

21 January 2023, Saturday



DENR

NEWS ALERTS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



TITLE :

PAGE



DENR FORUM.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources led by Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga (third from left) holds a multistakeholder forum, the second in a series in Iloilo City, as part of its effort to identify strategies and priority actions of the department. The forum served to enable inclusive dialog and share knowledge and experience on how different stakeholders can work together with the department and other national government agencies. With Yulo-Loyzaga are (from left) Iloilo province Second District Rep. Michael Gorriceta, Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Trenas; Usrag Ilonggo Partylist Rep. Jojo Ang, Chamber of Mines of the Philippines chairman Mike Toledo, Arthaland Corp. director Enrique Gonzales and Metro Pacific Water president and chief executive Rogelio Singson.



DENR to intensify efforts vs wildlife trafficking

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga has vowed an intensified drive to fight wildlife trafficking.

She made the declaration during the inauguration of the new regional monitoring building of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Iloilo City, which will be vital in strengthening the campaign to combat wildlife trafficking and illegal wildlife trade, especially in Western Visayas.

She added that the Forest Products and Wildlife Traffic Monitoring Section of the Iloilo Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office will operate in the building to monitor wildlife from Guimaras Island.

Guimaras Island is home to a variety of endangered wildlife such as the Visayan Tarictic Hornbill (*Penelopides panini*), Visayan Warty Pig (*Sus cebifrons*), Visayan Spotted Deer (*Rusa alfredi*) and the Visayan Wild Cat (*Prionailurus javanensis*

sumatranus).

"I am concerned about wildlife trafficking. It is very real. And so, this is a very important spot that could be vital for the intensification of this particular mandate of the DENR. We also need to look into the manpower, human resources, as well as the technical and support services needed for us to humanely handle the wildlife," Yulo-Loyzaga added.

She underscored the need to effectively enforce Republic Act 9147, or the "Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001."

At the same time, Yulo-Loyzaga ordered the digitization of the physical records that will be stored in the building to improve the agency's public service efficiency and provide effective and timely environmental interventions.

The DENR had allocated a total of P10 million for the construction of the monitoring building. **BELLA CARIASO**



DENR to bolster efforts vs illegal wildlife trade

By **CORY MARTINEZ**

AN intensified effort must be made to fight wildlife trafficking.

This was stressed by Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Antonio Loyzaga during the bless-

ing and inauguration of the department's new regional monitoring building in Iloilo City on Wednesday.

"I am concerned about wildlife trafficking. It is very real. And so, this is a very important spot that could be vital for the intensification of this particular mandate of the DENR," Loyzaga explained.

Loyzaga also said that there is a need to look into manpower, human resources as well as technical and support services to humanely handle the wildlife.

She stressed that these are all important to effectively enforce Republic Act (RA) 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation

and Protection Act of 2001.

Loyzaga, on the other hand, lauded the establishment of the monitoring building since this will be vital in strengthening the agency's mandate to combat wildlife trafficking and illegal wildlife trade, especially in Western Visayas.

See Page 10

DENR

FROM PAGE 3

The building, located along Muelle Loney Street and overlooking the Iloilo River and Guimaras Strait, will house the Forest Products and Wildlife Traffic Monitoring Section of the Iloilo Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) for the monitoring of charcoal and wildlife from Guimaras Island.

Guimaras Island is home to a variety of endangered wildlife, such as the Visayan Tarctic Hornbill



Call her 'commendatore'

Senator Loren Legarda recognized by Italian government for role in boosting PH-Italy bilateral ties

Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda has been conferred the award of "Commendatore" to the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic in appreciation of her role in strengthening bilateral relations between the Philippines and Italy.

The recognition was presented to Legarda by Italian Ambassador to the Philippines Marco Clemente on Wednesday, Jan. 18, at the ambassador's residence in Makati City.

"It is immensely an honor to receive the prestigious Order of Merit from the Italian Republic," said Legarda while accepting the award. "I am extremely grateful to the Italian Republic, President Sergio Mattarella, to my good friend Pier Ferdinando Casini, and to His Excellency Marco Clemente and everyone else involved with this recognition."

