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Ensuring water sufficiency

The water supply situation in the National Capitol Region and its surrounding high-growth areas like Rizal province borders on the funny as it is ironic.

During the wet season, torrential rains triggered by typhoons and the monsoon, we worry that our dams might overflow and cause destructive floods. During the dry season, we monitor with anguished feelings the reports about critical water levels in these dams.

We cannot be indifferent. After all, the situation in these dams determine whether or not the people of Metro Manila and the surrounding high-growth areas would be able to take a bath, brush their teeth and boil water for their coffee.

More than 95 percent of the water supply of these areas come from the Angat System which include Angat Dam, Ipo Dam and Umiray Dam. Close to 20 million people living in households in the National Capital Region, parts of Rizal and Cavite share that water supply with thousands of industries and commercial establishments. At present, low water pressure and frequent service interruption signal that the days of our dependence on the supply coming from the Angat System are numbered.

Water supply sufficiency and security has been the national government's headache. To be fair, during the past several administrations, the national government has done its best to come up with solutions. One such solution was tapping private sector concessionaires to manage and improve the water distribution system and to look for sources of bulk water supply.

Portions of Rizal, Cavite and Metro Manila are now benefitting from this particular solution.

In Rizal, for example, private concessionaire Manila Water is implementing two projects that taps the waters of Laguna de Bay, treats the water and distributes it to households in the province's various municipalities.

This is one solution and addresses

the need of only one part of the high-growth area. The government has to look for more solutions. Often, the potential solutions require the buy-in of the people and communities who will be affected directly by their implementation. And, often, the buy-in is hard to come by.

One such solution which the national government has attempted to pursue is the New Centennial Water Supply Project.

The project aims to build new bulk water supply sources to meet the needs of Metro Manila's households, businesses and industries.

The project calls for the construction of a new dam which is to be built on a portion of the Sierra Madre Mountain range Teresa, Rizal at the boundary of Rizal and Quezon provinces.

The project has been approved by the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) years ago. Construction of the dam in Teresa was supposed to have been started in 2020 and scheduled to be finished in 2025. It is expected to bring some 600 million liters of water daily Metro Manila and reduce the dependence of this area on the dwindling supply from the Angat System.

The project has been stalled for various reasons. One is the possible impact on the environment and communities. The construction of the dam will involve the submerging of several barangays. Most of them are part of the ancestral domain of indigenous Filipinos whose forebears inhabited Rizal province long before settlers from the lowlands came.

It appears the concerned national government agencies have gotten the nod of some of the affected indigenous communities – but not all of them. Based on feedback, there are many communities other than the indigenous ones which the concerned agencies may have overlooked. These communities – including some local government units in Rizal province – are affected by the construction of Kaliwa Dam. They feel they have not been consulted nor fully apprised of

the impact of the project on their lives and livelihood.

This is why the recent move by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to suspend the construction of the Kaliwa Dam was lauded by many.

We learned of the action taken by new DENR Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga over the weekend. Media reported Secretary Yulo-Loyzaga as saying that the agencies involved in the project have not fully complied with the conditions set in the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC). Because the conditions are unmet, the ECC has been put on hold.

Secretary Yulo-Loyzaga's move takes place at a time when environmental concerns are high on the consciousness of the public. As mentioned in our previous column, this was significantly influenced by the resurgence of the public's awareness of the important role that mountain ranges like our Sierra Madre play in protecting us from the wrath of serious weather disturbances entering the Philippine land mass from the east.

The Kaliwa Dam saga teaches all of us about the value of stakeholder relationship management and the importance of authentic dialogue with them. They have interests to protect, primarily their families and their future. The government has a stake to protect, too: its ability to fulfill its mandate to fulfill the needs of the larger community.

It is not easy to balance such colliding interests. But that is why there is government in the first place. That is a balancing act that government alone can do.

For feedback, please email it to antipolocitygov@gmail.com or send it to Block 6 Lot 10 Sta. Barbara 1 cor. Bradley St., Mission Hills Subd., Brgy. San Roque, Antipolo City, Rizal.



**THE VIEW
FROM RIZAL**
DR. JUN YNARES



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SPEED UP THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES



EDITORIAL

Twin goals

IT'S like shooting two birds with one stone.

Pardon the now politically incorrect idiom.

But the move of the Department of Labor and Employment would simultaneously accomplish a social mission and achieve an environmental goal.

The DoLE has announced that it would be deploying workers under its emergency employment program as forest rangers.

Labor and Employment Sec. Bienvenido Laguesma said the beneficiaries of Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa ating Disadvantaged / Displaced Workers program would be tapped as protectors of the environment.

"TUPAD beneficiaries shall be mobilized in patrolling the forest, seedling production, establishing plantations, and assisting in forest protection activities," Laguesma said.

He added that the project also supports the expanded national greening program of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

"We want to help in the mitigation of the worst impacts of climate change in the country. Those who will be hired will augment the current number of forest rangers, who will conduct patrolling, seedling production, plantation establishment, and protection activities," he pointed out.

Both departments' recently signed a memorandum of agreement for the implementation of the program.

The Bureau of Workers with Special Concerns and DoLE regional/field offices are tasked to hire workers to be deployed in areas to be identified by the Forest Management Bureau of the DENR.

The DoLE would provide funds to cover the prevailing daily minimum wage in the regions as well as the administrative cost for personal protective equipment and group personal accident insurance of workers who would be hired.

On the other hand, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority or its accredited training institutions will be conducting appropriate skills training for the worker-beneficiaries.

Earlier, Senate Majority Leader Joel Villanueva vowed to help the DENR seek additional budget for the preservation of the Sierra Madre mountain range.

Like in previous instances, the 540-kilometer mountain range that spans Cagayan and Quezon provinces was believed to have saved several parts of Luzon from the wrath of Super typhoon Karding on September 25.

Villanueva was shocked to hear that the budget of DENR for Sierra Madre preservation amounts to just P9.9 million.

"Let me put into record that I was disheartened. P9.9 million?" he said after hearing DENR Undersecretary Analiza Rebuelta-Teh read the budget allocated for the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park during the budget hearing.



