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New mining fiscal regime to yield P38-B revenues

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

The government is pushing for a new mining fiscal regime that is expected to provide some P38 billion in additional revenues yearly for the state in a bid to contribute to economic recovery from the pandemic.

In a House of Representatives ways and means committee hearing yesterday, the Department of Finance bared its proposal to reform the mining fiscal regime to achieve simplification, fair share, value-adding and good governance.

Finance Assistant Secretary Valery Brion said the DOF recognizes that the mining industry has the potential to boost economic recovery and long-term growth.

The DOF's proposal is estimated to result in total revenue of P37.52 billion per year for the government.

In particular, the DOF wants to impose a royalty rate of five percent for all large-scale mining operations and provide incremental revenues

of at least P5 billion yearly.

This would effectively change the current set-up where only those located inside a mineral reservation are subject to royalty payment.

Such a move is also supported by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB). A royalty payment for non-metallic minerals extracted within or outside mineral reservations is also being proposed.

The DOF is also pushing for a rationalized and single fiscal regime applicable to all large-scale metallic mines, regardless of location.

"This addresses the complexity of the current fiscal regime, which depends on whether the mine is operating in a mineral reservation and whether it is operated

under a Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) or a Financial or Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA)," Brion said.

In terms of value-adding, the DOF is proposing a 10 percent export tax on the gross value of mineral ore to encourage downstream and proper valuation of minerals. Currently, there is no duty on unprocessed export of minerals.

Committee chair Rep. Joey Salceda has expressed support for a new mining fiscal regime, saying that the industry has one of the lowest effective tax rates in the world and that the recent lifting of moratorium on new mining projects would create a bigger room for higher ETR.

The Philippines has an ETR of 38.2 percent for gold and 45.3 percent for copper, significantly below the global average of 58.7 percent.

Salceda argued that mining gross value-added has been declining but exports

value have been increasing, indicating that most exports are ores without domestic value-added.

"Tax rates should be higher than the current regime to offset the impact of lower corporate income tax on overall government tax take and to approach global averages," Salceda said.

He maintained that incremental revenues should reach at least P20 billion per year, lower than what the DOF is proposing.

The MGB, for its part, noted that policy objectives of a tax regime should enable the government to realize the full value of its resources consistent with attracting necessary investment and should be adaptable to changing circumstances.

As expected, the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) has expressed apprehension over the new tax regime.

Turn to B5

New mining From B1

COMP chairman Gerard Brimo maintained that the highly capital-intensive industry requires foreign investments if it is expected to grow and achieve its potential to contribute to the economy.

"The industry has been beset by huge policies such as the moratorium and the open pit ban. Foreign investors that are looking at us remain apprehensive about the stability of our policies. They are taking a wait-and-see attitude," Brimo said.

"If we come up with a tax structure that is not competitive internationally, we will not be able to attract investments that we need," he said.

Current mining tax policies in the coun-

try include a 25 percent corporate tax, four percent excise tax of gross value, and five percent mineral royalty inside mineral reservation areas, as well as 50:50 mode of sharing between government and mining proponents under an FTAA.

Right now, the industry is contributing a measly 0.7 percent to the economy, one percent to state revenues and 4.8 percent to total exports.

Last year, gross production value was P224 billion with taxes, fees and royalties amounting to P39 billion.

Total value of resources in the country is estimated at \$7.34 trillion including gold, copper, nickel, iron, chromite and other non-metallic minerals. However, total production value is only at \$38.44 billion or three percent.



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HOUSE PANEL CLEARS PIFITA, MINING REGIME

By JOVEE MARIE N. DELA CRUZ [@joveemarie](#)

THE House Committee on Ways and Means on Wednesday endorsed for plenary approval the Passive Income and Financial Intermediary Taxation (PIFITA) or Package 4 of the Comprehensive Tax Reform Program (CTRP) and the proposed Fiscal Regime for Mining, which will provide the government P63.5 billion in new revenues.

The panel chairman and Albay Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda said members of his committee passed the unnumbered substitute bill to House Bills 375, 2111, and 3244 or the proposed Package 4 of the CTRP, which seeks to make passive income and financial intermediary

taxes simpler and more efficient.

This proposed measure, popularly known as the PIFITA, was approved on third and final reading during the 18th Congress. It will redesign the taxation of the finan-

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CCC to get bigger budget in 2023

THE double-digit increase in the climate-related expenditure for the 2023 proposed budget showed President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr.'s commitment to address climate change, an official of the Climate Change Commission (CCC) said.

CCC Vice Chairman and Executive Director Robert Borje said the budget increase will help boost national government institutions' (NGIs) climate change adaptation and mitigation projects.

Citing figures from the Department of Budget and Management's National Expenditure Program submitted to the House of Representatives on August 22, Borje said that in the P5.268-trillion proposed national budget for 2023, P453.1 billion was tagged by NGIs for climate adaptation and mitigation actions.

This figure, he said, represents a 56-percent increase from the 2022 General Appropriations Act's P289.7-billion allocation by NGIs for climate change adaptation and mitigation programs and projects.

Borje considered the increase in climate budget as "a clear manifestation of national convergence: a whole-of-country and whole-of-society approach in dealing with the impacts of climate change."

"This signifies the government's commitment under President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr.'s leadership for more urgent, integrated and transformative climate actions," he said in a statement.

"This is proof that our government is serious in addressing, minimizing, and averting losses and damages from climate-related disasters, while investing on adaptation and mitigation actions for the benefit of present and future generations," he added.

For the 2023 National Budget Call, the CCC also logged a 44-percent rise in the compliance rate by NGIs undertaking the Climate Change Expenditure Tagging (CCET) process, from 145 submissions in 2022 to 210 out of 316 NGIs in 2023.

Borje stressed the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement in climate action, and lauded the NGIs' participation in monitoring, tracking and tagging their climate change-related expenditures.

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For 2024, the CCC's target is to raise the compliance rate of NGIs to 70 percent, from 64 percent in 2023.

"The CCC will continue to work with all stakeholders to efficiently mobilize resources by Building Right At First Sight," Borje said.

"This will bring us closer to our transformational goal of an upper-middle income and low carbon economy, and climate-smart and climate-resilient Philippines by 2050," he added.

Borje said the CCC thanked DBM for the "continued partnership."

"We will build on these gains, including through expenditure-level assessment by NGIs. This next step is vital to help ensure that climate change programs and projects are implemented accordingly," he said.

The CCC and DBM institutionalized the CCET process through Joint Memorandum Circular 2015-01, aimed to measure the progress in the implementation of climate change initiatives at national and local levels.

CATHERINE S. VALENTE



HOUSE PANEL CLEARS PIFITA, MINING REGIME

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cial sector by making it simpler, fairer, and more efficient, critical to its role in the long-term growth and development of the economy.

In 2020, Salceda said the government's total collection from bank deposits amounted to P58.84 billion while the percentage taxes on financial institutions was around P42.90 billion.

"These significant contributions add to government coffers used to finance large-scale infrastructure,

create more and better jobs, and boost economic growth," he said.

Currently, Salceda said there are several tax rates and tax bases on passive income, financial services, and transactions.

The tax on income, meanwhile, varies depending on the term of the instrument, the issuer, the currency involved, and the residency of the income recipient, he said.

Fewer combinations, rates

AT the hearing, Salceda said the Department of Finance recom-

mended that the number of combinations of tax bases and rates applicable to passive income, financial intermediaries, and financial transactions be reduced from 74 to 52. The committee adopted the recommendation.

"Likewise, stamp taxes depend on the types of instrument or transactions involved, the terms, and the issuers. These variations in the tax base and tax rates, even among comparable financial instruments and transactions, result in a complicated tax structure with

enty of room for tax arbitrage. Other disparities in tax treatments interfere with investment decisions," he added.

The measure aims to level the playing field by harmonizing tax treatments for certain transactions of financial institutions.

It seeks to simplify the complex structure of the financial sector, ensure neutrality in tax treatment across financial institutions, prove equity among investors and savers, minimize arbitrage opportunities, and promote capital market development and tax competitiveness within the context of financial globalization, increased capital mobility and financial inclusion.

The bill seeks to reduce the final withholding tax rates on interest income by imposing a single rate of 5 percent final tax on interest income, in general, regardless of currency, maturity, issuer, and other differentiating factors.

It also unifies tax rates on passive income through a single rate of 5 percent, in general, to be levied on interest income, dividends and capital gains.

The measure also harmonizes business taxes on financial intermediaries through a single gross receipt tax (GRT) rate of 5 percent, urged to banks, quasi banks, and certain non-bank financial intermediaries (FIs).

The distinction between lending and non-lending income, as well as the maturity of the instrument, will be removed. All types of income will be taxed at 5 percent, except dividends, equity shares, and net income of subsidiaries, which will remain exempt.

The bill said preneed, pension, life, and HMO insurance will be taxed uniformly at 2 percent of the premium. Non-life insurance will remain subject to VAT, while crop insurance will remain exempt from VAT. Income other than the premium will be subject to VAT.

Junk IPO tax

THE bill also mandates the removal of the initial public offering (IPO) tax, deemed to be detrimental to capital market development.

The IPO tax is seen as an imposition on capital and restricts capital markets, particularly since collections from IPO tax are minimal—only averaging P273 million annually from 2000 to 2016.

Income tax on listed shares of stock and debt securities will also be gradually removed to further promote capital market development.

It also provides for the rationalization of Documentary Stamp Tax (DST) to promote capital mobility.

The bill amends certain sections of RA 8424 or the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC) of 1997, as amended, to reduce the DST imposed on lotto tickets from P0.20 to P0.10.