The senator emphasized the importance of the Philippines and Italy's

partnership as both nations work together to expand their cooperative ties as essential partners in the international arena.

The two countries, she said, share common goals and interests, including the love of food, diverse culture, passion for arts, and the tradition of family values and close-knit communities.

She also underscored how culture could lead to peace and stability, which is why promoting Philippine culture remained her passion and advocacy.

In 2015, the Philippines was able to return to the Venice Biennale after a 51-year hiatus through Legarda's initiative in partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA).

"This is the best example of how cultural exchanges are not merely a way to showcase and promote cul-



ture," said Legarda. "Our participation in Venice has forged a deep relationship because each year we exchange ideas, we have meaningful discourses and we have new experiences together." As a legislator, Legarda has bridged parliamentary relations between the Philippines and other nations, such as Italy, to become partners for economic cooperation and cultural promotion.

Her dedication to her craft was acknowledged through numerous

global recognitions, such as the Global Leader for Tomorrow given by the World Economic Forum (WEF). She is also a United Nations Environment Program Laureate and the Global Ambassador for Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change, and Environment of the Women Political Leaders.

In recognition of her commitment to the fight against climate change and to the promotion of Philip-

The title "Commendatore" is the second recognition bestowed on Legarda by the government of Italy. On July 13, 2017, the Cavaliere dell Ordine al Merito Della Repubblica Italiana (Knight in the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic) was presented to her by then Italian Ambassador to the Philippines Massimo Roscigno.

"The world is decisively changing, shaped by the dangerous effects of cli-

'It is when we ensure a sustainable exchange that we step into the unknown with hope and anticipation.'

pine culture and heritage, she has been bestowed the title of Chevalier (Knight) in the Ordre national de la légion d'Honneur (National Order of the French Legion of Honor) by then French President Francois Holland through former French Ambassador Thierry Mathou on Feb. 18, 2016, and on Nov. 2, 2022, she was recognized as an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Biodiversity Hero in Bogor, Indonesia for her significant contributions to biodiversity efforts in the Philippines.

mate change, technological advancements, and sharp shifts in social and individual values," said Legarda. "The situation can be formidable and intimidating, but the Philippines and Italy must face the future and create deeper partnerships that can help navigate uncharted territory. As such, I commit to supporting Philippine-Italian projects and programs, whether in the arts, culture, or trade and economy. It is when we ensure a sustainable exchange that we step into the unknown with hope and anticipation."



Climate and environmental threats dominate global risks

CLIMATE and environmental threats dominate global risks over a 10-year horizon, according to the recently released The Global Risks Report 2023.

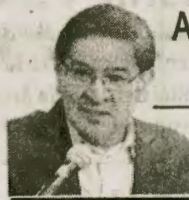
Global risk, as defined by the report, is the possibility of the occurrence of an event or condition that, if it occurs, would negatively impact a significant proportion of global gross domestic product, population and natural resources.

The Global Risks Report 2023 is the 18th edition of the World Economic Forum (WEF), in partnership with Marsh McLennan and Zurich Insurance Group and academic advisers, the National University of Singapore, Oxford Martin School at the University of Oxford and the University of Pennsylvania.

WEF Managing Director Saadia Zahidi said the report "identifies the most severe perceived risks to economies and societies over the next two years. The world's collective focus is being channeled into the 'survival' of today's crises: cost of living, societal and political polarization, food and energy supplies, tepid growth and geopolitical confrontation, among others."

The consequences of failure

Failure to mitigate climate change and climate change adaptation tops the list of global risks ranked by long-term severity. As described by the report, it is the "failure



ALL ABOUT CHOICES

LUDWIG O. FEDERIGAN

of governments, businesses and individuals to enforce, enact or invest in effective climate change measures, such as decarbonization of economic activity [for mitigation] and lack of climate-resilient infrastructure [for adaptation]."

It has the highest potential to severely damage societies, economies and the planet.

The preservation of ecosystems, protection of populations and transition to a carbon-neutral economy are clear pathways to solve it.