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BBM pushes creation of water department

PRESIDENT Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. renewed his push to establish a Department of Water Resources, one of the priority measures in his administration's legislative agenda.

The Chief Executive said the agency will set policies and implement structural reforms on water management that will address various issues including the critical supply of fresh water.

He made the pitch during a meeting with local officials in Isa-

bela province, who expressed their support for the initiative.

In his first State of the Nation Address last July, Marcos pledged to address the "precarious fresh water supply situation, particularly in urban areas. He vowed to "rehabilitate and improve water supply systems from the 1950s."

"This seeks to create the Department of Water Resources and adopts the Integrated Water Resource Management as the stra-

tegic framework for national water management, policymaking and planning," he added.

The President also underscored the importance of having accessible drinking water during emergencies and natural disasters. He sought more purifying systems in disaster prone areas.

Access to safe drinking water in times of calamities, he stressed, is needed as water-borne diseases such as cholera and diphtheria threaten the health and safety of

affected residents.

In the same meeting late Monday afternoon, Marcos and the provincial officials also discussed crafting several programs that will address agricultural challenges in the province and the whole Cagayan Valley.

These include building new dams and rehabilitation of existing ones, and enhancement of post-production and irrigation facilities as well as renewable energy.

KRISTINA MARALIT



SPEED UP THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES



EDITORIAL

New dep't needed

THE "precarious" freshwater supply situation in the Philippines has thrust upfront the need to speed up the establishment of the proposed Department of Water Resources (DWR)

In fact, the first legislative agenda of the administration of President Marcos, which he presented to the two-chamber Congress last July, included the creation of the new department.

As envisioned by those pushing for the establishment of the new body, the DWR is mandated to efficiently manage the country's remaining water resources for drinking and irrigation needs.

During last week's Legislative-Executive Advisory Council (LEDAC) meeting at Malacañang, the Chief Executive from Ilocos Norte was reported to have stressed anew the importance of water.

"Water is too important. Our freshwater supply is generally going down and irrigation is not as widespread as it should be," President Marcos was quoted as saying during the meeting.

Of course, we share the view of President Marcos that the country needs a team of experts directing the 20 different government state agencies under one roof.

Bongbong, the only son and namesake of the late President Ferdinand Edralin Marcos of Ilocos Norte, said this would ensure the efficient management of our water resources.

Several bills seeking the establishment of the Department of Water Resources are pending consideration in the 24-member Senate and the House of Representatives.

We are confident that the six-year presidency of Mr. Marcos is in a position to address the water needs of the burgeoning population, including our farmers who depend on irrigation.

Tiyak 'yon!



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Robin: DOST holds key to unlocking PH's natural resources

By PS JUN M. SARMIENTO

A SOLON on Monday stressed that a "science-based" approach could be the "key" to unlocking new technologies in using the country's natural resources for energy - including nuclear energy.

Senator Robinhood "Robin" C. Padilla further said that science can address the problem of high costs of power as well as its potential shortage.

The senator added that the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) holds the key to discovering and harnessing our natural resources so the Philippines can solve its debt and energy problems.

"Just think about it -

oil, gas, gold, copper, nickel, bromate - all these minerals are found here. The information that all our metallic mineral reserves amounting to \$1.4 trillion means a lot," Padilla stressed.

Also, Padilla lamented that despite having rich natural resources - the Philippines will still have to borrow some P2.207 trillion next year.

Padilla said the country is counting on the DOST to contribute to solving these problems by finding ways to harness the country's natural resources for the benefit of all Filipinos.

Similarly, he said a science-based method of lo-

cally processing minerals might mean big revenues, in turn helping address the country's debt woes.

"Kaya kami nakikiusap at ako kumakatok sa pin-tuan ng DOST, dahil nasa inyo ang pag-asa, kung magkakaroon talaga tayo ng pagsasaliksik sa agham at talagang gagamitin natin lahat ng resources ng bansa," Padilla said.

During the hearing, Enrico Paringit, executive director of the Philippine Council for Industry, Energy, and Emerging Technology Research and Development (DOST-PCIEERD), noted there are projects to find ways to locally process cop- per and nickel in the Philip-

pines - a potential major source of income.

Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI) Director Carlo Arcilla added they continue to conduct research on nuclear power plants to address the problem of energy.

Arcilla added they can run the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) safely, although the political decision on whether to allow the BNPP to run lies with the Department of Energy (DOE).

"Gusto ko malaman n'yo na napakalaki ng responsibilidad ninyo (I want you to know that you have a big responsibility)," Padilla told the DOST.



TITLE:

Troubled paradise



MAROON BLOODED

JOSE BAYANI BAYLON

'... unless the voices of the majority of the island's own residents are heeded, they will be condemned to live in such a troubled paradise for many more decades — maybe even for the rest of their lives.'

MANICANI is just a speck of an island when one is at 35,000 feet traveling from Manila to Butuan, a flight path that takes a PAL aircraft over Tacloban City before eventually reaching Mindanao airspace via Surigao del Norte. Nearby Homonhon is more visible — imagine looking down and seeing Magellan's fleet approaching? — and, of course, Dinagat looms even more larger down below.

What is common about these three islands at the eastern edge of the Philippines is that they're all mineral rich — with nickel, to be exact — and responsible extraction of this resource can mean bountiful lives for communities that host the operations.

The above can be said of both Dinagat and Homonhon. It doesn't apply to Manicani, the smallest of the three. For many reasons, the residents of Manicani island have, for decades, been denied the enjoyment of the benefits that responsible mining can bring. That's why it remains a troubled "paradise."

Actually, Manicani is a 1,000-hectare island paradise if all you want is to get away from the hustle and bustle of modern life. Because that's basically all that it can provide. It is not blessed with any good beaches. Its waters have been overfished. And due to the nature of the mineral rich soil of the island, not too many crops grow and grow well on the island. Hospitable is

not how I would describe it.

