

28 October 2022, Friday



DENR

NEWS ALERTS

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DENR tags 24 provinces 'weakest to climate change'

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has identified 24 provinces considered as the country's most vulnerable places to the impacts of climate change.

These provinces are Masbate, Sorsogon, Catanduanes, Apayao, Kalinga, Mountain Province, Ifugao, Negros Oriental, Western Samar, Eastern Samar, Northern Samar, Southern Leyte,

Siquijor, Sarangani, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Dinagat Islands, Zamboanga del Norte, Bukidnon, North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, Sulu, and Lanao del Sur.

The agency said Task Force Build Back Better (TFBBB) would shift DENR's efforts from the current disaster response and recovery to disaster prevention and building climate resili-

ency in the most vulnerable provinces.

"One aspect of the gains that the task force can look at is on how we can shift our mode from response and recovery to putting in place governance frameworks that will prevent climate-related disasters and climate resiliency in these identified provinces," said Analiza Teh, DENR Undersecretary for finance, information systems and climate change. **Rio N. Araja**



Task Force Build Back Better lines up more climate resiliency actions

THE Task Force Build Back Better (TFBBB), an interagency body led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), is strengthening disaster-prevention climate resiliency-building efforts in the country's most vulnerable provinces.

During the 35th TFBBB meeting held last October 10, the DENR presented a new policy direction that would give focus on disaster prevention and climate-resiliency capacity building in provinces identified as most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, deviating from the usual disaster response and recovery planning and implementation.

These provinces include Masbate, Sorsogon, Catanduanes, Apayao, Kalinga, Mountain Province, Ifugao, Negros Oriental, Western Samar, Eastern Samar, Northern Samar, Southern Leyte, Siquijor, Sarangani, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Dinagat Islands, Zamboanga del Norte, Bukidnon, North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, Sulu, and Lanao del Sur.

"One aspect of the gains that the task force can look into is how we can shift our mode from response and recovery to putting in place governance frameworks that will prevent climate-related disasters and climate resiliency in these identified provinces," said DENR Undersecretary for Finance, Information Systems, and Climate Change Analiza Rebueta-Teh, who also serves as the TFBBB Secretariat Head.

The direction was pursuant to the blueprint of action set out by DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, which focuses on strengthening climate risk capacities through improved coherence and implementation of climate-resiliency and adaptive programs under the "whole-of-society" approach. *Jonathan L. Mayuga*



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Climate action vital to inclusive growth — NEDA

By CHINO S. LEYCO

The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) said policies against climate change will have a pivotal role in upcoming development plans as these are much needed to achieve inclusive economic growth for the country.

In a statement on Thursday, Oct. 27, Socioeconomic Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan said the integration of climate action into the government's development plans is "absolute necessity" now more than ever.

Balisacan reiterated the Philippines' heightened risk against the adverse effects of climate change, highlighting that the country faces an average of eight to nine tropical cyclones annually.

The resulting damages cripple the Filipino people's sources of food, shelter, and livelihood, the NEDA chief noted.

Super Typhoon Karding, for instance, ravaged areas in Central Luzon just last September, and left with at least ₱304 million-worth of infrastructural damages and ₱2.99 billion-worth of agricultural damages.

He also highlighted that

the Philippines has a running "ecological deficit" due to the prevalence of harmful and unsustainable consumption practices affecting the environment.

"Our ecological footprint, or the impact created by our population on our environment, goes beyond our area's natural capacity," Balisacan said.

"If we do not get our acts right soon, more communities will be routinely displaced, more economic activities disrupted, and more agricultural systems devastated due to these extreme, climate change-induced weather conditions," he added.

According to Balisacan, the upcoming Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 will lay out the government's priorities for pursuing a greener economy and more sustainable, affordable, and livable residential areas by 2028.

"Examples of such priority actions will include mechanisms involving carbon pricing and incentivizing local government units to focus on more climate-friendly projects, such as electric vehicles, sustainable tourism, biodiversity protection, and energy efficiency," said Balisacan.



NEWS BRIEF

Mga informal settler nagbalikan sa estero

Dahil sa pagsulputan ng ilang informal settlers na naninirahan sa mga estero at creek sa Kamaynilaan nababaha ang ilang sektor dahil banta ito sa pagdumi ng ating mga katubigan.

Bunsod nito nanganib na mabigo ang programa ng pamahalaan na muling malinis ang Manila Bay dahil sa nagsulputan na naman

ang ilang mga informal settler na naninirahan sa gilid ng estero sa Kamaynilaan.

Nabatid sa ulat isang halimbawa nito'y ang umano'y nagsulputan na ilang informal settlers sa creek ng Estero de Tripa De Gallina sa Singalong Manila ang itinuturing na longest creek sa Manila na isa sa pangunahing programa

ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na malinis ang naturang estero.

Nabatid pa sa ulat na sinarhan ang dead-end ng kalye ng Rosa Mayo Street na patungo sana sa creek ng Estero de Tripa De Galina at nilagyan ng gate na tila binakuran ng isang residente sa lugar.



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Neda urges legislators to prioritize passage of national land use act

BY JOVEE MARIE N. DELA CRUZ

[@joveemarie](#)

THE National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) on Thursday called on Congress to immediately pass the proposed National Land Use Act (NALUA), a Marcos administration priority measure.

During the first briefing of the House Special Committee on Land Use, Neda Undersecretary Carlos Abad Santos reiterated the need to harmonize various policies on land use, such those in agriculture, agrarian reform, ancestral domain, protected areas, and housing and urban development.

