

31 October 2022, Monday



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

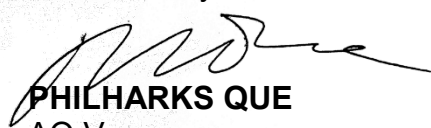
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service  
**SUMMARY OF DENR NEWS ALERTS**  
 31 October 2022

NEWSPAPER	TITLE	SPECIFIC ISSUES
<b>Top stories</b>		
<p><b>Manila Bulletin, p. 10</b>            Editorial by Manila Bulletin and <b>Tempo</b>, p.4</p> <p>Both with accompanying editorial cartoon</p>	<p>Adaptation and mitigation will shield economy from climate change crisis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Investing in climate adaptation measures, although costly in the short term, the country will benefit from the move substantially in the long term, more so in terms of shielding the population who largely are income-dependent families, aside from the long term investment for climate resiliency actions in the agricultural sector.</li> <li>● The Philippine case vis-a-vis climate change mirrors the primacy of instituting adaptation and mitigation interventions which far outweigh short term economic gains as pointed out by World Bank economists.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Daily Tribune p.4</b>  <b>Editorial</b></p>	<p>Ecology over greed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The natural gas project of the San Miguel conglomerate in Batangas will result in the ruin of the Verde Island Passage and the livelihood of residents in the province, urging government to scrap said project</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Phil. Star Ngayon</b>, p.6            editorial with accompanying editorial cartoon</p>	<p>Kalbong gubat resulta, pagguho ng lupa at baha</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The recent disasters left by typhoon Paeng, esp. in BARMM, are instructive of the unabated loss of the country's forests due to illegal logging and, unless stopped by the DENR, disasters will continue to happen in greater intensity.</li> </ul>

<p><b>BusinessWorld</b>,p. 5 by Torbjern Garstad (Opinion)</p>	<p>Offshore wind puts the Philippines on the road to energy independence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cautions the government not to entirely leave with the Department of Energy the development of offshore wind in the country, but that the DENR should play a prominent role in the undertaking given its potential impact on marine and biodiversity, particularly on migratory birds and coral reefs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Phil. Daily Inquirer</b>, p. A7 By Mariejo Ramos</p>	<p>Window Closing: on Climate Mitigation efforts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• G-20 countries should deliver on their pledges to cut their carbon emissions (Natiional Determined Contributions) as time may be falling short to avoid global catastrophe , according to the 2022 UN Emissions Gap Report of the UNEP</li> </ul>

Submitted by:



**PHILHARKS QUE**  
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Noted by:



**KHALIL S. BAYAM**  
Director  
Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service



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## DENR officials, Sibuyan Island stakeholders hold consultative dialog on responsible mining

**I**N a bid to proactively discuss concerns on responsible mining, environment officials met with stakeholders in Sibuyan Island for a Consultative Dialogue and Capacity Building on Mining and Environment on Wednesday, October 19, at the Evacuation Center in Barangay Panangalan, San Fernando, Romblon.

This undertaking, held in partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Mimaropa Region, the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) MIMAROPA Region, the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO)-Romblon, and the Local Government of San Fernando, Romblon is in connection with the request of the local government unit (LGU) to conduct an information, education, and communication (IEC) activity to address the issues and questions on

mining activities in Sibuyan Island.

The said IEC activity is also among the agreements during the Capacity Building for LGUs of Romblon on August 15, 2022, and in response to the Sangguniang Bayan Resolution No. 144, S. 2022, dated October 3, 2022 of the Municipality of San Fernando, Romblon requesting the DENR MIMAROPA Regional Executive Director to send a licensed forester and mining engineer to conduct IEC on mining issues in Barangays España and Taclobo.

During the discussion, environmental officials clarified the legal definition of responsible mining as well as the requirement to progressively restore and rehabilitate areas of operation. Under the law, the Mt. Guiting-guiting Natural Park was also specified as a "no-go" zone for mining due to its status as a protected area.



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## Belmonte, EcoWaste: Keep cemeteries trash-free

Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte and environmental watchdog EcoWaste Coalition yesterday appealed to the public to keep cemeteries trash-free as they visit their dead during the observance of All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day.

In a joint statement, Belmonte and EcoWaste noted the importance of ensuring the cleanliness of cemetery premises for the "health, safety and convenience" of visitors.

"Keeping cemeteries litter-free is not only pleasing to the eye, but also a good way to show our awareness and responsibility toward the environment," Belmonte said.

"In line with our thrust of building a livable, green and sustainable city, we join the EcoWaste Coalition in urging

residents as well as non-residents to remember the dead in a manner that is ecological and waste-free," she added.

EcoWaste had urged cemetery-goers to adopt the BTS or "*Bawal magTapon sa Sementeryo*" mantra, reminding them that littering is an environmental offense under Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act and the Quezon City Environment Code.

"Like Mayor Belmonte, we seek the cooperation of the people who will be visiting cemeteries, memorial parks and columbaria in Quezon City to pay homage to their dead without harming the environment," EcoWaste national coordinator Aileen Lucero said.

Food leftovers, wrappers,

plastic bags, bottles, cups and other single-use disposable plastics, soiled paper as well as cigarette butts are among the littered items during *Undas*, according to EcoWaste.

Among the burial sites in Quezon City are the Bagbag public cemetery, Novaliches public cemetery, Himlayang Pilipino Memorial Park, Holy Cross Memorial Park and Recuerdo Memorial Gardens.

The city is also home to several columbaria, including the Aeternitas Chapels and Columbarium, Ascension Columbarium and Chapels, Christ the King Columbarium, Elysium Gardens Columbarium, Garden of the Divine Word Columbarium, Mount Carmel Shrine Columbarium, Sanctuary, Santuario de Santo Domingo, St. Peter Par-

ish and Shrine Columbarium, St. Vincent Columbarium and The Columbarium.

Meanwhile, EcoWaste warned the public against imported candle wicks laced with the toxic chemical, lead.