What's worse (for me at least) is that Manicani is a 30-minute pump boat ride away from Guiuan town, of which it is part of. Guiuan is about three hours away from Tacloban, the nearest major urban city. And this to me means that if I were an island resident who needed immediate medical attention, the chances of me surviving the life-threatening

emergency are, well, close to nil.

The sad part is that the story of responsible mining on Manicani island is a story of the principle of subsidiarity standing on its head. Subsidiarity is all about respecting local dreams, wishes and aspirations, and for years for about 80% of Manicani residents who see no future in fishing or agriculture, responsible mining is their way out of poverty. But they've always been stifled by the noisier minority, aided by the bishop in faraway Borongan who opposes their livelihood but provides no equivalent substitute, except prayers, and funded by anti-mining advocates from across the seas who do not have to live through the abject poverty that is the stuff of day-to-day life on the island.

It is paradise in a way, but a troubled one many times over. And unless the voices of the majority of the island's own residents are heeded, they will be condemned to live in such a troubled paradise for many more decades — maybe even for the rest of their lives.



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A Philippine president's six-year term is composed of 2,190 days. Still, we assign great importance to the first 100 days, even though it is a fraction of the total number, because of several reasons: The initial period gives us an initial impression of what the entire presidency might be like, and a preview of the things it deems important. It gives us a taste of a particular president's brand of leadership, and an idea of what to expect for the remainder of his term. We get a sense of whether we should brace ourselves for a difficult ride, or rest assured that our country—even if beset by many problems—is under sound stewardship.

This was what we discussed last Friday during the virtual town hall discussion organized by the Stratbase ADR Institute. Entitled "Continuity and Change? An Assessment of the President's First 100 Days in Office," the event gathered a select panel of policy and governance experts. We talked about what we might glean from the first actions and decisions made by President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., — a majority president elected by 31 million Filipinos last May.

Marcos Jr. now faces the daunting task of addressing the lingering issues brought upon by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as by other external risks that threaten the country's growth. These issues range from social inequality, poverty, unemployment, inflation, corruption, the digital gap, to traditional security risks.

In my opening remarks, I conveyed my impression that at the very least, based on the President's words and decisions in the past few weeks, we have reason to be hopeful that he has set a good direction for the country in terms of goals and priorities. Mr. Marcos has very clearly outlined his legislative agenda. He has appointed some competent people in crucial posts. Judging from appearances, this administration would be run, not on a whim like the previous administration was, but with much more rationality and deliberation in the next six years.

That gives us a measure of relief—at least, for now.

A glimpse of what lies ahead

Pulse Asia President Dr. Ronald Holmes said that to a certain extent, "the administration has indeed done much in the last 100 days and there are certain indicators of what Marcos Jr. refers to as a functional government." He cited the many meetings in key areas already convened by the President during his first three months. They were also able to submit the 2023 budget in good time for Congressional deliberation.

There is a crucial challenge, though — this administration should strengthen, rather than erode, our democratic institutions and virtues. The issues of disinformation and protection of basic freedoms must be addressed.

Calixto "Toti" Chikiamco, President of the Foundation for Economic Freedom, was more nuanced in his observations.

On the plus side, he said Marcos Jr. had been able to correct the mistakes of his immediate predecessor in terms of public-private partnerships and achieve a more balanced foreign stance with China and the US, unlike the policies of Duterte (pro-China) and the late Benigno Aquino III (pro-US).

Mr. Chikiamco said he wanted to see a clear economic legislative agenda addressing the food shortage and fostering long-term, sustainable growth. "Fiscal consolidation and increasing taxes are not enough," he said. His advice was to operationalize the Public Service Act, establish a roadmap to boost mining, and have a clear plan to address the health crisis — emphasizing that COVID-19 is not yet over — more decisively.

Zy-Za Nadine Suzara, Executive Director of the Institute for Leadership, Empowerment, and

THINKING BEYOND POLITICS VICTOR ANDRES C. MANNIT

While we take the President's early pronouncements as encouraging, we also want to convey that we will be cautious and demanding. We want accountability at the core of governance and in the implementation of public policies.

Democracy (LEAD), commented on the apparent priorities of the Marcos administration as can be seen from its budget — priorities that do not seem to include economic recovery and the continued fight against COVID-19. Military spending and infrastructure seem to be important to this administration, she said, and there is less emphasis on people-centered programs.

"Let's see if there might be some changes in the next years and if there will be improvements in how these budgets are spent for programs that will benefit ordinary Filipinos," she said.

Finally, Coco Alcuaz, executive director of the Makati Business Club, said the business sector welcomes Marcos' words on partnerships, participation, and making the Philippines an investment destination.

"This is a very good signal that there will be a change in how the government deals with the private sector as compared with the

previous administration," he said, saying that the private sector really, truly wants to work with the government.

No doubt, all of us will be closely watching how the Marcos Jr. administration would perform in the next six years. And while we take the President's early pronouncements as encouraging, we also want to convey that we will be cautious and demanding. We

want accountability at the core of governance and in the implementation of public policies.

It will not be too much for the people to demand accountability for what has been articulated and promised, for what has yet to be done, and for succeeding policy choices and decisions. We have given this administration a strong mandate, and we pay our government officials with our hard-earned money, so the Filipino people have every right to exact accountability from those who claim to have the public's best interests in mind. ■



VICTOR ANDRES "DINDO" C. MANNIT is the president of the Stratbase ADR Institute.

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AGGRAVATED BY WEAK METAL PRICES

LOWER PRODUCTION PULLS DOWN ATLAS MINING INCOME

By **Jordeene B. Lagare**
@jordeenelagare

Listed mining firm Atlas Consolidated Mining and Development Corp. reported a 12-percent decline in its end-September net income to P3.07 billion from P3.48 billion in the same period a year prior due to lower production and mixed metal prices.

In a disclosure, Atlas Mining said gross revenue for the comparative period dropped by 9 percent to P13.31 billion from P14.65 billion.

Copper metal production by its wholly-owned subsidiary, Carmen Copper Corp., plunged by 14 percent to 54.82 million pounds due to the lower tonnage milled.

