

17 June 2023 Saturday



DENR

NEWS ALERTS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR welcomes PH, US pact on climate change

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Friday welcomed the strengthening of bilateral relations between the Philippines and the US on various areas of mutual interest, including cooperation on climate change, environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, and water security.

DENR Secretary Antonia Loyzaga was invited by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to be part of the Philippine delegation during the President's official visit to Washington, D.C. from April 30 to May 4.

The meeting between President Marcos and US President Joe Biden at the White House yielded several new bilateral commitments and reaffirmed the continued partnership between the two countries.

Rio N. Araja



Climate lockdowns begin; France bans short-haul flights to fight climate change

First word

MARC MORANO, founder



OBSERVER

YEN MAKABENTA

of the Climate Depot website, first warned of the danger of travel bans in his book Green Fraud in 2021. He wrote: **►MakabentaA5**

■ MAKABENTA FROM A1

Climate lockdowns begin; France bans short-haul flights to fight climate change

"The climate alarmists and activists were first of all jealous when the Covid lockdowns happened at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. They were beside themselves, saying, 'How is this happening?' Everyone from Greta Thunberg to John Kerry, and UN officials. And then they started saying, 'We need to follow this. If we can shut down for a virus, we can shut down for the climate.' And that's what we're seeing now. There are even academics in Australia proposing adding climate change to death certificates. And Bill Gates has said the death toll will be greater than the pandemic. So they're following every step of the way, and it's not just, you know, a professor here, or someone in academia. We have a major UK report coming out, as well as an international agency report that will call for essentially the same type of lockdowns — everything from restrictions on your thermostat to restrictions [on] moving. You can only fly in a climate emergency, one that's 'morally justifiable.' You know, kinda like a lockdown, you have to justify going to the store for essential services."

'Symbolic bans'

Morano's apprehension has started to happen.

Starting on the first of June, France has banned domestic short-haul flights where train alternatives exist, in a bid to cut carbon emissions.

The law came into force two years after lawmakers had voted to end routes where the same journey could be made by train in under two-and-a-half hours.

The ban all but rules out air travel between Paris and cities including Nantes, Lyon and Bordeaux, while connecting flights are unaffected.

Critics have described the latest measures as "symbolic bans."

Laurent Donceel, interim head of industry group Airlines for Europe (A4E), told the AFP news agency that "banning these trips will only have minimal effects" on CO2 output. Governments should instead support "real and significant solutions" to the issue, he said.

Airlines around the world have been severely hit by the coronavirus pandemic, with the website Flight-radar24 reporting that the number of flights last year was down almost 42 percent from 2019.

The French government had faced calls to introduce even stricter rules.

France's Citizens' Convention on Climate, which was created by President Emmanuel Macron in 2019 and included 150 members of the public, had proposed scrapping plane journeys where train journeys of under four hours existed.

Marc Morano commented on banning short airline flights: "This is what a climate lockdown looks like. This is what the Great Reset looks like. The climate agenda demands you give up airline travel, car travel, cheap reliable energy, and plentiful food. Net Zero goals are now dictating vehicle shortages to force more people into mass transit."

"They're going after your freedom of movement. They're going after private car ownership. They're going after everything it means to be a free person and turning it over to the administrative state."

French consumer group UFC-Que Choisir had earlier called on lawmakers to retain the four-hour limit.

"On average, the plane emits 77 times more CO2 per passenger than the train on these routes, even though the train is cheaper and the time lost is limited to 40 minutes," it said.

It also called for "safeguards that [French national railway] SNCF will not seize the opportunity to artificially inflate its prices or degrade the quality of rail service."

The law will mostly rule out air trips between Paris Orly airport and regional hubs such as Nantes, Lyon and Bordeaux.

Critics have noted that the cutoff point is shy of the roughly three hours it takes to travel from Paris to the Mediterranean port city of Marseille by high-speed rail.

As rail services improve, more routes could be added such as those between Paris Charles de Gaulle and Lyon and Rennes as well as journeys between Lyon and Marseille. They currently don't meet the criteria for the ban because trains to airports in Paris and Lyon don't allow passengers to arrive early in the morning or late in the evening.

Connecting flights are unaffected by the new law.

Train services must meet certain conditions to replace flights. The new law specifies that train services on the same route must be frequent, timely and well-connected enough to meet the needs of passengers who would otherwise travel by air — and able to absorb the increase in passenger numbers.

In October 2021, Greenpeace demanded an EU-wide ban on any flights where the rail journey would take under six hours. ...

Germany also has short-haul flights in its sights. While not banning or cutting back on them, the German government recently doubled the amount of tax levied on short flight tickets. Spain, meanwhile, has said it wants to eliminate all short-haul flights by 2050. ... Austria has taken a similar tack: when the government bailed out Austrian Airlines during the pandemic, the carrier was ordered to stop operating its Vienna-Salzburg route so that customers could prioritize train travel instead.

France's Minister of Transportation Clement Beaune admits intending to spread the ban beyond

France's borders. In an interview with Le Parisien, he said "that the EU must act as one on this matter to ensure that all have the same rules and impact is maximized." He also announced plans to promote the agenda at October's meeting of European transportation ministers. ...

The UN-approved book "Agenda 21: The Earth Summit Strategy to Save Our Planet," explained that "effective execution of Agenda 21 will require a profound reorientation of all human society, unlike anything the world has ever experienced."

