

27 January 2023, Friday



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**





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# Loyzaga shuffles key DENR officials, creates new posts

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA  
@jonlmayuga

**D**EPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga has issued a series of special orders on January 23, 24 and 25, creating new positions and designating key officials with specific tasks and functions.

Some of officials were named to newly created positions or office, somehow, duplicating existing the functions of other offices or officials who already have multiple functions under their present designation.

On January 23, invoking "in the interest of the service," Loyzaga assigned Undersecretary Ignatius Loyola A. Rodriguez as undersecretary for Special Concerns and Legislative Affairs.

The function of the newly created

position is to maintain an awareness of development that might affect the DENR, its property, personnel and prepare reports for the DENR chief. It was noted that this may have the same function of the existing Office of the Undersecretary for Legal Affairs and Administration.

With his new designation, Rodriguez will also assist in the review of documents for the signature of the Secretary, including correspondences, certifications, memos, circulars, orders, permits, contracts, and agreements, to ensure that they comply with relevant statutes and regulations.

As the undersecretary for the said office, Rodriguez will also handle priority areas, which necessitates special and immediate attention.

Meanwhile, Carlos Primo C. David has been assigned as undersecretary

for Integrated Environmental Science, another newly created position, to supervise the Geospatial Database Office; lead discussions in policy formulation, and required changes in the regulatory functions of DENR bureaus and attached agencies.

As undersecretary for Integrated Environmental Science, he will also be tasked to promote the use of science in the performance of all DENR bureaus and attached agencies; in policy formulation in the regulatory functions of the DENR, and liaise with the different National Government Agencies on scientific and technical matters.

Assistant Secretary Joan A. Lagunda, meanwhile, is reassigned to the Office of David.

The DENR currently has the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB), the agency's princi-

pal research and development unit.

In another order, Loyzaga has designated Undersecretary Marilou G. Erni as undersecretary for Strategic Communications who will supervise the Strategic Communication and Initiative Service (SCIS) on top of her present assignment as chief of staff of DENR.

Subsequently, Loyzaga has named Karmela Beatriz L. Galura as Director for Strategic Communications. The DENR chief has also directed the Financial Management Service to allocate funds for the SCIS.

On January 11, Loyzaga has given Undersecretary Augusto D. dela Peña the assignment as Supervising Undersecretary of the Human Resource Development Service, formerly assigned to Undersecretary Ernesto D. Adobo Jr.

As such, dela Peña is now the

DENR's undersecretary for Organizational Transformation and Human Resources.

Meanwhile, in view of the retirement of Director Tirzo P. Parian, Loyzaga has named Arleigh J. Adorable as Officer-in-Charge (OIC) Assistant Secretary for Field Operations-Western Mindanao.

Assistant Secretary Marcial C. Amaro Jr. has been named as Director of the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) replacing former OIC Director Natividad Bernardino. Armida P. Andres was named as OIC Assistant Director of the BMB.

For the EMB, Loyzaga has named Gilbert Gonzales as director. He will be performing the function as EMB Director in concurrent capacity as OIC Assistant Secretary for Luzon and Visayas. Esperanza A. Sajul was named as Assistant Director of the EMB.





## EDITORIAL

# Resilient communities

**A POST-PANDEMIC world demands resilient, sustainable communities even as it grapples with climate change.**

Quiet fortunately, international funding for such an undertaking is available, requiring only a viable plan of execution from the government which has expressed readiness to implement the project.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources, would build resilient, inclusive, and sustainable communities post-pandemic as it prepares its portfolio of environmental projects for consideration under the 8th funding replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF-8).

The Philippines is allocated over \$52 million in funding support, the country's largest allocation so far.

Environment and Natural Resources Sec Antonia Loyzaga, in her welcome remarks during the kick-off ceremony of the two-day GEF National Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue in Taguig City on January 18-19, said the country continues to face more complex challenges toward achieving ecosystem integrity and enhancing climate and disaster resilience.

Loyzaga considers the holding of the GEF National Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue as an opportunity to develop projects that respond to the country's environmental challenges and priorities.

"The healthy planet, healthy people framework, as the heart of the overall global GEF-8 architecture, emphasizes the critical connection between humanity and the environment – thus the importance of urgent environmental threats reduction and protection of our natural resources to improve human well-being (cannot be overemphasized)," said Loyzaga, a climate and disaster resilience advocate.

Before the dialogue, the GEF Secretariat paid a courtesy visit on the lady DENR chief on January 17.

Loyzaga said the country deeply values the consultative process in designing integrated approaches necessary to address the intersectionality of development, climate change, biodiversity, and disaster resilience and adopt a comprehensive risk management approach that integrates a system lens and optimizes the resources available to improve quality of life, which the DENR chief said "will ensure that no community and ecosystem is left behind."

She said the Philippines shall work with the GEF in strengthening national commitments and institutionalizing capacities to translate these commitments into meaningful actions to support sustainable development since the GEF-8 calls for a systematic and transformational strategy that responds to the urgency of raising global climate ambition.

In GEF-8, member countries are encouraged to move more their programming through 11 Integrated Programs, including food systems, landscape restoration, clean and healthy ocean, circular solutions to plastic pollution, elimination of hazardous chemicals from supply chains, net-zero, nature-positive accelerator, sustainable cities, greening infrastructure development and wildlife conservation for development.





## Bohol LGU asks DENR, NWRB to settle spring water extraction issue with neighboring town

**T**HE town of Sevilla in the province of Bohol has asked the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to stop its neighboring town Balilihan from extracting water from a spring located in one of its barangays.

In a letter to DENR Secretary Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga dated January 18, 2023, Sevilla town Mayor Juliet Dano said Balilihan's P95-million waterworks project "intruded our political jurisdiction in the installation of their infrastructure in Bugwak Spring... [which] is situated at Magsaysay, Sevilla, Bohol."

As indicated in their water permit, Dano stressed that the Balilihan local government unit should be extracting water from Bugwak

Spring, Sto. Niño, Balilihan, Bohol. Instead, the neighboring town has been siphoning water from Bugwak Spring in Magsaysay, Sevilla, "contrary to their approved water permit."

The Sevilla town mayor sought DENR Secretary Yulo-Loyzaga's "utmost attention and immediate action," saying the implementation of Balilihan's waterworks project is a clear violation of DENR rules for having no valid water and building permits.

DENR's National Water Resources Board (NWRB), which coordinates and regulates all water development and management in the country, has given the LGU of Balilihan permit to extract water within its own territory.

Aside from DENR, Dano formally petitioned NWRB to stop Balilihan from extracting water from her municipality. She noted that Balilihan's water permit is to appropriate water from its own territory, not Sevilla.

"The actual [water] diversion point is located at Magsaysay, Sevilla, Bohol as evidenced by the installations made by the Department of Public Works and Highways-Bohol 1st Engineering District," Dano said in her petition before the NWRB.

"The requirements of Posting and Sending of Notice Under Section 9 of the Amended Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the Water Code of the Philippines were not followed," the petition read.





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## IF NO CONCRETE STEPS ARE TAKEN *Plastics consumption to jump by 230%*

AN official of the Climate Change Commission (CCC) warned on Thursday that without measures in place, consumption of plastics in the Philippines would increase by 230 percent in 2040.