"By harmonizing these various policies, we will be able to have proper allocation of land and reduce disaster risk to proper land use planning and various development," he said.

According to Abad Santos, the 13 NALUA bills filed in the lower chamber have similar components with the Neda Board-approved version.

Three of these 13 bills, he said, are similar to the Neda Board-approved version—House Bill 420 of Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, HB 3611 of Ilocos Sur Rep. Kristine Singson Meehan and HB 3956 of Davao Rep. Paolo Duterte.

Abad Santos said the proposed NALUA seeks to address urban sprawl or uncon-

trolled development that encroaches on prime agricultural lands and other fragile areas.

He said it would also address indiscriminate conversion of prime agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses, which has an impact on food security.

"[It will address] poorly planned settlements that lack basic amenities, including transport and other infrastructure facilities and proliferation of informal settlements in unsafe and hazard-prone areas," he added.

Abad Santos said NALUA mandates the formulation of land use and physical framework plans, and provides the major considerations in land use planning.

The proposal also mandates government agencies to implement programs that facilitate and improve land use planning on forest land boundary delineation; national geospatial information program; delineation and mapping of hazard-prone and vulnerable areas; monitoring of Comprehensive Land Use Plan; and formulation, training and value information, information and education campaign, he added.

Abad Santos said the proposal will provide settlements, transportation and other infrastructure development in support of urban competitiveness and inclusive growth improved access to affordable, livable and resilient housing.



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EDITORIAL

Inclusive bill for IPs

They come to mind whenever the holiday countdown begins, but mainly as mendicants roaming the city for alms. Because despite a law, Republic Act No. 8371 or the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (Ipra), being passed 25 years ago to uplift their lives, members of the country's native tribes continue to exist in the margins: impoverished, ignored, and forced to seek seasonal help from urban folk at tremendous cost to their dignity.

Aside from fully implementing the Ipra, resource centers that would bring social services closer to indigenous peoples (IPs) might be one way to advance their rights and welfare. Or so suggested Sen. Sonny Angara, who notes that while "we have over a hundred IP groups comprising anywhere between 14 to 17 million indigenous cultural communities ... they continue to be among the most disadvantaged" in the country.

Angara has filed Senate Bill No. 1167, or the proposed Resource Centers for Indigenous Peoples Act of 2022, that seeks to establish such facilities in strategic places as determined by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples. The centers would focus on three major service areas, namely statistical, human development index, and domains management.

The statistical service area will take care of the documentation and recognition of IPs and their indigenous knowledge, systems, and practices through census and baseline reports, among other appraisal methods. "The absence of reliable public data on [IPs have led] to situations where they are neglected in the delivery of basic, social, technical, and even legal services," Angara said.

The human development index service area will meanwhile address the IPs' need for necessary services through link-ups with government agencies that would provide training programs, scholarship grants, employment, livelihood and enterprise assistance, and health services.

Helping IPs participate in programs and activities meant to maintain ecological balance, restore denuded areas, and ensure the implementation of the law developing and protecting ancestral domains, among other sustainable efforts, is the domains management service area.

Earlier this month, senior lecturer and University of the Philippines legal associate Raymond Marvic Baguilat lamented in a letter to the Inquirer Opinion page how the government's celebration of October as National Indigenous Peoples Month had been mere "token," with activities focused only on pageantry.

"The stark reality on the ground is that we remain vulnerable because we are disregarded and given the least priority," Baguilat wrote, citing the 2023 budget proposal for Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) under the Department of Education (DepEd).

He noted that the IPEd budget for 2023 has been slashed by more than 63 percent compared to that of 2022, with more than P90 million removed. "The budget proposal now stands at only P53 million, from P144 million. This means that out of the DepEd budget, less than 1 percent goes toward implementing IPEd. In context, the IPEd budget is just a third of the unnecessary DepEd confidential intelligence funds worth P150 million," Baguilat pointed out.

The meager allocation is also limited to maintenance and other operating expenses, with no budget set aside for personnel services and capital outlay, he said. This means that despite repeated pleas, there won't be more IPs hired to develop a culturally sensitive curriculum, no provision for salaries, wages, and other compensation for personnel, and no outlay for the purchase of goods and services, noted the lawyer from the UP Law Center Institute of Human Rights.

Baguilat had previously bewailed in a 2019 research forum in Australia that, despite the supposed normative effects of the Ipra, it had failed to realize social justice for the IPs.

In that forum, this Tuwali from Ifugao province presented ways on how government and private institutions can help IPs move into the mainstream, including providing them legal aid to educate them on their rights and how to claim them. Just as important is pushing for corrective measures in the educational system and even in the media to address prior misconceptions on IPs, while explaining their distinct culture and demolishing the harmful stereotypes that have limited their participation in public life.

In a recent UP forum, "Indigenous Peoples and Learning Spaces in the Academe," Baguilat cited how academia can help advance the rights of IPs. Aside from scholarships for them, educational institutions can include courses on IPs in the curricula and hire IP teachers to teach these while also developing culture-based learning materials.

With Congress expressing its intention to pass the 2023 budget before its session ends in December, Baguilat is pinning his hopes on our lawmakers recognizing "the importance of empowering us IPs to move out of the margins."

As it should. With IPs comprising from 12 to 17 percent of the country's total population, any diminution in their culture arising from economic want and social invisibility would mean shedding a part of our rich Filipino heritage.