"While locally made candles have braided cotton as wicks, some imported candles, especially those sold at specialty stores selling Chinese prayer articles, may still have lead-cored wicks despite a health advisory issued by the government," Lucero said.

"To avoid lead poisoning, refrain from using candles with metal wire in the wick unless certified non-toxic and safe," she added.

The group advised the public to pick candles with cotton or non-metal wicks.

- Elizabeth Marcelo



## Complaint filed vs E. Samar mayor over open dump operation

DOLORES, Eastern Samar – A complaint has been filed against the mayor of this town for allegedly allowing the operation of an open dump.

Residents of Barangay Tanauan filed the complaint against Mayor Rodrigo Rivera before the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) on Oct. 26.

The complainants said the open dump contained unsegregated waste in violation of Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Law.

The law prohibits the use of open dumps for solid waste management.

Signatories of the letter-complaint submitted to DENR-EMB regional director Martin Jose Despi said the continued operation of the open dump affected the health of the residents.

The complainants said the dump drew flies and rodents to their community as well as threatened their source of potable water. They said some residents have resorted to buying bottled water to prevent contracting diseases.

A resident said the previous local government had approved a sanitary landfill project to replace the open dump. He said the present administration reportedly did not implement the project and allowed the operation of the open dump to continue.

The DENR-EMB said it would conduct an ocular inspection to determine the extent of damage caused by the open dump to the community.

Meanwhile, Rivera said he has been addressing the problem cited in the complaint.

He said he was studying laws and possible solutions that could put an end to the problem.

Rivera said the complaint against him was politically motivated.

He said a former member of his political team, whom he ousted for "undesirable attitude" could be behind the complaint against him.

– Miriam Desacada



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## Paris Climate Change pact vital for PHL—Sen. Legarda

By BUTCH FERNANDEZ [@butch/BM](#)

SENATE President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda affirmed over the weekend the importance of the Paris Climate Change Agreement to the country as the Philippine delegation, led by Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri, met Tuesday with French legislators.

Legarda reminded that one of the many advocacies and issues that bond France and the Philippines is the Paris Agreement:

"Being number one in the world risk index, as the most vulnerable nation in the world, we value our ratification of the Paris Accord in 2015," Legarda said recalling their meeting with Guillaume Kasbarian, President of France's Commission for Economic Affairs and Member of Parliament of the National Assembly (Eure-et-Loir).

She noted that the World Risk Index 2022 Report released last September ranked the Philippines with the highest natural disaster risk among 193 nations globally.

Citing this ranking, Legarda prodded the European Union (EU) to increase its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), the climate action plans submitted by nations, to lessen the impact of climate change on vulnerable countries, such as the Philippines.

The senator recalled it has been "seven years since the ratification of the accord and it is incumbent upon industrialized nations in the EU, including France, to perhaps scale up the Nationally Determined Contributions so that vulnerable nations like the Philippines, which only emits 1/3 of 1 percent in terms of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, will not be as affected."

At the same time, Legarda affirmed, "This is one of the advocacies that I share with my colleagues, which we know the French government and the French people hold dearly, as well, because this impacts our energy security, our food security."

It will be recalled that the European Commission has committed to decrease GHG emissions from the EU by 2030 and produce "net zero" emissions by 2050, according to World Bank.

Moreover it also notes that 76 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions are coming from China, the United States and the EU.

Legarda and the rest of the Philippine delegation also met with French-South East Asian Friendship Group led by Senator Mathieu Darnaud and Madame Gisele Jourda, Vice President of the Committee on European Affairs and President-designate for the Philippines.

She recalled that during the meeting, Legarda, founder and president of the Philippines-France Parliamentary Friendship Association, conveyed the Philippines' commitment to the High Ambition Coalition (HAC) for

Nature and People, at the same time thanking France "for its continued assistance to the Philippines."

"I am glad that France does not stop in helping in giving technological, technical, and capacity-building, and even financial assistance in so far as biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, and climate action," she said.

In leading the support for the Philippines's actions against climate change, the senator also acknowledged the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) as it also committed EUR 482 million for the country.

The lawmaker likewise recalled that in 2021, a policy-based loan amounting to EUR 250 million was granted to the Philippines by France as funding support for disaster risk reduction, preparedness, and response at the local level.

"We are grateful for your continued support for the Philippines and other developing nations, and as the COP talks start in the first week of November in Egypt this year. We hope that France will be on the side of developing nations so that the \$100 billion commitment in the Paris Agreement would finally be realized, and so that the issues of loss and damage, which is important to vulnerable nations, could also be defended or even discussed," said Legarda.

The Philippine delegation comprised of Legarda, Zubiri, Senate Majority Leader Joel Villanueva, Senate Deputy Majority Leader Joseph Victor Ejercito, and Sens. Manuel Lapid, Maria Lourdes Binay, Grace Poe, and Christopher Lawrence. She met with Senator Daniel Gremillet, member of the Committee for Economic Affairs and President of the Study Group on Energy, and Pascal Chaix, Deputy Director for International Relations Division of the Atomic Energy Commission.

House Committee on Ways and Means Chairman Joey Sarte Salceda, for his part, said countries like the Philippines must continue to push for acknowledgment and compensation for "loss and damage" ahead of COP 27, or the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference.

In a news statement, Salceda said "Typhoon Paeng wasn't supposed to be that strong, and yet killed several dozens of people due to stronger than expected floods."

Salceda, who was formerly the Co-Chair of the United Nations Green Climate Fund, will be part of the Philippine delegation to the Conference of Parties (COP) 27, or the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference, set in Egypt this year.

"Climate change kills. There is loss and damage. And countries like the Philippines that are the most at-risk due to its impacts have a moral responsibility and the moral ascendancy to fight for the principle of loss and damage," Salceda said.