"With more evidence showing that the planet is increasingly being polluted, the CCC is one with the urgent calls to adopt more sustainable consumption and approaches," said CCC Commissioner and lawyer Rachel Ann Herrera during the International Zero Waste Cities Conference in Quezon City.

Citing a World Bank study, Herrera said the amount of unrecycled plastics might also increase to three million metric tons by 2030 without government intervention.

She reported that based on Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) data, at least 133 truckloads of plastics or equivalent to two cubic meters were collected from different pumping stations in Metro Manila alone during the last six months of 2022.

"It is an indication that not all our LGUs (local government units) are completely enforcing the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act which is a 22-year-old law and also the recycling rate of plastic packaging is relatively low in our cities, our municipalities," Herrera said.

She said that a big portion of the solid

waste being generated in the country comes from plastics.

Herrera expressed confidence that the implementation of the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act of 2022 will boost the country's campaign against plastics.

The law aims to reduce the volume of plastic waste generation and extend the life of plastics by adding value or purpose through upcycling or recycling.

Environment Secretary Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga has signed the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 11890 or "EPR Law."

The law mandates large-scale companies to establish a mechanism for recovery, treatment and recycling of the plastic packaging of their products.

Corporations with total assets of over P100 million will be required to recover a certain percentage of their plastic packaging waste, or else pay a fine.

The EPR Law sets incremental targets that should be fulfilled yearly until 2030.

For 2023, companies were obligated to recover 20 percent of their plastic waste.

Producers, distributors and retailers implementing initiatives under the EPR Law will be eligible for tax incentives.

Fines ranging from P5 million to P20 million will be imposed for failure to comply with the provisions and meet the target recovery rates of the EPR Law.

**BELLA CARIASO**





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# Manila Water pouring in P37.3 B for three-river wastewater masterplan

By DANESSA RIVERA

East zone concessionaire Manila Water Company Inc. is pouring in P37.3 billion for its three-river system wastewater masterplan aimed to protect waterways and upgrade sanitation.

The masterplan involves massive construction of wastewater treatment facilities and sewer network across the Marikina River, San Juan River, Pasig River, and Laguna Lake systems that comply with regulatory and environmental standards.

These wastewater projects are designed to collect, convey, and treat wastewater generated within their respective catchment areas.

To support the Marikina River System, Manila Water is putting up the San Mateo-Rodriguez and Quezon City East sewerage systems.

With a combined project cost of P10.2 billion, the two sewerage systems will serve around 129,000 residents in portions of Marikina, San Mateo-Rodriguez, Antipolo, and eastern portions of Quezon City by 2046.

Meanwhile, the company is spending P20 billion for its Mandaluyong West, Quezon City South, and San Juan South Sewerage System, which covers portions of catchments draining towards San Juan River and Pasig River systems.

This project will have a capacity to treat 60 million liters – and is expandable to 120 million liters – of wastewater per day conveyed through a 53-kilometer sewer network.

The remaining segments of the North and South Pasig Sewerage System will also be constructed to help protect the Pasig River System, with Manila Water investing P2.8 billion for the combined project.

The sewerage systems will have treatment provisions for households in Pasig and portions of Quezon City, Mandaluyong, Cainta, and Taytay.

East of Metro Manila, the P1.6-billion Hinulugang Taktak Sewerage System – which will treat 16 million liters of wastewater per day before releasing it into waterways – is already taking shape in Antipolo City.

Manila Water is also set to deploy new desludging trucks and construct the Pinugay septage treatment plant to ensure continued sanitation services for residents of Baras, Pililla, Tanay, and



**MANILA WATER**  
CARE IN EVERY DROP

Jala-jala in Rizal.

Manila Water said this massive investment in wastewater treatment facilities is anchored on its environmental sustainability efforts, which aim to reduce pollution produced in its operations.

It also aligns with the Marcos administration's prioritization of developing climate-resilient infrastructure and, at the same time, aids in the rehabilitation of the environment.

Aside from upgrading its wastewater treatment services to protect natural waterways, the company is also particularly involved in the reforestation and protection of key watersheds.

More than 1.2 million trees had been planted by Manila Water through its watershed management program as of 2021.





## Manila Water earmarks P37B for water treatment projects

MANILA WATER Co., Inc. announced on Thursday a P37.3-billion investment in its wastewater master plan, which covers the construction of treatment facilities and a sewer network across the Marikina River, San Juan River, Pasig River, and Laguna Lake.

"These wastewater projects are designed to collect, convey, and treat wastewater generated within their respective catchment areas," Manila Water said in a statement e-mailed to reporters.

The company said that P10.2 billion is allocated for the San Mateo-Rodriguez and Quezon City East sewerage systems that will cater to customers in some areas of Marikina.

The two sewerage systems, which are seen to serve around 129,000 residents by 2046, will be designed to support the Marikina River system.

Meanwhile, the P20-billion Mandaluyong West, Quezon City South, and San Juan South sewerage system will cover portions of catchments draining towards the San Juan River and Pasig River systems.

According to the company, the project will have the capacity to treat 60 million liters, expandable to 120 million liters, of wastewater per day conveyed through a 53-kilometer sewer network.

A total of P2.8 billion is allocated for the remaining segments of the North and South Pasig sewerage system aimed at protecting the Pasig River system.

"The sewerage systems will have treatment provisions for households in Pasig and portions of Quezon City, Mandaluyong, Cainta, and Taytay," the company noted.

Manila Water also noted that the P1.6-billion Hinulugang Taktak sewerage system is already "taking shape" in Antipolo City. The project will treat 16 million liters of wastewater per day before releasing it into waterways, according to the company.

The company plans to deploy new desludging trucks and build a treatment plant to provide sanitation services to the residents of Baras, Pililla, Tanay, and Jala-jala in Rizal.

The goal is to reduce pollution produced by the company's operations. — **Arjay L. Balinbin**





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A COLLECTIVE  
COMMITMENT TO  
SUSTAINABILITY AND  
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INITIATIVES

## BusinessWorld

EDITOR ADRIAN PAUI B. CONOZA

# special feature

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# Ripples of the global green movement in the Philippines

THE PAST YEARS saw climate change, defined by World Health Organization (WHO) as "the change in climate in time due to human activities," becoming a more intensified global issue, as well as a major factor in health risks. Former WHO Director Dr. Margaret Chan said that the climate crisis affects daily livelihood, including the social and environmental food determinants, namely food, water, shelter, and air. On top of that, natural disasters and health risks can be influenced by climate change.

Climate change has grown further into a global alarm as it started impacting humanity, from social, environmental, and health aspects; and, in response, both the government and private sectors across the globe have been working to address this worsening crisis by developing green infrastructures and initiatives, such as climate and ecological activism, the use of eco-friendly products, and developing sustainable buildings, to name a few. These initiatives and more has been likewise evident in the country.

In a foreword in the Green Infrastructure Investment Opportunities (GIIO) Philippines Report published by Climate Bonds Initiative in 2020, Former Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Commissioner Ephyro Luis B. Amalong shared that the Philippines has been subjected to many environmental challenges since before, becoming the most vulnerable when it comes to climate change. Additionally, the country has also been dealing with severe

natural disasters, including massive droughts and floods.