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Senate hearing on polymer currency

THE first Senate hearing on the inquiry into why the central bank decided to move into polymer currency, discarding the present abaca-cotton banknotes which have been less than 10 years in use, took place last October 19. The committee on banking, chaired by Sen. Mark Villat, conducted the meeting.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) appeared in full force, with a deputy governor (Mamerto Tongonan) and a battery of lawyers led by the chief legal counsel presenting its case. Deputy governor Tongonan then droned on, citing a few astonishing views according to how the BSP sees it. Namely, that the polymer currency is actually environmental because it uses less water, less power and is therefore cheaper to make. Except that he did not mention that it is non-biodegradable and will be around forever taking its toll on the environment, particularly the oceans, which obviously comes at a price. This matter of sustainability was brought up by Sen. Pia Cayetano who asked what would happen when the polymer currency is retired? Tongonan had a quick answer — it will be turned into plastic furniture. The first step will be to pelletize it, then turn the pellets into furniture like hospital beds and beach furniture, etc. Images of a hospital bed and furniture were then shown in the powerpoint presentation. They looked distinctly unattractive. Pelletizing polymer is an operation that obviously entails power and labor costs. Has the BSP imputed these costs into the so-called cheaper



**AMBIENT
VOICES**

**MA. ISABEL
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costs for the polymer currency? There was no mention of any cost in this process of transforming polymer currency to furniture. The next question is who has the technology to turn polymer into furniture? The BSP did not say if it has it or is about to acquire it. In both cases there must be a substantial cost for this new technology which should also be added to the cost of producing the polymer currency. Then again will BSP now go into the polymer furniture business? Or has it contracted someone to do it and take care of the polymer currency waste? And after the utility of the furniture is over and is discarded, the polymer will still exist, which will remain an environmental threat. Most countries, including the Philippines, have laws discouraging the use of non-biodegradable material. Why is the BSP going against them? As Senator Cayetano said, sustainability must be wholistic, fostering use of biodegradable materials, creating decent jobs that are environment-friendly, preserving heritage and culture. Polymer resists being sustainable in all these ways. The BSP also said that the polymer currency is more durable than paper banknotes, quoting data on other countries' paper banknotes but not data from our abaca-cotton banknotes. Foreign paper banknotes only use paper so they are not as durable as our



abaca-cotton banknotes. BSP, for the sake of fairness, should use our abaca-cotton banknotes to test for durability, not other countries' paper banknotes.

Moreover, the BSP says that polymer currency-using countries like the UK and Canada realized savings because the polymer banknotes were so durable, they reduced the need to replace them. The BSP forgets that in the age of digitalization — online payments which increased during the pandemic — has reduced the use of banknotes so they needed less replacing. The point the BSP tries to make is that the reduced use of banknotes meant fewer replacements so less cost. These savings are not intrinsic to polymer but intrinsic to the new technology in payments which happens here too — GCash, online banking, Palawan, Smart, Cebuana, PayMaya, etc.

By the way, some countries have switched back to paper from polymer banknotes — Indonesia and Nigeria. These countries which were not mentioned are on the same level of economic development as our country. Like us, they use wet markets, pay public transport with currency, handle money directly which they fold, crumple, rather than use wallets to keep them in.

Developed countries do not have the same circumstances where they handle money in that way.

Another point the BSP made in defense of polymer currency was that the president approved it. They forgot to say that they recommended it and urged him to approve it. Their presentation showed only the positive points of polymer, as in cheaper, without counting the pollution costs or the cost of the so-called technology to transform it into furniture. They also showed only the countries which are using it, ignoring those that do not and those that tried it and switched back to paper banknotes. The president's approval under these circumstances can only be called ministerial, relying on what the BSP presented. The fact is the polymer currency is BSP's baby and the buck stops there and nowhere else.

Regarding abaca, the BSP went even further by saying its replacement of abaca will affect the income of only 2 percent of abaca farmers. To the BSP, it may be minimal but to the 2 percent abaca farmers, it is not. Indeed, the cavalier way that BSP discarded abaca in its move to polymer is virtually unpatriotic considering that abaca is our pre-

mier fiber, the world's strongest and most resilient, and forever identified with the Philippines. Even if all countries move to polymer, it behooves the Philippines to keep to abaca as a symbol of its pride and appreciation of a natural resource that the country has been endowed and is universally known for.

Indeed, the abaca farmer representative at the Senate hearing, Leonardo Montemayor, made some telling points when he quoted two articles from the Constitution mandating that if a law or any change will be implemented that affects a community, that community should be consulted first. There is no record of BSP consulting abaca farmers, traders, processors, not even a fellow government agency, the Department of Agriculture's subcommittee on fibers. Neither did BSP consult the National Historical Commission on the matter of the removal of three heroes from the P1,000 bill.

On this last issue, Sen. Robinhood Padilla brought up the point of why the new P1,000 polymer bill has replaced three national heroes with the Philippine eagle. BSP's riposte was to emphasize to the public that the Philippine eagle is an endangered species and should be defended. Senator Padilla then said that Filipino heroes are also an endangered species and must also be defended, implying that human beings who laid down their lives for their country should rate higher than a bird. It seems that the BSP has been copycatting countries that use flora and fauna rather than those that use heroes in their currency. This is a misjudgment because we need to know

our heroes more as right now our youth do not and the rest of us have a fleeting knowledge of them.

