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DENR

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Masungi Georeserve mess

Police, DENR execs implicated

'We wanted to get the names, of course, the name of Remus Medina was mentioned. We wanted more so that the involvement of our policemen or military can be investigated and stopped.'

BY NEIL ALCOBER

Masungi Georeserve Foundation president Benjamin Dumaliang has implicated the names of an active police official and a retired official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources who, according to him, were illegally occupying the protected area within its conservation site covering the towns of Baras and Tanay in Rizal province.

Dumaliang was referring to former Quezon City Police District Director Brig. Gen. Remus Medina, who is now assigned to the Office of the Chief PNP, and former head of Rizal provincial environment and natural resources office Rey Crisostomo who, according to him, owns a resort within

the protected areas.

"There is also a general in the active service who gives us a big headache here in the protected areas. Hopefully action will be taken immediately," Dumaliang said.

"There is also a former PENRO official who has a resort here in our protected areas. He was the first to build a resort here against the law. He should be the one who enforces the law and sets an example but he's violating it. How can we expect our countrymen to follow the environmental laws if they themselves are the ones violating it?" Dumaliang added.

General Medina and PENRO Crisostomo were given show cause order in 2017 but this has been neglected by the DENR, Dumaliang said.

"They (trespassers and illegal occupants) are inching deeper into the watershed, putting our lives in danger because that's a geohazard zone — prone to floods and landslides," he added.

PNP chief Police General Rodolfo Azurin Jr. said he will conduct an investigation into the involvement of some policemen who are illegally occupying a land considered as a protected area.

"We wanted to get the names, of course, the name of Remus Medina was mentioned. We wanted more so that the involvement of our policemen or military can be investigated and stopped," Azurin said.

"We need to investigate but we need the cooperation of the complainant for this case to prosper. We don't care if they get dismissed or whatever happens to them. We need to place things in proper order," the PNP chief added.

Azurin also said that they will file charges against retired police officials who are also occupying a land within the protected areas.

"We will file a criminal case against them, because if the DENR found out that these are protected areas whose land title was under their names, the motive is definitely not good for the government," Azurin said.

Nilo Tamoria, Regional Executive Director of DENR Calabarzon, said they will also look into the allegations against the retired PENRO official.

"There are allegations like that. This is the PENRO who already retired a long time ago. We will look into this and when it is proven that he violated our environmental laws," Tamoria said.

DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones said the story behind these illegal claimants is so complicated.



Masungi 'invaders' leave area

BY ARIC JOHN SY CUA

THE Masungi Georeserve has declared that the armed men who set foot into the conservation area have already left.

"Today, our forests won, like a long drought welcoming its first drops of rain," the Masungi Georeserve said in a statement on its official website on Friday.

Earlier this month, around 30 armed men camped along Kilometer 58 of the Maharlika-Infanta Highway, particularly Lot 10 of the Georeserve.

Masungi thanked the Department of the Interior and Local

Government (DILG) Secretary Benjamin "Benhur" Abalos Jr. and Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Rodolfo Azurin Jr. for visiting the area and siding with environmental defenders.

"We found champions in DILG Secretary Benhur Abalos and PNP Chief Police General Rodolfo Azurin Jr., who have demonstrated today that they are firmly on the side of environmental protection

and the safety of its defenders," Masungi stated. "Majority of the invaders were no longer around just before the Secretary's party came on-site."

The Masungi Georeserve Foundation thanked Abalos and his staff for inspecting the site.

"With his commitment to protecting these areas, we look forward to working with him to bolster our efforts in reforesting and defending our conservation sites," the statement said.

The georeserve also thanked Sen. Ana Theresia "Risa" Hontiveros for calling an inquiry into the "armed invasion."

"Our gratitude goes to Sen. Risa

Hontiveros for her initiative to call an inquiry into the anomalous and violent incidents in Masungi's conserved areas, bringing even more sense of urgency on the matter," the statement added.

Masungi also called on the public to continue urging the national government to look into "anomalous and syndicated" activities around the area.

"This is not the end; this is just the beginning. We know that we will continue to sustain various forms of attacks after this, so we seek your continued support to help us power through. Our conservation work continues, in Lot 10 and other areas entrusted to us,"

the georeserve's statement wrote.

Azurin, meanwhile, ordered the probe on the alleged harassment and assault on one of Masungi Georeserve's caretakers.

"An investigation is also underway to identify possible violations of the group responsible for the alleged deployment of the armed men. What we are advocating for is to avoid any tension or violence from arising," Azurin said.

"Our security is tight. We are also constantly coordinating with the DENR and local government units. The PNP will continue to implement a sustained police presence at the Masungi Georeserve in Tanay, Rizal."

Police Regional Office-4A director BGen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. has previously released a statement to restore the sense of normalcy at Masungi amid the reported presence of security armed personnel in the protected area.

"Teams from Rizal Provincial Mobile Force Company, Baras and Tanay PNP were deployed to conduct 24-hour patrol and visibility to ensure peace and order in Masungi," Nartatez said.

The Masungi Georeserve was created in 1977 through Proclamation 1636 by then president Ferdinand Marcos Sr.

**WITH REPORTS FROM
ROSELLE AQUINO**



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House probe sought on Masungi issues

By SHEILA CRISOSTOMO

Four Rizal lawmakers have sought an inquiry into alleged illegal activities and other issues concerning the Masungi conservation site in Tanay.

Representatives Emigdio Tanjuatco III, Michael John Duavit, Jose Arturo Garcia Jr. and Juan Felipe Fidel Nograles filed Joint House Resolution 411 urging the House committee on natural resources to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation on alleged land grabbing, illegal fencing and violation of environmental laws at the Masungi Georeserve.

The resolution stated that the Masungi Georeserve is a "protected area" in the southern Sierra Madre mountain range.

A management contract was awarded by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to Masungi Georeserve Foundation Inc.

Tanjuatco cited incidents in July 2021 and last February when forest rangers were attacked while carrying out their duties.

On Sept. 18, 30 security guards of Sinagtala Security Agency, reportedly camped out along the Marikina-Infanta Highway, between the Kaliwa and Marikina watersheds, triggering a two-

week standoff.

Tanjuatco also expressed concern over the reported construction of illegal fences within the premises of Masungi, saying it "restricted the rightful access of farmers and residents, affecting their livelihood and day-to-day activities."

"More alarmingly, indigenous peoples in the area have allegedly been displaced due to these illegal construction," he said.

Philippine National Police chief Gen. Rodolfo Azurin Jr. ordered sustained police presence at the conservation site by putting up a detachment to prevent illegal activities.



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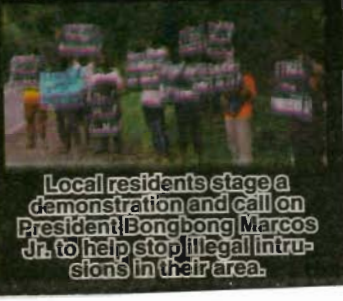
Invaders leave Masungi after Abalos, Azurin visit

By ALFRED DALIZON

SAYING that "invaders have left the area," officials of the Masungi Georeserve have hailed Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Benjamin "Benhur" C. Abalos Jr. and Philippine National Police (PNP) chief, General Rodolfo S. Azurin Jr. and his men for helping them win their battle following the two officials' visit to the vast forest on Friday.

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PNP chief, General Rodolfo S. Azurin Jr. (middle) talks with Rizal Police Provincial Office director, Colonel Dominic L. Baccay during a visit to Baras that is part of the Masungi protected area on Friday.



Local residents stage a demonstration and call on President Bongbong Marcos Jr. to help stop illegal intrusions in their area.

