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Water level in dams further decrease

Pagasa issues El Niño alert

THE water level in five major dams in Luzon continues to drop, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said Tuesday as it issued a warning against El Niño.

The dams are Angat and Ipo in Bulacan, La Mesa in Quezon City, San Roque in Cordillera, and Caliraya in Laguna.

Pagasa said as of 6 a.m. Tuesday, Angat Dam's water level was 194.88 meters, 0.20 m lower than the 195.08 m level on Monday.

Angat's water level dropped by 17.12 m from its normal high water level (NHWL) of 212 m.

It is 8.66 m lower than the 186.22 m level required for supplying sufficient water.

The reservoir supplies about 90 percent of raw water requirements for Metro Manila through the facilities of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, and it irrigates about 28,000 hectares

►DamsA4

of farmland in the provinces of Bulacan and Pampanga.

The water level at Ipo Dam decreased to 98.88 m, 2.22 m lower than the 101.10 m NHWL.

Ipo Dam is part of the Angat-Ipo-La Mesa water system, which also supplies water to the National Capital Region (NCR or Metro Manila).

The water level at La Mesa Dam, another water supplier to Metro Manila, also declined.

It dropped to 77.02 m, 3.13 m lower than the normal water level of 80.15 m.

San Roque Dam's level dipped to 233.88 m, 46.12 lower than the normal 280 m, and it is now

4.64 m lower than the 238.52 m rule curve elevation or the level required to supply water and perform other functions.

Caliraya's level went down to 287.02 m, or 0.31 m lower than the 287.33 m level on Monday.

Ambuklao Dam and Binga Dam in Benguet, Pantabangan in Nueva Ecija, and Magat in Isabela reported increases in water level but still below the normal level.

Ambuklao Dam increased to 741.31 m, .31 m higher than the 741 m on Monday.

This current level is 10.69 m lower than the normal level of 752 m.

Binga Dam also went up by .46 m, reaching 567.89 m, but it is still 7.11 m lower than its normal level of 575 m.

The level in Magat Dam rose to 178.2 m, or 0.11 m higher than the 178.21 m level the previous day.

Magat Dam's normal water level is 193 m.

To address a looming water crisis in the country, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. signed an executive order (EO), on April 27, 2023, creating the Water Resources Management Office (WRMO) under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

"The WRMO, in coordination with all stakeholders, shall primarily be responsible for the integration and harmonization of all government efforts and regulatory activities to ensure availability and sustainable management of water resources in the whole country," the EO read.

The office was also created to address challenges that affect water management in the country, specifically with the increasing demand for water caused by population and economic growth, impacts of climate change and the pandemic, and lack of adequate infrastructure leading to uneven distribution of water resources, among others.

Also on Tuesday, Pagasa issued an El Niño alert based on its forecast of an 80 percent probability of the occurrence of the phenomenon from June to August this year.

"Recent conditions and model forecasts indicate that El Niño may emerge in the coming season (June-July-August) at 80 per-

cent probability and may persist until the first quarter of 2024," Pagasa Administrator Vicente Malano said in a statement.

Pagasa said that El Niño (warm phase of ENSO) is characterized by unusually warmer than average sea surface temperatures (SSTs) at the central and eastern equatorial Pacific (CEEP).

With the phenomenon, there would be below-normal rainfall conditions, which could have negative impacts (such as dry spells and droughts) in some areas of the country, Malano said.

"However, over the western part of the country, above-normal rainfall conditions during the southwest monsoon season ('habagat') may also be expected," the Pagasa official added.

Analiza Solis, Pagasa's Climate Monitoring and Prediction Section chief, told *The Manila Times* during an earlier interview that before the looming onset of dry spells and droughts caused by the phenomenon, the county would likely experience a rainy season.

"It is possible that the Philippines will likely experience heavy or extreme rainfall events before the onset of the phenomenon and that could be somewhere [between] May [and] July wherein enhanced habagat or southwest monsoon will also likely occur," Solis said.

Such extreme rainfall events could be similar to what happened during Typhoon "Ondoy" in 2009 when the country was already under El Niño, she added.

"But let's just hope that it would not be like that," Solis said in an apparent reference to the volume of rainfall brought by Ondoy that largely affected most areas, especially in Luzon.



■ DAMS FROM A1

Water level in dams drop

On the possible extreme rainfall events, Solis added, Western Luzon or the entire Luzon might be affected as it falls under Pagsasa's type 1 climate, which is based on monthly average rainfall.

Solis clarified that even during El Niño, storms or super typhoons like Ondoy would also occur.

"We say El Niño because of the probability of having dry spells that might lead to drought," she said.

**JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL
AND ARLIE O. CALALO**



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Golf courses and water scarcity

The weather bureau is saying El Niño will start within two or three months. But for many of us, it seems the long and hot season is here already. People are learning about heat index and how our skins are feeling what seems like temperature way above fever level.

