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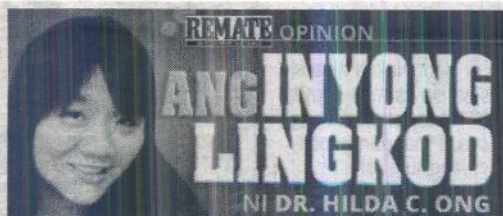
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



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REMATE OPINION

ANGINYONG LINGKOD

NI DR. HILDA C. ONG

NARESOLBAHAN ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang 606 land dispute cases o 43% ng 1,419 cases na isinangguni sa Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program nito simula pa noong 2019.

Ito ay ipinaalam ni DENR Assistant Secretary for Legal Affairs and ADR Committee Chair Michelle Angelica Go sa ginanap na awarding ceremony para sa Best ADR Officers (ADROs) na bahagi ng pagdiriwang ng DENR National ADR Day 2022 noong December 6 sa central office sa lungsod ng Quezon.

Sinabi ni Go na dahil ang mga pagkaantala sa pagresolba ng land dispute cases ay nagdudulot ng "mistrust" sa DENR, ang mabilis na resolusyon ng land cases sa

pamamagitan ng ADR mechanism ang nagtataas ng integridad ng ahensya na ayon dito ay "a crucial determinant of citizens' trust in government."

Ayon kay Go, ang 606 mediated case sa loob ng apat na taon "is quite a feat" kung ikokonsidera ang mas matagal na panahon at malaking gastos kung ang mga kasong naresolba ito sa korte.

Sabi ni Go, nakikinabang sa ADR mechanism ang mga nagtutunggali sa larangan ng oras at gastusin kung ikukumpara sa paghahain ng kaso, kung saan ang dalawang partido ay nasasailalim sa adversary system at court decisions batay sa merito ng kanilang pagtatalo.

Ang pagkakaroon ng DENR ng ADR mechanism ayon sa Republic Act (RA)

43% NG 1,419 LAND DISPUTE CASES NIREOLBA NG DENR SA LOOB NG 4 TAON

9285 o Alternative Dispute Resolution Act of 2004 at DENR Administrative Order (DAO) 2005-18, na nananawagan na gumamit ng ADR principles at procedures sa pagresolba ng mga tunggalian.

May 412 ADR mediations ang naisagawa sa taong ito, karamihan ginawang online, na lagpas ng 110 percent sa 376 ADR mediations na naisagawa noong isang taon.

Iniugnay ni Go ang pagtaas ng bilang ng ADR mediations noong 2022 sa buong implementasyon ng DAO 2021-01 na "Guidelines on the Conduct of Virtual Alternative Dispute Resolution Proceedings in the Resolution of Land Claims and Conflicts and Other Natural Resources Disputes in the Department" na inilabas noong January 29, 2021.

Maliban sa RA 9285, ang DAO 2021-01 ay ayon sa RA 11494 o ang "Bayanihan to Recover as One Act" na nag-

babalngkas ng mga hakbang para sa COVID-19 response at recovery interventions at sa Supreme Court Administrative Circular No. 37-2020 na nananawagan sa pilot testing ng mga pagdinig sa pamamagitan ng videoconferencing.

Ang lands sector ang naunang isinama sa DENR ADR program. Noong 2018, isang comprehensive 80-hour accreditation training ang isinagawa para sa launinging ito.

Sa 427 indibidwal na nakatapos sa training program, may 346 ang aktibong ADRO sa kasalukuyan matapos ang paglipat sa ibang ahensya ng gobyerno o retirement ng 78 na iba pang ADROs.

Ayon kay Go, karamihan sa DENR-ADROs ay hindi abogado na isang kalamangan kumpara sa lawyer-ADROs.

"As mediation facilitators, ADROs go beyond the legalese. The mindset should not be legalese. You get out of that box and it's better if the ADRO is a non-lawyer," saad ni Go.

