

30 August 2022, Tuesday



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NEWS ALERTS

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



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EDITORIAL

Addressing climate change

THERE is a blue sky behind climate change thick clouds.

Very recently, the government of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. geared up, following up on his pledge on July 25 during his first State of the Nation Address, and scaled up its response to cushion the impact of global warming.

Malacanang said that climate change, which refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns, and its effects are major issues the 64-year-old President Marcos will address throughout his six-year term ending in June 2028.

Simply put, "climate change" means a change of climate attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.

Malacanang said proof of the government's commitment is the allocation of P453 billion for climate change adaptation and mitigation programs in the 2023 National Expenditure Program.

In his letter to the House of Representatives before it started deliberations on the proposed national budget, the President said the country needed to "increase capacity building for natural disaster resiliency" and "disaster-proof planning of our communities."

Malacanang said proof of the government's commitment is the allocation of P453 billion for climate change adaptation and mitigation programs in the 2023 National Expenditure Program

Also recently the Philippines and Qatar agreed to bolster their partnership for climate change mitigation, with both sides agreeing to focus cooperation on knowledge and technology sharing to minimize the consequences of the global environmental issue.

The Philippine side, as a state party to the UNFCCC (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change), Kyoto Protocol, and Paris Agreement renewed its commitment to fulfill its Nationally Determined Contribution to reduce by 75 percent the country's green-

house gas emissions.

Foreign Undersecretary Ma. Theresa Lazaro and Qatar Secretary General Ahmed Hassen Al Hammadi reviewed this month the progress of the two countries' bilateral relations, including cooperation in the areas of culture, tourism, education, sports, trade, investment, and the economy.

It is heartening to note that both sides also discussed opportunities and ways to enhance and expand partnerships, as well as exchange views on climate change mitigation and regional and international issues.

During his first State of the Nation Address, President Marcos Jr. outlined his plan to increase the country's use of renewables as part of the country's climate agenda.

Although one of the top gas exporting countries in the Middle East, Qatar had repeatedly affirmed its commitment to support the transition to low-carbon energy and backed global efforts to assist countries most vulnerable to climate change.

The Joint Consultation Meeting, formalized with the signing of a 2019 memorandum of understanding, will serve as the primary dialogue mechanism with Qatar at the vice-ministerial level.

The Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted the inaugural meeting in Doha, with the second expected to be held in Manila next year.

Now we look up and see a sign of hope in an otherwise negative situation.



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The Manila Times

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Climate and pandemic alarmists engage in manipulation of fear

First
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LEST
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OBSERVER

YEN
MAKABENTA

Marcos administration blindly adopt costly and goofy programs to control climate change and prevent epidemics, I want to call attention to a new concern voiced by international media about how these issues are being fanned today through the overt manipulation of public fear and the hype of the alleged dangers, in order to promote radical reform and secure financing.

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MAKABENTA FROM A1

Climate and pandemic alarmists engage in manipulation of fear

Fearmongering is on the march, and people are being scared silly by what various media are witlessly spreading.

Public panic is a very bad guide for policymaking, and governments are wisely warned about the danger from this to national well-being.

Fearmongering

Fearmongering, or scaremongering, is a form of manipulation that causes fear by using exaggerated rumors of impending danger (Wikipedia).

According to evolutionary psychology, humans have a strong impulse to pay attention to danger because awareness of dangers has been important for survival throughout our evolutionary history. The effect is amplified by cultural evolution when the news media cater to people's appetite for news about dangers.

Fearmongering can have strong psychological effects, which may be intended or unintended. One hypothesized effect is mean world syndrome in which people perceive the world as more dangerous than it really is. Fearmongering can make people fear the wrong things, and use too many resources to avoid rare and unlikely dangers while more probable dangers are ignored.

Manipulation in the record

On January 7 this year, the Issues and Insights (I&I) website published a hard-hitting commentary entitled "What climate scare and pandemic fearmongering have in common."

"Climate alarmists have said it's necessary to ratchet up the fear about global warming to get the public's attention. It's the same story with the coronavirus outbreak. Authorities wanted to strike fear in the people, so they exaggerated the lethality of a virus that is deadly to only a narrow demographic segment," it said.

I&I made a thorough review of how the scare campaign has been propagated in the media, and asked readers to compare what is in the record:

Global warming, 1988. "We have to offer up scary scenarios, make simplified, dramatic statements, and make little mention of any doubts we might have," about global warming, said Stanford climatologist Stephen Schneider.