INVADERS

FROM PAGE 1

"Today, our forests won, like a long drought welcoming its first drops of rain. We found champions in DILG Sec. Benhur Abalos and PNP Chief Police General Rodolfo Azurin Jr. who have demonstrated that they are firmly on the side of environment protection and the safety of its defenders. Majority of the invaders were no longer around before the Secretary's party came on-site," the Masungi Georeserve said in a statement.

Prior to that, at least 14 security personnel from the Sinagtala Security Agency Services voluntarily left their place before Abalos and Azurin and his men inspected the roadside area said to have been illegally occupied by armed men along Kilometer 48 of the Marikina-Infanta Highway in Rizal province.

"Masungi Georeserve Foundation deeply thanks DILG Sec. Benhur and his staff for personally going to Lot 10, parts of Masungi Georeserve and the Masungi Geopark Project. With his commitment to protecting these areas, we look forward to working with him to bolster our efforts in reforesting and defending our conservation sites," the group said.

"We also give our sincere appreciation to PNP Chief General Azurin, for his dedication to peace and safety by putting up a police detachment in our vulnerable areas. We thank as well PNP Calabarzon Regional Director Brig. Gen. Nartatez for confiscating the firearms in the encampment when others didn't. This helped de-escalate the situation," it added.

Abalos and the PNP team led by Azurin were also joined by officials from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) led by Undersecretary Jonas Leones during the site visit.

Azurin promptly ordered his men to keep all areas of Masungi free of illegal occupants and declared that unauthorized security forces won't be allowed to enter the place especially those being claimed by different parties, without permit from the PNP.

He said violators of his order would lose their licenses as he instructed Nartatez and Rizal Police Provincial Office (PPO) director, Colonel Dominic L. Baccay to ensure that uniformed policemen would be guarding the site round-the-clock to prevent unauthorized intrusions.

PNP-SAF acquired part of Baras land

The Journal Group on Friday learned that the PNP Special Action Force (SAF)



'Invaders left the area' – Masungi Georeserve

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site round-the-clock to prevent unauthorized intrusions.

The Journal Group on Friday learned that the PNP Special Action Force has acquired some part of the georeserve in Baras, Rizal for training its commandos.

Azurin on Friday ordered the Rizal PPO to fully secure the Masungi Georeserve Area and enforce all ordinances pertaining to the forest land in Tanay and Baras municipalities.

Abalos also ordered the police force to help demolish all illegal structures in the area as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said it has been working with other government agencies to resolve the conflicting claims to parcels of land in the "contested" Masungi Georeserve in Rizal province.

In a statement sent to the media, the DENR assured residents in the province, especially in the municipalities of Baras and Tanay, that the agency is now in close coordination with the DILG, PNP, the local governments of the two concerned towns and the Protected Area Management Board to resolve the current and underlying issues in the area.

Joel dela Torre, Alfred Dalizon



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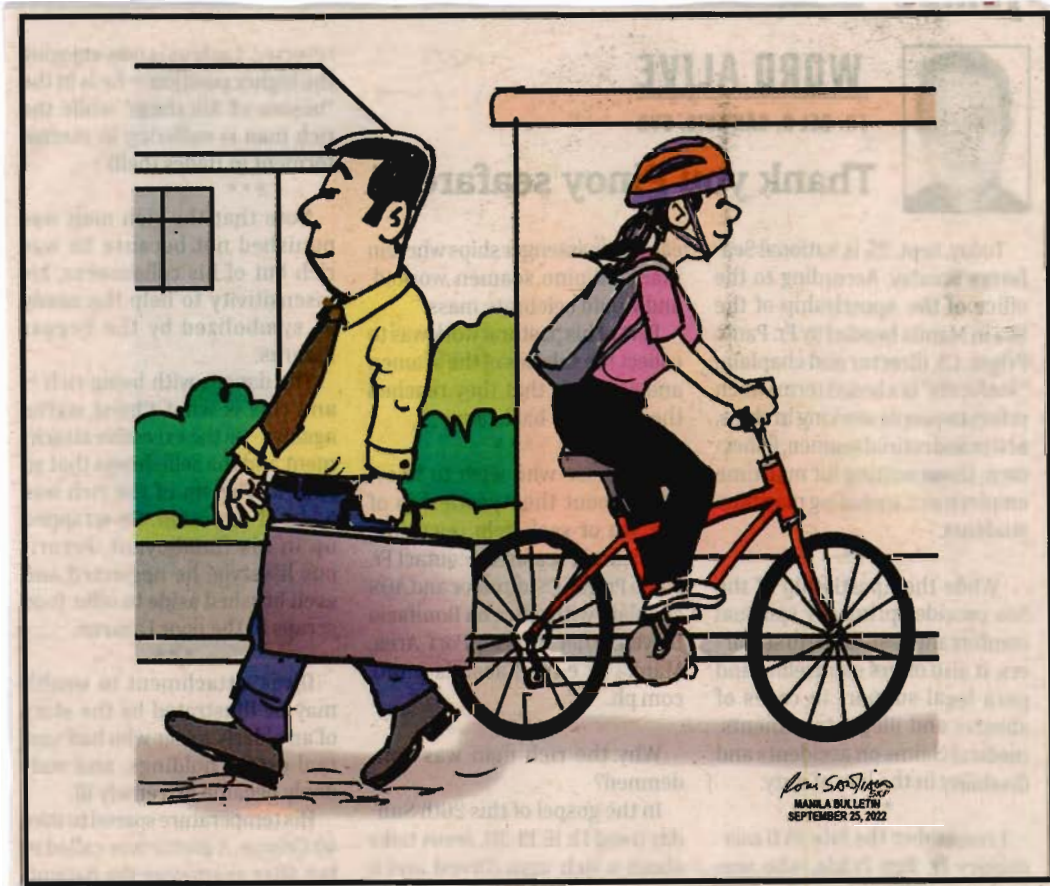
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EDITORIAL

**Car-free days: Giving
people a place to walk and
breathe clean air**



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TITLE: Car-free days: Giving people a place
to walk and breath clean air

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Many countries around the world went car-free for a day last week to "inspire motorists" to leave their cars just for a day - to walk, cycle, or take public transportation to go to work, or do errands. The global movement is considered a great opportunity to lower air pollution and boost efforts to protect the environment.

That day is now known as World Car-Free Day. It became a global movement in 2000 to bring awareness on ways to help the environment. The initiative is promoted by the United Nations Environment Programme in its website. It was launched by a group known as Carbusters, now named the World Carfree Network.

Declaring a car-free day is not new; since the 1990s, carless days were observed in many countries, either covering the whole city or specific areas like heritage sites and market areas. The first car-free Sundays were observed in 1956 throughout Belgium in the Netherlands. A global movement to encourage all countries to observe it set Sept. 22 as World Car-Free Day.

The European Commission has even taken a step further by transforming the day into a complete mobility week.

In the Philippines, carless days are observed in many cities and towns where local government units have closed streets to traffic on Sundays.

In Pasig City, there are "People's Streets" where week-day busy streets have become venues for fairs, play areas, or simply for pedestrians.

In 2019, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) encouraged carless Sundays in June to observe Environment Month.

Long before global warming came up, many towns had closed streets around their markets on Sundays to transform the streets into mini parks.

The benefits of car-free days have been measured in various ways. The impact differs from location to location, but the

impact on this day is clear that the reduction in air pollutants was between 40 percent in Paris to 89 percent on the day of the car-free marathon in London, a report from the World Economic Forum said.

Other benefits have been anecdotal but still considered significant - being pedestrians, people were friendlier and more relaxed, they talked to each other, and children played freely in those public places where cars were not allowed to run.

Car-free zones or car-free days have a place in communities. First, it reduces air pollution and helps efforts in slowing down climate change. Motor vehicles emit carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming, according to studies.