Nagpahayag si Go ng optimismo sa higit pang institutionalization ng ADR sa ahensya at ang paglunsad nito sa sektor ng pagmimina at kagubatan matapos magbigay ng suporta si DENR Secretary Antonia Loyzaga sa pag-

bubukas ng ADR photo exhibits sa umaga ng awarding.

"The environment chief expressed appreciation for the number of non-lawyers in DENR's roster of ADROs as she noted that dispute resolution requires a mindset that is not legalese," ayon kay Go.

Dagdag ni Go, pinalalakas ng DENR ang ADRO recruitment at accreditation sa plano nito na ilunsad ang ADR mechanism sa sektor ng kagubatan at pagmimina.

Kinilala bilang 2022 Top ADROs sina Mildred Atienza Pascual (DENR Region IV-B), Sebastian Miguel Magat (DENR-Region II), Alexis Valdez Abrasaldo (DENR-Region II), Jose Angelo Nermal Fabila (DENR-Region VI) at Orland Julius Moscardon Padios (DENR-Region VI).

Ang DENR regional offices I, II, IV-B, VI at X naman ang nakatanggap ng Top Pool of ARDO Awards bilang pagkilala sa kanilang suporta na ma-institutionalize ang ADR mechanism sa kanilang mga lugar na sinasakupan.



NEWS BRIEFS

Pamalakaya: Manila Bay rehab a failure

Militant fishers' group Pamabansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) on Wednesday refuted the claim of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) that the water quality of Manila Bay was "improving." Last week, the DENR said that the government's ongoing rehabilitation efforts in the bay "appeared to be paying off" with the "gradual decrease in fecal coliform level since January 2019." But Pamalakaya called the DENR statement an attempt to "whitewash the failure of the rehabilitation by only looking at the surface level." It noted that out of 30 ongoing reclamation projects in Manila Bay, 21 had received environmental compliance certificates from the DENR.

—MARIEJO S. RAMOS



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Confiscated logs serve new purpose

BUTUAN CITY – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has handed over on Wednesday 7,667 newly-fabricated armchairs to be used by students in 143 public schools in Agusan del Sur.

Provincial environment and natural resources officer Norman Asugan said that the armchairs were made from 498.31 cubic meters of confiscated logs and fitches that were turned over to the provincial government last year.

“These logs and fitches were donated to the provincial

government in a deed of donation signed on 14 October 2022 between Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Caraga Region executive director Nonito Tamayo and Governor Santiago Cane Jr.,” Asugan said.

On Tuesday, both officials led the turnover of the armchairs to the province’s Department of Education office, represented by Superintendent Miverva Albis, at the provincial government center in Patin-ay, Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur.



Mountaineers told: Inform village officials before mountain hikes

By MANUEL T. CAYON

@awimailbox

Mindanao Bureau Chief

DAVAO CITY—Mountaineers have been told to coordinate their plans and share their itinerary with barangay officials here before they scale the country's highest peak at the Davao City side of Mt. Apo, the head of the Davao City Public Safety and Security Office (PSSO) said.

PSSO chief, Angel Sumagaysay, said there have been incidents in the past "when people going up to the mountain did not ask permission from barangay officials in the area. These people eventually got lost and had to be rescued."

"They went up, then it rained, and you know in the mountains if there are many trees it is very dark. Now the rain became strong, the water level rose they could not go down," Sumagaysay said, as he recalled a recent incident.

The mountaineers were eventually found by the Bantay Bukid, the city's forest guards.

The Bantay Bukid is composed of members of tribal communities living in the area who were deputized to guard the forests in the area.

"They were able to penetrate and locate the area where the hikers were trapped," Sumagaysay said.

The rescue was augmented by personnel from the Davao City Central 911 and policemen who were deployed to assist the Bantay Bukid in rescuing the trapped hikers.

"Don't just look at mountain climbing as all enjoyment. You should anticipate that there are so many considerations to look at," Sumagaysay said.