"The reduction in copper metal production was mainly due to inclement weather experienced during the first four months of the year and this quarter," the company said.

Milling tonnage for the July to September period alone de-

creased by 11 percent to 12.60 million tons. Copper grades tumbled by 3 percent to 0.238 percent.

Gold production went down by 13 percent to 16,923 ounces, also because of lower gold grades which stood at 5.36 grams per dry metric ton.

Copper metal content of concentrate shipped fell by 12 percent to 56.90 million pounds and gold content dipped by 11 percent to 16,377 ounces.

Metal prices were mixed, with the price of copper down by 2 percent to \$4.15 per pound but that of gold inched up by 1 percent to \$1,827 per ounce.

Meanwhile, earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization were lower at P4.37 billion from P8 billion.

"Operating cost was adversely affected by higher energy and fuel prices, and higher waste charged to operations," it added.

Cash generated from operations improved, enabling the additional loan payment of \$74.6 million of loans. **INQ**



OPINION ANG INYONG LINGKOD

NI DR. HILDA C. ONG

NWRB: MAGHUGAS NG KAMAY BAGO AT MATAPOS KUMAIN

ISA ang Pilipinas sa mga bansang aktibong nakiisa sa paggunita sa "Global Handwashing Day" nitong nagdaang Sabado, October 15. Sinimulan ang taunang aktibidades noong taong 2008 kasabay ng deklarasyon ng United Nations General Assembly sa taong iyon bilang "International Year of Sanitation."

Layunin ng paggunita na maitaas ang antas ng kaalaman ng publiko lalong-lalo na sa mga bata at kabataan hinggil sa wastong paghuhugas ng kamay na siyang unang depensa upang malabanan ang ilang karamdaman gaya ng

diarrhea at typhoid, na nakukuha sa maruming pagkain, tubig at kapaligiran.

Sa ating bansa, tinatayang may 10,000 ang namamatay kada taon sanhi ng pagtatae na karamihan ay mga bata. Kaya naman, lubhang mahalaga ang paglilinis ng mga kamay bago magsimula at matapos magluto, bago at matapos kumain, at matapos gumawa ng iba't ibang aktibidades.

Naging mahalaga ang papel na ginampanan ng paghuhugas ng mga kamay sa paglaban natin kontra coronavirus disease 2019.

Ang simpleng paggamit ng

malinis na tubig at sabon ay nakapapatay na ng mikrobyong maaaring maging sanhi ng pagdumi ng walang tigil.

Kaya naman, sa ating mga tahanan, opisina at tanggapan, dapat na maging kaugalian na natin ang paghuhugas ng mga kamay. Ano ba naman ang ilang minuto gayung para ito sa kaligtasan ng kalusugan mo at ng iyong pamilya.

Rekomendasyon ng DOH o ng Department of Health ang paggamit ng sabon at masusung paglilinis ng kamay sa loob ng dalawampung segundo.

Nakipagtulungan rin ang DOH sa DEPED o Department of Education at sa UNICEF o United Nations International Children's Fund para maipalok sa kurikulum ng edukasyon ang sanitasyon na kinabibilangan ng paghuhugas ng mga kamay.

Paulit-ulit ang panawagan ni Dr. Seville D. David Jr., Executive Director ng National Water Resources Board, kinakailangang magtipid sa paggamit ng tubig

- Laging suriin ang mga linya kung may tagas at agad itong ayusin;

- Gamitin ang pinaghu-gasang tubig bilang panilinis ng palikuran o bakuran;

- Gumamit ng timba at bato sa palligo;

- Huwag hayaang nakabukas ang gipo habang naglalaba, naghilamos o nagsisipilyo;

- Gumamit ng palanggana sa paghugas ng mga gulay at prutas;

- Gumamit ng timba at basahan sa paglilinis ng kotse.

May iba't ibang patuloy ang pag-aakosaya ng tubig, dapat pahalagahan kung anung meron tayo ngayon tulad na lang ng tubig na alam natin na kailangan natin sa pang-araw-araw na pangangailangan.

Kung nais ninyo malaman ang TAMANG IMPORMASYON, TAMANG SERBISYO ni AGARANG SERBISYO LADY, i-search sa YOUTUBE CHANNEL, "HILDA ONG" at sa Facebook Fanpage "TV RADIO HIT-DA ONG". Huwag kalimutan i-click ang salitang "SUBSCRIBE", "LIKE" at "SHARE".



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DAHIL SA MABABANG WATER LEVEL SA ANGAT

Supply ng tubig sa MM

nanganganib kulangin

Sa kabila ng mga pag-ulan, mababa pa rin ang antas ng tubig sa Angat Dam sa Bulacan kaya't nanganganib na kulangin ang suplay ng tubig sa Metro Manila sa susunod na taon.

Sinabi ni National Water Resources Board (NWRB) executive director Seville David Jr., nasa 189.4 metro ang antas ng tubig sa Angat sa ngayon at dapat umakyat ito sa

212 metro hanggang sa katapusan ng taon.

Ito aniya ay para matiyak ang suplay ng tubig sa Metro Manila, gayundin para sa irigasyon sa mga tani-man sa Bulacan at Pam-

NI ANGIE DELA CRUZ

panga, hanggang sa panahon ng tag-init sa susunod na taon.

"Yung mga ulan na nararanasan natin dulot ng pagbagyo" noong

nakaraan ay hindi pa halos nakarating sa mga water shed kung naka-locate ang mga dams para naman umangat nang maayos ang lebel ng mga ito," paliwanag ng opisyal.

Binanggit din ni David, na mababa pa

rin ang antas ng tubig sa Pantabangan Dam sa Nueva Ecija at San Roque Dam sa Pangasinan.

Nitong nagdaang araw kahit na may bagyo na dumaan sa Northern Luzon at may mga pag-ulan ay hindi

naman nakasapat ang ulan sa may watershed ng Angat dam para makatulong na tumaas ang tubig sa naturang dam.

Ang 90 percent ng tubig sa Metro Manila ay nagmumula sa Angat dam.