With Jovene Marie H. Delo Cruz



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AMID SHORTFALL IN CUTTING EMISSIONS

# 'WINDOW CLOSING' ON CLIMATE MITIGATION EFFORTS—REPORT

By **Mariejo S. Ramos**  
@MariejoRamosINQ

Countries are falling short in their efforts to help ease climate change amid a further increase in carbon emissions, according to a report on climate change by an agency of the United Nations.

The 2022 UN Emissions Gap Report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) warned that the "window is closing" on climate mitigation efforts, unless emissions

are cut by as much as 45 percent eight years from now "to avoid global catastrophe."

The report published on Thursday said members of the Group of 20 (G-20)—an inter-governmental forum comprising 19 countries and the European Union—"are far behind in delivering on their mitigation commitments for 2030 ...."

G-20 countries would therefore need "additional policies to achieve their NDCs," the report said, referring to each mem-

ber-state's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) to reduce their emissions.

Given that progress, the community of nations may fall short of the goal of the Paris Agreement—the 2015 international treaty, which aims to reduce global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius before pre-industrial levels, then to 1.5 by DATE.

Furthermore, while the COVID-19 pandemic led to an unprecedented "reduction" in global emissions, this was also

"short-lived" as it rebounded to an estimated 52.8 GtCO<sub>2</sub>eq (gigatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent) in 2021, the report said.

Global greenhouse gas emissions were at 37 GtCO<sub>2</sub>eq in 2019 but leaped to 49.8 GtCO<sub>2</sub>eq in the pandemic year of 2020, despite a near-standstill in global economic activity.

There are still solutions to reverse that trend, the report said, as it emphasized that "Governments and key financial actors [must] steer credibly in one direction." INQ





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## Adaptation and mitigation will shield economy from climate change risks

**A** World Bank economist has signaled the urgency of climate change adaptation and mitigation measures in order to shield the Philippine economy from slower growth that could bring about higher economic and human costs to the needy and marginalized sectors.

Souleymane Coulibaly, World Bank lead economist, said climate shocks would erode natural and physical capital, as well as reduce labor productivity, thereby adversely affecting the country's economic growth. He cautioned, too, that the government's financial capability would be strained, and that domestic and external competitiveness could be impaired.

World Bank estimates on the economic costs of climate change were derived from typhoon information. As a climate-vulnerable country, the Philippines bears the brunt of an average of 20 typhoons a year, with losses and damages in the past decade amounting to a 0.5 percent loss in the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Vice Chairman and Executive Director Robert E. A. Borje of the Climate Change Commission — a body chaired by President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. — has pointed out the need for climate equity and climate justice to climate vulnerable countries. According to Germanwatch, world-recognized publisher of the Global Climate Risk Index, the Philippines is ranked fourth most vulnerable country to climate change.

This explains the country's preeminent position as an authoritative and influential voice among Climate Vulnerable Countries (CVC). During COP 21, the 21st Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Agreement on Climate Change, the Philippines headed this group. Thus, then President Benigno

S. Aquino III chaired a special forum at which the CVCs weighed in on their proposals that facilitated the crafting of the historic Paris Agreement of 2015. After decades of stalemate, the countries of the world finally agreed to limit the emission of greenhouse gases in order to mitigate global warming and reduce the frequency and strength of typhoons and floods in the CVCs.

Climate shocks would drag down the government's poverty reduction effort, whose metrics mainly depend on economic growth and income distribution, according to the World Bank. The average output losses of the Philippines due to climate change will be at 3.2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030 and could further rise to 5.7 percent by 2040.

Under the much worse scenario, the World Bank estimated that the costs of climate shocks could amount to 7.6 percent by 2030 and 13.6 percent by 2040. "As illustrated by this figure, you can see the poor would suffer the most. The poorer the households, the more negatively the consumption is estimated to be affected by climate change," Mr. Coulibaly said.

While the cost of climate adaptation could be substantial, this is easily outweighed by the more significant economic benefits. To illustrate, the cost of making vulnerable new infrastructure in the Philippines climate resilience is estimated to be about 0.6 percent of GDP annually, at level with the cost of improving climate resilience in the agricultural sector.

The clarion call to the citizenry from the Climate Change Commission should be heeded: "Today is an opportunity to get things right: to secure climate



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# EDITORIAL

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The clarion call to the citizenry from the Climate Change Commission should be heeded: "Today is an opportunity to get things right: to secure climate equity and justice for all."





### *Editorial*

## Kalbong gubat resulta'y pagguho ng lupa at baha

**H**INDI lamang malawakang pagbaha ang dinulot ng Bagyong Paeng sa maraming bahagi ng bansa kundi pati na rin ang landslides. Nanalasa ang Bagyong Paeng noong Biyernes at grabeng tinamaan ang Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). Tumawid sa Visayas Region noong Sabado at sunod na hinagupit ang Bicol Region at ilang beses nag-landfall sa mga probinsiya sa Southern Tagalog Region bago tinatak ang West Philippine Sea. Sa pinaka-latest na report, umabot na sa 48 ang namatay at marami pang pinaniniwalaang nawawala.

Pinakagrabeng tinamaan sa BARMM Region ang mga probinsiya ng Maguindanao del Norte at Maguindanao del Sur. Ayon sa report, pinakamarami ang namatay sa Maguindanao del Norte na umabot ng 40 at may mga hinahanap pa. Maraming bahay ang natabunan ng lupa makaraang maguho ang Mt. Minandar sa Maguindanao del Norte. Tinatayang 100 bahay ang nabaon sa putik. Umano'y dahil sa malakas at walang tigil na pag-ulan kaya nanguho ang bundok.

Hindi lamang sa Maguindanao nagkaroon nang malawakang landslides kundi pati na rin sa Sitlo Grahe, Bgy. Busay, Cebu City kung saan maraming bahay din ang natabunan ng lupa. Ganito rin ang nangyari sa ilang bayan sa Laguna, partikular sa Calauan at Nagcarlan na nagkaroon ng landslides. May mga kalsada na hindi madaanan ng sasakyan dahil sa naghong lupa.