Morano wrote: "The turn toward climate lockdowns epitomizes the irrationality, silliness and self-absorption of the climate crusade. It shows that it really knows no bounds ..."

"You can only fly in a climate emergency, one that's 'morally justifiable.' You know, kinda like a lockdown, you have to justify going to the store for essential services. They're going after freedom of movement. They're going after private car ownership. They're going after everything it means to be a free person and turning it over to the administrative state."

What will BBM bring back from Dubai?

When the climate summit takes place in Dubai in November, climate lockdowns will almost surely be on the table for discussion. President Marcos Jr. has eagerly accepted an invitation to attend the conference, confirming yet again his inability to resist an opportunity to travel abroad at public expense.

Let's pray that when he returns home, his pasalubong is not a sweeping ban on short-haul flights. Should this be his surprise, the ban should include a restriction on his own foreign travels.

Fair is fair.



TITLE: _____

PAGE _____

DATE _____

CO2 cuts vs. cash: Climate talks halted

PARIS—Pressure to speed cuts in carbon pollution took a back seat at UN climate talks that ended late Thursday night, as emerging economies, including China, demanded that rich ones vastly scale up climate financing.

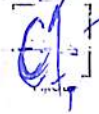
The stand-off over 10 days of technical negotiations in Bonn stymied progress across a raft of issues, including how to minimize the social costs of transitioning to clean energy, how to quantify countries' adaptation needs, and how to help economies already devastated by climate-amplified extreme weather.

This puts even more pressure on the COP28 climate summit in oil-rich United Arab Emirates in December. There, nearly 200 nations will review a "global stocktake" of how far off track the world is from achieving the Paris climate treaty goal of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Under current policies, the planet will warm nearly twice that much by 2100, according to the UN's climate science advisory panel.

"Climate change is not a North versus South issue," UN Climate chief Simon Stiell said at the closing plenary on Thursday.

"This is a tidal wave that doesn't discriminate. The only way we can avoid being swallowed by it is investing in climate action." AFP



TITLE:

PAGE

UK firm assures clean water in Nueva Vizcaya town

FCF Mineral Corp., the British mine company operating in the gold deposit-rich town of Quezon in Nueva Vizcaya, assured the provincial board of the company's regular water quality monitoring and maintenance in accordance with government requirements.

Lorne Harvey, FCF Minerals Corp. general manager for operations, said their ongoing operation of the Runruno Gold-Molybdenum Project in Runruno village includes strict monitoring of their wastewater discharges.

Superintendent Jomar Bravo of the FCF Minerals' Mine Environmental and Protection Office remarked that their "water discharges have always passed the water quality parameters" set by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB).

He added that "water discharges from our operations are regularly monitored and checked" by the

DENR-EMB and the Multi-Partite Monitoring Team (MPMT). The MPMT is composed of national government agencies, local government units, community organizations and civil society groups.

Bravo, however, explained that several areas beyond the coverage of their operations had been identified as factors contributing to the poor water quality of the river water affecting downstream. He further attributed the poor water quality to "the high presence of coliform as a result of human and animal wastes and that it is not in any way related to our operations."

Bravo cited the study conducted by their company in collaboration with the DENR-EMB which shows said results. He said their company's Community Relations Office is "also conducting information education and communication programs on proper health and sanitation to prevent indiscriminate dumping of human and animal wastes along the rivers."



Wastewater discharge coming from the FCF Minerals Corp.'s operation of its Runruno Gold-Molybdenum Project in Quezon town, Nueva Vizcaya is regularly monitored. PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY LEANDER C. DOMINGO

Meanwhile, the provincial board headed by Vice Gov. Eufemia Dacayo said they have required

the company to furnish them with the MPMT and DENR-EMB report. Bravo gave assurance that

the company will forward its quarterly engagement report with the DENR-EMB concerning the water

quality of their discharges as well as that of the river downstream.

LEANDER C. DOMINGO



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
AND
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

THE EXPONENTIAL OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1908
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

30
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

JUN 17 2023

TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

NWRB grants MWSS request to maintain water allocation from Angat Dam

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) granted again the request of Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) to maintain its raw water allocation from Angat Dam until the end of June.

NWRB Executive Director Sevillo David Jr. confirmed the extension of the 52 cubic meter per second (CMS) water allocation from Angat Dam until June 30. The 52 CMS allocation approved by the NWRB was scheduled to end on the last day of May.

However, due to the request of MWSS, the NWRB agreed to extend it until the first half of June. The water allocation would have been reduced to 50 CMS beginning June 16 to 30.

Meanwhile, west zone concessionaire Maynilad said the sustained allocation would ensure a normal supply of water to its consumers.

"At this allocation, we will be able to

sustain normal service levels in our concession area and prevent service disruptions due to a supply shortfall from our main raw water source," Maynilad said in a statement released on Friday, June 16.

"We continue to pursue our augmentation projects so that more supply can be generated from alternate sources," Maynilad added.

Maynilad had initially said that reducing the water allocation from the Angat Dam would cause water service interruption in its concession area.

The NWRB and Maynilad reiterated its reminder to the public to conserve water due to the continuous decrease of water level at Angat Dam.

