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DENR

NEWS ALERTS

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



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'DON'T COP OUT IN ENFORCING PLASTICS LAW'

By JOVEE MARIE N. DELA CRUZ
@joveemarie

WITH only about 600 out of 4,000 big enterprises obliged to practice the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act, a senior lawmaker wants the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to take more decisive steps in implementing fully a new law on the proper disposal of single-use plastics.

Camarines Sur Rep. Lray Villafuerte said this new measure holds big companies responsible for getting rid of or re-

cycling their products' plastic packaging wastes after these have been sold to and used by consumers.

"Rather than seemingly giving up this early the fight against plastic waste pollution, the DENR should do a better job of implementing the Extended Producer Responsibility [EPR] Act, in support of the government goal of advancing a circular economy and mitigating the deleterious impact of climate change," Villafuerte said.

Villafuerte was one of the principal authors of Republic Act (RA) 11898, which institutionalized the practice of EPR

in waste management that imposes on producers, in coordination with their distributors and retailers, the responsibility of properly and effectively disposing of their products after these have been sold to and used by consumers.

"The objective here is to reduce waste generation and improve the recyclability or reusability of such wastes as plastic containers or packaging materials as part of a wholistic approach in switching to an eco-friendly circular economy," he said.

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"But sadly, this grand government drive to reverse the worsening plastic waste pollution appears to have nosedived this early before it could even fully

take off, with our DENR Secretary herself conceding that 'we are not winning the war' on this campaign."

Villafuerte reacted to DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga's recent revelation that only about 600 or 15 percent of 4,000 enterprises obliged to practice EPR have thus far registered, in compliance with RA 11898.

He reminded the DENR that under RA 11898, enterprises obliged to practice EPR that fail to register or comply with this law face fines ranging from P5 million to P20 million, and automatic suspension of business permits, depending on whether violators have committed their first, second or third offenses.

In the previous Congress, Villafuerte authored House Bill (HB) 9859 that was one of the measures incorporated into HB 10696, which, in turn, was reconciled with the Senate's version of the EPR bill (Senate Bill or SB 2425), to come up with the final congressional measure transmitted to the Palace for the President's signature.

This measure, which lapsed into law on July 23, 2022, amended RA 9003 or the "Ecological Solid Waste Management Act" of 2000 by requiring enterprises to register and be responsible for the correct disposal of their products' plastic packaging after their products have been sold to and used by consumers.

"So far, we have counted 4,000 obliged enterprises. Unfortunately, we only have around 600 that have actually registered. Some of those 600 have fully complied with what is required for the registration; the rest are still in the process," said Yulo-Loyzaga at a recent news conference marking World Environment Day.

Villafuerte pointed out to the DENR chief that the successful implementation of RA 11898 relies mainly on the active participation of the obliged companies, as Yulo-Loyzaga herself said the challenge of finding a sustainable replacement for single-use plastics should not be left to the government and the academe but should involve producers or manufacturers that use plastics in their products.

With the IRR's release almost six months ago, Villafuerte asked the Secretary whether a new Commission under the supervision of Malacañan Palace—as mandated under RA 11898—has started its work already on overseeing the shift to a circular economy as part of the government's climate-mitigation action.

Villafuerte said RA 11898 called for the establishment of the proposed National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC), which is "mandated under this EPR Law to see to it that big producers along with their distributors and retailers take charge of the proper disposal or recycling of their waste products after their goods have been sold to and used by consumers."

According to an earlier DENR statement, within six months of this new law's effectivity, large-scale enterprises were expected to initiate their efforts on plastic recovery and diversion schemes as mandated by the EPR law.

The DENR described the implementation of the EPR Law as "a crucial step to the Philippines' transition to the circular economy," as it noted that the Philippines was cited in 2015 as the third largest contributor to ocean plastic, with approximately 0.75 million metric tons (MT) of plastic ending up in the seas and other waterways annually.

Following the enactment of RA 11898, the DENR said the Philippines was included in a select group of states that promulgate EPR, including the United States (US), Canada, Japan, Singapore, India, South Korea, Chile, Mexico, Columbia, Peru and Brazil.



DENR: Include waste pickers in plastic management

By Rio N. Araja

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources seeks to employ waste pickers from the informal sector and integrate them into an expanded producer responsibility (EPR) system for plastic packaging waste.

To ensure that no one is left behind as the country transitions toward a circular economy, DENR Secretary Antonia Loyzaga cited the need for a more holistic integration of the informal sector to the EPR system.

The informal waste sector in the Philippines include waste pickers at dumps

and communal waste collection points.

The DENR chief cited the significant role of the sector in waste collection and management, and the potential contribution it could bring being the "backbone of the currently limited collection services and partly of recycling" in the country.

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"Collection and sorting facilities from the informal sector may be transformed into formal activities and establishments. These can be duly registered and supported by the EPR system," she said.

"The informal sector can also be integrated as business partners, such as non-government organization-supported microenterprises, franchises of formal waste management companies, operating local collection centers, and forming cooperatives and collectives. This social inclusion can be improved to develop alternative livelihoods and diversified livelihoods for our informal community," she added.

The EPR Act of 2022 or Republic Act 11898 serves as the environmental policy approach and practice that requires producers to be environmentally responsible throughout the life cycle of a product, especially its post-consumer or end-of-life stage.



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DENR chief pitches for synergy-based governance to achieve water security

THE Philippines can achieve water security if the government and all other stakeholders will work together for the effective and sustainable management of the country's water resources, according to Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga.

In her keynote address at the recent Financial Inclusion for Women, Water and Climate Resilience Forum organized by the Financial Executives of the Philippines (FINEX), Yulo-Loyzaga said there is no substitute for coherence, convergence, and synergy in water governance.

"With your partnership, I know, these are all possible and water security can be reached and achieved for the Philippines," Yulo-Loyzaga said.

While it is considered as most vulnerable to climate change, the water sector holds the potential to lead change and deliver transformative solutions in the country's quest for climate resilient, inclusive, and sustainable development, she stressed.

"Today, more than ever, there is a critical need for nexus governance for climate and disaster resilience—one that pursues a strategic balance between supply, distribution and consumption of water for health, food, energy, human and environmental security," Yulo-Loyzaga pointed out.

"Building resilience through equity in the water sector requires us to address the ecological, political, socioeconomic, and engineering risks, as well as, perhaps quite important, the national and local capacity for

science-informed governance," she added.

Synergetic approach

LOYZAGA noted that the government—through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is embarking on synergistic approaches to solving the country's water woes: an attempt at the effective management of water resources and the application of geospatial data.

The first synergistic approach was highlighted by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. by establishing the Water Resources Management Office (WRMO) in the DENR through an executive order he issued recently, she said.

The newly created WRMO integrates the functions of all agencies with water-related mandates to effectively manage the country's water resources and to achieve water security.

Loyzaga said the apex body would strengthen the coordination among various agencies and provide the venue for coherent policy formulation and rationalized functions to address cross-sectoral needs.

She also said that the implementation of the presidential directive is aligned with efforts to eventually establish a Department of Water.

"There are long-standing institutional issues which we now have a strong chance of solving and this unlocks some of the barriers in managing water," Loyzaga stressed. "It also opens the possibility of coordinating projects between agencies to enter with more efficient programs like the

construction of multi-use dams and reservoirs."

Geospatial planning

MEANWHILE, Loyzaga said the DENR is now using geospatial data to monitor the state of the country's natural resources, including water. The Geospatial Database Office in the DENR was created for evidence-informed decision-making.

She also created the position of Undersecretary for Integrated Environmental Science to ensure that the science needed for ocean and atmosphere dimensions of the environment and natural resources mandate is embedded in all bureau deliberations and decisions.

"The DENR believes in the power of information and more importantly science and information-based decision-making with the support of the best technologies available," Loyzaga explained.

Using satellite imagery and geographic information systems, the DENR is now able to detect watershed and mangrove health, the recent oil spill and other related hazards, water quality challenges, illegal activities, and potential future water resources for development.

Loyzaga said these two systems would eventually ensure that the DENR is able to identify, account for, mitigate, restore, and regenerate the natural capital from ridge to reef.

"In short, we are able to see changes in these terrains and cross-reference them with permits and other instruments," Loyzaga said.

These new capacities, she added, now allow the DENR to assist in de-risking investment and improve

water resource management down to the community level.

Whole-of-government approach

UTILIZING these new capacities and platforms, Loyzaga said the DENR has adopted a whole-of-government approach to resolving water challenges.

The DENR chief cited the DENR's use of a physical database to work with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the National Economic and Development Authority, and the local water utilities in identifying the best sources of surface water to serve the needs of local communities.

