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'Do not use toads, fish vs. dengue'

By Rio N. Araja

AMID rising cases of dengue cases, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Tuesday warned the public against releasing frogs and fish to eliminate dengue-causing mosquitoes.

Natividad Bernardino, Biodiversity Management Bureau chief, said frogs and fish in stagnant water and swamps could disrupt the ecological balance of the surrounding environment.

To place frogs and fish is not an effective solution to eliminate dengue-causing mosquitoes as they have "diverse diet from plant materials to small invertebrates," she clarified.

"While adult frogs eat a variety of things, mosquitoes do not appear to be a major part of the diet of any adult frog or toad," she stressed.

Citing a 2016 study by biologist Jodi Rowley on the effectiveness of frogs to combat the Zika virus, Bernardino said that "mosquitoes make up only less than 1 percent of the frog's diet."

The cane toad, known as *Rhinella marina*, which is being released by several local government units supposedly to combat dengue, is one of the worst invasive alien species in the world, she warned.

"When introduced to a new environment, non-native species of frogs and fishes may become invasive and alter the biodiversity of the area," she said.

According to Bernardino, the Convention on Biological Diversity defines invasive alien species as "organisms that are non-native to an ecosystem, and which may cause economic or environmental harm or adversely affect human health."

She added that invasive species can negatively affect human health by directly infecting humans with new diseases, serving as vectors for certain diseases, or causing wounds through bites, stings, allergens or other toxins.



Public told: Stop release of invasive species in dengue fight

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA [@jlmayuga](#)

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB) has warned the public against releasing potentially invasive biological control agents like frogs and fish in swamps and stagnant water to combat dengue.

Instead, the DENR-BMB said the best way to combat and prevent the outbreak of dengue is by maintaining the surroundings clean and free from dengue-carrying mosquitoes.

The DENR-BMB warning came amid the increase in dengue cases in the Philippines that breached the 90,000 mark from January to July this year alone. The Department of Health (DOH) said there were 92,343 cases

of dengue from January 1 to July 2, which is 118 percent higher, compared to the 42,294 cases reported during the same period last year.

But the DENR-BMB believes releasing biological control agents like frogs or fish in swamps or stag-

nant water where mosquitoes breed is not an effective way in fighting dengue.

In a news release, DENR-BMB Director Natividad Bernardino said the practice could even disrupt the ecological balance of the surrounding environment.

Bernardino explained that placing frogs and fish is not an effective solution to eliminating dengue-causing mosquitoes as they have a "diverse diet from plant materials to small invertebrates."

"While adult frogs eat a variety of things, mosquitoes do not appear to be a major part of the diet of any adult frog or toad," she explained.

Citing a 2018 study by biologist Jodi Rowley on the effectiveness of frogs to combat the Zika virus, Bernardino said, "Mosquitoes make up only less than 1 percent of the frog's diet."

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She added that invasive species can negatively affect human health by directly infecting humans with new diseases, serving as vectors for certain diseases, or causing wounds through bites, stings, allergens, or other toxins.

The proliferation of mosquitoes is largely attributed to environmental conditions that encourage the reproduction of disease vectors. These conditions include dirty surroundings, stagnant man-made canals and interference with natural



MMDA ISSUES CLARIFICATION



BEACH BUMMER Garbage litters the dolomite beach in Manila on Saturday, a day after heavy rains caused flooding on Taft Avenue and surrounding streets. —RICHARD A. REYES

FLOODING NOT DUE TO DOLOMITE BEACH

By Dempsey Reyes
@dempseyreyesINQ

It wasn't the Dolomite beach of Manila Bay that triggered the heavy flooding in some streets in Manila last week, but three drainage systems undergoing construction, according to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA).

A news report earlier quoted the MMDA as pointing to the controversial project as the main cause of flooding in some parts of the capital city, including Taft Avenue, following heavy rains on Friday.

Baltazar Melgar, the agency's acting general manager, was quick to make a clarification on Tuesday, saying that there was no connection between the dolomite beach and "the recent flooding in the area."

"The reason why flood water subsided slowly during heavy rains last Friday was

the ongoing construction of three pumping stations and a pipeline by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), which is expected to be completed by October," Melgar said during an inspection of Juan Luna Elementary School in Manila for "Brigada Eskwela."

Engineering solutions

He said the unfinished pumping stations were the Padre Faura drainage, the Remedios drainage and Estero de San Antonio.

The pumping stations and pipelines, according to Melgar, are all "part of the engineering solutions that the government has put in place to further decrease the high coliform level count in the area and make the quality of water in Manila Bay 'swimmable.'"

He said the "slow subsidence" of floodwater was

caused by its diversion to Pasig River through the Balete Pumping Station, instead of being discharged directly into Manila Bay.

He added that the MMDA was currently coordinating with DPWH on operating a "mobile pump" in the area, so that the water could be discharged directly to Manila Bay.

A project of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources during the previous administration, the dolomite beach was part of the bay rehabilitation program launched in 2019 based on a Supreme Court order.

Critics, however, panned the beach, which opened while the country was in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. Aside from the cost totaling millions of pesos, environmentalists and experts also cited the harmful effects of dolomite. INQ



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Floods hit Metro Manila anew

By MARC JAYSON CAYABYAB

A heavy downpour flooded parts of Metro Manila on Monday night, four days after torrential rains caused floods and power outages in parts of Luzon – including the capital region – and the Visayas on Friday.

The rain caused gutter-deep flood as of 8:30 p.m. in the following areas, according to the city disaster risk reduction and management office: Finance Road corner Taft Avenue northbound, UN Avenue corner Taft northbound, Taft corner Quirino

Avenue, Pedro Gil corner Taft southbound, V. Mapa corner Old Sta. Mesa, Magsaysay Boulevard and Taft-Padre Faura.

The flood in Manila, especially in Malate and Ermita, took time to subside because of the closure of three drainage outfalls

– Padre Faura Drainage Main, Remedios Drainage and Estero de San Antonio de Abad – and the pending construction of pumping stations to expel water from these areas.

According to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), the Department of Public Works and Highways has yet to finish the construction of the pumping station and pipe installation.

The excess water is discharged to the Pasig River and not to Manila Bay because of the need to treat floodwaters being discharged to the bay through a sewage treatment plant, as part of the Manila Bay rehabilitation program, according to MMDA flood control and sew-

age management office director Baltazar Melgar.

Dolomite beach link

Speaking to *dzMM* radio yesterday, Public Works Secretary Manuel Bonoan said the project is not yet finished because of the need to install longer pipes in order to divert floodwater and discharge it away from the artificial white sand dolomite project at the Manila Baywalk.

He said it is also part of the bay rehabilitation program to keep the dolomite beach clean.

Amid criticisms of being an artificial white beach project, the dolomite beach project is part of the Manila Bay rehabilitation efforts

following a Supreme Court mandamus ordering government agencies to clean up the historic bay.

Monday night's downpour also caused flooding in the following areas of Caloocan, according to the city's disaster risk reduction and management office: 11th Avenue corner Rizal Avenue, 10th Avenue corner A. de Jesus, MacArthur Highway-Valenzuela boundary, EDSA Balintawak southbound-Quezon City boundary and 10th Avenue corner B. Serrano.

It also caused flood in parts of Valenzuela, such as portions of MacArthur Highway, the Dalandanan market and Arkong Bato, among others.



Motorists drive through a flooded portion of Taft Avenue in Manila following a downpour at past midnight yesterday.

MIGUEL DE GUZMAN



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DPWH: Renovation works on drainage facing delays

THE renovation work for three drainage systems leading to the Manila Bay Dolomite Beach project faces delay due to the lack of funds, the Department of Public Works and Highways said.

The closure of the said drainage systems has been blamed for the recent floods in Manila.

DPWH Secretary Manny Bonoan said the Padre Faure drainage, Remedios Drainage, and Estero de San Antonio were closed down to make way for renovations that would benefit the Manila Baywalk Dolomite Beach.

But the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) on Tuesday clarified that it is not the do-

lomite beach itself but the ongoing drainage systems project which caused flooding in some of the streets in Manila last Friday.

Bonoan, in an ABS-CBN News report, said that under the requirements of the dolomite project, the drainage systems must pump wastewater to a sewage treatment plant before flowing to Manila Bay near the beach.

The official said the DPWH needs to place longer

pipes and put more powerful pumps in the said drainage systems.

MMDA general manager Baltazar Melgar meanwhile said it is not the beach but the unfinished pumping stations and a pipeline near the area that caused the flood.

"Dolomite Beach has no connection to the recent flooding in the area. The reason why flood water subsided slowly during heavy rains last Friday was the ongoing construction of three pumping stations and a pipeline by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) which is expected to be completed by October," he said.

With Joel E. Zurbano



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Manila flood traced on Dolomite project

When finished, the DPWH project would channel sewer water to a treatment facility before being released to Manila Bay near Dolomite Beach, according to the MMDA official

BY ALVIN MURCIA
@tribunephil_abi

Acting Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) general manager Baltazar Melgar traced Tuesday the flooding experienced in Manila the past weekend on an ongoing drainage project related to the Dolomite Beach attraction along Manila Bay.

According to Melgar, the heavy rains on Friday partly caused the flooding of Manila streets because three drainage systems had been closed to make way for the Department of Public Works and

Highways (DPWH) project.

The inoperational drainage systems are located along Padre Faura, Remedios Street, and the Estero De San Antonio, he said.

Diggings at Padre Faura, motorists and residents have lamented, have also been going on for months dating back to the Duterte administration.

The diggings have been snarling traffic in the area despite the relatively low volume of vehicles passing through the avenue amid the pandemic.

When finished, the DPWH project would channel sewer water to a treatment facility before being

released at Manila Bay near Dolomite Beach, according to the MMDA official.

Melgar explained that the drainage systems have remained closed as the DPWH has yet to complete laying down pipes connected to a pumping station. Flood water, thus, was slow to subside in Manila when heavy rains hit the metropolis over the weekend, he added.

The Dolomite Beach is a project of the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources to beautify a section of Manila Bay, famous for its breathtaking sunset, to attract local and foreign tourists.

The DPWH project, on the other hand, is intended to make the water at Manila Bay safe for swimming and watersports.

Presently, instead of releasing floodwater directly to Manila Bay, the same is released first to the Pasig River.

The MMDA, the implementer of policies and regulations set by the Metro Manila Council composed of the 17 mayors in the National Capital Region, said it might require the DPWH to install mobile pumps or to allow the operation of existing pumps as needed, like when heavy rains would result to flooding in the metro.