According to Salceda, while this could cause revenue losses to the government, the measure would help ensure that the Philip-

pine Charity Sweepstakes Office's (PCSO) revenue does not collapse due to skyrocketing ticket prices in the long run.

The panel also agreed to incorporate in the bill the proposal made by the Department of Finance and Industry (DTI), to remove the excise tax exemption of pick-up trucks introduced under TRAIN.

This was stated in a letter sent by Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno, who also cited that this would result in an estimated additional revenue of P52.6 billion from 2022 to 2026.

Mining regime

TO boost the mining industry's potential contribution to the country's gross domestic product while safeguarding mineral resources and the rights of host communities, the ways and means committee also approved the proposed Fiscal Regime for Mining. See related story in *Banking*, page B4.

The bill seeks to provide a single fiscal regime applicable to all existing and prospective large-scale metallic mines, regardless of location.

"Optimum utilization of our minerals cannot be made possible due to gaps in our current laws and regulations. The adverse effects of environmental degradation and climate change must also be addressed to promote sustainable economic development and social equity," Salceda said.

Salceda said this bill addresses the complexity of the current fiscal regime which depends on whether

the mine is operating in a mineral reservation and whether it is operated under a Mineral Product Sharing Agreement (MPSA) Financial or Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA).

"A royalty rate of 5 percent on all large-scale mining operations. At present, only those located outside the mineral reservation are subject to this royalty payment. It is not subject to royalties," said Salceda.

The bill also provides for a minimum government share to be imposed when the basic government share is less than 60 percent of net mining revenue. At present, this only applies under the Fiscal Regime.

An export tax of 10 percent on the gross value of minerals is proposed to encourage downstream and value-adding processing, and proper valuation of minerals, said Salceda.

Lastly, the measure proposes to create a Natural Resource Fund from the revenues collected from the margin-based royalty fund projects that will redound to the benefit of local government units directly affected by mining activities.

The trust fund shall serve inter-generation savings to protect the environment and provide for the needs of host local government units, given the non-renewable nature of mineral resources.



Bill sees govt earning P37.52B from new mining fiscal regime

By BERNADETTE D. NICOLAS @BNicolasBM

THE Department of Finance (DOF) expects the government to earn P37.52 billion in revenues from the passage of its proposed bill on the rationalization of the mining fiscal regime in the country.

Speaking at the House and Ways and Means Committee hearing on Wednesday, Finance Assistant Secretary Valery Joy A. Brion said their proposed measure would reform the mining fiscal regime to achieve simplification, fair share, value-adding and good governance.

"The DOF recognizes that the mining industry has the potential to drive our economic recovery and long-term growth and this is really in support of the administration's Medium-Term Fiscal Framework," Brion said.

Under their proposal, the DOF seeks to establish a rationalized and single fiscal regime applicable to all large-scale metallic mines regardless of location to make the country's mining policy "predictable."

"This addresses the complexity of the current fiscal regime, which depends on whether the mine is operating within or outside a min-

eral reservation, and whether it is operated under a mineral production sharing agreement, an MPSA or a financial and technical assistance agreement or what we call the FTAA," she said.

On top of this, the DOF is also pushing for the imposition of a royalty rate of 5 percent applicable to all large-scale mining operations since only those located in mineral reservation are currently subject to royalty payment.

Brion said this will generate incremental revenue of about P5 billion.

On fair share, the DOF proposes to impose a minimum government share when the basic government share is less than 60 percent of the net mining revenue, pointing out that this is only applicable to FTAA's.

The DOF also wants the government to impose a 10-percent export tax on the gross value of mineral

ore "to encourage downstream and value-adding processing and proper valuation of minerals."

On good governance, Brion said the department also seeks to institutionalize an Extractive Industries Transparency and Accountability mechanism for the full public disclosure of extractive industry information, including tax and revenue data in the extractives value chain, following best practices in the open, accountable, and good governance of mineral resources.

"This will allow public monitoring when information is publicly available. A multi-stakeholder group composed of representatives from government, industry and civil society shall provide oversight on the implementation of these transparency and accountability mechanism," she said.

Interestingly, the Philippine government in the latter part of the Duterte administration withdrew from a global initiative on extractives transparency, assailing the body's "unfair" metrics and procedures for assessing the countries' compliance with its requirements.

In June this year, the DOF said then Finance Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez III formally expressed the country's decision to pull out from the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which prescribes a standard for transparency and accountability in the mining, oil, and gas industries. Extractive compa-

nies in countries implementing EITI are engaged to publicly disclose data on taxes, royalties, and other payments they make to the government and their host communities.

BIR backs DOF stance

NONETHELESS, the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) backed the DOF's position on the proposed rationalization of the mining fiscal regime during the committee hearing.

"The inclusions of these amendments in the Tax Code will make it clear the tax treatment of the large-scale mining and also the fiscal regime, your Honor, for efficient task collection and enforcement on the part of the BIR," BIR Officer-in-Charge Assistant Commissioner for Legal Service Larry M. Barcelo said.

The BIR also reported that the government's basic share from mining taxes, fees, and royalties, reached P40.1 billion from 2018 to 2021.

The Duterte administration earlier proposed reform on mining taxes under Package 2+ of its Comprehensive Tax Reform Program. The proposed package included the implementation of a single fiscal regime in the mining industry and the imposition of royalty and additional government share on all metallic and non-metallic minerals, small-scale and large-scale mines, whether inside or outside mineral reservations. However, this proposal did not hurdle the legislative mill.



Lawmakers OK new fiscal plan for mining firms

By Maricel V. Cruz

THE House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means has approved a new fiscal regime for the mining sector, which is set to increase revenues for mining by up to P37.5 billion in its first full year of implementation.

"As part of our continuing commitment to President Marcos and the Marcos administration, with the approval of this measure, the House committee on ways and means is done with all SONA and Cabinet tax bills," Albay Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda, the panel's chairperson and House resident economist, said.

Salceda, who was also the first principal author of the measure, said that the committee adopted the version of the Department of Finance, which would "bring the country's effective tax rate on mining (considering all taxes) to 51 percent, up from 38 percent under the current system."

"That brings us closer to the middle of the pack among major mining countries, instead of near the bottom of the list. 51 percent is a good number, because it brings us closer to Australia's effective tax rate, at around 51 percent as well, counting royalties."

"Among major countries, only Chile and South Africa have lower effective tax rates than us. This proposal brings us closer to Australia and Indonesia, which are our regional comparatives. China is at a very high 71 percent effective tax rate for gold mines," Salceda added.

"With this measure, we are fulfilling our commitment to the President and to the DOF to raise revenues to fund PBBM's priority programs," Salceda said. Salceda explained that under Marcos's Medium Term Fiscal Framework, which the House of Representatives adopted with Salceda as a major sponsor, the revenue program assumes a tax-to-GDP growth of 0.3 percent annually.



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51% buwis sa pagmimina kinasa ng Kamara

Umusad na ang panukala na itaas ang buwis na ipinapataw sa sektor ng pagmimina.

Inaprubahan ng House committee on ways and means ang fiscal regime sa mining sector alinsunod sa mungkahi ng Department of Finance (DOF) upang maitaas ang kita ng gobyerno.

Sa ilalim ng panukala, aakyat sa 51% ang kabuuang buwis na ipinapataw sa pagmimina mula sa 38%. Inaasahang magbibigay ito sa gobyerno ng P37.5 bilyong dagdag na kita.

Ang panukala ay magpapantay sa ipi-

napataw na buwis ng Australia na nasa 51% din at maglalapit sa 71% buwis ng China sa pagmimina ng ginto.

Sa ilalim ng panukala, papatawan ng 8% royalty tax ang market value ng gross output ng mga large-scale mining operation. Makakukuha rin ang gobyerno ng 60% minimum share sa net mining revenue kasama ang mga buwis at iba pang sinisingil sa mga minahan.

Papatawan din ng 10% export tax ang mga mineral ore na dadalhin sa ibang bansa upang mahikayat ang domestic processing ng mga mineral product. (Billy Begas)



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Rationalize mining fiscal regime aprub na sa House committee

APRUBADO na sa House Ways and Means Committee ang panukalahag Rationalize Mining Fiscal Regime.

Layon nitong itaas ang public tax revenues at palakasin din ang transparency sa mining industry.

Sa ilalim ng panukala, itataas nito ang government share sa pamamagitan ng pagpapatupad ng single fiscal regime na naaayon sa lahat ng mining agreement.

Nasa 60:40 revenue dividend naman ang bahati ng national government at host local government unit.

Kapag tuluyan nang

naging batas, hihigitan ng new mining fiscal regime ang full public disclosure on extractive industries habang istriktong ipatutupad ang responsible and sustainable mining practice.

Sinabi ni committee chair Joey Salceda, target ng hakbang ang 20 billion incremental revenues o tinatayang 1 percent ng GDP na siyang sagot sa medium term fiscal frame assumption ng Marcos administration.

Ayon naman kay Marikina Rep. Estella Quimbo, napanahon nang magamit ang full potential ng mining industry para sa economic recovery ng bansa. (Henry Padilla)



Benguet Corp's net income continues to climb

STAKEHOLDERS and investors of Benguet Corporation would be pleased to know that the 2022 financial update shows sustained strong positive results.

Pegged at P553 million, the consolidated net income for the second quarter almost doubled at 83 percent compared to P303 million for the same period in 2021.

By the end of June, net income stood at P974 million which is higher than what was attained during the first semester of 2021 (P821 million).

The increase is mainly attributable to gains in consolidated revenues posted at P1.5 billion for the second quarter and P2.70 billion for the first half, which are substantially higher this year compared to last year's figures of P1 billion and P2.3 billion for the same periods, respectively.