The DENR is also currently working with the DPWH and DILG to provide water to 1,374 barangays across Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Meanwhile, the WRMO is also working with the private sector to bring water to those who need it most, such as 65 isolated barangays in island municipalities.

"Water is a fundamental resource for human health, economic development, and ecological sustainability but also for inclusive and resilient development. It plays a critical role in many aspects of community life specifically food production, for example, sanitation, hygiene, and energy production," said Loyzaga.

According to Loyzaga, the DENR's goal is to secure a robust source of water for all which will be one less challenge for communities already dealing with volatile and uncertain times. *Jonathan L. Mayuga*



Water impounding project is good, but forest cover restoration is better, Rep. Nograles says

WHILE supporting President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s order to construct water-impounding facilities near Metro Manila in a bid to control flooding and ensure water supply in Luzon, a lawmaker on Thursday said such facilities should only be supplementary, and the government's greater objective should be the restoration of the country's forest cover.

House Committee on Labor and Employment Chairman and Rizal 4th District Rep. Fidel Nograles issued the statement after the President directed the Water Resources Management Office (WRMO) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to come up with a comprehensive plan to protect coastal communities and Metro Manila from flooding, including the construction of water impounding facilities to manage the country's water resources.

"Water-impounding facilities are a good idea. These could boost our flood mitigation efforts and provide additional water for irrigation and other needs, especially amid El Niño," he said.

"However, our greater objective should still be aggressive reforestation to restore our forest cover, which would not only increase the carrying capacity of our watersheds but also solve a host of other issues connected with climate change," said the lawmaker.

Besides being briefed on flood control projects, Marcos was also apprised of the P5.86-billion rainwater collection system program under Republic Act No. 6716 and the installation of 6,002 rainwater collection systems nationwide.

"Our forests shield us from natural disasters, particularly from the stronger typhoons that have resulted from climate change. They also counter drought and make our air cleaner," said Nograles.

"Given how crucial forests are, our government should prioritize the restoration of our forest cover. And we are confident that this is also top of mind of the President," he added.

The President issued the order following a briefing with officials from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) on their flood control programs and the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) on the management of irrigation facilities.

During a recent briefing, the President noted the P351 billion estimated cost of flood control projects of the DPWH in Metro Manila as well as in the surrounding areas.

According to the President, the government is looking for locations outside Metro Manila where it can put up large impounding areas to control water flow and avoid flooding.

Jovee Marie N. Dela Cruz



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NWRB extends higher Angat allocations for water firms

By DANESSA RIVERA

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) has decided to maintain the raw water allocation from Angat Dam until end-June, effectively giving reprieve to customers of Maynilad Water Services Inc. in Metro Manila and nearby provinces whose water interruptions were scheduled to begin today.

In a text message, NWRB executive director Sevillo David yesterday confirmed that the 52 cubic meters per second (CMS) raw water allocation from Angat Dam was extended

until June 30 following the request of Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS).

Originally, the NWRB only approved the 52 CMS from June 1 to 15, and would be reduced to 50 CMS from today until June 30.

In another text message, MWSS division manager Patrick Dizon welcomed the NWRB approval as this would help prevent the implementation of rotating service interruptions in the areas covered by Maynilad.

"With the same commitment that we promised to NWRB when the 52

CMS was first approved in April 16 that there will be no interruption in the areas supplied by Angat Dam," he said in a mix of English and Filipino.

"We have presented to NWRB the impact of the non-extension of the 52 CMS allocation, which is water interruption on 632,000 water service connections," Dizon said.

The NWRB had approved in mid-April the increase in water allocation from Angat Dam to 52 CMS dedicated to Maynilad.

This allowed Maynilad to lift its water service interruptions, which

lasted up to 19 hours in most of its covered areas, except in the southern portion of its service area dependent on the Putatan output.

But earlier this month, the MWSS said consumers may experience interruptions during nighttime if the Angat allocation would not be maintained – even with "mitigating measures" being put in place.

Of the mitigating measures, the most that would boost water supply to prevent supply interruptions is intensifying water recovery through Maynilad's non-revenue water (NRW) program.

Mitigating measures also include reactivating deep wells, improvement of operation in Maynilad's Putatan water treatment plants, and the expected operation of the 50-MLD Poblacion treatment plant.

As of 6 a.m. yesterday, the water level at Angat Dam was 187.20 meters, slightly lower than the 187.42 meter level on Wednesday.

Angat Dam supplies more than 90 percent of Metro Manila's potable water needs and provides for the irrigation needs of 25,000 hectares of farmlands in Bulacan and Pampanga.



Filipinos must drink

YOU can live for several weeks without food. You die after just a few days without water. I'm certainly not in favor of even more government departments, but one that ensures all Filipinos, and foreigners here, get enough water to drink, to wash themselves and do other household chores, surely, seeing how our life is dependent on it, a water department is one of the most important departments to have. We also need enough water, so farmers can irrigate their crops so we don't die from lack of food. And enough water to supply our hydropower plants, so we don't live in darkness, but are illuminated by green light.



**LIKE
IT IS
PETER
WALLACE**

There are over 30 — yes, 30 — agencies that are somehow involved in the management of water. Inevitably, they're going to be in conflict with one another. A headless chicken comes to mind. Each agency concentrates on its area of attention with no concern for the others, or for an overall program for water. There's overlap and conflict.

Thrown into this mess is the Department of Environment and Natural Resources responsible for the preservation of watershed areas and water quality of rivers and streams, while the Department of Health is responsible for drinking water quality and general sanitation. Even local governments have a say. They can set up their own water systems. Not to be left out of all this is the National Irrigation Administration that has its say in irrigation. And the Department of Energy for the production of hydropower. The National Economic and Development Authority is included in the policy and planning to ensure these are consistent with government programs.

None of this is coordinated. It needs to be, and there are bills in Congress that allow for that by requiring all these departments to work together in a coordinated manner. House Bill 1754 and a similar one, Senate Bill 195, have been sitting in Congress since 2019 — four years. It's on the President's priority list, but movement is inexplicably slow. Other, far less important bills are given priority.

A master plan was developed way back in the 1090s under a Japanese grant known as the Philippine National Development Plan for the 21st Century — Plan 21 — that included what to do about water. It is a very thorough report, supported by interaction with all stakeholders and a detailed questionnaire. Creating an independent authority to take control was part of that plan. Three decades later it remains an unimplemented part of that plan. No further study is needed. All that's needed is to just do it. In 1999 President Ramos held a national conference to develop a water plan. It had many good features — it too was unacted upon.

One aspect of this plan that fits into the President's goals was to encourage private sector assistance in the provision of water. This can be a proven success as Maynilad and Manila Water have shown. But in order to encourage others, the forced changes of contract terms, as they were subjected to, must never be allowed again. BBM should state this very clearly. And Congress should include a clause in the law to create a Department of Water Resources (DWR) that, by law, prevents any contract changes unless willingly agreed to by both parties.

Its vision statement said: "By the year 2025, water resources in the Philippines are to be used efficiently, allocated equitably, and managed in a sustainable way." We are but two years from 2025. Within the report, it stated: "The desired changes entail an integrated approach that would be best achieved with the political will of the present and future leaders and of the citizenry." What we've seen isn't political will, it's political won't.

What it all comes down to is that the plans are there, the ideas are there, the knowledge of what to do has been well enumerated. It just needs to be done. To effect that action there needs to be one overarching agency — a DWR that absorbs all those 30 agencies. And brings other departments in line with its master plan. A plan that is already there if you but look for it. It's all encompassed in Plan 21.

Too many Filipinos don't have access to running water. There are no hard numbers on it, but the best estimate is that around 11 million Filipino families don't have running water. Something no one likes to talk about, but is an essential component of the water sector is sewage. Where does your sh*t go? A frightening 50.3 million Filipinos can't dispose of it healthily.

As it now stands, we are in the frightening situation of relying on just one dam, Angat, to supply about 90 percent of the water needs of some 15 to 16 million Filipinos. A severe drought, which climate change makes entirely possible, or an earthquake in an earthquake-prone country could deprive millions of the daily water they must have. Worsening the situation, Angat Dam and, later, Kaliwa Dam are filled from rivers. These rivers are shrinking due to deforestation that has led to soil erosion, siltation and sedimentation. Previous governments have recognized this, and introduced measures to address the problem. They've mostly remained unacted upon.