Pandemic, 2020. Britain's Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Behavior warned "that ministers needed to increase 'the perceived level of personal threat' from Covid-19 because 'a substantial number of people still do not feel sufficiently personally threatened,'" the *London Telegraph* reported last year in its coverage of "A state of fear. How the UK government weaponized fear during the Covid-19 pandemic," by Laura Dodsworth.

Global warming, 2014. The academics who wrote a paper published in the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* said their article "provides a rationale for" the tendency of "news media and some pro-environmental organizations" to accentuate or even exaggerate "the damage caused by climate change."

"We find," they wrote, "that the information manipulation has an instrumental value."

Pandemic, 2020. The Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Behavior recommends the perception of fear regarding the coronavirus needed to "be increased among those who are complacent, using hard-hitting emotional messaging."

Global warming, circa 2001. University of Alabama in Huntsville climatologist John Christy, lead author on the 2001 United Nations' climate report, had lunch with three European colleagues who talked about "how they were trying to make the report so dramatic that the United States would just have to sign the Kyoto Protocol."

Pandemic, 2021. The *New York Times*' "overblown" warnings "must be viewed in context of the Gray Lady's wider lock-down-the-world agenda," says the *New York Post*'s Steve Cuozzo. "The paper rarely reports unqualified hopeful news about taming the virus."

Global warming, 2004. NASA scientist James Hansen, who is the godfather of climate alarmists, wrote in *Scientific American* that an "emphasis on extreme scenarios may have been appropriate at one time, when the public and decision-makers were relatively unaware of the global warming issue." In the next sentence, he added that, "now, however, the need is for demonstrably objective climate-forcing scenarios consistent with what is realistic under current conditions."

Pandemic, 2021. "I did a simple Google search of 'recent coronavirus news reports,'" says psychologist Ilisa Kaufman in *Psychology Today*. "The first random five headlines had the words, 'death toll rising,' 'new infections,' and 'thousands of Covid cases, hundreds of deaths.' Those were the first five. Also, it is May 2021, a full 14 months since the beginning of the pandemic. Absolutely nothing reassuring, hopeful, or non-alarming." She goes on to suggest "some ways to help correct or prevent mental health consequences from the 'fear porn' industry."

We're not fully convinced the lockdowns were conspiratorial dry runs to accustom the world to future restrictions handed down under the guise of "fighting" global warming. But as we said when the lockdowns were still relatively new, "observant and cunning politicians have gone to school"

and were thinking over the possibility they could "use the pretext of a climate emergency to control Americans and break the back of capitalism."

The chilling fact here to be afraid of — is not of a falling sky or a virus that we hope is on the wane, but of those eager to stir up dread and anxiety so they can exercise the raw power they covet."

Covid-19 and lockdowns

This month on August 26, I&I made an acute warning about lockdowns:

"For over about two-and-one-half years, Covid-19 has killed a little more than 1 million Americans and another 5.5 million in the rest of the world. It's a grim toll. At least its deadly effects will decrease as it becomes endemic."

The same can't be said for the lockdowns. Their poison will be killing victims for years.

A recent article from the *London Telegraph* posted in Yahoo News tells the story of 'experts' believing 'decisions taken by the government in the earliest stages of the pandemic may now be coming back to bite.'

"Policies that kept people indoors, scared them away from hospitals and deprived them of treatment and primary care are finally taking their toll," said the *Telegraph*.

For more than three months, excess deaths in England and Wales have averaged around 1,000 a week, and none are due to Covid.

It's not as if the decision-makers weren't warned. Robert Dingwall, a Nottingham Trent University professor and a government adviser during the pandemic, told the *Telegraph* that 'the picture seems very consistent with what some of us were suggesting from the beginning.'

On our side of the Atlantic, 'from April 2020 through at least the end of 2021, Americans died from non-Covid causes at an average annual rate 97,000 in excess of previous trends, says a National Bureau of Economic Research paper.

It further contends that 'excess mortality continues into calendar year 2022,' though it's safe to say they will persist well past that date.

The lockdowns have not only been deadly, they brought economic catastrophe (which has its own lethality — economists even have a multiplier they use to calculate deaths due to unemployment); an agonizing mental health crisis; delayed child development; and possibly irreversible educational losses."

Wreck of global warming narrative

Last year, I&I called the global warming narrative a wreck. It said the climate alarmists' narrative "continues to crash into reality."