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Group seeks closure of Dolomite Beach

BY BELLA CARIASO

FISHERS' group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) on Tuesday urged Environment Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga to order the permanent closure of the controversial Dolomite Beach in Manila after the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) blamed the pumping stations attached to the synthetic white beach as the main cause of flooding in some parts of Manila amid the heavy rains.

"This is all the more reason to demand the immediate shutdown of this ill-conceived project. Not only did it cost us hundreds of millions, but the dolomite beach has proven to be environmentally unfeasible and a disaster," Pamalakaya National Chairman Fernando Hicap said.

He called on the new leadership of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to

heed their call and probe its previous officials who were behind the project.

"DENR Secretary Yulo-Loyzaga should acknowledge that the dolomite beach is a farce and an ultimate failure. She should totally scrap this project and instead focus on actual restoration of marine biodiversity of Manila Bay," he added.

Hicap added that Yulo-Loyzaga

should focus on the rehabilitation of Manila Bay instead of an aesthetic makeover like the beach nourishment project.

Secretary Yulo-Loyzaga should take a 180-degree turn and reverse her predecessor's ill-conceived programs that are destructive in nature. She must carry out a genuine rehabilitation of Manila Bay by rejecting destructive projects such as reclamation," he said.



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MAYNILA BINAHA SA DOLOMITE BEACH PROJECT

NAANTALA ang renovation ng tatlong drainage system na patungo sa direksiyon ng Manila Bay Dolomite Beach project dahil sa kakapusan sa pondo, ayon sa Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) kahapon.

Kinumpirma ni DPWH Secretary Manny Bonoan ang ulat na ang mga drainage sa Padre Faure, Remedios at Estero de San Antonio ay isinara para bigyang-daan ang renovation na magbibigay-benepisyo sa Manila Baywalk Dolomite Beach.

Ang pagsasara ng 3 drainage systems ang sarisip na sanhi ng patuloy na pagbaha sa Lungsod ng Maynila base sa ilang report.

"Yong 3 pumping stations po na sinasabi natin, kailangan po i-enhance

yong capacity nong mga bomba diyan kasi nag-require ng [DENR] na i-extend 'yong mga pipe going to Manila Bay para hindi ho madumihan 'yong Dolomite Beach. Ang requirement po nila is we have to extend 'yong mga pipe sa up to 350m," ayon kay Bonoan.

"Medyo nagkaproblema lang po nong, because of the additional requirement, technical requirement ng 'yong pumping stations na kagaya nong sinasabi ng DENR na kailangan may (sewage treatment plant), kailangan merong mahaba na pipe na papunta ng Manila Bay eh. Medyo nagkaantohan po kami ng pondo," dagdag nito.

Gayunman ay target ng DPWH na matapos ang renovation sa susunod na buwan.

Nauna nang isinisi ng Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) ang mabilis na pagbaha sa Maynila sa isang proyekto na may kaugnayan sa Dolomite Beach na hindi pa tapos.

"Sarado po. Hindi pa natatapos ang project ng DPWH 'yong pumping station and installation ng pipe... so mabagal ang pag-subsidi ng tubig baha," ani MMDA acting General Manager Baltazar Melgar.

Hahang ginagawa ang proyekto, ang tubig baha ay idinadran muna sa Pasig River na siyang didirekso naman sa Manila Bay.

"Doon na siya nag-drain sa Pasig River instead na mag-drain siya dito directly sa Manila Bay. likot pa siya sa Pasig River," wika ni Melgar. (Joven Delantar)



Konstruksyon sa pumping stations dahilan ng pagbaha, hindi ang Dolomite Beach - MMDA

NILINAW ng Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) na walang kinalaman ang Dolomite Beach sa nangyaring pagbaha sa ilang lansangan sa Maynila nitong Biyernes kundi ang patuloy na konstruksiyon SA drainage systems na proyekto ng Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

Sa inspeksyon sa Juan Luna Elementary School sa Maynila para sa Brigade Eskwela, sinabi ni MMDA acting general Manager Balazar Melgar na hindi ang nasabing beach ang dahilan kundi ang hindi pa lapos na pumping stations at pipelines malapit sa lugar ang dahilan

ng pagbaha.

"Dolomite Beach has no connection to the recent flooding in the area. The reason why flood water subsided slowly during heavy rains last Friday was the ongoing construction of three pumping stations and a pipeline by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) which is expected to be completed by October," ani Melgar.

Ang tatlong pumping station na ito ay ang Padre Faura Drainage, Remedios Drainage at Estero De San Antonio.

Binigyang-diin ni Melgar na ang mga pumping station at pipelines na ito ay bahagi ng engineering solutions na

inilagay ng gobyerno para lalo pang bawasan ang bilang ng mataas na coliform level sa lugar at gawing "swimmable" ang kalidad ng tubig sa Manila Bay.

Ipinangwanag din ni Melgar na ang mabagal na paghupa ng tubig-baha ay dahil inilinis ito sa Pasig River sa pamamagitan ng Balete Pumping Station sa help na direktang ilabas sa Manila Bay habang hinihintay ang pagkumpleto ng tatlong pumping station.

Nakikipag-ugnayan na ngayon ang MMDA sa DPWH sa pagpapatakbo ng mobile pump sa lugar upang direktang ilabas ang tubig sa Manila Bay.

Aniya, bilang bahagi ng programa ng gobyerno para



For Pinoy Basques, seats at the table

MANY Philippine towns have their Basque stories, not on the scale of the empire-building Zobel de Ayalas but significant enough to be part of a town's lore and history. Lubao, my hometown, has one. If it were not for the fact that Lubao has turned out two presidents for the Republic, a rare feat for a town, the story of how a 17-year-old fresh-off-the-boat Basque named Valentin Arrastia landed in my town and became one of the biggest and most innovative sugar planters of the province in the early 20th century would probably loom very large in the town's chronicles.

Valentin Arrastia's involvement in sugar is quite familiar; Basques have been largely credited for developing the then nascent sugar industry in the Philippines. And in the old sugar towns, you would most likely find traces of Basque influence.



MIDWEEK COMMENTS

**MARLEN V.
RONQUILLO**

Even with the rapid urbanization of the 21st century, even after the Basques and their descendants shall have left their haciendas to settle in the gated Makati villages or in some far-away place, a town's Basque stories tend to have continuity, at times spilling over into the international arena. For example, news features on Isabel Artamisa-Breysler, like a recent long-form journalism on her life in Madrid with Nobel laureate Mario Vargas Llosa, mentioned her Manila roots, which could as well be substituted with Lubao.

My late father, a sharecropper, was one of the hundreds of sharecroppers who tilled rice

farms for the Arrastias. Who passed on stories of the Arrastias' humane treatment of their poor tenants to the next generation. Culminating in the sale of the rice lands to their sharecroppers under very generous terms.

How can stories like that, the rare story of humanity in an extremely feudal setting, not take on a life of their own?

If the stories of the adventurous Basques of yore centered on sugar-growing pioneers, the 21st century version is about Basque captains of industry. There is hardly any story on the evolution from adventurers to corporate overlords and even the rare Borja book on the Pinoy Basques did not focus on that evolution. But no one can miss the Basque surnames driving news of Big Business, perhaps the only the credible competitors to the dominant Chinese Filipino business families.

Check the major figures in the C-suites of the Top 500 Philippine corporations and if you were observant enough you will not have missed the Basques.

This is the Basque paradox. While they help turn out a sizable portion of the yearly national output, there is no clear tendency of their part to get a choice seat at the power table, to influence policy in an overt and aggressive manner, to leverage their economic might in the political arena. The last optic of a Basque closeness to power was during the Commonwealth presidency, when the Elizalde patriarch was aide de camp to the late President Manuel Luis Quezon.

Dominant in business but with underwhelming presence in political affairs.

This is about to change. Under the new administration, Pinoy Basques have secured proverbial seats at the (power) table. The president of the

Senate, the head of the powerful upper chamber of the legislature, is a descendant of Basque immigrants. And given his UP Los Baños training, probably his original goal in life was to be an agri-businessman based in Bukidnon with sugar as his main crop, before going into politics. (Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri's father, Joe Zubiri, used to head Busco, or the Bukidnon Sugar Co., before moving on to electoral politics.) Today, the younger Zubiri sets the tone and direction for the powerful chamber. And plays an outsize role in determining which executive priorities should be turned into law.

The ratification of treaties and trade pacts is also a mandate of the Senate and in this area, the Senate president wields real influence.

The head of a diversified conglomerate who is of Basque descent has been named head of a newly created body tasked to strengthen public and private sector partnership, the Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC). Sabin Aboitiz, a close friend of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., is the CEO of the diversified Aboitiz Group.



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While the PSAC is an ad hoc body, it is also expected to wield real influence in crafting the shape, thrust and direction of the nation's economic policies. Sabin Aboitiz's forefathers, like the Basque pioneers, started with agricultural trading; this time hemp (abaca), before evolving into ventures like power, banking, shipping and real estate. And, of course, agri-business.

The new secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Tina Yulo-Loyzaga, is not an ethnic Basque, but is married to one and for all intents and purposes carries a Basque surname. Husband Chito Loyzaga made a name for himself in basketball, a record that, however, pales in comparison with the historic accomplishments of his Basque father Carlos in the nation's hoops history. Carlos Loyzaga was one of the best basketball players in the world during his time and the best Philippine showing in Olympics basketball was the team that Caloy Loyzaga led.

Last but not least, if you look at the long list of prominent Filipinos of Basque descent, the name of Liza Cacho Araneta Marcos is there. The boldest of the boldface Pinoy Basque names.



PPP ideas for LGUs

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has advised local government units (LGUs) to engage the private sector for possible funding of their investments, such as for infrastructures, through public-private partnerships (PPPs). I wish to introduce here unsolicited ideas that can be developed further into PPP projects, for anyone's consideration, that is, especially those who have the authority and means to carry out PPPs.

The PPP route has become fashionable for many developing countries, especially those which struggle to collect enough funds for their public goods and services investments. Through PPPs, private funds come in; they free up government funds for other much-needed expenditures. In certain cases, private firms are quick to propose PPP agreements with government when opportunities to profit from them are hard to ignore.

Governments can sweeten PPP deals and make them more enticing for private firms, such as providing guarantees (where government assumes contingent liabilities in case the private firm defaults on its debts with which it funded the PPP project), or by creating conditions that make a PPP some kind of a



**INGMING
ABERIA**

commercial monopoly (as in the case of the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange, or PITEX).

In some instances when access to PPP goods or services entails costs that price out the lower segments of the population (such as skyways), some PPPs can be seen as serving private interests more than public welfare (hence the "private gain, public pain" rant). There is also the argument for comparing, from a whole-of-society perspective, the costs and benefits over a period of, say, 25 years, between two similar projects, one funded by PPP and the other by government debt.