Kalbo na ang mga gubat. Naubos na ang mga kahoy dahil sa illegal logging at pagka-kaingin. Wala nang kinakapitan ang lupa sa mga bundok kaya sa pag-ulan, guguho ito at aagos ang putik at mga bato at lililbing nang buhay ang mga naninirahan sa paanan ng bundok.

Bumabaha dahil sa illegal quarrying. Dahil sa pagkagahaman ng mga kompanyang nagku-quarry, nasisira at nawawasak ang mga ilog, bumababaw at wala nang kontrol kaya mabilis umapaw. Tatangayin ang mga bahay na nasa pampang.

Magpapatuloy ang ganitong trahedya kapag walang ginawang aksyon ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources at local government units. Isulong ang pagtatanim ng mga puno sa bundok at gubat. Ipagbawal ang quarrying.



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# Ecology over greed

**“Greed should be prevented from destroying the riches of nature that generations would benefit from.”**

Environmental groups are questioning Asian conglomerate San Miguel Corporation's expressed commitment to safeguarding the environment and public welfare as it pursues projects that put natural resources at risk.

In the rush to put up a liquefied natural gas facility in Batangas to feed the fuel requirements of the Ilijan plant and another one under construction, SMC is endangering the Verde Island Passage or VIP that, in turn, earned the ire of Batangueños and ecology groups.

The Department of Agrarian Reform has ordered a halt on the project, while different groups are working on the revocation of the environmental compliance certificate awarded to SMC.

The DAR action was based on its failure to acquire a land conversion approval for the project site.

A campaign has raised 12,500 signatures thus far on the petition platform Change.org for the government to deny permits for fossil gas plants and LNG terminals in Batangas.

The petition described the passage as an underwater wilderness that stretches for more than 1.4 million hectares through the provinces of Batangas, Marinduque, Mindoro Occidental and Oriental and Romblon.

Over 1,736 fish and 338 coral species, and thousands of other marine life rely on the habitat.

The marine area protects 60 percent of all known shore fish species in the world, making it the most biodiverse marine habitat on the planet. It is called the Mecca of global marine shore fish biodiversity.



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DAILY TRIBUNE



SUBSCRIPTIONS  
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# Daily Tribune

WITHOUT FEAR & WITHOUT FAVOR

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Moreover, this marine corridor provides food to more than two million Filipino fisherfolks. Since it is an ecological wonder, the area is also a travel hotspot and a source of tourism livelihood for millions in the coastal area.

**“A campaign has raised 12,500 signatures thus far for the government to deny permits for fossil gas plants and LNG terminals in Batangas.”**

The petition also cited Executive Order 5788 which former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed on 8 November 2006 which committed the government to ensure the protection, conservation, and sustainable resource use of the VIP Marine Corridor.

Following this, representatives of provinces and various agencies made a strong commitment to protecting VIP on 29 March 2017 through a Memorandum of Agreement creating the VIP Marine Protected Area Network and Law Enforcement Network.

An alarm has been raised in the petition over the expansion “of a fossil fuel industry in the province of Batangas, on top of an already existing coal and gas fleet.”

“The Philippine government and fossil fuel proponents are pursuing massive plans to build new natural gas, more accurately fossil gas, power plants and LNG terminals in Batangas,” according to the petition.

In the integrated project, Atlantic Gulf and Pacific Co.-Linseed is building a liquefied natural gas import terminal facility in Batangas City, and SMC-Excellent Energy Resources Inc. is constructing a 1.75 gigawatt LNG power plant in the same vicinity.

Both projects are threats to the biodiversity of the VIP and the livelihoods of the people who depend on it. Greed should be prevented from destroying the riches of nature that generations would benefit from.

The petitioners are now strongly urging government action to preserve the natural resource.



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# BusinessWorld™



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## Information, relief, and environmental responsibility



Atty. Jose Ferdinand M. Rojas II

### RISING SUN

**I**t often takes calamities or disasters for people to wake up a little and realize some important things. I say "a little" because, after a while, we do have a tendency to forget. And so the cycle simply repeats itself.

As far as Typhoon Paeng is concerned, as of this writing, news reports have come out that there were massive destruction, landslides, displacement, deaths, and flooding in some areas in Mindanao, like Zamboanga, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, and Cotabato. Certain camps have lamented that real-time news reporting has been inadequate and updates were not being shared fast enough for concerned groups and individuals to extend much-needed help. We were focused on the path of the typhoon—which was necessary, of course—but somehow, some of

us failed to pick up on the calls for help coming from other places. Calls for rescue, for instance, are always urgent and require real-time dissemination.

Relief has to reach the needy more quickly. There were a few small efforts that were visible online at the height of the typhoon, but again people always need to know where to send immediate help so families in evacuation centers will not starve and remain warm and well. Many of their needs—like medicines, clothing, blankets, food items, cooking ingredients, water, and the like—

Relief has to reach the needy more quickly. There were a few small efforts that were visible online at the height of the typhoon, but again people always need to know where to send immediate help so families in evacuation centers will not starve and remain warm and well. Many of their needs—like medicines, clothing, blankets, food items, cooking ingredients, water, and the like—have to reach them quickly, for obvious reasons. Needless to say, the resources of the small rescue and relief organizations will never be enough to provide for all the needs of those affected. For example, the cash collection of Patreng Non's group (a meagerly P23,000 as of press time) had to be divided among 11 municipalities in Mindanao. We all know the national government allocates budgets for situations like this, it just needs to be distributed fairly, quickly, and

without so much fanfare. Finally, we have been calling time and again for our environmental agencies to take great care and responsibility for safeguarding our forests, trees, mountains, waters, and Mother Nature as a whole. Illegal logging and quarrying, for one thing, have to stop because the trade-offs are high. Lives, livelihood, and our people's future are at stake. And as long as we are unable to overcome our greed, our people will continue to suffer greatly in the years to come. How many more typhoons and disasters will it take before we finally come to our senses? Let us not forget that climate change brings with it more disastrous climate events, so instead of tearing down nature, why not work harder to protect it? Obviously, our present efforts are not enough.

without so much fanfare.