A second dam, Kaliwa Dam in Rizal and Quezon provinces, is now 22 percent complete, according to the MWSS. It will add some security to the provision of water to Metro Manila and its surrounding areas, including parts of Central Luzon. Laguna Lake is a source that Maynilad is tapping for 10 percent of its service area's needs. But the increasing pollution of the lake is making purification increasingly difficult and expensive. Silting of the lake is a major concern. I can't find any numbers on it, but the depth of the lake has been severely reduced, to a worrying degree. Removal of the silt to build a dike with an expressway on top contracted during President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's time was canceled by President Benigno Aquino Jr. It needs to be revived.

We have a growing population with a stagnant supply of water to them. Surely nothing can be more important than water for everyone.

It's on the President's priority list, but the movement is inexplicably slow and other bills are getting priority. Time for political thinking to change. Mr. President, it's time to put your foot down and force immediate passage of this law, above all others. Otherwise, as Samuel Taylor Coleridge said, it will be "water, water everywhere nor any drop to drink."



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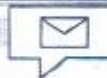


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LETTERS

HOW THE PROPOSED NATIONAL LAND USE ACT CAN FAST-TRACK HOUSING

"It is the policy of the state to provide for a rational, holistic, and just allocation, utilization, management, and development of the country's land resources." This is to ensure that their "optimum use is consistent with the principle of sustainable development." The state also recognizes the need for developing sustainable settlements, and shall "allocate lands for urban uses ... consistent with the principles of environmental management and equitable access to land and security."

The foregoing are the declaration of policies and principles

in the introductory provisions of the proposed National Land Use Act (NLUA), as introduced by Sen. Pia Cayetano under Senate Bill No. 898. The measure is meant to harmonize all reasonable claims on the land, and to safeguard and promote the general welfare of present and future generations through proper management of this limited resource.

To do this, the state "shall institutionalize land use and physical planning as a mechanism to [identify, determine, and evaluate] alternative land use and allocation patterns." In my view,

the centerpiece program component of the NLUA, based on SB 898, is the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) to be prepared and updated every nine years in every city and municipality in accordance with the national, regional, and provincial physical planning frameworks.

The CLUP will serve as guide to fast-track the country's social and economic development projects, with sanctions on officials who fail to comply with performance standards. The CLUP will substantially accelerate housing production to effectively address the huge

housing backlog of about 6.5 million housing units. The significant provision in the bill on this is the easier access to suitable land for housing development, as contained in Chapter VII, Section 42. It says that residential zones as designated in the CLUP "shall be considered as outside the geo-hazard areas ... and shall be exempt from the [environmental compliance certificate] ... without the need for any further certificate of exemption from the [Department of Environment and Natural Resources] or any other government regulatory agency."

Equally significant is that portion of Section 44 of the same chapter, that says "housing or residential lands designated in the CLUPs and [zoning ordinances] of cities and municipalities shall ... not be subject to further land reclassification by the LGU (local government unit) or land conversion procedure under the [Department of Agrarian Reform]. On the other hand, agricultural lands as designated in the CLUP which are no longer economically feasible for agricultural use may be subject to land reclassification or conversion to housing/residential pur-

poses and such conversion, as the case may be, shall be exempt from the coverage of any moratorium on land conversion."

These two provisions are critical in accelerating the production of affordable housing nationwide, particularly for the underprivileged sector, including the homeless and informal settlers. A much greater volume of housing production will also stimulate economic activity in allied industries, such as construction, and create much-needed jobs and livelihood opportunities.

JOSE S. DE GUZMAN



Didipio Mine spends P60M for road projects

CABARROGUIS, Quirino: The Didipio Mine has implemented around P60 million worth of projects under the community development fund (CDF) program of the company in this province.

Marjorie Idio, Didipio Mine external affairs and communications manager, said these projects for 2023 were approved by the CDF Technical Working Group and Steering Committee.

Idio also said two farm-to-market (FMR) road projects under the CDF program were awarded to the barangay (villages) of Victoria and San Manuel in Aglipay town.

Recently, the Didipio Mine broke ground for the concreting of a P3 million FMR project in Don Mariano Perez village in Diffun town, and another in Villa Peña village in Cabarroguis town.

The company, which operates under a financial or technical assistance agreement (FTAA), supervises the government-sanctioned Didipio



THE ONE AND ONLY In partnership with the provincial government and local government units of Quirino province, the Didipio Mine launches community development projects in different villages in the province under its community development fund program, the first and only program among mining companies in the Philippines. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gold and Copper Project in gold-rich Kasibu town in Nueva Vizcaya and parts of Quirino province.

Idio explained that the CDF projects aim to enhance connectivity, provide community spaces and improve infrastructure for the benefit of local communities.

"These initiatives were made

possible through the Didipio Mine's Community Development Fund in partnership with barangay and local and government units under the provincial government of Quirino," she said.

In its CDF program, Mines and Geosciences Bureau Region 2 Director Mario Ancheta said that

the company spends on community development projects as an improvement in the renewed government license or FTAA.

"These projects are implemented outside the mine's immediate host and surrounding villages," he said.

Ancheta noted that the Didipio Mine CDF program is the first and only program in the Philippines established by a mining company.

"The CDF program was an addition to the renewed FTAA of the company for another 25 years after its first 25 years of operations under the same license expired," he said.

Earlier, the Didipio Mine also held a groundbreaking ceremony for a multipurpose hall, also under its CDF program, in San Benigno village in Aglipay town.

"This soon-to-rise multipurpose hall is one of the products of the strong collaboration of the mine with its neighboring local government units," Idio said.

LEANDER C. DOMINGO



Marcos hopes to attend December climate meet in UAE

By ALEXIS ROMERO

President Marcos hopes to visit the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in December to participate in the 28th United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP) and renew the Philippines' ties with the Middle Eastern country, where more than 600,000 Filipinos work.

In an interview on the sidelines of the International Trade Forum in Taguig yesterday, Marcos said the conference was one of the topics discussed during his meeting with UAE Ambassador Mohamed Obaid Salem Alqataam Alzaabi last Tuesday.

"The ambassador came to see me beforehand, the day before and we were talking about precisely COP 28... I hope to be able to attend because climate change is a primordial issue when it comes to the Philippines. So I hope that we will be able to attend," Marcos told reporters. This year's COP will be held at the Expo City in Dubai.

"And beyond the Conference of Parties is that we also want to renew our ties with the UAE. There are many Filipinos there. We need to ensure that they are continuously treating our countrymen well. And they have been very welcoming. They have treated our people very well," the President said.

Marcos said Filipino workers in the UAE are well protected and reasonably compensated.

"So that's something that we hope to

continue and even progress further," he added.

Marcos has had 12 official foreign trips since assuming office last year, the latest being the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Summit in Indonesia last May.

The UAE ambassador was with Marcos during the latter's visit to families evacuated from danger zones around the restive Mayon Volcano in Albay.

"That's why I brought him (Alzaabi) there so he could see where his country's aid went," the Chief Executive said in Filipino. The UAE government has donated some 50 tons of food items to Albay province.

Marcos was wearing a COP 28 green baller given to him by the envoy when he faced members of the media.

During his courtesy call on Marcos last Tuesday, Alzaabi reaffirmed his country's support for the Philippines' economic and environmental programs, according to a statement issued by the Presidential Communications Office (PCO).

The ambassador also told the President of the intention of many UAE companies to set up businesses in the Philippines, the PCO statement added.

The UAE ambassador also talked about a government information exchange program being implemented in more than 40 countries, including Egypt, Spain and Jordan. Marcos has directed Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin to draft a memorandum of understanding on the program.



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President wants to attend COP28

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. intends to attend the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Dubai.

The United Arab Emirates government already invited Mr. Marcos to attend the conference that will take place at Expo City in Dubai from Nov. 30 to Dec. 12.

The invitation was extended to the President when UAE Ambassador Mohamed Obaid Salem Alqataam Al-Zaabi paid him a courtesy visit at Malacañan

Palace in Manila on Tuesday.

"The ambassador came to see me beforehand, the day before and we were talking about precisely COP 28, I hope to be able to attend because climate change is a primordial issue when it comes to the Philippines. I hope that we'll be able to attend," Mr. Marcos told reporters Thursday on the sidelines of the International

Trade Forum at the Shangri-La The Fort in Taguig City.

The President said a visit to UAE will strengthen the Philippines' ties with the Gulf state, acknowledging that many Filipinos are residing and working in the host country.

"Beyond the Conference of Parties is that we also want to fortify our ties with the UAE," he said.

"And they have been very welcoming. They have treated our people very well. They have protected them and they have allowed them to make a living in the United Arab Emirates. So, that's something that we hope to continue and even

progress further," Mr. Marcos added.

UAE is home to over 700,000 Filipinos, with 450,000 of them based in Dubai.

This year's COP is expected to host over 70,000 delegates, including heads of state and world leaders to build consensus and facilitate progress on climate action among 198 countries, the European Union, and thousands of non-government organizations, companies, youth groups and other stakeholders.