As of 6 a.m. of June 16, the water level at Angat Dam was recorded at 186.98 meters, which is slightly higher than its minimum operating level at 180 meters. (Nicole Magmanlac)



Water board OKs 52cms allocation for MWSS in June

THE National Water Resources Board (NWRB) approved the request of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) to retain a higher water allocation of 52 cubic meters per second (cms) from June 16 to June 30.

NWRB chief Sevillo David confirmed the NWRB decision, although the board was reportedly expected to lower the allocation – drawn from Angat Dam – to 50 cms for Maynilad Water Services, Inc. and Manila Water Corporation beginning Friday to conserve water amid a looming El Niño.

House Ways and Means chair and Albay Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda meanwhile expressed his gratitude to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Felipe Medalla for officially clarifying that “financing of water and sanitation projects in rural communities” qualifies as a project financeable with Agri-Agra Rural Credit funds under the country’s banking system.

Maricel V. Cruz (See full story online at manilastandard.net)



Water board OKs 52cms allocation for MWSS in June

THE National Water Resources Board (NWRB) approved the request of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) to retain a higher water allocation of 52 cubic meters per second (cms) from June 16 to June 30.

NWRB chief Seville David confirmed the NWRB decision, although the board was reportedly expected to lower the allocation – drawn from Angat Dam – to 50 cms for Maynilad Water Services, Inc. and Manila Water Corporation beginning Friday to conserve water amid a looming El Niño.

House Ways and Means chair and Albay Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda meanwhile expressed his gratitude to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Felipe Medalla for officially clarifying that “financing of water and sanitation projects in rural communities” qualifies as a project financeable with Agri-Agra Rural Credit funds under the country’s banking system.

Maricel V. Cruz (See full story online at manilastandard.net)



FILE :

PAGE

DATE

Wildlife tourism in the islands of the Philippines

IMAGINE the seven largest islands in the Philippines — Luzon, Mindanao, Samar, Negros, Palawan, Panay and Mindoro. For the purpose of wildlife tourism, include Masbate, Romblon, Marinduque and the biggest island, Luzon's Cordillera Region, as well as Rizal, Batangas, Cavite, Laguna and Quezon. How to properly pursue wildlife-related interests like hiking, camping, caving, game drives and scuba diving were already introduced. One can easily surmise that now is the opportune time for our Department of Tourism (DoT) to expose the locals and the rest of the world to Philippine wildlife tourism.

These days, we learn about ecotourism attractions through social media sites like Instagram and Facebook. In particular, we are exposed to various species of mammals through TV's "Amazing Earth" and "Ano na, KK?" The Covid-19 pandemic offered opportunities for entrepreneurs to engage in "specialized farms" of edible flowers, berries, grapes, etc. which could be reached by walking, trekking, trail running on unpaved roads for hours and, in the process, coming to know various species of wildflowers and a class of (insects) arthropods like bees along the way, feeling for the first time the sound of nature and its beauty.



AMBASSADORS'
CORNER

AMADO S.
TOLENTINO JR.

How do we begin?

An archipelagic state, the Philippines is a tropical paradise and has many places to explore for wildlife spotting. Whether one is interested in marine life, birds or land mammals, the islands are full of waters (wetlands), lush jungles and mountain ranges for a wildlife enthusiast to see, touch and feel.

The country has the dugong, the world's only herbivorous marine mammal in Busuanga Island in Palawan; tarsier, the world's second smallest primate in Bohol; the Philippine Eagle, the world's largest and most powerful bird of prey in Mount Kitanglad in northern Mindanao; and the tamaraw, a small, dark sturdily built buffalo (*Bubalus mindorensis*), one of the rarest mammals in the world and critically listed as endangered. It thrives nowhere except on the island of Mindoro, specifically in Mount Iglit-Baco. But what is currently identified as the home of the tamaraw is a small area in Occidental Mindoro where the Tamaraw Gene Pool Farm, an off-site breeding facility is located.

It was set up in 1980 under the Tamaraw Conservation Program after research revealed only 327 were spotted, making the species one of the rarest in the world.

Other species for Philippine wildlife tourism are the Philippine crocodile (also known as Mindoro crocodile) which could be found in the freshwater and coastal areas southwest of Mindanao islands; Philippine spotted deer in Calauit and Culion islands in Palawan; Negros and Mindoro bleeding heart doves; bamboo sardines (*tawilis*) in Batangas; Palawan peacock (pheasant) at the National Park in Palawan; and different species of sea turtles, including green turtles, loggerhead, leatherback, hawksbill turtle, are found all over the Philippines.

Mention should be made of the Turtle Islands Protected Area located between Malaysia and the Philippines where, during peak season from May to July, hundreds of turtles lay their eggs every night on the beach area to the delight of tourists, benefiting the two countries which have a joint management agreement of the Turtle Islands Wildlife Sanctuary.

In addition, the Philippine wild pig (*baboy damo*), mouse deer and the red-vented cockatoo are also everywhere in the Philippines.

It would be most informative to

relay that there are many threat to the existence of wildlife in the country among which are human encroachment (excessive hunting dynamite fishing, use of lethal weapons), habitat loss (logging) poaching and disease outbreaks.

Sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism is the practice of considering the impact of tourism on the environment, the economy and society while at the same time taking into account the needs of tourists, the host communities and the industry.

Nature-based tourism is among the fastest-growing sectors of the tourism industry. In that regard wildlife tourism is important in the quest to expand opportunities for people and communities to bring in local benefits.