As a result, Mr. Amalong continued, the Philippine government has strived to build a supportive and enabling environment to establish a sustainable market. With the economic effect of climate change at hand, the SEC encourages the increase of green financing in the market to achieve a more sustainable environment.

"While green finance is relatively new in the Philippines, the first movers in our market have been instrumental in introducing the concept to our domestic investor base and making other local firms aware of the potential for green finance," Mr. Amalong wrote.

"The continued development of the green sustainability bond market is also supported by the Philippines whole government approach to sustainable/green finance," he added.

Alongside these financial initiatives, the Climate Change Act, passed by the Philippine government in 2009, promotes climate resilience, creates a low-carbon economy, and strengthens the nation's climate change position. Thereafter, many laws and policies were implemented to support and raise awareness of ecological issues and initiatives.

Climate Bonds Initiative's GIIO report further highlighted that as the country was struck down due to the pandemic, the main priority of authorities is to build back better and develop a more sustainable and greener tomorrow for all Filipinos.

Developing green infrastructure now becomes an opportunity for economic and ecological growth for the Philippines. As the significant demand for green investments and green infrastructure continues to increase, this becomes an opportunity for the country to build resiliency and achieve development to recover from the economic crises that the pandemic has brought.

The GIIO report noted that infrastructure investment and developments were executed by the Philippine government and public-private partnerships (PPPs), providing initiatives and climate change mitigation and building a greener future.

"As a top priority for the current Philippine administration, infrastructure development is being heavily supported and promoted in the Philippines. Currently, much of the Philippines' investment in infrastructure is being carried out through public funding and PPP ventures," the report read.

However, the country is still seen struggling in some aspects. For instance, among investors, there is a lack of awareness and understanding of green investments, making it difficult to develop future infrastructure and investment opportunities in supporting the country's goal to shift to a low-carbon economy.

According to the report, the lack of awareness and understanding of green investments can be solved by educating and promoting knowledge on green investments and green financing, which

in turn will increase resiliency and help establish a more sustainable country.

The report also shared that the Philippine government has also been developing an action plan that prioritizes green infrastructure development, including timely environmental monitoring, improving waste management, increasing sustainable urban mobility solutions, and promoting resource-efficient and climate-smart practices and lifestyles.

The global green movement has been growing, providing more growth and opportunities for everyone. For instance, more green investments are happening lately because of the global trend of consuming green-labeled products. In addition, green financing is increasing in the Philippines, the government has been establishing national and regional policies that support the growth of green financing in the country.

"The Philippines has been increasingly exploring the use of green debt as well as equity instruments and has been expanding credit enhancement mechanisms and risk-sharing options," the report added.

On top of the global green movement's impact on finances, the country is implementing eco-conscious initiatives. Diverting from reliance on imported coal, the government and private sector are investing in more renewable energy as an alternative source to help meet the country's energy needs and goals. Low-carbon transportation modes are also starting to be used such as national and urban passenger



PHOTOS VIA FREEPK

trains, electric vehicles, and bicycle transport systems, which are seen to produce low or zero direct carbon emissions to restrain air pollution. Green buildings that are also beginning to help achieve energy efficiency and establish a safer environment, and the country has also been modifying older buildings to become more energy-efficient by adopting green building codes. Finally, as tourism starts bouncing back after the pandemic and the number of tourists is gradually increasing again, sustainability in tourism is becoming more crucial, the Sustainable Tourism Development Project has been implemented, where the Department of Tourism collaborates with local government unities, communities, and private sectors in promoting sustainable practices in the sector. —  
Angela Klara S. Brillantes





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The Manila Times

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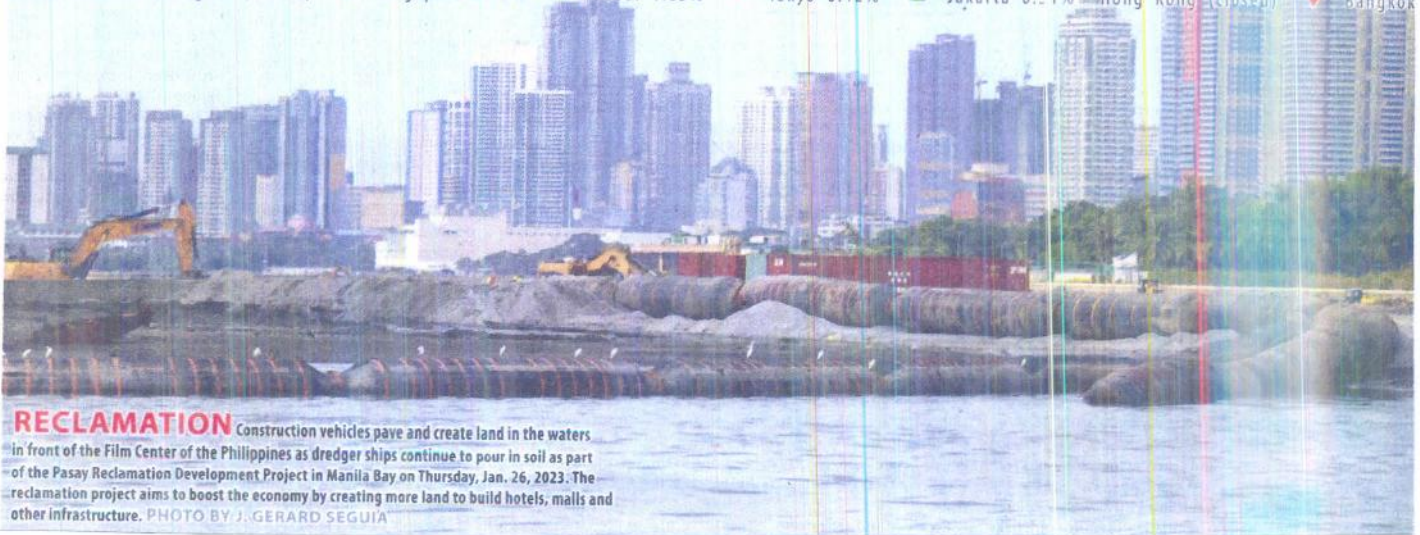
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# Business Times

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FRIDAY JANUARY 27, 2023

ASIAN STOCKS: Shanghai (closed) ▲ Singapore 0.73% ▲ Seoul 1.65% ▼ Tokyo 0.12% ▲ Jakarta 0.51% Hong Kong (closed) ▼ Bangkok



**RECLAMATION** Construction vehicles pave and create land in the waters in front of the Film Center of the Philippines as dredger ships continue to pour in soil as part of the Pasay Reclamation Development Project in Manila Bay on Thursday, Jan. 26, 2023. The reclamation project aims to boost the economy by creating more land to build hotels, malls and other infrastructure. PHOTO BY J. GERARD SEGUIA