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Suplay sa MM nanganganib na kulangin

Angat Dam patuloy ang pagbaba ng tubig

Sa kabila ng mga pag-ulan, mababa pa rin ang antas ng tubig sa Angat Dam sa Bulacan kaya't nanganganib na kulangin ang suplay ng tubig sa Metro Manila sa susunod na taon.

Sinabi ni National Water Resources Board (NWRB) executive director Sevilla David Jr., nasa 189.4 metro ang antas ng tubig sa Angat Dam sa ngayon at dapat umakyat

ito sa 212 metro hanggang sa katapusan ng taon.

Ito aniya ay para matiyak ang suplay ng tubig sa Metro Manila, gayundin para sa irigasyon sa mga taniman sa Bulacan at Pampanga, hanggang sa panahon ng tag-init sa susunod na taon.

"Yung mga ulan na nararanasan natin dulot ng pagbagyo noong nakaraan ay hindi pa halos nakarating sa mga water

shed kung naka-locate ang mga dams para naman umangat nang maayos ang lebel ng mga ito," paliwanag ng opisyal.

Binanggit din ni David Jr., na mababa rin ang antas ng tubig sa Pantabangan Dam sa Nueva Ecija at San Roque Dam sa Pangasinan.

Ang 90 percent ng tubig sa Metro Manila ay nagmumula sa Angat dam. (Angie dela Cruz)



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Prioritize agriculture, group says

BY JED MACAPAGAL

FOOD security and livelihood advocacy group Tugon Kabuhayan said government can do more in prioritizing the agriculture sector.

"We would always need our food producers. We fear that if our government does not heed the call (for help), there'll be more farmers who will stop tilling the land and fishermen who will stop going out to sea," said Asis Perez, Tugon Kabuhayan convenor, in a statement yesterday.

Perez said food producers remain impoverished. Farmers and

fishermen are the top two poorest sectors in the country with 31.6 percent and 26.2 percent poverty incidence percentages, respectively.

Tugon Kabuhayan said some consumers also "unfairly" blame rice and vegetable farmers for rising food prices. It said traders are the ones who mostly benefit from higher prices.

Dr. Ronald Edilberto Ona, dean of the College of Sciences at the Palawan State University, said the Philippines still has a long way to go in achieving its food security goals.

Ona said the government must

revisit its strategic plan for agriculture and rural development to ensure farmers, fisherfolk and other agricultural workers who comprise 40 percent of the labor force "are not left behind."

Citing latest data from the Philippine Statistics Authority, Ona said the agriculture, forestry, and fishery sector contributes only an average of 20 percent to the Philippine gross domestic product with an 8.4 percent contribution in the second quarter of 2022.

"This is unfortunate considering

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that the agriculture sector is the lifeblood of the Philippine economy as it employs about 40 percent of Filipino workers," Ona said.

Ona also warned about the estimates compiled by the Food and Agriculture Organization that by 2050, the world will need to produce 60 percent more food to feed a population of 9.3 billion as there is a big shortfall between the amount of food the world produces today and the amount needed to feed everyone in 2050.

Ona added that in terms of food security, The Economist's 2021 Global Food Security Index ranked the Philippines 64th out of 113 countries in terms of its four

dimensions of food security.

Fishing group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) said lack of government subsidies amid rising oil prices will continue to pull down the fisheries sector.

Ronnel Arambulo, Pamalakaya national spokesperson, said fisherfolk may be forced to abandon their livelihood or cut their fishing activities as they are now unable to recover the ever-rising production cost, 80 percent of which goes to fuel expenses.

Arambulo reiterated the group's demand for a P15,000 production subsidy that will cover the fuel expenses of a fisherfolk for at least two months.



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Bgy. Kapitan kulong sa pagbebenta ng ancestral domain

PATONG-PATONG na kaso ang isinampa laban sa isang barangay kapitan sa iligal na pagbebenta ng ancestral domain sa Davao del Sur.

Ayon kay Ely Leano, spokesperson ng National Bureau of Investigation XI, naisampa sa Digos City Prosecutor's Office ang kasong Estafa through falsification of Public documents, illegal possession of firearms, illegal possession of explosives, at ang paglabag sa Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (Republic Act No. 8371 of 1997) laban kay Brgy. Kapatagan, Digos, Davao del Sur Chairman Juanito "Wantoy" Morales.

Sa ulat, nadakip sa entrapment operation si Morales sa loob mismo ng Barangay Hall nang maaktuhan na pumirma ng dokumento sa alleged iligal na pagbebenta ng lupa sa ancestral domain.

Samantala, maliban kay Morales, nadakip din ang sampu pang may kinalaman sa nasabing transaksyon.



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'TASK FORCE DISIPLINA'

IN CEBU CITY, 'RANGERS' TAPPED TO KEEP RIVERS CLEAN

CEBU CITY—A team of “river rangers” will soon be deployed by the local government to ensure that the city’s waterways will be free of trash.

Raquel Arce, head of Cebu City’s Prevention, Restoration, Order, Beautification and Enhancement (Probe) team, said the city was planning to tap the services of barangay emergency responders for this task, which is part of a river cleanup

project led by former Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu.

“These responders will be trained as river rangers who may issue citation tickets to violators. They will be assigned to monitor the condition of rivers and watch for people who are making these dirty,” Arce said.

Mayor Michael Rama recently launched “Task Force Disiplina” where Probe and other city offices make sure that

residents do not litter, spit, or smoke in public places.

Arce said monitoring of people throwing trash in the city’s rivers will be part of the task force’s responsibility.

Cebu City has at least 800 emergency responders from its 80 barangays, or about 10 for each village. They are primarily tasked to assist residents during times of calamities and disasters. —DALE ISRAEL INQ



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Greta Thunberg's own definition of climate justice



URBANISTA

DAPHNE
OSEÑA PÁEZ

BACK in September, Swedish activist Greta Thunberg said: "There can be no climate justice under Marcos ... we stand in solidarity with the martial law victims seeking justice and the human rights defenders pursuing the democratic rights of people and climate justice." Greta referred to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr as a "fascist leader." This video message was played at the 50th anniversary of the declaration of martial law at the University of the Philippines. While this statement was on brand with climate activists' plea for protection of human rights, it dilutes the message and strategies of addressing climate change.