Second, it focuses attention on creating more pedestrian-friendly city areas.

Third, walking or cycling gives the benefits of exercise, which is good for the body.

In Metro Manila where we don't even need official figures to tell us the heavy volume of motor vehicles on the roads that cause traffic- and serious air pollution - observing car-free days or car-free zones should not be an action declared only every so often. Government leaders should initiate moves to give people a place where they can walk and breathe the clean air - at least once a week.



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

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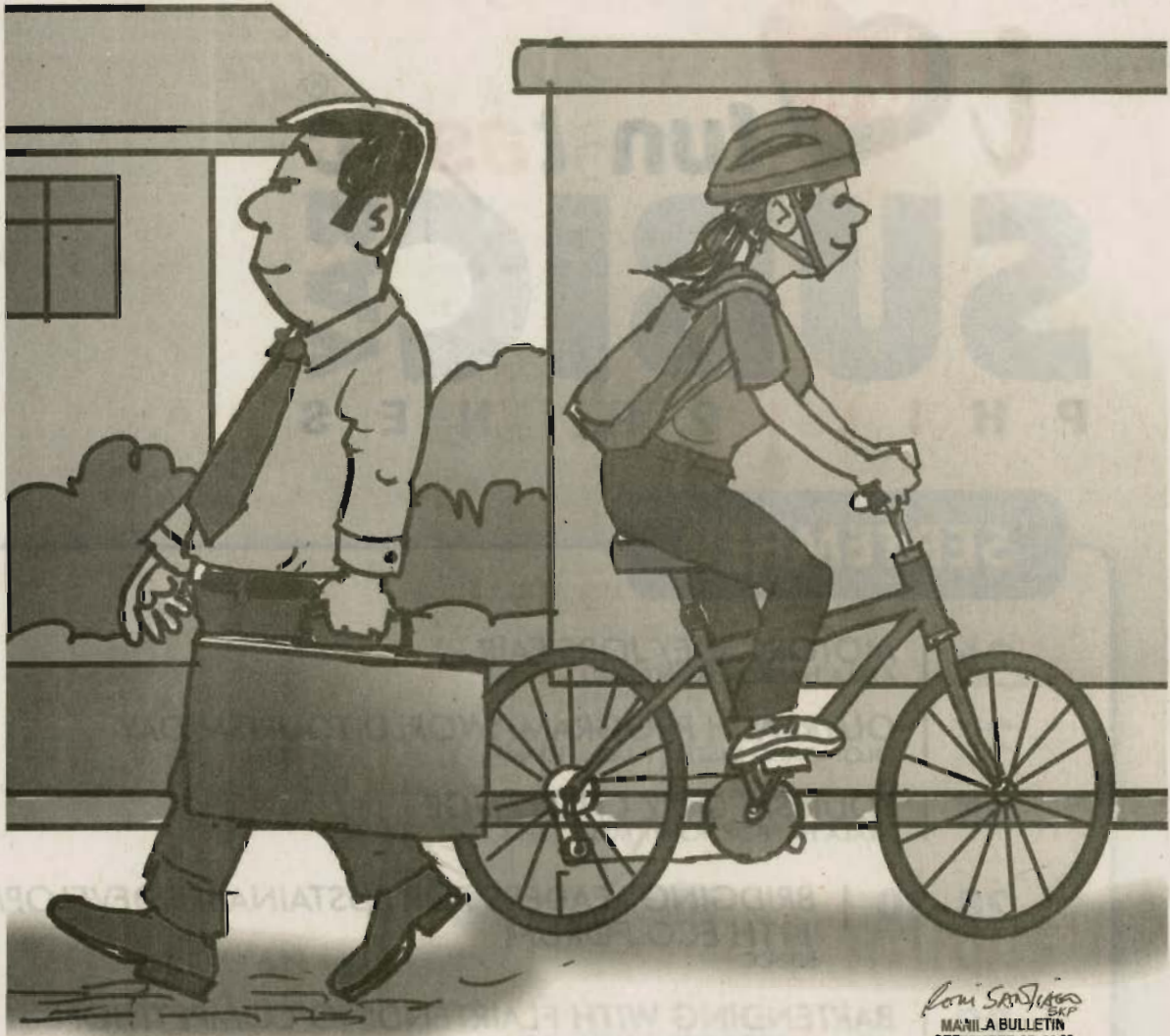
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MANILA BULLETIN

Editorial

Sunday, September 25 2022



Leon San Diego
MANILA BULLETIN
SEPTEMBER 25, 2022

**Car-free days: Giving people a
place to walk and breath clean air**



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'Time is up': Climate crisis raised at UN

Countries bearing the brunt of the climate crisis are fed up. During the annual gathering of world leaders at the United Nations, the low-lying island nation of Vanuatu makes an urgent plea.

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'Time is up': Climate crisis raised at UN

Vulnerable nations demand action now, saying least responsible suffering the most

UNITED NATIONS—Countries on the front lines of the climate crisis are fed up.

During the annual gathering of world leaders at the United Nations this week, low-lying island nation Vanuatu stepped up a fight to get the world to focus on combating global warming by calling for a fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty.

"The time is up—action is required now," Vanuatu's President Nikenike Vurobaravu told the UN General Assembly on Friday.

The treaty would aim to scale down coal, oil and gas production to limit the rise in temperatures to the globally agreed 1.5 degrees Celsius.

It would also "enable a global just transition for every worker, community and nation with fossil fuel dependence," said the leader of the carbon-negative country.

A UN climate science panel—the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—has warned that global emissions are on track to blow past the 1.5 degrees Celsius warming limit and reach some 3.2 degrees Celsius by the end of century.

Vanuatu has also asked the International Court of Justice to issue an opinion on the right to



DO OR DIE A protester holds up a sign during the International Youth Climate Action day in the French city of Toulouse on Friday. —AFP

be protected from the adverse impacts of climate change, a move that Vurobaravu said "is not a silver bullet for increasing climate action, but only one tool to get us closer to the end goal of a safe planet for humanity."

In Pakistan, devastating floods this month engulfed large swaths of the country, killing more than 1,500 people and causing damage estimated at \$30 billion. Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif asked

world leaders why his people were paying the price of global warming.

'Life changed forever'

"Pakistan has never seen a more stark and devastating example of the impact of global warming. Life in Pakistan has changed forever," Sharif told the General Assembly. "Nature has unleashed her fury on Pakistan, without looking ... at our carbon footprint."

Around the world on Friday young activists rallied for climate action, staging protests from New Zealand and Japan to Germany and the streets of New York to demand rich countries pay for global warming damage to the poor.

The protests take place six weeks before this year's UN climate summit, known as COP27, where vulnerable countries plan to push for compensation for climate-related destruction to homes, infrastructure and livelihoods.

"We renew our call to the world to declare total war on this century's greatest challenge: the climate change monster. And yet, after all these years, the world has failed to break our addiction to fossil fuels," Marshall Islands President David Kabua told the UN General Assembly on Tuesday.

Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said the least responsible for climate change are suffering the most.

"The Philippines is a net carbon sink, absorbing more carbon dioxide than we emit. And yet, we are the fourth most vulnerable country to climate change," he told the UN gathering. —REUTERS



Reviving strategies

“*Anyway, all these strategic state level policies Mr. Marcos is renewing and navigating with the US alliance, calling international attention on the country’s WPS problems.*”

“I cannot see the Philippines in the future without having the United States as a partner,” President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. declared before potential American investors last Tuesday in New York City.

Mr. Marcos Jr.’s remark is by far his clearest affirmation yet he is advocating for stronger ties with the United States.