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# The Manila Times



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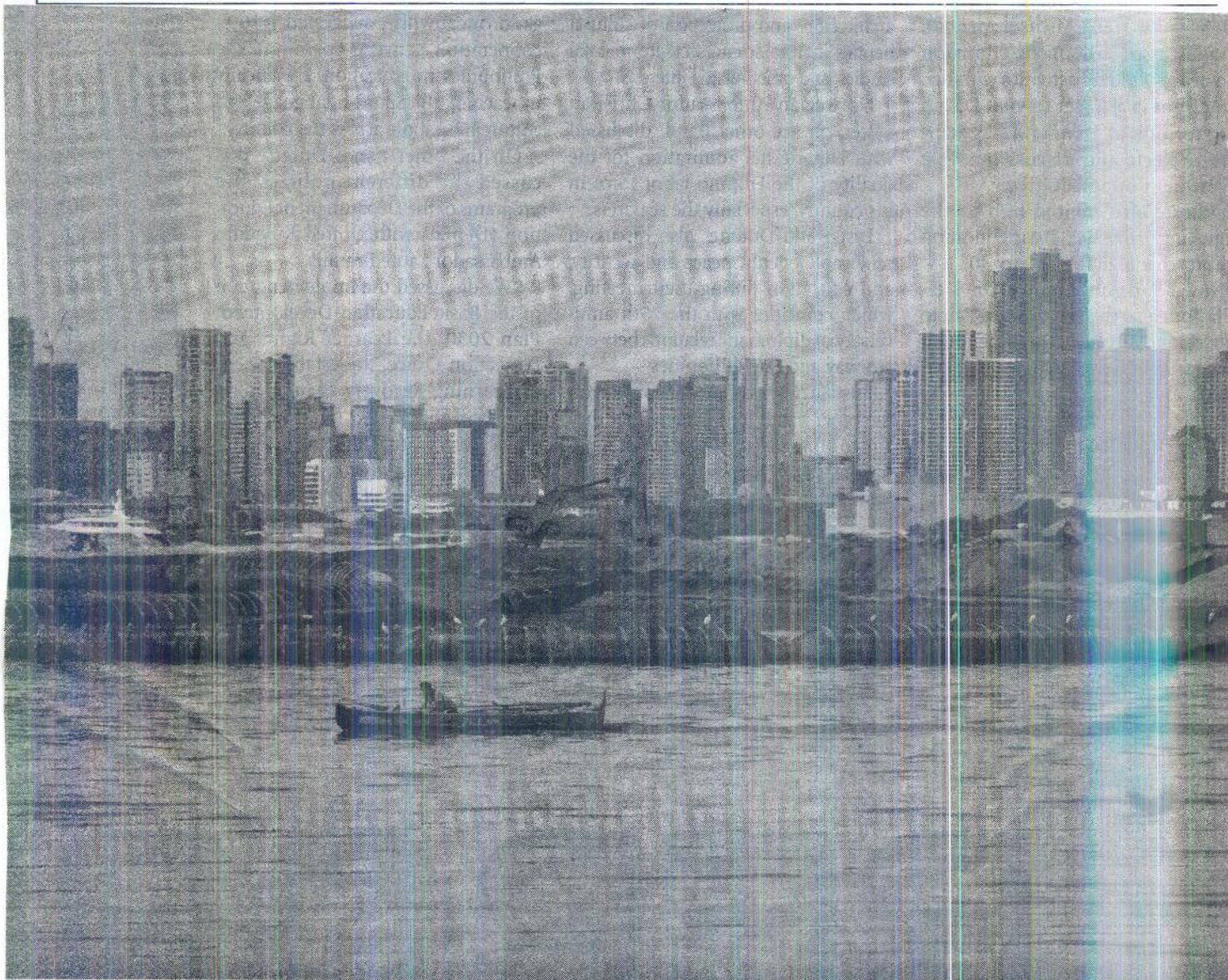
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**MAKING LAND** Ships pour sand as the reclamation project in Manila Bay continues. Through the Pasay Reclamation Development Project, more hotels and malls will rise in the bay area. PHOTO BY J. GERARD SEGUIA





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# The Manila Times

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## Yinglong illegal mining: A microcosm of our national quagmire

Third of a series

**I**LLE-  
**G**AL  
nickel-  
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miner  
Yinglong



**RIGOBERTO  
D. TIGLAO**

Steel's lies in its full-page ads in this newspaper and *The Philippine Star* last week are as stunning as its brazen disregard for the Constitution itself, as well as for our country's laws on mining and those governing business contracts.

► TiglaoA11





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# The Manila Times



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## ■ TIGLAO FROM A1

# Yinglong illegal mining: A microcosm of our national quagmire

My interest in this controversy that I've written three previous pieces on, was ironically piqued by a Yinglong PR operator who tried to sell me a story that the company was the victimized party, that its experience if not corrected will portray the country as a bad site for foreign investments. However, because of my SOP of always getting "the other side," the more accurate picture that emerged was the opposite. I also hate it when people think they can easily fool me.

This episode is a case study of the characteristic situation in our country, that instead of the rule of law, it is the rule of the corrupt, from the local levels of government and possibly even to the highest, coddling unscrupulous businessmen bold enough to bribe officials to get what they want. It's been years since documented details of a controversy that reveals the corruption involved has been made available — ironically thanks to the legal documents filed by the protagonists themselves.

For starters, Yinglong in its paid full-page ad on January 18 in this newspaper in its very first sentence says that it "is 70 percent Filipino-owned." Its Chinese owners most probably scolded the PR operator who published it, as in another ad on January 23 in *The Philippine Star*, that "70 percent Filipino-owned" claim was deleted. It instead referred to the company as a "Filipino corporation." This however is still grossly false.

In this digital age, an online check on who the owners of an SEC-registered company in the country are is just a few clicks away, but expensive. Yinglong's amended articles of incorporation submitted June 2022 showed that going by shares subscribed and actually paid, it is 60 percent-owned by four Chinese citizens: Ming Ying Shi, Hanping Shang, Haibo Shang and Jiangang Zhang. The Constitution under Article XII, Section 2 and detailed in the 1995 Mining Law, limits foreign equity in mining firms to 40 percent.

### Violation

Despite this gross violation of our most fundamental law, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has not been able to close down Yinglong's nickel-mining operations, enabling the company in April 2022 to ship out 200,000 metric tons worth P250 million of nickel ore.

I don't think such shipment could have been undertaken without the local government looking away.

Zambales Gov. Hermogenes Ebdane appears to be backing Yinglong. He even inadvertently revealed this in his letter to me questioning my first column on Yinglong as inaccurate. However, he did not even mention in that letter that Yinglong was 60 percent owned by Chinese citizens, already a violation of the Constitution and mining laws that he cannot ignore.

Ebdane's letter itself reveals that he is collaborating in some way with Yinglong. The letter was delivered by his personal messenger to *The Manila Times* on January 23. This was the very day that Yinglong came out with its full-page ad in *The Philippine Star*, half of which consisted of Ebdane's letter. This means that Yinglong had a copy of the letter even the day before so it could submit it

## AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT

Yinglong Steel Corporation (YSC) is a Filipino Corporation set up as the local partner of one of the biggest steel factories in China. Established in April 12, 2017, YSC aims to set up initially a Ferro-Nickel Plant and Steel Plant separately in Zambales this year as a strong commitment to the call of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. to put an added value to the mining industry of not just a mere exporter of raw nickel ore.

After our MP3SA Contract was approved in August 2021, we immediately poured more than P402 billion investments in equipment, mine development, environmental and social management measures and programs to prove our capability. Our aggressive efforts, however, are met with so many challenges from unscrupulous companies using their applications and MP3SA to do little mining for speculative financial commerce and gains, putting strings to the process. Added to this is the allegations...