These numbers were achieved from higher nickel ore exports coupled with rise in metal prices and favorable foreign exchange.

The company moves full steam forward with all operating units reporting profits.

For the first half of the year, the gold project yielded 10 percent higher revenue, nickel project generated 20-percent increase in revenue, and, not to be outdone, Irian lime project provided a 29-percent revenue increase.

In April, its nickel subsidiary, Benguetcorp Resources Management Corporation, formerly Benguetcorp Nickel Mines, Inc., received the following awards and recognitions from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau Region 3: (a) Highest Average Tenement, Safety and Health, Environment and Social Development Score

for the Metallic Category; (b) Best Recorded Improvement on its Mine Operations and Rehabilitation; and (c) Safety Award for Attaining 2 Million Man Hours Worked Without Any Lost Time Accident Up until the End of CY 2021.

On the other hand, ILP was awarded runner-up under the Safest Mineral Processing-Calcining Plant Category by the Philippine Mine Safety and Environment Association and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Mines and Geosciences Bureau during the 67th Annual National Mine Safety and Environmental Conference in 2021.

These awards and recognitions are testament to the Company's adherence to best mining practices as a responsible miner.



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DENR pressed to nix Navotas land reclamation proposal

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

[@jonlmayuga](#)

THE Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) is urging Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga to deny the application for an environmental compliance certificate (ECC) for the 650-hectare Navotas Coastal Bay Reclamation project, citing environmental and socioeconomic concerns.

Pamalakaya National Spokesperson Ronnel Arambulo, in a news statement, said the project would bring disaster to both the environment and livelihood of more than 1,000 fisherfolk and workers in mussel farms in the area.

"It should be a no-brainer for the DENR to reject reclamation, as it has been proven by many scientists and environmental experts to be catastrophic to the marine environment and natural resources," Arambulo said.

Pamalakaya said their group has been invited by the proponent of the project to a public hearing during which the environmental impact assessment is expected to be presented.

The first public hearing for the same project was held in November 2020, it was learned.

According to the group, land reclamation, also called dump-and-fill, is in "total contrast" to the DENR's mandate to protect the marine biodiversity of Manila Bay.

"It was no less than the Supreme Court that mandated the DENR to lead several government agencies to rehabilitate and clean up Manila Bay for the benefit of the fisherfolk and the people," Arambulo stressed.

He was referring to the 2008 Supreme Court mandamus directing 13 government agencies, to be led by the DENR, to rehabilitate and restore Manila Bay for fishery resources development and recreational use.

"We remind Secretary Yulo-Loyzaga that rehabilitating Manila Bay never includes destructive reclamation projects. Without any reservation, she should deny the Navotas reclamation project an environmental permit and save the environment and livelihood of the affected fisherfolk," Arambulo said.



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F.F. Cruz unit appeals 'void' P34.3-B Manila Bay reclamation

The Honorable Court has already resolved that Respondent PRA revoked and canceled Petitioner's Award and not the Office of the President

A property developer controlled by the F.F. Cruz construction group has asked the Makati City Regional Trial Court to reverse its 4 August ruling voiding the P34.3 billion joint venture deal of the Gatchalian family's Waterfront Manila Premier Development Corp. with the Philippine Reclamation Authority and the City of Manila for the reclamation of 318 hectares off Manila Bay.

In its 24-page motion for reconsideration before Makati RTC Branch 139 Presiding Judge Benjamin T. Pozon, the Asian Seas

Resources and Construction Development Corp. said the court had erred when it ordered vacated and set aside its 25 April 2022 decision. ASSERCO stressed the Office of the President should first be impleaded in the case as an "indispensable party."

"The Honorable Court erred when it vacated and set aside the Decision dated 25 April 2022 on the ground that the Office of the President is an indispensable party when the Honorable Court has resolved the same in its order dated 17 February

2022, which became final and binding to the parties," ASSERCO said.

— It added the same court had already ruled that the Office of the President was not an indispensable party in the case when it ruled on a previous joint motion to resolve affirmative defenses made by lawyers from the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel and private respondent Waterfront Manila.

ASSERCO cited that in the order of the said court just last 17 February 2022, the Makati court had ruled that the Office of the President was not an indispensable party.

"The issue of whether the Office of the President

is an indispensable party was already resolved by the Honorable Court in its Order dated 17 February 2022," the ASSERCO, represented by the Bernas Law Offices, said.

"The Honorable Court's February 2021 finding that the Office of the President is not an indispensable party has attained finality because no Respondent filed a Motion for Reconsideration after receiving the Honorable Court's Order dated 17 February 2022. It was not an issue to be revisited or resolved in the Decision nor the Motion for Reconsideration," ASSERCO stressed.

In the absence of the indispensable party in the instant case, the assailed decision should be vacated.

ASSERCO also argued that the court had already resolved that the PRA revoked and canceled their award and not the Office of the President, which

negated the need to implead the latter.

"The Honorable Court has already resolved that Respondent PRA revoked and canceled Petitioner's Award and not the Office of the President. Assuming for the sake of an argument that the president case may be legally and procedurally re-opened, still, the outcome of the dispute will not be changed by impleading the Office of the President, given that the issues are essentially legal," ASSERCO said.

ASSERCO said that the Office of the President, in one of its letters to the PRA, had instructed that the vested rights of third parties must not be prejudiced by the joint venture reclamation project led by Waterfront Manila.

"In the Memorandum from the Executive Secretary to the PRA dated 28 November 2019, it was expressly stated by the Office of the President that pursuant to Executive Order No. 74 (s.2019) that the PRA Governing Board has the power to approve reclamation projects; hence, it was Respondent PRA and not the Office of the President who prejudiced the Petitioner," ASSERCO said.

"At the end of the day, the reclamation project was not

bidded out by Respondent PRA or any other National Government Agency. It was conceived by Respondent Waterfront Manila, a private party, and enabled by the City of Manila, and then folded into Respondent PRA to provide the illusion that the Waterfront reclamation is a national government project," ASSERCO said.

In the 4 August order of Baybay, the Makati court said the petitioner failed to "implead" the Office of the President, which it said was an indispensable party, when it sued the joint venture parties and stakeholders Philippine Reclamation Authority, the City of Manila and Gatchalian-led Waterfront Manila Premier Development Corp.

"In the absence of the indispensable party in the instant case, the assailed decision should be vacated," Baybay said in his ruling.

"Accordingly, for the petitioner's failure to implead the Office of the President as public respondent, the decision is premature," Baybay said in his nine-page order, which acted favorably on the 11 May appeals of the joint venture parties.

The new order came six days after presiding judge Benjamin Pozon retired last 29 July.



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Green Solutions tapped for beekeeping project in Mt. Hamiguitan sanctuary

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has tapped the Green Solutions Agricultural Farming Training Center (GSAFTC) for its beekeeping project in the Mt. Hamiguitan sanctuary.

The Mt. Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary (MHRWS) is aiming to improve the production of its honey enterprise in its farms in Brgys. San Isidro and General Generoso, Davao Oriental.

A memorandum of agreement (MOA) was signed between MHRWS Protected Area Management Board and GSAFTC to expand their collaboration on trainings, marketing-promotional work, experimental, and technology-demonstration on beekeeping.

The beekeeping livelihood program is a special project called "Beekeeping as Bio-diversity-Friendly

MHRWS" of the DENR as part of forest conservation.

Mt. Hamiguitan is a wildlife sanctuary recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco). It is home to globally threatened flora and fauna, 8 of which are found only in Mt. Hamiguitan.

The beekeeping project in Mt. Hamiguitan ensures the surrounding communities have a livelihood so that they do not resort to illegal forest activities around Mt. Hamiguitan, according to the DENR.

Beekeeping is also known to have the very important "pollinating" function in the ecosystem, enhancing environmental balance. It contributes to rapid generation of forest reserves.

The government sees a good market potential for beekeeping products (pollen, propolis, beeswax,

honey wine, honey and propolis-based soap, massage oil, shampoo, and ointment). The Philippines currently imports honey but local producers may soon be able to fill the country's requirements.

The beekeeping project is financed by DENR's special project fund, which is supervised by the Foreign Assisted and Special Projects Service (FASPS).

The project already identified two potential expansion sites in Sto Rosario, San Isidro and Macambol, City of Mati.

The project was compelled to transfer the beekeeping activity to the GSAFTC site which serves as the recovery area for the propagation of the bee colonies. This is erratic weather caused the infestation of small beehive beetles which led to the decline of bee colonies.

Part of the project's target is to

diversify-friendly enterprise and sustainable honey production. As such, an ordinance for the preservation, habitat protection, and collection of bee products from the wild has been drafted together with the legislative members from municipal and barangay levels, Davao Oriental State University, Department of Agriculture, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and municipal tourism offices.

The DTI and the Department of Science and Technology also facilitated a training on the handling and packaging of bee products for the project's beneficiaries.

Mt. Hamiguitan is being strictly protected as it faces threats of conversion of land for agriculture. There are also mining threats outside the site.

The DENR said it is now addressing potential risks from climate



House bill declaring Mt. Arayat as tourist destination OK'd

THE House Committee on Tourism chaired by Romblon Representative Eleandro Jesus Madrona on Wednesday approved a bill declaring Mt. Arayat in Pampanga as a tourist destination.

Deputy Speaker and Pampanga 3rd District Rep. Aurelio "Dong" Gonzales Jr., author of House Bill (HB) No. 181, told the committee that Mt. Arayat "continues to attract tourists who are nature lovers because of the splendor of the mountain, which, among others, possesses a rich bio-diversity as attested by the recent discovery of new plant species *pyrostria arayatensis*."