"To start with, how do they explain that three new studies show warming from 2001 to 2019 'was driven by increases in absorbed solar radiation, not human emissions'? Sure, the eco-activists will do what they always do: obfuscate, dodge, change the subject and call out the 'science deniers.'

They will do the same when confronted with the news that the last six months were the coldest on record in Antarctica. Just one of those places in a warming world, they say, where it happens to be more frigid than usual.

'As Antarctica holds about 90 percent of all the ice on the planet, what happens in Antarctica will have major effects on the rest of the world,' Discovering Antarctica, a partnership of organizations that includes the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office, said some years ago.

More recently, we were told that 'Antarctica is headed for a climate tipping point by 2060, with catastrophic melting if carbon emissions aren't cut quickly.'

Maybe the record-breaking winter in Antarctica is simply an anomaly on the way to that 'tipping point.' But Richard Lindzen, professor emeritus of atmospheric sciences at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has noted that across the world 'temperatures at any given location' are 'almost as likely to be cooling as warming.' So while one region is warming (or cooling), another somewhere is cooling (or warming). It's useless to argue otherwise. Of course, if Antarctica had just gone through its warmest winter on record, the news would be filled with stories of how it's irrefutable evidence of impending doom.

The alarmist narrative has also been beaten back by the facts, as the hysteria about 'sea level, hurricanes and other weather extremes,' is 'based on the illegitimate cherry-picking of starting dates for the trends,' says Lindzen.

Furthermore, the widely accepted, often-used assertion that says 97 percent of scientists agree that the climate and our earthly environment are in trouble due to warming is a blatant case of misinformation. Lindzen calls it 'a bizarre fantasy' concocted through 'various shenanigans.'

The global warming scare is more than three decades old, yet the disaster that's been forecast on a nearly daily basis since the late 1980s has yet to arrive. That's the reality, that's the brick wall that the alarmists keep banging their heads into. That's the fact they refuse to acknowledge.

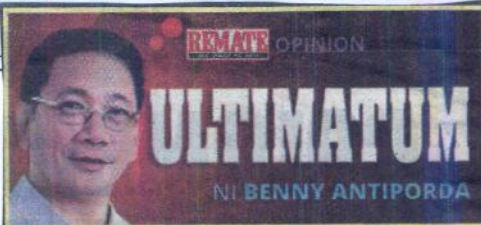
No wonder, the fearmongers have replaced the term 'global warming' with 'climate change.' And now they are testing a shift from 'climate change' to 'climate emergency.'

yenobserver@gmail.com



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REMATE OPINION

ULTIMATUM

NI BENNY ANTIPORDA

BAHAY NG MAYAYAMAN AT TURISTA SANHI NG BAHA

LUMALABAS ngayon ang halaga ng salita ng mga mamamayan ukol sa mga nagaganap na baha.

Sa Pakistan na binabaha at may mahigit nang 1,000 patay, 700,000 bahay na nawasak at 30 milyong apektado, lumalabas ang malalakas na paniniwala ukol sa baha.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Siyempre pa, nariryan ang environmentalists na nagsasabing ang pag-iinit ng mundo dahil sa polusyon sa kalangitan ang isang malaking dahilan.

Sa pag-iinit umano ng mundo, nararanasan na ang abnormal na sobrang malalakas na bagyo at matagalang pag-ulan at sa kabila naman nito, ang sobrang pag-iinit ng kapaligiran at pagkatuyo nito.

Anila, malinaw na malinaw na nagaganap ang mga ito.

Sa China at Europa, ramdam na ramdam ang pag-iinit ng mundo kaya natutuyo na ang mga ilog, kasabay ng malakihang mga sunog sa mga lungsod at kagubatan.

Sa Pakistan, India at Afghanistan, at maging sa mahal kong Pinas, nariryan naman ang mga pagbaha mula sa matagalan at malalakas na ulan at bagyo ngayon tag-ulan.

Parehong nakalilikha ang pagbabago ng klimang binubuo ng mga pag-iinit ng mundo at pagluha ng ulan ng kalangitan ng mga hindi masukat na perwisyo sa buhay, ari-arian at maging sa kalayaan ng mga tao na mamuhay nang normal.

BAHAY MAYAYAMAN, PANTURISTA

Sa Pakistan na dinadaluhong ng delubyo, kumbinsido sila na totoo ang climate change.

Saksi na rin kasi sila sa pagkatunaw ng mga niebe sa kanilang bansa bilang epekto ng pag-iinit ng mundo na nagbubunga ng pagbaha.

Subalit, mga Bro, may sinasabi silang napakahalaga rin.