Overall, however, the Philippines (according to an Asian Development Bank paper) is known as having a relatively robust enabling legal framework (Republic Act 6957, the Build, Operate and Transfer Law of 2012, and its amendment, Republic Act 7718), and implementing structures such as the PPP Center, for PPP projects.

The PPP Center defines PPP as

a contractual agreement between the government and a private firm targeted towards financing, designing, implementing and operating infrastructure facilities and services that were traditionally provided by the public sector.

There can be many forms of PPPs in terms of modalities and scope, for example. In the Philippines, the PPP Center identifies two basic forms of PPP. One is called availability PPP, the other is a concession-based PPP. The center says that "they are distinguished from each other on the roles the partners assume."

In the availability PPP, government "contracts with a private sector entity to provide a public good, service or product at a constant capacity to the implementing agency for a given fee (capacity fee) and a separate charge for usage of the public good, product or service (usage fee). Fees or tariffs are regulated by contract to provide for recovery of debt service, fixed costs of operation and a return on equity."

In a concession PPP, "the government grants the private sector the right to build, operate and charge public users of the public good, infrastructure or service,



a fee or tariff which is regulated by public regulators and the concession contract. Tariffs are structured to provide for recovery of debt service, fixed costs of operation and return on equity."

Examples of finished/ongoing PPP projects include Cavite-Laguna Expressway (Calax), NLEX-SLEX Connector Road Project, Muntinlupa-Cavite Expressway, NAIA Expressway, Tarlac-Pangasinan-La Union Expressway (TPLEX), North Luzon Expressway Harbor Link Project, Southeast Metro Manila Expressway Project (Semme/C-6), and Metro Manila Skyway.

Most of these projects are located within or near Metro Manila. While some PPP projects have been considered for LGUs, they are few and far between as it were.

The Local Government Code identifies several sectors in which PPP projects can be adopted, such as agriculture and fisheries, commercial and industrial development, education, government buildings and operations centers, forestry, health, housing, information and communication technology (ICT) systems and facilities, land use, roads and bridges, social welfare, transpor-

tation, water and sanitation.

On government buildings and operations centers, I suggest that LGUs develop through PPPs some of their real estate properties as host for the relocation of central offices of government agencies that are presently located in Metro Manila. The host LGU may need to make it easy for central personnel to relocate, such as by offering free unlimited Wi-Fi, free housing for at least 25 years, etc. The multipliers and positive externalities that such an investment can bring to the local economy promise to be almost boundless, while helping to somehow decongest human and vehicular traffic in Metro Manila. Thus, the national government would have a vested interest in such a prospect. Public policy should deem it compelling enough for a presidential edict to be issued, directing the dispersal of government offices to the countryside.

Initial preferences for location should suggest that the mandate of each office should fit to specific leverages offered by an LGU. For the Department of Tourism, for example, prime locations should include Palawan or Bohol. For the Department of Environment

and Natural Resources, I would recommend my home province, Eastern Samar. Here, one can still see vibrant canopies; the better for our DENR people to appreciate the rewards of being able to protect the environment. For the Commission on Elections, any site beside a body of water should be appropriate, so that it can dive into it whenever a fire alarm rings out from any of its data centers.

There can be social costs, of course, as red districts can be expected to proliferate with the influx of migrants. Offices like the Department of Public Works and Highways, Bureau of Internal Revenue, Bureau of Customs, Department of Health, Bureau of Immigration, and Department of Agriculture, among many others, as suggested by a 2021 Presidential Anti-Corruption Commission report, would bring in enough spoils to the countryside that, although foreseen as being able to lift the local economy to new levels of activity, may also encourage new lifestyles.

More PPP ideas next week
(Aug. 17, 2022).

haberia@gmail.com



LGUs urged: Make plans on disaster management

BY TIZIANA CELINE PIATOS

THE Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) researchers urged municipal and city governments to integrate barangay disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) plans into their development plans.

PIDS senior research fellow Sonny Domingo and research specialist Arvie Manejar made this call in a webinar featuring their study titled "Policy, Institutional and Expenditure Review of Bottom-up Approach Disaster Risk Reduction and Management."

According to the researchers, cities and municipalities are "not optimally" using the barangay DRRM and development plans when creating their development and land use plans.

"In many cases, inputs from

barangay (villages) are not given the much-needed space in upper-level planning," noted Domingo in a statement.

Hence, he advised municipal and city governments to improve the inclusion of barangay DRRM plans in their development plans.

The researchers also pointed out that the country's DRRM system is "still largely top-down," with scant evidence of community involvement through civil society representation.

Domingo added that whereas

regional and global policies promote bottom-up engagement, the procedures "remain ambiguous or difficult."

The study found "weak reporting, accounting, tracking and feedback on DRR resources" regarding LGUs' (local government units) use of DRRM funds.

According to the report, the Full Disclosure Policy Portal for LGUs "is a good platform for transparency and validation."

Still, standards and quality checks for the inputs must be in place.

These problems, Domingo said, highlight the necessity of educating LGUs on DRR policy and fiscal management.

"We need to empower them in using what is available in terms of assets and resources instead of waiting for many years to

capitalize on them," explained Domingo.

The researchers also emphasized a better monitoring and assessment system for plans, programs, resources and expenditures.

"We need to enhance reporting efforts and transparency platforms by compelling LGUs to come up with yearly reports on disaster-related initiatives and impacts of disasters on their communities," mentioned Domingo.

The researchers also added that the government should strengthen institutional avenues for more community and stakeholder participation by engaging micro, small and medium enterprises, and implementing more participatory programs and activities.

"Be very explicit in allocating resources for participatory-related initiatives," suggested Domingo.

Second fastest economy

Phil's GDP grows by 7.4% in second quarter

This performance also remains in line with our expectations, or our expected 6.5 percent to 7.5 percent growth in 2022

BY RAADEE SAUSA

Gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 7.4 percent in the second quarter, making the Philippines the second best-performing nation among emerging economies, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) chief Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said on Tuesday. **Turn to page A2**

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Arsenio Balisacan said on Tuesday.

"The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said that our economy sustained its expansion in the second quarter of 2022, with real GDP growth of 7.4 percent," NEDA chief Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said in a press conference.

"This growth is slightly less than the median forecast of 7.5 percent; still, this figure places the country as the second best-performing nation among the region's major emerging economies that have released their second quarter reports," the secretary added.

Balisacan said the Philippines is next only to Vietnam's 7.7 percent but ahead of Indonesia's 5.4 percent and China's 0.4 percent.

"This performance also remains in line with our expectations, or our expected 6.5 percent to 7.5 percent growth in 2022," he said.

"All we need is 7.2 percent growth to achieve the 7.5 percent growth for the year's second half."

This performance also remains in line with our expectations, or our expected 6.5 percent to 7.5 percent growth in 2022.

For the remainder of the year, Balisacan said the government must apply the same or even better risk management protocols and protect the most vulnerable against high inflation and other shocks and scarring because of Covid-19.

All sectors on the production side expanded in the last quarter, driven by the services and industry sectors at 9.1 percent and 6.3 percent, respectively. Transport, accommodation, food service, and other services have shown continued yet slow signs of recovery to their pre-pandemic levels.

This growth is slightly less than the median forecast of 7.5 percent; still, this figure places the country as the second best-performing nation among the region's major emerging economies that have released their second quarter reports," the secretary added

Meanwhile, the agriculture sector remained weak at 0.2 percent growth due to its vulnerability to natural calamities and rising input costs.

PSA Undersecretary Dennis Mapa said: "The main contributors to the second quarter 2022 growth were: Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, 9.7 percent; construction, 19.0 percent; and transportation and storage, 22.1 percent."

Major economic sectors, namely: Agriculture, forestry, fishing, industry, and Services, all posted positive growths in the second quarter with 0.2 percent, 6.3 percent and 8.1 percent, respectively.

Meanwhile, the manufacturing output continued to grow in June as the average capacity utilization increased during the month, Mapa said.

"Increases were also seen in other manufacturing

and repair and installation of machinery and equipment (5.7 percent); other non-metallic mineral products (5.5 percent); manufacture of furniture (4.8 percent); and rubber and plastic products (0.7 percent)," Mapa said.

Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno commented: "The economy experienced broad-based growth in second quarter 2022 with positive contributions from all three major sectors - agriculture, industry and services, despite the increase in international commodity prices. Private domestic demand also expanded with household consumption (8.8-percent growth rate) and gross capital formation (20.5-percent growth rate) providing robust support to the economy."

The second quarter's growth reflects the increase in mobility, better labor conditions, and the government's support for development.

"For the first half, real GDP growth averaged 7.3 percent, above the 6.5 percent to 7.5 percent DBCC (Development Budget Coordination Committee) target for the year," Diokno added.

The secretary also said that "while there might be some slowdown in growth in the second half of the year, reflecting the downgrade in the outlook for the global economy, we still expect that the DBCC growth target for 2022 will be achievable as we continue the ongoing infrastructure program, maintain macroeconomic stability."

The Philippine economy has to expand by only 5.2 percent in the year's second half to achieve the lower bound of the 6.5 percent growth target. But to reach the upper bound of 7.5 percent, the economy has to grow by 7.6 percent. Both targets are double, Diokno added.

For his part, economist Ronilo Balbieran of the University of Asia and the Pacific said the GDP performance affirmed "that the strength of our economy lies in the many young and still growing population of our country that are now being permitted to get out of the house and resume with all the socialization activities that drive consumption, travel, tourism, recreation, public events that are now driving trade, transport, and logistics to support this behavior, and further, providing a stronger and longer-term horizon for construction and another investment spending."

For his part, Michael Enriquez, president and chief investment officer of Sun Life Investment Management and Trust Corp., said "the second quarter GDP growth came out to be strong but still below consensus estimates of 8.4 percent. The higher oil and commodity prices weighed down on spending."



DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS AND
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Parañaque spillway eyed to solve Metro flooding

BY WILLIAM DEPASUPIL

THE government revived the planned Parañaque Spillway Project (PSP) in a bid to protect low-lying communities in Metro Manila and nearby provinces from massive flooding.

Public Works and Highways Secretary Manuel Bonoan said on Tuesday that the government sought the support of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to finance the ambitious project, which was first eyed for implementation during the Arroyo administration following the onslaught of Typhoon "Ondoy" that inundated Metro Manila.

Officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), National Economic and Development Authority, Department of Finance, and JICA mission

group recently held a fact-finding meeting for the PSP flood control project to address the perennial flooding problem in Greater Manila and the nearby provinces of Laguna and Rizal.

Bonoan said that flood damage in the Laguna lakeshore area during the rainy season due to the effects of climate change is a situation that could not be further ignored.

