

05 August 2023 Saturday



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LOOPFORWARD LAUNCHED – Department of Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Juan Miguel Cuna, Climate Change Commission Deputy Executive Director Rommel Antonio Cuenca, Coastal Cities at Risk in the Philippines Project Lead Prof. Emma Porio, DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyza, Sen. Cynthia A. Villar, United Nations Development Programme Climate Action Programme Team Leader Floradema Eleazar, UNDP Resident Representative Dr. Selva Ramachandran, and DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones launch the 'LOOP FORWARD: Linking Opportunities and Partnerships Towards Circular Economy through EPR' campaign organized by the DENR at Conrad Hotel in Pasay City on Friday, Aug. 4, 2023. (Ali Vicoy)



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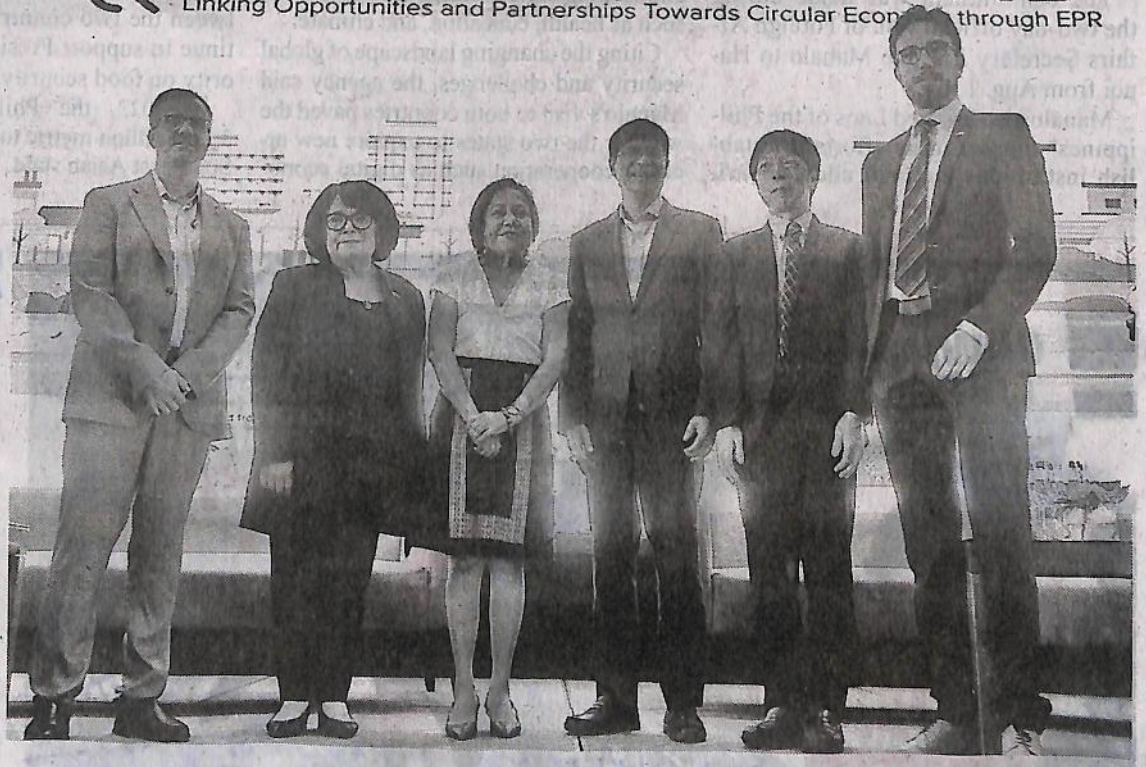
MOVEMENT TOWARD CIRCULAR ECONOMY.

Environment and
Natural Resources
Secretary Maria
Antonia Yulo-
Loyza and
Senator Cynthia
Villar

lead the launch
of a nationwide
awareness
campaign
to promote
the Extended
Producers
Responsibility
Act (EPRA) of
2022, attended
by leaders from
the private sector,
the government,
and other
development
partners.
Danny Pata

@LOOPFORWARD

Linking Opportunities and Partnerships Towards Circular Economy through EPR





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DENR says firms violating EPR face steep penalties

BY JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL AND BRIX LELIS

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said that obliged enterprises (OEs) violating the EPR Act of 2022 would be fined P5 million to P20 million and face the automatic suspension of their business permits.