Ang mga bahay ng mga mayayaman at imprastrakturang panturista, gaya ng mga hotel, ang malaki ring dahilan ng grabeng pagbaha sa kanila.

Anak ng tokwa, itinuturo nila ang mga hotel at bahay na pag-aari ng mga mayayaman at dayuhan bilang harang sa daloy ng mga tubig ulan at niebe.

Nakatayo umano ang marami sa mga ito sa mga pampang o tabing ilog para naman masabi na napakagandang tanawin ang mga ilog ng mga turista at mayayaman.

Ngunit nagsisilibi naman ang mga istrukturang nabanggit at gusali ng pamahalaan na harang sa pagdaloy ng tubig kaya pagdating ng mga tubig-baha at niebe, lumolobo ang mga tubig sa mga ilog.

Dito na lumalawak ang mga baha dahil hindi na kaya ng mga ilog na lamunin ang mga tubig-baha mula sa ulan at natutunaw na niebe.

Kita n'yo, mga Bro?

SA PILIPINAS?

Partikular sa mga istruktura at imprastruktura na ginagawa, marami sa mga ilog ng Metro Manila at mga karatig na lalawigan ang patay na dahil pinagtatayuan ang mga ito ng mga bahay, pabrika at wala sa maayos na plano na mga proyekto mismo ng pamahalaan.

Kung puntahan natin ang mga senior citizen at hayaan silang magkwento ukol sa paligid, kaya nilang ituro ang mga dating ilog na ngayo'y patay o sakal na sakal na at isa itong malaking dahilan ng mga pagbaha dahil wala nang aagusan ng tubig patungong Manila Bay at Laguna de Bay.

At ganito rin sa ibang lugar ng bansa.

Panahon nang bigyang-buhay talaga ang kalikasan.

Anomang reklamo o puna, iparating lang sa www.remate.ph o i-text sa 0921-4303333.



Quesejoda



NI BUTCH M. QUEJADA

Gasolina, krudo at climate change

ILAN taon na lang at baka wala ng mga krudo at gasolina na makukuha galing ibang bansa kapag nagbigay hudyat na ipatigil na ang supply na ito.

Bakit?

Mukhang may planong ipagbawal ang pagbebenta ng mga kotseng pinatatakbo ng gasolina at diesel para mabawasan ang carbong emission na nakakatulong sa pag-init ng mundo at pagbabago ng klima.

Sabi nga, sa Hainan, China ay uumpisahan na ito para huwag nang gumamit ng mga nasabing produkto sa kanilang mga sasakyan.

Ika nga, mga e-cars na lamang ang ibebenta o gagamitin ng madlang people doon.

Ano sa palagay ninyo ganito rin kaya ang mangyari sa Philippines my Philippines?
Abangan.



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Mining bill expected to raise gov't revenue but poses risk to FDI growth

By **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jacson** Reporter

THE proposed new fiscal regime to govern the mining sector is expected to strengthen the position of responsible miners and benefit the government, which will receive a fairer share of the revenue generated by the industry, analysts said, though miners warned that investors may elect to go elsewhere as a result.

"The new fiscal regime may benefit the government more as it aims for simplification and fair share, more so as policy makers look to achieve fiscal consolidation over the course of the several years without necessarily burdening other revenue sources," Security Bank Corp.'s Chief Economist Robert Dan J. Roces said in an e-mail. "As such, this will help manage and stabilize the high fiscal and debt-to-GDP ratios on top of economic recovery," he added.

The House of Representatives' Committee on Ways and Means last week approved a new fiscal regime which raises the tax rate on the mining sector to 51% from 38%.

The measure aims to increase government revenue from mining to P37.5 billion in its first full year of implementation.

Under the proposal, a royalty of 5% will be imposed on the market value of gross output of large-scale mining operations.

A minimum government share of 60% of net mining revenue, including all taxes and charges, will also be imposed on all mining operations.

A 10% export tax will also be levied on the market value of mineral ore exports to encourage domestic ore processing.

cautious and prudent to ensure that we are getting the most benefit from this industry. These are our natural resources. Once mined, we can never get them back so maximizing benefits for our country should also be a major consideration," she said in an e-mail.

She said the Philippines should export high-value products which have already been processed.

"In most cases, the products we export have low value because the important processing steps are done abroad. So, the income realized here in the Philippines is also very low which, in turn, means low government share and taxes. Then, we import those same products after they have been processed at a very high value. Encouraging the processing to be done here in the Philippines will also transfer the much-needed technology to our workers and skilled laborers," she added.