They also warned that the climate event, El Niño, could bring the water in the dams to critical levels, particularly in the last quarter of this year until the first half of 2024. As early as now, we were warned, the water levels of the dams are already dropping. The water level of Angat Dam has started to drop and Metro Manila is about 98 percent

DEMAND AND SUPPLY



BOO CHANCO

dependent on Angat for water supply. We should start preparing for what could be a catastrophic event for our mostly poor population. Even in the best of times, our poor are deprived of a good supply of running water. The unfairness inherent in our society means they will lose even the occasional drips of water they painstakingly collect to drink, cook, bathe, and otherwise live their difficult lives.

MWSS deputy administrator Jose Dorado Jr. has urged Metro Manila mayors to pass ordinances regulating the use of water by golf courses, car wash, and swimming pools to address the dwindling water level in Angat Dam. He said there are at least 10 golf courses operating in Metro Manila, including four serviced by Maynilad Water Services Inc. The rest are served by Manila Water.

It is difficult to get the 17 mayors of Metro Manila to agree to do something that needs to be done. A national government agency like the MWSS must take the initiative to carry out its responsibility to avert a crisis.

MWSS must have enough powers to make everyone conserve water while we still have water to conserve. MWSS should be able to physically curtail the amount of water being supplied to the golf courses, as well as by increasing the rate to be charged for such non critical use of water.

The MWSS official is on the right track. I was in California a few years ago when they had a bad dry spell. Homeowners could be penalized for watering their lawns or washing their cars. Golf courses had their water supply curtailed as well.

Social justice demands that before our government rations water supply for all Metro Manilans, it should have completely cut off water supply to golf courses for at least a month before. In a water crisis, non-critical users of water should not get a single drop from our scarce supply.

Actually, the golf courses should have long ago planned to deal with this. It is simply stupid and wasteful and, and in a crisis, criminal as well, to water their greens with chlorine-treated drinkable water. They should have made arrangements to take in "gray water" or water from the sanitary treatment plants or STPs of condos, buildings, and even factories around them, or even from the Pasig River for watering all that grass.

Tong Padilla of Rockwell Land was telling me that in all Rockwell developments, they use "gray water" for watering the plants and washing cars even now. I am not sure if other property developers are doing the same thing. They may have excess "gray water" to sell to Manila Golf and the other golf courses. I understand that Wack Wack is using their lagoon for watering their greens and that's "gray water" from their STP.

Manila Golf, where a share costs in the vicinity of P100 million each, should set the example in responsible golf course management. The Manila Polo Club will also have the same problem keeping their polo grounds green. The barangays at Forbes, Dasmariñas, and others where swimming pools are common should also have rules on water use.

The MWSS Board should have the power to set the water rates high enough for use in volumes beyond what is necessary for household purposes. Golf courses and rich households with swimming pools should be given a good reason to minimize their water use through higher water bills.

Or maybe, the newly created Water Resources Management Office under DENR should "avert a water crisis" by harnessing all the powers of government to make sure what little available water we now have is equitably distributed to primarily support every human being's need to have water for basic daily needs.

The United Nations reports it will require 2.5 billion gallons of water each day to sustain the world's 4.7 billion people. Today, the cumulative amount of water used to irrigate the world's golf courses is just that: 2.5 billion gallons every day. Audubon International estimates that the average American course uses 312,000 gallons per day. In a place like Palm Springs, each golf course each day consumes as much water as an American family of four uses in four years.

It isn't as if the managers of our golf courses didn't know this problem was coming. Golf Digest devoted a candid article to the subject, in which the magazine states very frankly: "Golf will face a crisis over water."

In some areas in the US, the United States Golf Association has made it mandatory for as many as 1,000 courses to use recycled or reclaimed water. New grasses are being developed that require less moisture to thrive. Courses are being returned more to their natural state, so grass will often have to lose some of its sheen. As the Golf Digest puts it, "at the end of the day, for golf to go green and accommodate itself to the real world, it's simply going to have to be much more brown."

It can be done by relying more and more on technological advances like soil moisture meters, which measure moisture in the soil at various spots on the golf course. Soil wetting agents, which draw water from the surface down to the roots of grass plants, also help courses cut back on water use.

Water is life and the government must guarantee our right to have the water we need to live. Wasteful and non-critical use of water must be stopped.

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Use water responsibly

“We have an annual ‘ritual’ regarding our water supply situation,” a colleague in the local government sector told me recently. I asked him what he meant, and we found his explanation both sad and funny. He said:

During the wet season, we worry about our dams overflowing due to heavy rains and flooding the surrounding towns and cities.

During the dry season, we worry about the low water levels in our dams as we nervously listen to announcements regarding possible water rationing.

Yes, we are nervous again as the “vigil” over the dwindling water level at our dams began a few weeks ago as we start this year’s “ritual.” Stoking the embers of our collective anxiety was the pronouncement of a senior official of a water agency urging the heads of Metro Manila’s local governments to pass ordinances regulating the use of water. The official called attention in particular to the car washing operations and golf courses based in the National Capital Region.

We do not know if the call to regulate the use of water by these entities will be heeded by our colleagues in Metro Manila. What we do know is that all sectors must cooperate in the bid to conserve water, whether or not the annual “ritual” of dams-drying-up-then-overflowing would happen this year.

The fact is we must all learn to use water responsibly.