He said the hikers should consider the weather and the conditions of the area, such as if the trails are slippery.

"You should ask permission and coordinate with barangay officials of the area where you are trekking, or plan to trek," he said.



SC ruling on joint oil exploration deal won't affect PH-China ties

By Macon Ramos-Araneta
and Rey E. Requejo

THE Department of Foreign Affairs said the bilateral relationship between the Philippines and China will not be affected despite the Supreme Court's decision declaring as unconstitutional a tripartite 2005 joint oil exploration pact of the two countries with Vietnam in the South China Sea.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo stressed that oil and gas is only "basically one aspect" of the Philippines' relationship with China even as he admitted the DFA will have to "see how this pans out"

Manalo said the DFA has not yet received an official communication from the Supreme Court regarding its decision to nullify the oil exploration pact.

"So we will have to see how this pans out with respect to oil and gas development," he said in an interview with CNBC.

"I think this is an issue which has been there for some time. In fact, when the President visited China last week, there was a general understanding that we would resume talks on oil and gas development. But of course, there were no details."

Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri said the government must "tread carefully" in these exploration talks with China because it might also be declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

"There are questions there. One question: Are we now barred from doing joint exploration with other claimant countries such as China and Vietnam under this ruling?" Zubiri said.

Although he cautioned the government on the negotiations with China regarding the joint oil and gas exploration, Zubiri expressed confidence that Mr. Marcos will be advised well on its legality, as former Chief Justice Lucas Bersamin serves as his Executive Secretary.

On the other hand, Zubiri urged the government to study possible explorations in other areas such as the Sulu Sea and Benham Rise.

"We are talking about oil exploration... We are an archipelago. I do not believe there is no oil in the Sulu Sea, between Mindanao and Palawan," he said.

"We have other opportunities. I do not know why we are always concentrating on the West Philippine Sea, and South China Sea area. We can continue to explore down south," he added.

Sen. Francis Tolentino also said he agrees that Philippine laws will have to apply in areas "where we have jurisdiction pursuant to existing laws and UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea)."



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'SC ruling to affect oil exploration plans'

BY RAYMOND AFRICA

SENATE President Juan Miguel Zubiri yesterday said the Supreme Court decision voiding the agreement entered into by the Philippines, China, and Vietnam has implications on the proposed joint oil and gas exploration between Manila and Beijing.

"There are questions there. One question: Are we now barred from doing joint explorations with other claimant countries such as China and Vietnam under this ruling? ... We have to study that very carefully and with that we have to tread cautiously in these exploration talks,

for example with China. Because it might also be declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court," Zubiri said at a forum.

Zubiri said that Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin, who is former Supreme Court chief justice, can share his inputs on the SC decision, to clarify if the Philippines cannot enter into a joint exploration with other claimant countries in contested areas of the South China Sea/West Philippine Sea.

"For example, we will do exploration in Pag-asa Island, should that be wholly Filipino undertaking?" he said.

For the oil and gas exploration

not be declared as unconstitutional, Zubiri said, the government may want to do the activities in areas well within the Philippine territory.

He said areas like the Sulu Sea, which is between Mindanao and Palawan, could have the potential of oil and gas source.

He said another potential source of oil and gas is the Benham Rise which has no claimants.

"I do not know why we are always concentrating on the West Philippine Sea area. We can continue to explore down south, I asked (energy) Secretary Lotilla about and he said it was started I

think in the early 2000s but was not pursued because of security concerns. We should send navy boats there to secure these exploration vessels," he said in mixed Filipino and English.

Sen. Francis Tolentino said he agrees with the SC decision "that Philippine laws will have to apply in areas where we have jurisdiction pursuant to existing laws and the UNCLOS."

"That said, future negotiations if the Supreme Court ruling is raised by our government is akin to saying our laws should apply – which the other side might consider a thorny issue," Tolentino said.