Another point brought up by the BSP is that it will compose a framework for evaluation of the polymer currency regarding its sustainability and the sentiment of the public about it. They will do the survey in 2024. I do not think we should hold our breath. From its present attitude and viewpoint, its decision on polymer, the BSP will most probably say they made the right decision as per the survey. If any survey is to be undertaken, it should be an independent survey by an independent third party and not the BSP which has already revealed its insistence on and bias for polymer currency.

There are many other questions hanging due to the scarcity of information that the BSP has given and the questions it has refused to answer from the general public. Among them is, if the BSP printing facility has been printing the abaca-cotton currency since 1975, why has it switched to polymer when its printing facilities cannot print polymer? That print outsourcing is another cost both in using an outside facility and making obsolete an in-place facility. Taxpayers' money misused.

We do hope the Senate committee investigating the issue ferrets out the facts and comes to the truth of how polymer currency was foisted on this country at this point when we are facing environmental problems, through the rejection of abaca, a biodegradable material which it replaced with polymer, a non-biodegradable material.

It might just be that the BSP has bought a bill of goods that it is passing on to the public.



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The right time for renewable energy is now



The Burgos Solar and Windfarm in Iloxs Norte. (Photo from First Gen)



GREGORY E. BAUTISTA

WHEN the blades of the giant Bangui Windmills in the Ilocos Norte started spinning in 2005, the expectations were very high for cheaper and cleaner electricity in the region. It has so far not disappointed. The majestic 230-foot high wind turbines line up the part of the picturesque beach facing the West Philippines Sea generating about 33MW of electricity. This is not a small number because the Ilocos Region hosts four of the 11 wind power plants in the country.

In South Luzon, power is generated from underground steam fissures along the geologically active Laguna Caldera power the Makiling-Banahaw (Mak-Ban) Geothermal Power Plant in Bay, Laguna, and the Maibarara Geothermal Power Plant in Santo Tomas, Batangas. Combined these steam-powered powered generators supply up to 500 MW of power, with Mak-Ban delivering 480MW at peak operation. The Malitbog Geothermal Power Station in Tongonan, Leyte feeds about 215 MW into the grid. Further down south in Bicol is the 234MW Tiwi Geothermal Power Plant which began operations in 1979. It is the grandfather of Philippine geothermal facilities.

Above ground, there are now 62 solar power plants in planning or in operation. Of these, the Calatagan Solar Power Plant is the largest solar facility in South Luzon. The 63.3-megawatt solar farm, located near the foothills of Mount San Piro has a photovoltaic array of over 200,000 solar panels. These were designed to withstand the hurricane-force winds that come at least five times a year. The solar farm also enjoys optimum weather conditions near the Batangas coastline where it receives the highest levels of sunshine in Southern Tagalog.

Early this year the Department of Energy published a list of all operational renewable energy projects that have agreed to provide the required energy supply in the regions and provinces they are situated in. The list only covers 6 of the 25 listed operation

geothermal power plants with a combined capacity of 218.5 MW, 7 of the 11 wind farms projects of 409.9 MW, 36 of the over 50 hydropower of 412.8 MW, but listed all the 62 solar projects of 1,312.9 MW.

The list made available information to investors to explain how these projects are eligible for renewable portfolio standards (RPS), mandating local electricity providers to provide the agreed capacity of energy supply from its renewable energy projects.

Powering the future

Solar and wind now occupy very important places in the Philippines' power-producing grid. From almost nil just two decades ago, more solar farms are being built within the last ten years than ever before. The ease of construction, relatively low cost of operations and start-up investments for solar farms and the availability of technology and foreign support for wind power generation have made these environmentally sound, renewable energy sources popular and profitable.

When the Burgos Wind Farm came into operation, wind power generation was in the measly 60 or 70MW. Currently the biggest windfarm, it now supplies about 150MW of electricity to the surrounding towns around the ciudad of the province—almost 5 times as much as the Bangui windmills could crank out. The town of Burgos could very well be the renewable energy capital of the country or possibly the world because surrounding the windmills is the 6.8 MW Burgos Solar Farm making the town the first location in the world to host a combined solar and wind farm.

Located on a 5.5-hectare site at Brgy. Saoit, the Burgos Solar Farm has 13,420 photovoltaic modules mounted on structures that feed power to 61 inverters. Operated by the Lopez-backed First Gen, the two Burgos solar

power plants provide power to the Ilocos Norte Electric Cooperative (INEC) via a distribution line to the grid under a separate contract. This interconnection project included the development of a 1.6-kilometer, 13.2-kilovolt distribution line, distribution cables, concrete poles, and other related facilities.

Investing in renewables

Investing in renewable energy is now a priority of many businesses in the Philippines.

According to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), every dollar invested in the clean energy transition provides 3-8 times the return. But profit is not the only motivation for investing in renewables—in the slow and murky post-pandemic healing period, part of the recovery means ensuring a steady supply of electricity to help industries return to health.

Businesses need not set up energy franchises to produce power.

In many cases, companies produce power for their own use. Take the SM Group of Companies as an example. The company has invested heavily in renewable energy using rooftop solar panels. To date, solar energy provides power to 10 SM Supermalls, generating a combined 55 MW. This move enabled the company to reduce energy consumption by 28 percent. It has also since 2017 shrunk its carbon emissions by 31 percent.