For people living in or near wildlife areas, tourism offers opportunities for jobs, enterprise and skills development. On such is a simple "home accommodation" scheme, but more important is community tourism relevant to local conservation at tititudes or simply, participatory wildlife resource conservation.

A vital first step is to focus the attention of different stakeholder groups on community involve

► Tolentino!

■ TOLENTINO FROM A4

Wildlife tourism in the islands of the Philippines

ment as a priority and not just an add-on to macro-economic, environmental or marketing schemes.

If we do not take care of environmental resources like wildlife, it will lead to deterioration and ultimately destruction and

future generations will not be able to appreciate their beauty and natural value.

As we traverse sustainably and responsibly, let us always be aware of the environmental impacts of wildlife tourism and always re-

member environmentalists' advice on proper interaction with wildlife — "Take only photographs. ... Leave only footprints."

Better still, to show support for the DoT's sustainable wildlife tourism efforts, encourage more

LGUs to adopt a wild fauna or flora as its official symbol to be used in promotional postcards, booklets, medals, trophies, stamps, stick-on or informative giveaways in furtherance of wildlife education and conservation.

(Note: During the 1990s, old folks in Mindoro volunteered the opinion that the island was favored by international scientists as the place to go for wildlife research as if it was a "jungle" of gentle people and wild animals, which turned

out later to be present also in some other islands of the archipelago. No wonder "Mindoro" is attached to the common name of some wildlife species, e.g., Mindoro crocodile, Mindoro baboy damo and red-vented cockatoo.)



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
AND
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

Founded Since 1858

The Manila Times

cl
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

TITLE:

PAGE:

JUN 17 2023
DATE

The Manila Times
www.manilatimes.net

Green Industries

EDITOR: Cora Llamas

SATURDAY June 17, 2023

C1

Exploring Ilocos' mesophotic coral reefs



The University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute, Mariano Marcos State University, and Holy Name University in Bohol are exploring Ilocos Region's mesophotic coral reef ecosystems. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

BY LEANDER C. DOMINGO

EXPLORING mesophotic coral reef ecosystems, the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute (UP-MSI), Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU), and Holy Name University (HNU) in Bohol have collaborated to venture into an underwater research expedition in Region 1 (Ilocos).

Mesophotic Coral Ecosystems (MCEs) are deep communities of reef-building corals that occur on the deeper edges of coral reef

zones where there are still low levels of light that can support photosynthesis.

The three-year research project

was funded with P2.8 million from the Department of Science and Technology — Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development, said Dr. Patrick Cabaitan, UP-MSI associate professor and program leader.

He said the study aims to discover the ecological factors affecting the coral ecosystems, and their potential as refuges from disturbances. "The study is expected to provide inputs to address the biodiversity and ecological dynamics of mesophotic coral reef

ecosystems in the Ilocos Region," Cabaitan added.

MCEs are found in tropical and subtropical regions, at depths ranging from almost 100 feet to over 490 feet below the ocean's surface. These serve as essential habitats for spawning, breeding, feeding and growing fish species.

The exploration in the sea reefs of Badoc and Currimao towns in Ilocos Norte, and San Esteban town in Ilocos Sur started in May this year by a team from the MMSU College of Aquatic Sciences and Applied Technology (Casat) led

by Prof. Rhea Espiritu together with key personnel from UP-MSI and HNU.

Espiritu said team members collaborated with concerned local government units to further facilitate the implementation of the project to foster knowledge-sharing among local officials and stakeholders.

Prof. Ernesto del Rosario Jr., MMSU Casat officer-in-charge dean, expressed hope the project would contribute to the formulation of effective conservation strategies that safeguard these fragile ecosystems from potential threats.

MMSU President Dr. Shirley Agrupis expressed support for the research project, acknowledging their "high hopes that it would help secure the marine resources in the region."

Agrupis also noted that MMSU and UP Los Baños are also implementing the Industry Strategic Science and Technology Plans for Eel project which is also funded by the DoST-Pcaard. "This project aims to develop protocols for eel aquaculture, thereby sustaining and helping build the eel industry in the country," she added.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
AND
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



JUN 17 2023

TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

What will the UN high seas treaty mean for protecting the ocean?

UNITED NATIONS, United States (AFP) – The world's first international treaty on the high seas, set to be adopted by the United Nations on Monday, contains landmark tools for the conservation and management of international waters.

International waters — outside the jurisdiction of any single state — cover more than 60 percent of the world's oceans.

Ocean ecosystems create half the oxygen humans breathe and limit global warming by absorbing much of the carbon dioxide emitted by human activities.

Once adopted, the UN treaty will go into force 120 days after 60 countries have ratified it.

Here are the key points of the text approved in March. The final version to be voted on has not yet been published.

Ocean under threat

The treaty begins by recognizing "the need to address, in a coherent and cooperative manner, biodiversity loss and degradation of ecosystems of the ocean."

These impacts include the warming of ocean waters along with their loss of oxygen, acidification, mounting plastics and other pollutants, as well as overfishing.

The text specifies that it will apply to waters beyond countries' exclusive economic zones, which extend to a maximum of 200 nautical miles from the coasts.