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Addressing climate crisis with PHL: Germany partners for a greener world

THE catastrophic effects of the ongoing climate crisis can be felt extensively in many parts of the globe, with the Philippines being one of the most vulnerable countries.

With this in mind, Germany is upholding its promise to help create a greener planet, while limiting global warming both nationally and internationally.

"We consider the climate crisis the greatest security challenge of our time. The world cannot afford to wait longer. We need to end the fossil age, and rapidly reduce emissions," Ambassador Anke Reiffenstuel said.

"This is why Germany has massively upped the pace on the shift to green energy, with the aim of being climate neutral by 2045. Globally, [my country is a reliable partner of those] that are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, such as the Philippines," Reiffenstuel further stated. "Being a priority country of the International Climate Initiative, Germany is currently implementing more than 50 projects with a total volume of more than €88 million [or around P5.2 billion] in the areas of climate, environment and biodiversity."

Germany's foreign minister Annalena Baerbock reemphasized her country's commitment at the recent Conference of the Parties, or COP27, in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt: "[We are] putting climate justice at the top of our agenda," she said, and added that the European country was to raise its contribution for climate finance

directed to emerging and developing countries at the tune of \$6 billion per year.

Baerbock also stressed the "breakthrough on the issue of loss and damage" that was achieved in the conference, which is "opening up a new chapter in the area of climate justice."

During its "G7" presidency, Germany also initiated the development of a "Global Shield Against Climate Risks," which was unanimously supported by the group. The Global Shield, officially launched on November 14, 2022 at the COP 27, systematically analyzes—country by country—gaps in protection, and works with those hardest hit by climate change to develop protection packages, as well as financial protection against climate-related loss and damage.

Environment-friendly transport systems

SINCE 2014 German development agency *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) has been implementing projects that aim to transform the local public-transport system—a key sector for reducing emissions in the Philippines.

Jeepneys, a part of everyday Filipino life, use diesel—a fossil fuel proven to contribute to the production of ground-level ozone. Traffic jams in the city provoke longer idle time for the said vehicles and others that employ fossil fuels. According to a GIZ study published in 2016, there are 250,000 jeepneys in the Philip-

pinas, with 55,000 of them operating in Metro Manila alone. They account for 40 percent of vehicle trips, making them the biggest greenhouse-gas emissions contributor in the transport sector.

Together with the Department of Transportation, the GIZ embarked on the "Jeepney+NAMA," or Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action project, which aimed to create a modern, sustainable and climate-friendly transport system in Philippine cities. By 2026 the project strives to modernize jeepney fleets and reduce the share of diesel-powered vehicles by 22 percent. This means replacing them with electric jeepneys and public-transport vehicles that follow the Euro-4 emission norms.

The project also helps craft systems that will make public transport more efficient for users. Institutional reorganization and planning will also help fully modernize the country's jeepneys.

"The transport sectors both in Germany and in the Philippines [are] key when it comes to reducing emissions. Focusing on public transportation benefits especially the lower-income segments of society, and has positive, sustainable long-term effects," Reiffenstuel explained.

She went further that Germany has expanded its rail networks and financially incentivized the use of public transportation, while taxes on airfares were increased. At the same time, the said country has invested in making cycling more attractive



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and in incentivizing individuals to switch to e-mobility.

The envoy added that the "Jeepney+" project doesn't stop there: The aim is to help create people-oriented cities, empowered by efficient, dignified and sustainable mobility. Through another GIZ-powered project called "TRANSfer," similar efforts are being implemented to also modernize the Philippines's bus systems.

Climate resiliency among farmers

ANOTHER crucial but vulnerable sector affected by the climate crisis is agriculture, especially in Mindanao. Typhoons, floods and droughts—induced by the climate crisis—are now more frequent and destructive, leaving farmers' livelihood at risk.

Partnering with the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement, World Vision and GIZ, the German government is helping farmers adapt to climate change, while teaching them about eco-friendly practices that will sustain their yield.