Those who wish to extend help may course it through Community Pantry PH (find them on Facebook), while those who would like to work with a platform to match needs with resources and response can find organizations like Green Releaf on Facebook.



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## Negros Oriental approved 140 quarry applications in 3 months

WITH all eyes on the Percy Lapid murder case, it's easy to forget the pile of unsolved murder cases from the past six years. For instance, a week from now will be three years since radio broadcaster Dindo Generoso was gunned down in Dumaguete City. Initially, the progress of the case was fast. Two of the suspects were arrested, the suspected triggerman surrendered, and the owner of the backup vehicle was identified. Murder charges were filed against the four. Alas, three years later and all is quiet on that front. Then Negros Oriental Provincial Police Director Julian Entoma didn't live to see the killers brought to justice. He passed away in August 2021, at 57 years.

However, the case was suddenly back in the limelight after Negros Oriental Gov. Roel Degamo claimed that the alleged triggerman and one of the accomplices are among the 100 plus persons whose applications for quarry operations were cleared by Pryde Henry Teves and endorsed to the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB). Mr. Teves, the brother of Negros Oriental Third District Rep. Arnie Teves, served as governor from June 30 until the special provincial board of canvassers in Negros Oriental on October 3 canceled his certificate of proclamation and proclaimed Degamo the rightful winner of the May 9, 2022 elections.

Degamo, in his October 27 press conference with lawyer Richard Enojo, revealed that Teves, during his three months in office, approved 141 quarry projects — mostly for sand and gravel extraction — and signed corresponding endorsement letters to the MGB-7 regional director Armando L. Malicse for the latter to issue area

### RESURGENCE



### MARIT STINUS-CABUGON

clearance and status for the projects. Teves' endorsement letters, posted online, show that among the project holders are Roger Rubio, the suspected triggerman in Generoso's murder, and Teddy Salaw, the man who was accused of driving the backup vehicle. The murder charge against Salaw was dismissed by the prosecutor. Rubio reportedly returned to active duty in Negros Oriental some time ago, but he may since have retired.

As for the other quarry project proponents, the governor pointed out that several had the same family names as certain known personalities, for instance: Depalubos, Mallari, Futralan and Lacuesta. Henry Teves' legal officer during his brief stint as governor was Ronel Depalubos. A number of "Depaluboses" are listed among sand and gravel extraction project proponents. Are they related or is it a mere coincidence? How about Mallari, Futralan and Lacuesta? Degamo claimed that one of the project proponents is a child of Col. Germano Mallari. Police colonels Mallari and Carlos Lacuesta and LtCol. Alvin Futralan are or have been assigned in Negros Oriental. Mallari, a native of Daanbantayan, Cebu, served as provincial director from October 2021 until he was relieved on August 16. The relief became controversial as an order was issued, then recalled, on August 15, and a new one issued the following day.

Mallari's relief came a month after he cheated death when he and his companions — all on motorcycle — were hit by a truck in San Carlos City, Negros Occidental. Col. Ruben Verbo, the newly



■ Negros Oriental Gov. Roel Degamo, at his Oct. 27, 2022 press conference, is seen showing letters signed by former governor Pryde Henry Teves, endorsing various sand and gravel projects to the Mines and Geosciences Bureau. With Governor Degamo is lawyer Richard Enojo. PHOTO/SCREENSHOT OF VIDEO POSTED IN GOV. ROEL DEGAMO'S OFFICIAL FACEBOOK PAGE

installed chief of the Guihulngan City police, was killed in this tragic accident. The group was reportedly on its way to Bacolod City.

Going back to the controversial sand and gravel extraction projects whose applications for area clearance and status, I understand, the MGB-7 office hasn't acted upon yet, some were endorsed by Teves as late as September 30. One of the letters that was posted online concerns the extraction of siliceous clay within "unclassified public forest" in Barangay Maaslum, Ayungon. There is already existing silica mining projects in this barangay, I believe. And in the adjacent barangay Jandalamanon, the New People's Army's Mt. Canserron Command in January 2019 burned heavy equipment of another mining company engaged in silica mining. The estimated damage was P120 million. The mining company and then Ayungon mayor Edsel Enardecido had been at loggerheads over the mining operations and there was a suspicion that the mayor might

have had something to do with the attack, an allegation that he, a former marine, vehemently denied. Enardecido was one of the victims in the July-August 2019 shooting rampage carried out by suspects who until this day have not even been identified.

Degamo's trusted man, lawyer Richard Enojo, who was with the governor at the press conference, was recently suspended from the practice of law for six months by the Supreme Court's Second Division for neglecting a client's case. And that's just one of the controversies that Enojo has figured in, which is not helping Governor Degamo gain the confidence of those who are skeptical of his intentions. However, the governor has official documents to support his case that Pryde Henry Teves in his three months as governor of Negros Oriental approved nearly 150 applications for various mineral extraction projects from Santa Catalina in the south to Guihulngan City in the north, the proponents apparently being his close allies.



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31 Oct. 2022  
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# Fearsome 'balete' tree finds mystique fading in modern times

By Dempsey Reyes  
@dempseyreyesINQ

Sixteen-year-old Enola (not her real name) recalled how she felt her skin crawl every time she took a peek at the "balete" tree towering a few meters away from her classroom.

It didn't help when the security guard at her school in General Trias City, Cavite province, warned schoolchildren not to get too close to the tree with the creepy hanging roots because it "ate people up."

They were told it was the dwelling place of supernatural monsters like the half-man, half-horse "tikbalang" and the tree giant "kapre," along with the "diwata" (fairy) and "dwende" (dwarf).

One day, Enola saw a "mariposa" butterfly, which seemed bigger than its usual size, fluttering out of the balete's hollow trunk.