To complete the cycle of renewable energy and sustainability, some of the fifteen SM Malls that currently have electric car charging stations in their parking lots are powered from solar roof arrays. SM Prime Holdings Inc., a division of the SM Group of Companies, is on top of these investments in energy-efficient programs, inspiring other companies to adopt the sustainable corporate lifestyle.



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In its latest sustainability report, Robinsons Land Corporation announced the expansion of its solar energy portfolio to 23 Robinsons Malls nationwide, increasing its total renewable clean energy capacity to 29.5 MW.

"Through energy conservation and efficiency programs like this, RLC demonstrates its commitment to protect the environment from the adverse effects of carbon emissions and to become an industry leader in efficient energy use," RLC's 2020 annual report mentioned. The solar panel arrays help keep electricity costs low, reduce the country's carbon footprint to achieve its sustainability goals.

The Ayala Group ACEN invests not only in the Philippines. It has about 4,000 MW generation capacity in the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, India, and Australia. As the listed energy platform of the Ayala Group, the company has a share of 87 percent renewable power generation, which is among the highest in the region.

ACEN's aspiration is to be the largest listed renewables platform in Southeast Asia, with a goal of reaching 20 GW of renewables capacity by 2030. In 2021, ACEN announced its commitment to

achieving Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. This will involve the early retirement of its remaining coal plant by 2040 and the transition of the company's generation portfolio to 100 percent renewable energy by 2025.

The Energy Development Corporation (EDC) is the Philippines' largest producer of geothermal energy. It has what is possibly the most complete renewable portfolio with hydro, wind, and solar energy making it the pure renewable energy company with a gross installed capacity of 1,480 MW.

EDC is a pioneer in the geothermal energy industry with over three decades of proven business viability. From the exploration to the production of water-based steam power into the generation of electricity for commercial use, EDC has developed some of the world's pioneering and most complex steam fields. EDC aims to strengthen its position as a market leader by developing more steam fields and power generation projects locally and overseas.

EDC itself has likewise bid for and won several power plants from the Philippine Government since First Gen acquired the company. These were NPC-owned geothermal power plants that EDC supplies steam to. EDC won the bids for the then 192.5-MW Palinpinon and the 112.5-MW Tongonan geothermal power plants in 2009, and the Bac-Man geothermal power plants in 2010.

Clear directions from the new administration

Part of President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. hinged on sustainability, climate change, and renewable energy. In his

first State of the Nation Address (SONA) the chief executive said the use of renewable energy will top his administration's climate change agenda. Early in his administration already pushed for the clear transition to renewable energy to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change on the country.

Having the Burgos Solar and Wind Farm and the Bangui Wind Power Farm in his own backyard in Ilocos, the president said the shift to renewable energy is seen as a solution to help slow down the effects of climate change, emphasizing the need to promote the use of renewable energy, as he noted that the Philippines is a "disaster-prone country."

"We will increase our use of renewable energy sources such as hydropower, geothermal, solar, and

wind," Marcos said adding that the country's geographical situation and a number of natural calamities hitting the country over a period of time, "capacity-building for natural disaster resiliency is a must"

On one hand, Marcos said investing in science and technology would enable the government to have accurate weather forecasts and on-time disaster alerts. Renewable energy, on the other hand, would lessen the country's huge carbon footprint.

"For the welfare of our people, it is incumbent upon us to lessen our vulnerability," he said. "Studies show that many areas in the Philippines are already at high risk from the rise in sea levels brought about by the increase in global temperature. We must adapt to this phenomenon with disaster-proof urban planning."



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Is the Philippines reaching the tipping point?

The President's pronouncements clearly show a direction skewing away from fossil fuels, currently, coal, diesel, and natural gas which continue to dominate the Philippines' power supply generation scene. There are nearly 50 fossil fuel plants—28 of these use highly pollutive coal to produce energy.

The REN21 is an international policy network dedicated to building a sustainable energy future with renewables and has developed a unique renewable energy. In a report it released in late 2021, it identified 7.1 giga-watts (GW) of potential and actual renewable energy capacity in the Philippines.

Over half, or 4.3 GW, came from hydropower, with a further 896 MW sourced from solar energy. For this year, solar energy in the Philippines is estimated to rise to 3 GW and may overtake other renewables. Wind energy has the potential of 76 GW but currently only delivers about 427 MW. The current administration targets just 2.3 GW by 2030 for wind, when there is much, much more potential. Alongside Indonesia, the Philippines has the highest concentration of geothermal power generation in Asia at 1,918MW.

According to the Philippine Department of Energy (DoE) "like many developing countries, especially those in Asia, the Philippines needs to respond and recover fast to the economic impacts and human devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic." To do this the DoE is investing in climate-proof, economically smart energy systems to chart a bold path toward a renewable energy future.





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WB projects 11% energy price decline in 2023

BY ANDREA SHALAL AND DAVID LAWDER

WASHINGTON - The World Bank on Wednesday said it expects energy prices to decline by 11 percent in 2023 after this year's 60 percent surge following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, although slower global growth and COVID restrictions in China could lead to a deeper fall.

The bank in its latest Commodity Markets Outlook projected a Brent crude average price of \$92 a barrel in 2023, easing to \$80 in 2024 but well above the five-year average of \$60.

It said Russia's oil exports could drop by as much as 2 million barrels per day due to a European Union embargo on Russian oil and gas products, coupled with restrictions on insurance and shipping, that are take effect on Dec. 5.