Four other climate and environmental threats have been identified among the most severe risks on a global scale over a 10-year term: natural disasters and extreme weather events; biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse; natural resource crises; and large-scale environmental damage incidents

Philippine respondents in the WEF's 2022 Executive Opinion Survey identified natural disasters and extreme weather events as the top risk. Others are debt crises, rapid inflation, misinformation and geopolitical contestation of resources.

Completing the top 10 global risks include large-scale involuntary migration and displacement

across or within borders; erosion of social cohesion and societal polarization; widespread cybercrime; and geoeconomic confrontation.

Risks posed by social inequality

Large-scale involuntary migration and displacement across or within borders, according to the report, stems from persistent discrimination and persecution, lack of economic advancement opportunities, natural or human-made disasters and internal or interstate conflict. In 2022, the Global Report on Internal Displacement, the world's leading source of data and analysis on internal displacement, reported that 23.7 million were displaced internally due to disasters and 14.4 million due to conflict and violence.

Erosion of social cohesion and societal polarization will lead to declining social stability, individual and collective well-being, and economic productivity. It includes potential civil unrest and actual inequalities in opportunities across age, income bracket, race and educational background, among others.

The World Inequality Report 2022 narrates that inequalities among nations, societies and populations are increasing. It reveals that the global population's richest 10 percent takes 52 percent of the global income and owns 76 percent of all wealth. Meanwhile,



the poorest half earns a measly 8.5 percent and possesses just 2 percent.

Groecconomic confrontations will emerge as one of the long-term critical threats to the world and one of the next decade's most potentially severe risks. While pressing domestic challenges require immediate attention, the pandemic and its economic consequences have proven that global risks do not respect political frontiers. Humanity faces the shared and compounding threats of economic fragmentation and planetary degradation, which will require a coordinated global response.

"The report highlights the multiple areas where the world is at a critical point. It is a call to action, collectively preparing for the next crisis the world may face and, in doing so, shape a pathway to a more stable, resilient world," Zahidi continues.

PDP 2023-2028 as the initial response

In recent weeks, the National Economic and Development Authority released the new Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 which, for the first time, included an entire chapter (Chapter 15) on Accelerate Climate Action and Strengthen Disaster Resilience. In a press statement, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) "welcomed the inclusion and pointed

out that this will further strengthen the commitment of the government to deliver on key climate actions."

Chapter 15 "identifies the goal for communities, institutions, and the natural and built environment to be 'more resilient to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change' by 2028." Strategies identified to achieve this include increasing climate and disaster risk resilience of communities and institutions, enhancing ecosystem resilience and enabling a transition to a low-carbon economy.

To support and operationalize PDP 2023-2028, the CCC is updating the National Climate Change Action Plan and the Nationally Determined Contribution, strengthening the implementation of the National Climate Risk Management Framework and developing the National Adaptation Plan. These plans will enhance ecosystem resilience and enable a low-carbon economy transition while allowing the government to assess the required climate investments on top of public resources for needed climate change actions.

Government institutions have allotted P400 billion for fiscal year 2023 for climate change expenditure for adaptation and mitigation programs anchored on the National Climate Change Action Plan's following priorities: food security, water sufficiency, human security, environmental and

ecological stability, sustainable energy, climate-smart industries and services, and knowledge and capacity development.

CCC will ramp up its programs to further strengthen the capacity of local government units (LGUs) and communities through the development, enhancement and submission of the Local Climate Change Adaptation Plan (LCCAP). A total of 1,397 out of 1,715 LGUs submitted their LCCAPs in 2022 compared to 715 submissions in 2021, representing a year-on-year submission rate increase of 40 percent.

Aside from Chapter 15, climate change-related action points are in Chapters 2 (Health); 3 (Food Security and Nutrition and Social Protection); 4 (Income-earning Ability); 5 (Agriculture and Agribusiness); 6 (Industries); 7 (Services); 8 (Research and Development, Technology and Innovation); 11 (Fiscal Management), 12 (Infrastructure); and 13 (Peace and Security).

The author is the executive director of the Young Environmental Forum and a nonresident fellow of Stratbase ADR Institute. He completed his climate change and development course at the University of East Anglia (United Kingdom) and an executive program on sustainability leadership at Yale University (USA). You can email him at ludwig.federigan@gmail.com.