Republic Act (RA) 11898, or the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act, lapsed into law in July 2022. Based on the DENR's estimates, up to \$890 million worth of plastics are lost each year in the absence of a massive recovery and recycling effort that RA 11898 aims to put in place.

"Any obliged enterprise that fails to register under the EPR Act of 2022 shall be fined," Environment Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and International Affairs Jonas Leones said during the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) campaign launch on Friday at the DENR office in Quezon City.

OEs are the owners or manufacturers and importers that sell and supply commodities for the use of the general public.

Leones explained that there are two types of OE, the large scale, and micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) with total assets exceeding P100 million.

"But those MSME who do not belong in the aforementioned type are not required but highly

encouraged," he said.

Leones said the penalty shall be imposed whether or not noncompliance is the result of failure to register, falsification of documents or employment of any scheme to maliciously evade the responsibility of an enterprise under the EPR Law.

He added that the first offense will be penalized from P5 million to P10 million. Second offense will be P10 million to P15 million and third offense will be not less than P15 million but not exceeding P20 million and automatic suspension of business permit.

For her part, Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga said that 70 percent of the material value of plastics is lost each year, equivalent to \$790 million to \$890 million annually.

"Circularity, therefore, is not just linked to environmental sustainability. Its process can yield multiple system-wide benefits beyond resource efficiency and emissions reduction," she said.

Loyzaga added that the country generates roughly 61,000 metric

tons of solid waste daily.

"Estimates vary, but we understand that between 12 [and] 24 percent of that waste is plastic in various forms," she said.

The Environment secretary added that the country uses more than 163 million plastic sachet packs, 48 million shopping bags and 45 million thin-film bags a day. Of these, 33 percent is disposed of in landfills and dumpsites, and around 35 percent is leaked to the environment.

Furthermore, Yulo-Loyzaga said that "the war on plastics will always be here unless we change our behaviors," adding the country needs to produce and consume what is actually needed.

Promoting the circular economy

For her part, Sen. Cynthia Villar, the principal author of RA 11898, said the law will also promote awareness of the circular economy, an academic model that intends to extend product lifespan. She added the law is also a "big leap" toward sustainable development.

"The EPR Law is not the single solution to eliminate all our waste problems, but it is certainly a big leap forward in the right direction," said Villar during the EPR campaign launch at the DENR office in Quezon City.

The senator, who chairs the Senate Committee on Environment

and Natural Resources, reiterated that the EPR Act parallels global initiatives to promote responsible consumption and production.

"This law is more than a national initiative; it is our contribution to the global effort for responsible consumption and production aligning with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal No. 12," she added.

With the Philippines ranking third among the biggest contributors of plastic waste in Asia, Villar said RA 11898 would encourage the country to recalibrate its actions toward waste management.

"By embracing the EPR Law, we are leading in innovative waste management and affirming our commitment to a global shift toward responsible consumption, production and sustainability," the senator said.

Under the law, incentives will be provided to enterprises, including producer responsibility organizations, to motivate them to participate effectively in solid waste management.

Department of Finance Director Karla Espinosa said that they are eyeing participation with the DENR in a technical working group to craft specific policies and regulations to govern the availability of the incentives.

"I would like to believe that our private sector is on board with the purpose of this law, its aims and the vision it has," Espinosa added.



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DENR to review all Manila Bay reclamation projects

By **BELLA CARIASO**

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources will form a team to review all ongoing reclamation activities amid the controversy regarding the involvement of a Chinese company in a Manila Bay project, DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga said yesterday.

At a press conference, Loyzaga said the composition of the team would be announced soon.

"The public will be updated when the team is formed," Loyzaga said, adding that the DENR would also tap foreign experts to assist the panel in conducting the review.

The United States embassy in Manila earlier raised with the Philippine government its concerns over ongoing reclamation projects in Manila Bay and the project's ties with a Chinese firm blacklisted by the US for helping Beijing construct and militarize artificial islands in the South China Sea.