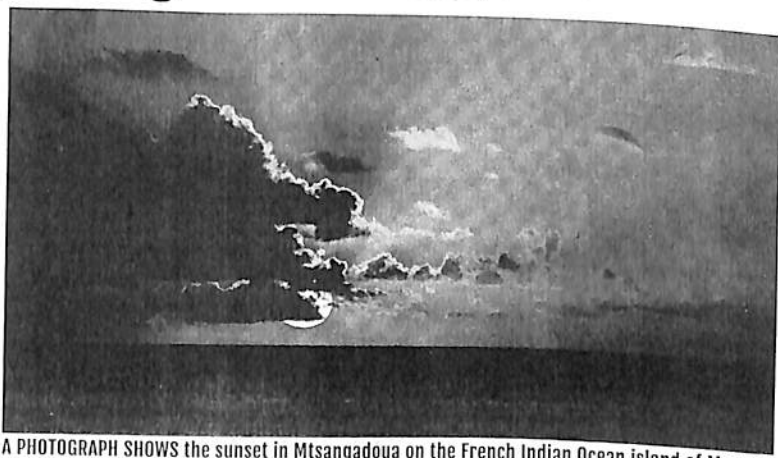
It also covers what is known as "the Area," shorthand for seabed and subsoil beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. The Area comprises just over half of the planet's seabed.

The Conference of the Parties (COP) will have to navigate the authority of other regional and global organizations.

Chief among these are regional fisheries bodies and the International Seabed Authority, which oversees permits for deep-sea mining exploration in some areas and may soon make the controversial move of allowing companies to mine beyond current test runs.

Marine protected areas

Currently, almost all protected marine areas (MPAs) are within national territorial waters.



A PHOTOGRAPH SHOWS the sunset in Mtsangadoua on the French Indian Ocean island of Mayotte on May 28, 2023. The first international treaty to protect the high seas is due to be adopted on June 19, 2023 at the United Nations. (AFP)

The treaty, however, allows for these reserves to be created in the open ocean.

Most decisions will be taken by a consensus of the COP, but an MPA can be voted into existence with a three-quarters majority, to prevent deadlock caused by a single country.

One crucial shortcoming: the text does not say how these conservation measures will be monitored and enforced over remote swathes of the ocean — a task that will fall to the COP.

Some experts say satellites could be used to spot infractions.

Individual countries are already responsible for certain activities on the high seas that they have jurisdiction over, such as those of ships flying their flags.

Sharing the bounty?

On the high seas, countries and entities under their jurisdiction will be allowed to collect animal, plant, or microbial matter whose genetic material might prove useful, even commercially.

Scientists, for example, have discovered molecules with the potential to treat cancer or other diseases in microbes scooped up in sediment, or produced by sponges or marine mollusks.

Benefits-sharing of those resources has been a key point of contention between wealthy and poorer nations.

The treaty establishes frameworks for the transfer of marine research technologies to developing countries and a strengthening of their research

capacities, as well as open access to data.

But it's left to the COP to decide exactly how any monetary benefits will eventually be shared, with options including a system based on specific commercialized products, or more generalized payment systems.

Environmental impact studies

The treaty requires signatories to assess the environmental impacts of planned activities under their control on the high seas before they are authorized in instances when such activities may have more than a minor or transitory effect.

It also calls for countries to assess the potential impact on international waters of activities within national jurisdictions that may cause "substantial pollution" or harm the high sea marine environment.

Ultimately, states are responsible for giving the green light to any potentially harmful activity — a role NGOs hoped would go to the COP, to make controversial approvals more difficult.

The treaty also requires states to publish updates on an activity's environmental impacts. Approvals can be called into question if unanticipated impacts arise.

Though they are not specifically listed in the treaty, activities that could come under regulation include transport and fishing, as well as more controversial subjects such as deep-sea mining or even geo-engineering initiatives to mitigate global warming.



TITLE :

PAGE

DATE

UN to adopt high seas treaty

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) – The world’s first international treaty to protect the high seas is scheduled to be adopted on Monday at the United Nations, a huge step for the “historic” environmental accord after more than 15 years of discussions.

“It’s a historic moment,” Minna Epps, ocean team director of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, told AFP. But “it’s appalling that it took so long.”

The landmark treaty would establish a legal framework to extend swathes of environmental protec-

tions to international waters, which make up more than 60 percent of the world’s oceans.

Following four years of official negotiations, UN member states finally agreed on the text for the treaty in March after a flurry of final, marathon talks.

Since then, the text has been pored over by the UN’s lawyers and translators to make sure it matches in the body’s six official languages.

But the journey won’t be over on Monday. After the UN adopts the treaty, it will need to be ratified by at least 60 member states to go into effect.

“Humanity counts on the ocean. But can the ocean count on us?” UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres

asked on Twitter recently, calling for more maritime protections.

Scientists have increasingly come to realize the importance of oceans, which produce most of the oxygen we breathe, limit climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide, and host rich areas of biodiversity, often at the microscopic level.

But with so much of the world’s oceans lying outside of individual countries’ exclusive economic zones, and thus the jurisdiction of any single

state, providing protection for the so-called “high seas” requires international cooperation.

A key tool in the treaty will be the ability to create protected marine areas in international waters.

The treaty, officially known as the treaty on “Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction” or BBNJ, also introduces requirements to carry out environmental impact studies for proposed activities to be carried out in international waters.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
AND
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

5
PAGE

UPPER
LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

JUN 17 2016

TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

UN to adopt high seas treaty Monday

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The world's first international treaty to protect the high seas is scheduled to be adopted Monday at the United Nations, a huge step for the "historic" environmental accord after more than 15 years of discussions.