Greta appeared on video with another European climate activist named Alde Nilsson and a Filipino, Mitzi Tan. Together they said things like, "the fight for climate justice is a fight for democracy." While I don't disagree with that, I find it con-

voluted. First, in any environmental management matrix, the fight for climate justice begins with the recognition that groups are affected by climate change differently regardless of the form of government. Second, the Philippines is a democracy, recognized as a sovereign nation by the UN and all other countries, and praised for having a peaceful and legitimate elections by no less than the EU last May. Third, fascism is a harsh allegation which these young activists are throwing at Marcos with no proof or reference. He has only been president for a little over 100 days.

Even the UN is of the position that there is a great inequality in how the impacts of climate change are felt in different parts

of the world — between rich and poor, men and women, older and younger generations. The poor are always the first to suffer. In the case of the Philippines, we, collectively, are among the most adversely affected by climate change regardless of age, gender, or socioeconomic status.

President Marcos, at a recent United Nations General Assembly speech, highlighted climate change as the first of four global challenges threatening humanity calling the effects uneven, reflecting an historical injustice. "Those who are least responsible suffer the most. The Philippines, for example, is a net carbon sink, we absorb more carbon dioxide than we emit. And yet, we are the fourth most vulnerable country to the effects of climate change. This injustice must be corrected, and those who need to do more must act now."

In general, the victims of climate change also have very little responsibility for causing the emissions responsible for climate change in the first place. Wealthy, industrialized nations have been producing high emissions per capita since the mid-1800s. The pollution caused by greenhouse gas emissions is a global concern that brought countries together for a common cause, hence the Paris Climate Agreement, of which the Philippines is a signatory.

President Duterte emphasized the need for rich countries to pay up. He said this in an April 2022 televised message in "Talk to the People": "The rich countries that are not affected by the destruction caused by pollution should pay us for the damage. They should find a way to equalize the damage."

While we, as a country, cry foul and seek the real justice we so urgently need from wealthy industrialized nations, there are a lot of things we can do to mitigate the effects of climate change domestically. Deforestation is a constant problem

mainly caused by our own people. The threats of landgrabbing, illegal quarrying, and killing trees in Masungi are still ongoing. These are human activities that can be stopped by a change in behavior and implementation of current laws.

As the most high-profile climate activist, Greta Thunberg's messages get magnified the world over. She has the opportunity to move and influence climate policies and action. Her statements on this Marcos administration's position on climate change may be well intentioned but are ill-informed and false. The Philippines legitimately does not have a fascist government.

Climate justice is not granted by one government. It requires a complicated global shift that will affect economies, politics and security in an already conflicted world. Europe's dependence on Russian gas is a cautionary tale. Canada has the ability to provide Europe with natural gas

but Trudeau will not in the name of the Liberal's commitment to renewable energy. These are complicated trade-offs.

Though Greta's home country, Sweden, has among the lowest greenhouse gas emissions per capita among European nations, one Swede still uses more carbon than one Filipino. According to the World Bank, the Philippines' carbon dioxide emissions per capita is 1.33 metric tons. Sweden produces 3.54 MT per capita.

Greta Thunberg is no longer a child. She must take responsibility for her actions and her words. The obtaining climate justice is not something that will be granted by a president whether liberal, conservative, fascist, or dictatorial. Top polluting countries must cut their emissions, choose renewable energy, fund climate action programs in developing countries, and most of all, pay for the damage of the storms of the past and those that are yet to come.



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A thousand days for Marcos

For the country's businessmen, the first 100 days for a new administration is too short.

Thus, George Barcelon, president of the influential Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) is choosing to look at President Marcos' first 1,000 days or the first three years of his administration before gauging him as president.

Perhaps, Barcelon is mindful of the fact that it isn't easy to get things done here in our nation of 110 million, what with the cobwebs of bureaucratic red tape, corruption, an endless list of problems, global headwinds, etc.

EYES WIDE OPEN



IRIS GONZALES

As for me, I think that indeed, nothing big or significant happened during Marcos' first 100 days except perhaps some sudden departures of key players in his administration.

But this isn't unusual for a Philippine president.

Productive 100 days

The idea of a really productive 100 days started when Franklin D. Roosevelt or FDR took office in 1933 as the 32nd president of the United States.

He took swift action, so says our history books, to get his country out of the Great Depression and calm the nation's crippling financial panic. He moved Congress to pass critical legislation, such as the Emergency Banking Act and several other measures that translated to extraordinary productivity for the man they called FDR.

It was he who set a first 100-day standard against which all future US presidents – and every other leader across the globe – would be measured.

Other US presidents would then be remembered for

notable things they did in their first 100 days. There's the Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba, which John F. Kennedy or JFK launched; while Gerald Ford gave Richard Nixon a full pardon for his involvement in the Watergate scandal that led to his resignation. Ronald Reagan was not to be outdone, announcing the release of US diplomats being held hostage in Iran.

Barack Obama – who like FDR took office during a severe financial crisis – was able to get Congress to sign a \$787 million stimulus package, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, on his 29th day in office, according to *history.com*.

It's only fair to wish that Marcos had done more in his first 100 days, especially given the enormity of our problems, coming from a debilitating two-year COVID-19 pandemic. He could have already appointed a Health Secretary or made permanent the OIC by now. He could have also finally appointed an Agriculture Secretary to focus on the enormity of the food crisis.

There are many urgent things to address, including skyrocketing food and oil prices, and the still rampant corruption in notoriously corrupt government agencies such as the Land Transportation Office. I know this for a fact because I recently visited the LTO.

But Marcos had a lot of housecleaning to do and I hear that he is treading carefully given the burden or the legacy of the Marcos name. The world is watching him closely and he is well aware. He is afraid to make mistakes, say people in his circle.

Wishlist

But Barcelon and his fellow businessmen are giving Marcos enough time to get the ball rolling, he told me recently when we sat down for a chat.