The project initially focuses on farmers located on the North Cotabato side of the Liguasan Marsh: a low-lying tract of land that gets flooded during the rainy season. In such areas, floodwater takes longer to dissipate after heavy rains.

"Every year farmers lose so much of their crops due to the effects of climate change," said Executive Director Marlon P. Palomo of PRRM.

"This leads to financial loss for the farmer, but also has an effect on the rest of the country, as it means less rice and produce will be available for sale, leading to higher prices."

As of September 2022, 360 farmers are now undergoing capacity-building workshops. These include biointensive gardening practices, information on the "Systems of Rice Intensification" methodology, and even seed banking to ensure genetic diversity in the area. Farmers are also being taught on ways to compost and make natural fertilizers for organic produce.

Keeping the world informed

JOURNALISTS reporting on climate change carry the heavy burden of being the bearers of mostly bad news. As the world grapples with the pressure to adapt to climate change, the information is sometimes met with rejection and denial.

Armed with data and credibility, it is the members of the press' job to help the world understand what is going on, and inform ways to help prevent the climate crisis from getting worse.

Through a five-day training with mentors like journalist Kyle James and Project Officer Deborah Urban of the *Deutsche Welle Akademie*, Filipino journalists from seven different news organizations went through an intensive course in October 2022 on the manner to better report about the climate.

Participating media practitioners were provided with an overview of

global warming's causes and consequences, and were briefed on safety and security issues. They were also trained to better understand and use data to ultimately become better storytellers.

The journalists were given the chance to hear practical tips from Imelda Albano, the founding president of the Philippine Network of Environmental Journalists, and senior coordinator for the Philippines and the Pacific Region of Internews Earth Journalism Network.

Participants and their mentors also visited the Technical Education And Skills Development Authority's main building and Green Technology Center to witness first-hand how projects like the "Greening Technical Vocational Education and Training and Skills Development" bring new employment opportunities to Filipinos, and improve existing job profiles to accelerate the transition to green economies and sustainable societies.

In the wake of Typhoon Paeng (international name Nalgae), Germany redirected part of the P70.4-million (€1.2-million) donation through the International Organization for Migration's strategic response and recovery plan for Covid-19 for the Philippines, to enable emergency assistance for communities affected by the typhoon.

Addressing climate change is a long and arduous process. Reiffens-tuel however assures the Philippines that Germany will remain a committed partner in this fight.



Community-level disaster resilience best defense vs climate change

The past year ended not with a bang or a whimper but with a strong whiplash, as described by the Associated Press in this dispatch:

“MANILA – Thousands of people in the Philippines remained in emergency shelters in the wake of devastating Christmas flooding, as the death toll climbed to 51 with 19 missing, authorities said Monday.”

Images showed residents in southern Misamis Occidental province sweeping away thick mud from the floors of their homes. In the seaside village of Cabol-anonan, coconut trees were uprooted and huts made of light material were nearly flattened.

The Northern Mindanao region bore the brunt of the disaster, reporting 25 deaths, according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council. Most of the deaths were from drowning and landslides, and among the missing were fishermen whose boats capsized.

What brought this about was not even a tropical storm or typhoon but another meteorological phenomenon: “A shear line – the point where warm and cold air meet – triggered heavy rains in parts of the country last week, causing the floods, the state weather bureau said.

Not less than 22 affected cities and municipalities declared a state of calamity to enable local governments to release emergency funds and expedite rehabilitation efforts.

In 2021, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank issued a series of Climate Risk Country Profiles. In a nutshell, the Philippines’ profile was described:

The Philippines faces some of the highest disaster risk levels in the world, and these are projected to intensify as the climate changes. The country is especially exposed to tropical cyclones, flooding, and landslides.

• The number of tropical cyclones making landfall is steadily increasing, with tropical cyclones appearing to also have greater intensity.