The embassy also expressed concern over the environmental impact of reclamation projects in Manila Bay, which are feared to aggravate flooding in Metro Manila and the nearby provinces of Bulacan, Cavite and Pampanga.

"The law allows us to review and to modify (contracts of reclamation projects) so we are looking at those carefully. This is the entire set of projects," Loyzaga said, noting the panel will come up with recommendations on various reclamation projects.

"Until we get a very good sense of what scientifically is

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going to happen in this area and until we can get a good sense of how the rule of law can be followed in this area, we want to proceed with much caution," she said.

According to Loyzaga, the reclamation is a national policy amid opposition to the projects.

"Each region has specific context and requirements as well as their own ecological and social profile. The government aspect of reclamation needs to be studied, and the national as well as the regional components of the policy need to be carefully put together," she said.

Loyzaga cited Executive Order 74 which directs the DENR to conduct a cumulative impact assessment on all reclamation projects.

"What has happened here is that individual projects were somehow processed without taking into consideration the cumulative impact of all the projects together. This is actually critical for future use," she said.

At the same time, Loyzaga added that the mandamus issued by the Supreme Court ordered 13 agencies, including the DENR, to ensure that Manila Bay is rehabilitated "to the point that people can actually swim in it."

"What we were not able to do at this point is implement that order and also make sure that all of these other developments will take place because the permits were processed. There is ecological concern, socio concern, obviously regulatory concern because of the mandamus order and we do need to balance all of these now into a set of recommendations," she said.

For its part, the Department of Foreign Affairs said it is "fully committed" to working with relevant government agencies to ensure the "safety and well-being" of diplomatic missions accredited to the Philippines following concerns raised by the US embassy on the Manila Bay reclamation projects.

Waterfront compliance

The Waterfront Manila Premier Development Inc. (WMPDI) – proponent of the 318-hectare Manila Waterfront City Reclamation Project – yesterday maintained that the company has complied with the requirements of the DENR after the US embassy in Manila raised concerns over the project.

The WMPDI also denied that the Chinese firm involved in the reclamation project was blacklisted for helping Beijing construct and militarize artificial islands in the South China Sea.

"As for the recent issue on national security, the project has complied

with the requirements of the DENR to make sure of the safe passage of vessels and that the distance of the project from the US embassy will not impede the natural flow of water, and security protocol, as necessary," the WMPDI said in a statement.

US embassy spokesman Kanishka Gangopadhyay has said the embassy is concerned with the impact the project will have on the environment as well the involvement of China Communications Construction Co. (CCCC), which the World Bank and Asian Development Bank said engaged in fraudulent business practices.

"As to the issue of the eligibility of the project's EPC Contractor, China First Highway Engineering Corp. is not blacklisted by the World Bank. CCCC is a separate juridical entity from CFHEC. Moreover, the project is not funded by the World Bank but by the private proponent/developer, Waterfront Manila and at no cost to the government. In fact, the national government will get 51 percent share of the reclaimed land once the project is completed," it added.

The WMPDI added that the initial concerns of the US embassy, which were communicated to the City of Manila, pertained only to the flooding in August 2022 and possible heavy traffic in the area.

It also maintained that the Manila city government and Waterfront Manila are compliant with all the requirements of the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA), including the payment to the government of regulatory fees of about P800 million.

It added that the project has been given a Notice to Proceed and Notice to Mobilize and Notice to Commence Actual Reclamation Works by the PRA.

"Several government offices interposed no objection to the project. The Environmental Compliance Certificate was issued by the DENR. The project was studied and master-planned by AECOM, a US-based company. The project involves billions of dollars worth of investment that is expected to immediately spur economic activities across business sectors," the WMPDI said.

The WMPDI stressed that the project cannot be the cause of flooding within the US embassy area as it did not commence reclamation works last August 2022.

Halt reclamation

Environmental group Oceana on Friday urged Loyzaga to halt all Manila Bay reclamation projects while the cumulative impact assessment is ongoing.