The call made by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to LGUs last Monday further underscored the need for responsible use of water. We were told to prepare for the onslaught of “El Niño.” Several portions of the metropolis had already felt this in advance as they had been experiencing water service interruptions for hours in the past few months.

This looming crisis will not be unique to the National Capital Region and parts of Luzon. The expected “El Niño” is set to impact Mindanao as

well, based on the prognosis aired by PAGASA.

This perennial problem should lead us all to understand and accept one important fact: the world’s supply of fresh water is not infinite.

Cynics, expectedly, would say that the Earth has an inexhaustible supply of hydrogen and oxygen. The planet will continue to produce water providing us unlimited supply.

That is not what researchers say. The fact is Earth does not have unlimited water and the total amount of water on the planet stays fairly constant, a professor of earth and atmospheric sciences at the University of Mexico told US media.

The professor underscored: “Water scarcity occurs, not because there

This perennial problem should lead us all to understand and accept one important fact: the world’s supply of fresh water is not infinite.

is less total water, but because water becomes less available in specific places due to overuse, drought or pollution.”

Speaking of “overuse,” the public must know that residences, commercial establishments, and businesses do not have a monopoly on the use of the freshwater stored in the dam system in Luzon.

That water is shared with agricultural lands where our food is produced. We also share that supply of precious fresh water with the hydropower generation facilities which produce electricity both for households and industries. When the freshwater supply is low, national government agencies have to make the tough decision of reallocating what’s available. One sector will then

have to give up part of its allocation in favor of another.

We cannot keep drawing from deep wells and shallow wells when the supply of fresh water from dams becomes scarce. Tapping groundwater is not sustainable. A study by the University of the Philippines says “groundwater in the Philippines may be depleted by 2050.”

The continuous exploitation of groundwater may also result in the drying up of lakes, rivers, and streams, a United States government geological study warned. The water table is lowered. It becomes more difficult and more expensive to pump out water. The ecological consequences of this are unimaginable.

This is why the national government is in a hurry to create additional dams where fresh water can be stored during the rainy season. To do so, it has to deal with issues of costs, technology, environmental safety, and social consent. It will take time before new dams are constructed.

Meanwhile, we will all have to live with the annual “ritual” of worrying about lower dam levels in summer and overflowing dams during the rainy season.

Local governments will do their share to conserve water and address the potential shortage, based on the directive of the DILG.

However, the general public will have to contribute its share. We will all have to use water responsibly.

We will have to reject the myth that its supply is unlimited and eternal. That would be the most irresponsible thing we can do in this situation.

Let’s use water as if every drop counts.

(For feedback, please email it to antipolocitygov@gmail.com or send it to Block 6 Lot 10 Sta. Barbara 1 cor. Bradley St., Mission Hills Subd., Brgy. San Roque, Antipolo City, Rizal.)



**THE VIEW
FROM RIZAL**
DR. JUN YNARES



Pagasa issues El Niño alert

By BELLA CARIASO

State weather forecasters yesterday issued an El Niño alert as the country faces the threat of the dry spell.

Vicente Malano, administrator of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), said recent conditions and model forecasts indicate an 80 percent probability that El Niño will start in June, July and August and may persist until the first quarter of 2024.

"With this development, the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) alert and warning system is now raised to El Niño alert," Malano said.

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Pagasa From Page 1

El Niño is a weather condition characterized by unusually warmer than average sea surface temperatures at the central and eastern equatorial Pacific.

"When conditions are favorable for the development of El Niño within the next two months at a probability of 70 percent or more, an El Niño alert is issued. El Niño increases the likelihood of below-normal rainfall conditions, which could bring negative impacts such as dry spells and droughts in some areas of the country," Malano said.

"However, over the western part of the country, above-normal rainfall conditions during the southwest monsoon season may also be expected."

He said all concerned government agencies as well as the public are encouraged to monitor and take precautionary measures against the impacts of the dry spell.

Analisa Solis, chief of the PAGASA Climate Monitoring and Predictions Section, warned that Mindanao would be severely affected by El Niño with at least 35 percent reduction in the amount of rainfall due to the lack or absence of typhoons.

The Visayas follows will see a 21 percent decrease in rainfall, and Luzon a 12 percent decrease.

"This means there will be a major drop in the amount of rainwater in Mindanao. They will be more affected as currently we are also experiencing a short dry season, so that's the impact during the El Niño," Solis added.

Citing projections, Solis said the effects of El Niño would start to be felt in the Visayas and Mindanao during the third and fourth quarters of the year.

"Since we still expect the habagat or southwest monsoon season, for now Luzon will not yet feel the effects of El Niño," Solis noted.

She said that aside from Mindanao, areas in the Visayas that are expected to experience the dry spell and drought are Bohol and Cebu.

Based on the PAGASA forecast, Luzon will still experience near to above normal rainfall.

Solis said El Niño would increase the temperatures in the country.

"That is the effect of the coming El Niño. We are also in the dry season.

The increasing temperature is part of the pre-development of El Niño and the prevailing easterlies," she said.



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PAGASA raises El Niño alert

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) has raised the El Niño warning to "alert" after forecasts showed 80 percent probability that the phenomenon may develop in the coming months and may persist until the first quarter of next year.