"It's a historic moment," Minna Epps, ocean team director of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, told AFP. But "it's appalling that it took so long."

The landmark treaty would establish a legal framework to extend swathes of environmental protections to international waters, which make up more than 60 percent of the world's oceans.

Following four years of official negotiations, UN member states finally agreed on the text for the treaty in March after a flurry of final, marathon talks.

Since then, the text has been pored over by the UN's lawyers and translators to make sure it matches in the body's six official languages.

But the journey won't be over Monday. After the UN adopts the treaty, it will need to be ratified by at least 60 member states to go into effect.

"Humanity counts on the ocean. But can the ocean count on us?" UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres asked on Twitter recently, calling for more maritime protections.

Scientists have increasingly come to realize the importance of oceans, which produce most of the oxygen we breathe, limit climate change by absorbing CO₂, and host rich areas of biodiversity, often at the microscopic level.

But with so much of the world's oceans lying outside of individual countries' exclusive economic zones, and thus the jurisdiction of any single state, providing protection for the so-called "high seas" requires international cooperation.

The result is that they've been long ignored in many environmental fights, as the spotlight has been on coastal areas.

A key tool in the treaty will be the ability to create protected marine areas in international waters.

Currently, about one percent of the high seas are protected by any sort of conservation measures.

That's a drop in the bucket for what's required to achieve goals to set aside for protection 30 percent of the world's oceans and lands by 2030, as agreed by world governments in a separate historic accord reached in Montreal in December.

Without the ratification of the high seas treaty, "we're not going to achieve 30x30. It's as simple as that," said Jessica Battle, an ocean policy expert with the World Wildlife Fund.



PERSPECTIVE

A secure and reliable rare earth mineral supply chain to meet net-zero emissions by 2050

BY HAN PHOUMIN

All countries are committed to pursuing pathways to decarbonize emissions by 2050, amid concerns raised by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) over the serious consequences of global climate change. The Paris Agreement, a legally binding international treaty on climate change, set the goals to hold "the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 C above pre-industrial levels" and pursue efforts "to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 C above pre-industrial levels."

Pursuing net-zero emissions requires political commitment to drive policies in all energy-related sectors to transform business-as-usual energy infrastructure to clean and sustainable energy infrastructure, with clean fuels and renewables playing key roles. The scaling up of all clean and renewable technologies and production requires a massive amount of rare earth minerals or rare earth elements (REE) as critical input into the production of all clean technologies and renewables, such as wind turbines, battery storage and batteries in electric vehicles, electrolyzers, and all smart technologies involved in smart grids and telecommunications. REE are also used in the production of military weapons.

To meet the net-zero emission scenario, demand for critical minerals is estimated to grow around six-fold from 7.1 megatons (Mt) in 2020 to 42.3 Mt in 2050. This jump in demand raises concerns over energy security in the global sourcing supply chain,



Han Phoumin is senior energy economist at the Economic Research Institute for Asean and East Asia. ERIA PHOTO

China is the biggest global rare earth player in terms of mine production and reserves of rare earth elements (REE), with 44 million tons in reserves (representing about 35 percent of global reserves) and 140,000 tons of annual mine production. The United States is second, having reopened mining in 2018, and gradually increased production to 38,000 tons in 2021, with 1.5 million tons in reserves. Australia ranks third with an annual production of 17,000 tons and about 4.1 Mt in reserves. Vietnam and Brazil have the second and third most reserves with 22 million tons and 21 million tons, respectively, but their mine production is among the lowest at only 1,000 tons per year each (USGS, 2022).

China has a strong foothold in the global supply chain, accounting for 80-85 percent of global supply, with the US

heavily dependent on China for about 80 percent of its rare earth imports. Security of supply is an issue, underlining the need to develop new sources of rare earths in North America and elsewhere, such as Australia, Vietnam and Indonesia. China's dominant role enables it to control the global production and availability of these valuable metals.

Prior to the 1980s, the US held a majority stake in the REE market, but that changed as production growth abroad, mounting environmental pressures at home, and cheaper labor shifted production overseas.

China's dominant position has sparked supply concerns. It has used REE for political leverage and used its monopoly as a diplomatic tool in 2010 when it severely limited REE exports to Japan during arguments over disputed territory. This showed the world it saw its monopoly as a strategic tool in foreign policy. More recently, China also threatened to cut REE supply to the US during their trade war.

What we know is there are few players in the global REE supply chain. Recognizing the importance of supply chain security, the US has made several attempts to re-emerge as a major player. This has seen renewed focus under the Biden administration, with massive investments in climate change technology, and a hard line being taken on geopolitical rivalries and the national security threat posed by China.

As a result, Australia, Indonesia, Vietnam and India could be new supply chain sources in the near future. Australia's resources sector is well-positioned to develop a cost-competitive domestic processing sec-

tor that meets environmental, social and governance considerations. This includes drawing on high labor and environmental standards, reliability as a supplier, and technical expertise to drive production efficiency. Its high standards and strong resources record give Australia a major advantage in the global critical minerals market. However, Australia, Indonesia and Vietnam will all need to address barriers facing miners and processors, including skills and expertise to meet the technical challenges of production, processing and refining, and managing the sustainability of the critical minerals industry.

