

26 JULY 2023 Wednesday



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



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# Sen. Poe pushes passage of water resources bill

BY BUTCH FERNANDEZ

[@butchfBM](#)

**B**UOYED by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s endorsement of the Department of Water Resources Management (DWRM), Senator Grace Poe prodded her peers Tuesday for Congress to frontload timely passage of its enabling legislation in the lawmakers' priority agenda, as the Senate and the House buckled down to work following the President's delivery of his traditional State of the Nation Address (SONA) Monday.

The call for a Water Department comes amid frantic efforts by various agencies, and the two major private water concessionaires, to "address a water crisis that many fear might repeat a 2019 scenario of months of waterless days for many big communities." "Let us seize the moment stirred by the President's marching orders to finally pass the Department of Water Resources Management bill."

In a statement, Poe pointed out "water deserves serious focus and consolidated effort," stressing that "we must act before the crisis exacerbates."

Moreover, she stressed the urgency of

pushing timely passage of the remedial legislation, adding "we hope the push for a Water Department law can take a step forward with an urgent certification from the President."

While President Marcos did not say in his SONA if he will certify the water bill, he laid down "the importance of a comprehensive approach to the recurring problem of sourcing new water supplies, allocating water, and anticipating issues that could jeopardize the system."

Marcos added, "Ang tubig ay kasing-halaga rin ng pagkain. Kailangan nating

*tiyakin na may sapat at malinis na tubig para sa lahat at sa mga susunod na salinlahi. Kasama na rito ang tubig na ginagamit natin para sa sakahan."*

Considering its fundamental importance, water security deserves a special focus, Poe pointed out "our efforts must not be scattershot, but rather, cohesive, centralized, and systematic."

Given that urgency, Poe pressed "the need to have created the Water Resources Management Office to specifically handle the delicate job involving this most precious resource."



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## IN BRIEF

### Poe, Zubiri support new water agency

SEN. Grace Poe on Tuesday urged support for President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s call to finally pass the Department of Water Resources Management bill.

She noted that water deserves serious focus and consolidated effort. "We must act before the crisis exacerbates," she said.

Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri said he was glad to hear that the Department of Water Resources remain a big priority of the administration.

"As the principal author of the bill, I am ready to push the bill through the Senate, which is especially timely now, with the El Niño crisis upon us," he said.

He added that he would have liked to hear more about the administration's plans to support workers by way of increased wages and benefits.

**Macon Ramos-Araneta**



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# Passage of priority bills eyed before year-end

By Marlon Ramos  
and Julie M. Aurelio  
@Team\_Inquirer



The House of Representatives has vowed to pass before the end of 2023 the wish list of priority measures, which President Marcos mentioned in his State of the Nation Address (Sona) on Monday.

Speaker Martin Romualdez said they had already approved seven of the 17 priority bills on final reading and would work double time on the remaining bills.

The House is eyeing the passage of four bills before Congress goes on a monthlong break in October, and six more bills in December before the monthlong Christmas break.

The four Sona priority measures set for approval by October are the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Bill, Amendments to the Cooperative Code, Tatak Pinoy Bill and Blue Economy Bill.

The six remaining priority measures for approval by December are the Motor Vehicle User's Charge Bill, MUP (military and uniformed personnel) Pension Reform Bill, Revised Government Procurement Bill,



SONA 2023 President Marcos at his second State of the Nation Address on Monday bares his priority bills that he wants Congress to pass. —NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

New Government Auditing Code, Rationalization of Mining Fiscal Regime Bill and National Water Act.

In the Senate, Senators Aquilino Pimentel III and Risa Hontiveros said that Mr. Marcos presented a different picture of the country's current condition in his Sona, far from the one still beset by rising prices of basic commodities, unemployment, unabated smuggling and corruption.

The Senate minority bloc also questioned the accuracy of Mr. Marcos' claim that the employment rate was now at nearly 96 percent.

"In the agriculture sector alone, almost 600,000 lost their jobs in the previous year. [On the other hand], many of the newly created jobs were low-paying and low-productivity," Hontiveros told reporters.

## Premature

"[The improvements] in the drivers of growth, such as mining, manufacturing and other high-skilled jobs, have not been realized. That's why it is premature for the President to say that the 'state of the nation is sound and it is improving,'" she said.

Pimentel said the Department

of Labor and Employment should not just collate raw employment data, but also check the quality of jobs created in different sectors.

"If we look at the figures that the President mentioned, we practically have full employment. I do not believe it. I can see unemployment all around us," the Senate minority leader said.

Meanwhile, the President's Sona drew praise from Aral Pilipinas, a group of education practitioners, parents, students and development workers for emphasizing the "paramount importance" of resilience in education and acknowledging the challenges in learning continuity.

"Aral Pilipinas supports the proposed policy that enables learners to transfer schools during times of disaster, even in cases where transfer credentials are unavailable or insufficient," it said.