"Recent conditions and model forecasts indicate that El Niño

may emerge in the coming season, June-July-August, at 80 percent probability and may persist until the first quarter of 2024," PAGASA said in an advisory released on Tuesday, May 2. "With this development, the PAGASA El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) Alert and Warning System is now raised to El Niño alert," it added.

The El Niño watch has been in effect since March 23, before PAGASA changed ▶ 7

PAGASA raises El Niño alert ◀

the monitoring status to El Niño alert on Tuesday.

"When conditions are favorable for the development of El Niño within the next two months at a probability of 70 percent or more, an El Niño alert is issued," PAGASA explained.

The next and final stage of the ENSO Alert System is activated when the climate phenomenon reaches

"full-blown" El Niño status.

The El Niño or warm phase is characterized by unusually warmer-than-average sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific.

According to PAGASA, El Niño raises the likelihood of below-average rainfall conditions, which might have adverse impact, such as drought and dry spells

in several parts of the country.

However, PAGASA pointed out the probability of above-average rainfall conditions over the western portion of the country during the southwest monsoon, also known as "habagat" season.

"All concerned government agencies and the general public are encouraged to keep on monitoring and take precautionary measures against the impending impacts of El Niño," it said.



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Brace for severe dry spell—Pagasa

The weather bureau has raised an El Niño alert, predicting hot and dry conditions in the next three months until early 2024, as temperatures continue to rise in many parts of the country. Based on recent conditions and model forecasts, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said El Niño might “emerge” during the rainy season between June and August. —STORY BY DEMPSEY REYES

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EL NIÑO ALERT RAISED

PAGASA: SEVERE DRY SPELL TO START IN NEXT 3 MONTHS

By Dempsey Reyes
@dempseyreyesINQ

Expect hot and dry conditions in the next three months until the early part of 2024, as the weather bureau on Tuesday raised an El Niño alert amid rising temperatures experienced in several parts of the country.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said that based on recent conditions and model forecasts, the El Niño phenomenon might “emerge” in the rainy season between June and August.

According to a statement by Pagasa administrator Vicente Malano, there was now 80 percent probability of a severe dry season that “may persist until the first quarter” of next year.

“With this development, the Pagasa El Niño Southern Oscillation (Enso) alert and warning system is now raised to El Niño Alert,” the state weather bureau said.

El Niño Alert, an upgrade from El Niño Watch, is issued when conditions are favorable for the development of El Niño within the next two months at a probability of 70 percent or higher.

Records by Pagasa showed that the country’s heat index—an indicator of discomfort that an average person experiences due to temperature and humidity—will remain around 40 degrees Celsius in the next several weeks.

Highest heat index

The highest heat index recorded by the weather bureau was at 49 C on April 16 in Guiuan, Eastern Samar.

The weather bureau also explained that El Niño, the “warm phase” of Enso, is characterized by unusually warmer than average sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean.

torial Pacific Ocean.

The likelihood of below-normal rainfall conditions is also increased by El Niño and could lead to negative impacts such as dry spells and droughts in some parts of the country, Pagasa said.

In the western part of the country, on the other hand, above-normal rainfall conditions can still be expected during the southwest monsoon season, locally known as “habagat,” it added.

“All concerned government agencies and the general public are encouraged to keep on monitoring and take precautionary measures against the impending impacts of El Niño,” Pagasa said.

In April, President Marcos ordered the creation of a government team focused on mitigating the impact of the looming El Niño phenomenon.

“He wanted us to ensure a whole-of-government approach through the mechanisms of the NDRRMC (National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council). He specifically instructed us to form an El Niño team,” Undersecretary Ariel Nepomuceno of the Office of Civil Defense said.

‘Better to be prepared’

“His instruction was for us to make sure that we would have long-term processes that are protocol-based and scientific. Of course, it’s better for us to be prepared,” he added.

El Niño is known to upset normal weather patterns, bringing heavy rainfall in some countries and dry spells and drought in others, including the Philippines.

First observed in the 1600s, it usually occurred toward the Christmas season, hence the name El Niño referring to the child Jesus. INQ



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Offshore miners optimistic on PBBM's rare minerals talk with US President

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA [@jonlmayuga](#)

A GROUP of offshore miners on Monday expressed high hopes and lauded the statement of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. about his plan to discuss, among other issues, the prospects of critical minerals with US President Joseph Biden during his five-day working visit to the United States.

These minerals can impact positively the country's economy as well as the worldwide battle against climate emergency, the group said in a statement.

The Philippines is ranked fourth on the global list of the most vulnerable countries to the deadly effects of climate change.

The President, during his departure speech in Pasay City, was quoted as saying, "My visit to the United States more especially my meeting with President Joe Biden is essential to advancing our national interest... during this visit... I intend to convey to President Biden and his senior Cabinet officials... that the President is determined to forge an even stronger relationship with the United States.... in a wide range of areas... one of my priorities for this visit is to push for greater economic engagement, particularly through trade and investments... between the United States and the Philippines... I intend to speak and find opportunities in the semiconductor industry, critical minerals, renewable and clean energy... and facilitate sustainability efforts to address Climate Change."