Tax Management Association of the Philippines President Fulvio D. Dawilan said that the measure will be good for both the environment and the economy.

"The accrual of the royalties paid by large-scale metallic mining operations into a Natural Resource Trust Fund is a new concept. The fund redounds to the benefit of the localities affected by the mining operations. There are therefore clear benefits to the affected local government units, including the use of the funds for the rehabilitation of abandoned mines," he said in an e-mail.

"Also, the requirement for the small-scale miners to get tax identification (numbers) as a requisite for registration with the Mines and Geosciences Bureau and Mining Boards will place them on the radar of the tax authorities. This will require them to pay their fair share of taxes on the income generated from their mining activities," he added.

The bill also proposes a government system for the public disclosure of all mining tax and revenue data in the extractive industries value chain.

Eleanor L. Roque, head of the Tax Advisory and Compliance Division of P&A Grant Thornton, said that fiscal rationalization will promote transparency and level the playing field.

"It also minimizes the discretionary powers on the taxes and charges that can be imposed on a particular contract. I think it will encourage responsible and conscientious miners. Although mining as an industry is potentially a huge source of revenue for the government, we should still be very

Mr. Dawilan noted that assigning royalty collection duties to the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) is a new move.

"This is correct as in fact the royalties paid by mining contractors are actually taxes which should be under the jurisdiction of the BIR," he added.

Stock market analysts said that the new fiscal regime will likely not impact investor appetites.

Mercantile Securities Corp. Head Trader Jeff Radley C. See said in a Viber message that the mining industry anticipated these changes as the government needed more money.

FULL STORY



Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or by typing the link bit.ly/Mining083022



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Water lack worsening food insecurity—WB

BY CAI U. ORDINARIO
@caiordinario

AS the Philippines struggles to address supply issues of key commodities, another major commodity—water—is also expected to present serious, urgent problems, according to an expert from the World Bank.

In the Washington-based lender's blog, World Bank Water Global Practice Global Director Saroj Kumar Jha—citing estimates made by the International Monetary Fund (IMF)—said water demand will outstrip supply by 40 percent in less than a decade.

Globally, Jha said 2 billion people still lack safe drinking water and 3.6 billion people are still in need of safe sanitation.

In the Philippines, the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) said 57 million Filipinos have to fetch water for their families from communal pipes or springs or wells up to 250 meters away.

"Water is a basic human right—but it is also a finite resource. Water scarcity is a growing problem, with one in four people living in water-scarce areas," Jha said. "The global water crisis undermines our ability to produce food, protect livelihoods, and build strong economies."

Jha said water security is far from being realized in many countries, with an estimated \$150 billion needed each year to deliver universal safe water and sanitation globally.

P100-B needed

IN the Philippines, the Neda said, the country needs to invest P100 billion annually between 2020 and 2030 to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The total price tag to improve the country's water and sanitation situation is P1.1 trillion by 2030.

The scale of the needed investments, Jha said, cannot be addressed by just one institution alone. These efforts require greater collaboration between government, businesses, and civil society.

"The scale of investment needed requires the involvement of the private sector and innovative financing mechanisms to complement limited government resources,

transforming efficiency and resilience in water-dependent sectors such as agriculture, energy, and industry—and in urban water supply," Jha said.

In the Philippines, one of the primary solutions is to create the Department of Water which aims to address the fragmented management of the country's water resources.

There are at least 30 agencies related to the creation of policy and regulation for the water sector. This includes the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), the National Water Resources Board (NWRB), and various local water districts, among others.

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Water...

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Neda said the creation of an apex body for water policy and a

Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC), would be ideal for the water sector.

This will not only create order in the management of a very important natural resource but also



'Florita' damage reaches P500M

BY FRANCIS EARL CUETO

THE National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) on Monday said that damage to infrastructure due to tropical depression "Florita" has reached P500 million.

According to the latest situation report from the NDRRMC, the damage to infrastructure in

the Ilocos Region and Cagayan Valley is now at P498,980,000. They are from 102 infrastructures

in the said regions.

The majority of them come from Ilocos with 93 infrastructure, amounting to P474,580,000.

Cagayan Valley had nine damaged infrastructure worth P24,400,000.

The reported damage according to the Department of Agriculture has reached P3,414,672 in the Ilocos Region's agriculture sector due to Florita.

The National Irrigation Administration reported P10,850,000 damage in Calabarzon.