Public Works Senior Undersecretary Emil Sadain said the PSP is a much-needed engineering intervention to address extreme

flooding by draining excess water from Laguna Lake into Manila Bay.

Using underground tunnel technology, this flood control option for the Laguna de Bay basin is based on the comprehensive flood management plan supported by surveys carried out by JICA experts, added Sadain.

To control the water level of Laguna Lake, DPWH proposed the construction of an underground drainage channel to catch overflowing flood water from Laguna Lake before it is pumped out to Manila Bay.

The Parañaque spillway involves the construction of an open channel and tunnel with the inlet at the land side in Buli (south side of Sucat) and with the outlet at the Zapote River mouth with a maximum outflow discharge of 240 cubic meters per second.

It will have a deep tunnel technology with an inner diameter of

13 meters having a tunnel depth ranging from 50 to 77 meters from the existing ground with a total tunnel length of 10.50 kilometers.

The underground structure that will connect Laguna Lake to Manila Bay will avoid the spilling of lake water into low-lying communities. The project will traverse 50 m underground the cities of Muntinlupa, Parañaque, Las Piñas and Bacoor in Cavite.

With this, the DPWH will be able to mitigate the inundation in the Laguna de Bay Lakeshore area by draining the water lake directly into Manila Bay.

The DPWH, which is mandated to implement the infrastructure development projects, including the flood control works, has identified the PSP project as one of the priority projects in the Philippine investment plan.

The project was proposed to be funded under a JICA loan.



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COMMUNICATION
AND
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Manila Standard

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FLOODING ALL AROUND.

More than 1,000 families in Kabacan, North Cotabato on Monday waded through floods triggered by nonstop rain over the past few days, which affected many areas in Mindanao and Luzon. See related story on [A3: Kabacan LGU via Facebook](#)



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Dolomite Beach, 'wag sisihin sa pagbaha

Wala umanong kinataman ang Dolomite Beach sa naging mga pagbaha sa lungsod sa Maynila nitong Lunes ng gabi.

Ayon sa Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) na ang naranasang pagbaha ay dulot ng konstruksyon sa pumping station sa Baywalk.

Nabatid pa sa MMDA na tatlong pumping stations at isang pipeline ng Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) ang kasalukuyang kinukumpuni ngayon na siyang dahilan ng pagbabaha.

Ito ay ang mga pumping stations sa Padre Faura Drainage, Remedios Drainage at Estero de San Antonio ang mga isinasailalim sa rehabilitasyon.

Ang mga pumping stations at pipelines na ito

umano ang solusyon ng pamahalaan para mapababa ang mataas na lebel ng coliform at maisaayos ang kalidad ng tubig sa Manila Bay upang maaari na itong maliguan.

Ang mabagal na paghupa ng baha ay dulot umano ng pag-divert sa tubig sa ilog Pasig sa pamamagitan ng Balete Pumping Station sa halip na dalhin ito ng diretsa sa Manila Bay.

Nakikipag-ugnayan na umano sila ngayon sa DPWH para makapag-operate ng isang mobile pump para madala ang tubig-baha ng direkta sa Manila Bay.

Ilan pa ring mga karatig lungsod sa Metro Manila ang naitala ring naranasan ang mataas na tubig baha dulot nang walang humpay na mga pag-ulan. (Danilo Garcia)



ESTABLISHED 1859
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The Manila Times



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Drought, floods linked to infectious diseases

CLIMATE hazards such as flooding, heat waves and drought have worsened more than half of the hundreds of known infectious diseases in people, including malaria, hantavirus, cholera and anthrax, a study says.

Researchers looked through the medical literature of established cases of illnesses and found that 218 out

of the known 375 human infectious diseases, or 58 percent, seemed to be made worse by one of 10 types of extreme weather connected to climate change, according to a study in Monday's journal *Nature Climate Change*.

The study mapped out 1,006 pathways from the climate hazards to sick people. In some cases, downpours

and flooding sicken people through disease-carrying mosquitos, rats and deer. There are warming oceans and heat waves that taint seafood and other things we eat and droughts that bring bats carrying viral infections to people.

Doctors, going back to Hippocrates, have long connected disease to weather,

>FloodsA8

■ FLOODS FROM A1

Drought, floods linked to infectious diseases

but this study shows how widespread the influence of climate is on human health.

"If climate is changing, the risk of these diseases are changing," said study co-author Dr. Jonathan Patz, director of the Global Health Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Doctors, such as Patz, said they need to think of the diseases as symptoms of a sick Earth.

"The findings of this study are terrifying and illustrate well the enormous consequences of climate change on human pathogens," said Dr. Carlos del Rio, an Emory University infectious disease specialist, who was not part of the study.

"Those of us in infectious diseases and microbiology need to make climate change one of our priorities, and we need to all work together to prevent what will be without doubt a catastrophe as a result of climate change."

In addition to looking at infectious diseases, the researchers expanded their search to look at all types of human sicknesses, including non-infectious illnesses such as asthma, allergies and even animal bites to see how many maladies they could connect to climate hazards in some way, including infectious diseases.

fuels joint pain years later.

Sometimes climate change hits in odd ways. Mora included the 2016 case in Siberia when a decades-old reindeer carcass, dead from anthrax, was unearthed when the permafrost thawed from warming. A child touched it, got anthrax and started an outbreak.

Mora originally wanted to search medical cases to see how Covid-19 intersected with climate hazards, if at all. He found cases where extreme weather both exacerbated and diminished chances of Covid-19. In some cases, extreme heat in poor areas had people congregate together to cool off and get exposed to the disease, but in other situations, heavy downpours reduced Covid spread because people stayed home and indoors, away from others.

Longtime climate and public health expert Kristie Ebi at the University of Washington cautioned that she had concerns with how the conclusions were drawn and some of the methods in the study.

It is an established fact that the burning of coal, oil and natural gas has led to more frequent and intense extreme weather, and research has shown that weather patterns are associated with many health issues, she said.



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They found a total of 286 unique sicknesses and of those 223 of them seemed to be worsened by climate hazards, nine were diminished by climate hazards and 54 had cases of both aggravated and minimized, the study found.

The new study doesn't do the calculations to attribute specific disease changes, odds or magnitude to climate change, but finds cases where extreme weather was a likely factor among many.

Study lead author Camilo Mora, a climate data analyst at the University of Hawaii, said what is important to note is that the study isn't about predicting future cases.

"There is no speculation here whatsoever," Mora said. "These are things that have already happened." One example Mora knows firsthand.

About five years ago, Mora's home in rural Colombia was flooded — for the first time in his memory water was in his living room, creating an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes — and Mora contracted Chikungunya, a nasty virus spread by mosquito bites. And even though he survived, he still

"However, correlation is not causation," Ebi said in an email. "The authors did not discuss the extent to which the climate hazards reviewed changed over the time period of the study and the extent to which any changes have been attributed to climate change."

But Dr. Aaron Bernstein, interim director of the Center for Climate, Health and the Global Environment at Harvard School of Public Health, Emory's del Rio and three other outside experts said the study is a good warning about climate and health for now and the future. Especially as global warming and habitat loss push animals and their diseases closer to humans, Bernstein said.

"This study underscores how climate change may load the dice to favor unwelcome infectious surprises," Bernstein said in an email. "But of course it only reports on what we already know and what's yet unknown about pathogens may be yet more compelling about how preventing further climate change may prevent future disasters like Covid-19." **AP**



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ILLEGAL QUARRYING SA ALBAY IPINATIGIL

TINULDUKAN na ni Albay Governor Noel Rosal ang walang pulnat na ilegal na paghahakot ng black sand mula sa malalaking ilog na pinaniniwalaang ugat ng malawakang pagbaha sa lalawigan.

Ilang araw matapos na umupo bilang Gobernador si Rosal, kaagad siyang nagpalabas ng kautusan para hullihin ang mga biyahero ng black sand na walang kaukulang permiso mula sa DENR at PENRO ng probinsyang matalagang ginawang gatasan ng ilang buwayang personalidad na malapit sa nakaraang administrasyon.

Kamakailan, ipinatawag ni Rosal ang mga kontraktor at quarry operator upang ipaalam

ang bagong panuntunan nang paghahakot ng black sand kung saan ipinegbawal na ang pagkuha nito sa ilog na may limang kilometro ang layo mula sa kalsada.

Yung mga kanal na daluyan ng lahar na malapit sa paanan ng Bulang Mayon ang napagkasunduang magiging 'quarry area' ng magbubuhangin upang hindi magkumpulan ang ibinubugang lahar na sadyang delikado sa Albayano kapag hindi inasahang mag-alburuto ang bulkan at posibleng rumagasa patungo sa kabahayan.

Batay sa panibagong kautusan ni Rosal, ang mga lehitimong quarry operator lang ang pahihintulatang maghahakot ng



black sand sa kanilang lugar kaya nasisiguro ng mga Albayano na direktang kaban ng lalawigan ang ibinabeyad na buwis at hindi tulad ng dati na ang bulsa lang ng ilang tiwaling opisyal ang nakikinabang. Kunsabagay, hindi na bago sa dating Alkalde ng Legaspi City ang pagpapatupad ng mga programang sadyang pakikinabangan ng nakararaming Bikolano buneod sa noon pa man ay tsampyon si Rosal sa wasto at tamang pamamahala ng lokal na pamaha-

laan dito.

Siya ay ilan lang sa natitirang 'servant leader' ng bansa na inuuna ang kapakanan ng nakararami kesa sa sarili.

Abangan ang kasunod na isyu kung saan tatanggalan ng taluknong ang ilegal na sugal na 'Lotteng' sa sa isang isla sa sa Kabikolan na hindi malapatigil ng awtoridad dahil sa umano'y milyones na pumapetsok sa bulsa ng mga ito.

Anonimang punta o reaksyon i-text sa 09999388537/email notmerlaurio17@gmail.com



Regional Updates

Cebu City rushes to address flooding problems

THE CEBU City government is speeding up the rollout of several measures to address persistent flooding problems as one of the worst incidents was recorded last week with waist-high water along major roads and makeshift houses along waterways getting swept away.

An "aggressive" demolition of structures started this week in line with the implementation of the three-meter easement rule for waterways, Mayor Michael L. Rama said in a press release from the city government following a meeting with local authorities in the aftermath of the last week's flash floods.

Mr. Rama also met with the regional director of the Department of Public Works and Highways on Monday evening to coordinate assistance from the national agency.

The mayor noted that owners of structures along waterways have been given options for relocation or cash to move out, with some already having received payment.

Dredging and desilting operations by the city's engineering office also started on Tuesday at the South Road Properties (SRP) area, where vehicles were submerged in an underground parking facility last week, the city government said in a separate statement.