Dr. Michael Raymond A. Aragon, chairman of Offshore Mining Chamber of the Philippines Inc. (OMCPI) applauded the speech as "a timely and welcome development."

"President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. will be the first Chief Executive of the Philippines to ever initiate talks that will potentially open the full exploration and utilization of these novel critical minerals of our generation's digital and electronic era. These mineral resources are found and never been touched just under the deep waters of Philippines," he said.

Aragon underscored the demand for rare minerals if we all intend to stop using dirty fuels soon in order to defeat climate change.

"The Philippines is so blessed with abundant deposits of these critical minerals that will help in our country's full economic recovery and at the same time also support the clean and green energy transition of the world from dirty fossil

fuel-based energy sources. Surely this will allow mankind to effectively address the global issue of Climate Change that threatens humanity with extinction," Aragon said.

"Critical minerals such as manganese, nickel, copper, palladium, iron, silver, gold platinum, and other rare earth minerals to name a few are abundant deep in our country's territorial waters. Mining these critical mineral resources offshore is a lot cleaner than mining them on land. The only problem with why we cannot immediately tap and benefit from all these potentially new blue economy mineral resources is that we don't have the expensive technology and the big money to cleanly mine all of it. This is where our country needs foreign partners like the United States and Japan," the OMCPI chairman added.

"Take the case of palladium. This critical mineral found abundant in the Philippine seas is being used worldwide in pollution control devices [as catalytic converters] of all petroleum-based motor vehicles in the planet. A kilogram of high-grade Palladium would cost more than P2.5 million in the world market today. No less than the United States Geological Survey [USGS] and the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration [NASA] positively confirmed the vast abundance of palladium deposits in the Visayan and Sibuyan seas, specifically off the coasts of Negros, Panay, Romblon, and Mindoro, in the Philippines."

These untouched palladium deposits in our deep seas have been estimated to be two percent higher in total volume compared to the palladium deposits in Russia, said Aragon.



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He noted that it is in Russia where the biggest palladium deposit in the world is currently being mined.

The USGS and NASA estimated the palladium deposit in our country's deep water to be in a total volume of 3.8 million metric tons with an approximate peso value of not less than P400 trillion conservatively based on the current world market price.

"The Philippine national debt as of the end of 2022 is only P13.7 trillion pesos. This is just the palladium that I am talking about now. I am not even mentioning other rare earth elements that also fall under the category of critical minerals that our beloved President mentioned in his departure speech the other day," Aragon said.



TITLE:

From Magellan to Hinatuan: How mining keeps Eastern Samar deeply wounded

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First of 2 parts

FIVE hundred years ago, on March 16, 1521, Ferdinand Magellan landed on the shores of Homonhon Island in what is now part of the municipality of Guiuan, Eastern Samar, Philippines, after more than a year of rough sailing on the high seas. Known for his exploits as a seafarer and a risk-taker of gigantic proportions, he appeared to be driven more by monetary rewards than by some kind of patriotic anchor. He led an expedition for the King of Spain — his benefactor — instead of his native country, Portugal. Spain and Portugal at the time were locked in a battle for supremacy as imperialist powers.

Magellan's history-altering voyage was tough. Two of the five vessels that comprised his fleet did not make it; he himself would eventually perish at the hands of Lapulapu in the nearby island of Cebu.

But his feat was a giant leap for mankind. It marked the first time a human being had successfully sailed across both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans — traversing more than half the globe. It led to the discovery by Europeans of natural resources that abound in the far east. Driven largely by the promise of greater accumulation of wealth, colonization of the country by Spain followed (1565 to 1898), which also gave rise to a social order in which money and political power fed on each other, and those who possessed either one or both earned the birthright to pillage the country's natural wealth.

The colonizing power leveraged the moral suasion of the Catholic Church and took up her mission to evangelize peoples everywhere as its own. The church had a bountiful harvest in the Philippines; not only did up to 90 percent of the local population embrace Christianity, but the transformation also established norms where Church and State jointly administered public affairs.

When, after close to 400 years, Spain ceded its control of the Philippines to the United States, Eastern Samar again figured prominently in the grand mix of schemes carried out by the new colonizers. In 1901, remnants of armed opposition to American control all but dissipated, including Emilio Aguinaldo who declared the country's independence from Spain on June 12, 1898, except for pockets of rebellion that the stubborn guerrillas in Samar intermittently mounted. American forces went on to wage a "pacification drive" and established a battalion in Barrio Balangiga which, like Guiuan, is now part of the province of Eastern Samar. Irritants occasioned by foreign occupation soon provoked the people of Balangiga to resent the way the Americans imposed their will and abused the accommodating nature of the natives.

At daybreak on September 28 of that year, exploiting the element of surprise, the oppressed attacked the oppressors, resulting in the death of 48 out of 74 Americans. Written on



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the footnotes of mainstream history books as the "Balangiga Massacre," this incident has been described as the "worst single defeat of the US military during the Philippine-American war." The American forces retaliated by setting Balangiga and its surrounding settlements ablaze and shooting to death everyone on sight. The reported number of casualties varies, but the common summary is that thousands died from the reprisal — including women and children that were too young to be involved in armed combat.