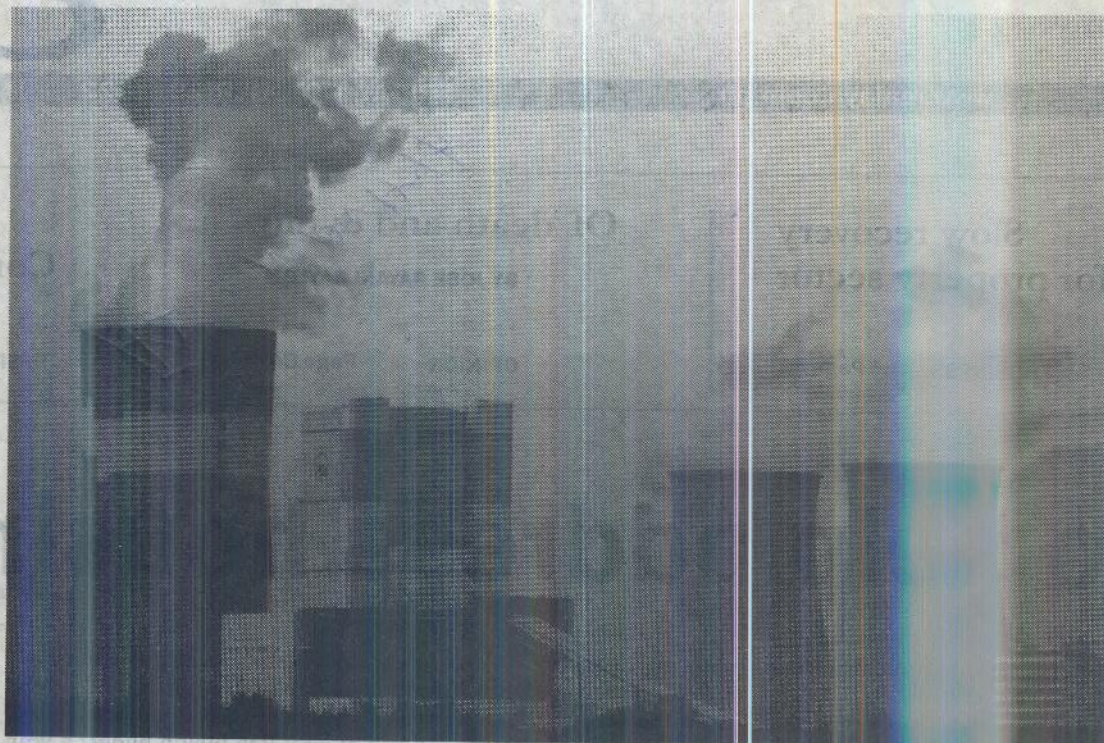
A proposed Group of Seven oil price cap could also affect the flow of oil from Russia, but needed the participation of large emerging markets and developing countries to be effective, it said, calling the mechanism "untested."

The World Bank said the stronger dollar - and the shrinking value of the currencies of most developing economies - had driven up food and fuel prices that could aggravate the food insecurity already affecting 200 million people worldwide.

"The combination of elevated commodity prices and persistent currency depreciations translates into higher inflation in many countries," said Ayhan Kose, who heads the World Bank group that produces the report.

He said emerging market and developing economies should brace for "a period of even higher volatility in global financial and commodity markets."

Currency depreciation meant



Belchatow Power Station, Europe's largest coal-fired power plant operated by E.ON Energy Group, is pictured near Belchatow. (Reuters Photo)

that almost 60 percent of oil-importing emerging markets and developing economies saw an increase in domestic currency oil prices from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which began on Feb. 24, the report found.

Nearly 90 percent of these economies also saw a larger increase in wheat prices in local currency terms, it said.

Food price inflation averaged more than 20 percent in South Asia in the first three quarters of 2022, while other regions, including Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, averaged food price inflation of between 12 percent and 1 percent.

While energy prices were eas-

ing, they would still be 7 percent above their average over the past five years, the bank said.

Both natural gas and coal prices are projected to decline in 2023 from record highs in 2022, but Australian coal and US natural-gas prices are still expected to be double their average over the last five years by 2024. European natural gas prices could be nearly four times higher, it said.

Coal production, meanwhile, was increasing significantly, as major exporters boosted output, putting climate-change goals at risk.

The multilateral development bank said energy prices should start to decline in the second half of 2022 as supply constraints ease, with non-energy prices such as agriculture and metals also expected

to ease after strong gains in 2021.

"The surge in energy prices poses significant near-term risks to global inflation and, if sustained, could also weigh on growth in energy-importing countries," said Kose.

"The sharp rebound in commodity prices is turning out to be more pronounced than previously projected. Recent volatility in prices may complicate policy choices as countries recover from last year's global recession."

The International Monetary Fund, in a separate blog, said it expected energy prices to revert to "more normal levels" early next year when heating demand ebbs and supplies adjust. But it warned that uncertainty remained high and small demand shocks could trigger fresh price spikes. - Reuters



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Maynilad: Creating a green impact



Through "Plant for Life", Maynilad has been able to reduce its carbon emissions by around 25,000 tons per year.

To fulfill its mission of providing safe, affordable and sustainable water solutions to its customers, West Zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services, Inc. (Maynilad) implements a number of programs and projects to protect and nurture the environment.

Shortly after its re-privatization in 2007, Maynilad implemented a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) and Air Pollutant emissions inventory program, which aims to establish baseline data for the company's carbon emissions using an Inventory Management Plan that covers the entire organization. The inventory defines Maynilad's management plan to improve energy utilization, reduce its power consumption and, ultimately, cut its GHG emission.