Republic of the Philippines  
PROVINCE OF ZAMBALES  
ISA



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

17 January 2023

MR. RIGOBERTO D. TIGLAO  
Columnist, The Manila Times  
2F Star Center Building  
488 A, Gen. A. Avenue, Interoceanic  
Marikina

Dear Mr. Tiglao:

Zambales, I have received the DENR to have three contracts to put in and submit contracts. These contracts currently have the form and are being in some parts of the. One thing the submitting teams that received in the... But incidents did not happen due to legal mining operations, but rather through... irresponsible mining operations.

What we really need is "properly regulated mining operations."

Recently we have submitted two (2) mining plans prepared of mineral environmental authorities, under their offices, and SOCs to ensure the conditions of mining operations. We have a clear title. Our Constitution and Mineral and the... But incidents did not happen due to legal mining operations, but rather through... irresponsible mining operations.

At this point, the public must be informed of what is happening on the ground. (Responsible for the original copy), after securing necessary mining permits... never submitted among operations. I immediately sent and signed to MP3SA over the... mining area to Yinglong, who immediately conducted development of the site. In... addition, the other MP3SA of Westchinamin was also sent and assigned in a... more matter is after completion, all of what brought concerns before the DENR... special requirements. But since, for reasons only known to Westchinamin, I become... interested in taking over the mining operations at Yinglong, I have Westchinamin... immediately submitted a Consent and Disposal Order against the operations of Yinglong, a... Motion for Reconsideration was filed before the Office of the President. Consequently, a... key order of the COO was issued. This temporary lifting of the COO was announced on...

### ■ Yinglong's report to the SEC.

Article VIII: That all the incorporators and directors have subscribed to the capital stock and at least 25% of the authorized capital stock has been subscribed and at least 25% of the total subscription has been paid as follows:

Name	Nationality	No. of Shares Subscribed	Amount Subscribed	Amount Paid
SHI, MING YING	CHINESE	25,000	2,500,000.00	1,100,000.00
SHANG, HANPING	CHINESE	100,000	10,000,000.00	4,400,000.00
SHANG, HAIBO	CHINESE	17,500	1,750,000.00	770,000.00
ZHANG, JIANGANG	CHINESE	7,500	750,000.00	2,750,000.00
VENUS PERALTA SY	FILIPINO	62,500	6,250,000.00	330,000.00
FRANCIS PERALTA SY	FILIPINO	12,500	1,250,000.00	550,000.00
VIVIAN RAMOS CHUA	FILIPINO	25,000	2,500,000.00	1,100,000.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>250,000</b>	<b>P25,000,000.00</b>	<b>P11,000,000.00</b>

### ■ Yinglong had a copy of Ebdane's letter to me before I even received it: Its ad in *The Philippine Star* January 23 containing Ebdane's letter which I received only that day.

to the newspaper for publication the following day. Or maybe he gave it to the Chinese firm a week before, going by the date of the letter, January 17.

### Letter to me

Why would Ebdane send a private letter to me to Yinglong, which was the subject of my critical column that came out January 16, if not to tell the Chinese firm that he was not just taking the cudgels for it, but publicly disclosing such support? That public announcement is obviously critical in that Yinglong's operations are in Candelaria, Zambales, Ebdane's hometown, his *baluarte* so to speak, where he reportedly has one of his residences.

Ebdane's letter is also very revealing of his backing for Yinglong in that it portrayed Westchinamin [the company that sold its rights to the mining area to Yinglong on August 2] as double-crossing the Chinese firm. Ebdane wrote: "For reasons known only to Westchinamin, it became interested in taking over the mining operations of Yinglong."

Ebdane is not telling the whole truth. In fact, the root cause of this episode is that Yinglong double-crossed Westchinamin in their deal under which the Filipino company sold to it for \$20 million (P1 billion) its rights to the nickel mining tract in Zambales in March 2021. Yinglong however did not pay Westchinamin: All its nine checks purportedly for paying the amount were dishonored by the issuing banks, with only two for P47 million cleared. That is just 5 percent of the P1 billion agreed price. This fact is well known in the DENR and the mining industry, as it was a brazen double-crossing of a deal.

Starting August 2022, Westchinamin began writing to DENR Secretary Ma-

ria Antonio Yulo Loyzaga asking her department to close down Yinglong's operations for brazen noncompliance of its deal with the Filipino company. Loyzaga has not acted on the complaint.

### Ebdane

Ebdane's letter to me defending Yinglong is also revealing in that it did not mention at all that Yinglong did not have an environmental compliance certificate (ECC), the most crucial document any mining firm needs to get from the DENR. Required since 1978 under Presidential Decree 1586, the ECC declares that a particular project will not have any adverse impact on the environment. It is in fact required for any project that may affect the environment in the remotest possibility, such that a cottage industry has grown for consultants who work to get such clearance from the DENR. Even golf courses, residential subdivisions and gas stations are required to obtain such ECCs.

A Yinglong representative claimed that the firm does not need to have its own ECC since it can use that of Westchinamin, which leased only a portion of the entire area on which it has an ECC. However, the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau in three separate decisions rejected Yinglong's argument. Yinglong in its ad at *The Philippine Star* admitted that it doesn't have an ECC, and that the EMB had not acted on its demand to issue it one, "for reasons only known to EMB."

That latter part is another lie: the EMB had informed Yinglong that ECCs are issued not for particular projects, but to the proponent of such projects as only this would ensure accountability if there is environmental damage.

What is revealing of the character of the Chinese company is that its representative filed a case with the

Ombudsman in November 2022, claiming that it had given a DENR official a year earlier P3 million, out of the P10 million the official said was needed for the company to get all the necessary clearances from the department. The complainant, one Eugene Co, said he was the interpreter of Yinglong's principal Mingying Shi who gave the bribe in a check. He even submitted to the Ombudsman images of the check encashed by the official who allowed the bank to even copy his driver's license.

### Encashment

The Yinglong official claimed that "despite encashment of the check, our applications (to secure the required mining and export permits) were not approved."

The DENR's Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) chief ordered Yinglong to stop its operation starting March, the documents show, with several cease and desist orders issued up to November 2022.

But then out of the blue, the deputy executive secretary for legal affairs (Desla), Anna Liza Logan, on December 23 blocked that last MGB order, agreeing with the Chinese firm's claim that it needed to dispose of the stockpiled nickel ore, or it could pollute the Uacon river. Six days later, on December 29, despite the Christmas partying season, the head of the DENR's Region 3 office, one Aliso Ensomo, issued an export permit to Yinglong.

Because of the order, Yinglong managed to load its nickel iron ore on a vessel bound for China. MGB chief Wilfredo Encano, invoking the approval of two DENR secretaries, countermanded that order January 12, and ordered Yinglong to stop its mining and exports. On the basis of that order, the Coast Guard on January 16 confiscated the vessel and its nickel-ore shipment reportedly worth P250 million. (Ensomo resigned January 13. Why?)

Logan recalled her order dated January 17 after I made public her order in my column of January 16, claiming the "environmental issue had been resolved."

### Broad strokes

So there are broad strokes: the involvement of government entities that allowed a Chinese firm to operate illegally in Zambales, and very nearly shipping out a second shipment of nickel ore it extracted, because of an order issued by an office 250 kilometers away in Malacañang.