Meanwhile, Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) and Bicol Region, and three bridges in Ilocos Region and Cagayan Valley also remained impassable.

A total of 72 houses were also affected by the storm — 47 in Cagayan Valley, 24 in Ilocos Region, and one in the CAR.

Out of the said number, 68 were partially damaged, and four were totally damaged.

Some 129,768 individuals or 31,936 families from 486 villages in the Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, CAR, and the National Capital Region (NCR) were affected by the storm.

Meanwhile, 286 displaced families or 993 individuals are

still inside 20 evacuation centers.

The NDRRMC also said that the reported death toll remained at three and the number of reported injured individuals was at four.

A total of P7,701,996.21 worth of assistance was already provided to affected individuals in the Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley, Calabarzon, Bicol Region, CAR and NCR.



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Sarangani drafts reso to declare Mount Busa local conservation area

BY MANUEL T. CAYON
@awimailbox
Mindanao Bureau Chief

DAVAO CITY—Sarangani province has drafted a provincial board resolution to delineate Mount Busa as a local conservation area (LCA) and community consultations are being conducted in villages around Sarangani's last ecological frontier.

Board Member Irish Louie Arnao, chairman of the Committee on Natural Resources, Environmental Protection, and Energy, said the resolution strengthens its protection and conservation measures from destructive human activities, such as small and large-scale mining, timber-poaching, wildlife hunting, illegal logging, "kaingin" or slash-and-burn farming, collection of wildlife species or byproducts, land conversion, and others.

According to the Environmental Conservation and Protection Center (ECPC), Mount Busa is a vast mountain range that covers 107,275 hectares in the town of Kiamba, but also covers Maitum and Maasim in Sarangani, and those of Lake Sebu and Tboli in South Cotabato. It has a thick and mossy forests and the mountain is considered the western watershed in Mindanao.

ECPC Executive Director Cornelio Ramirez, said the legislation

was urgent to declare Mount Busa an LCA "because the flora and fauna resources in Mount Busa are vulnerable, irreplaceable, and are critically endangered species."

He emphasized that preserving Mount Busa "is protecting the critically-endangered Philippine Eagle, rufous hornbill or kalaw, Mindanao flying lizard, dwarf reed snake, Philippine tarsier, orchid species like 'waling-waling,' and some potentially new frog species."

Ramirez said the declaration of Mount Busa as an LCA should "add more teeth to our protection efforts and enforcement of various environmental laws."

The resolution states that within 90 days from its approval, the LCA Management Council would create a technical working group of various stakeholders to formulate an LCA Management Plan for Mount Busa.

Public hearings for the draft provincial resolution were conducted in Maitum, Kiamba, and Maasim on August 25 and 26. Invited to these community gatherings are representatives from tribal groups, government and nongovernment organizations.

The provincial information office said the public hearings also became an opportunity for the ECPC-Sarangani to widen its education and information reach on protecting Mount Busa.



House bill eyes Arayat as tourist destination

Pampanga's "mystical mountain" Mt. Arayat may soon be officially recognized as one of the country's tourist destinations.

This developed after the House committee on tourism approved House Bill 181, which seeks to declare Mt. Arayat as a tourist destination.

The proposal was authored by Deputy Speaker and Pampanga 3rd district Rep. Aurelio Gonzales Jr.

Gonzales said the House approved the measure during the previous 18th Congress, but the Senate failed to pass it into law.

He told the committee that Mt. Arayat continues to attract nature lovers because of its rich biodiversity.

Gonzales cited the recent discovery of a new plant species, *pyrostria arayataensis*.

"It is also home to Arayat National Park. Located in Barangay San Juan Baño, Mt. Arayat's cool springs and green foliage offer a family-friendly resting place perfect for swimming and other activities," he said.

Mountain climbers from Metro Manila prefer Mt. Arayat because of its proximity to the National Capital Region.

Gonzales said Arayat is an integral part of the Kapampangan culture and home of Apung Sinukuan, a local god revered for teaching the art of agriculture and metallurgy to ancient Kapampangans.

He clarified that Mt. Arayat is neither fully developed nor prepared to receive the influx of tourists.

Gonzales said unregulated developments around Arayat endanger its ecology and the people, whose livelihood depends on the mountain.