CCC sees more govt action on climate change

THE Climate Change Commission (CCC) said the inclusion of an accelerated climate change agenda in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 will further strengthen the country's commitment to deliver key action to deal with climate change.

CCC Vice Chairman and Executive Director Robert Borje said the Philippines' plans to boost campaign against climate change was included in Chapter 15 of the PDP 2023-2028.

"The PDP Chapter 15 reflects the Philippine government's commitment and dedication to enhance the nation's overall resilience to climate change and its impacts, putting a premium on the need for integrated and comprehensive climate action between and among government, partners and all stakeholders," Borje said.

Borje added the PDP identified the goal for communities, institutions, and the natural and built environment to be more resilient to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change by 2028.

He added that among those to be undertaken include increasing climate and disaster risk resilience of communities and enabling transition

to a low-carbon economy.

Borje said the CCC is updating its various programs, including the National Climate Change Action Plan, to support the PDP.

"These plans and frameworks provide convergence points for CCC to work with relevant government agencies on enhancing ecosystem resilience and enabling low carbon economy transition," he said.

Borje added that these plans and framework will allow the country to assess the required climate finance and investments on top of public resources for needed climate change actions.

"Toward this end, P453.1 billion has already been tagged for fiscal year 2023 for climate change expenditure to be used for adaptation and mitigation programs," he added.

Borje noted that the figure represents a significant 56-percent increase from the P289.7-billion budget in 2022, with 83 percent for adaptation and 17 percent for mitigation.

"This is an indication of the priority of the administration given to the transformative climate change agenda, as laid out by President Ferdinand Marcos [Jr.]," Borje noted.

BELLA CARIASO



Most populous no more: China's population drops for first time in six decades

First
word

CHINA
has a
new
problem



OBSERVER

YEN
MAKABENTA

to wrestle with, in addition to its precarious Covid situation and its weakened economy. This time, the headache is its declining citizen count.

►MakabentaA5

■ MAKABENTA FROM A1

According to a Reuters report, China's population fell last year for the first time in six decades, a historic turn that is expected to mark the start of a long period of decline in its citizen numbers with profound implications for its economy and the world.

"The country's National Bureau of Statistics reported a drop of roughly 850,000 people for a population of 1.41175 billion in 2022, marking the first decline since 1961, the last year of China's Great Famine," the report said.

That possibly means that India has overtaken China as the world's most populous nation. UN experts predicted last year that India would have a population of 1.412 billion in 2022 though they did not expect the South Asian nation to overtake China until this year.

India, however, only collects population figures every 10 years and its latest census, originally scheduled for 2021, has been delayed due to the pandemic.

UN experts see China's population in the long term shrinking by 109 million by 2050, more than triple the decline of their previous forecast in 2019.

That has caused domestic demographers to lament that China will get old before it gets rich, slowing the economy as revenues drop and government debt increases due to soaring health and welfare costs.

"China's demographic and economic outlook is much bleaker than expected. China will have to adjust its social, economic, defense and foreign policies," said demographer Yi Fuxian.

He added that the country's shrinking labor force and downturn in manufacturing heft would further exacerbate high prices and high inflation in the United States and Europe."

It will take time for the demographic crisis to work its way into the specific policy goals and projects of President Xi Jinping and his government, but the writing is on the wall. The impact will be profound.

Like most Filipinos who are troubled no end by our lingering dispute with China over our conflicting claims in the South China Sea (SCS), I personally hope that China's demographic crisis will translate to less Chinese poaching on our exclusive economic zone in the SCS and fewer Chinese fishermen to carry out the provocative policy.

Let it be noted lightly that in contrast the Philippine population is irrepressibly increasing, and no amount of population hysteria has deterred the national birth rate.

Population hysteria preceded climate hysteria

While on the subject of the demographic crisis in China, I want to digress quickly into the not insignificant fact

that according to cultural historians, the climate hysteria today was fathered by an earlier hysteria — the population hysteria in the 1970s and 1980s.

Both alarms waned before the end of the world scenario. Both professed to be the result of serious scientific study, and both have fallen or are falling flat on their phony vision of the apocalypse.