Environmental groups, however, lamented that the Sona only touched on climate change, disaster response and resilience, and the so-called "circular economy" but failed to address major environmental issues facing the country.

—WITH REPORTS FROM JANE BAUTISTA AND DELFIN T. MALLARI JR. INQ



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TITLE:

WHERE'S MINDORO OIL SPILL?

# GREEN GROUPS ON SONA: NO HARD STEPS VS ENV'T ISSUES

Environmental groups lamented that President Marcos' second State of the Nation Address (Sona) on Monday only broached the topics of climate change, disaster response and resilience, and the so-called circular economy but failed to address major environmental issues facing the country.

Fr. Edwin Gariguez, lead convener of the Protect Verde Island Passage (Protect VIP) movement, said they were "surprised" that the President chose not to mention the first major environmental disaster under his term—the oil spill off Oriental Mindoro in February.

"Is the plight of more than 24,000 fisherfolk not worth mentioning or is the oil spill now a crisis forgotten?" Gariguez said in a statement.

He noted that the Philippine Coast Guard had already declared the oil spill recovery operation "complete" despite traces of oil on the coasts of Pola and Pinamalayan towns.

Protect VIP recalled that Mr. Marcos had committed to resolve the spill, which came from the sunken tanker MT Princess Empress, in under four months since the Feb. 28 accident off Naujan town.

### Water quality

"We take its absence in his speech as his admission of failing to meet his own deadline," it said.

"President Marcos wants to incorporate and strengthen science-based analysis in the fisheries sector, but this is a contradiction to the real state of affairs in the oil spill-affected waters of the Verde Island Passage," it added. (See related story on Page A7)

Based on the rapid water quality assessment conducted by Protect VIP on July 17, five out of six marine-protected areas (MPAs) failed to meet the water quality standards for oil and grease after registering a concentration of more than 1 milligram per liter.

"The only MPA that is within the standards of water quality in terms of oil and grease is

the Bacawan fish sanctuary in Pola. With this, the pollution level for the five MPAs is high and could ultimately impact the ecosystem within the established MPAs," the assessment read.

In his second report to the nation, Mr. Marcos stressed that the economic agenda "will not ever be incompatible with our climate change agenda."

"Climate change is now an important criterion in our integral national policies, in planning, decision-making, up to the implementation of programs. The potential advantages of such enlightened policies extend to jobs and livelihood, with the unlocking of the development of the green and blue economies," he said.

Mr. Marcos, however, did not mention specific steps to address the climate crisis but noted receiving comments that "sometimes we are overprepared for such natural disasters."

Reacting to this, Greenpeace Philippines said: "The fact that [Mr. Marcos] was proud of the country being 'overprepared' in response to natural disasters shows a lack of awareness of the reality on the ground."

"When people and the local economies suffer after every major typhoon, that is not preparedness. Data also shows that [many] of our coastal cities stand to lose billions [of pesos] from sea-level rise. We have yet to see a clear government plan to address these climate impacts," it added.

"Climate agenda? But no word on stopping disastrous mining, reclamation, logging, other oligarchic and foreign companies' businesses," said think tank Ibon Foundation.

Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines-Mindanao, for its part, said: "There was no mention of the reclamation projects throughout the country that not only pose environmental risks but also entail significant social, economic and cultural losses to the communities that will be affected."

—REPORTS FROM JANE BAUTISTA AND DELFIN T. MALLARI JR. INQ



# Deep ocean targeted for mining is rich in unknown life

By KELLY MACNAMARA

**P**ARIS, France (AFP) — A vast area at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean earmarked for controversial deep sea mineral mining is home to thousands of species unknown to science and more complex than previously understood, according to several new studies.

Miners are eyeing an abyssal plain stretching between Hawaii and Mexico, known as the Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ), for the rock-like "nodules" scattered across the seafloor that contain minerals used in clean energy technologies like electric car batteries.

The lightless ocean deep was once considered a virtual underwater desert, but as mining interest has grown scientists have scoured the region exploring its biodiversity, with much of the data over the last decade coming from commercially-funded expeditions.

And the more they look the more they have found, from a giant sea cucumber dubbed the "gummy squirrel" and a shrimp with a set of elongated bristly legs, to the many different tiny worms, crustaceans, and mollusks living in the mud.

That has intensified concerns about controversial proposals to mine the deep sea, with the International Seabed Authority on Friday agreeing to a two-year roadmap for the adoption of deep sea mining regulations, despite conservationists' calls for a moratorium.

Abyssal plains over three kilometers underwater cover more than half of the planet, but we still know surprisingly little about them.

They are the "last frontier," said marine biologist Erik Simon-Lledo, who led research published Monday in the journal *Nature Ecology and Evolution* that mapped the distribution of animals in the CCZ and found a more complex set of communities than previously thought.

"Every time we do a new dive we see something new," said Simon-Lledo, of Britain's National Oceanography Center.