• Sea-level rise is happening at an above-average rate for some parts of the Philippines, exposing up to one million people to flooding from rising sea levels by 2070–2100; investing in adaptation could potentially bring this number down significantly.

• The agricultural sector is especially vulnerable to climate change impacts. Both increased flooding and the increased likelihood of droughts could impact agricultural land. This could contribute towards decreased agricultural productivity.

• Without effective adaptation and disaster risk reduction, climate change is likely to exacerbate high existing levels of income and wealth inequality; poverty alleviation progress will be slowed.

Filipinos must imbibe and develop a proactive and preventive mindset that builds upon the bayanihan spirit of unity and solidarity in warding off the perils of climate change.

The last three items point to areas of priority attention: rising sea levels; vulnerability of the agricultural sector; and imperatives for adaptation.

Although the projected time frame is far into the future, it is apparent that what happened in northern Mindanao last month was ominous. Coastal communities were suddenly inundated by landslides and floods that brought on memories of the deadly storm surge that hit Leyte and Samar in Typhoon Yolanda’s deadly onslaught nine years ago.

“A storm surge, storm flood, tidal surge, or storm tide is a coastal flood or tsunami-like phenomenon of rising water commonly associated with

low-pressure weather systems, such as cyclones. It is measured as

the rise in water level above the normal tidal level, and does not include waves.” Such are the manifestations of triggers for widespread natural disasters.

How prepared are our coastal communities? Are there protocols in place for preemptive evacuation? Not so if it’s a “shear line” event that is not a tropical storm for which there are existing alert levels, depending on wind velocity and projected rainfall. Recall that in 2013, there was a low level of awareness on the possible impact of a storm surge – and this accounted for complacency and unpreparedness that translated into high mortality rates.

Lawmakers are mulling the establishment of a Department for Disaster Resiliency. In my view, what is more important is to foster a high level of disaster awareness and resiliency at the barangay level. The following declaration is definitely reassuring:

“ADB will continue efforts to increase the resilience of vulnerable communities to disasters and climate change risks by linking community-level resilience-building measures to wider investments in community-driven development and comprehensive land use planning. ADB recognizes that while agriculture and natural resources, urban development, transport, and energy are vulnerable to climate change and disasters, they also offer opportunities for implementing adaptation and disaster risk mitigation measures and strategies.”

Notice ADB’s focus on community-level resilience-building measures as well as community-driven development. Filipinos must imbibe and develop a proactive and preventive mindset that builds upon the bayanihan spirit of unity and solidarity in warding off the perils of climate change.



ENDEAVOR
SONNY COLOMA



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Salary Standardization Law final pay hike takes effect

THE fourth and last tranche of salary hikes for government employees authorized by the Salary Standardization Law took effect on Jan. 1, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) said.

"The government recognizes the indispensable role of its dedicated personnel in serving our beloved country. We are firmly committed to help them amidst rising prices of goods and services. We hope this latest salary increase will cushion the impact of inflation," Budget Secretary Ameh F. Pangandaman said in a statement on Wednesday.

Republic Act (RA) No. 11466 or the Salary Standardization Law raised public servants' salaries in four phases starting Jan. 1, 2020.

Under the law, the salary increase covers all civilian personnel, whether regular, casual, or contractual, appointive or elective, full-time or part-time, existing at the time of the law's signing or thereafter created in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches; constitutional commissions and other constitutional offices; state universities and colleges; and government-owned or -controlled corporations (GOCCs) not covered by RA No. 10149 or the GOCC Governance Act of 2011.

It also applies to all salaried personnel in local government units (LGUs), whether regular, contractual or casual, elective or appointive; full-time or part-

time, existing at the time of the law's passage or thereafter created in LGUs, and all positions for barangay personnel who are paid monthly honoraria.

"Those engaged without employer-employee relationships and funded from non-personnel services (PS) appropriations and budgets shall be excluded from (its) coverage," it added.