It was 1968 that the *The Population Bomb* was published to the astonishment and alarm of the whole world. The book, co-authored by Stanford biology professor emeritus Paul R. Ehrlich and his wife Stanford senior researcher emeritus in conservation biology Anne Howland Ehrlich, predicted worldwide famine due to overpopulation, as well as other major societal upheavals, and advocated immediate action to limit population growth.

The Ehrlichs declared with absolute certainty that "the battle to feed all of humanity is over." Because so many people were living so close together and consuming so much of the world's limited resources, the inevitable future was one of "mass starvation" on "a dying planet." A year after the book's publication, Ehrlich went on to say that this "utter breakdown" in Earth's capacity to support its bulging population was just 15 years away.

I was matriculating or teaching in college when the population bomb was detonated. For those of us who watched the explosion and are still alive today, it is clear that nothing approaching what Ehrlich predicted ever happened. Indeed, in the 54 years since his dire prophecy, those suffering from starvation have gone from 1 in 4 people on the planet to just 1 in 10, even as the world's population has doubled. More importantly, there have been great advances in fertilizer potency, the genetic modification of seeds, irrigation and related farming techniques.

Suffering caused by population control

What did happen were the unwelcome, dire and cruel effects that the book unleashed. Those who believed in Ehrlich's predictions caused a great deal of real suffering.

According to *Smithsonian Magazine*, Ehrlich's book inspired the International Planned Parenthood Federation, the World Bank and other groups to undertake cruel depopulation programs throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In Mexico, Bolivia, Peru, Indonesia and Bangladesh, millions of people were sterilized, often against their will.

In India, many states required sterilization in order for citizens to



obtain water, electricity, ration cards, medical care, pay raises and even an education. And in China, according to *Smithsonian* author Charles Mann, a "one-child" policy led to as many as 100 million forced abortions, often in unsanitary conditions, causing needless infections, sterility and even death.

And the media at the time mindlessly contributed to sowing fears of a "population explosion."

The book has been criticized since its publication for its alarmist tone, and in recent decades for its inaccurate predictions.

The Population Bomb was characterized by critics as primarily a repetition of the Malthusian catastrophe argument that population growth will outpace agricultural growth unless controlled.

The Ehrlichs made a number of specific predictions that did not come to pass, for which they have received criticism. They have acknowledged that some predictions were incorrect.

'Most foolish book ever published'

In *The Population Bomb's* opening lines, the authors state that nothing can prevent famines in which hundreds of millions of people will die during the 1970s (amended to 1970s and 1980s in later editions), and that there would be "a substantial increase in the world death rate." However, in reality, the global death rate has continued to decline substantially since then, from 13/1,000 in 1965-1974 to 10/1,000 from 1985-1990.

Journalist Dan Gardner has criticized Ehrlich both for his overconfident predictions and his refusal to acknowledge his errors.

Jonathan Last described *Population Bomb* best of all, when he called it "one of the most spectacularly foolish books ever published."

This is a clear instance of a book review deserving to be remembered better than the reviewed book!

The story of the population hysteria and the feared population explosion ought to have made the world and all humanity more discerning and less gullible to all prophets of apocalypse and their end-of-life predictions. But here we are today, literally in the grip of hysteria over climate change and climate apocalypse, with the United Nations and entire governments working double time to scare us out of our wits.

The weakness of the end-of-life scenario of climate change and climate hysteria has already become apparent. Its first predictions about the rapid extinction of polar bears and the death of the Great Barrier

Reef have not only proved false, but both are flourishing more than ever. And despite the alarmist media death counts following every hurricane or other natural disaster, the OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database estimates that the real number of 2022 climate-related fatalities will be the lowest in 20 years.

At the same time, carbon capture, making biomethane from organic waste, producing diesel from low-carbon waste, making fuel from hydrogen and other promising technologies for reducing atmospheric pollution continue to make progress.

Yet climate fear persists, driven in no small part by the media and the entertainment industry.