“I believe that the political, economic, diplomatic relations that we make, the partnerships that we forged and that we strengthen now are going to be extremely necessary for the simple reason that they provide stability in this highly unstable economic, political, geopolitical, and diplomatic environment,” he explained his stand.

Notwithstanding his stance, speaking a day later during the 77th UN General Assembly, he said the country will retain its “friendly” foreign policy and said disputes should be resolved peacefully.

“By reinforcing the predictability and stability of international law, particularly the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, we provided an example of how states should resolve their differences: Through reason and through right,” he said.

Without detailing specifics, Mr. Marcos Jr. obviously is referencing the country’s dispute with China over the West Philippine Sea and the arbitration case against China at the Permanent Court of Arbitration, which the country won.

Foreign policy experts, as well as the foreign governments Mr. Marcos Jr. is addressing, would



OUT AND ABOUT
NICK V. QUIJANO JR.

have no trouble getting the messages he wants to put across.

But if you haven’t the faintest idea what Mr. Marcos Jr.’s goings about mean, best to see it as him shaking and blowing off the dust on some of the country’s decade-old strategic foreign policy scripts on the contentious WPS issue.

Take, for instance, his stand on further reinforcing the country’s strong bilateral relationships with the US.

Reinvigorating the US-Philippine alliance is all about furthering a stronger external defense infrastructure than at present.

That means the US security umbrella (aka military firepower) for Mr. Marcos Jr. is more than ever crucial for defending our territorial integrity and sovereignty if matters go haywire at the WPS.

Mr. Marcos Jr.’s plea for rules-based UNCLOS, meanwhile, is about engaging the international community on valid international concerns, like respect for the freedom of navigation and commerce, protecting the global commons or marine environment, and peaceful settlement of disputes.

At the same time, by internationalizing the country’s WPS problems before a forum like the UN, he reiterates the country’s interim solution of protecting itself by garnering sympathy from more partners and allies.

And, when he mentions the country as an example of how states should resolve differences, he is obviously talking about our country’s arbitration victory even if he avoided any mention of The Hague ruling.

If nothing else, our arbitral victory legally clarified what countries had maritime entitlements in the WPS. Meaning the ruling made clear

what rocks, reefs, and whatever features in the seas we are claiming did really belong to us and nobody else’s, including those being claimed by China.

As we all know by now, hegemonic China doesn’t want to recognize the arbitration case even if the previous administration tried the “strategy of putting the ruling on the shelf and trying to work closely with China.”

If it strikes you Mr. Marcos’ tone is vastly different from his predecessor’s experimental strategic subservience toward Beijing, you are right.

His predecessor, who despite affirming the Philippines’ ties with the US in official statements, several times had lambasted Washington.

Officials of the previous administration claimed the bombast was merely about the need to maintain an independent foreign policy and to boost ties with non-traditional allies like China.

In the end, however, both the country and China failed to secure any major diplomatic and economic breakthroughs despite the long bout of warm relations.

Anyway, all these strategic state level policies Mr. Marcos is renewing and navigating with the US alliance, calling international attention on the country’s WPS problems, and the arbitration case reflects our continuing struggle to solve

the puzzle on what we can practically do insofar as solving our security predicament when two great powers are competing for hegemony in our part of the world.

Sustaining the momentum in solving that puzzle is now Mr. Marcos Jr.’s daunting challenge, not least because a long-term solution to the WPS dispute is still not forthcoming.

Email: nevqjr@yahoo.com.ph

“*Reinvigorating the US Philippine alliance is all about furthering a stronger external defense infrastructure than at present.*”



Time's up: Countries trapped in climate crisis raise alarm at UN

UNITED NATIONS – Countries on the frontlines of the climate crisis are fed up.

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"The time is up – action is required now," Vanuatu's President Nikenike Vurobaravu told the UN General Assembly on Friday.

The treaty would aim to scale down

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Philippine Ambassador to the US Jose Manuel Romualdez shakes hands with US President Joe Biden as President Marcos looks on during a meeting on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly last Thursday.



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'Climate change monster'

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UN chief Antonio Guterres on Friday warned that the world is "not even close" to making enough progress on climate change, telling a meeting of Pacific Island leaders: "Those who did nothing to create this crisis are paying the highest price."

Guterres has also urged rich countries to tax windfall profits of fossil fuel companies and to use that money to help countries harmed by the climate crisis and people who are struggling with rising food and energy prices.

The United States and China are the world's biggest carbon emitters. On the fight against global warming, US President Joe Biden warned at the United Nations this week: "We don't have much time."

Fiji Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama condemned the climate war as being fought with "apathy, denial and a lack of courage to do what we all know what must be done."

He appealed for the world to step up. – Reuters



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BABE'S EYE VIEW

FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.

AMBASSADOR B. ROMUALDEZ

A very successful US trip for President BBM

Arriving on presidential flight PR001 from Manila to Newark Liberty International Airport in New Jersey, we were extremely honored to welcome President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. for his official visit to the United States – his first trip to the Western world as president. With me was Ambassador Antonio Manuel “Tonet” Lagdameo, our Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Our staff from the Philippine embassy in Washington D.C. and the New York consulate, together with the Philippine Permanent Mission to the UN office, worked extremely hard to make the President’s trip successful.



As instructed by the President, he wanted his trip to be meaningful and successful. And sure enough to begin with, the Filipino community event at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center was jampacked where the President and the First Lady received a very warm welcome from our *kababayans* – many of them traveling from across the US, with some coming all the way from Canada just to see the President, who lauded the overseas Filipino workers for their courage and heroism at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A good friend of mine, John Tuttle, who is vice chairman of the New York Stock Exchange, invited the President as their special guest. The President and the First Lady were expected to ring the closing bell. While making our way to the famous balcony, a number of Filipino traders and people at the trading floor came up to President BBM to congratulate and wish him well. I found it a very good omen that the green light was on, signaling that the stocks were going up.

Joining the President at the NYSE forum were members of his economic team that include Finance Secretary Ben Diokno and Trade Secretary Fred Pascual, as well as businessmen led by Aboitiz Group president and CEO Sabin Aboitiz, lead convenor of the Private Sector Advisory Council.

The NYSE meeting was a great opportunity to signal that the Philippines is definitely back on track and is the “next big thing in Asia,” as Sabin Aboitiz said, describing President Bongbong Marcos as smart because he was able to get 30 of the Philippines’ busiest CEOs to “voluntarily work for him and our country.”

The President’s schedule was arranged in such a way that even dinners became meetings with American business executives coming from various industries, along with discussions from organizations such as the US-ASEAN Business Council and the US Chamber of Commerce as well as the World Bank.

The main event was of course his speech at the 77th UN General Assembly, where he told the world that we are a country that seeks global peace, underscoring “our open, inclusive and rules-based international order that is governed by international law and informed by the principles of equity and of justice” as we continue to be “a friend to all, and an enemy of none.”

PBBM called attention to climate change as the greatest threat affecting nations and the people, saying “the time for talk about if and when has long since passed – it is here and now.” He called on industrialized nations to act responsibly as the effects of climate change are “uneven and reflect an historical injustice: Those who are least responsible suffer the most,” among them the Philippines.

The President also spoke about existential threats and the transcendent challenges of our times that are as consequential as those the world faced 77 years ago when the UN was founded. Saying the world is at a watershed moment and is ready for transformation, he enjoined world leaders to work together, to stand united and achieve success for the peoples of the world.

It was an excellent, well delivered speech that people thought was very well written. The President himself had been working on it for some time, adding ideas and keeping at it for the past month. As usual, the sour-graping naysayers started posting that hardly anyone heard the President speak at the UN General Assembly hall. The fact is, many permanent representatives usually watch it from their mission offices.