Obviously because of the high price of nickel (due to the Russian war against Ukraine), which means big money, Yinglong's efforts haven't stopped. It filed a case at the Zambales Regional Trial Court January 14, asking it to order the DENR to allow it to continue its nickel mining operations in Zambales. Never say die, or is it just its lawyers?

This episode is a microcosm of the quagmire the country has been in for decades that continues today, which is a major reason why we are still a poor country. And the Yinglong ads' spin — disguised as appeals to President Marcos — is that "there should be ease of doing business" in the country. Amazing gall.

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# Bantag faces illegal quarrying raps

Catapang, a former chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, disclosed the hole and tunnel in NBP was 200 meters wide and 30 meters deep

BY ALVIN MURCIA  
@tribunephil\_alvi

The Bureau of Corrections will file a complaint for illegal quarrying against suspended prison chief Gerald Bantag over the digging and excavation work inside the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa City, according to acting BuCor chief Gregorio Catapang Jr. on Thursday.

"We will file a case against Bantag about this illegal quarrying. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources already confirmed that it is indeed illegal quarrying that was done besides the director general's quarters," Catapang said.

"After that, we will cover the area, put back the tunnel and fill up the soil that was removed in the area," he added.

Catapang, a former chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, disclosed the hole and tunnel in NBP was 200 meters wide and 30 meters deep.

To recall, Bantag has denied that the digging was meant to become a tunnel for escape and stressed that the excavation was to build

a deep swimming pool to train BuCor personnel in scuba diving.

He added that while there is no tunnel, there is a hole inside intended for scuba diving pool to train personnel for disaster preparedness.

Catapang, meantime, confirmed reports that Bantag has ordered the excavation inside the NBP to look for the fabled Yamashita treasure — the alleged war loot purportedly buried in the country by Japanese general Tomoyuki Yamashita and his forces during the waning days of World War II.

"I think it was more of a gold hunting and digging for treasure," he added.

Catapang said he first got wind of the supposed buried treasure in NBP when he was still the *aide-de-camp* of retired Armed Forces chief of staff Rodolfo Biazon.

"When I was the *aide-de-camp* of Gen. Biazon, somebody came to me and he told me that Yamashita treasure is hidden underneath the superintendent's quarters and he asked me if we could dig underneath," Catapang said.

In other developments, two more persons deprived of liberty signified their intent to testify against Bantag on the alleged murder of another inmate.

"Maybe one or two would like to speak out. These are PDLs who witnessed the killing of a co-PDL and they want to testify against Bantag," Catapang said.

Just recently, prison guards from the Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm in Palawan have filed charges against before the Department of Justice. They were identified as Jer Mojado, Lazaro Rafols, Richie Canja, Asher Labrador and Eddie Jimenez.

Another prison guard — identified as Roy Gacasa — filed torture, grave coercion, threats, defamation, and obstruction of justice against Bantag and former deputy security officer Ricardo Zulueta.

According to them, they only spoke now because of fear of retribution when Bantag was still in power.

Apart from Bantag and Zulueta, named respondents were: Former bureau spokesperson Gabriel Chacag, and prison guards Jayferson Bon-As, Victor Pascua, Bayani Allaga, Rose Marie Casion, Joel Arnold, Kanoy Lattot, Ave Akilit, Edgar Angeles Jr. and Michale Marzan.

Also, two gang leaders filed charges for violation of the Anti-Torture Act of 2019 and serious physical injuries against Bantag, while Zulueta was sued for violating Presidential Decree 1829 or obstruction of justice.

Meantime, Department of Justice Secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla revealed on Thursday that an inmate is now in the custody of the National Bureau of Investigation to testify against Bantag regarding another killing incident involving an inmate.





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### 9-foot-long python caught in Antipolo

A 9-foot-long python was recovered by city government officials and residents of Antipolo City on Wednesday.

According to the city government, the reticulated python was spotted on Wednesday night inside the house of a family while they were sleeping.

They then called the city's Animal Control Team who immediately responded to the area and successfully caught the said python. The team turned over the reptile to the Provincial Environmental and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) for checkup and documentation.

Antipolo City Mayor Jun Ynares urged residents who may see any snake in their homes to not try to catch, hurt, or kill the animal and instead immediately call the City Veterinary Office (CVO) (8689-4514) or inform their respective barangays.

According to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), reticulated pythons are native to the rainforests of Southeast Asia including the Philippines and live in rain forests, woodlands, grasslands, rivers and nearby streams, and lakes. (Patrick Garcia)





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## MPIF, TMO partnership strengthens Tubbataha marine conservation

Metro Pacific Investments Foundation, Inc.'s (MPIF) commitment to support the conservation of the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park and World Heritage Site (TRNP) has reinforced its Biodiversity and Habitat Protection, Research, Monitoring, and Restoration program by providing the necessary funding to mobilize ecosystem research, monitoring and enforcement.

From January to September 2022, MPIF has funded two of three of the six annual relieving trips for marine park rangers, including their corresponding subsistence allowance. MPIF's financial support has also allowed for the Tubbataha Management Office (TMO) to pursue its water quality monitoring and beach forest reforestation initiatives, as well as its equipment and supplies procurement.

"MPIF's commitment to Tubbataha recognizes that strengthening its marine conservation includes supporting the stewards who work in service of the environment," said MPIF President Melody del Rosario. "Safeguarding the Philippines' Crown Jewel entails a collective effort inclusive of all stakeholders and thus benefiting the common people."

This partnership between MPIF and TMO envisions to result in the improved conservation and protection of Tubbataha by determining ecosystem health, generating sound scientific information, serving as a basis for formulating proactive strategies, measuring biophysical indicators of management effectiveness, and ensuring the Park's integrity and safety.

### ON ENFORCEMENT AND ECOSYSTEM RESEARCH

TRNP was named a Ramsar site — a wetland site of international importance — by the Ramsar Convention or "The Convention on Wetlands," an intergovernmental environmental treaty established in 1971 by UNESCO. The Convention provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

Placing more importance to this integral biodiversity location, enforcement is one of the key



At Christmastime, monster waves and winds battered the 23-year-old Tubbataha Ranger Station. (Inset photo) Metro Pacific Investments Foundation, Inc. committed to provide an additional P1 mill on this year for the repairs of the heavily-jamaged Tubbataha Ranger Station.

elements in protecting and conserving the TRNP. Beyond funding three relieving trips conducted last April 11, June 8, and December, MPIF financed the subsistence allowances for 51 marine park rangers who were assigned to the park from January to December.

Aside from law enforcement, they were tasked to monitor the population of giant clams, deploy and check the hydrophone, monitor the reefs for bleaching and crown-of-thorns starfish infestation, conduct monthly turtle surveys, check the status of the seabird nesting structures, conduct monthly distance and quarterly direct counts of seabirds, conduct surface and coastal clean-ups, maintain equipment and lighthouse in South Islet, repair and maintain the ranger station, and maintain moorings.



Water quality monitoring and beach reforestation initiatives were conducted to fulfill their ecosystem research and monitoring initiatives. With the assistance of the Palawan Council for Sustainable

Development (PCSD) staff, water samples and situated water parameters were collected from the 20 monitoring sites on the reef, inside the lagoon, and in the buffer zone of the park.

The parameters collected included temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, total dissolved solids, conductivity, and salinity. Water samples were taken to the PCSD Environmental Laboratory for analysis.