The exaggerated fear of climate change, just like the fears raised by Malthus and Ehrlich on population, is causing its own harm. According to a special 2020 issue of the *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, the constant warnings of environmental catastrophe have led to what mental health professionals call, "passive anxiety," in lay terms, a constant worrying over events one feels helpless to stop. The panic attacks, insomnia, obsessive thinking, substance abuse and depression associated with passive anxiety are widespread.

A 2021 study by the research group Avaaz found that over half of those between ages 16 and 25 believe humanity is irrevocably "doomed" because of climate change. **Fear of a looming climate catastrophe has produced not only needless emotional pain but foolish legislation as well.** As Toyota Motors President Akio Toyoda recently confided to reporters, the trillions US President Joe Biden's Inflation Reduction Act plans to spend on boosting the use of electric cars will most likely be completely wasted.

Perhaps the most helpful way to understand the current debilitating obsession with climate change is to go back to the time when all humanity was scared witless by the population catastrophe.

Look around you. Look where we are now. We're still around. As China is proving, there is more to worry about in population decline than in population expansion.

Yet the false prophets of climate change have astutely located their apocalyptic scenario at the end of the century. They figure that climate skeptics and deniers will not be alive by then to collect on their dissent. But neither will the climate alarmists today be alive to boast of the proof of their wild imaginings.

In short, this is the most stupid debate to engage in in this day and age.

yenobserver@gmail.com



Editorial

The hazards of gas cooking

A CONTROVERSY has erupted in recent days in the United States in the wake of calls to ban gas stoves for cooking due to the health hazards they pose. Efforts by right-wing politicians and their media accessories to turn the issue into another battle in the "culture war" are immature and not worthy of discussion, but their silly reaction to it has at least drawn attention to the potential risks of gas cooking. Those risks are real, and given the widespread use of gas here in the Philippines, are something the government and the public should be taking a closer look at.

Gas stoves are usually fueled by liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), which is mostly propane, and have a number of advantages. Being of simpler construction, the stoves themselves are considerably less expensive than comparable electric versions, and have the additional advantage of being usable even during power outages, which are frequent in some parts of the Philippines. The cost of a gas supply, most commonly sold in 11-kilogram bottles, can be prohibitive for poorer families, but gas stoves are nevertheless generally more economical than electric stoves. Many people also prefer to cook on a gas stove because the flame it produces is infinitely adjustable, whereas most electric stoves only provide a few built-in heat settings.

The convenience and economy of gas stoves do come with the trade-off of considerable health and safety risks, however, which has sparked concern — no pun intended — in the US and elsewhere. The fire hazard of gas stoves and LPG supply bottles is, of course, well-known here in the Philippines. Unattended flames from cooking are cited as the third most common cause of house fires by the Bureau of Fire Protection; according to a study done by researchers from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines and the Philippine College of Health Sciences in 2018, these average about 70 incidents per month. Defective, damaged or improperly connected gas bottles are an explosion hazard, and cause a number of fires each year as well.

Even if fire safety is scrupulously observed, gas stoves have other less obvious but equally dangerous risks, which is the reason for the contentious calls to ban or restrict their use in the US. When in use, gas stoves produce carbon dioxide (CO₂), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and carbon monoxide (CO) as combustion products. CO₂ is a greenhouse gas, and CO can be lethal if it accumulates in a high enough concentration, such as in a poorly ventilated room. NO₂ is the one that has activists in the US most worried, and should be a concern for public health authorities here as well. NO₂ is a toxic, corrosive gas that can irritate the respiratory system, and is thought to be a significant cause of asthma in children. A 2013 study in the US found that children living in homes with a gas stove had a 42-percent increased risk of contracting asthma.

The risks are real, and given the widespread use of gas here in the Philippines, are something the government and the public should be taking a closer look at.

Another serious hazard from gas stoves is benzene, a compound found in natural gas that is released into the air almost constantly, because almost all gas stoves leak due to their design. This is a bigger problem in places that have piped-in gas supplies, but benzene can also leak from defective or worn gas regulators and hoses. Chronic exposure to benzene is linked to bone marrow and immune system damage, and increased risk of leukemia. In a study published in July, researchers in Massachusetts found that the average benzene concentration in homes with gas stoves was 165 parts per billion, which is 5,500 times the safe limit of 0.03 parts per billion.