As host, the UAE is focused on providing practical and positive solutions that drive progress for climate and the economy, as well as relief and support to vulnerable communities.



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EDITORIAL

CARTOON

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We cannot call for climate justice and equity without calling for an overhaul of the international financial system.

REWRITECOP

Lean, developed and developing countries, and their development challenges (especially in the areas of energy, water, and digital) are interconnected and require a holistic approach.

In these countries, the climate crisis translates to a fight for life.

REWRITECOP

Climate COP is a complex event where we will be making considerable climate commitments. It is our responsibility to ensure that we do not waste time and resources in tackling the climate crisis.

REWRITECOP

The air, creative inquiry, we virtual reality, we play, the real world, the real world, we play, the real world, the real world.

THE FATE OF THE MOST VULNERABLE WILL BE THE FATE OF THE WORLD

REWRITECOP



ELEVENTH HOUR
THE CLIMATE REALITY PROJECT PHILIPPINES

Since its inception in 1994, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has aimed to push forward international commitment and action on climate issues. The treaty focuses on increasing scientific research to inform how best to adapt to a changing climate and safeguard adequate food production and bio-sphere, while still enabling continued (albeit so-called "sustainable") economic development.

With 198 member states, also

Why rewrite climate finance in COP28?

called Parties, the UNFCCC and its yearly meeting, the Conference of the Parties (COP), is the world's largest platform for international climate agreements. Through the years, negotiations have pulled forth new priority areas, such as transitioning away from fossil fuels and coal-based energy, keeping the average rise of global temperatures below 1.5C degrees, and increasing climate action and its transparent reporting.

The 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) held last year yielded historic wins in its final decision, including the agreement to set up a loss and damage fund for nations most vulnerable to the climate crisis and the call for a reform of multilateral banks such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

This year, the global community will convene once again for COP28 to tackle a myriad of issues involving the delivery of adaptation, mitigation, and loss and damage finance to communities that

need them the most.

Will finance finally reach the most vulnerable communities?

One of the critical policy points in this year's COP is the operationalization of a loss and damage fund to finance the needs of communities disproportionately affected by the climate crisis.

The most contentious issues that would have to be settled are determining who pays for the funds, how much, and what will be the basis for access, reporting, and financing mechanisms.

At its core, the envisioned loss and damage facility requires high-emitting countries to acknowledge their historical role in the climate crisis and take responsibility for it.

Ideally, the facility is to be governed by rules and modalities that leverage the best available science and risk data and lift the burden of proof from vulnerable communities. Innovative and responsive instruments utilizing a

trigger-based and pre-arranged design must be made available to deliver an additional layer of protection for our communities.

Another issue to be tackled in COP28 is the progress of the Climate Finance Delivery Plan, which sets out when and how the developed world will meet its promise to mobilize US\$300 billion per year starting 2020 for the adaptation and mitigation needs of developing countries.

A Progress Report on the Delivery Plan released last year projected that developed countries will collectively deliver the full US\$300 billion this year and that climate finance flows for vulnerable communities in 2024 and 2025 will exceed US\$300 billion, reaching the US\$500 billion aggregate goal for the five-year period (2020-2024).

This year's COP will be an opportunity for rich nations to provide more clarity on how they will deliver their commitments and unlock more climate

finance by reforming institutions like the World Bank to align with the Paris Agreement.

Why and how to rewrite COP?

Rooted in the conviction that culture, along with creative inquiry and storytelling, is vital to tackling the climate crisis, Agam Agenda and Climate Reality Philippines launched RewriteCOP in the lead-up to COP28.

RewriteCOP aims to democratize climate policies by allowing more people to voice their demands for better solutions through art and creative expression.

To rewrite COP28, our first call is an invitation to intervene in the World Bank's evolution process through erasure poetry. How to?

1. In our starter kit bit.ly/rewritecopic, you'll find an excerpt of the draft World Bank Evolution Roadmap. Pick a page you want to rewrite in line with our call for the World Bank to pave the way for a fit-for-climate global financial system.
2. Choose the words that resonate with the climate promise you envision.
3. Using paint, images, markers, or any digital application, erase the rest to create a new version of the roadmap.
4. Head to whentowrite.com/submissions/ to submit your creation.

Join us in creating traction for climate policies designed for the realities of the most vulnerable.

Call for submissions

Rewrite the World Bank Evolution Roadmap with Erasure Poetry

REWRITECOP

How to create erasure poetry:

1. Choose a section. In our starter kit bit.ly/rewritecopic, you'll find pages 50 of the draft World Bank Evolution Roadmap. Pick a page you want to rewrite in line with our call for the World Bank to pave the way for a fit-for-climate global financial system.

REWRITECOP

How to create erasure poetry:

2. Choose your words. Choose the words that resonate with the climate promise you envision. Using paint, images, markers, or any digital application, erase the rest to create a new version of the draft Roadmap.

REWRITECOP

Show us your work.

Head to whentowrite.com/submissions/ to submit your creation.

You deserve to post your work on your social media accounts. Don't forget to tag [@whentowrite](https://whentowrite.com) and [@climatecreativityph](https://whentowrite.com).

REWRITECOP



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OPINION

Climate change manifestations

I AM not a climate change skeptic. I note warmer days in our summer, droughts in certain parts of the world and snow falling in San Francisco. They are manifestations of climate change.

Traveling through Europe has reinforced the belief that climate change is real and must be mitigated, if not tamed back. The European Union has implemented climate change measures extensively.

In hotels, there are no more individual amenities in plastic bottles or wrapping. The soap and shampoo are permanently secured to the wall in large, albeit plastic, containers for long-term use, from which hotel guests pump out their needs. Only the hotel manages the containers. The hotel in Madrid also proudly announced that, in the late spring and summer, it provides 65 percent of its hot water needs from solar sources.

If plastic is used — and that is becoming rarer — it is not for one-time use to be discarded and cause a plastic pileup in the trash. It is for reuse and to be kept out of the trash. Most commercial entities ask you if you need a bag for your purchase, expecting you to bring your own. If you need a bag, they will provide a paper bag for you to purchase.

Meanwhile, Europe is having one of its hottest springs. Tourists are going around in minimal clothing. Actually, this last one is usual, as most



AMBIENT
VOICES

MA. ISABEL
ONGPIN

tourists are young and traveling light. But with temperatures soaring, everyone, it seems, is shedding clothes. Last summer, at the Sagrada Familia precinct in Barcelona, it was more of a beach scene than the premises of a famed cathedral. Bathing suit look-alike clothes were the option of young and old.

The showing of skin comes with the next phenomenon: tattoos. Tattoos are a well-regarded decoration in ancient Philippine culture for both men and women. In the Visayas, the Spaniards saw so many tattoos on the natives at the beginning of their occupation that they called them "pintados." In the Cordillera, they come, too, with the culture, which means it is a response to the environment, whether physical or spiritual.

The modern world has taken to tattoos in a big way as statements of personal decoration expressing individuality. Perhaps because the practice is not quite in their known past, the result compared to our Cordillera tattoos, for example, is rather garish, overdone and in-your-face. Limbs are all a bold black. Images disproportio-



tionately large. Maybe it is the ink! The aesthetics leave much to be desired. Cordillera tattoos seem more subtle, more blue with a sense of proportion that is pleasing. We are more restrained maybe because we have the tradition. This is just my personal impression and I should talk to Dr. Ikin Amores, who has written on our tattoos, to compare opinions.

It is to be noted that tattoos have been used by gangs, usually criminal gangs. In South America and Central America, gang members are identified by their tattoos. I am not sure if this

is adaptive use or whether they originally had a tattoo culture. But definitely, their tattoos now are for the most part a sign of gang identity. In Philippine jails, tattoos are gang identification, mostly for protection against other gangs. They may have originated as criminal identification marks outside of jail, too.

These are the sinister modern uses that tattoos have been made to become. Seeing tattoos all over Europe on such a multiple and disproportionate scale brings on these links. But it is too that climate change brings on such warm temperatures that the response is

less clothing and more skin.

Due also to hotter temperatures, thunderstorms are on the rampage in Europe. We have been told to expect more violent thunderstorms in this era of climate change where the hotter temperatures generate them. When in Madrid, I heard a clap of thunder followed by a flash of lightning that made me think I was in Mandaluyong the week before under a thunderstorm. The same in Paris, yesterday, when it poured accompanied by lightning and thunder. Mercifully, this was after the final at Roland Garros for the French Open where both

players were visibly wilting in the heat.