During the Japanese occupation (1942-1945), the Americans lost their naval base in Olongapo and an airfield in Clark, Pampanga. When the Americans, led by Douglas "I shall return" MacArthur, returned in 1944 to liberate the country from the Japanese, they established a naval base and an airfield in Guiuan, complete with a 3,000-bed hospital, a water system in Salcedo (north of Guiuan), a gas-refilling station in Lawaan (west northwest of Guiuan), a receiving station in Tubabao Island, a ship repair base on Manicani Island, Guiuan, a supply depot in Calicoan Island, also in Guiuan, and a sawmill in Balangiga.

The Guiuan airport served as the US Air Force launch pad for aerial attacks on Japanese ground forces in Luzon and other parts of the country. Although largely unmaintained, this facility remains functional to this day; it became handy during the Super Typhoon "Yolanda" rescue, relief and early recovery operations. (Guiuan was ground zero of Yolanda's first landfall.)

Fast forward to current issues and events, media outlets early last month reported that "a Chinese vessel transporting 55,000 metric tons of nickel ore to China ran aground off the coast of Guiuan." Going over the full text of the report, I noticed that it made no mention whatsoever about the mining operations in Homonhon, e.g., "The Philippine Coast Guard said the ship was not damaged ... the Marine Environmental Protection Unit conducted a surface assessment and did not detect any traces of oil spill ... The DENR's Environmental Management Bureau will also evaluate the corals in the vicinity of the grounding to assess any damage to marine life etc."

But something toward the end of a CNN report intrigued me: "Last January, the PCG rescued Chinese crewmen near Guiuan after the hull of their fishing vessel, KAI DA 899, was damaged. The crewmen turned out to be suspects in China."

At an estimated price of \$72.25 per metric ton of nickel ore, the treasure that got stuck in Guiuan is easily worth around P220 million, an amount that

almost matches the annual budget of a middle-class municipality like Guiuan. But it need not only be about nickel; having that much volume of soil being mined and transported elsewhere have invaluable use for countries like China that has been building artificial islands inside parts of a territory that is being contested by other countries.

On April 11, 2022, Bishop Crispin Varquez of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Borongan issued a statement expressing alarm over the continued mining operations in Homonhon and the neighboring island of Manicani. Four mining companies are at present operating in Homonhon — Techiron Resources Inc., Emir Mineral Resources Corp., King Resources Mining Corp. and Global Min-met Resources Inc. — two of which, Techiron and Emir, were suspended in 2016 by the late Environment Secretary Gina Lopez for violating their mining agreements.

In Manicani, the Hinatuan Mining Corp. (HMC) extracted soil and nickel ore despite being inside a protected area (in 1994, then President Fidel V. Ramos declared the coastal areas of Guiuan, including Manicani, as a marine reserve). In 2002, the bishop of Borongan filed a complaint against HMC, prompting the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to order the suspension of its operations. Its mining agreement was eventually canceled in 2004 following an investigation that found the company to have violated its Environment Compliance Certificate (ECC). Reports say that "the mining operations were found to have polluted Manicani's seawater... residents also claimed that HMC continued to ship out part of its stockpile of 900,000 WMT even during its suspension."

Hinatuan's license to operate expired in 2017, but the DENR approved its extension in 2022 partly on the strength of endorsements by the municipal government of Guiuan and the province of Eastern Samar.

Hinatuan had fueled contentious conflicts among local stakeholders, often dividing families and groups into two warring factions — one being in favor of mining, and the other against it. Anti-mining protests could spark violent confrontations among protesters and peacekeeping authorities. Casualties have been reported not only in Manicani but also in Salcedo, among other towns that host mining operations. In 1996, the forests of Homonhon were razed to the ground by what locals believed as a premeditated arson by mining companies.

In 2013, the Geography and Geology Journal reported that in Manicani, "nickel mining has reduced the amount of land available to farmers and siltation into the ocean has adversely impacted fishing. Before mining came, agriculture and aquaculture could sustain the livelihood of the people of Manicani, but now they have been made poorer."



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US sending 'first-of-its-kind' trade mission to Phl

WASHINGTON – US President Joe Biden is sending a “first of its kind” trade and investment mission to the Philippines to boost the investments of American firms in the country’s innovation

economy and its clean energy and food security initiatives.

“We’re going to announce today that I’m sending a first-of-its-kind presidential trade and investment mission to

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US sending From Page 1

the Philippines," Biden told President Marcos during their bilateral meeting at the White House Oval Office yesterday.

A fact sheet released by the White House after the meeting indicated the sending of a trade and investment mission to the Philippines is among the new arrangements and initiatives that aim to "expand on the historic momentum" in the relations between Manila and Washington.

"The Presidential Trade and Investment Mission will feature the highest caliber of US business leaders," it added.

The arrangements and initiatives were placed under different categories, namely, economic cooperation, where the sending of the trade and investment mission belongs; US-Philippines alliance, education and people-to-people ties, advancing respect for human rights, collaboration on clean energy and environmental protection and supporting resilient and healthy communities.