"Time is of the essence. The DENR cannot be reviewing all these projects without exercising precaution. It is clear that these projects have already started, and resulted in an alarming degradation of the environment destroying the mangroves, denying fisherfolk their fishing livelihood and sources of food and the destruction of seagrass and the seabed by dredging. This is simply unjust and unacceptable," Oceana acting vice president Rose Liza Eisma-Osorio said.

Pamalakaya chairman Fernando Hicap, meanwhile, said the DENR should stop reclamation activities in Manila until proponents can scientifically prove their projects have not aggravated the flood hazards in coastal areas.

"We are certain that these reclamation projects worsened the flooding in the northern part of Manila Bay, as this has been established by geological experts before," Hicap said in a statement.

He noted that geologist Kelvin Rodolfo had already raised the geophysical hazards of reclamation projects in Manila Bay, which are in danger of land subsidence, storm surge and strong waves caused by typhoons, and seismically induced liquefaction.

- With Emmanuel Tupas



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Stop Manila Bay reclamation, int'l environmental group urges DENR

An international environmental group has joined calls for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to stop all the approved Manila Bay reclamation projects.

Oceana, the largest international ocean conservation organization, made the call after Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga said the DENR is conducting a cumulative impact assessment in the said reclamation project.

In a statement, Oceana backed the US embassy's position on the reclamation project as the group raised concerns on its "potential negative long-term and irreversible impacts to the environment,

the resilience to natural hazards of Manila and nearby areas, and to commerce."

"Time is of the essence. The DENR cannot be reviewing all these projects without exercising precaution," lawyer Rose Liza Eisma-Osorio, Oceana's acting vice president, said. "It is clear that these projects have already started, and resulted in an alarming degradation of the environment destroying the mangroves, denying fisherfolk of their fishing livelihood and sources of food, and the destruction of seagrass and the seabed by dredging, thus impeding better habitats and spawning grounds of fisheries resources. This is simply ► 3

Stop Manila Bay reclamation, int'l environmental group urges DENR ◀

unjust and unacceptable."

Oceana said Loyzaga should not waste time in adopting the international standard on evaluating environmentally critical projects, such as, reclamation, seabed quarrying, offshore mining, among others.

"Proposed projects, such as dump-and-fill must be thoroughly assessed and closely monitored to determine their inherent risks to environment, climate, culture, and health, especially of local communities," she said. "Anyone who violates environmental impact assessment laws and regulations that are already in place faces administrative, civil, or criminal sanctions. It is even more disheartening to see our coastal communities, particularly the artisanal fisherfolk and their families being displaced from their food and livelihood even before the project was approved."

Data revealed by Oceana showed that

the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) listed 52 reclamation projects in the country, including the project in Coron that has been forfeited by the government, as of Feb. 28.

"Of this number, 22 projects are located in Manila Bay, and half of these or 11 are already underway. Outside of Manila Bay, the PRA lists a total of 30 projects—15 projects, one of them Coron, already approved; and 15 applications under Executive Order 74 with memoranda of understanding," Oceana stated.

The group noted that the projects were approved even though Manila Bay has been identified as a Key Biodiversity Area by the DENR and other groups.

"It is a rich sardine spawning ground as shown by the data from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources-National Fisheries Research and Development Institute. It is also a stopover for millions of migratory birds from the northern hemisphere," it stressed. (Jel Santos)



DENR reviewing land reclamation project in Manila Bay, DFA assures US Embassy

By MALOU TALOSIG-BARTOLOME

THE Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) assured it is "committed" to work with relevant agencies on concerns raised by the US Embassy in Manila over land reclamation activities in Manila Bay.

"The DFA is fully committed to working with relevant government agencies to ensure the safety and well-being of diplomatic missions accredited to the Philippines," DFA spokesperson Ma. Teresa Daza said in a text message

to reporters Friday.

Daza made a statement in reaction to concerns raised by the US Embassy in Manila on the negative environmental impact of a massive reclamation project in Manila Bay and the involvement of a Chinese-state-owned construction company.

The US Embassy complex in Manila is situated along Roxas Boulevard fronting the Manila Bay.

Two major concerns were raised by the Embassy over some the reclamation project in Manila Bay:

1. Potential negative long-term and irreversible impacts to the environment, resilience to natural hazards of Manila and nearby areas, and to commerce;

2. Projects have ties to the China Communications Construction Co., which was blacklisted by the US Department of Commerce for helping the Chinese military construct and militarized artificial islands in the South China Sea.