"It is also the home of Arayat National Park. Located in San Juan Baño, its cool springs, covered by green foliage of trees, offer a family-friendly resting place excellent for swimming and picnic," Gonzales said.

The mountain is also a hiking destination preferred

by mountain climbers from Metro Manila due to its proximity to the National Capital Region (NCR), he said.

Gonzales said Mt. Arayat is likewise "an integral part of the Kapampangan culture since time immemorial, serving as the home of Apung Sinukuan - a local god revered for teaching the art of agriculture and metallurgy to ancient Kapampangans."

However, he added that Mt. Arayat is neither fully developed nor wholly prepared for receiving flocks of tourists and unregulated developments around it might endanger its ecology to the detriment of residents who depend on it for their livelihood.

Under the bill, the Department of Tourism (DOT) is mandated to prioritize the development of Mt. Arayat as a tourist destination.

The measure mandates the DOT, in coordination with the Department of Public Works and High-

ways (DPWH), the provincial government of Pampanga, and the towns of Magalang and Arayat, where the mountain is located, to prepare a tourism development plan for the construction and maintenance of facilities.

Such a plan shall preserve and conserve the natural beauty and resources of the area.

The DOT shall include the plan's funding requirements in its budget proposal, which would be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

The Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority, the provincial government of Pampanga, and the local governments of Arayat and Magalang would be mandated to issue implementing rules and regulations.

Gonzales said the House had approved the bill in the 18th Congress but the Senate failed to pass it.

"We hope it will be enacted this time," he said.

Ryan Ponce Pacpaco



House panel okays bill declaring Mt. Arayat as tourist destination

A MEASURE declaring Mt. Arayat, located in Pampanga, as a tourist destination was approved by the House Committee on Tourism.

The bill's author Deputy Speaker and Pampanga Rep. Aurelio "Dong" Gonzales expressed gratitude to the committee chaired by Romblon Rep. Eleandro Jesus Madrona.

In filing House Bill 181, Gonzales said that Mt. Arayat "continues to attract tourists who are nature lovers because of the splendor of the mountain, which, among others, possesses a rich bio-diversity as attested by the recent discovery of new plant species *pyrostria arayatensis*."

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Gonzales said Mt. Arayat is likewise "an integral part of the Kapampangan culture since time immemorial, serving as the home of *Apiang Sinukuan* - a local god revered for teaching the art of agriculture and metallurgy to ancient Kapampangans." *Jester Manalastas*



New subspecies of Begonia seen in Zambo

ZAMBOANGA CITY: Researchers from the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden of the Chinese Academy of Sciences have reported a new subspecies of *Begonia* in Mount Timolan Protected Landscape in Zamboanga del Sur province.

Begonia is a genus of perennial flowering plants in the family Begoniaceae.

The genus contains more than 2,000 different plant species. The *Begonias* are native to moist subtropical and tropical climates. Some species are commonly grown indoors as ornamental houseplants in cooler climates. In cooler climates some species are cultivated outside in summertime for their bright colorful flowers, which have sepals but no petals.

In ongoing taxonomic studies of the genus *Begonia*, the researchers and their collaborators collected a population of peculiar *Begonia* section *Petermannia* species, according to a report by Phys.org.

The report, attributed to Zhang Nannan of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said after meticulously examining its morphology and comparing it with protologues and available digitized type specimens from across the Philippines and neighboring countries, the researchers confirmed it as a subspecies of *Begonia bangsamoro* that is new to science.

The new subspecies was named as *Begonia bangsamoro* subsp. *Bagasa* and published in *Phytotaxa*. It is the 17th representative of the genus *Begonia* for Zamboanga Peninsula.

The new subspecies is a terrestrial, monoecious, perennial herb,

up to 30 cm long. It differs from *Begonia bangsamoro* subspecies *bangsamoro* in having staminate and pistillate flowers with much narrower and elongate tepals.

The new subspecies is endemic to the Zamboanga Peninsula. It was found in deeply shaded lower montane forest with damp soil growing along the trail with an elevation of 700–900 m a.s.l. It was also found growing as a terrestrial, lithophyte and as a climber on tree ferns.

The conservation status of the new subspecies is proposed as "least concern" following the International Union for Conservation of Nature Standards.

The Mount Timolan Protected Landscape is a protected area covering Mount Timolan and its surrounding forested landscape. The park encompasses an area of 1,994.79 hectares (4,929.2 acres) and a buffer zone of 695.39 hectares (1,718.3 acres) in the municipalities of San Miguel, Guipos and Tigbao.

It was established on Aug. 14, 2000 through Proclamation Order 354 issued by then President Joseph Estrada. The park was also earlier established by the provincial government of Zamboanga del Sur as a provincial park and wildlife sanctuary known as the Zamboanga del Sur Provincial Park through Provincial Ordinance 3 in 1992.

The presence of various microhabitats is reflected in the diversity of flora and fauna found there. However, limited information is available and biodiversity studies are scarce up until now.

AL JACINTO



■ *Begonia bangsamoro* subsp. *Bagasa*. PHOTO BY MARK ARCEBAL K. NAIVE/PHYS.ORG



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Manila cleans up debris left by Florita

The Manila city government's Department of Public Services (DPS) cleaned up the debris left by Severe Tropical Storm Florita on Tuesday.

Personnel of the DPS collected garbage scattered along Quirino Avenue in Barangay 853, Dagupan street in Barangay 156 and Barangay 902.

DPS workers also cleared fallen trees along Jose Abad Santos Avenue near Mayhaligue street.

Sacks of trash were seen washed ashore by the storm at the Manila Bay dolomite beach.

Workers from the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and DPS personnel used rakes in collecting the garbage. — Marc Jayson Cayabyab



Workers from the Manila Department of Public Services collect trash washed up by Tropical Storm Florita at the Manila Bay dolomite beach yesterday.

EDD GUMBAN





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THE EXHIBIT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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WASHED ASHORE – Workers from the Manila Department of Public Services (DPS) and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) remove the heaps of garbage swept onto the Manila Bay Dolomite Beach in the aftermath of severe tropical storm Florita on Wednesday, Aug. 24, 2022. (All Vicoy)



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The morning after. Workers from the Manila Department of Public Services and Metro Manila Development Authority remove garbage swept into the Manila Bay Dolomite Beach by waves caused by tropical storm 'Florita.'

PHOTO BY RHOY COBILLA



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Daily Tribune

WITHOUT FEAR • WITHOUT FAVOR

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY BOB DUNGO, JR. FOR THE DAILY TRIBUNE @starnews/trib
Hey, Joe Volunteers of all shapes, sizes and skin color joined the cleanup effort of Dolomite Beach Wednesday. The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and Department of Public Safety organized the activity to clear the garbage brought by typhoon 'Florita' to the Manila beach.



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Nagitulong ang mga tauhan ng Manila Department of Public Services (DPS) at Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) para linisin ang mga basura na tinangay sa Manila Bay Dolomite Beach matapos ang bagyong Florita. (Edd Gumban)



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WORKERS from the Manila Department of Public Services (DPS) and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) collect piles of trash washed ashore in Manila Bay's dolomite beach following heavy rains brought by severe tropical storm Florita. (Ali Vicoy)



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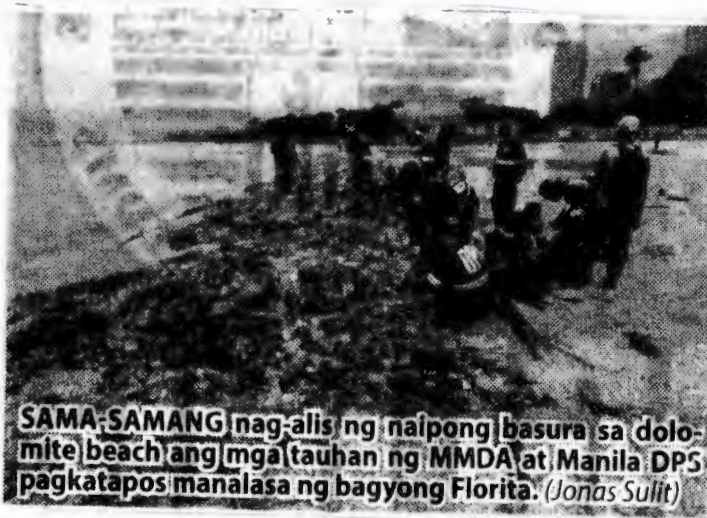
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SAMA-SAMANG nag-alis ng naipong basura sa dolomite beach ang mga tauhan ng MMDA at Manila DPS pagkatapos manalasa ng bagyong Florita. (Jonas Sulit)



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'Environmental sustainability is a key part of humanitarian work in dryland regions'

HUMANITARIAN interventions in the world's dryland areas blighted by conflict must, in the context of the climate crisis, also address the environmental impacts of the conflicts such as those exacerbated by the forced displacement of people, according to a new policy brief released last August 19.

Produced jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), CGIAR and CARE, "Doing no harm while doing good: Climate and conflict sensitivity in dryland humanitarian projects" follows on the heels of the Global Report on Food Crises 2022, which revealed that 70 percent of people with crisis levels of acute food insecurity or worse were found in 10 countries and territories located in dryland regions.

"On the occasion of World Humanitarian Day 2022, the focus is on taking action to support people in need, by all corners of society," said Tiina Vähänen, Deputy Director of FAO's Forestry Division. "Working together with local communities, humanitarian interventions must be more holistic so we can contribute to improved food security for people in need, while doing no harm to dryland environments and their tree resources."