Since the saplings planted in Bird Islet in 2021 did not thrive due to the lack of fresh water, excessive pressure from seabirds, and disproportionate amount of sea spray due to rough seas, TMO partnered with residents of Cagayancillo to propagate beach forest trees for planting in Tubbataha during the season. MPIF defrayed the costs of propagation, transportation, and planting of the saplings.

"Our partnership with MPIF has ensured that we continuously value Tubbataha as an integral site for Philippine marine biodiversity. The initial stages of our collaboration have already resulted in beneficial initiatives and we look forward to pursuing equally important efforts for the coming years," said Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park Protected Area Superintendent Angelique Songco.

At Christmastime, monster waves and winds battered the 23-year-old ranger station so that marine park rangers had to be evacuated to safety by the Western Command. MPIF committed to provide an additional P1 million this year for the repairs of the heavily-damaged Tubbataha Ranger Station.

The new ranger station complex will include the ranger quarters, a research station, and a helipad.

Shore It Up's commitment to Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park is aligned with Gabay Kalikasan, one of the MVP Group's Gabay Advocacies for a Sustainable Philippines. It is also in line with MPIC's efforts to contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), particularly SDG 14 Life Below Water, 15 Life on Land, and 17 Partnerships for the Goals.

This partnership bolsters MPIF's role alongside MPIC, as the largest catalyst for a Sustainable Philippines, aimed to improve the lives in the country through providing essential services and mobilizing advocacies that uplift the quality of life of all Filipinos.





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As this piece was being written, the number of dead, missing, and injured and the toll on agriculture and infrastructure were still rising in Oriental Mindoro, Camarines Norte, Samar, Romblon, and other provinces where almost every barangay had been devastated by days of torrential rain.

No super typhoon was responsible, and neither is it the rainy season. Low pressure areas (LPAs) and the clash between hot and cold air have nevertheless been bringing floods to parts of southern Luzon, the Visayas, and Mindanao.

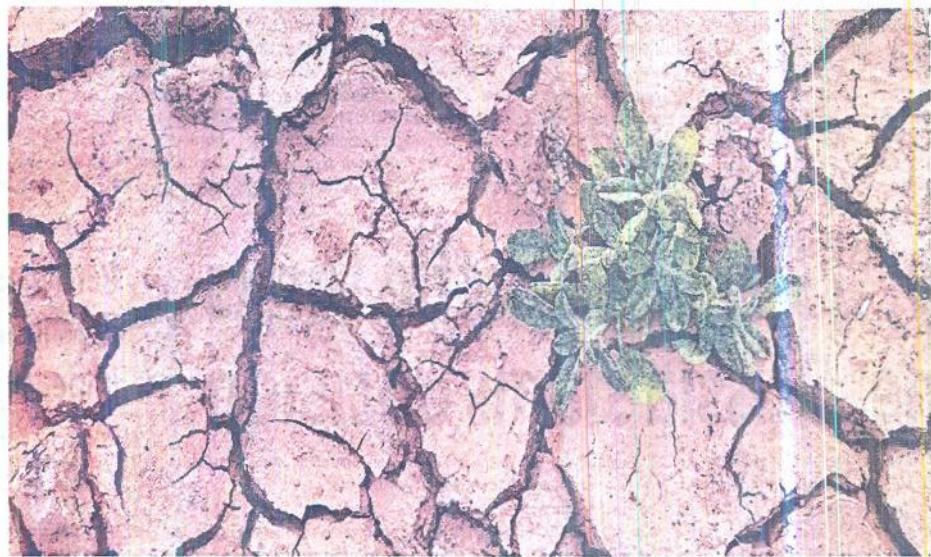
No country can long endure the human and material costs of the unpredictability and intensifying violence of the weather disturbances that climate change is generating across the planet—and in the Philippines they have made even more problematic the poverty and destruction that bureaucratic bungling and corruption has inflicted on millions of Filipinos.

The increasing number of the super typhoons that have been smashing into the Philippines, the unseasonal weather, the tornadoes, cyclones, droughts, floods, and exceptionally cold winters in other countries are among the many indications that time is running out and the hour of what could be the end of the human race approaching.

Among the most vulnerable countries to global warming is the Philippines: it is a frontliner in the seemingly global rush to extinction. Not only is it in the path of typhoons; it also sits on the Pacific "ring of fire" that powers earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The deaths, the injuries, and the billions in property losses and livelihood from these disasters contribute to the poverty and want that already define the lives of millions of Filipinos.

Even without global warming, crafting and implementing a national disaster mitigation program has always been among the responsibilities of any Philippine administration. To the need for such a program has been added the necessity of incorporating in it provisions that will give the Philippines a fighting chance

## Global Warming: Frontline Philippines



RENZO D. SUZUA-ANGRASA

### VANTAGE POINT LUIS V. TEODORO

in surviving the onslaught of the weather anomalies climate change is generating.

But the National Government has been remiss in the making of such a program. Local government units (LGUs) complain not only of the lack of funds for the dredging of creeks and rivers and for resident relocation, but also of the erratic and even non-existent reach of the food and other aid communities need during the current weather crisis.

No sense of urgency drove the previous administration to remedy the situation. Then President Rodrigo Duterte even had an excuse for his limited response to the victims of the super typhoons that ravaged the country, despite the billions of pesos budgeted for that purpose. Instead, he promised in 2021 to look for the funds needed to rehabilitate devastated communities. Hence it was mostly from foreign sources—the UN, Japan, the US and other countries—that those affected obtained some relief.

Unfortunately, neither has there been any sign that the Marcos II regime is seriously thinking of addressing the problems that climate change is aggravating, such as the decline in agricultural productivity and the losses in lives and property in the affected communities. Mr. Marcos is instead focused on regaling the rest of the world with his administration's supposedly great economic achievements, the vast investment opportunities in the Philippines, and his sudden mastery of the complex realities of the country's foreign relations.

Not all the 20 or so weather disturbances that enter the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) annually make landfall. But even those that do not can still bring rains, flash floods, and landslides. Depending on the power of their winds, the rain they bring, and the number of places they ravage, those that do make landfall can be even more devastating. And as recent events are demonstrating, the rains from LPAs alone can bring unprecedented disasters to the most vulnerable communities.

These phenomena are likely to intensify, and they affect the

entire country and the lives of everyone in it. Social and natural scientists have described the climate crisis as a threat worse than nuclear war to the future of organized human life. But little is being done in the Philippines by either local governments or their national counterpart to protect the most vulnerable communities from flooding and storm surges. Rather than proactive risk-reduction, which global warming has made more urgent, government response to disasters has been mostly reactive and limited to moving those affected to improvised evacuation centers, distributing instant noodles and sardines, and urging them to relocate.

But neither the incentives, the means, nor the opportunity to relocate have been provided the residents of coastal communities, who are in perennial danger from storm surges, and those who live in places below average flood levels. Some do manage to evacuate when typhoons batter their communities. But they return to the same sites to repair or rebuild damaged or destroyed homes, and hence are in constant danger

of losing their lives and property when the next typhoon comes.

Relocating can prevent the repetition of the same woes. But without access to livelihood sources, water supplies, and electric power in places they are unfamiliar with, few families are willing to risk it. And yet the millions still being spent on maintaining such frivolities as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) Dolomite Folly could be better spent on, among others, providing endangered communities the incentives that could help reduce the annual human and material costs of weather disturbances.