One of the highlights of the visit was PBBM’s meeting with Dr. Henry Kissinger, who came over to the President’s hotel. The former US State secretary – who has been described as “a master of the geopolitical chessboard” – was still very sharp at 99 and had fond memories of president Marcos Sr. and Mrs. Imelda Marcos. During their one-on-one, the President had good insights from Dr. Kissinger on what the world was before, and the political challenges the world faces today. The President truly appreciated Dr. Kissinger’s insights that were extremely valuable.

The most awaited engagement was President BBM’s bilateral meeting with US President Joe Biden. I accompanied the President together with Secretary Ricky Manalo and Secretary Diokno, House Speaker Martin Romualdez who brought along Senior Deputy Majority Leader Rep. Sandro Marcos. President Biden has always been a warm and friendly person and the two leaders hit it off very well. I must admit that it gives me a great feeling that we are truly on the right track regarding our relationship with the United States.

We were hoping BBM could stay longer but it was clear his schedule was already packed full once he arrives in Manila. While the amount of business pledges is normally used to evaluate the outcome of a President’s overseas trip, I personally think that the success of this US trip could not be measured simply in terms of the amount of potential investments but more in terms of elevating the country’s profile in ways that are immeasurable.

* * *

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Marcos wants to 'reintroduce' PH



BY CATHERINE VALENTE,
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK: Looking to "reintroduce the Philippines" to the world, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has plans for his nation on the international stage and at home — if, that is, the twin specters of pandemic and climate change can be overcome or at least managed.

And if he can surmount the legacies of two people: his predecessor and his father. He also wants to strengthen ties with both the United States and China — a delicate balancing act for the Southeast Asian nation — and, like many of his fellow leaders at the United Nations this week, called on the countries that have caused global warming to help less wealthy nations counteract its effects.

In a separate interview with former Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd here, Marcos also laid out his economic agenda where he hoped there would be "not one more hungry Filipino."

Marcos, swept into office in the May 2022 Philippine elections, is drawing distinctions both subtle and obvious

➤ **reintroduce** A2

MARCOS INTERVIEW WITH ASSOCIATED PRESS President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is interviewed by the Associated Press on socio-political issues on Friday, Sept. 23, 2022 (September 24 in Manila). Marcos, who was on a six-day visit to the US, spoke before the United Nations General Assembly and met with US President Joe Biden. The two world leaders reaffirmed their alliance amid concerns over the pandemic, climate change and the South China Sea dispute. AP PHOTO



REINTRODUCE FROM A1

Marcos wants to 'reintroduce'

tween himself and his voluble predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte, who alienated many international partners with his violent approach to fighting drug trafficking and the coarse rhetoric he used to galvanize supporters.

Asked if Duterte went too far with his lethal drug crackdown, Marcos redirected the criticism toward those who carried out the plan.

"His people went too far sometimes," Marcos told The Associated Press on Friday. "We have seen many cases where policemen, other operatives, some were just shady characters that we didn't quite know where they came from and who they were working for. But now we've gone after them."

Marcos said that his administration's war on drugs will shift its focus to target the big networks involved in such illegal activity in the country and not on "the kid who makes P100 a week selling weed."

Marcos said that he ordered the Philippine National Police to "go after people who — if we get them, if we neutralize them, or put them in jail, we put them away, whatever it is — will make an actual difference so that the supply of drugs, the system of distribution, the system of importation of drugs because much of it really does come from abroad."

"That will actually make a difference; it will put a stop to it. And that's what we are working on right now," the President added.

Citing that the "argument or rather the discussion about human rights in the Philippines in the past few years has really derived from the anti-drug war that President Duterte undertook," Marcos said what can be done is "to examine and learn lessons from the experience from the past administration."

He said that "enforcement, which has been the part of the drug war that has been most vigorously pursued by President Duterte, only gets you so far."

Marcos said that instead of simply enforcement, the "focus" would be on "prevention, education and cure."

"To be more sensitive and more sympathetic to those who actually have gotten caught up in this lifestyle," he added.

tural productivity and streamlining bureaucracy will ensure a more efficient government service, adding that this will be among his administration's strategies to ensure economic transformation.

In the same event, Marcos also touted the country's macroeconomic fundamentals and enabling policies as among the main reasons that make the Philippines a leading investment destination.

He said the Philippine economy expanded by 5.7 percent last year and 7.8 percent in the first half of this year.

Marcos also cited enabling policies and investor-friendly laws that seek to "leverage game-changing reforms."

He also took note of the country's human capital and boasted of a "young, educated, hardworking and English-speaking workforce that is globally competitive."

Family legacy

Marcos, 65, sat for a wide-ranging interview in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly's annual leaders' meeting. Three months into his administration, he seemed energetic and enthusiastic — and eager to project his vision for the nation beyond its borders.

On Thursday, he met with US President Joe Biden in a bid to strengthen the sometimes complicated ties that have ebbed and flowed between the two nations since the Philippines spent four decades as an American colony in the early 20th century.

"There have been bits and pieces where they were not perhaps ideal," Marcos told the Associated Press. "But in the end, that overall trajectory has been to strengthen and strengthen and strengthen our relationship."

In addition to Duterte, Marcos also must draw distinctions between himself and the most iconic figure in the Philippines' public sphere: his late father, whose name he shares. Ferdinand E. Marcos Sr., hero to some and plundering dictator to others, ruled from the 1960s to the 1980s, including a tumultuous period of martial law and repression. He made the family reputation an indelible part of Filipino history.

'Not one more hungry Filipino'

In the same interview with Rudd at the Asia Society here, Marcos said what he hoped to achieve with his economic agenda was simple: "Not one more hungry Filipino."

"It's a very simple aim. It's a very simple goal," said Marcos, acknowledging that "it is not necessarily a simple problem to solve, and it requires a great deal of effort and thinking on the part of the public sector." Marcos sits concurrently as the Philippines' Agriculture secretary.

The President noted the importance of their partnership with the private sector to reach the administration's goals.

So far, the country is addressing the supposed shortage of sugar and rising prices of basic commodities.

But Marcos said improving agricul-

Addressing the family legacy directly is something the son has been loath to do, at least explicitly, though he vehemently rejects use of the term "dictator" to describe his father's rule. To him, the political baggage of his parents is a remnant of the past.

"I did not indulge in any of that political back-and-forth concerning the Marcos family," he said. "All I spoke about was, 'What are we going to do to get into a better place?' And people responded."

Engaging, he said, would have simply been a retreat — and an unnecessary one. "It doesn't help. It doesn't change anything," he said. "So what's the point?"

The elder Marcos placed the Philippines under martial law in 1972, a year before his term was to expire. He padlocked Congress and newspaper offices, ordered the arrest of political opponents and activists, and ruled by decree. Thousands of Filipinos disappeared under his rule; some have never been accounted for.