At a global level, the world's drylands are important for both food security and mitigating climate change, supplying about 60 percent of the world's food production and 50 percent of livestock while containing 27 percent of the world's forest area and storing 30 percent of soil organic carbon.

Findings

THE policy brief provides an in-depth analysis of three projects based in ecologically fragile areas hosting settlements of people in protracted displacement in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger and Uganda. It shows the fragility of ecosystems in humanitarian settings and explains how competition for natural resources in agrosilvopastoral areas often leads to conflict between host communities and displaced people.

It argues that humanitarian interventions should address the environmental impact of displaced populations, and that protection of dryland natural resources must be seen as a vital part of program implementation. The report aims to provide decision makers with potential considerations in which a humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach can be reflected in humanitarian activities in ecologically fragile dryland environments.

The policy brief proposes integrating environmental concerns into interventions, including projects designed to target just one area of development. For example, interventions that target food security should include access to sustainable cooking energy to reduce the need for displaced populations to use or collect charcoal or woodfuel, triggering forest resource depletion, environmental conflict and sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls.



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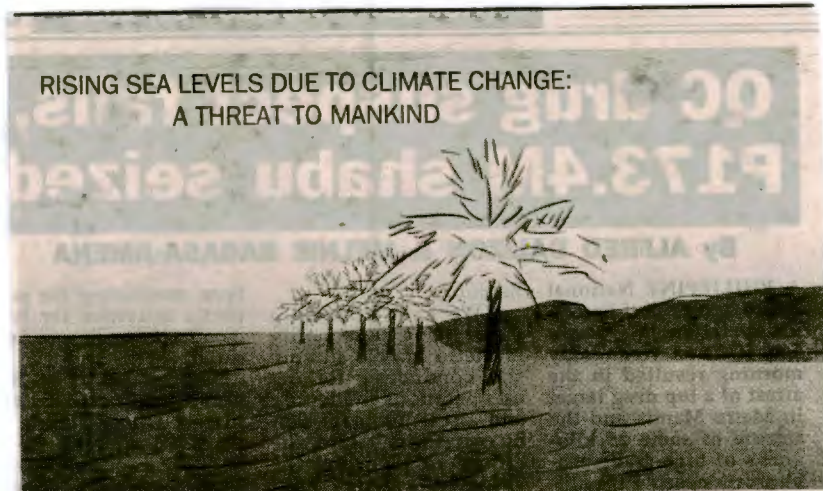
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EDITORIAL

Let's act now

THE problem of climate change continues to worsen, worrying health authorities and the people, particularly the poor, not only in the Philippines but throughout the world.

As a result, typhoons, storms, flooding and other weather disturbances have become more frequent and destructive.

Every year, these natural disasters claim the lives of many people and destroy agricultural crops, infrastructure, houses and other buildings worth billions of pesos in the Philippines.

That's why we, like other well-meaning Filipinos, cannot overemphasize the importance of having climate change action plans designed to address the problems posed by global warming.

Thus, the Filipino people welcomed the return of lady Senator Loren Legarda, an acknowledged environmentalist, to the Upper House of Congress.

We share the view of Legarda and others that what concerned government authorities ought to do is to make our environmental laws, rules and regulations work at the community level.

"Ang dapat ay mahigpit na ipatupad ng gobyerno ang mga batas at regulasyon na ito para hindi na lumalala pa ang problema," said a worried barangay official.

He added: "Tigilan na natin ang walang patumanggang pagputol ng mga natitira nating punong kahoy at pagtapon ng basura, lalo na ang mga plastik, kung saan-saan."

As an environmentalist, Legarda is in a position to lead the nationwide campaign to mitigate the impact of natural disasters, according to nature lovers across the country.

But let's act now...and fast.



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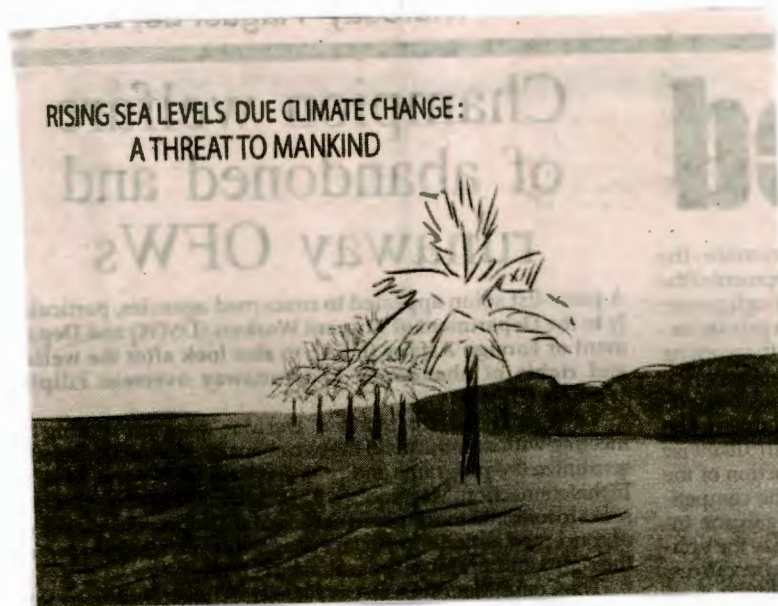
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Mga LGU tinulak gamitin hazard map sa pagplano

Hinimok ng isang opisyal ng Benguet Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRM) ang mga bagong opisyal ng iba't ibang local government units (LGUs) na gamitin ang kanilang geohazard, landslide at flood susceptibility maps upang maiwasan ang pagkawala ng buhay at ari-arian.

Dapat nilang gamitin bilang batayan ang susceptibility plan upang gabayan ang mga nagpapalano, mag-ing ang mga residente, ng mga angkop na istruktura na dapat itayo, sabi ni Abner Lawangen ng PDRRM-Benguet.

Binanggit niya na kailangang bawasan ang pagde-develop sa lugar na ipinapakita sa mapa na madaling bahain at pagguho ng lupa para maiwasan ang anumang sakuna.

Batay sa landslide at flood susceptibility map ng Benguet, 80 porsiyento ng lalawigan ay nasa ilalim ng red zone, na nangahulugan na ang mga lugar na ito ay maaaring makaranas ng "worst possible scenario" dahil sa

kanilang lupa.

Aniya, maliban sa lupa, ang mga pag-ulan sa isang partikular na panahon, pagguho ng lupa na dulot ng ulan, kalidad ng lupa, at mga halaman ay dapat isaalang-alang lahat ng anumang pagpaunlad ng lupa.

Sinabi ni Lawangen na maraming opisyal ang hindi pinapan-sin ang mga ganitong uri ng mga mapa na nakabatay sa agham dahil kadalasan ay nahihirapan silang umangkop o maunawaan ang mga teknikal na aspekto ng mga dokumentong ito.

Bilang bahagi aniya ng mga programa at aktibidad ng kanilang tanggapan, patuloy silang nagsasagawa ng mga aktibidad upang matulungan ang publiko na matutunan kung paano pahalagahan at maunawaan ang mga dokumentong ito.

Idinagdag pa niya na ang mapa lamang ay mukhang nakakatakot dahil sa mataas na susceptibility nito sa pagguho ng lupa at ang kulay nito ngunit ang ilang mga kadahilanan ay maaaring isaalang-alang upang mabawasan ang pagkakataon na mangyari ang mas masamang senaryo. (Mina Navarro)



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The nation must first
have unity of purpose
in order to prosper

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tion campaign, candidate Ferdinand Marcos Jr. found a word that perhaps more than anything energized his campaign and connected instantly with most of the people. The word was "unity." He baptized his team-up with Sara Duterte-Carpio and their entire ticket as the UniTeam.

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■ MAKABENTA FROM A1

The nation must first have unity of purpose in order to prosper

That Marcos was elected by 31 million votes, and Sara by 32 million, is a testament to their respective popularity. It was plainly an affirmative vote for their message of national unity. It was as much a mandate for the team, as it was for Marcos and Duterte.

They did not win alone. They won together with the people.

Now, almost 60 days into the Marcos presidency, many people are wondering about how BBM will turn his unity slogan into reality. They wonder whether he can gather together the variant, scattered and often clashing hopes of Filipinos and weave them into a whole.

During the campaign, the unity theme was unavoidably inchoate and short of definition. Now with the Marcos administration under way on its six-year term, the unity vision bids to be turned into a full agenda and program.

This may seem fated to fail because the Yellows, the Liberals and the communists are determined to oppose Marcos and his administration every step of the way.

National purpose

Believers in implacable hostility between rival factions and parties forget that in our constitutional system there is a bigger reality that brings these forces together in common. They are all Filipinos, members of one nation and inhabiting the same homeland, and they are citizens of the same constitutional republic.

The American historian and political scientist James MacGregor Burns describes eloquently the overarching reality of the nation in his book *Presidential Government: The Crucible of Leadership* (Houghton Mifflin, 1965):

"A nation may be said to exist only when most of its people share some common set of beliefs, expectations, symbols and ultimate values that together make up a national purpose. The purpose may be plain and

positive; it may be obscure and unsettled. It may be defined and trumpeted forth from the temple of God or government; or it may lie in 'the hearts of the people.' It may grow out of the conditions of a society; or it may be imported and imposed on it. And it may be badly formulated. But it is there.

"It is there because people wish to believe that they are engaged in an undertaking that is somewhat broader and more elevating than the advancement of their specific and individual welfare. There must be some transcendental purpose that gives meaning to their everyday activities.

"If a society is to realize its national purpose, there must be some institution and symbol through which social change can be directed and related to that purpose. The government is the only institution possessing the power or the mandate to legitimize the national purpose and to attempt to realize it. And the presidency is the institution best equipped to serve as formulator and symbol of the national purpose."