The Madrid thunderstorm was considered such a phenomenon that the news was full of flooded expressways, inundated commercial premises and the chaos that it brought. Spain is having a drought, reservoirs are at critically low levels and saving water reminders are all over. But as the lady taxi driver said, "We need water, but not like this!"

With us, thunderstorms have caused an unacceptable number of fatalities this year. It is a given that they are more frequent and more violent these days that they have to be taken seriously.

All in all, climate change is real except for the willfully blind. The icebergs in the south of the globe are predicted to be gone by 2030 which is tomorrow. The world has to wake up faster and we in the Philippines must begin to manage the issue better. One-time plastic must be forbidden by law that is implemented without fear or favor, among other measures like saving water, trees, planting more greenery and preserving our natural resources. These will require infinitely more effort, more ingenuity and more political will than we have so far shown.



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6.3-magnitude quake jolts Batangas

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

A magnitude 6.3 earthquake rocked Batangas province at around 10:19 a.m. on Thursday, June 15, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.

Phivolcs traced the epicenter of the earthquake 15 kilometers southwest of Calatagan, Batangas.

Intensity IV

It said the tremor was felt at Intensity IV (moderately strong) in Manila, Mandaluyong City, Quezon City, Valenzuela City, Malolos City in Bulacan, Dasmariñas City and Tagaytay City in Cavite, Tanay in Rizal, and in the following localities of Batangas—Batangas City, Ibaan, Lemery, Nasugbu, and Talisay. ▶7



EARTHQUAKE — Students and faculty of the Araullo High School on UN Ave. in Manila evacuate after a magnitude 6.3 earthquake struck Calatagan, Batangas, on Thursday, June 15, 2023. (Juan Carlo de Vela)

GOOGLE MAPS



6.3-magnitude quake jolts Batangas 1◀

Intensity III

It was felt at Intensity III (weak) in Pateros, Las Piñas City, Makati City, Marikina City, Parañaque City, Pasig City, Obando in Bulacan, Laurel in Batangas, Bacoor City and Imus City in Cavite, San Pablo and San Pedro in Laguna, and San Mateo in Rizal.

Intensity II

Intensity II (slightly felt) tremor was recorded in Caloocan City, San Juan City, Muntinlupa City, San Fernando City in La Union, Alaminos City and Bolinao in Pangasinan, Santa Maria in Bulacan, and Bambang in Tarlac.

It was Intensity I (scarcely perceptible) in San Jose del Monte City in Bulacan.

Phivolcs' instruments also recorded the quake at Intensity IV in the following: Abucay in Bataan, San Ildefonso in Bulacan, Magallanes in Cavite, San Jose in Occidental Mindoro, Calapan City and Puerto Galera in Oriental Mindoro, and San Antonio, Olongapo City, and Cabangan in Zambales.

It was recorded at Intensity III in Dinalupihan and Mariveles in Bataan; Batangas City, Sta. Teresita, Cuenca, Bauan, Talisay, and San Luis in Batangas; Paombong, Guiguinto, Marillao, and Pulilan in Bulacan; Carnion, Ternate, and Naic in Cavite; Malabon City, Cabanatuan City in Nueva Ecija, Abra de Ilog in Occidental Mindoro, Roxas in Oriental Mindoro, Guagua in Pampanga, Mauban in Quezon, Tanay in Rizal, and San Marcelino and Subic in Zambales.

Phivolcs pointed out that the quake

was due to the movement in the Manila Trench—a major earthquake generator located offshore west of Luzon island, which is roughly parallel to the Philippine archipelago and runs from Taiwan to Occidental Mindoro.

It said the earthquake may have caused damage to houses, buildings, and other infrastructure, and warned the public to be cautious as aftershocks may occur.

However, no tsunami warning has been issued by Phivolcs.

Cracks at MRT-3 Boni, Ayala stations

Following the quake, inspection teams found cracks at the Boni and Ayala stations of the Metro Rail Transit Line 3 (MRT-3).

But Department of Transportation (DOTr) Assistant Secretary for Railways and MRT-3 officer-in-charge Jorjette B. Aquino said the cracks should not be a cause for alarm for the riders.

"The cracks discovered in Boni Station and Ayala Station will not pose any danger to the public and the MRT-3 operations," said Aquino.

Aquino, however, said she already ordered teams to conduct more inspections on the cracks in order to totally assess them.

"As a safety protocol, since cracks were observed, I directed the MRT-3 operations, maintenance and engineering personnel, together with Oriental Consultants Global (OCG), the MRT-3's consultant, to conduct an in-depth inspection," said Aquino.

The MRT-3 operations, along with the Light Rail Transit (LRT) 1, 2 and the Philippine National Railways (PNR), were temporarily suspended after the quake.

Operations were back to normal at 11:39 a.m. after thorough inspections.

Aquino said there was no damage detected in all other stations.

"I assure the public that the line is clear and safe for revenue operations after inspecting the system's tracks, signaling equipment, and station facilities," she said.

NAIA runways, taxiways inspected

Runways and taxiways at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) were temporarily closed for inspection.

In a statement, the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) said the decision to shut down the runways and taxiways is part of the standard operating procedure in the conduct of ground safety assessment.

"The MIAA Ground Safety Units are now doing a cursory inspection to check any damage to the pavements. This is a standard operating procedure to ensure safety of landing and take-off of aircraft," said the MIAA in a statement.

"We seek the understanding of the public for possible effects to flight schedules due to the runway closure," it added.

Initially, MIAA said the departure and arrival operations inside the terminals are unaffected.

As of press time, there was no information if operations already resumed.

Manila employees, students evacuate

In Manila, city hall employees and students from various schools evacuated due to the earthquake.

The Manila Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office (MDRRMO) conducted roving operations in schools, universities, offices, and museums after the earthquake.

Visitors and employees of Pambansang Museo and the National Museum of Anthropology also evacuated to the open area.

MDRRMO said no injuries or damage were reported.

However, six to eight students in Malate Catholic School and Araullo High School reportedly felt dizzy and were rushed to the Araullo High School clinic for medication.

Bacoor suspends classes, work

In Bacoor City, Cavite, classes and city hall transactions were suspended following the quake.

Department of Education-Bacoor said classes in all levels, both public and private schools, were suspended from noon onwards.

In a Facebook announcement, Bacoor Mayor Strike B. Revilla directed the cancellation of city hall operations as part of the precautionary measures.

Residents were also advised to call the city's Rescue 161 hotline in case of emergency. (With reports from Aaron Recuenco, Richielyn Canlas, and Carla Bauto-Deña)



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Strong quake hits Batangas, rattles Luzon

By ROMINA CABRERA

A magnitude 6.3 earthquake struck Batangas yesterday morning, with its impact felt in Metro Manila and parts of Northern Luzon.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said the quake was monitored 11 kilometers south of Calatagan in Batangas province at 10:19 a.m. It was tectonic in nature and had a depth of 108 kilometers. The state agency warned of aftershocks.

According to Phivolcs, the intensity was not strong, but it was felt over a larger area

due to the depth of the quake's focus in the Manila Trench.

The possibility of a tsunami was ruled out.

Calatagan police chief Emil Mendoza said he and his staff rushed outside following the earthquake.

"It was a bit strong. We had to run outside," Mendoza told *Agence France Presse*.

While there were no immediate reports of casualties or

damage, disaster authorities were deployed to assess the earthquake's impact, Mendoza said.

Calatagan disaster officer Ronald Torres said the quake lasted between 30 seconds and a minute.

The quake was also felt at Shangri-La The Fort in Taguig, where President Marcos witnessed the launching of the

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Strong quake From Page 1

export development plan.

After a media interview, officials told Marcos that an earthquake had just taken place. The President looked up, smiled and then remarked: "*Akala ko magtatakbuhan na tayong palabas* (I thought we would all run toward the exit)."

Malacañang employees wore hard hats, immediately vacated their offices and proceeded to an open space along J.P. Laurel street when the earthquake was felt at 10:20 a.m. They returned to their workplaces after about 20 minutes.

Operation of the capital's metro system was also halted while tracks were checked for possible damage.

Images on social media verified by AFP showed a crane truck at a Manila port as it swayed from the force of the tremor.

Intensity 5 was recorded in Calatagan as well as in Looc, Lubang and Paluan in Occidental Mindoro.

Intensity 4 was reported in the cities of Las Piñas, Malabon, Mandaluyong, Manila, Quezon, Pasay,

San Juan and Valenzuela. The same intensity was recorded in Balanga City and in Abucay and Orani towns, all in Bataan province; and in some parts of Bulacan, Batangas, Cavite, Occidental Mindoro and Oriental Mindoro provinces.