The girl and her classmates crowded around it for a closer look and concluded, as children would, that a diwata must be living inside the balete and shape-shifted into that butterfly.

"Back then, I personally just wanted the tree to be gone so I could get it off my mind," Enola said.

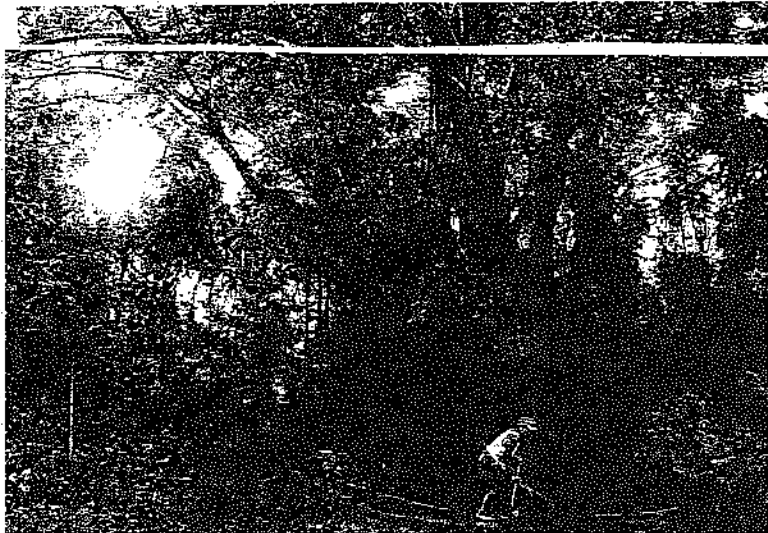
A staple in horror stories in popular culture and folklore in the Philippines, the balete tree has been the object of fright and fascination among Filipinos for decades, even centuries.

## 'White lady'

A popular urban legend about the tree is the two-lane street in New Manila, Quezon City named after it.

A "white lady" is said to stalk unsuspecting motorists passing along Balete Drive, but that story has been retold in many variations as far back perhaps as the 1970s.

One such story, which has prompted fear in some and laughter in others, is about a seemingly distraught woman in white who hails a cab and asks the driver to drop her off at a house along that road.



**'A PALACE IN ITSELF'** This "balete" tree is centuries old or believed to be 400 years old located at Brgy. Campalanas, Lazi, Siquijor. It is the ultimate setting for a horror movie. It is locally known as the oldest and biggest tree in the province of Siquijor. Legends and myths have been attached to the history of tree. —INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

Upon reaching that destination, the woman asks the driver to wait for her and passes through the side of that house.

After quite a long wait he rings the bell and inquires about his passenger, describing the woman, only to be told that she had long been dead.

Balete Drive has inspired at least two movies about a wronged woman seeking justice from the afterlife, although the street, which intersects some of the busiest thoroughfares in Quezon City, is now lined with condos and various establishments.

In 2005, a barangay official proposed to declare the street a "haunted site," hoping it would boost local tourism.

At Malacañang, too, a balete tree stands tall in front of the old presidential palace.

In 2011, then President Benigno Aquino III declared it a heritage tree despite stories among Palace staff that it was inhabited by a kapre.

How did such fear of the ba-

lete tree start?

## 'Least endangered' tree

According to University of the Philippines (UP) anthropology professor Felipe Jocano Jr., this dates back to the Spanish colonial period when priests and friars preached against indigenous religions and superstitious beliefs.

"The tree itself was always regarded as the home of the spirits," Jocano told the Inquirer, noting that the balete is a known "residence of spirits" based on ancient stories. "Spirit beings were a familiar part of the natural environment," he said.

In some ways, the fear of the balete has benefited the species, as it has kept humans at bay.

It may well be the reason why it is considered the "least endangered" of all native trees in the country, according to Lillian Rodriguez, an assistant professor of ecology and taxonomy also at UP.

Balete trees help sustain Philippine rainforests, being a

source of staple food for hundreds of wildlife species.

"If we have #RiceIsLife, they would have their own hashtag: #FigsIsLife," Rodriguez told the Inquirer in an online interview. "This is particularly evident when you stumble upon a fruiting balete tree in the forest."

## 'Sacrifice'

While Filipinos fear the balete tree, the local name of several species of figs from the genus Ficus, its close relative, the banyan tree, or strangler fig, is revered and even worshiped elsewhere, including by Buddhists in parts of Asia, such as Thailand and Cambodia.

They hold the banyan tree in high regard, as it is believed Buddha achieved enlightenment while he was meditating under its shade.

As for the balers, the tree has always been considered to be "connected" to the spiritual world by Filipinos, said Jonathan Carl Salazar, a member of the Philippine Native Tree En-

thusiasts, who specializes in the balete.

Salazar said locals had long believed that cutting down the tree would require a "sacrifice"—often the life of the perpetrator.

Others say that playing around the balete tree or making noise in the vicinity might disturb the creatures lurking inside.

"For me, we should also hold the balete trees in high regard to prevent any threats," Salazar said.

One way of giving respect to the balete tree would be to utter the words "tabi tabi po" or "excuse me," he said, "so as not to experience any supernatural effects."

## 'Strangled to death'

Under folk traditions, the balete tree is seen as a "palace in itself," Jocano said, as those taken or lost in it were bound to enter a "totally different world."

Deep in the forest, the balete tree is clearly distinguishable from other trees, making it easy to locate for birds and insects that look at it as food source.

While myths surrounding the balete may not be grounded in science, its biological life cycle may qualify as a horror story of its own.

As hemi-epiphytic plants, the balete tree starts as a seed on a tree branch up in the forest canopy, according to Rodriguez.

As it grows, the tree continues to shoot its roots down to the ground, giving it its distinct appearance, she said.

Once they reach the forest floor, the roots receive "more nutrition" from the soil, eventually thickening enough to "suffocate" the host tree, Rodriguez said. The host tree begins to wither and die because of "indirect competition."