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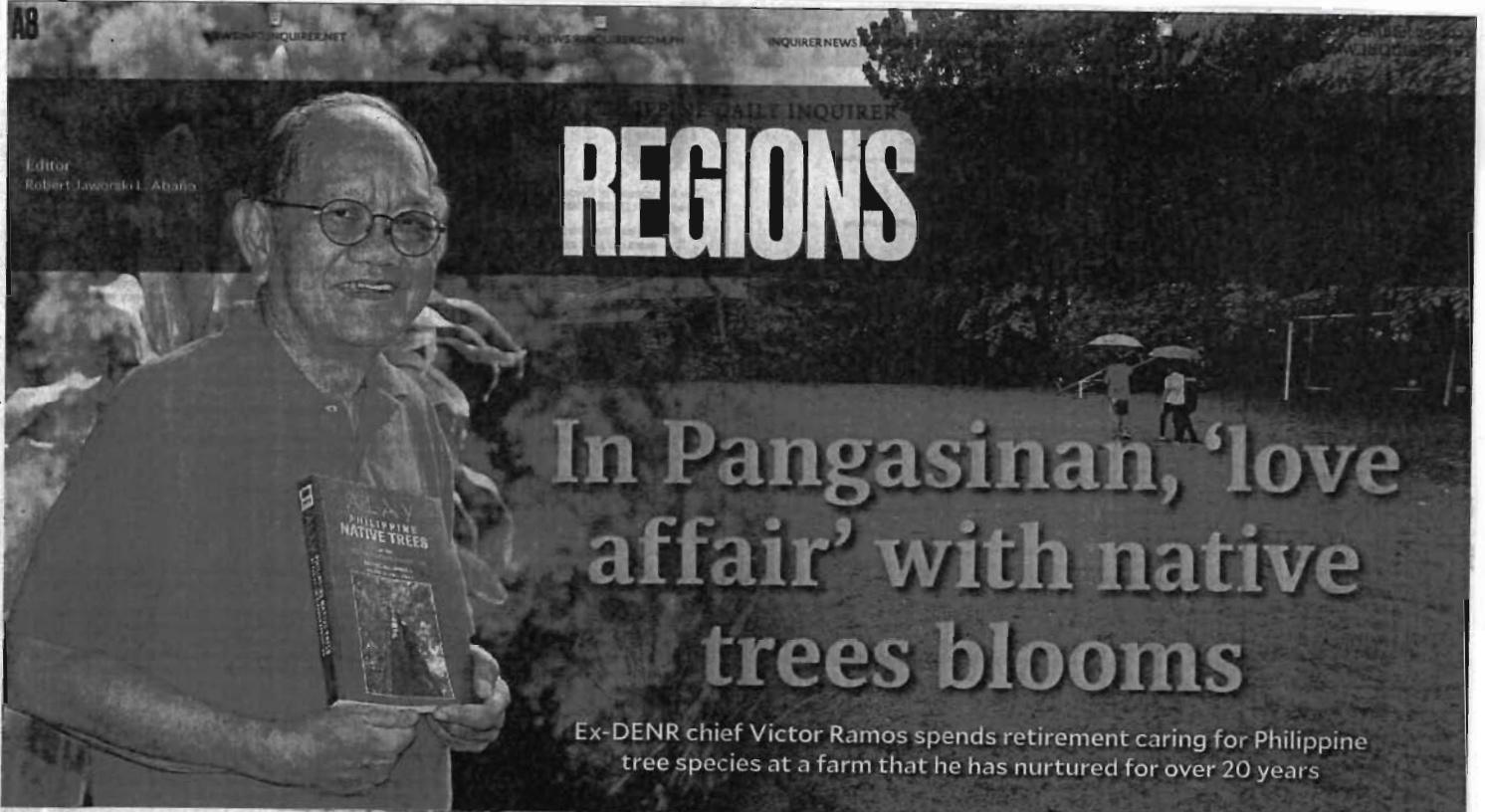
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REGIONS

In Pangasinan, 'love affair' with native trees blooms

Ex-DENR chief Victor Ramos spends retirement caring for Philippine tree species at a farm that he has nurtured for over 20 years

EVERGREEN Some 300 species of native trees grow in harmony in a tree farm established more than 20 years ago by former Environment Secretary Victor Ramos. The miniforest in Natividad town, Pangasinan province, according to Ramos, is a realization of a childhood dream. —PHOTOS BY WILLIE LOMIBAO



WATER FEATURE A hectare of pond carved out of Ramos' 4-hectare arboretum contains water from springs and sustains the native trees at the property all year round. —WILLIE LOMIBAO



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By Yolanda Sotelo
@yzsoteloINQ

NATIVIDAD, PANGASINAN—Growing up in a farming town in the shadow of the Cordillera mountains, former Environment Secretary Victor Ramos recalls how children like him were awed by trees that they would climb for their fruits.

During those days, “reverence for trees came naturally for boys like me,” Ramos tells the Inquirer.

“We showed respect to the trees by asking permission to pass by quietly. We were both awed and terrified of some trees that provide havens for some imagined ghosts,” he says.

According to him, schoolchildren then would observe the periodic blooming of some trees to know if it was already close to the end of the school year. “Nature was a daily part of our upbringing,” he says.

The former head of a department tasked with protecting the country’s trees, forests and natural resources reminisces about his childhood while sipping coffee on the porch of a wooden house in the middle of a 4-hectare property in Natividad town, which is next to San Nicolas town where he grew up.

The property is a miniforest of some 300 native trees, which are either indigenous or endemic to the Philippines. Indigenous species are native to a place but can also be found in other places, while endemic to a place means a species can only be found in a particular area, Ramos explains.

The arboretum (botanical garden devoted to trees) is tucked behind an elementary school and accessible by a bridge across a street canal.

There is nothing extraordinary at the property’s entrance, nor is there a signboard to announce what to expect around the corner.

But the gate opens to a seemingly different world: a pebbled road canopied by towering trees, a hectare-wide man-made pond, a bridge adorned with flowering plants, a house made of wood, a sprawling lawn and greenery all over.

“Exhilarating” may be an understatement when describing a visit to the arboretum, Ramos says.

A visitor can easily feel that it is cooler at the property, with the temperature about 2 degrees Celsius lower than the prevailing reading. The arboretum is also an open classroom where one can learn anything about native trees (some of them common, others rare and a few almost extinct) like how tall they can grow, how hard their wood is and their medicinal properties. Basic facts like the trees’ local, common and scientific names are provided in labels below each species.

Childhood dream

Ramos believes that the tree farm, named Victor O. Ramos Arboretum, is a realization of his childhood dream to retire in a “quiet place with a lot of trees.”

Everything seems to fall into place for Ramos, who, after leaving the corporate world, went on to head the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) from 1995 to 1998 under the administration of the late President Fidel V. Ramos.

While at the department’s helm, Ramos’ innate love for trees surfaced when he initiated the shift in policy from pro-logging to community-based stewardship of the country’s forest lands.

He also then denied the issuance of an environmental compliance certificate to the proposed multimillion-dollar cement plant complex in Bolinao, Pangasinan, citing the environmental degradation it would create.

“The department then was too focused on commercial timber trees because of the need for lumber. I got to know more about native trees after my time in the DENR. That happened when I joined like-minded enthusiasts for native trees,” he says.

Ramos started the arboretum when he turned 50, before he joined the government. He asked friends and well-wishers



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to gift him with saplings, and, as expected, he received seedlings like those of golden coconuts and golden showers, mahogany and acacia.

But his "love affair" with Philippine native trees came after his stint as environment secretary, when he had more time to focus on propagating them.

The then empty land in Natividad was planted with the saplings which became "nurse trees" for the native tree seedlings Ramos later acquired from the University of the Philippines (UP) Los Baños in Laguna province.

"My first native tree saplings were *yakal*, *bagtikan*, *guijo*, *kalantas*, *saplungan*, *malibato* and *narig*," recalls Ramos, now 77.

'Keepers of stories'

Ramos hopes that the younger generation will develop a passion for propagating native trees, some of which are disappearing because of deforestation.

"The rich biodiversity of our trees and plants is the foundation of human life as we know it. Losing them is a tipping point toward disasters, as history keeps reminding us," he says.

Some civilizations, like that of the Mayans, collapsed because they lost their trees, which resulted in the loss of water and the capacity of the place to produce food, Ramos notes.

Trees, he says, are keepers of stories of "how our early ancestors lived their lives, which trees they depended on for food, what cured their ailments, what provided oil to light their living spaces or helped them catch more fish in the rivers."

"These lessons become more important as we confront the challenge of living on a fast-changing planet, causing life-threatening events like droughts, heat waves and flooding," he adds.