Also excluded from the pay hike are military and uniformed personnel, GOCC staff covered by RA No. 10149, and individuals whose services are engaged through job orders, contracts of service, consultancy or service contracts with no employer-employee relationship.

The DBM said that around P48 million is being allocated to conduct a study on the government's compensation structure.

"President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. directed us to conduct a study to ensure that the compensation of all civilian personnel will be generally competitive with those in the private sector doing comparable work to attract, retain, and motivate corps of competent and dedicated civil servants," Ms. Pangandaman said.

"Apart from the conduct of the study, the DBM is also undertaking a review of the rates of the existing benefits being provided to qualified government employees to assess if these may need adjustment in the future," she added. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**





DBM reviewing govt workers' pay, focuses on competitiveness

THE Department of Budget and Management (DBM) said it is reviewing the current benefits received by some government employees to assess if there is a need for adjustments in the future.

Budget Secretary Amenah F. Pangandaman disclosed that the agency will also conduct a study on whether all civilian personnel are receiving "competitive" compensation against private sector employment.

Pangandaman explained that the Governance Commission for GOCCs (GCG) has a P48-million budget this year to support undertaking a study on the government compensation structure of national government agencies and GOCCs.

"President Bongbong Marcos directed us to conduct a study to ensure that the compensation of all civilian personnel will be generally competitive with those in the private sector doing comparable work to attract, retain, and motivate corps of competent and dedicated civil servants," she said in a statement on Wednesday.

"Apart from the conduct of the study, the DBM is also undertaking a review of the rates of the existing benefits being provided to qualified government employees to assess if these may need adjustment in the future," she added.

The DBM also announced on Wednesday that the fourth and last tranche of mandated salary hikes for government employees took effect last January 1.

The fourth tranche is the last phase of the pay increase mandated by Republic Act 11466 or the Salary Standardization Law of 2019. The first salary increase took effect last January 1, 2020.

"The government recognizes the indispensable role of its dedicated personnel in serving our

beloved country. We are firmly committed to help them amidst rising prices of goods and services. We hope this latest salary increase will cushion the impact of inflation," Pangandaman said.

The DBM said Pangandaman recently signed two separate budget circulars on the implementation of the fourth tranche of Salary Schedule for civilian personnel and local government unit (LGU) workers.

RA 11466 covers all positions for civilian personnel, whether regular, casual, or contractual in nature, appointive or elective, full-time or part-time, now existing or thereafter created in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches; constitutional commissions and other constitutional offices; state universities and colleges (SUCs); and government-owned or controlled corporations (GOCCs) not covered by RA 10149, according to the DBM.

The DBM added that the salary hike also applies to all positions for salaried LGU personnel, whether regular, contractual or casual in nature, elective or appointive; on full-time or part-time basis, now existing or thereafter created in LGUs, and all positions for barangay personnel which are paid monthly honoraria.

"Those engaged without employer-employee relationship and funded from non-Personnel Services (PS) appropriations/budgets shall be excluded from the coverage of the Circular," it said.

"Also excluded are the military and uniformed personnel, GOCCs under RA 10149, and individuals whose services are engaged through job orders, contracts of service, consultancy or service contracts with no employer-employee relationship," it added. *Jasper Emmanuel Y. Arcalas*



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Gov't workers get pay hike

By **Rommel W. Domingo**
@RonWDomingoINQ

Government employees can look forward to receiving a higher pay as the fourth and last tranche of mandated salary increases under the Salary Standardization Law (SSL) V of 2019 took effect on Jan. 1, according to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

Under Republic Act No. 11466, wage hikes for civilian personnel were implemented in four yearly stages or tranches that started in 2020.

The DBM also reiterated that this year's national budget had earmarked P48 million for a study on a possible additional round of pay increases for state workers.

"The government recognizes the indispensable role of its dedicated personnel in serving our beloved country," Budget Secretary Ameh Pangandaman said in a statement. "We are firmly committed to help them amid rising prices of goods and services. We hope this latest salary increase will cushion the impact of inflation."