"This is why the insides of mature baleta trees are hollow, because there was once a tree inside the center of the baleta," she explained.

This may be the scientific reason for Filipinos' fear of the balete tree, "because life was once inside it but the balete tree strangled it to death."

Like all fig trees, the balete has white sap or "dagta," which

Rodriguez said contains plenty of chemical compounds that are proven to be antibacterial and antimicrobial.

Traditionally, these fig species are used to cure small open wounds, with its leaves and the bark having the greatest concentration of antimicrobial compounds, she said.

But no specific studies have been done yet in the country as to the possible medicinal use of baleta's components, except for other Ficus species like the Ficus septica ("hault") and Ficus nota ("tibig"), according to Rodriguez.

The ecology professor said it was "fortunate" that Filipinos feared the native tree.

## 'We let them be'

"We leave them as is. We refrain from cutting them, thinking we might offend the spirits living inside these trees," she said. "As a result, we preserve their diversity. We let them be and they continue providing food for our native fauna."

But Rodriguez said such treatment should extend to other tree species, as she called on the government to "put its foot down" on illegal logging, especially within the country's protected areas.

"Commercialism and greed know no bounds," Rodriguez lamented. "Habitat conversion and illegal logging will always be huge threats to all our trees, the baleta trees included," she said.

Time may also not be on the side of the baleta tree.

As modernity creeps into the country's forests, chipping away at the mystique that once protected the baleta, the legends surrounding the scary tree are fading away, too.

Soon, the baleta tree may grow more and more vulnerable to exploitation, according to Jocano.

"Nowadays," he said, "with a more materialistic worldview, these trees and places no longer evoke the same fear as they did in the past, thus endangering them." —INQ





31 Oct, 2022  
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By Torbjørn Kirkeby-Garstad

OFFSHORE WIND is emerging as a possible "win-win" for the Philippines in its pursuit of energy independence. The country's success will depend on clear regulations, strong incentives, early investments in grid capacity, and the political will to make it all happen.

Offshore wind can meet growing energy needs, while protecting our land.

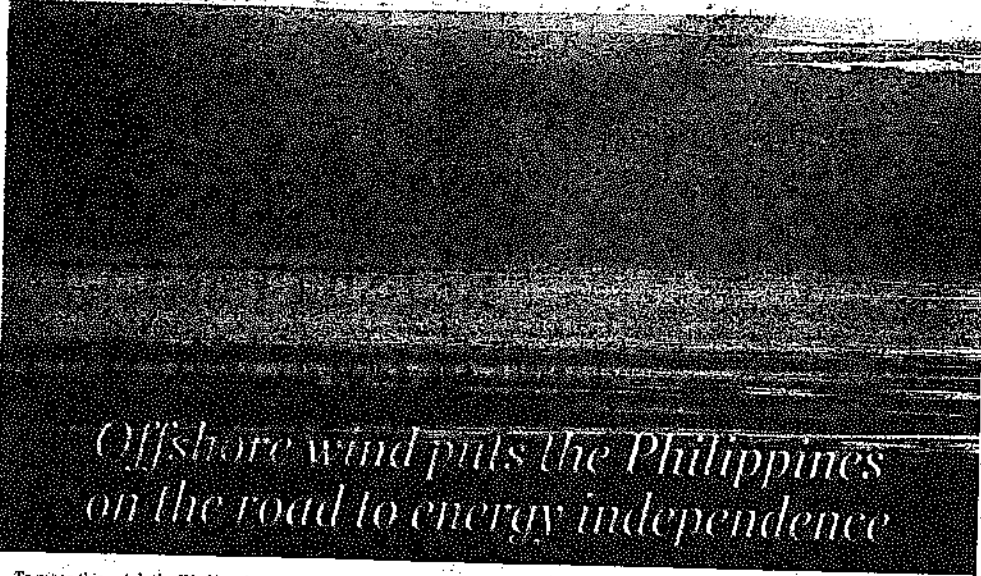
With its lush and beautiful nature, both above and below the sea, the Philippines is balancing the development and environmental agendas. And like all nations, it faces the imperative to transition to cleaner sources of energy, while protecting its precious, and limited, land resources.

Land scarcity is a problem, and offshore wind is one of the solutions. Food vs Energy vs Environment is a false choice. The Philippines can achieve greater security on all through good political craftsmanship.

When you combine increasing food security concerns with the growing demand for clean energy, it's natural to explore ways of producing energy offshore, rather than on land. Offshore wind in Asia, Europe, and North America has reached 60 gigawatts (GW) to date, and another 315 GW is anticipated to be added to the global energy mix by 2031.

Offshore wind is poised to be an abundant energy source in the Philippines, with potential for up to 178 GW according to the World Bank. It's been identified as a viable energy solution that allows this country to protect its scarce land resources, boost local employment, and stimulate industrial growth.

Size matters in the offshore wind game.



## Offshore wind puts the Philippines on the road to energy independence

To get to this point, the World Bank suggests the Philippines needs a government-sanctioned roadmap, supporting a minimum of 15 GW of operational capacity by 2035, 30 GW by 2040, and 50 GW by 2050. This level of government commitment will give offshore wind players the long-term assurance they need to make the necessary investments. It will also help the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) plan its own development, as the grid remains a critical limiting factor to expanding renewables.

By the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2022, the Philippines Department of Energy (DoE) has awarded over 22 GW of service contracts for offshore wind. This is a good start, but a lot of work remains to secure a position as more than just a minor contributor in the larger offshore wind ecosystem. The Philippines is

home to strong players in the energy industry, and the country must continue to partner with global leaders to successfully navigate the energy transition. Upscaling offshore wind along the shores, the Philippines has the potential to create a national cluster that benefits both the local economy and national development.