It is important for the governments of these three countries to look into issues that can help de-risk projects at all stages of development to overcome barriers and attract private investment. This can be done through project facilitation, providing technical support, and making strategic investments to scale up processing and lock in finance and off-take for production. There is a need to invest in research and development (R&D) for this sector to grow, just as China did for decades through its own R&D investment.

Finally, it is crucial to build relationships with key countries other than China for securing supplies; such as the United States, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, India and the European Union members to secure off-take contracts for these critical minerals.

Disclaimer: The views expressed are purely those of the authors and may not in any circumstances be regarded as stating an official position of ERIA.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
AND
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

A5
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

JUN 17 2023

TITLE:

PAGE

1/7

DATE

PROTECTING WATERSHEDS

CORDILLERA PUSHES FOR 'GREEN ENERGY'

BAGUIO CITY—The latest Cordillera development plan will be driven by a “green energy” agenda to maximize the region’s potential as a “renewable energy powerhouse” while raising capital needed to preserve Luzon’s watershed areas, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said on Thursday.

In a recorded message, Balisacan discussed the new direction being taken by Baguio City and the provinces of Kalinga, Ifugao, Benguet, Abra, Apayao and Mountain Province during the launching ceremony here of the 2023-2028 Cordillera Administrative Region Development Plan (CARDP), which was attended by all of the region’s governors.

Like the rest of the country, CARDP was designed to steer the region’s recovery in the wake of the “lasting” economic impact of the COVID-19 pan-

demic, the lingering effects of the Russian war in Ukraine and extreme weather, he said.

Balisacan said the Cordillera appeared to have coped better compared to other regions, having ranked as the second-fastest growing economy in 2022. The Cordillera’s gross regional domestic product (GRDP) contracted by 10.2 percent in 2020 when the pandemic struck, but bounced back last year, with an 8.7-percent growth in GRDP.

He said improving food security remains a key priority for the CARDP in light of fluctuating world food prices, the country’s high power costs and the El Niño phenomenon expected to affect the country by the end of the year.

But Balisacan said actively pursuing renewable energy projects is “timely,” given that the headwaters of 13 Luzon river systems are in the Cordillera.

According to the Depart-

ment of Environment and Natural Resources, 85 percent of the highland region is forest land.

“The [CARDP] strategies include the protection of the region’s environment and natural resources as well as the exploration of all of its renewable energy potentials,” he said.

The ceremony made no references to some of the country’s oldest hydroelectric dams, which buried indigenous Cordillera communities after they were built in the 1960s. These hydroelectric dams still contribute to the Luzon Power Grid.

A Malacañang-backed project in the 1970s to build four more dams along the Chico River, a 233-kilometer river system traversing the Cordillera and Cagayan Valley regions, stirred up broad-based opposition from tribal elders at the time, forcing the developers to back out.

—VINCENT CABREZA INQ



Mayon ashfall reaches foot-slope villages; evacuees swell to 20,000

By CET DEMATERA
and ROMINA CABRERA

Mayon Volcano in Albay continued its silent effusion of fresh lava in the past three days that has reached as far as two kilometers down the crater, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seis-

mology (Phivolcs) reported. Phivolcs said that the largest pyroclastic density current (PDC) happened on Thursday at 11:18 p.m. and lasted up to four minutes, depositing materials within one kilometer of the gullies.

Phivolcs also observed very slow effusion of lava from the

summit crater of Mayon Volcano that continued to feed lava flows and collapse debris on the Mi-isi (south) and Bonga (southeastern) gullies.

These lava flows have advanced to around one kilometer from the summit crater while the collapse

Turn to Page 5

SATURDAY | JUNE 17, 2023

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

news

5

Mayon From Page 1

debris reached around two kilometers from the crater.

The state bureau said Alert Level 3 is maintained over Mayon Volcano as there is relatively high level of unrest. Magma is at the crater of the volcano and hazardous eruption within weeks or even days is possible.

Paul Alanis, Phivolcs resident volcanologist at the Lignon Hill Observatory in Legazpi City, said that aside from the largest pyroclastic density current, 12 more dome-collapsed PDCs were detected by their monitoring instruments, accompanied by 307 rockfall events in the past 24 hours.

Alanis said traces of ashfall dispersed from the PDCs were reported in Sitio Buga, Barangay Nabonton, in Ligao City; and in Purok 7, Barangay San Francisco in Gunobatan, Albay.

"We included this traces of ashfall report in our latest bulletin because this is also the first time that we received such information from the barangay residents and validated by our team," Alanis said.

Phivolcs detected a total of 922 rockfall events as triggered by the sustained lava effusion

in the past three days. Steam-laden plumes also averaged to 725 tons a day, while sulfur dioxide (SO₂) emissions averaged to 509 in the past 48 hours, Phivolcs data showed.

A total of 307 rockfall events, four volcanic earthquakes and 13 dome-collapse PDCs lasting two to six minutes were recorded in 24 hours since Thursday morning, the Phivolcs added.

"These data indicated that Mayon's overall abnormal condition was sustained and remained with the alert level three parameters in the past 72 hours, or three days," Alanis explained.

He refused to predict as to how long this quiet lava effusion would last, adding that "Mayon is a volcano that displays abnormal behavior that is so difficult to predict."