Amid a clamor for higher pay for government workers in November while prices of goods and services were rising faster, the DBM said there was no need for such a move since the implementation of SSL V's fourth tranche was near.

Guidelines

Pangandaman recently signed two separate budget circulars on the implementation of the fourth tranche of salary schedule for civilian personnel and local government unit workers.

RA 11466 covers all positions for civilian personnel, whether regular, casual or contractual in nature, appointive or elective, full-time or part-time in the executive, legislative and judicial branches; constitutional commissions and other constitutional offices; state universities and colleges; and government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs).

The law also applies to all positions for salaried local government unit personnel, whether regular, contractual or casual in nature, elective or appointive; on full-time or

part-time basis, now existing or thereafter created in local governments, and all positions for barangay personnel who receive a monthly honoraria.

Competitive compensation

Regarding the study for additional wage hikes, the Governance Commission for GOCCs will conduct a study on the government compensation structure of different national government agencies and GOCCs.

"President Bongbong Marcos directed us to conduct a study to ensure that the compensation of all civilian personnel will be generally competitive with those in the private sector doing comparable work to attract, retain and motivate a corps of competent and dedicated civil servants," Pangandaman said.

"Apart from the conduct of the study, the DBM is also undertaking a review of the rates of the existing benefits being provided to qualified government employees to assess if these may need adjustment in the future," she added. INQ



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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT BUREAU
DENR Compound, Visayas Avenue,
Diliman, Quezon City 1116
Tel. No.: (632) 8539-4378
Website: www.emb.gov.ph E-mail: recordsco@emb.gov.ph



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

On the **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)** of the proposed **BATANGAS COMBINED CYCLE GAS TURBINE POWER PROJECT** of the **BATANGAS CLEAN ENERGY INC.** to be located in **BARANGAYS LIBJO AND MALITAM, BATANGAS CITY, BATANGAS.**

Notice is hereby given to all parties who wish to give their opinion regarding the implementation of the proposed **BATANGAS COMBINED CYCLE GAS TURBINE POWER PROJECT** to attend the Public Hearing on:

Date	Time	Venue
26 January 2023 (Thursday)	9:00 AM Registration starts at 8:30 a.m.	Maribelle's Garden, Brgy. Libjo, Batangas City, Batangas

The Public Hearing is being conducted in connection with the review of the EIS of the aforementioned project by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The following is the project information:

Project Name	Batangas Combined Cycle Gas Turbine Power Project
Project Location	Barangays Libjo and Malitam, Batangas City, Batangas
Project Capacity	1,100 MW
Proponent	Batangas Clean Energy (BCE) Inc.

All interested parties who wish to attend or participate in these Public Hearings should preferably confirm their attendance/participation and may give their opinion(s) in a concise position paper to the **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION (EIAMD)** of this Office through mail or through e-mail at eia@emb.gov.ph, at least three (3) days before the Public Hearing schedule. Those who will not be able to register or submit written positions may be given the opportunity to share their issues on the day of the hearing itself.

The project's EIS and Executive Summary for the Public are downloadable at our website: www.eia.emb.gov.ph (kindly access the Notice of Public Hearing/Consultation link found on our website) while copies will be available in the following offices:

- EMB CALABARZON**
6th Floor 1515 DENR By the Bay Bldg., Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila
Tel. No.: (02) 8536 9784
- Batangas City Hall**
Batangas City Hall Complex, P. Burgos St., Brgy. Poblacion 17,
Batangas City, Batangas
Tel. No.: (043) 723 1511

For more details, please contact the EIAMD Division at this Office at telephone number (02) 8539-4378 loc. 116, through the project case handlers Engr. Dexter Tabada and Engr. George Silverderio.

Protect the environment... Protect life...

(PDI - Jan. 12 & 19, 2023)