We have a window of opportunity to build a thriving offshore wind industry. If we look at mature offshore wind markets today, they deliver competitively priced energy with zero direct emissions. This did not happen by accident. Every thriving market for offshore wind has always started with a certain level of government support. It begins with a clear and agreed upon roadmap towards a defined target that in turn drives the regulatory agenda. Well-crafted

regulation gives the assurance needed to encourage investment.

To attract capital and secure the development of a domestic renewables industry, offshore wind will require a form of feed-in tariff in the initial phase. The larger the scale and the greater the visibility on the regulation side, the lower the tariff can be. However, there is no way around the fact that the first movers will require incentives from government to develop the industry. Thanks to the government support, the offshore wind power costs have fallen dramatically in recent years in the UK. In the latest auction, prices dropped 5.8%, and is a quarter of the current spot price.

Developing the domestic offshore wind industry will require upgrades of not only the national grid, but also the country's ports, domestic shipping capabilities,

sea-traffic management and much more – all with a keen eye to protect the rich and beautiful underwater environment surrounding the Philippines. In addition to Department of Energy and Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Maritime Industry Authority and the Philippine Coast Guard should also be involved.

Support from the local government is also crucial to the success of offshore wind. From a regulatory and political perspective, they are an essential enabler in ensuring everything is in place to succeed. National, provincial, and municipal governments must work together to harmonize regulations. With the build-out of offshore wind comes the need to take care of the aquatic life around the infrastructure. It requires research and mapping of the biodiversity and the migratory routes for

aquatic life and birds. This enables the offshore developers to deliver the projects in a responsible and sustainable manner.

When it comes to the local fisheries in the Philippines, we see some clear advantages connected to offshore wind. While the construction period for the offshore structures may reduce catch levels temporarily, the large number of structures installed act as artificial reefs and can help boost biomass generation in the project areas.

The potential is enormous, but time is of the essence.

The Philippines is a country rich in offshore wind resources. It has a strong maritime legacy. It is home to highly capable local industries. And it's a country that has long welcomed global partners to help it progress. These factors combined make the Philippines the ideal setting for a thriving offshore wind sector, and the country is well-positioned to extract significant value from this energy resource.

Offshore wind has the potential to put the Philippines on the road to energy independence. We see that a crucial enabler for offshore wind success in the Philippines will be finding the right partners who understand and respect Filipino culture, history, and legacy. The future offshore wind sites will become important infrastructure for the country's future, and its development must be done in a way that is respectful and profitable for all.

\*Global Wind Energy Council, annual report 2021

TORBJØRN KIRKEBY-GARSTAD is the General Manager Southeast Asia, Scatec. Scatec has a joint venture with Abotiz Power, SN Abotiz, and is aiming to develop 2.4 GW of offshore wind in the Philippines over the coming years.



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## Millions at risk of climate displacement in Middle East

**CAIRO:** Little rainfall, aggressive heat waves and worsening drought make the Middle East the most water-stressed region in the world, with climate change threatening to displace millions of people.

Hussein Abu Saddam, head of the farmers' syndicate in Egypt which is hosting the COP27 global climate summit in November, told Agence France-Presse (AFP) he is already witnessing a climate-induced exodus from the countryside.

Agriculture in Egypt — "one of the most arid countries in the world" — has grown even less profitable because of new climate-linked hazards such as "the appearance of new parasites," he said.

"Young people from rural areas are migrating abroad or to big cities to work in industry."

According to the UN refugee agency UNHCR, "roughly 90 percent of refugees come from countries that are the most vulnerable and least ready to adapt to the impacts of climate change."

"If people can't farm, if people can't work, if people can't find food, they have few alternatives to displacement," Amy Pope, deputy director of the International Organization for Migration, told AFP.

In 2021, natural disasters forced "nearly 3 million people" to leave their homes in Africa and the Middle East, she said.

"And the situation is only going to get worse."

### Rising sea level

By 2060, Egypt's already stretched agricultural sector could shrink by as much as 47 percent, researchers predict.

In addition to "the decline in agricultural production," rural-urban migration is also fed by "the attractiveness of urban life, the city and services that are available there," according to Florian Bonnefi, a research fellow at the Center for Economic, Legal and Social Study and Documentation in Cairo.

Globally, the World Bank estimates that by 2050, if nothing is done to prevent it, there will be 216 million people internally displaced by climate change, including 19.3 million in North Africa.

Some 7 percent of people in North Africa — where densely populated coastlines are among the world's most threatened by rising waters — live less than 5 meters (16

feet) above sea level, according to the European Institute of the Mediterranean.

As coastlines are affected, populations will naturally converge on big cities: Cairo, Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, the Casablanca-Rabat area and Tangier.

But these "hotbeds of climate migration," the World Bank warns, are themselves vulnerable to rising waters.

In the Egyptian city of Alexandria, for example, 2 million people — nearly a third of its inhabitants — could be displaced and 214,000 jobs lost if the sea level rises by half a meter.

### 'Violent conflict'

Climate-induced urban migration can "increase the pressure on natural resources," according to economist Assem Abu Hatab, "thus leading to social tensions and violent conflict" in a region where agriculture currently accounts for 22 percent of employment.

Already in Sudan, tribal clashes over access to water and land leave hundreds dead every year. In just two days in October, at least 200 people died when violence erupted in the southern Blue Nile state.

According to Unicef, of the 17 most water-scarce countries in the world, 11 are in the Middle East or North Africa.

In Iraq, 20 percent of the country's fresh water could disappear if the world warms by "one additional degree" and rainfall decreases a further 10 percent, according to the World Bank.

A third of agricultural land could be deprived of irrigation, creating acute shortages for the country's population of 42 million.

Jordan, one of the world's driest countries, had to double its water imports from Israel in 2021, and the blockaded Gaza Strip has for years suffered chronic water shortages.

The international community has committed — first in Copenhagen and then in Paris — "to help developing countries adapt to the impact of climate change," including by supporting "different mechanisms for farming and water management," according to Pope.

In order to help communities "find other jobs and thus other sources of income" and stem climate migration, these financial commitments must now be kept. **AFP**