Vice Mayor Raymond Alvin N. Garcia met on Monday with officials of the engineering office and Filinvest Land, Inc., which has a 40-hectare joint venture with the city and a 10-hectare commercial development at the SRP.

Dredging involves the removal of sediments and debris from the bottom of rivers while desilting covers fine sand and clay carried by running water.

"We are also looking for a long-term solution on this and we will give importance to this matter," said Mr. Garcia.

Teams have also been deployed to ramp up the cleaning of drainage systems and waterways clogged by trash. — NSJ



CEBU CITY PHOTO/STAFF

A TEAM from Cebu City's engineering and public works office clean up garbage from a waterway.

3 companies invest P468M for banana plantation in former Maguindanao conflict zone

A FORMER combat zone between Moro rebels and government forces in the small town of Matanog in Maguindanao province has been transformed into a banana plantation with a P468-million outlay from three companies, the Bangsamoro investment board said.

"The whole fields before were once a war zone and now an economic zone in the region," Regional Bangsamoro Board of Investments (BBOI) Board Governor Mohammed Omar Pasigan said in a statement on Tuesday.

The three firms operating in the area are Usman Banana Farm-Cardava, which invested P277.7 million, Tayon Banana Farm-Cavendish with 128 million, and Abai Banana Farm-Cavendish, P62 million.

A combined 519 locals have been employed, mostly former combatants, the board said.

Regional officials visited the farm last week in southern Philippines where Cavendish and Cardava varieties are grown.

"Our office encourages investor-friendly and effective partnerships among registered companies in the region. Hence, visiting them

is essential to ensure our continued sharing of knowledge with the companies that may benefit them in the scope of their business," Mr. Pasigan said.

He said the BBOI provides full support services from investment procedures to marketing assistance.

"We could help the company with their marketing and promotions, avail of incentives, and provide all the necessary information needed to help grow their business to its maximum potential," he said. — NSJ

Senator gives push to appointment of Marawi compensation board members

A SENATOR on Tuesday filed a resolution calling for action on the establishment of a compensation board that will process the claims of those who lost family members and whose properties were damaged during the 2017 Marawi siege.

Resolution 8, filed by Senator Robinhood Ferdinand "Robin" C. Padilla, urges the Office of the Executive Secretary to conduct the vetting process of the nominees for the Marawi Compensation Board (MCB).

Under Republic Act 11696 or the Marawi Siege Victims Compensation Act of 2022 signed in April, the Philippine President has the authority to appoint the chairperson and eight members to the board.

Marawi stakeholders can submit a list of nominees.

"Since the passage of RA 11696 on 15 April 2022, victims of the Marawi siege have been clamoring for the organization of the MCB ... so it can forthwith perform its functions, organize, and promulgate the implementing rules and regulations," Mr. Padilla said.

Central parts of Marawi City in southern Philippines were damaged in the five-month heavy gun battle between government forces and local extremist groups linked to the Islamic State.

More than 85,000 residents were displaced and about 23,700 are still residing in various transitory sites or staying elsewhere as of May 24, according to data released by the United Nations Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Office. — Alyssa Nicole O. Tan



Bataan police join tree-planting at Mt. Samat Shrine

THE Bataan police headed by Col. Romell Velasco participated in the tree-planting activity at Mt. Samat Shrine in Pilar, Bataan.

Those who took part in the activity were the Team Provincial Community Affairs Development Unit (PCADU) led by acting chief Maj. Winston Norie, personnel from different Bataan police stations, members of the Philippine Army from the 305 Community Defense Center (CDC), Regional Community Defense Group-3 (RCDG-3), and Reserve Command (Res-Com), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources - Cordillera Autonomous Regional Office, DENR Mt. Province, and officers and staff members of the Mt. Samat Shrine led by Ma. Cecilia Medes, OIC ad-



TREE PLANTING VS GLOBAL WARMING. Members of the Bataan PNP help plant trees at Mt. Samat Shrine in Pilar, Bataan to promote biodiversity and encourage the communities to plant more trees and help combat the effects of global warming. Photo courtesy of Bataan PNP

min, and Rizaldy Mamud, OIC maintenance/operation.

The event was spearheaded by the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office and the Veterans Memorial and Historical Division

of the Mt. Samat Shrine. A total of 300 pine tree seedlings were planted.

Velasco said the activity aims to combat the effects of global warming.

"This tree-planting will contribute in the gov-

ernment's National Greening Program in promoting biodiversity and encouraging the communities to protect and conserve our natural resources," the Bataan top cop said. **Bernard Galang**



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Bataan cops join tree planting activity at Mt. Samat

By **BERNARD GALANG**

THE Bataan Police participated in a tree planting activity at the Mt. Samat Shrine or "Dambana ng Kagitingan" in Pilar, Bataan.

Led by Col. Romell Velasco, the tree planting project were also joined by Team PCADU, led by Acting Chief Maj. Winston

Norte, personnel from different Bataan Police stations, members of the Philippine Army from 305 CDC, 3RCDG, RESCOM, DENR CAR RO, DENR Mt. Province, and officers and staff of Mt. Samat Shrine led by Ma. Cecilia A. Medes, OIC (Officer-in-Charge) Admin, and Rizaldy Mamud, OIC for maintenance and operation.

The event was spearheaded by the Philippine

Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO), Veterans Memorial, and Historical Division of the Mt. Samat Shrine, where in 300 pine tree seedlings were planted to combat the effects of global warming.

"This tree planting will contribute to the government's National Greening Program in promoting biodiversity and encouraging the communities to protect and conserve our natural resources," said Velasco.



FILE:

Awaiting Marcos' mining moves

BIZ BUZZ



Mining firms heaved a huge sigh of relief following Malacañang's policy pronouncement that the government will ramp up the development of the industry to shore up the economy.

Miners in Zambales, in particular, must have also felt vindicated by the recent audit conducted by the Mines Geosciences Bureau (MGB) that they passed with flying colors.

According to reports, these mining companies—Benguet Corp. Nickel Mines, Eramen Minerals Inc., LNL Archipelago Minerals Inc. and Zambales Diversified Metals Corp.—got an aggregate score of 97.86 last year from 93.07 the previous year.

They were assessed for safety and health, environment and social development management performance.

Veteran stockbroker and now Eagle Securities senior consultant **Den Somera** told Biz Buzz that the Marcos administration's policy is most welcome.

"The industry has suffered immeasurable losses because of the successive shutdowns," he said. "I hope that the present government will follow through with this initiative and finally consider the industry as one of the pillars of economic growth."

The industry could be a rich source of revenue for the government due to the growing market for industrial minerals, specifically nickel.

But Biz Buzz hears that stakeholders first want to see the Marcos administration set the stage for an investor-friendly mining industry.

In particular, they believe that the Philippines should take advantage of the increasing need for nickel, propelled by the large demand for batteries, specifically for electric and hybrid vehicles.

They say that the country should especially aim to become a major player in the electric vehicle supply chain of which nickel is a vital component.

In the US, **President Biden** is set to unveil a \$3.1-billion plan to boost domestic manufacturing of batteries in a broader effort to shift the

country away from gas-powered cars to electric vehicles.

Indonesia, Southeast Asia's largest economy, is already way ahead in harnessing nickel to grow its economy.

President Widodo has been hobnobbing with world leaders and technology movers to position his country at the top of the EV chain. He had a high profile meeting with Tesla and Space X founder **Elon Musk** at the private space agency's headquarters, discussing "future collaboration on many fronts."

Mr. Widodo acts as his country's top salesman and has been successfully luring foreign investment from the likes of Musk into his country of 273.5 million people. Can **President Marcos** do the same? *Abangan!* —**DAXIM L. LUCAS**

Crypto warning

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) issued an interesting warning against Binance, the world's biggest cryptocurrency exchange.

In an Aug. 2 response to a complaint-letter from the Infracore PH think tank, led by former Rep. **Terry Ridon**, the SEC advised the public against investing with Binance.

This was based on the fact that the crypto platform had failed to register as a local corporation or partnership. Thus, it could not apply for any license to solicit investments from the public.

We won't dwell on the hazy regulations and how cryptocurrencies should be classified. Elsewhere in the world, the debate continues on whether these should be considered securities or commodities.

In any case, the SEC letter could also be read as telling Binance to simply register.

Why the company, led by Chinese billionaire **Changpeng "CZ" Zhao**, has failed to do so is curious given his recent visit to the Philippines to drum up their local expansion plans.

The plans include securing a virtual asset services provider license from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the route some of its local counterparts took.

This is unfolding as another local player plans to make a splashy entrance in the sector.

Of course, we're referring to GCash, the mobile wallet backed by the Ayala Group's

Globe Telecom and CZ's fellow Chinese billionaire, **Jack Ma**.

Neil Trinidad, head of new business at GCash, said they would launch their own crypto exchange sometime this year.

GCash appears to be betting on its massive base of over 60 million users but we would like to see more interesting features that would differentiate it from other platforms. —**MIGUEL R. CAMUS**

Robot-powered Aboitiz Power

Aboitiz Power Corp., the flagship unit of listed Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc., has enlisted the help of "robots" to improve the company's customer service and operational efficiency.

AboitizPower said this was a result of its recently concluded Robotic Process Automation (RPA) bootcamp wherein 23 robots were "successfully developed."

The newly developed robots, it added, have reduced turnaround and processing schedules across participating teams by an average of 50 percent, not only saving time, money and effort but also freeing up team members to do more value-adding work.

Among these is a robot developed by Visayan Electric Co., the Cebu-based distribution utility of the Aboitiz Group. It is capable of consolidating high-volume data from various sources and generating accurate and actionable reports.

AboitizPower explained that RPA technology, not to be confused with mechanical robots, are "metaphorical software robots" that use artificial intelligence to handle manual and repetitive tasks that would otherwise be very tedious to complete.

These include capturing customer information, sifting through power outage data and fast-tracking internal processes.

The power company said there would be more programs to further improve the digital competencies of team members, in line with the Aboitiz Group's transformation toward becoming the Philippines' first "techglomerate."

—**JORDINE B. LAGARE** INQ





Awaiting Marcos' mining moves

BIZ BUZZ



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Crypto warning

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) issued an interesting warning against **Binance**, the world's biggest cryptocurrency exchange.

In an Aug. 2 response to a complaint-letter from the Infracore think tank, led by former Rep. **Terry Blanton**, the SEC advised the public against investing with **Binance**.

This was based on the fact that the crypto platform had failed to register as a local corporation or partnership. Thus, it could not apply for any license to solicit investments from the public.

We won't dwell on the hazy regulations, and how cryptocurrencies should be classified. Elsewhere in the world, the debate continues on whether these should be considered securities or commodities.

In any case, the SEC letter could also be read as telling **Binance** to simply register.