Also at Intensity 4 were Abucay in Bataan; City of Malolos and San Ildefonso in Bulacan; Cabangan, Iba and San Antonio in Zambales; City of Olongapo; Calatagan and Lemery in Batangas; Magallanes and the City of Tagaytay in Cavite; San Jose, Occidental Mindoro; City of Calapan and Puerto Galera in Oriental Mindoro; and San Roque, Northern Samar.

Intensity 3 was reported in the cities of Makati, Marikina, Navotas, Parañaque, Pasig, Taguig as well as in Pateros. The same strength was recorded in some parts of the provinces of Pangasinan, Pampanga, Batangas, Quezon, Cavite, Occidental Mindoro and Oriental Mindoro.

Phivolcs also reported that Intensity 2 was recorded in the cities of

Caloocan, Muntinlupa and Baguio as well as in parts of La Union, Bulacan, Pampanga, Laguna, Rizal and Romblon provinces.

It also said that Intensity 1 was recorded in Balagtas town and City of San Jose del Monte in Bulacan; Bongabon, Gabaldon, Laur, and City of Palayan in Nueva Ecija; and in Pitogo, Quezon and Taytay in Rizal.

Following the quake, some local government units suspended afternoon and evening classes for all school levels.

These LGUs include Calatagan, San Jose and Lemery in Batangas; Laguna province; Calasiao and Bayambang in Pangasinan; and Bacoor City as well as Ternate and Naic towns, all in Cavite.

In Quezon City, principals were allowed to suspend face-to-face classes based on the recommendation of their respective schools' disaster risk reduction and management councils. At least 42 public schools in the city opted to shift to asynchronous modality.

Under the Department of Education guidelines, classes will be automatically suspended in areas where



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Intensity 5 or higher are felt. Local officials may suspend classes in case of Intensity 4 or lower.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said "no major damages or casualties" were reported yesterday.

NDRRMC deputy spokesperson Diego Mariano said in a short message to reporters that they would continue their assessment and monitoring on the incident.

Sen. Ramon Revilla Jr., who chairs the Senate committee on public works, said in a statement that he has already tasked the Department of Public Works and Highways to conduct an "inspection of (public) infrastructures to assess and ensure their structural integrity" and to do this "expeditiously in order to abate the damage and harm it may cause our people."

Senate employees were evacuated in Pasay city yesterday following the tremor. One of them was Sen. Nancy Binay, who said her meeting was cut short by the shaking.

Meanwhile, the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA)

closed its runway 06/24 for international flights and runway 13/31 for domestic use as well as its taxiways at 10:23 a.m. yesterday. These were reopened though after 11 minutes of cursory inspection for damage to pavements.

Personnel from the Ground and Safety Units of the Manila International Airport Authority conducted the inspection - a standard operating procedure to ensure the safety of landing and takeoff of any type of aircraft using the NAIA runways and taxiways. They found no damage in any part.

The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines reported that the quake was also felt at the airports in Mamburao, Calapan, Marinduque, Plaridel, Lubang, San Jose, Pinamalayan, Sangley and Jomalig as well as in the Clark Tower and Subic Tower.

CAAP officials found no damage after conducting inspections. It also reported that all its employees are safe.

- With Alexis Romero, Rudy Santos, Ed Amoroso, Janvic Mateo, Ralph Edwin Villanueva, Marc Jayson Cayabyab, AFP



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306 rockfall events recorded in Mayon

There were 306 rockfall events observed at Mayon Volcano, the second day in a row that it surpassed the 300-mark as it continued its unrest that has displaced thousands of residents.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said there were also two

volcanic earthquakes recorded in the past 24 hours since Wednesday.

Phivolcs observed slow effusion from the summit crater emplaced lava flow and collapse debris on the Mi-isi (south) and Bonga (southeastern) gullies within approximately

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a kilometer from the crater. There were also three dome-collapse pyroclastic density current (PDC) that lasted three to six minutes.

Fair crater glow or "banaag" and incandescent rockfall shed from fluidal lava at the summit was observed as well as steam-laden plumes that reached 700 meters following the continuous moderate degassing from the summit crater.

Phivolcs said that Alert Level 3 is maintained over Mayon Volcano and warned a hazardous eruption is possible within weeks. It noted that there is currently a relatively high level of unrest as magma is at the crater.

The evacuation of residents in the 6-km radius permanent danger zone (PDZ) has been undertaken due to the danger of PDCs, lava flows, rockfalls and other volcanic hazards.

Meanwhile, there were 20 volcanic earthquakes recorded in Taal Volcano since Wednesday, including five volcanic tremors that lasted two to three minutes.

There was also an observed upwelling of hot volcanic fluids and voluminous emission of plumes that measured 2,100 meters tall.

There has been a short-term inflation of the western Taal Volcano island.

Taal remains under Alert Level 1 or low-level unrest.

Phivolcs has recommended the strict prohibition of entry into Taal Volcano island especially the main crater and Daang Kastila fissures, and occupancy and boating on Taal Lake.

Marcos satisfied with gov't response

President Marcos expressed satisfaction with the government's response to Mayon Volcano's restiveness even as he reminded agencies to assess the needs of affected residents before providing them cash aid.

"I think that the response that we have put together is satisfactory, that we were able to prepare and we were able to achieve so far the no casualty that the province is saying," Marcos said during a briefing on the situation of Mayon Volcano at the Albay Astrodome in Legazpi City last Wednesday. "Let us continue that. We will follow that principle in everything that we are doing."

In an interview with reporters in Taguig yesterday, Marcos gave assurance that the government has enough funds to help those who were affected by the activities of the volcano. However, he noted that not all concerns of the evacuees can be addressed by cash.

"Whatever is needed, we will have to provide... All agencies are already engaged in the rehabilitation effort, in (support of) the evacuees... Because we are not just talking about cash. We are also providing non-cash (assistance)," the President said.

Marcos said some issues affecting the displaced persons are not quantifiable, including those related to their mental health and the education of children.

During the situation briefing in Albay, Gov. Edcel Greco Lagman said P196.7 million is needed to help the residents affected by the volcano's restiveness. He said the amount covers relief services, water and sanitation, health emergency services, temporary learning spaces, livestock evacu-



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ation, logistics and emergency assistance.

More than 33,000 people may be displaced if Mayon Volcano, now under Alert Level 3, is placed under Alert Level 4, the governor added.

Marcos said families in evacuation centers have received food packs and hygiene kits from the government but some of their needs are not yet provided.

He said the evacuees must have some activity or livelihood source while waiting for Mayon Volcano to stabilize.

The labor department assured Marcos that it would include the evacuees in its Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers or TUPAD program for 30 days.

The program provides emergency employment for displaced workers, underemployed and seasonal workers, for a minimum of ten days but not more than 30 days.

The DepEd, meanwhile, will be having a learning camp for displaced children. Temporary learning shelters or spaces will also be set up in evacuation centers with the help of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

Speaker's assistance

Albay lawmakers have thanked Speaker Martin Romualdez for efforts in assisting those affected by the unrest of Mayon Volcano.

In separate statements Wednesday, Rep. Joey Salceda and Rep. Fernando Cabredo of Albay's 2nd and 3rd district, respectively, thanked colleagues for not leaving their constituents behind.

The Speaker's office and Tingog party-list – through their coordination with DSWD – earlier announced P33 million worth of assistance to the first three congressional districts of Albay. The assistance will take the form of cash and relief packs.

"I have already requested for DOLE-TUPAD support from Speaker Romualdez, who has assured us that he will do whatever he can to provide what Albay needs to endure this situation," Salceda said. "He (Romualdez) has already given us very significant assistance. We are very thankful."

"Speaker Romualdez immediately granted the request and appropriated funds through the DSWD Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) program. Each family received P5,000 cash assistance to support their daily needs while temporarily settled in the evacuation centers," Cabredo said in a Facebook post on Wednesday.

Reports coming from the Speaker's office said 1,420 relief packs have been released each to districts one and two, while the same number of relief packs are being readied for district three.

The assistance package consists of P1 million (P500,000 in cash and P500,000 worth of relief packs) from Romualdez and Tingog and P10 million worth of payouts from Department of Social Welfare and Development's AICS for each of Albay's first three districts. – Romina Cabrera, Alexis Romero, Delon Porcalla, Evelyn Macairan, Cet Dematera, Ralph Edwin Villanueva



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REGIONS

With Mayon unrest, teachers get creative

LEGAZPI CITY—For weeks or even months, teachers in Camalig, Albay, will have to make do with alternative learning spaces and visit their students staying in different evacuation centers so they can continue with classes and other school activities, as the province braces for a possible hazardous eruption of Mayon Volcano. They are now meeting their students in tents, fields and in the shade of trees. —STORY BY MA. APRIL MIER-MANJARES

A10



GET YOUR SHARE Evacuees in the village of Mauraro in Guinobatan, Albay, get their share of relief packages distributed by the Philippine Red Cross on June 13. Each family received hygiene kits, blankets and water containers.