"The Department of Foreign Affairs is aware of the concerns raised by the US Embassy with regard to the reclamation

projects in Manila Bay and the risk further exacerbating the coastal erosion and flooding in the area," Daza said

She added the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is "already preparing to undertake cumulative impact assessment" on the Manila Bay reclamation.

"We are also aware that the DENR is looking into the compliance of the projects with the conditions of the permits, as well as with existing environmental laws and regulation she added.



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PLAN, PREPARE, PREVAIL

'Gibo' seeks to redefine OCD's role in disaster response and readiness

By REX ANTHONY NAVAL

AS the country beefs up its disaster response capabilities, Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Gilberto "Gibo" C. Teodoro Jr. wants the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), one of the attached agencies under him, to act as a "bridge" between the national and local government units (LGU) in times of disasters and calamities.

"Now, on our part what we want to be is the 'bridge' between concerted national government assistance and efforts in all these aspects and the local government units. That is what the OCD is all about," he said during the post-State-of-the-Nation Address briefing on July 26.

Doing this role merely means increasing the OCD's capacity of marshaling and coordinating all efforts related to disaster response, Teodoro said.

And as of this time, the defense chief said the OCD is now "increasing its coordinative functions" to allow it to get real-time data and information needed for making critical and timely decisions in times of disasters in case LGUs are overwhelmed.

"So, what the OCD is doing is to [increase] its coordinative functions to get as reliable and timely information and analyze this in as much a real-time situation or scenario as possible for concerted efforts of the national government, in case a local government unit cannot cope with a natural or a man-made disaster," the defense chief emphasized.

In line with this, Teodoro said the country is continuing to galvanize its partnerships with international humanitarian organizations and response agencies to beef up its response capabilities.

That being the case, too, we continue also to partner with international humanitarian agencies and response agencies to advocate with the rest of the national government in best practices in disaster risk reduction," he added.

However, Teodoro also maintained that the DND and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) are getting the lion's share in terms of helping fellow Filipinos in times of disasters and calamities.

"That being said, in the DND proper, the AFP too are tasked—big share—of helping our people in times of crisis and in terms of delivering basic goods and services

when communities are isolated as we see now," he stressed.

Preparedness, resiliency
AS this developed, Teodoro said that major gains have been made by DND partner agencies when it comes to disaster preparedness and resiliency.

These partner agencies include the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) and the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

"Well, great strides have been made by our partner agencies with the primary responsibility for preparedness and resiliency, namely, of course the DILG because the first responders are the local government units," he added.

"In case of predictive capabilities for natural calamities, a lot has been done by the DOST through Phivolcs and Pagasa," Teodoro said.

Meanwhile, the DPWH and the DENR are doing everything possible in terms of ensuring disaster mitigation and resiliency, he added.

Teodoro also lauded Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary Rex Gatchalian for being one of the driving factors in improving the country's disaster response and rehabilitation.

"To add to that, the coordination between the DSWD, of course, anchored on the much-improved predictive capabilities of Pagasa and Phivolcs, has allowed us to adequately plan beforehand and marshal our resources more efficiently in order to serve our people in a faster manner. And it is a testament to the close coordination between Cabinet members that we are able to function this efficiently," he emphasized.

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DEFENSE Secretary Gilberto Teodoro arrives at La Isabela Airport in Cagayan on Thursday August 3, 2023. The airport is one of the additional sites for the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement between the Philippines and the United States. JANI STA. ROSA/POOL PHOTO VIA AP

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Cooperation boosts disaster resilience

EARLIER, OCD administrator, Undersecretary Ariel Nepomuceno, called for enhanced cooperation among the various government agencies, the private sector and the public to boost the country's disaster resilience.

He made this comment as the country observed its 35th National Disaster Resilience Month (NDRM) in July.

The OCD chief said that a "whole of nation" approach is important in building disaster resilience.