"President Biden intends to dispatch a Presidential Trade and Investment Mission to the Philippines on his behalf – the first mission of its kind – to enhance US companies' investment in the Philippines' innovation economy, its clean energy transition and critical minerals sector, and the food security of its people," the White House said.

Another initiative under economic cooperation is the bringing of the Indo-Pacific Business Forum to the Philippines.

The White House said the US and the Philippines would co-host the 6th annual Indo-Pacific Business Forum in Manila, pending congressional notification.

Sponsored by the US Trade and Development Agency, the event has been described as "the US's marquee annual commercial event in the region" that convenes the highest level of public and private sector leaders to review policy developments, announce new investments and identify new commercial partnerships.

It is expected to take place in spring of 2024.

"The forum will strengthen the Philippines' position as a key hub for regional supply chains and high-quality investment," the White House said.

The US also aims to establish a brick-and-mortar Open RAN Interoperability Lab in Manila, pending

congressional notification. The White House said the lab would provide hands-on training to current and aspiring 5G professionals and an opportunity for vendors and operators deploying Open RAN to teach and educate local engineers how to design, build and operate these open, secure and interoperable networks.

Infrastructure

Another initiative under economic cooperation is investing in sustainable, high-quality infrastructure, including a plan by the US Agency for International Development to launch a new partnership to scale up infrastructure development in the Philippines and support the building of high-quality railways, ports and transport systems.

The US Trade and Development Agency is also expected to launch throughout the year sustainable infrastructure activities that seek to leverage over \$3 billion in public and private financing to strengthen the Philippines' critical mineral supply chains, advance smart grid technologies and clean energy solutions, promote secure 5G deployment, strengthen airport security and maritime safety and support health care infrastructure across the Philippines.

The Philippines and the US also aim to expand their air connectivity and modernize their bilateral aviation relationship.

Aeronautical authorities from the two countries will formalize a technical aviation dialogue at the upcoming Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Transportation Ministerial Meeting in Detroit to enhance policy and regulatory alignment to modernize their air transportation agreement.

Manila and Washington also seek to enhance bilateral cooperation on space situational awareness and the use of space for maritime domain awareness, including through the first-ever US-Philippines Civil Space Dialogue, the White House said.

"The countries will collaborate on the use of space-based technology in the areas of disaster management and emergency response, health care, mapping of resources and accessibility, pollution monitoring, deforestation, land use and infrastructure planning and maritime awareness," it added.

Marcos and Biden also welcomed the strengthening of bilateral cooperation on the Landsat program, includ-

ing the possibility of the Philippines downloading imagery directly from Landsat satellites to its ground stations.

Climate change

In a joint statement, Marcos and Biden vowed to undertake urgent action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, noting that the Philippines is vulnerable to the effects of climate change, which "poses an existential threat to the world."

"They resolve to expand collaboration on renewable energy production to accelerate the clean energy transition while bringing down energy costs and expanding energy access for families," the statement read.

The two countries also intend to pursue an "ambitious" program of cooperation on wind, solar and geothermal energy, while enhancing cooperation on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the waste, road and shipping sectors.

Marcos and Biden also agreed to expand cooperation on environmental protection, including enhanced domain awareness, marine conservation and protecting coastal areas from environmental degradation. They also pledged to promote increased cooperation and knowledge sharing through the Science and Technology Agreement.

The two leaders also emphasized the importance of strong democratic institutions, rule of law and respect for human rights, including freedom of expression, press and association and countering any form of violence in society.

They also welcomed the establishment of a bilateral labor working group as part of the US-Philippines Trade and Investment Framework Agreement and recognized the people-to-people ties between their countries as "an indispensable pillar" of their partnership.

The two leaders cited the service and sacrifice of Filipinos in World War II, and the contributions of Filipino Americans frontliners to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Looking to the future, President Biden and President Marcos express the utmost confidence that the special ties between their nations and their people will only grow stronger with time, as the United States and the Philippines continue to realize their shared vision of partnership, peace and prosperity," the joint statement read. – Alexis Romero, Delon Porcalla



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The rising ocean temperature

THE *Guardian* reported last week that “for the best part of two months now, something very strange has been happening in the oceans. Something very worrying.”

Sea temperatures are rising, which is not really news in this

age of global warming, but they are rising in a manner that has been described as “unprecedented” by scientists who are said to be figuratively “scratching their heads” over the phenomenon.

Fiona Harvey, the environment editor of *The Guardian*, said that normally, global ocean temperatures hit the highest point in March and start to decline by early April. But this year, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration noted that temperatures reached record highs in late March and stayed there. “They have not fallen below 21 C for at least 45 consecutive days,” Harvey said.

The “anomaly” cannot be attributed to El Niño, as that climate pattern is just beginning to build up in the Pacific. BBC reports that scientists are worried that, “combined with other weather events, the world’s temperature could reach a concerning new level by the end of next year,” which can kill off marine life and lead to more extreme weather conditions.

The oceans play an immense role in the climate system. They have absorbed about 90 percent of the heat generated by rising emissions, causing ocean acidification.