If BBM's unity vision is to begin anywhere, it properly should begin with "unity of purpose." We're not going to get anywhere if our people are rowing in different directions, even after a hotly fought election, where the people have unequivocally spoken.

Nation-building and state-building

For comprehending the challenge of shaping and achieving the national purpose, it is useful to relate this to the twin processes of nation-building and state-building.

In the formative stage of national independence, nation-building is the term of political science for the broad process of developing a shared sense of national identity and a political community that is capable of binding together the population of a given state.

In turn, state-building refers to the process of building a

functioning and durable state capable of fulfilling the essential attributes of modern statehood. This includes providing security from external threats and maintaining internal order, raising and collecting taxes, delivering essential services such as health and education, the provision of transport and communications infrastructure, and the prudent management of the economy.

Distinguished in this way, state-building comprises the practical task of establishing or strengthening state institutions, while nation-building is more concerned with the character of relations between citizens and their state.

Building state capacity

Contemporary political science uses the terms "state capacity" or "capacity development" to describe the relative success or failure of states in achieving their policy goals as modern states. Some have been pronounced as failed or weak states.

According to Wikipedia, "State capacity is the ability of a government to accomplish policy goals, either generally or in reference to specific aims. A state that lacks capacity is defined as a fragile state or, in a more extreme case, a failed state. Higher state capacity has been strongly linked to long-term economic development, as state capacity can establish law and order, private property rights and external defense, as well as support development by establishing a competitive market, transportation infrastructure, and mass education."

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has opted for the term "capacity development" to describe the process whereby "people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time."

Capacity itself is understood as "the ability of people, organiza-

tions and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully."

The OECD-Development Assistance Committee stated in 2006 that the term "capacity development" should be used rather than the term "capacity-building." This is because "capacity-building" would imply starting from a plain surface and a step-by-step erection of a new structure — which is not how it works.

The European Commission Toolkit defines capacity development in the same way and stresses that capacity relates to "abilities," "attributes" and a "process." It is an attribute of people, individual organizations and groups of organizations. Capacity development is a change process internal to organizations and people.

Challenge to Marcos govt

The challenge that the Marcos presidency faces today is in an important sense a challenge to the nation's record in capacity-building. It is saddled with problems inherited from previous administrations.

Marcos' declared priority on the revitalization and modernization of agriculture is a measure of his commitment to national renewal and the reduction of mass poverty.

The obstacles put up against the president by the agriculture bureaucracy and interest groups testify to the weak Philippine state capacity in agriculture, despite the success of the Green revolution in the country back in the 1970s.

President Marcos' present stint as agriculture secretary must install an effective agriculture department, inaugurate a new period of national agricultural productivity, grant a new deal to millions of Filipino farmers, and assure food security and affordable supply to our 110 million people.

There are, of course, more expansive policy goals than this in the national purpose, but meeting the agricultural challenge is indubitably essential.

yenobserver@gmail.com



68 MWac solar plant in Currimao to start producing power

The 68 MWac solar project in Currimao, Ilocos Norte, a joint venture between MGen Renewable Energy Inc. and Vena Energy, will commence operations soon and contribute to the country's economic growth by producing renewable energy.

The project is set to complete energization by the end of 2022 and commence commercial operations by the first quarter of 2023. MGreen and Vena recently held a ceremony to lay a time capsule celebrating the project's continued progress.

'We are looking forward to commencing its operations soon and witnessing how it would help advance economic progress and create better lives for all.'

"Today is a celebration of small and big wins and even the trials we have successfully overcome along the way. We are most grateful for the continued support of the government of Currimao and Ilocos Norte, and to everyone working on the ground for the timely accomplishment of this solar facility with Vena Energy," said Meralco PowerGen Corporation (MGEN) President and CEO Jaime T. Azurin.

"We are looking forward to commencing its operations soon and witnessing how it would help advance economic progress and create better lives for all," he added.

"We are grateful to the government of Currimao and Ilocos Norte for their continued support for our second project here, and we look forward to delivering it on time safely for the benefit of the nation and our host communities," said Vena Energy Philippines head Samrinder Nehria. "We hope that through our partnership with MGreen, this project will play an important role in accelerating the energy transition in the Philippines."

Among those who graced the event were Governor Matthew Marcos Manatoc and Vice Governor Cecillia Araneta-Marcos of the Provincial Government of Ilocos Norte, and Mayor Edward Quilala and Vice Mayor Sandra Cabrerros of the Municipality of Currimao.

MGreen entered into a partnership with Vena Energy in February 2022 to develop, construct, and operate this new solar project. MGreen is a wholly owned renewable energy unit of MGEN – the power generation arm of Manila Electric Company.

Anchored on One Meralco's long-term sustainability plan, MGEN has set its sights on building 1,500 MW of renewable energy projects in the next seven years. In 2021, MGEN commenced commercial operations of BulacanSol's 55 MWac solar plant located in San Miguel, Bulacan, followed by the construction of another 75 MWac solar project in Baras, Rizal, through PH Renewables Inc.

Vena Energy is a leading renewable energy company in the Asia-Pacific region that owns, develops, constructs, operates, manages, and commercializes a renewable energy portfolio totaling 18 GW of solar, onshore wind, offshore wind, battery energy storage, and hybrid renewable energy projects.

Vena Energy has a fully integrated business model and an extensive local presence throughout the region with 67 corporate and site offices in Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand. Vena Energy is committed to engaging with local communities throughout its portfolio projects' lifecycle and incorporating internationally recognized Environmental, Social, and Governance standards into its strategy and business practices.



CENRO staff kalaboso sa pekeng bakuna card

Kulong ang inabot ng isang 21-anyos na ba-baeng empleyada nang makumpiska sa kanya ang 13 pekeng COVID-19 vaccination card matapos arestuhin ng pulisya sa Angeles City, kahapon.

Nakilala ang suspek na si Janine Lising, na nagtatrabaho sa Angeles City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) at residente ng Brgy. Malabánias sa nasabing lungsod.

Ayon sa imbestigasyon ng pulisya, ang mga pekeng bakuna card ay pailsipikado ang pirma at license number ng city vaccinator.

Ginawa ang imbestigasyon batay sa reklamang isinampa sa pulisya ni Patrick Dimal, staff encoder ng COVID-19 Database Center ng lokal na pamahalaan ng Angeles City, laban sa suspek.

Batay sa custodial report ni Corporal Aaron

Joe Lingat ng Angeles City Police Station 3, ikinulong matapos arestuhin si Lising dahil sa kasong falsification of public document.

Sinabi ni Dimal sa pulisya na nadiskubre niya noong Agosto 18, 2022 na mayroong mga vaccination card na naglalaman ng pekeng pirma at license number ng mga city vaccinator na sina Glenda Aromin at Anna Unika Marieya Cabigting na ginawa umano ni Lising.

Matapos ikumpara ang original na pirma ng mga city vaccinator lumitaw na peneke ang kanilang mga pirma sa vaccination card.

Nalaman din na wala sa COVID-19 Database Center ng Angeles City ang mga pangalan ng mga taong nakasaad sa pekeng vaccination card na nakumpiska mula sa suspek. **(Rudy Abular)**



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'Florita' exits PH; death toll now 4

Gov says floods, slides still threaten Cagayan; agri damage 'minimal,' notes DA exec

By Villamor Visaya Jr.
@VillVisayaJrINQ

TUGUEGARAO CITY—More than 3,600 families (12,127 people) from 149 villages in Cagayan province remained in evacuation centers on Wednesday following the onslaught of Severe Tropical Storm "Florita" (international name: Ma-on), which was already outside the Philippine area of responsibility after battering northern Luzon for two days.

As of 5 p.m. Wednesday, "Florita" was 585 kilometers west of Calayan, Cagayan, packing a maximum sustained winds of 110 km per hour near the center with a gustiness of 135 kph, according to an advisory from the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

Florita is expected to move west northwestward toward the West Philippine Sea in the next 36 hours. By 8 p.m. Thursday night, it would already be within the vicinity of Guangxi, China, the weather bureau said.

As the weather improved, Gov. Manuel Mamba cautioned residents in low-lying and landslide-prone areas against the rush of water downstream, which could cause widespread flooding.

As of Wednesday afternoon, 17 villages in 10 Cagayan towns were

still submerged in floodwater, which reached a foot deep in some areas, according to the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO).

Cagayan and nearby Isabela province have been experiencing widespread flooding during the rainy season as incessant rains, worsened by the southwest monsoon, could cause the Cagayan River, the longest and largest in the country, to breach its banks.

These provinces experienced their worst flooding in 40 years at the height of Typhoon "Ulysses" (Vamco) in November 2020 after 47,600 families (164,400 people) were affected by the floods and landslides, which also killed 29 people in Cagayan Valley.

2 more fatalities

The death toll from Florita rose to four on Wednesday after a farmer in Kalinga province was struck by a falling tree and a public school teacher in Camarines Sur province drowned.

Police said Francis Bitanga, 56, a resident of Barangay Wagud in Kalinga's Pinukpuk town, was pinned by a large tree during the heavy downpour. His body was recovered near a creek at 3 p.m. Tuesday.

In Camarines Sur's Bato town, Romeo Sison Jr., a teacher at San Roque High School, was pushing a bicycle through knee-deep flood-

water when he was swept away by a string current at 5:45 p.m. Tuesday.

The first two reported storm-related fatalities were Oliver Corpuz and his wife Myrna, both from Diffun, Quirino. The couple died after their bus tipped over while negotiating a slippery road in Naguilian, Isabela, on Tuesday.