—MARK ALVIC ESPLANA

CLASSES IN FIELDS, UNDER TREES

FOR ALBAY TEACHERS, MAYON UNREST WON'T STOP LEARNING

By Ma. April Mier-Manjares
@MaAprilMierINQ

LEGAZPI CITY—For weeks or even months, teachers in Camalig town will have to make do with alternative learning spaces and visit their students living in separate evacuation centers so they can continue with classes and other school activities as Albay province prepares for a possible hazardous eruption of Mayon Volcano.

Ginalyn Maravillas, a grade 2 teacher at Tumpa Elementary School in Barangay Tumpa, said when they met their students now staying at Comun Elementary School in Barangay Comun on Wednesday, they had to request some families staying there to vacate a room to accommodate them because the covered court was used for the distribution of relief items.

On Wednesday afternoon at Taladong Elementary School in Barangay Taladong, teachers had one-on-one reading sessions with students under the shade of trees.

"It's very challenging because when we arrive at 7 a.m., most of the students are still asleep, not yet having breakfast and some did not bring their school supplies," Maravillas said.

On Thursday, they returned to the same schools and would continue in the next few days in the villages of Sua and Tumpa, this time with students whose families had yet to evacuate.

Raysante Mujar, principal of Tumpa Elementary School, said they split their teachers in the different schools and villages to ensure the continuity of learning and assess the literacy and numeracy skills of students as part of intervention programs of the Department of Education (DepEd) on the learning loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Our goal is to ensure the continuity of learning, despite the fact that our students were evacuated to different evacuation centers and live in other villages," Mujar said in a separate phone interview.

Classes in Tumpa and other

schools inside the 6- to 7-kilometer radius danger zone in the villages of Quirangay, Anoling and Cabaghan were suspended on June 8 after the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) raised the alert level to 3 over the volcano.

On Thursday, April Ivy Nocos, a Grade 2 teacher, and her nine colleagues at Quirangay Elementary School held in-person classes with 85 children under a mango tree.

Displacement

Alvin Cuz, the disaster risk reduction and management coordinator of DepEd Albay division, said more than 15,000 students were affected, including those studying in 14 schools inside the danger zone and those displaced after 15 schools were occupied by evacuees.

As of Thursday, the Albay Public Safety and Emergency Management Office said 5,526 families (19,754 people) were evacuated from the towns of Daraga, Camalig, Guinobatan, Malilipot and Sto. Domingo and the cities of Ligao and Tabaco.

In Manila, President Marcos directed government agencies to conduct a thorough evaluation of the evacuees' conditions.

"Whatever is needed, we will have to provide. There are many agencies that are helping. All agencies are already engaged in the rehabilitation effort, in the support for the evacuees," the President said in an interview after attending a trade forum in Taguig City on Thursday.

Mr. Marcos stressed the necessity of addressing other critical aspects in this emergency situation, including the education and mental health of children in Mayon's danger zones.

"If it takes cash, then that's good. Well and good. But sometimes, it's not cash. We spoke a long time about what to do with the children [who] would not go to school, who are not doing anything. These are other issues that are basically not quantifiable but they are important," he said. —WITH

REPORTS FROM JEROME ANING AND FRANCES MANGOSING INQ



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Mayon still in state of 'high-level' unrest; PBBM assures aid

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ
and ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS

Mayon Volcano's "high-level of unrest" persisted, with two volcanic earthquakes and 306 rockfall events recorded between 5 a.m. on Wednesday, June 14, and 5 a.m. on Thursday, June 15.

Although the record is slightly less than the previous day's total of seven volcanic quakes and 309 rockfall events, most of the parameters continue to indicate a high level of unrest at Mayon Volcano.

Phivolcs still observed "very slow effusion of lava from the summit crater enplaced lava flow and collapsed debris on the Mi-isi (south) and Bonga (southeastern) gullies within approximately a kilometer from the crater."

Three dome-collapse pyroclastic density currents (PDCs) ▶ 7

that lasted three to six minutes were also detected.

Phivolcs said a continuous moderate degassing from the summit crater produced steam-laden plumes that rose 700 meters before drifting northwest.

"Fair crater glow or 'banaag' and incandescent rockfall shed from fluidal lava at the summit of Mayon Volcano was observed," it added.

Magma creeping upward

Mayon Volcano is "currently in a relatively high level of unrest," according to Phivolcs, implying magma is creeping upward.

It has been on alert level 3 since June 8, indicating a "hazardous eruption is possible within weeks or even days."

The evacuation of residents within the six-kilometer permanent danger zone has been recommended due to risk of PDCs, lava flows, rockfalls, and other volcanic hazards.

Phivolcs warned the public to be cautious of PDCs, lahars, and sediment-laden stream flows along channels draining the volcano edifice.

It pointed out that heavy rainfall could cause channel-confined lahars and sediment-laden stream flows on channels where PDC deposits were emplaced.

Likewise, it said ashfall events may "most likely" occur on the southside of the volcano, based on the current prevailing wind pattern.

Phivolcs advised civil aviation authorities to ask pilots to avoid flying close to the volcano because ash from sudden eruption may pose hazards to aircraft.

Marcos assures gov't aid

With Mayon's unrest, President Marcos assured affected families that the national government is ready to cater to their needs as they wait for the situation to return to normal.

Marcos gave the assurance when he visited evacuees at the Guinobatan Community College evacuation center in Guinobatan, Albay, on Wednesday, June 14, to personally assess ongoing disaster operations.

"We will have to make up the difference for the continuing—in terms of food, non-food items and all others that we have to make," Marcos said after Albay Governor Edcel Grex Lagman presented the capability of the ₱30-million quick response fund (QRF) that can only

last for 14 days.

90-day relief aid

Marcos said government agencies must prepare to cover 90 days of relief assistance to evacuees, which is the estimated maximum period of unrest of the volcano, to unburden the load of local government units (LGUs) responding to the disaster.

In his remarks, the President told the evacuees that they would not have to wait long if they needed assistance as government agencies, such as the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) are on standby.

"Sabihin ninyo sa amin. Nandito silang lahat at nandiyan lang sila para alalayan kayo (Just tell us. They are just around to help you)," he said.

Marcos has directed national government agencies to provide the necessities of those sheltering at the evacuation centers, particularly food, potable water, medicines, and sanitation kits and equipment.

He said the Department of National Defense (DND) has been coordinating with all disaster relief response agencies in the country to provide the evacuees with their needs while the DSWD works on extending relief goods.

The Department of Health (DOH), along with the municipal and provincial hospitals, will tend to the medical needs of evacuees, particularly by providing them with the necessary medicines.

President Marcos also reiterated his gratitude to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for providing 50 tons of relief goods after learning of the Mayon Volcano's unrest.

"Maybe, the reason they are so sympathetic to the Philippines is because they have many Filipinos working in UAE, and they feel the closeness and friendship to Filipinos," he said.

The Office of Civil Defense (OCD) reported that 4,400 families or 15,676 individuals were displaced by the Mayon's unrest, mostly from the seven municipalities and cities of Albay—Camalig, Ligao City, Daraga, Guinobatan, Malilipot, Santo Domingo, and Tabaco City.

Of the total number of displaced families and individuals, 4,215 families, or 15,017 persons are sheltering in 22 evacuation centers, while 185 families



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CLASSES GO ON — Students attend classes outside their classroom-turned-evacuation center for residents affected by the Mayon Volcano unrest at the San Jose Elementary School in Malilipot, Albay, on Thursday, June 15, 2023. (Ali Vicoy)

are temporarily residing elsewhere.

So far, Marcos said he was pleased with how the government has been responding.

He said the response, so far, has been "satisfactory."

"I think that the response that we have put together is satisfactory, that we were able to prepare and we were able to achieve so far yung sinasabi ng province (na) walang casualty (that there were no casualties)," he said. "Let's keep this up. We will follow that principle in everything that we are doing," he added.

Livelihood for evacuees mulled

However, Marcos said evacuees must have some activity or source of livelihood while waiting for Mayon

Volcano to stabilize.

"I don't know what livelihood or something [that we can provide] para mayroon naman silang ginagawa, mayroon naman silang pinagkakakitaan (so that they'll do something, earn a living)," he said.

The President also expressed concern about the toll of the disaster on children's emotional and mental health while staying at the evacuation centers.