Through this program, Maynilad became the first Philippine company to receive the ISO 14064:2006 certification for the verification of its GHG or carbon footprint quantification and reporting initiative from TÜV Rheinland. The standards define international best practice in the management, reporting and verification of GHG data. These greenhouse gases are the precursors of global climate change.

More recently, Maynilad made its initial foray into renewable energy by building two one-megawatt PV (photovoltaic) solar farms at the La Mesa Compound

in Quezon City. This is in line with the company's environmental sustainability and operational efficiency initiatives.

The two solar power farms augment the power requirements of La Mesa Treatment Plant 1 and several pumping stations within the La Mesa Compound—facilities that operate 24/7 to treat and distribute water for Maynilad customers. Each solar farm is expected to reduce the electricity consumption of Maynilad's La Mesa facilities by around 90,000 (kWh) kilowatt per hour, as well as minimize carbon emissions by 21 tons per month.

Further supporting this initiative is Maynilad's "Plant for Life" – the company's flagship environmental conservation program, which aims to recover denuded watersheds and thus protect the water supply of millions of consumers. It rallies volunteers from the public and private sector to help recover forestlands through the annual planting of trees.

Originally conceptualized to reforest the watersheds in Angat, Ipo and La Mesa, this tree-planting initiative later became a multi-site reforestation program that included areas along the Manila Bay coast and Laguna Lake. Since the program's inception in 2007, Maynilad has already planted more than 975,000 indigenous trees and mangroves covering a land area of 704 hectares.

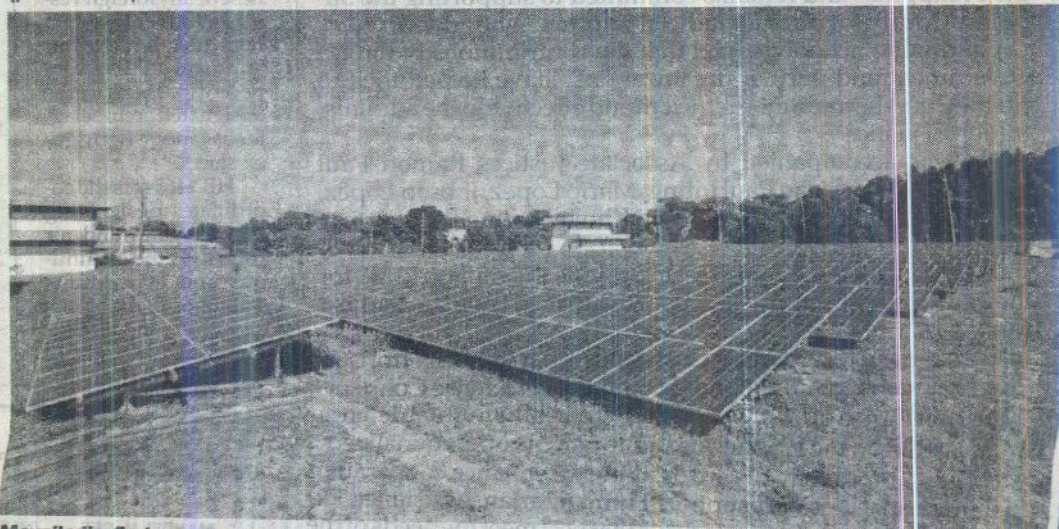
Maynilad also became the first company in the country to include indigenous peoples in this reforestation program when it tapped the Dumagats' support in caring for saplings planted at the Ipo watershed.

The company also embarked on a partnership with the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) for the reforestation and afforestation of the Laguna Lake watershed. The program seeks to restore and introduce land cover, which will alleviate environmental issues at the Laguna Lake watershed and promote environmental values among surrounding communities.

Meanwhile, Maynilad is continuously implementing its priority sewerage projects, such as the construction of several Sewage Treatment Plants in different parts of the West concession, to help clean up waterways that drain into the Manila Bay.

Also, the company's continued expansion has brought potable, surface water supply to previously waterless areas. This has helped to decrease people's reliance on deep wells, which when over-extracted could result in serious environmental problems such as land sinking and salt water intrusion.

In the years to come, Maynilad will continue to deliver on its environmental conservation commitments by aligning its business targets and sustainable development objectives while pursuing growth within and beyond its concession area.



Maynilad's first one-megawatt solar power farm yields savings of around 90,000 kilowatt per hour, which roughly translates to annual savings of 5.4 million pesos.



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'Paeng' intensifies into tropical storm

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

Cyclone Paeng (international name: Nalgae) has intensified into a tropical storm, prompting the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) to raise Tropical Cyclone Wind Signal No. 1 over six areas in Bicol Region and Eastern Visayas before noon yesterday.

(Turn to Page 3)

'Paeng'...

(From Page 1)

In its 11 a.m. bulletin issued yesterday, PAGASA hoisted Signal No. 1 in Catanduanes, eastern portion of Albay (Rapu-Rapu), eastern portion of Sorsogon (Prieto Diaz, Gubat, Barcelona, Bulusan, Santa Magdalena, Irosin, Juban, Casiguran, City of Sorsogon), Eastern Samar, Northern Samar, and Samar due to the expected strong winds from the approaching storm.

