Preciosa Soliven, who was UNESCO Secretary-General of the Philippine National Commission, actively promoted the preservation of Ifugao Heritage Sites under the UNESCO Program and supported educational improvement among children in Ifugao through their Operation Brotherhood Community Foundation.

"Our family has deep ties in Ifugao and we look forward to strengthening this together with Alternergy in harnessing renewable energy and helping uplift the lives of the Ifugaos," she added.

"We are happy to bring in Exeter as we create transformative partnerships in promoting clean energy and impacting the lives of the people. While the development of hydropower projects could be long-gestation, the benefits of clean and renewable power are long-term and significant," Eduardo Martinez Miranda, president of Lamut-Asipulo Mini Hydro Corp. said. *Lenie Lectura*



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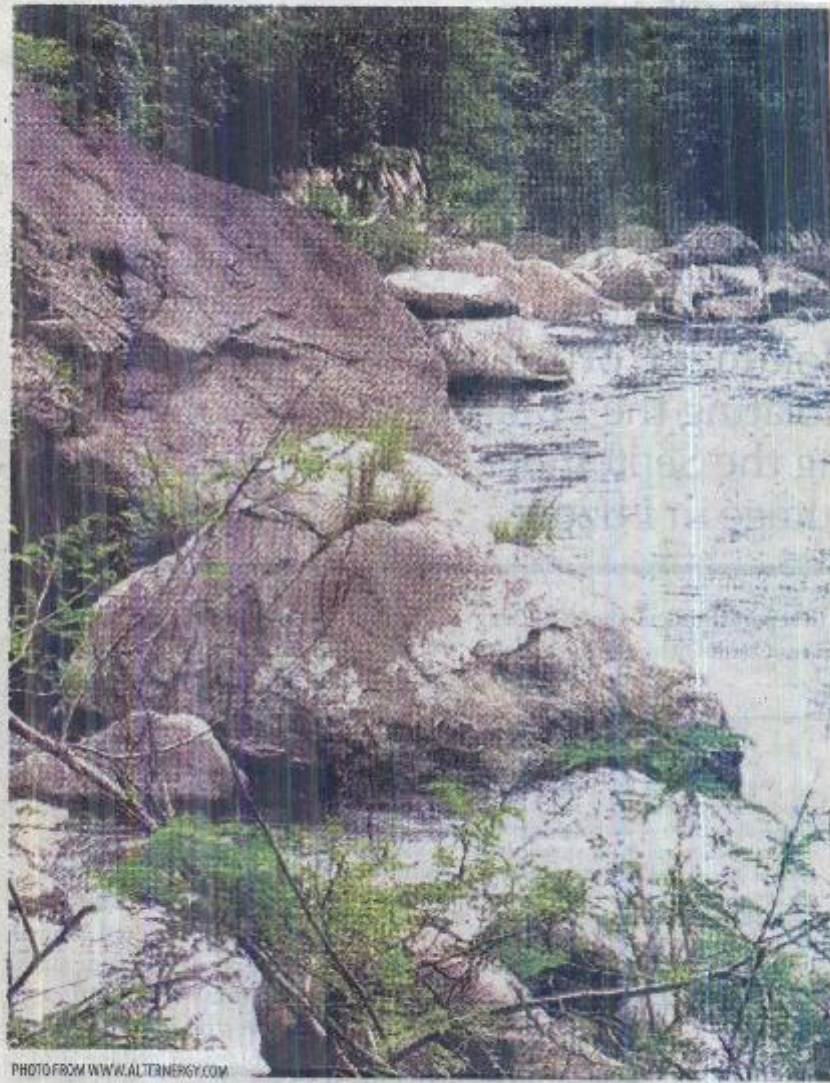


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BALITANG ABROAD

Total lunar eclipse masasaksihan sa Nov 8

MASASAKSIHAN ang total lunar eclipse sa Pilipinas sa Martes, Nobyembre 8 kung saan ay matatapan ng arino ng mundo ang liwanag ng buwan.

Avon sa Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), magsisimula ang eclipse ng alas-5:19 ng hapon, at alas-6:59 ng gabi naman maoobsorbahan ang 'greatest eclipse' o peak stage ng astronomical phenomenon.

Dagdag ng Pagasa, makikita pa ang kabuuan ng buwan hanggang

alas-7:42 ng gabi, makikita ang partial eclipse nito hanggang alas-8:45 ng gabi bago tuluyang matalapán ng arino ng mundo ang liwanag ng buwan pagsapit ng alas-9:56 ng gabi.

Samantala, kumpara sa solar eclipse, ligtas na paborin ang total lunar eclipse at hindi na kaila ngang gumamit ang mga observer ng anumang uri ng protective filters para sa mata. Masasaksihan din ang lunar eclipse sa Australia, bahagi ng northern at eastern Europe, North America at South Africa.