"Isipin natin yung mga bata (Let's think about the children). What can we do with them?" Marcos said. "Maybe, DepEd (Department of Education) can help us, maybe the NGOs (non-governmental organizations) can help us. So that active naman sila doon at hindi lang nag-aantay ng araw-araw na walang

ginagawa (they remain active and not just wait doing nothing everyday). That is not a small issue."

TUPAD for evacuees

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) assured President Marcos that it will include evacuees in its Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers (TUPAD) program, in which a family member could earn ₱10,950 for 30 days.

TUPAD is a community-based package of assistance that provides emergency employment for displaced, underemployed, and seasonal workers for a minimum period of 10 days but not exceeding 30 days.

They will do community gardening near the evacuation centers, temporary shelter maintenance and housekeeping, and food preparations.

The DOLE said they are coordinating with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Department of Agriculture (DA) to maximize assistance to the evacuees.

Learning for learners

DepEd Region V Director Gilbert Sadsad said the department devised schemes to continue educating children while they are in evacuation centers.

Under the scheme, the original school occupants will attend classes in the morning, while the evacuees will do classes in the afternoon. Others will be taught through modular distance learning. (With reports from Betheena Unite and PNA)



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STRONGEST IN A WHILE

MAGNITUDE 6.3 QUAKE SHAKES SOUTHERN TAGALOG AREA

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
and Nestor Corrales
@Team_Inquirer

Classes at all levels in public and private schools were suspended in the town of Calatagan in Batangas, Bacoor City in Cavite and the whole of Laguna as a precaution after a magnitude 6.3 earthquake struck four kilometers southwest of Calatagan at 10:19 a.m. on Thursday.

No casualty or major damage was reported in the aftermath of the quake, which forced Metro Manila's three light rail systems to temporarily halt operations and sent Palace employees rushing out of their offices wearing hard hats and clutching emergency "go bags."

At the Laging Handa briefing, Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology Director Teresito Bacolcol, told reporters that the quake of tectonic origin was also felt at Intensity 4 in Manila, Mandaluyong, Quezon City, Valenzuela, Malolos, parts of Batangas such as Batangas City, Ibaan, Lemery, Nasugbu and Talisay, as well as Dasmariñas City and Tagaytay in Cavite and Tauay in Rizal.

In an advisory, Calatagan Mayor Peter Oliver Palacio

suspended all classes in the town at 11:35 a.m. to allow an assessment of the quake's effects on schools, public buildings and other critical infrastructure.

Ongoing inspections

Dan Badong, public information officer of the Calatagan disaster risk reduction and management office, said in a phone interview that the tremor, which lasted around 30 seconds, left no casualty or any major damage, causing just "minor cracks" in some school buildings and government office although inspections were still ongoing.

He added that they have yet to receive reports about any damage to houses or injuries to residents from the town's 25 barangays.

In an advisory, Assistant Transportation Secretary Jorjette Aquino, also the Metro Rail Transit 3 (MRT 3) officer in charge, said that after the quake, cracks were detected at Boni Station in Mandaluyong City and Ayala Station in Makati City, but they do not "pose any danger to the public and MRT 3 operations."—WITH REPORTS FROM JOANNA ROSE AGLIBOT, JANE BAUTISTA AND REUTERS INQ



EDITORIAL

Reminder of the Big One

As Mayon and Taal volcanoes show restiveness, a magnitude 6.3 earthquake struck near Calatagan in Batangas yesterday morning. Seismologists said the strong earthquake was tectonic, meaning it was not caused by volcanic unrest but by ground movement.

Still, suspicions persisted that the quake, which was felt in Metro Manila and which was followed by several aftershocks, was connected to the ongoing restiveness of volcanoes in the country as well as in neighboring Indonesia and as far away as Hawaii. All these areas sit in the Pacific Ring of Fire, a network of active volcanoes and earthquake faults in the Pacific Rim.

The earthquake occurred 33 years after the magnitude 7.8 Luzon earthquake on July 16, 1990 that left about 2,000 people dead or missing from Nueva Ecija to Baguio City. Yesterday's quake also struck exactly 32 years to the day Mt. Pinatubo roared to life with an explosive eruption after 600 years, blanketing much of Luzon with ash and altering weather patterns worldwide.

Fortunately, damage caused by yesterday's earthquake was minimal, with no reported injuries or deaths. Inevitably, however, the earthquake revived warnings long aired by seismologists that Metro Manila is ripe for a so-called Big One with a magnitude of

7.2 that can cause massive loss of lives and destruction of property in the country's most densely populated region.

The warning has led to newer buildings being designed with earthquake resiliency in mind, although it can be challenging to avoid structural damage caused by a temblor with a magnitude of seven or stronger. Several bridges and other public works infrastructure have also been inspected for structural integrity and fortified.

Information has also been made available for checking earthquake resilience of residential structures, although several of the steps are complicated for ordinary people. Rescue and relief preparedness has also improved.

Still, there's much room for better preparedness. The Big One is also expected to cause widespread fires and serious damage to water, electricity and telecommunications networks. Even a typhoon can cause widespread disruptions in water and electricity in the National Capital Region. Destruction of roads can seriously disrupt supply chains to and from Ground Zero, the NCR.

Science has not yet developed an accurate way of predicting earthquakes. The Big One may not happen in our lifetime... or it can. Yesterday's earthquake should remind everyone about the urgency of preparing for the worst.



PRIMEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE CORP.,
Applicant.

Case No. 23-3543

THIRD NOTICE OF HEARING

This is an application for Certificate of Public Convenience to operate and maintain a waterworks system within the municipality of Floridablanca, province of Pampanga with the following proposed rates:

PROPOSED TARIFF

Residential and Institutional

Pipe Size	0-5 m ³ (min)	6-10 m ³	11-20 m ³	21-30 m ³	31-40 m ³	Over 40 m ³
3/4"	P 117.00	23.70	24.60	26.10	26.00	32.90
1"	P 187.50	37.50	39.40	41.70	44.70	52.70
1 1/2"	P 375.00	75.00	78.80	83.40	89.50	105.30
2"	P 608.00	121.60	127.60	134.50	143.70	173.30

Residential and Commercial

Pipe Size	0-5 m ³ (min)	6-10 m ³	11-20 m ³	21-30 m ³	31-40 m ³	Over 40m ³
3/4"	P 117.00	23.70	24.60	26.10	26.00	32.90
1"	P 187.50	37.50	39.40	41.70	44.70	52.70
1 1/2"	P 375.00	75.00	78.80	83.40	89.50	105.30

Commercial and Industrial

Pipe Size	0-15 m ³ (min)	16-30 m ³	31-500 m ³	501-1000 m ³	Over 1000 m ³
1/2"	P 736.50	52.20	65.60	60.90	50.90
3/4"	P 1,177.50	83.90	105.20	120.40	125.40
1"	P 2,355.00	167.80	210.50	240.90	250.90
1 1/2"	P 5,687.50	417.70	526.20	647.20	647.20
2"	P 14,718.00	1,044.20	1,315.60	1,618.00	1,518.00
3"	P 26,491.00	1,879.50	2,398.10	2,912.50	2,812.50
4"	P 52,983.00	3,758.90	4,736.20	5,824.90	5,824.90

Bulk

Pipe Size	Per cu.m.	Pipe Size	Per cu.m.
1"	P 150.00	3/4"	P 75.00

Others

This application will be initially heard by the Board on 3 July 2023. The hearing will start at 9:00 o'clock in the morning at the NWRB-WUD Conferenda Room, 8th Floor, NIA Building, EDSA, Quezon City, at which time applicant shall present its evidence.

At least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled hearing, applicant shall publish this notice once in a daily newspaper of general circulation in the province of Pampanga and serve by personal delivery or registered mail a copy of the (i) application and its attachments, and (ii) this notice, to all affected parties appearing on page 2 hereof.

Parties opposed to the granting of the application must file their written opposition supported by documentary evidence on or before the above scheduled date of hearing, furnishing a copy of the same to the applicant.

Failure on the part of any person affected to file its opposition on time and to appear at the hearing will be construed as a waiver of their right to be heard. The Board will proceed to hear and decide the application based on the evidence submitted.

Likewise, failure by the applicant to appear at the hearing shall amount to lack of interest on its part and the instant application shall be dismissed accordingly.

Witness the Honorable Executive Director of the National Water Resources Board this 23rd day of May 2023.

By Authority of the Board:


Dr. BEVILLO D. DAVID, JR., CESO III
Executive Director

Affected Parties:

The Secretary
Sangguniang Bayan
Floridablanca, Pampanga

The Barangay Chairman
All the affected Barangays within
Floridablanca, Pampanga

The General Manager
Floridablanca Water District
Rizal St., Pab., Floridablanca
Pampanga 2006