Abi Perrin, a postdoctoral researcher into micro-



**FROM THE DESK
OF THE IMO
AMBASSADOR
CARLOS C. SALINAS**

algae at the University of York, has expressed a sense of dread over this development. It’s bad enough that the ocean is warming, which is likely to lead to the death of some of our precious ecosystems and species. “But these extremes imply that things are changing faster than was predicted,” Perrin said.

The repercussions of this unprecedented rise in sea temperature may not be immediately felt, but they will surely have an impact — not only on life in the ocean but on life everywhere on Earth as well.

Seas cover around 70 percent of the world’s surface, providing raw materials, energy, food, employment, and the means to transport more than 80 percent of global trade by volume. The shipping industry is a key user of the oceans and thus plays a crucial role in helping keep the oceans safe and secure.

The International Maritime Organization, a specialized agency of the United Nations that oversees the maritime industry, has been developing and adopting measures to improve the safety and security of international shipping.

In 2020, IMO put in place a regulation to reduce the sulfur content of fuel burned by ships. This measure has rapidly and effectively reduced the amount of aerosol particles that pollute the air. On World Oceans Day on June 8, 2022, IMO reaffirmed its commitment to help protect the ocean through several projects around the world and help attain the United Nations Sus-

tainable Development Goal (SDG) 14: “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.”

IMO’s work is also linked to SDG 13 on climate action since the oceans are impacted by increasing carbon dioxide (CO2) and other greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from human activities.

More global partnership projects executed by IMO address a range of ocean issues, including action on marine litter, reduction of GHG from shipping to address climate change as well as projects targeting the spread of potentially invasive aquatic species.

IMO believes that coordination and collaboration are key in all ocean matters. It is its mission, after all, to promote safe, secure, environmentally sound, efficient and sustainable shipping through cooperation.

There is a lesson to be learned from “The Legend of the Candle” by Purnell Bailey:

“One evening a man took a small candle from a box and began to climb a long winding stairway.

“Where are we going, asked the candle. ‘We’re going up higher than the house to show ships the way to the harbor.’

“But no ship in the harbor could ever see my light,’ said the candle. ‘It is so very small.’

“If your light is small,’ the man said, ‘just keep burning brightly and leave the rest to me.’

“When they reached the top of the long stairs, they came to a large lamp. The man took the little candle and lit the lamp. Soon the great polished reflectors behind the lamp sent beams of light out across miles of sea.”

We are God’s taper! Our job is to keep on shining, and our effectiveness is in His hands. And, may I add, in the collective strength of our hands, working together toward the healing of the sea and the planet.



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THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
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MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

On the ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS) REPORT of the proposed **ONE DELTA TERRACES RESIDENTIAL CONDOMINIUM** project, a residential building of **DMC ESTATE DEVELOPMENT VENTURES, INC.** located Quezon Avenue cor. West Avenue, Brgy. West Triangle, Quezon City.

Notice is hereby given to all parties who wish to give their opinion regarding the implementation of the proposed One Delta Terraces Residential Condominium project to attend the PUBLIC HEARING on:

Date	Time	Venue
MAY 09, 2023	09:00 AM	One Delta Terraces Residential Condominium Project Site, Quezon Avenue cor. West Avenue, Brgy. West Triangle, Quezon City

The Public Hearing is being conducted in connection with the review of the EIS Report of the aforementioned project by the Environmental Management Bureau-National Capital Region of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.


The following are the project details:

Project Name	ONE DELTA TERRACES RESIDENTIAL CONDOMINIUM
Project Location	Quezon Avenue cor. West Avenue, Brgy. West Triangle, Quezon City
Project Size (Gross Floor Area)	155,894.35 square meters
Project Rationale	The project will provide reasonable commercial, residential condominium units and amenities to interested buyers. It will also offer an alternative place for people who work within the San Juan, Caloocan, Marikina, travelers, tourist, overseas contract workers among others due to its proximity to the business centers, tourist area among other.
Project Components	Fifty-One (51) Residential Levels, One (1) Roof Deck Level, One (1) Amenity Level, One (1) Ground Floor Commercial Level, Four (4) Podium Parking Levels and Six (6) Basement Parking Levels
Proponent	DMC ESTATE DEVELOPMENT VENTURES, INC.

All interested parties who wish to attend or participate in this Public Hearing should preferably confirm their attendance/participation or give their opinion(s) in concise position paper to the EIA Section of this Office through mail or through email at cpd.eia.embnrc@gmail.com at least three (3) days before the Public Hearing Schedule. Those who will not able to register or submit their written positions may be given opportunity to share their issues on the day of the hearing itself.

The Project's EIS Report and Executive Summary for the Public are downloadable at our website: ncr.emb.gov.ph. (Kindly access the Notice of Public Hearing link found in our website).

For more details, please contact the EIA Section of Clearance and Permitting Division of this Office at telephone number 8931-1331 local 1111 through the project casehandler Mr. Jhonel S. Siarez.


ATTY. MICHAEL DRAKE P. MATIAS
Regional Director

Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Environmental Management Bureau
National Capital Region
NCR-2023-01878
Office of the Regional Director