Campaigners say this biodiversity is the true treasure of the deep sea and warn that mining would pose a major threat by churning up huge plumes of previously-undisturbed sediment.

The nodules themselves are also a unique habitat for specialized creatures.

"With the science as it is at the present day, there is no circumstance under which we would support mining of the

seabed," said Sophie Benbow of the NGO Fauna and Flora.

The CCZ has both its age and its size to thank for the unique animals discovered there, scientists say.

The region is "mind-bogglingly vast," said Adrian Glover, of Britain's Natural History Museum, a co-author both on the study with Simon-Lledo and on the first full stocktake of species in the region published in *Current Biology* in May.

That study found that more than 90 percent of species recorded in the CCZ — some 5,000 species — are new to science.

The region, which was considered to be essentially barren before an increase in exploration in the 1970s, is now thought to have a slightly higher diversity than the Indian Ocean, said Glover.

He said sediment sampling devices from the region might only capture 20 specimens each time — compared to maybe 20,000 in a similar sample in the Antarctic — but that in the CCZ you have to go much further to find the same creature twice.

Scientists are now also able to use autonomous underwater vehicles to survey the seabed.



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## Rare Signal No. 5 raised over north as 'Egay' triggers widespread floods

By Rio N. Araja and Joel E. Zurbano

THE state weather bureau raised tropical cyclone wind signal no. 5 over the eastern portion of Babuyan Islands as super typhoon "Egay" (international name Doksuri) maintained its strength, threatening Northern Luzon.

The storm's effect on the "habagat" or southwest monsoon also caused widespread flooding as far south as Western Visayas, with residents of Bacolod City and its neighboring areas needing rescue from sudden chest-high floodwaters.

"Egay" is forecast to move west-northwestward in the next 24 hours before turning generally northwestward and crossing the Luzon Strait, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Administration Services Administration (PAGASA) said.

In its 8 p.m. bulletin last night, the bureau said the center of the eye of "Egay" was estimated at 135 kilometers east of Aparri, Cagayan. These and other areas in Northern Luzon can expect heavy rainfall of more than 200 millimeters until this afternoon.

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### Rare...

From A1

The storm was moving northwestward at 15 km/h, packing maximum sustained winds of 185 km/h near the center and gustiness of up to 230 km/h.

It is forecast to make landfall or pass very close to the Babuyan Islands and the northeastern mainland Cagayan area between late last night and Wednesday morning.

After passing the Babuyan Islands,

"Egay" will turn northwestward or north-northwestward and pass over the waters south of Taiwan.

It is forecast to exit the Philippine area of responsibility on Thursday morning.

PAGASA said "Egay" is nearing its peak intensity, as only a handful of storms reached signal No. 5 since the agency first used the warning level in 2015. The last such storm was "Karding" in September last year.

The southwest monsoon enhanced by "Egay" will continue to bring occasional monsoon rains over the western

portions of Central Luzon, Southern Luzon, and the Visayas in the next three days.

Signal no. 4 was hoisted over the northern portion of Cagayan and the rest of Babuyan Islands.

Signal no. 3 was in effect in the northeastern portion of Isabela, the rest of Cagayan, Apayao, Ilocos Norte, the northern part of Kalinga, Batanes, and the northern portion of Abra.

The rest of Isabela, northern and central portions of Aurora, Quirino, the rest of Kalinga, the northeastern portion of

Nueva Vizcaya, Ilocos Sur, the rest of Abra, Mountain Province, Ifugao, the northern portion of Benguet and the northern portion of La Union are under signal no. 2.

Quezon, including Polillo Islands, the rest of Aurora, the rest of Nueva Vizcaya, the rest of Benguet, the rest of La Union, Nueva Ecija, Pangasinan, Tarlac, Zambales, Bulacan, Pampanga, Bataan, Cavite, Metro Manila, Rizal, Laguna, Batangas, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes and Marinduque are under signal no. 1.




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Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
**NATIONAL MAPPING AND RESOURCE INFORMATION AUTHORITY**  
www.namria.gov.ph

**INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID**


The National Mapping and Resource Information Authority, Bids and Awards Committee (NAMRIA-BAC) invites interested bidders for the following project:

1. **RENEWAL & UPGRADING OF MULTI-TEMPORAL IMAGE PROCESSING AND SPATIAL MODELLING SYSTEM**
2. Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC): **Php 14,000,000**
3. Project Duration -- **Two (2) months**


The schedule is listed, as follows:

3.1	Issuance of Bid Documents:	Starting	<b>July 20, 2023</b>
3.2	Pre-Bid Conference:		<b>July 27, 2023</b>
		10:30 A.M. NAMRIA Lecture Hall	
3.3	Deadline of Submission and		<b>August 10, 2023</b>
	Opening of Bids:	10:30 A.M. NAMRIA Lecture Hall	

The NAMRIA-BAC reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to the government.

  
**RUELL DM. BELEN**  
Chairman, BAC

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