Narciso Edillo, the Department of Agriculture (DA) regional director in Cagayan Valley, said an initial assessment showed that there was "minimal damage" to crops in the region.

But data from the Cagayan PDRRMO showed the initial cost of damage to agriculture in the province was pegged at P169 million. This covered 28,110 hectares of corn and rice farms in at least nine areas.

An initial report from the DA pegged the damage at P3.01 million, with the volume of production loss at 220 metric tons spanning 628 ha of agricultural land.

"Affected commodities include rice and high-value crops. These values are subject to validation. Additional damage and losses are expected in areas affected by Florita," the DA said.

In Isabela, floodwater also damaged corn and rice farms in the towns of Cabagan and Tumauni.

Corn farmer Alex Vilorio, 61, of Cabagan, said he would be forced to sell his rain-drenched crops at

a low price if only to recoup his losses.

Rosita Guzman, 61, another corn farmer in Cabagan, said she lost almost P100,000 to the floods.

Roads, bridges

According to Cagayan PDRRMO, at least nine bridges in Cagayan remained impassable as of Wednesday due to floods, while the discharge of excess water from Magat Dam had already been stopped.

In Baguio City, access to Camp 3 along Kennon Road in Baguio City was blocked by a landslide, according to the Department of Public Works and Highways. Also closed due to landslides were the Apayao-Ilocos Norte Road along Cabugao town in Apayao province, and the Tue section of the Mountain Province-Ilocos Sur Road.

In Central Luzon, at least 199 families remained in evacuation centers in the provinces of Zambales, Tarlac and Aurora, the Department of Social Welfare and Development regional office said.

As of Wednesday, 27 villages in Pampanga and 10 more in Zambales remained flooded. —WITH REPORTS FROM KRIXIA SUBINGSUBING, FRANCES MANGOSING, JORDEENE LAGARE, KIMBERLIE QUITASOL, MA. APRIL MIER-MANJARES, VINCENT CABREZA, TONETTE OREJAS, JOANNA ROSE AGLIBOT, ARMAND GALANG, CARMELA REYES-ESTROPE AND YOLANDA SOTELO INQ



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3K families evacuated in Cagayan due to floods; 'Florita' out

BY VICTOR REYES

ABOUT 3,000 families or some 9,000 individuals have been evacuated in Cagayan province due to flooding caused by severe tropical storm "Florita" which exited the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) yesterday morning, less than 24 hours after making landfall in adjacent Isabela province.

The Cagayan evacuees are from 131 barangays in 19 towns, and mostly from low-lying areas that get flooded whenever the Cagayan river overflows, said Ruelie Rapsing, head of the Cagayan provincial disaster risk reduction and management office.

Rapsing said some of the evacuees left their houses because of floods at the height of Florita while others, he said, were preemptively evacuated due to anticipated flooding in their areas.

"The advice given to them is they may go back to their houses once the flooding recedes in their barangays," he said.

Rapsing said officials of the af-

ected areas have been distributing relief goods to the evacuees. The provincial government has prepositioned food and non-food items in case the municipalities request for additional supplies, and personnel from the provincial health office are extending services to make sure no evacuee will get sick while in evacuation centers.

He also said no fatality was reported in the province and there were only "three minor injuries."

"They were injured due to fallen tree branches, just minor injuries, no serious injuries," he said.

Five roads and nine bridges were initially declared unpassable though most of them were already passable as of yesterday noon.

"These are secondary barangay roads only. These are not national highways. All national highways (in the province) are passable," said Rapsing.

He said power was down during the onslaught of Florita but it was restored a few hours later. He said

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• FROM

3K FAMILIES

communication lines in the province were not affected by Florita.

Rapsing said weather in the province improved yesterday although it was still windy with isolated rain showers. He the water level at Cagayan river was also going down.

ISABELA, ILOCOS NORTE

In Isabela, the provincial disaster risk reduction and management office said the number of evacuees was now down to six families or 24 persons as of yesterday.

The province on Tuesday reported 285 families or 1,067 families were evacuated.

There are also no reported deaths or injuries reported in Isabela.

In Ilocos Norte, provincial disaster risk reduction and management office chief Marcell Tabije reported a P3.6-million damage to agriculture.

Tabije also said two bridges were damaged but could not immediately say the estimated cost. He said all roads in the province are passable.

No houses were reported damaged in Ilocos Norte, added Tabije.

Tabije said there were residents

who evacuated due to the storm but are already back to their homes as weather has improved.

Michael Conag, information officer of the Office of Civil Defense of the the Cagayan Valley region, said some low-lying areas in Cagayan were still flooded as of yesterday. He said these areas are usually flooded when they experience rains.

"We have no isolated communities as of now. As per monitoring of the DPWH (Department of Public Works and Highways), all national roads (in the region) are passable," said Conag.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said 30 areas in Ilocos region and Bicol region were flooded but floods in 20 of the areas have subsided and receding in four areas. Only six areas remain flooded as of 8 a.m. yesterday.

NDRRMC spokesman Mark Timbal said five landslide incidents were reported in Ilocos region and Bicol region. "The landslides fortunately did not lead to casualties," he said.

The NDRRMC reported a lower number of affected population. It said only 1,344 families or 4,646 individuals were affected by Florita in the Ilocos and Cagayan

Valley regions and the Cordillera Administrative Region.

Of the number, 465 families or 1,529 are still displaced -- 311 families or 956 individuals are still housed in 19 evacuation centers and 154 families or 573 individuals are staying with their relatives and friends.

DAMAGE TO AGRI

Damage to the agriculture sector from Florita was placed at P3.01 million, according to the Department of Agriculture's Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Operations Center.

The DA attached agency said as of 7 AM yesterday (Aug. 24), Florita's total cost of damage is equivalent to 220 metric tons of goods tended by 310 farmers in 628 hectares of affected areas.

Bulk of Florita's recorded damage is from rice at P2.93 million, followed by high value crops at P81,000.

The DA said among assistance to be provided are rice, corn and assorted vegetable seeds; drugs and biologics for livestock and poultry; fingerlings and assistance to affected fisherfolk; credit from the Agricultural Credit Policy Council; and a quick response fund for the



FLOODS; FLOODING OUT

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rehabilitation of affected areas.

Meanwhile, the Department of Energy (DOE) said that all grid-connected power generation plants in the affected areas of Florita are under normal operations.

The National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) said its transmission lines and facilities in Northern Luzon are under normal operations despite the tripping of two 69-kilovolt lines that were immediately re-energized.

MONSOON RAINS

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said Florita exited the country at around 4 a.m. yesterday, about 18 hours after hitting land in Maconacon, Isabela.

In a bulletin issued at 5 a.m. yesterday, PAGASA maintained Signal No. 1 in 12 areas in northern Luzon even after the exit of Florita. The agency lifted the signal warning in the last bulletin for the storm issued at 11 a.m. yesterday.

As of 10 a.m. yesterday, Florita was some 490 km west of Cagayan and moving west northwestward at 25 kph.

PAGASA weather specialist Raymond Ordinario is Florita is

no longer affecting any part of the country and rains experienced in the western section of Luzon are caused by the southwest monsoon.

Ordinario also said no storm is expected to develop within the next three days.

Social Welfare Secretary Erwin Tulfo said the Department of Social Welfare and Development is also monitoring the situation in some areas in Mindanao, like Zamboanga and Sarangani, that were affected by flash floods brought about by monsoon rains.

Social Welfare Undersecretary Marco Bautista said P1.113 million worth of assistance have been distributed to the affected families -- P1.03 million from DSWD and P82,945 from local government units.

The government has on standby P1.759 billion worth of funds (P848.9 million) and stockpiles of family food packs (P290 million) and non-food items (P619.97 million).

PUMPING STATIONS

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority assured the public that its pumping stations in strategic areas in the metropolis are fully operational.

MMDA acting chairman Carlo

Dimayuga III made the assurance while inspecting the Libertad pumping station in Pasay City to check on its operations amid public concerns due to rains brought by Florita.

The MMDA operates 71 major and minor pumping stations in the metropolis.

Dimayuga was accompanied in his inspection by MMDA acting general manager Baltazar Melgar, who is the concurrent head of the agency's Flood Control and Sewerage Management Office, and other officials of the agency.

Dimayuga said aside from making sure that the pumping stations are fully operational, the MMDA has further intensified operations to clear waterways to prevent garbage from flowing all the way to the agency's pumping stations.

Early this month, the agency said unfinished pumping stations near the controversial Manila Bay dolomite beach is to be blamed for the flooding in portions of Taft Avenue during heavy downpour caused by southwest monsoon.

The pumping stations are the Remedios drainage, Estero de San Antonio, and Padre Faura drainage.

— *Jocelyn Montemayor, Jed Macapagal, and Ashzel Hachero*



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105 VILLAGES SUBMERGED

MAGUINDANAO UNDER STATE OF CALAMITY DUE TO FLOODS

By **Edwin O. Fernandez**
@InqNational

stayed in homes of relatives.

COTABATO CITY—The Maguindanao provincial board placed the province under a state of calamity on Wednesday due to a series of floods that submerged 105 villages in 15 of 36 towns.

Maguindanao Vice Gov. Bai Ainee Sinsuat said the declaration was approved during the Sangguniang Panlalawigan's regular session, upon the recommendation of the provincial disaster risk reduction and management council (PDRRMC).

Sinsuat said the floods displaced 46,922 families (234,610 people), half of whom remain in various evacuation centers.

Maguindanao is no stranger to the massive dislocation of people, being a major battleground of the Moro rebellion since 1972. But in the last five years, with a peace deal with Moro rebels in place, floods have replaced armed conflict as the major driver of displacement.