Why the company, led by Chinese billionaire **Changpeng "CZ" Zhao**, has failed to do so is not clear given his recent visit to the Philippines to drum up their local expansion plans.

The plans include securing a virtual asset services provider license from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the route some of its local counterparts took.

This is unfolding as another local player plans to make a splashy entrance in the sector.

Of course, we're referring to **GCash**, the mobile wallet backed by the **Ayala Group's**

Globe Telecom and **CZ's** fellow Chinese billionaire, **Jack Ma**.

Neil Trinidad, head of new business at **GCash**, said they would launch their own crypto exchange sometime this year.

GCash appears to be betting on its massive base of over 60 million users but we would like to see more interesting features that would differentiate it from other platforms. —**INSURE R. CANAVE**

Robot-powered Aboitiz Power

Aboitiz Power Corp., the flagship unit of listed **Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.**, has enlisted the help of "robots" to improve the company's customer service and operational efficiency.

AboitizPower said this was a result of its recently concluded **Robotic Process Automation (RPA)** bootcamp wherein 23 robots were "successfully developed."

The newly developed robots, it added, have reduced turnaround and processing schedules across participating teams by an average of 50 percent, not only saving time, money and effort but also freeing up team members to do more value-adding work.

Among these is a robot developed by **Visayan Electric Co.**, the Cebu-based distribution utility of the **Aboitiz Group**. It is capable of consolidating high-volume data from various sources and generating accurate and actionable reports.

AboitizPower explained that **RPA** technology, not to be confused with mechanical robots, are "metaphorical software robots" that use artificial intelligence to handle manual and repetitive tasks that would otherwise be very tedious to complete.

These include capturing customer information, sifting through power outage data and fast-tracking internal processes.

The power company said there would be more programs to further improve the digital competencies of team members, in line with the **Aboitiz Group's** transformation toward becoming the Philippines' first "techglomerate."

—**JORDENE S. LABARE (INQ)**



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SC orders CA to resume hearing of writ after Zambales mining firms resume ops

By JOEL R. SAN JUAN

[@jrsanjuan1573](#)

THE Supreme Court (SC) has ordered the Court of Appeals (CA) to hear anew the petition filed by the residents of Sta. Cruz, Zambales for the issuance of a writ of kalikasan with temporary environmental protection order (TEPO) against all mining operations in the province.

In a 22-page unanimous ruling penned by Associate Justice Henri Jean Paul Inting, the Court en banc set aside the resolutions dated May 22, 2017 and December 14, 2017 of the CA, which denied the petition and at the same time lifted the provisional writ of kalikasan issued by the Supreme Court in June 2016.

The CA ruled that the closure order issued by then Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Gina Lopez against the operations of five

mining companies in the province had rendered the petition moot and academic.

However, the SC noted that the closure orders dated February 8, 2017 have already been lifted and respondent mining companies, namely, Benguet Corp Nickel Mines Inc., Eramen Minerals Inc., LNL Archipelago Minerals Inc., Zambales Diversified Metals Corp, and Shangfil Mining and Trading Corp., have resumed their operations.

"Indeed, with the lifting of the closure orders...and the resumption of the mining operations of respondent companies as manifested by the OSG [Office of the Solicitor General], petitioners' allegations, i.e., that respondent companies conduct unsystematic mining activities and their mining operations violate pertinent environmental and mining laws, which were considered by the DENR in the issuance of said closure orders become material and significantly

relevant in the subject petition for writ of kalikasan," the SC said.

"Thus, the propriety of the ultimate relief in a petition for writ of kalikasan, that is, to prevent further violations of the constitutionally protected rights to a balanced and healthful ecology remains a justiciable controversy. This has not been squarely passed upon or resolved by the CA," it added.

The SC noted that the CA did not make any evaluation of facts on petitioners' allegations as it merely cited the in-depth audit of respondent mining companies conducted by the audit team from the DENR and representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Department of Health, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, and National Economic and Development Authority.

However, the SC said the audit team's findings on the various violations of pertinent mining and environmental laws by respondent



mining companies merely ended in the closure of the mining operations as directed in the closure orders.

In its 2017 assailed decision, the CA held that "with the closure of the mining operations, there can be no unlawful act or omission that may be committed by respondent mining companies that would result in actual or threatened violation of petitioner's constitutional right to a balanced and healthful ecology."

"More importantly, the principal relief sought in this petition has already been accomplished, thereby rendering the controversy moot and academic. There, thus, no more actual controversy between parties and no useful purpose can be served in passing upon the merits of this petition," it added.

In its petition, the Concerned Citizens of Sta. Cruz, Zambales claimed that the respondent mining companies are violating their constitutional right to a balanced and healthful ecology.

The petitioners noted that their mining activities are destroying the irrigation system and the ecosystem in Sta. Cruz, Zambales and its neighboring municipality of Candelaria, Zambales, extending up to Infanta, Pangasinan.

The mining firms' "unsystematic" mining practices, according to the petitioners, are causing water, air, and soil pollution, as well as heavy laterite siltation of river systems, coast, farmlands, fishponds and residential areas.

Forest denudation caused by mining also could result in soil erosion and could exacerbate flood problems, the petitioners said. The livelihood of residents is likewise adversely affected, they added.

With regard to petitioners' allegation of violation of the DENR closure orders, the CA said the matter can be brought before the DENR, which has primary jurisdiction for the full enforcement of environmental standards in mining.



Cagayan fault lines lead to strong quakes

TUGUEGARAO CITY: Due to the presence of three active fault lines, there is a high chance that Cagayan province can experience strong earthquakes, according to the Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (DoST-Philvolcs).

Shally Marck Daguiao, DoST-Philvolcs Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) science research assistant, has identified the active fault lines during the "Kapehan sa Kapitolyo" program held by the Cagayan Provincial Information Office on Monday, August 8.

The fault lines are located in Sicalao in Lasam town; Dummun River in Gattaran town and Taboan River in Baggao town.

According to Daguiao, the earthquake magnitude can reach up to 6.7 if the fault line moves in Sicalao; 7.2 magnitude in Dummun River and 6.8 magnitude in Taboan River in Baggao.

She explained that although their office can monitor movements in fault lines, she, however, clarified that until now, there is still no gadget or equipment that can predict an earthquake.

"There is no way to determine ahead of time or know when an earthquake will occur in an area," Daguiao said.

"Thus, it is better for everyone

to be prepared during calamities and disasters," she added.

"Let us also participate in exercises such as earthquake drills that are often conducted in schools and government agencies to be prepared during disasters," Daguiao said.

She noted that compliance with the National Building Code is also important, particularly among builders of structures.

Meanwhile, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Cagayan Valley also affirmed that prompt and proper planning is necessary for preparation for any possible earthquake.

Felicitas Pilligan, MGB Region 2 Geoscience Division chief, said their agency often conducts geological assessments.

Pilligan said a good design is needed in the construction of structures, even houses to avoid damage when there is an earthquake.

She said the MGB has already conducted an inspection in areas that often experience landslides in the province.

Pilligan explained that the conduct of inspection and assessment is to give immediate notice to the residents to avoid any accidents.

LEANDER C. DOMINGO



EDITORIAL

Makati's climate leadership

It is tempting for jaded observers to think of Mayor Abby Binay's move last week to declare a "state of climate emergency" in Makati City as a gimmick to buttress her position at the top of the political hierarchy of one of the country's wealthiest local government units (LGUs) and premier business hub.

But to do so would be to dismiss unfairly all the good that the policy pronouncement can bring to the city and, ultimately, to the rest of the country if this experiment is executed properly and ends up achieving its goals.

A cursory glance at the city will reveal that, while its central business district is dominated by high rise buildings and gleaming skyscrapers, many residential areas along its fringes are less affluent and particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Yes, Makati City has its share of densely packed and densely populated neighborhoods that are not part of its iconic skyline. In these parts, pollution caused by human activities is high and, when the rains come, the waters rise, trapping residents in their flooded homes and preventing people from moving from one place to another whether in their vehicles, bicycles, or on foot.

In fact, no less than nine of the city's 33 barangays—almost a third of them—are classified by the city government as "flood prone."

But flooding is just one visible challenge that Makati City is grappling with. The others are less visible, but no less grave.

Because of its unique position as the Philippines' top location for commerce and industry, Makati City also has one of the largest carbon footprints and greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, among LGUs in the country.

Its central business district is a leading consumer of electricity and all that power, though generated elsewhere, adds to the emissions that eventually aggravate climate change by pushing the planet's temperature higher, slowly but surely.

The same can be said of all the public and private vehicles that move into Makati City each morning to deliver up to four million workers, prepandemic, to their offices and take them back to their homes in the evening. All those buses, jeepneys, cars, and motorcycles emit carbon monoxide, which adds to the world's climate problem.

For the city's chief executive, it can be tempting to simply kick the proverbial can down the road and leave it to future generations to solve. But Mayor Binay did the right thing by grabbing the problem by the horns in an attempt to solve it.

For one, by declaring a state of climate emergency, the city's chief executive elevates the issue to the top of a list of challenges that the LGU must handle. Such a declaration makes climate change a "clear and present danger" to which all the resources of the city's instrumentalities must be oriented to address.

Hopefully, this move will result in policies that will require businesses operating in the city to consume electricity more efficiently, including installing more power-saving devices, using more cost effective appliances and office apparatus, and relying more on renewable energy in its many forms for their electricity needs.

And such a policy that will be imposed on office, commercial, or industrial users should eventually be cascaded down to the city's residents.

We also hope that the Makati LGU will put a priority on reducing the city's dependence on vehicles that use internal combustion engines and will instead shift reliance on those that use hybrid or electric engines.

There are many ways to go about this, including incentivizing ownership of hybrid or electric vehicles, or incentivizing the use of urban mobility solutions, like traditional and electric bicycles (the latter through a bike sharing program, for example).

The government can also implement disincentives like imposing charges on the use of cars in the city during peak hours, similar to an electronic toll program used in Singapore to discourage vehicle use during the morning and evening rush hours.

And that's just the tip of the solutions iceberg for starters. There are a host of other innovative solutions available to the city to address problems of flooding, garbage disposal, and urban blight, all easily implementable with the political will that has distinguished this Binay from the previous holders of power from her family.

Indeed, it is tempting to think of all this as a political gimmick. But if Mayor Abby Binay's track record in her past two terms is any indication, there's a good chance that her initiative to help protect the climate on a city level will bear fruit and, more importantly, serve as a model for other LGUs around the country in facing down their own climate challenges.



'Nuclear power can solve energy problem'

BY KAITHREEN CRUZ

NUCLEAR power can be part of the solution to the country's energy problem, Dr. Art Romero, a geoscientist, said.