Together with such a program, a national plan could include the construction of a system of levees along the country's most vulnerable coastal areas. A network of permanent evacuation centers could also be constructed, and stricter engineering standards implemented in the construction of roads, bridges, buildings, homes, and other infrastructure.

Global warming has been attributed to, among others, the carbon dioxide and methane

gases that are released into the atmosphere by industries and the burning of fossil fuels of such countries as the United States, the European countries, Japan, and China. Reducing such emissions to stop the rise in global temperatures is therefore mostly those countries' responsibility. They have to forge and implement working protocols to regulate their environmentally destructive industries and reduce the amount of pollutants from other sources discharged into the atmosphere. Among the existing conventions for that purpose are the Paris Climate Agreement and the Kyoto Protocol, but their implementation is hampered by the industrialized countries' resistance to regulating the industries responsible.

Although not among those countries, the Philippines could make the use of alternative sources of power generation mandatory, together with the strict implementation of the Clean Air Act (RA 8749). It can also contribute to the global imperative of halting the threat by adopting a national plan devised by scientists, environmentalists, and other experts to ease the impact of disasters on the most endangered sectors of the population.

Ecologists and environmental activists have long been alerting the planet on the perils of climate change, but the governments of most countries, among them that of the Philippines, have not paid much attention to them. The "inconvenient truth," as former US Vice-President Al Gore noted over two decades ago, is that not only national plans are needed but also a truly global program to address climate change.

Mr. Marcos could use his new-found skills in international relations to convince the rest of the world of that need. But rather than just globe-trotting, he could also craft and implement the policies that can combat the ravages of global warming here, in frontline Philippines. ■

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STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
AND  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE

# Malaya Business Insight

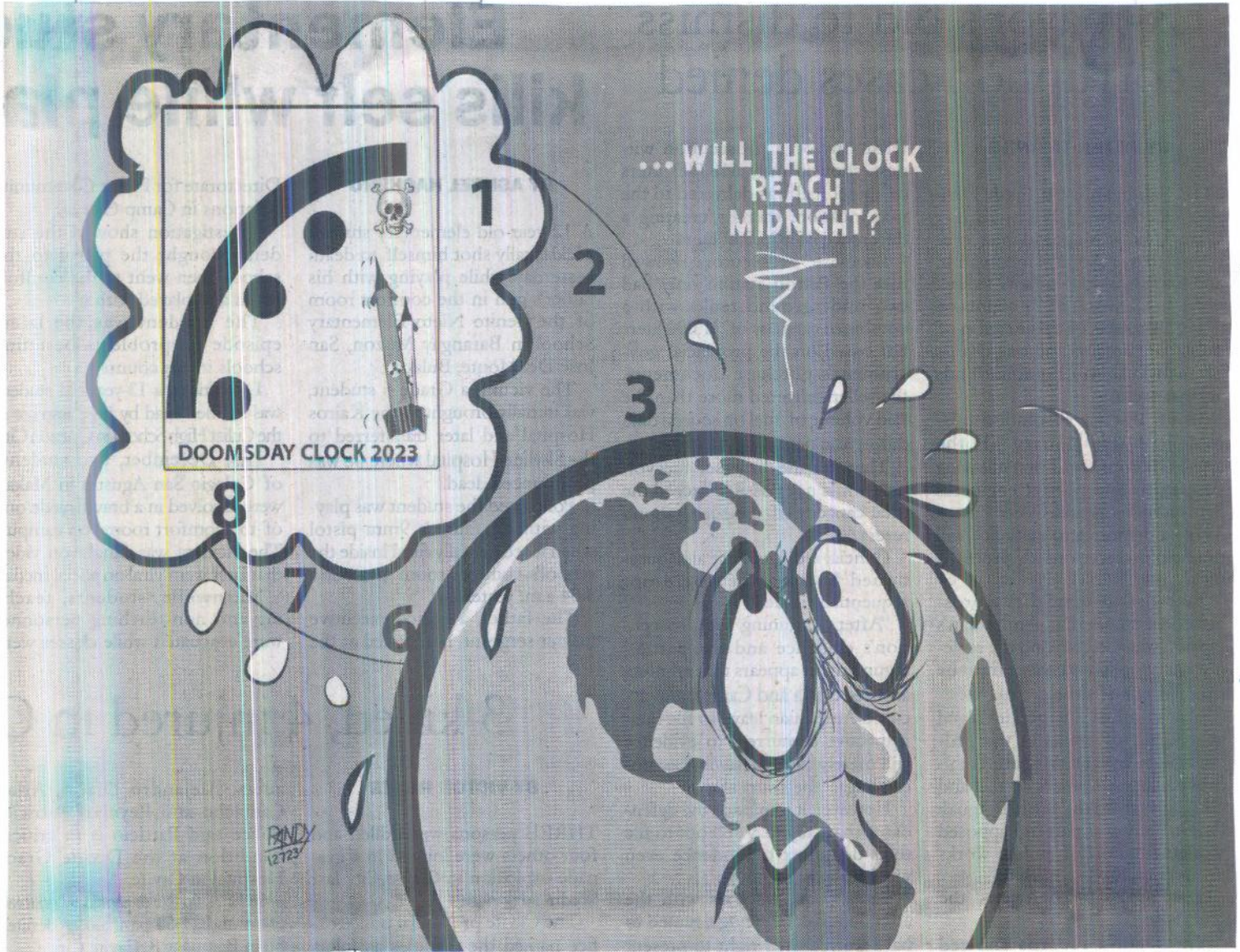


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## Asteroid zips close to Earth, but will miss

**CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.**—An asteroid the size of a delivery truck will whip past Earth on Thursday night (Friday in Manila), one of the closest such encounters ever recorded.

NASA insists it will be a near miss with no chance of the asteroid hitting Earth.

NASA said Wednesday (Thursday in Manila) that this newly discovered asteroid will zoom 2,200 miles (3,600 kilometers) above the southern tip of South America. That's 10 times closer than the bevy of communication satellites circling overhead.

►EarthA2

The closest approach will occur at 7:27 p.m. EST (9:27 p.m. local).

Even if the space rock came a lot closer, scientists said most of it would burn up in the atmosphere, with some of the bigger pieces possibly falling as meteorites.

NASA's impact hazard assessment system, called Scout, quickly ruled out a strike, said its developer, Davide Farnocchia, an engineer at the agency's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California.

"But despite the very few observations, it was nonetheless able to predict that the asteroid would make an extraordinarily close approach with Earth," Farnocchia said in a statement. "In fact, this is one of the closest ap-

proaches by a known near-Earth object ever recorded."

Discovered Saturday, the asteroid known as 2023 BU is believed to be between 11 feet (3.5 meters) and 28 feet (8.5 meters) feet across. It was first spotted by the same amateur astronomer in Crimea, Gennady Borisov, who discovered an interstellar comet in 2019. Within a few days, dozens of observations were made by astronomers around the world, allowing them to refine the asteroid's orbit.

The asteroid's path drastically will be altered by Earth's gravity once it zips by. Instead of circling the sun every 359 days, it will move into an oval orbit lasting 425 days, according to NASA.

AP