The proposal requires the Department of Tourism to coordinate with the Department of Public Works and Highways as well as the provincial government in developing Mt. Arayat. — Sheila Crisostomo

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NEWS IN BRIEF

■ SMC completes ₱1-B Tullahan River cleanup

San Miguel Corporation (SMC) has completed its two-year, ₱1-billion cleanup of the Tullahan River, President and CEO Ramon S. Ang announced in his Facebook post on Saturday, August 27. "In just over two years, we've reached our target of removing 1.12 million metric tons of wastes from the river, deepening and widening it, to allow water to flow freely into the Manila Bay," he noted. "This will help mitigate flooding in nearby communities especially during the rainy season," according to Ang. "We still have a lot of work ahead, especially with our ongoing Pasig River cleanup and soon, the cleanup of the rivers in Bulacan," he added. "But for now, we're just extremely proud of what this partnership with the government and other stakeholders achieved." SMC fully-funded the Tullahan River project and undertook it in cooperation with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). "We are another step closer to realizing the dream of having truly clean and healthy rivers that can be enjoyed and appreciated by future generations," the SMC President concluded. (Emmie V. Abadilla)



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7-YEAR-OLD COMPLAINT

FISHERS PROTEST CONSTRUCTION OF SEA WALL IN CEBU TOWN

CEBU CITY—A group of fishermen has sought the help of an environment nongovernmental organization to address their concern over the construction of structures within the coastal easement zones in a village of Medellin town in northern Cebu after failing to get the government to act on their seven-year-old complaint.

Merdivina Tuico, the lead complainant, said some people who owned beach houses and establishments in Barangay Daanlungsod constructed sea walls and have closed the access to the sea, to the detriment of fishermen and other residents in the area.

“Our shores were heavily damaged because of the structures that were put up by the lot owners,” Tuico said in a statement sent to Oceana Philippines, a nonprofit ocean conservation organization.

“We, fishermen, as well as those who want to visit the shores to breathe fresh air no longer have clear access to the shores,” she added.

Tuico said they had raised this concern since 2016 and personnel of the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources

Office had visited the place in the same year but the agency had not presented any result yet.

“Fishermen no longer have an area where they could put their pumpboats. We hope our appeal will not fall on deaf ears,” she said.

Under Presidential Decree No. 1067 or the Water Code of the Philippines, building of structures of any kind within a zone of three meters in urban areas is prohibited as this area is subject to the easement of public use in the interest of recreation, navigation, floatage, fishing and salvage.

Easement zones are the minimum distance from bodies of water that should remain clear of private structures.

Not heard

Analiza Rescuera, another complainant, called on the government to listen to the plea of fishers.

“We, ordinary people, have not been heard. Are the laws of the sea intended for the rich only? We hope there will be access roads leading to the shores and a place where fishermen can park their boats,” she said.

—ADOR VINCENT MAYOL INQ



TITLE:

Salary hike for gov't employees eyed in 2024

THE MARCOS administration may consider another round of annual salary increases for government employees starting 2024 as the scope of the Salary Standardization Law (SSL) is only until 2023, the economic managers said.

"The national budget proposal for next year includes an appropriation for a study on the need and level of the next round of salary increases in 2024 onward," Finance Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno told reporters on Friday.

Budget Secretary Amenah F. Pangandaman said the Governance Commission for Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations has been given a budget to conduct a study for the next SSL.

"The budget for the study of the next salary standardization will amount to P49.5 million," she said during the Development Budget Coordination Committee's (DBCC) briefing for the House Committee on Appropriations on Friday.

Of the proposed P5.268-trillion national expenditure plan for 2023, P1.631 trillion or 31% of the total is earmarked for personnel services. This is 16.1% higher than this year's allocation for personnel services.

Mr. Diokno said that part of the study would assess the sustainability of further salary hikes amid the tighter fiscal space and plans to rightsize the bureaucracy.

Ms. Pangandaman told lawmakers that the government can renew the individual contracts of an estimated 150,000 contract of service (COS) and job order (JO) workers in the National Government, and even engage new services under similar contracts, until Dec. 31, 2022.

"Since said deadline is already approaching, the DBM conducted focus group discussions this month with departments and agencies to check their readiness regarding the implementation of said government contracts starting 2023," Ms. Pangandaman said.

"However, all of them are requesting extension on the engagement of COS and JO for about two [to] three years in order for them to have ample time to absorb their existing qualified JO and COS as necessary. The DBM will have a meeting with the office of the chair of the CoA (Commission on Audit) regarding said proposal of the different departments and agencies," she added.

Salary, S1/10

Salary,

from S1/1

At the same briefing, ACT Teachers Party-list Rep. Francisca "France" L. Castro expressed support for the salary increase, citing how the purchasing power of Filipinos is being eroded due to faster inflation.