At the 48th PCCI Philippine Business Conference & Expo happening today and tomorrow at the Manila Hotel, businessmen will discuss with Marcos their wishlist on how to improve the economy and the business climate in the country.

Barcelon said discussions would focus on the ease of doing business in the country, connectivity, and availability of power.

This year's conference carries the theme, "The Philippines is ready and open for business."

Barcelon said businessmen have been consistent in pushing

for the reopening of the economy because we need to get back on track to sustain our growth momentum.

Ferdinand "Perry" Ferrer, chairman of the business conference, said the business community is also eager to hear President Marcos' programs to steer our country toward a higher growth trajectory.

Business delegation from Sri Lanka

A 30-member business delegation representing Sri Lanka's leading companies will also be part of this year's Philippine Business Conference, with the aim of strengthening trade relations with the Philippines.

Sri Lankan Ambassador to the Philippines Shobini Gunasekera said members of their delegation are looking forward to meeting their counterparts to discuss potential collaborations, joint ventures, and engagements that will benefit both economies.

Issues

There are, indeed, many issues that Marcos needs to address – from food security, climate change, availability of power, corruption, etc.

I told sir George that these are the same issues that we hear over and over, and they never seem to be addressed. He says the key is for implementing agencies to set accomplishment targets so that we can really see actual improvements.

In all, Barcelon remains hopeful, he says, because President Marcos has the willingness to listen to businessmen.

For now, they are giving Marcos more time to get the ball rolling.

But we have yet to see what this really means for the Marcos administration. We have yet to hear a grand vision – beyond unity – and concrete plans on how to move the country forward.

JFK once said that the work of a president will not be finished in a hundred or in a thousand days or perhaps in a lifetime, but first and foremost, it must begin.

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Follow her on Twitter [@eyesgonzales](https://twitter.com/eyesgonzales). Column archives at [EyesWideOpen](https://www.facebook.com/EyesWideOpen) on FB.



Pilipinas kong baha

Naalala n'yo ba ang awiting Pilipinas Kong Mahal? Isa itong makabayang awitin.

Gustong-gusto kong awitin ito noong nasa hayksul pa ako.

Kasama ko ang mga kapuwa miyembro sa aming choir group, sunod-sunod naming inaawit ito kasunod ng isa pang kilalang awit na makabayan tulad ng ang Bayan Ko.

Subalit nanatiling popular ang Bayan ko ni Freddie Aguilar lalo na noong Edsa 1986 kung saan ito sumikat hanggang ngayon. Tila nalimutan na ngayon ang Pilipinas kong Mahal.

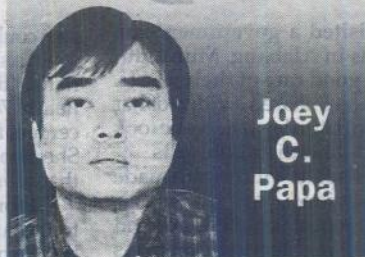
Nguni ang titik nito ay tila nagbabago depende sa pananaw ng isang indibwal sa kanyang lipunan at bayan.

Sa mga nangyayaring global warming o heating at climate change, tila sunod-sunod ang mga delubyo sa ating bansa. At isa sa pangunahing pinsala sa maraming lugar ng Pilipinas ay ang mabilis na pagbaha kahit nga hindi naman kalakasan ang bagyo tulad ng katatapos ng bagyong Neneng.

Binaha nitong katatapos na Bagyong Neneng ang Cagayan at katabing lalawigan na Isabela. Lagpas tao 'umano ang tubig-baha ayon sa mga ulat.

Hindi lang naman itong bagyong Neneng ang nagbigay sa ating bayan ng matinding pagbaha. Simula pa noong Ondoy, Pepeng,

BANGON KALIKASAN



Joey
C.
Papa

Yolandas, Odette, Ulysses, Karding, at marami pang ibang na nauuna pa sa mga bagyong binanggit ko. Hindi na magkakasya ang buong pahina ng kolum na ito kung babanggitin ko pa ang mga bagyong nauuna pa sa Ondoy.

At sa mga bagyong 'yon ay laging may malalalim na pagbaha, malalawak na landslides, pagkasira ng mga tirahan, paaralan at pampublikong gusali.

Isa sa laging matindi ang hinahagupit ng mga delubyong ito ay ang mga taniman. Nasisira ang malalaking ektarya ng lupang sakahan dahil inilulubog ito ng malalaking pagbaha.

Ano ang epekto sa atin?

Ang mga magsasakang hindi pa nakababangon sa mga nakaraang delubyo ay baon na baon sa utang. Ipinambili nila ng kanilang binhi ay kailangang bayaran. Ngunit 'ika nga'y saang kamay ng Diyos nila kukunin ang pambayad kung na-

wasak ng baha ang kanilang taniman?

Matagal nang lubog ang ating agrikultura. Kailangan na itong ibangon ngayon din.

Magpapatuloy ang delubyo sa bansa dahil sa pagtuloy na paggamit ng fossil fuel o 'yung mga langis na minimina sa ilalim ng dagat.

Nagdudulot ang mga coal, petroleum products at iba pa, nang matinding polusyon sa atmospera na siya ring bumutasa payong ng ating mundo o ozone layer kaya patuloy na umiinit ang ating planeta.

Kasabay pa nito ay ang patuloy na pagkabalbo ng ating kagubatan at pagkabasag ng mga kabundukan. Mga kabundukan at puno na kalasag natin sa malalakas na bagyo.

May panahon pa upang mapigilan ang patuloy na pag-init ng mundo o global heating. Tigilan na ang pagputol sa mga kagubatan at pagbabasag sa mga kabundukan.

Itigil na ang pagtatambak ng mga basura sa mga kabundukan at watershed. Ang garbage dumping ang ikatlong sanhi ng pag-init ng kalawakan ng mundo.

Kailangan nang itigil ang kasibaan at katawan sa salapi upang mailigtas natin ang Inang Kalikasan sa matinding pagbaha at marami pang delubyo upang tunay nating mabibigkas ang Pilipinas Kong Mahal at hindi Pilipinas Kong Baha.