Ramos willingly shares tidbits about how the trees he accumulated through the years preserve their kind.

"When some trees, such as *langka* (jackfruit), die, their last fruit will be under the soil, where the seeds will germinate and ensure that the species will not be extinct," he says.

He adds: "When molaves are in full bloom, there could be a long drought in

the offing. Threatened trees release flowers and seeds, which are also nature's way of preserving the species."

Lessons

There are many more "tree lessons" from Ramos, which he learned through his years of bonding with native trees.

A book that features 250 available native trees on the farm was published by the Philippine Native Tree Enthusiasts (PNTE).

The book, "Alay: Philippine Native Trees at the Victor O. Ramos Arboretum," is authored by Pastor Malabrigo Jr. and Arthur Glenn Umali, professor and assistant professor, respectively, of the College of Forestry and Natural Resources at UP Los Baños.

Each tree gets a page listing its local and scientific names; the places where it can be found; and uses of its trunks (timber for building boats, houses, furniture, musical instruments and others), leaves and flowers. Most trees have medicinal properties, and the book is a good source of information about medicinal plants.

PNTE founder Arceli Tungol says the 322-page book "covers a significant volume in a sector that has seen very limited coverage regarding one of our most precious but often ignored resources—our Philippine native trees."

"PNTE will strive to bring the book to the general public as well, in the hopes that knowledge of these trees will spark new interest that will motivate more people to support our advocacy," Tungol adds. **INQ**



PRACTICAL GUIDE
The book "Alay" gives readers a crash course on Philippine trees.
—YOLANDA SOTELO



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Endangered sea cucumber found in Aboitiz Cleanergy Park

THE sea cucumber puti-an, scientifically known as *Holothuria scabra*, is currently an Endangered (EN) species on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List because its population faces a high risk of extinction in the wild. The risk is primarily attributed to overfishing because of its high value in the fishing trade.

The puti-an is one of the 1,250 known species of sea cucumbers that are re-

lated to starfish and sea urchins. All sea cucumbers are ocean dwellers, inhabiting both shallow and deep ocean. Commonly, they are gleaned in shallow seagrass beds or fished in deeper reefs by free- or compressor-diving.

Surprisingly, a rapid scanning conducted by the University of the Philippines Mindanao (UP Mindanao) researchers in September 2021 found the existence of the endangered puti-an at the beach area of the Aboitiz Clean-

ergy Park in Sitio Punta Dumalag, Matina Aplaya, Davao City. Back in 2015, the team also conducted a rapid scanning of the beach and the nearshore reef. However, the puti-an was not encountered inside the observation transects.

Edible sea cucumbers like the puti-an are exported to other Asian countries that consider it a delicacy. In the country, no specific laws are directed at managing sea cucumbers so high-value species

are overfished.

"To be classified by the IUCN as 'endangered' means that puti-an fisheries monitoring and regulations should be in place to prevent the species from being critically endangered or worse, extinct," Dr. Ruth Gamboa, the lead researcher from UP Mindanao, said.

Gamboa emphasized that they cannot truly verify if the puti-an has not existed in the area before the recent survey since their team only conduct-

ed a rapid scanning of the beach. She says the record of puti-an now is worth another study.

Besides the puti-an, the team also found a Vulnerable (Vu) species hanginan or *Stichopus horrens*. Vulnerable species means that their population is in a continuing decline and their rate of reproduction cannot catch up with the rate of harvest. "In time, there is a possibility that those species will also be endangered," Gamboa add-

ed.

The IUCN Red List assesses the extinction rate of species population on a global scale. And sometimes, a global category may be different when applied to a regional or national category. Currently, the Philippine Aquatic Red List Committee of the Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) is conducting a national assessment of sea cucumber population in the

country.

The sea cucumbers are considered janitors of the sea floor. Their tentacles pick up tiny debris and waste materials that are small enough to fit their mouths. They form burrows in the sand that help loosen up the sediment, hasten the rate of decaying organisms, and mix the substrate preventing fouling of the ocean floor. These 'janitors', keep the coastal ecosystems, such as the Aboitiz Cleanergy Park, healthy and clean.



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PHIL'S Tubbataha Reefs, 4 others eyed for Asean marine protected area management project

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

FIVE sites in the Philippines, including the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park (TRNP), have been named among candidates for a marine protected area (MPA) management project in the Asean to be implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The TRNP, a popular diving destination in Palawan, is a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage Site, an Asean Heritage Park, and a known sea bird sanctuary.

Besides TRNP in the Sulu-Celebes Sea, the four MPA candidates in the Philippines are the Ticao-Burias Pass Protected Seascape in Masbate province, Bicol region;

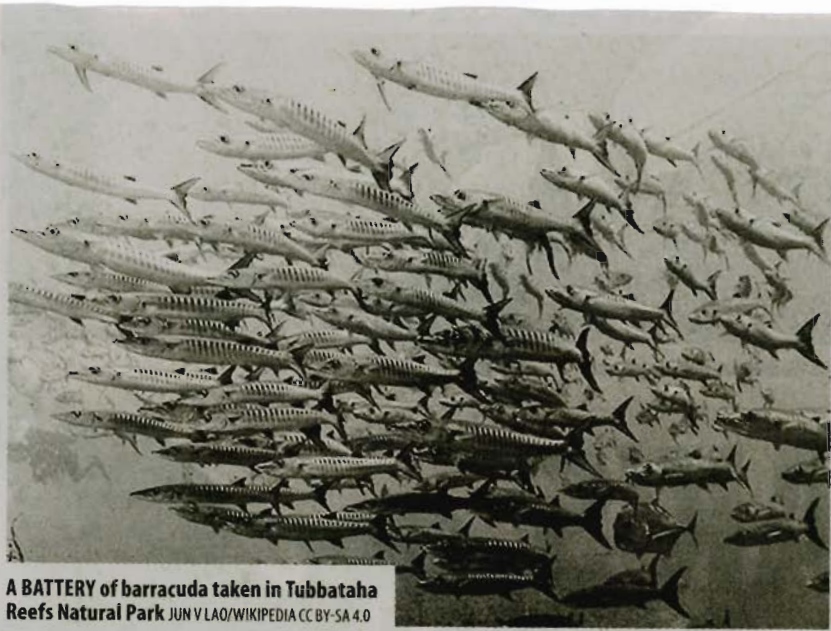
Agoo Damortis Protected Landscape and Seascape in La Union province; Bani-Bolinao-Burgos-Infanta, Dasol-Agno MPA Network in Pangasinan province; and Turtle Islands Wildlife Sanctuary in Tawi-Tawi province in Mindanao.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) recently convened the stakeholders of the project titled, "Effectively Managing Networks



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marine protected area management project

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A BATTERY of barracuda taken in Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park JUN V LAO/WIKIPEDIA CC BY-SA 4.0

of Marine Protected Areas in Large Marine Ecosystems [LME] in Asean [Enmaps],” to gather and consolidate data as it is scheduled to submit its project proposal to Global Environment Facility (GEF) by March 2023.

The sites being chosen for Enmaps are biodiversity-rich sites that also face threats of

be executed by the Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) in collaboration with the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB).

It includes national technical working groups from the Foreign Assisted and Special Projects Services of the DENR; the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources; National Fisheries Research and Development Institute; and the intergovernmental organization Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia.

The coastal and marine biodiversity of Asean are known to have 20 percent of the world's seagrass beds, a third of the world's mangrove forests with 45 to 75 tree species, and a third of the world's coral reefs with more than 75 percent of species of coral and 40 percent of fish species.

The GEF, multilateral environmental fund, has been concerned that the world's oceans have been reaching their ecological carrying capacity, a limit to their ability to produce fish for food.

environmental degradation.