Inflation quickened to 6.4% in July, the fourth consecutive month it exceeded the central bank's 2-4% target band. The seven-month average stood at 4.7%, reflecting the impact of soaring transport, fuel, and food expenses.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael L. Ricafort also cited inflation as a probable reason for the proposed adjustment, while noting the hike in daily minimum wage hikes in various regions this year.

"The adjustments, just like in recent years, are also partly meant to attract more talent, in view of more competitive salaries in the private sector and also versus much higher salaries abroad for some workers who are attracted from the government," Mr. Ricafort added in a Viber message.

Mr. Ricafort said the government should also consider the limited funds, especially with the debt incurred during the pandemic.

"Government service is an important part of nation building. As far as proper compensation, people in government should be top of mind in terms of keeping up with high inflation and its effects. Note, however, that higher salaries mean more costs and subsequent critical fiscal decisions have to be made," said UnionBank of the Philippines, Inc. Chief Economist Ruben Carlo O. Asuncion in a Viber message.

The SSL was signed by then President Rodrigo R. Duterte in 2019, the fifth law to date which implemented an increase in the annual salary of government workers.

The law's implementation schedule is Jan. 1 of every year until 2023, covering all personnel, whether they are "regular, casual, or contractual; appointive or elective; and on full-time or part-time basis." — **Diego Gabriel C. Robles**



Bagyong Gardo papasok sa bansa ngayong Miyerkoles

POSIBLENG tuluyan nang makapasok sa bansa ang bagyong Gardo ngayong Miyerkoles, ayon sa ulat ng Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

Batay sa pagtaya ng Japan Meteorological Agency, papasok sa Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) ang Severe Tropical Storm Hinnamnor bukas

hanggang Huwebes at tatawagin itong bagyong Gardo.

Gayunman, sinabi ni weather specialist Aldczar Aurelio na posibleng manatili lang ito sa dagat at hindi tumama sa lupa bago tuluyang lumabas ng bansa sa Sabado.

Bagama't hindi ito tatama sa lupa, palalakasin naman aniya ito ng hanging habagat na magpapaulan sa karlu-rang bahagi ng Luzon.



Bata sinakmal ng buwaya sa Palawan

Isang bata ang masusi pa ngayong pinaghahanap matapos sakmalin at tangayin ng buwaya, kamakalawa, sa Brgy. Canipaan, Rizal, Palawan.

Ayon sa ulat, bandang alas-10:30 ng umaga nang maligo sa ilog ang bata kasama ang mga kaibigan.

Ngunit pagdating ng alas-5:00 ng hapon ay nakita umanong sakmal na ng buwaya ang paslit at tinangay palayo.

Noong 2018, lumabas umano sa pag-aaral ng *Crocodylus Porosus Incorporated* na 33 buwaya ang naninirahan sa naturang ilog kaya nagkaroon ng panukalang gawin itong crocodile sanctuary.

Hindi umano ito naisasakatuparan dahil may ilang kondisyon na dapat ikonsidera gaya ng pagpapaalis sa mga naninirahan malapit sa ilog.
(Issa Santiago)



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Rules-based solution urged on China sea row

BY RAYMOND AFRICA

SEN. Francis Tolentino yesterday said any settlement reached with China on the West Philippine Sea issue should be rules-based.

He made the remark after Minister Liu Jianchao, of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China said his country is "ready to continue" proper dialogue in a bid to find a "proper settlement" of the territorial and maritime dispute.

"It should be rules-based. it should not stray away from the arbitral ruling and should be anchored on the general principles of international law," Tolentino said.



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JUN 17 2022

DENR ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
NO.: 2022- 14

SUBJECT : MANUAL OF AUTHORITIES ON
FINANCIAL MATTERS

In the interest of the service and in order to align the delegated authorities of certain DENR Officials with the existing organizational structure, the Manual of Authorities on Financial Matters is hereby prescribed .

The attached Manual shall enhance transparency/accountability and serve as reference to expedite the processing/approval of documents pertaining to financial matters. It shall provide guidance to Officials and employees on the delegated authorities at the Central Office, Bureaus, and Regional/Field Offices.

This Order shall take effect immediately and supersedes DENR Administrative Order No. 2014-04 dated March 26, 2014 and all other issuances inconsistent herewith.

JIM O. SAMPULNA, CESO I
Acting Secretary



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT
AND NATURAL RESOURCES



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MT - Aug. 30, 2022