Prior to the province-wide calamity declaration, six towns were already placed under a state of calamity due to floods that began in late July.

Nasrullah Imam, Maguindanao provincial disaster risk reduction and management officer, said some of the displaced families chose not to take shelter in evacuation sites and

Crop losses

The calamity declaration came after disaster response and agriculture officials reported that at least P130.5 million worth of crops, mostly palay, had been destroyed by floods.

A report from the PDRRMC said torrential rains in the past three weeks submerged low-lying areas of Northern Kabuntalan, Sultan sa Barongis, Datu Piang, Mamasapano, Rajah Buayan, Datu Salibo, Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Pagalungan, Datu Montawal, Guindulungan, Talayan, Talitay, General SK Pendatun, Kabuntalan Mother and Datu Odin Sinsuat.

Ronjamin Maulana, Maguindanao director of the Bangsamoro Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, said the series of floods damaged palay, corn and other crops that have "no chances of recovery."

Damage to palay fields were estimated at P115.2 million; corn, P11.2 million; and others crops, P4.1 million.

Also on Wednesday, Balumol Kadiding, Datu Montawal disaster response officer, said all of the town's 11 villages were flooded after the Kabacan River overflowed due to heavy rains in Bukidnon and Cotabato provinces that swelled its tributaries.

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MAG-INGAT SA HAZARDS DULOT NG TAG-ULAN

TINATAWAG na safety and health hazards ang mga kondisyong maaaring magdulot ng aksidente at sakit.

Ngayong tag-ulan, kinalalang suriin at kilalanin ng tao ang mga hazard upang makontrol agad o makaiwas at maging laging ligtas.

Kabilang sa hazards na ito ang madulas na daan at hagdan; malakas na hangin; madilim na lagusan; baradong alulod, kanal o pusali; manhole na walang takip; naipong tubig sa ibabaw ng mga ginagawang istruktura tulad ng tulay, building o bahay; pag-apaw ng dam, ilog at iba pang daang-tubig; paglambot ng lupa sa bundok o kapatagan; at marami pang iba.

Mas mabuting ipagpaliban

muna ang paglabas ng bahay kapag malakas ang ulan. Kungmay kailangang gawin sa labas, iwasang maglakad ng mabilis o tumakbo dahil madulas ang mga daan.

Ugaliing humawak sa mga handrails kapag umaakyat o bumababa sa hagdanan at dagdag na solusyon dito ang pagsusuot ng anti-slip na sapatos.

Kung magmamaneho, inspeksyunin muna ang sasakyan bago gamitin. Sa mga motorcycle rider, isuot ng maaayos ang helmet. Marami na tayong obserbasyon na ipinapatong lang ng driver ang helmet sa kanyang ulo o isinasabit sa braso.

Ang masaklap pa, may ilang nagmamaneho na wa-



lang suot na helmet habang walang puknat sa kanilang unsafe act tulad ng over-speeding.

Kaya hindi nakapagtataka ang mas malalang injury kapag may aksidente.

Magsuot naman ng seat-belt ang driver at pasahero ng kotse, SUV's, truck, buses at iba pang vehicle. Sundin ang safety signs at huminto lamang sa ligtas na lugar kung may yadong malakas ang ulan at hangin.

I-report sa kinauukulan ang mga baradong alulod, kanal o pusali gayundin ang mga

manhole na walang takip. Gawan din ng aksyon ang mga naipong tubig at maduming lugar na maaaring pamahayan ng lamok tulad ng aedes mosquito na nagdudulot ng dengue fever.

Maging alerto sa posibleng landslide at storm surge. Ihandang ang pamilya sa emergency evacuation lalo na kung malapit ang bahay sa bundok, dagat, ilog at dam.

Alamin ang emergency hotline, lokasyon ng evacuation area at mga dapat dalhin sa paglikas in case of emergency.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
AND
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR EXPLORATION PERMIT OF JBB DRAGON MANAGEMENT MINING CORPORATION

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 21 of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Administrative Order (DAO) No. 2010-21¹, that **JBB Dragon Management Mining Corporation** with office address at **Purok 6 (Santa Filomena), Pasian, Monkayo, Davao de Oro**, has filed an application for Exploration Permit for the exploration of **gold and other associated minerals** particularly described as follows:

I. Tenement Application No.: **EXPA 000291-XI**

II. Date of Filing: **May 31, 2022**

III. Area Location: **Barangay of Pasian,
Municipality of Monkayo,
Province of Davao de Oro**

IV. Technical Description of the Area

Technical Description		
Corner	Latitude	Longitude
1	7° 57' 00.00"	126° 05' 00.00"
2	7° 57' 08.37"	126° 05' 00.00"
3	7° 57' 12.99"	126° 05' 06.04"
4	7° 57' 21.02"	126° 05' 07.20"
5	7° 57' 44.87"	126° 05' 01.54"
6	7° 58' 00.00"	126° 05' 00.00"
7	7° 58' 00.00"	126° 05' 10.05"
8	7° 57' 44.44"	125° 05' 30.55"
9	7° 57' 44.46"	126° 05' 39.28"
10	7° 57' 50.04"	126° 05' 47.95"
11	7° 57' 51.48"	126° 06' 00.29"
12	7° 57' 44.87"	126° 06' 22.49"
13	7° 57' 46.64"	126° 06' 30.00"
14	7° 57' 00.00"	126° 06' 30.00"
Area = 407.29 hectares		

Total Size of the Area: **407.29 hectares**, more or less

Sketch Plan: Please refer to "Annex A"

Exceptions:

The applied area shall be subject to Section 15 ("Areas Closed to Mining Applications"), Section 16 ("Ancestral Lands"), and Section 105 ("Entry to Lands") of DAO No. 2010-21, and Section 4 of DAO No. 2012-07², as amended, which provide, among others, that:

- The following areas are closed to mining applications: areas covered by valid and existing mining rights/applications, old growth/virgin forests, proclaimed watershed forest reserves, protected areas and other areas expressly prohibited by law;
- The following areas shall also be closed to mining applications except upon the written consent/prior clearance by the concerned government agency or private entity: areas near or under the public or private buildings, cemeteries, archeological and historical sites, bridges, highways, waterways, railroads, reservoirs, dams or other infrastructure projects, public or private works, including plantations or valuable crops;
- In cases of areas occupied by Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and/or covered by Certificate of Ancestral Domain/Land Claims/Titles (CADC/CALC/CADT/CAL), the Free and Prior Informed Consent shall be secured from the concerned IPs;
- In cases of surface owners, occupants and concessionaires that may be covered by the applied area, their permission shall be obtained prior to entry into their lands by the eventual Permittee for purposes of undertaking exploration therein;
- Prime agricultural lands, in addition to land covered by RA No. 6657 or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reforms Law of 1988, as amended, including plantations and areas devoted to valuable crops, and Strategic Agriculture and Fisheries Development Zones and fish refuge and sanctuaries declared as such by the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture;
- Tourism development areas, as identified in the national and local tourism development plans; and
- Other critical areas, island ecosystems, and Impact areas of mining as determined by current and existing mapping technologies, that the DENR may hereafter identify pursuant to existing laws, rules and regulations, such as but not limited to, the National Integrated Protected Areas System.

V. Duration of the Permit

Exploration Permit - shall have a term of two (2) years from the date of issuance thereof, renewable for like periods but not to exceed a total term of four (4) years for nonmetallic mineral exploration or six (6) years for metallic mineral exploration.

Total duration of the Mineral Agreement shall be twenty-five (25) years from the date of execution subject to renewal for another period not to exceed twenty-five (25) years under the same terms and conditions. The same is subject to changes mutually agreed upon by both parties, provided that, such terms and conditions are not inconsistent with law and do not prejudice the principle of sustainable development.

VI. Relinquishment

After the exploration period, the contractor/applicant is obliged to relinquish portions of the contract area that are not needed for the development and utilization.

VII. Extent of activities/operations to be undertaken

Research Work, Reconnaissance/Regional Survey or Studies, Semi-detailed Survey or follow-up studies, Topographic Survey, Detailed Survey and Subsurface Investigations will be conducted by the applicant.

Any and all persons having adverse claims, protests and/or opposition to the subject application are hereby notified that their adverse claims shall be filed directly within ten (10) days from the date of publication or from the last date of posting/radio announcement, with the Regional Office concerned or through any PENRO or CENRO concerned for filing in the MGB Regional Office No. XI for purposes of its resolution by the Panel or Arbitrators and/or the concerned appellate body(ies) pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act 7942 and its implementing rules and regulations. Adverse claims protests or opposition should be accomplished in accordance with Sections 203 and 204 of DAO No. 2010-21, and a copy thereof shall be furnished to the applicant by the adverse claimant.

For further particulars, please course your inquiries to the Regional Director of Mines and Geosciences Bureau Regional Office No. XI located at 2nd Floor EMB-MGB-XI Bldg., 3rd Avenue corner V. Guzman Street, Brgy. 27-C, Davao City.

By the Authority of the Regional Director:

(Sgd.) **BRENICE ANN M. GENDEVE-CASTILLO**
Chief, Mine Management Division

¹ Providing for a Consolidated Department of Environment and Natural Resources Administrative Order for the implementing rules and regulations of Republic Act No. 7942, otherwise known as the "Philippine Mining Act of 1995"

² Rules and regulations to implement Executive Order No. 79 dated 06 July 2012 entitled: Institutionalizing and implementing reforms in the Philippine Mining Sector providing policies and guidelines to ensure environmental protection and responsible mining in the utilization of mineral resources

(PDI - Aug. 25, 2022)