"We need to keep an open mind, make it a part of the solution to meet an increasing energy demand while meeting low carbon diet," he said during the Integrated Energy Solutions Addressing Security and Sustainability webinar organized by the Philippine Association for the Advancements of Science and Technology.

Romero, who works at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in California, believes that transitioning to cleaner energy based on the Department of Energy's roadmap is doable and can be done in a gradual manner without putting a heavy burden on the country's economy.

He said that having nuclear power options open would be beneficial to the country, with it being the second-largest source of low-carbon electricity today and having almost 500 operating reactors globally providing 10 percent of the global electricity supply.

"From an economic standpoint, it may be cheaper to revive a mothballed facility than to build a new one. Note that nuclear is considered clean since it doesn't contribute to carbon emission," Romero said, referring to the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant.

He added that nuclear power is as safe as wind and solar despite the dangers as seen

in Chernobyl and Fukushima.

The geoscientist emphasized the need to conduct due diligence, technical hazard studies, and engineering and safety reviews. The government should also have action support to raise public awareness of the need for clean energy and the consequences of global warming.

"We need public support to influence public officials to act. This is a global issue with a direct impact on the Philippines," he said. Aside from nuclear power, Romero suggested the facilitation of indigenous energy exploration and development for both conventional and clean energy resources to avoid the cost of importing oil.

He also called for continued diversification of power generation and distribution while encouraging grid interconnectivity as increased competition would drive prices down and interconnected grids would improve reliability and minimize power outages.

Earlier this year, former president Rodrigo Duterte signed Executive Order 164 to include nuclear power in the country's energy mix, recognizing that it can be a reliable, cost-competitive and environment-friendly source of energy based on other countries' experiences.



DOE: Moratorium on new coal power plants stays

BY JED MACAPAGAL

THE moratorium on building new coal-fired power plants will continue under the current administration, according to the Department of Energy (DOE).

DOE Secretary Raphael Lotilla said the decision is supported by market sentiments especially by banks and insurers.

"It's the market itself. In fact, market behavior is not favoring the construction of more coal plants. Insurers do not want to support it, investors also find it difficult... The moratorium on building new coal fired power plants has

been set and I do not believe in completely changing policies and therefore sending mixed signals to investors," Lotilla said in an online briefing yesterday.

He added investors "do not make distinctions between one administration and another" and only yearns for consistency in terms of core policies.

"It is important to stress that we need all power available from different sources now. We should not proceed to kill any of them because we need all of them at a time when there is a shortage but there should be a managed, orderly transition," Lotilla further said.

Meanwhile, the DOE said it is awaiting the looming takeover of the Raasb Group of the operations of Malampaya natural gas resource, with the PNOC-Exploration Corp. (PNOC-EC) heading the steps needed for the transaction to proceed.

Lotilla said he chooses not to be directly involved in the proceedings to be more objective.

"As the DOE secretary, I would be heading the agency that would also be reviewing this from the standpoint of the DOE. While I am the chairman of PNOC-EC, it would not be good for me to be participating in the delibera-

tions of PNOC-EC on this and then reviewing myself, later on," Lotilla said.

"I would have to get PNOC-EC to address these issues and president (Franz) Alvarez is heading this particular effort right now and they would have to address these issues with the PNOC-EC board soon because there are certain timelines that have to be met," Lotilla added.

The DOE also said they are making sure PNOC-EC would have competent advisors and consultants alongside career officials to process the evaluation of the Malampaya's takeover.



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Point of view

We should look to renewables immediately

By JOHN ALTOMONTE

As climate change-induced heat waves, energy crises and inflationary concerns sweep across the globe, the Philippines sits at a critical junction with a new administration at the helm. Navigating a complex energy transition is notoriously difficult, especially while having to balance the need to adapt to climate change simultaneously.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. outlined his administration's initiatives in his first State of the Nation Address last month, setting a sustainable energy agenda within the context of climate change. Stressing the need for cheap and reliable energy, renewables were highlighted as having immense potential in the country, particularly through wind and solar.

Marcos also briefly mentioned other renewable technologies such as geothermal and hydropower, and specifically highlighted the need to re-examine nuclear as an option. Other key considerations include expansion of transmission and distribution networks and strengthening electric cooperatives with the ultimate aim of reducing energy costs, particularly for households.

Overall, President Marcos outlined an admirable energy agenda, with the exception of one glaring, fossil-based issue: the "need" for natural gas.

Stating the long transition time needed to shift to renewables, "in the interim, natural gas will hold the key," said Marcos. In a continuation of the previous administration's efforts to develop natural gas in the country, Marcos stated that incentives would be granted to help development of the industry.

Here's the catch: the entirety of the country's natural gas sector is fueled by our only indigenous source in the Malampaya gas field, which is set to be fully depleted in a few years. Malampaya currently supplies five power plants for a combined installed capacity of 3,453 megawatts (MW). In

the latest iteration of the Philippines' Energy Plan put forth by the previous administration, natural gas supply will rely almost entirely on imports to replace local supply.

Natural gas imports have proven detrimental across the globe this year, driving global inflation. Russia weaponizing gas supply to Europe has led to a tumbling Euro, fears of recessions and a lack of energy security. Asian gas markets have not fared much better, with spot prices almost triple what they were last year. Supply crunches in countries such as Pakistan, Thailand, Myanmar and India coupled with increased demand from heat waves have caused power prices to soar.

The rational reaction to global LNG markets would be to transition AWAY from the fossil fuel, not towards it. Even prior to the current energy crises, investors in natural gas risked exposure to \$14 billion in stranded assets. When compared against the already-cheaper option of renewables, there is clearly no need to develop the natural gas industry.

Wind and solar, technologies specifically highlighted by President Marcos, combine for a measly 0.3 percent of the country's energy supply. Around the world, these technologies are being deployed at rapid scales, providing cheap, reliable and secure power. Prioritizing natural gas at this point would only serve to set the Philippines back, likely even increasing power prices for consumers.

If we are to achieve the proposed climate agenda and accomplish a clean and just energy transition, President Marcos should forego natural gas and look to renewables immediately.

John Altomonte is the CEO of Verne Energy Solutions. An environmental scientist by training, he is an adjunct faculty member of the Ateneo de Manila University and serves as a consultant for the Senate of the Philippines and the World Wildlife Fund.



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The Manila Times



08-10-22

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ITF hails newly recognized human right to clean environment

THE United Nations General Assembly has recognized a new human right — the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

The landmark vote on July 28, 2022 was backed overwhelmingly by 161 countries, with no votes against and only eight abstentions.

Though not generally binding on UN member states, the resolution served as a ray of sunlight for workers all over the world.

It also further deepens the global consensus on the co-dependence of human rights and environmental protection, including climate action.

"This is a huge moment for workers, and perhaps, especially for transport workers," said Ruwan Subasinghe, ITF legal director.

"Transport workers are on the front line of climate change and other environmental hazards, as they try to keep the world moving through worsening conditions on land, at sea, and in the air. This new human right is a vital complement to the existing labor rights recognized in national and international law. Indeed, today's vote adds impetus to eventual recognition of a standalone human right to a just transition," he added.

According to ITF, the state of the natural environment is inseparable from issues of occupational safety and the health of transport workers.

Rising temperatures, toxic air pollution, and more frequent storms and flooding are everyday challenges for workers.

The new resolution also notes the vulnerability of women and young people to environmental damage, as well as their vital leadership role in achieving sustainable development.

The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment has applications for workers across the different transport sectors.

Public transport and rail are integral to tackling both climate change and air pollution. The ITF is campaigning for a significant modal shift away from private vehicles. Its Safe and Sustainable Rail campaign sets out a vision for the sector's leading contribution to a low-carbon future.

The humanitarian role required by the world's seafarers is increasing with the rate of wildfire evacuations and greater flows of climate refugees. The sector needs stronger safety standards to ensure resilience to climate change, while any shift to decarbonize must be negotiated with unions — especially as new technologies like ammonia, hydrogen and methanol fuels pose their own safety risks.

In aviation, significant public investment is needed in technologies to help the sector decarbonize. Unions must be represented at every stage of the process and new technologies must undergo rigorous safety assessments involving the workers who will be operating and exposed to them.

"This week's General Assembly vote is just the start," said Subasinghe. "With the G20 summit and COP27 on the horizon, governments have imminent opportunities to make this human right a lived reality. In particular, transport workers should be explicitly recognized within states' nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement, as part of systematic plans to limit global warming in a socially just way."

YASHIKA F. TORIB



08-10-23
DATE

Blinken highlights U.S. Clean Energy commitments in the Philippines

ON August 6, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken highlighted the United States' clean energy commitments to the Philippines at an expo featuring small- and medium-sized renewable energy companies.

Citing the Philippines' increasing vulnerability to the dangerous effects of climate change, Secretary Blinken stressed the importance of investing in clean energy and lauded the projects of six renewable energy companies specializing in biomass, hydropower, solar, wind, energy efficiency, and off-grid solutions.

"Last year, the Philippines announced an ambitious clean energy goal: to produce 35 percent of the nation's energy from renewable sources by 2030 and 50 percent by 2040. The United States commends these goals, and we're committed

to helping the Philippines achieve them," Secretary Blinken said in his remarks.

Secretary Blinken, alongside Philippine Ambassador to the United States Jose Manuel Romualdez and U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines MaryKay Carlson, also witnessed the signing of a grant awarded by the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) to Aboltix Renewables, Inc. for a feasibility study to develop one of the first offshore wind projects in the Philippines.

This project is expected to produce up to three gigawatts of clean energy, providing power to more than two million households.

"USTDA is committed to delivering game-changing projects to close the infrastructure gap and support the clean energy transition in the Philippines," said USTDA Director Enoch

T. Eboong.

"Our assistance will be critical toward defining the wind projects' technical and design options, as well as structuring deals for international financial institutions. Our goal is the delivery of clean energy to millions of Filipinos," Eboong added.

"The United States remains a steadfast partner and supporter of emerging economies like the Philippines in facilitating job creation and building of a high quality and environment-friendly energy infrastructures that support initiatives aimed at mitigating the impact of climate change," said Philippine Ambassador to the United States Jose Manuel Romualdez.

In his remarks, Secretary Blinken cited several projects to support energy security in the Philippines. This includes the United



USTDA Director Enoch T. Eboong (seated left) and Aboltix Renewables, Inc. Vice President David Aboltix (seated right) sign a USTDA grant that will lay the groundwork for one of the first offshore wind projects in the Philippines. Standing from left: U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines MaryKay Carlson, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Philippine Ambassador to the United States Jose Manuel Romualdez, and Department of Energy Undersecretary Felix William Fuentesbello.