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ABOUT TOWN
ERNESTO M. HILARIO

PH is most disaster-prone country

WE'VE known all along that we're among the countries most prone to disasters.

That's because we have typhoons, or hurricanes, that regularly visit the country from this side of the Pacific Ocean causing massive floods that displace people and cause extensive damage to agriculture.

We have earthquakes that occur with varying intensity from time to time due to movements in tectonic plates deep in the ground that exact a high toll on lives and property.

And we have volcanic eruptions in the major islands that are part of the so-called Pacific 'ring of fire' that send people scampering to safety from ashfall and lava flows.

What we've been recently made aware of, however, is that we are now the world's most disaster-prone country. And that's not just because of the natural causes that we mentioned, but also due to human failings.

That's the conclusion reached and published in the World Risk Report 2022 by the Germany-based Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft and the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict at Ruhr University Bochum.

Their World Risk Index that calculated the disaster risk for 193 countries showed that the Philippines has the highest disaster risk, with an index score of 46.82, followed by India with 42.31, Indonesia with 41.46, Colombia with 38.37, and Mexico in fifth place with 37.55.

Myanmar, Mozambique, China, Bangladesh, and Pakistan were among the top 10 countries with the highest disaster risk.

The World Risk Report is based on the idea that a disaster occurs not only when severe natural hazards hit a country but also when it becomes vulnerable to their effects.

It seeks to raise awareness about the relevance of social capacities in disaster preparedness among the public and decision-makers in all sectors of society, to provide guidance for practitioners in the prevention of humanitarian crises, and to support decisions in the allocation and prioritization of resources.

The World Risk Report aims to make governments

understand that the emergence and progression of disasters are highly dependent on the social conditions of the people, and armed with adequate information, they can shift from reactive to proactive action.

Our current ranking in the World Risk Index represents a huge jump from our previous records.

Our record in disaster response in the last few years is not something to be proud of.

The World Risk Report tells us very clearly that the Philippines needs a Department of Disaster Resilience now, not at sometime in the future, to avert further loss of lives, property and public infrastructure, as well as economic setbacks

In 2018, we ranked third on the list of countries with the highest disaster risk, with an index score of 26.70. In 2019, the country dropped to ninth after registering an index value of 20.69.

In 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic spread like wildfire, the Philippines was still among the top 10 countries with the highest disaster risk while remaining in ninth place with the same index score.

Last year, the Philippines ranked eighth with an index score of 21.39.

The report also found that the Philippines was among the top 10 countries with the highest exposure to disasters.

The country ranked fourth with 39.99 exposure, trailing China, Japan, and Mexico.

It defines exposure as the extent to which populations in hazard-prone areas are exposed to and burdened by the impacts of extreme natural events or the

negative consequences of climate change.

Hazardous events include the frequency and intensity of earthquakes, tsunamis, coastal and river floods, cyclones, droughts, and sea-level rise in populated areas.

The report also focuses on vulnerability, which is the tendency of populations to be affected by extreme natural events or the negative impacts of climate change.

The vulnerability factor explores the capacities and dispositions of households and societies and how easily and to what degree they can be destabilized, damaged, or even destroyed by extreme events.

Here, the country's vulnerability score was "very high," at 54.81.

The report makes an important point: "Disaster risks are not solely shaped by the occurrence, intensity, and duration of extreme natural events, but that social factors, political conditions, and economic structures are equally responsible for whether disasters occur in the context of extreme natural events."

But there's hope in the horizon: Every society is capable of taking direct or indirect precautions, such as the establishment and maintenance of effective disaster protection to counter the effects of natural hazards or climate change.

And not all is doom and gloom. The country's coping capabilities and adaptive capacities scores were 57.81 (very high) and 55.48 (high), respectively.

Coping capacities are abilities and measures of societies to counter adverse impacts of natural events or climate change through direct actions and available resources in the form of formal or informal organized activities and measures, as well as to reduce damage in the immediate aftermath of an event and initiate recovery.

Adaptive capacities, on the other hand, refer to long-term processes and strategies to achieve changes in societal structures and systems to counteract, mitigate, or purposefully avoid future negative impacts.

Given all this, do we need to create a department devoted exclusively to disaster response/resilience?

That's been debated by lawmakers, policy implementors and civil society for as long as we can remember.

But what the World Risk Report tells us very clearly is that the Philippines needs a Department of Disaster Resilience now, not at sometime in the future, to avert further loss of lives, property and public infrastructure, as well as economic setbacks.

(Email: emhil@yahoo.com)



Holistic approach to disaster mitigation pushed

Following a study citing the Philippines as the most disaster-prone country in the world, Senator Christopher "Bong" Go renewed his call for a holistic approach to building a more disaster-resilient nation as he works to get his proposed measures passed that will allow the country to deal with calamities, both natural and manmade, more effectively.

With a 46.82 index score, the Philippines had the highest disaster risk according to the World Risk Index. The index is part of the annual World Risk Report 2022 by Germany-based Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft and the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict at Ruhr University Bochum which calculates the disaster risk for 193 counties.

The Philippines' index score is due to its vulnerability, exposure, and high risk to disasters and calamities, the report noted.

The Philippines was followed by India, Indonesia, Colombia, and Mexico. China, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Mozambique and Pakistan were also among the top 10 nations with the highest disaster risk.

Meanwhile, the United Nations recently reported that despite the rise in catastrophic weather and natural disasters, half of the countries in the world lack sophisticated early warning systems required to save lives.

According to a recent assessment by the UN agencies for weather and disaster risk reduction, countries with

weak early warning systems experience eight times more disaster-related deaths than those with effective safeguards.

Taking into account how natural disasters can gravely harm the nation's economy and put people's lives in danger, Go refiled Senate Bill 1181, otherwise known as the Philippine Building Act of 2022, which aims to protect the people's lives and mitigate the impact of disasters by setting standards and benchmarks that all buildings and structures must meet with, particularly the recommended structural stability and integrity designed to withstand disasters.