"NDRM 2023 is a call for us to continue working to make the Signature Filipino Smile of Resilience clearly stand for our ability to mitigate, prepare, respond and recover from disasters. The time is now for us to scale up our strategies and work in surmounting the impacts of disaster through foresight and preparedness," Nepomuceno, who is also executive director of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), said in a new statement.

With the theme: "BIDAng Filipino: Building a stronger Filipino well-being towards disaster resilience," the agency is advocating for a collective effort to ensure the safety of communities against disaster by promoting well-being holistically.

"Our goal is to make the annual NDRM observance bring our nation closer to the goal of building safer,

climate change-adaptive and disaster-resilient communities across these islands. Our countrymen can thus be assured that we at the OCD will continue to advocate for action and cooperation from all levels of governance, community-based organizations and the public to ensure the safety, adaptiveness and resilience of every Filipino for this generation and the next," he added.

Executive Order No. 29, signed on June 28, 2017, mandates the observance of NDRM "throughout the country through the conduct of activities relative to building of disaster resilience covering the four thematic areas. Regional DRRMCs, local DRRMCs and barangay committees are also tasked to implement activities and programs relative to NDRM.

The NDRRMC through the OCD led the month-long celebration of NDRM.

The council member agencies, regional DRRMCs and OCD regional offices have also started implementing their respective programs and activities for NDRM 2023.

Participants hailed

TEODORO lauded all participants, both in the government and private sector, for the successful conclusion of this year's NDRM on July 31.

This is for dedicating their resources and time in making this year's celebration a resounding success.

"Without your unwavering support, we could not have achieved such a meaningful and

impactful commemoration. This year's theme, BIDAng Filipino: Building a Stronger Filipino Well-being Towards Disaster Resilience," perfectly encapsulates the indomitable spirit of the Filipino people," the DND chief stressed.

"Bida is not merely a word; it is a manifestation of our national character, our innate ability to rise to any occasion, whether it be in normal or disaster situations. It signifies the heroic actions, resilience and compassion that define us as a nation. Throughout the month, we have witnessed countless stories of heroism and selflessness displayed by our fellow Filipinos, who have acted as 'Bida' in their communities, saving lives, offering a helping hand, and rebuilding in the aftermath of disasters."

He added that this year's theme is also a reminder that resilience starts within us, within our families and communities.

And by building a stronger foundation of well-being, Teodoro said the country can better withstand the challenges that come in its way.

"In closing, let us remember that the work does not end here. Our commitment to disaster resilience should extend beyond this month-long observance. We must continue to collaborate, innovate, and advocate for strategies that build the resilience of our nation. Together, we can create a future where no disaster can break our spirit, and where the Filipino people can thrive amidst any challenge," he added.



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3M affected, 200K displaced by monsoon rains – NDRRMC

MORE than 3 million persons were affected and over 200,000 were displaced by relentless rains spawned by the southwest monsoon, or "habagat," interacting with Typhoons "Egay" and "Falcon," according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC).

Based on the agency's report Friday, 3,028,040 individuals, or 805,621 families, in 14 regions were affected by the rains, while 287,057 persons were displaced.

A total of 17,349 persons were preemptively evacuated in the regions of Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon), Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan) and Western Visayas.

The death toll rose to 29, while injuries numbered 165. At least 11 people were reported missing.

The damage to infrastructure was placed at P3.631 billion and P1.950 billion to agriculture.

The NDRRMC also reported 590 flooded areas, 33 landslides, 16 tornadoes, two sinkholes, and one

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■ AFFECTED FROM A1

3M affected

maritime incident during the prolonged rainy spell.

A state of calamity was declared in 232 cities and municipalities.

Power supply was interrupted in 266 areas, and water supply problems were encountered in six areas.

Communication services were disrupted in 10 areas.

A total of 85 domestic flights were canceled, but 78 of them resumed.

The agency said 45 seaports remained closed, stranding a total of 248 passengers, 42 rolling cargoes, 11 vessels, and 21 ferry boats.

P248,324,084 in assistance was

provided to the victims, according to the NDRRMC.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said on Friday that the southwest monsoon has weakened following the exit of Falcon, and generally fair weather is expected in the coming days.

The monsoon, however, will continue to bring rain to Pangasinan, Zambales and Bataan over the next 24 hours.