States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Energy Secure Philippines Initiative, a 5-year project worth \$34 million (P1.89 billion) that aims to mobilize more than

\$750 million (P41.8 billion) of private-sector investment to support up to 500 megawatts of new clean energy generation.

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BLINKEN

He also noted the Clean Energy Demand Initiative and U.S.-Philippines Memorandum of Understanding on Civil-Nuclear Cooperation signed in March 2022 and announced ongoing capacity-building

assistance to help the Philippines explore nuclear energy options through the Foundational Infrastructure for Responsible Use of Small Modular Reactor Technology (FIRST) program.

The Philippines is an initial partner of the U.S.-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), a group

of 13 countries across the region that are committed to promoting clean energy and decarbonization as a key pillar of a stronger, fairer, and more resilient economy.

Secretary Blinken recognized the contributions of several public-private partnerships with the Philippines under the IPEF's

Clean Energy, Decarbonization, and Infrastructure Pillar, which includes the Clean Energy Demand Initiative, the Geothermal Development Initiative, and the Energy Resource Governance Initiative that will strengthen the mining sector governance for resilient mineral supply chains.



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 The Manila Times



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Last month one of hottest Julys on record – UN

GENEVA: Last month marked one of the three hottest Julys ever recorded, with global temperatures measuring nearly half a degree above average, the United Nations' weather agency said Tuesday.

"The world just had one of the three warmest Julys on record," Clare Nullis, spokeswoman for the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), told reporters in Geneva.

Pointing to fresh data from the European

monitoring service Copernicus, she said that July 2022 had been slightly cooler than the same month in 2019 and slightly warmer than the one in 2016.

"The difference between the three months is too close to call, so that's why we're saying one of the three warmest," Nullis explained.

Temperatures globally last month were 0.4 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 average, the

WMO said.

And this despite the fact that the weather phenomenon La Nina, which has held the globe in its ditches almost uninterrupted since September 2020, "is meant to have a cooling influence".

Notably, the European summer has seen extreme heatwaves and drought, with low precipitation records broken in some countries, the WMO said.

AFP



House bill extends NHA's corporate life by 50 years, exemption from certain fees and taxes

By JOVEE MARIE N. DELA CRUZ
@joveemarie

A PARTY-LIST lawmaker is pushing for the passage of a bill extending the corporate life of the National Housing Authority (NHA) by another 50 years.

In House Bill 2994, Pinuno Party-list Rep. Ivan Howard Guintu said his proposal seeks to exempt NHA from certain taxes and regulatory fees, increase its powers and duties, and authorize it to issue bonds and other securities to finance the implementation of its housing programs.

Created in 1975 by virtue of Presidential Decree No. 757, the NHA was originally given a corporate term of 50 years, ending in 2025. Guintu's House Bill No. 2994 seeks to extend the NHA's corporate term by another 50 years.

HB 2994 also reconstitutes the NHA Board of Directors to have a minimum of 13 members, including two panel experts in urban planning and development and the following: Secretary of the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD); Secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH); Secretary of the Department of Finance (DOF); Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI); Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE); Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR); Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG); Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM); Director General of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda); Executive Secre-

tary; and General Manager (GM) of the NHA.

The bill said the Secretary of the DHSUD shall be the ex officio chairperson of the Board.

"The proposed new composition of the NHA Board better reflects the holistic approach to affordable and sustainable housing, including environmental sustainability, community sustainability, and financial sustainability," Guintu said.

"We also tweaked the qualifications of the GM and Assistant GMs [AGMs] to give particular emphasis to urban planning, again, to further sustainable development in our cities and urban areas," he added.

The current NHA Board is composed of the secretaries of the DPWH, DOTr, DOF, DOLE, and DTI; the Executive Secretary; the Neda Director General; and NHA GM. The new qualifications for the GM and AGMs now specify expertise in housing and urban planning and development.

Moreover, Guintu explained that the proposed law also seeks to exempt the NHA from any tax, assessment fee, charge, or customs or import duty, including income tax, real property tax, capital gains tax, transfer tax, value added tax, donor's tax and similar taxes; and building permit fee, fire inspection permit fee, Environmental Clearance Certificate fees and other regulatory fees.

He said the NHA shall also be exempt from the payment of documentary stamp tax and registration fees, including fees required for the issuance of transfer certificates of titles.

"We also plan to offer the same exemptions to the projects of the NHA, to promote

the policy of improving housing affordability," the Pinuno lawmaker said.

House Bill 2994 also further authorizes the NHA to issue bonds and other securities to finance the implementation of its housing programs, subject to the approval of the Secretary of Finance and after consultation with the Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

"The NHA would be authorized to issue bonds or securities subject to the following conditions: 1) amount of bonds or securities to be issued and sold would only be as much as the annual project implementation would require; 2) no bonds or securities shall be also issued unless 80 percent of those already issued had been sold; and 3) the total amount of the bonds or securities issued shall in no case exceed 10 times its paid up capital and surplus," Guintu said.

The lawmaker added that the bonds and securities to be issued under his proposed law shall be exempt from all kinds of taxes and from attachment, execution, and seizure.

The NHA became an attached corporation of the DHSUD by virtue of Republic Act No. 11201 or the DSHUD Act in 2019.

"Nearing the end of its corporate life, the NHA and its objectives remain relevant and important in providing housing to low-income families," Guintu said.

"With our growing population, there is a continued demand for low-cost and socialized housing. To meet this and in order to achieve and fulfill its mandate, the NHA's corporate life needs to be extended and its powers and functions expanded," he added.



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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

On the **ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REPORT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN (EPRMP)** of the **TOLEDO COPPER MINE PROJECT (MINE TO PORT OPERATIONS)** of **CARMEN COPPER CORPORATION** located in **BRGY. ANDRES SORIANO/LUTOPAN, BIGA, MEDIA ONCE, AND LOAY, TOLEDO CITY, CEBU.**

Notice is hereby given to all parties who wish to give their opinion regarding the implementation of the **TOLEDO COPPER MINE PROJECT (MINE TO PORT OPERATIONS)** to attend the Public Hearing scheduled on:

Date	Time	Participants	Venue
25 August 2022 (Thursday)	10:00 AM (Registration starts at 09:00 AM)	Barangays Don Andres Soriano, Biga, Poog, Bagaay, and Deanglungsod	Brgy. Cantabaco Covered Court, Brgy. Cantabaco, Toledo City, Cebu
26 August 2022 (Friday)	10:00 AM (Registration starts at 09:00 AM)	Barangays Media Once, Loay, Campo 8, Cantabaco, General Climaco	Brgy. Cantabaco Covered Court, Brgy. Cantabaco, Toledo City, Cebu

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

The following is the project information:

Project Name	Toledo Copper Mine (Mine to Port Operations)	
Project Location	Brgy. Andres Soriano/Lutopan, Biga, Media Once, And Loay, Toledo City, Cebu	
Project Capacity	Mining: 17,611,146 MT/yr Processing: 8,780,000 MT/yr	
Project Type	Resource Extractive Industry and Mineral Processing Project: Metallic Mineral or Ore Processing	
Project Rationale	Mining industries positively contribute to a country's economy particularly on aspects of foreign direct investment and national revenues and employment generation. Carmen Copper assists in the development of host and neighboring barangays (villages) where it operates through projects and activities that address issues on human resource development & institutional building; enterprise development; assistance to infrastructure development & support services; access to education & educational support; access to health services, health facilities & health professionals; protection and respect of socio-cultural values; and use of facilities services inside the mine camp.	
Project Components	Major Components:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mining Pits • CARCÓN Facility • Port Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste Rock Dumps • Tailings Disposal Facility
Project Components	Support Facilities	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admin, Social Community Facilities • Maintenance and Service Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reforestation Facilities • Utilities
Investment	Carmen Copper Corporation	


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

The project's EPRMP and Executive Summary for the Public are downloadable on our website: (kindly access the Notice of Public Hearing/ Consultation link found in our website) while copies will be available in the following offices:



- **EMB Region VII**
Greenplains, Mahogany St, Mandaue City, Cebu
- **City Environment & Natural Resources Office- Toledo City**
Toledo City Sports Center, Sangi, Toledo City

For more details, please contact the EIAMD Division at this Office at telephone number (02) 8538 4378 loc. 116 and look for the project case handlers: **Engr. Dexter Tabada** and **Engr. Jason Paolo Eguerra**.





Department of Environment and Natural Resources
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT BUREAU
DENR Compound, Valaya Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City 1100
Telephone Number (02) 8636-4378
Website: www.denr.gov.ph Email: records@denr.gov.ph

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

On the ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT of the proposed NICKEL AND CHROMITE MINING PROJECT of the NUBUAN METALS AND MINERALS MINING CO. INC./SMT MINING INC. located in Barangay Dos, Cagditano, Dinagat Island.

Notice is hereby given to all parties who wish to give their opinion regarding the implementation of the proposed NICKEL AND CHROMITE MINING PROJECT to attend the Public Hearing scheduled on:

Date	Time	Venue
24 August 2022 (Wednesday)	10:00 AM Registration starts at 9:30AM	Barangay Hall of Dos, Municipality of Cagditano, Province of Dinagat Island

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

The following is the project information:

Project Name	Nickel and Chromite Mining Project	
Project Location	Barangay Dos, Cagditano, Dinagat Island	
Project Capacity/Area	226,026 hectares	
Project Type	Resource Extractive Industry	
Project Rationale	With the extraction of Nickel and Chromite within the area of Sulgarao- Mineral Reservation in Barangay Dos, Cagditano, Dinagat Island, in which the said area is rich in minerals and ores, which can be sustainably utilized without much impact to the biological and social environment. This project will directly benefit the community through the jobs it can create apart from its larger impact to the community in economic perspective. In addition, the CARAGA region is considered the top producer of mining products in the country including nickel.	
Project Components	Component	Area/Capacity
	Mining Area	226,026 hectares
	Mining Yard (1-6)	6 hectares
	Water Pond	1,260 square meters
	Camp Site	2,885 square meters
Slitstone Ponds (10 units)	1,680 cubic meters total capacity	
Proposed	Nubuan Metals and Minerals Mining Co. Inc./SMT Mining Inc.	

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

The project's EIS and Executive Summary for the Public are downloadable on our website directly across the Notice of Public Hearing Consultation (link found in our website) while copies will be available at the following office:

- 2288 Reglar XII
Purok 5, Barangay Amaga-Bukuan City
- Municipal Environmental & Natural Resources Office (MENRO)
of Cagditano, Dinagat Island

For copy details, please contact the EAMD Division of this Office at telephone number 8636-4378 local 116 and look for the project case handlers Pcs. Mark Anthony G. Tulao and Engr. Joel G. Poliman.

Printed for environment... Protect it.