Alanis recalled Mayon's 2014 eruption that ended only with lava flow and did not proceed to bombastic eruption of volcanic materials.

18,584 in shelters

Some 5,125 families or 18,584 persons are being served across 27 different evacuation

centers - including school classrooms transformed into temporary shelters - in Albay, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said.

The number of residents affected by or displaced by Mayon's continuing volcanic activity in Albay also ballooned to a total of 9,947 families or 38,391 persons yesterday.

Some 471 families or 1,683 persons who were also forced out of their homes have decided to seek refuge elsewhere of stay with their relatives living in safer areas, the NDRRMC added.

Albay Public Safety and Emergency Management Office (Apsemo) OIC Eugene Escobar said evacuees are being anticipated to further increase in number due to the sustained abnormal condition of Mayon.

"LGUs are starting to evacuate their residents staying near the danger zones as they are afraid to stay while seeing fresh hot lava oozing out of Mayon's crater in a 24-hour duration period," Escobar said.

He also said that assistance continued to pour in yesterday from national agencies and non-government organizations including filtration machines to be stationed near the clustered

evacuation centers across Albay.

Albay Gov. Edcel Grex Lagman said that the provincial government is prepared if Phivolcs decides to raise the Alert Level.

He said the government is prioritizing water, sanitation and hygiene in the evacuation centers.

Price freeze ordered

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has ordered a price freeze for basic goods in Albay amid the continued unrest of the Mayon Volcano.

"Through DTI's provincial office in Albay, I have ordered a price freeze for basic goods today," Trade Secretary Alfredo Pascual said yesterday.

"Business establishments are directed to comply to this, otherwise, we will impose necessary penalties. We want to ensure that our affected *kababayans* in Albay will have access to affordable and reasonably-priced basic goods especially during disasters like this," he added.

Under the Price Act (RA7581), as amended by RA 10623, prices of basic necessities are automatically frozen at their prevailing prices for 60 days from declaration unless sooner

lifted by the President.

DTI monitoring teams are continuously checking the prices and availability of basic goods like canned fish, locally manufactured instant noodles, bottled water, bread, processed milk, coffee, candles, laundry soap, detergents and salt in supermarkets, groceries and wet markets.

According to the Price Act, business establishments found to have violated the price freeze will face a penalty of imprisonment for a period of one year to 10 years, or a fine ranging from P5,000 to P1 million, or both, at the discretion of the court.

DPWH readies assets

Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Secretary Manuel Bonoan said the DPWH is ready with preparedness measures and a response action plan in case of an escalation in Mayon's alert level.

"The DPWH Disaster and Incident Management Teams of Regional and nearby District Engineering Offices have been activated, while Quick Response Assets composed of 340 individuals with 30 equipment were prepositioned for any eventuality," he said.

As part of the preparedness measures, DPWH Regional Office 5 also identified alternate routes if the situation worsens or in case some road sections need closure for safety.

In the event that the Legazpi-Sto. Domingo-Tabaco Road will be impassable, motorists may take Ligao-Tabaco Road as an alternative road.

In case the Camalig Section of Daang Maharlika will be closed, the Camalig-Comun-Gapo-Peñafrancia Road may be an alternate route.

Meanwhile, a community pantry will be organized for the residents in Albay province, House Speaker Martin Romualdez announced yesterday as he expressed support for the planned community pantry project of Albay 3rd District Rep. Fernando "Didi" Cabredo.

The program will be funded by the P500,000 financial aid that Cabredo received from Romualdez and Tingog party-list Reps. Yedda Marie, Romualdez and Jude Acidre. It will be dubbed "Community Pantry nina Speaker and Cong Didi." - With Michael Punongbayan, Sheila Crisostomo, Jose Rodel Clapano, Cecille Suerte Felipe, Catherine Talavera, Mark Ernest Villeza



Minor infra damage in Calatagan due to quake

The magnitude 6.3 earthquake that struck Batangas and was felt in Metro Manila and other parts of Luzon left minimal damage to infrastructure in Calatagan, Batangas, the town mayor said yesterday.

Mayor Peter Oliver Palacio said only small cracks were found in schools, hospitals and other buildings as well as roads and bridges, based on inspections conducted by municipal engineers.

Palacio said there was no reported death or injury as residents followed standard operating procedures in evacuating buildings during earthquakes.

He said he also suspended classes following the quake.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said the epicenter of the quake was monitored 11 kilometers south of Calatagan.

The quake was felt at Intensity 5, which is classified as strong, in Calatagan as well as in Looc, Lubang and Paluan in Occidental Mindoro.

Meanwhile, in Batangas, 33 students of the Lipa City National High School in Barangay 1 reportedly collapsed or vomited due to the earthquake.

First-aid responders brought the students to the Hospital ng Lipa and Lipa City District Hospital for treatment.

35 aftershocks

Phivolcs said 35 aftershocks of the magnitude 6.3 quake have been recorded since Thursday.

The aftershocks had magnitudes ranging from 1.4 to 3.1, 17 of which were plotted or those that were detected by at least three seismic stations.

Phivolcs said none of the aftershocks was felt due to the lower magnitude.

Phivolcs director Teresito Bacolcol said the magnitude 6.3 quake was due to a movement in the Manila Trench.

- Emmanuel Tupas, Romina Cabrera