The Cordillera Administrative Region, Batanes, Babuyan Islands, Occidental Mindoro, and the rest of Ilocos and Central Luzon will be overcast with scattered downpours and thunderstorms.

**FRANCO JOSE C. BAROÑA
AND ARLIE O. CALALO**



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Loyzaga orders revamp of DENR regional offices

DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga has ordered a minor revamp in the agency's regional offices following complaints of inefficiency and complacency in the discharge of their duties of some DENR officials.

Loyzaga announced the reassignment of several regional executive directors

(REDs) and officials of two regional offices of the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB).

Given new assignments were Lormelyn Claudio, who was designated as regional executive director of Eastern Visayas (Region 8), Arturo Fadriquela named as officer-in-charge (OIC) of the Zamboanga Peninsula (R-9), Felix Mira-

sol Jr., also as OIC of Mimaropa (R-4B), Ronald D. Gadot as OIC assistant regional director for technical services of Northern Mindanao (R-10), Cesar Odi as OIC of the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) of Romblon, and Arnold Blaza Jr. who was assigned to the Office of the regional executive director in Mimaropa.



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MMDA eyes rainwater basins vs El Niño threat

By GHIO ONG

Chief executives in Metro Manila are working to collect rainwater amid a looming dry spell caused by the El Niño phenomenon in the country.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority is studying the possibility of installing modular rainwater catchment systems that can store 10 cubic meters or 10,000 liters of rainwater, according to acting MMDA Chairman Romando Artes.

The rain catchment basins could help households have other sources of water instead of trying to get their supply from water concessionaires, he said during a recent press

briefing.

The rain catchment systems would also depend on the available space where they would be set up, Artes added.

Once the study is finished, the MMDA would install modular rainwater catchment systems in two to three areas in each city in Metro Manila, according to Artes.

He said collected rainwater would not be used for drinking, but for cleaning and watering plants.

San Juan City Mayor Francis Zamora – president of the Metro Manila Council, the MMDA's policy-making body – also proposed putting up rainwater collection systems in public infrastructure like city and barangay halls and schools.

Malabon City Mayor Jeanie Sandoval said local governments could put up rainwater collection systems in open areas like basketball courts.

Normal to above normal rainfall conditions are expected to continue until next month in most parts of the country due to the prevailing northwest monsoon.



PMRC forum unites mining sector on push for positive perception

IN a bid to address long-standing challenges concerning public perception, mining industry leaders in the Caraga Region convened to underscore the importance of enhanced transparency, centered on the revised Philippine Mineral Reporting Code's (PMRC) potential impact on the industry's reputation and its significant contribution to the local and national economy.

Held as part of the weeklong Caraga Resilient Mining Week, the PMRC Forum, themed "Understanding the Philippine Mineral Reporting Code," provided a crucial platform for participants from different mining firms, local government units and the academe to understand the objectives and implications of the revised policy.

The new PMRC is slated for full implementation on Sept. 21, 2023 and is mandated to be followed by all mining companies.

Philippine Mining and Exploration Association president and PMRC representative Joey Nelson Ayson emphasized transparency, materiality and competence as the guiding principles of the policy.

Notable changes under the revised PMRC were the disclosure of the Environment, Social and Governance or ESG information from the mining operators; subject to review by the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Philippine Stock Exchange.

The updated policy introduced the "if not, why not" principle, holding operators accountable for both commission and omission of responsibilities. The more stringent compliance measures aimed to foster credibility and trust among stakeholders, investors and the public and set a new standard for responsible mining practices.



■ Mining industry leaders in the Caraga Region convene to underscore the importance of enhanced transparency, centered on the revised Philippine Mineral Reporting Code's potential impact on the industry's reputation.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

With the PMRC 2020 guiding the course, the mining industry was determined to change its story and work toward a future characterized by sustainable and responsible mining operations.

"Mining companies, miners, mining operators [and] claim owners do not own the miner-

als. Some people in the industry complain about mining being a strictly regulated industry. I should say: it must be. Because at the end of the day, we are just stewards of this patrimony," said Asia Corp. Vice President for Mining Business Rolando Cruz, who was one of the authors of the PMRC 2020.