PAGASA said Paeng's maximum sustained winds increased to 65 kilometers per hour (kph) near the center, from 55 kph six hours ago, while its gustiness increased to 80 kph, from 70 kph, previously.

"Further intensification is likely while moving over warm waters of the Philippine Sea. Paeng is forecast to reach severe tropical storm category within 24 hours and may intensify into a typhoon by Saturday. The occurrence of rapid intensification in the next 72 hours is not ruled out," PAGASA said.

"Per latest track and intensity forecast, the highest wind signal that will likely be hoisted is Wind Signal No. 4, in anticipation of typhoon-force conditions associated with Paeng," it pointed out.

PAGASA said tropical storm Paeng was estimated 540 kilometers east of Borongan City in Eastern Samar as of 10 a.m., and is moving west-northwestward at 10 kph.

"Tropical storm Paeng is forecast to track generally west-northwestward over the Philippine Sea through Sunday (Oct. 30), while moving towards the central or northern portion of Luzon," PAGASA said.

"On the forecast track, Paeng may pass close to Catanduanes on Saturday (Oct. 29), and a landfall scenario is possible on Sunday within any of the coastal areas along the eastern

portions of Central Luzon or mainland Cagayan Valley," it added.

However, PAGASA has not ruled out a possible southward shift in the forecast landfall, which could be over the eastern portion of Southern Luzon, due to the recent shift in Paeng's track.

HEAVY RAINFALL

Due to the wide circulation of the storm, rains may start to affect several parts of the country as early as Friday, Oct. 28.

From Friday morning to evening, moderate to intense rains may prevail over Bicol Region and Eastern Visayas.

Light to heavy rains may also affect Quezon, Cagayan, Isabela, Apayao, Aurora, Oriental Mindoro, Occidental Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, Palawan, Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), Zamboanga Peninsula, Northern Mindanao, Caraga, and the rest of Visayas.

From Friday evening to Saturday, Oct. 29, heavy to torrential rains may persist in Bicol Region, Northern Samar, and Quezon.

Moderate to intense rains may also prevail over Metro Manila, Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon, Oriental Mindoro, Occidental Mindoro, Aurora, Bulacan, Marinduque, Romblon, the eastern portions of Cagayan and Isabela, Western Visayas, and the rest of Eastern Visayas.

Light to heavy rains may also affect Palawan, Cordillera Administrative Region, Zamboanga Peninsula, BARMM, and the rest of Visayas, Cagayan Valley, and Central Luzon.

"Under these conditions, flooding and rain-induced landslides are expected, especially in areas that are highly or very highly susceptible to these hazards as identified in hazard maps and in localities with significant antecedent rainfall," PAGASA warned.



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT BUREAU III




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SC PO 0054 SQE

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

The DENR-Environmental Management Bureau Region III project entitled, **SURVEY, SUPPLY, DELIVERY, AND INSTALLATION OF TRASH TRAPS IN THE TRIBUTARIES OF THE TWO (2) MOST POLLUTED RIVERS IN REGION 3** awarded **Clean Leaf International** as the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bid (LCRB) at a Contract Price equivalent to **One Hundred Forty-Three Million One Hundred Ninety Pesos (P143,190,000.00)** only with delivery term of 120 calendar days upon receipt of the Notice to Proceed. The said project will commence on July 23, 2022 up to November 23, 2022.


WILSON L. TRAJECO, PME, PH.D.
 Regional Director



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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES BOARD
8th Floor NIA Bldg., EDSA, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines 1100

THE MARIDIEN CONDOMINIUM
CORPORATION,

Case No. 22-3439

Applicant.

X-----X

NOTICE OF HEARING

This is an application for Certificate of Public Convenience to operate and maintain a waterworks system within The Maridien Condominium, Barangay Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila, with the following proposed rates:

PROPOSED TARIFF

Residential and Institutional

Pipe Size	0-5 m ³ (min)	6-10 m ³	11-20 m ³	21-30 m ³	31-40 m ³	Over 40 m ³
1/2"	P314.00	78.50	94.20	110.00	125.70	141.40

This application will be initially heard by the Board on **14 November 2022**. The hearing will start at **9:00 o' clock in the morning** at the NWRB-WUD Conference Room, 8th Floor, NIA Building, EDSA, Quezon City, at which time applicant shall present its evidence.

At least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled hearing, applicant shall publish this notice once in a newspaper of general circulation in **Metro Manila** and serve by personal delivery or registered mail a copy of the (i) application and its attachments, and (ii) this notice, to all affected parties appearing on page 2 hereof.


Parties opposed to the granting of the application must file their written opposition supported by documentary evidence on or before the above scheduled date of hearing, furnishing a copy of the same to the applicant.

Failure on the part of any person affected to file its opposition on time and to appear at the hearing will be construed as a waiver of their right to be heard. The Board will proceed to hear and decide the application based on the evidence submitted.

Likewise, failure by the applicant to appear at the hearing shall amount to lack of interest on its part and the instant application shall be dismissed accordingly.

Witness the Honorable Executive Director of the National Water Resources Board this 20th day of September 2022.

By Authority of the Board:


Dr. SEVILLO D. DAVID, JR., CESO III
Executive Director

Affected Parties:

The Secretary
Sangguniang Panlungsod
Taguig City, Metro Manila

The Barangay Chairman
Barangay Fort Bonifacio,
Taguig City, Metro Manila

The Homeowners Assn. President
The Maridien Condominium
Barangay Fort Bonifacio,
Taguig City, Metro Manila