Taking a drastic step, such as banning the use of gas stoves, would be completely unrealistic, but the government should take careful note of their hazards, and find ways to better protect the public. Educating households on the importance of good ventilation and maintenance will help. Safety standards for gas stoves, gas containers and associated equipment should also be more closely monitored and enforced to ensure that only the safest possible items are sold or used. Eliminating the risks entirely is probably not possible, but there are ways to greatly reduce them without unduly burdening consumers.



HOW GREEN IS MY ISLAND.

International eco-building standards and materials have been incorporated throughout Panglao Shores. These include high-performance glass, natural ventilation and solar harvesting, along with smart technologies, electric transport, water treatment, waste reduction, and the removal of all single-use plastics.

A gem in the offing in Panglao

Alturas Group eyes a sustainable island-community

PANGLAO, Bohol —The first hotel in Panglao Shores — a 50-hectare mixed-use estate that will have six hotels and resorts, as well as a residential and retail area — is currently being built in Bohol island.

Scheduled for completion by the first quarter of 2024, the development is being undertaken by the tourism arm of Alturas Group of Companies.

Panglao Shores' first hotel will have 188 room keys. It will be an expansion of South Palms Resort Panglao which currently has 78 rooms and villas.

According to Hope Marie R. Uy, managing director of Panglao Shores and South Palms Resort, the project will also have 37,000 square meters (sq.m.) of commercial space, over 1,000



VIBRANT HUB. At the heart of Panglao Shores is the Town Square Retail Mall & Night Market, an indoor-outdoor hub of shopping, dining and entertainment with live performance areas, garden walkways and courtyards.

residential units, 27-sq.m. communal area, international convention center, farmers market and community green spaces, international medical facility, among others.

She acknowledged that the development will seek to help Bohol

achieve its goal of attracting more meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions.

"Definitely we need a bigger communal area for events and conferences as we have that here yet in Bohol," she said.

Sustainability from the get-go

The community estate aims to mirror the sustainability agenda and circular economy in its existing property called South Farm Panglao-Bohol, where waste is recycled.

Bill Barnett, managing director of the estate's lead consultant C9 Hotelworks, said that being sustainable is not only a conscientious choice but also helps reduce costs.

"If I have an energy-efficient hotel, my hotel will have lower operating costs," Barnett said.

"Although you have to continue to invest in the technology, there is a return. The return is not only doing the good thing but there's also an economic model on the return of investment," he added.

Uy added that having a solar-powered hotel is achievable as the group already tried it in one of its farms.

"We have livestock farms located in Bohol and one of these farms is solar-powered so we already have a success

story," she declared. She added that the whole estate will incorporate international building standards and materials.

Smart technologies on tap

Panglao Shores will also make use of smart technologies, electric transport and water treatment, reduce waste, and will eliminate single-use plastics.

The Alturas group plans to finish the whole project in two phases within 10 years. The initial phase includes all initial infrastructure needs like roads, as well as the first hotel.

"In our timetable, we are hoping that we are able to establish this project in 10 years," Uy said. "Early next year we are opening our first resort, and phase two is coming up with the commercial zone and hopefully by 2033 we're all up."

Panglao Shores is a flagship project under the Tourism Infrastructure & Enterprise Zone Authority which aims to deliver economic and social benefits to their destinations. It will be under Panglao Bay Premiere Parks and Resorts Corp., a subsidiary of Alturas Group.



Rubber tree disease outbreak hits Basilan

ZAMBOANGA CITY - The Basilan provincial government has expressed alarm over the spread of a disease affecting rubber trees in the province.

Gov. Jim Hataman Salliman said up to 800 hectares of rubber tree plantations were affected.

He said the disease may have originated from Sabah.

Salliman said the provincial agriculture office and experts from the Philippine Rubber Research Institute have been asked to study the possible treatment of the disease.

City agriculturist Esther Domingo told local radio station *dxNO* that infected trees have wilting or falling leaves.

Basilan has over 50,000 hectares of rubber tree plantations.

The province used to be the largest rubber-producing province followed by Zamboanga Sibugay and North Cotabato.

- Roel Pareño