Beneficiaries of the project are Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand.

Other Asean LME sites under the project are the Gulf of Thailand, Andaman Sea of the Bay of Bengal, the Indonesian Seas and the South China Sea.

The Asean Enmaps project will

“More than 75 percent of world fish stocks are already fully exploited, overexploited, depleted or recovering from depletion,” according to the GEF web site.

Enmaps aims to develop and improve the management of networks of MPAs and marine corridors within selected LMEs in the Asean region.

It likewise aims to conserve globally significant biodiversity and support for sustainable fisheries for people's livelihood and other ecosystem goods and services.

GEF has supported sustainable governance of 23 LMEs involving the collaborative work of many countries. The world's oceans is known to be divided into 66 LMEs.

This area covers 7.7 million square kilometers with 173,000 km of coastline.

LMEs are huge marine areas extending beyond boundaries among countries which is why collaboration is important. Enmaps has a cost of \$77.596 million. Of this, \$12.548 million consists of GEF grants.



URC steps up efforts to achieve plastic neutrality

By IRIS GONZALES

Gokongwei-owned Universal Robina Corp. (URC) continues to step up efforts to achieve plastic neutrality.

In a statement, URC said it opened two more plastic collection sites as part of its newly launched "Juan Goal for Plastic" initiative meant to achieve "plastic neutrality."

URC's initiatives are in line with the Gokongwei Group's thrust to promote long-term efforts that will significantly help manage post-consumer plastic waste. Various business units under the group have ongoing collection, sorting and recycling programs in various areas nationwide.

The new sites are in Batangas and Negros Occidental.

Both sites are currently collecting used PET bottles as well as other recyclable plastic waste, and offer incentive schemes.

URC's Batangas collection site is in partnership with the Local Government of Balayan, Batangas, the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (MENRO) and the Balayan Junkshop.

Some 281 kilos of PET bot-

ties were collected, through the efforts of the local community and URC employees, during the site's opening last month, it said.

The Negros collection site is likewise in coordination with the local government.

Over 700 kilos of plastic waste were gathered during the site's recent launch, with some 300 children and their parents and other community members participating.

URC is also currently collecting plastic waste in exchange for "environmental points" in various barangays in Bagong Ilog Pasig and General Mariano Alvarez, Cavite.

Other sites are in Robinsons Malls Galleria, Ermita, Las Piñas, Magnolia and Starmills Pampanga, where collection booths are set up every payday weekend until the end of the year.

In partnership with Robinsons Land Corp., these booths gather clean and dry plastic waste under a drop-weight-redeem scheme.

The plastic materials being collected are shredded into flakes that are then sent to an upcycling center. These flakes can be used to make high-value products such as chairs, bins and tables.



Maynilad, TV5, PHL Navy join Intl Coastal Cleanup

MAYNILAD Water Services Inc. (Maynilad) participated in the 37th International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) drive, which was held simultaneously in different locations within the National Capital Region.

The West Zone water concessionaire rallied volunteers from among its employees as well as from TV5 Network Inc., Cignal TV, Alagang Kapatid Foundation and the Philippine Navy's Naval Reserve Command to assist in the

cleanup drive, Maynilad said in a news release.

They were able to collect around 1,000 kilograms of trash from the Manila Bay coastline near the grounds of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

The company also provided a water station and water tanker during the event.

Since 2010, Maynilad has been supporting the cleanup drive, which is spearheaded by the Department of Environment and

Natural Resources.

Other cleanup sites this year include Tanza Marine Park and Barangay Tangos North and South rivers in Navotas; San Francisco River in Quezon City; Baseco, Dolomite Beach and SM by the Bay in Manila; and the Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park.

The International Coastal Cleanup is the world's largest volunteer effort to clean the ocean. In 2003, Presidential Proclamation 470 was issued declaring

the third Saturday of September of every year as ICC Day in the Philippines.

Every year, volunteers remove tons of trash from coastlines, rivers and lakes.

The cleanup drive also aims to raise environmental awareness and provide information that will guide and influence governments, corporations and industries in developing smart solutions to the marine debris problem.





Manila Water reaffirms commitment to protect water bodies during Intl Coastal Cleanup Day

MANILA Water joined simultaneous cleanup activities in different parts of Metro Manila last September 17 in celebration of this year's International Coastal Cleanup Day and in observance of the National Cleanup Month.

Together with volunteers from the public and private sectors, employees from Manila Water Foundation (MWF), Wastewater Operations, Advocacy and Research Department, Project Management Group, Enterprise Regulatory Affairs Group and 503rd reservists of the Company cleared waste and debris along the coast of Manila Bay and Manila Baywalk Dolomite Beach in a nationwide cleanup drive organized by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Manila water said in a news release.

According to DENR, the event was attended by 4,000 volunteers and a total of 3,500 sacks of garbage was collected.

In Taguig City, army reservists from Manila Water joined the cleanup drive at Pinagsama Creek.

The company brought water tankers and provided water stations for volunteers,



MANILA Water employees team up with volunteers from various public and private organizations and institutions in cleaning up Manila Bay during the International Coastal Cleanup Day, as the company recognizes the importance of coastal clean-up in keeping the waterways clean and pollution-free.

with water safe for drinking and handwashing.

MWF, in partnership with Unicef, distributed bottles of alcohol for the attendees.

Protection of water bodies has always been one of the key initiatives of Manila Water's environmental advocacy, notably "Toka Toka," the first and only environmental

movement in the country that promotes proper management of wastewater in every household as an important share (or "toka") in reviving rivers and waterways.

Manila Water, in partnership with local and national government agencies and barangays, conduct tree planting, waterway cleanups



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TITLE: Manila Water reaffirms commitment to protect
Water bodies during Intl Coastal Clean Up Day

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and desludging caravans.

"This day is a call to action for every one of us to take part in keeping our coasts and beaches clean. We remain steadfast in our commitment to help in the rehabilitation of Manila Bay," said Jennifer de los Santos, head of Manila Water's Advocacy and Research Department.

"We continue to pitch our part with the able help of our partners—the DENR, DENR-National Capital Region, Laguna Lake Development Authority, Local Water Utilities Administration and Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System—to whom we extend our sincerest gratitude," de los Santos added.

The company also joined the series of synchronized waterway cleanup drive organized by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority in partnership with different barangays in Metro Manila.

Last September 10, Manila Water volunteer employees assisted in cleaning the Maytunas Creek in Barangay Addition Hills in San Juan City, and Buhangin Creek in Barangay Plainview, Mandaluyong City.



China, 'di kaaway ng 'Pinas — P-BBM

BEIJING LANG ANG UMAANGKIN SA WEST PH SEA

IGINIIT ni Pangulong Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos, Jr. na may sobe-ranya ang Pilipinas sa West Philippine Sea (WPS) at walang namamagitan na "territorial conflict" sa pagitan ng China, at tanging ang Beijing lamang ang umaangkin sa teritoryo ng Pilipinas.

"The position that the Philippines takes is that we have no territorial conflict with China. What we have [is] China claiming territory

that belongs to the Philip-pines," pahayag ni Pangu-long Marcos sa isang pana-yam kasama si dating Austra-lian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd na silang nag-host ng meeting sa Asia Society sa New York, kahapon ng unaga.

"This is the position we take, and with our American partners, we have promoted that position. We have also made it clear to our friends in Beijing that this is the way we feel about it," wika pa ni

Pangulong Marcos.

May matagal ng mari-time dispute sa pagitan ng Pilipinas at China matapos na angkinin ng Beijing ang buong South China Sea.

Nanalo naman ang Pilipinas laban sa China

sa Permanent Court of Arbitration sa The Hague, Netherlands noong 2016.

Sinabi ng arbitration court na ang claim ng Beijing sa halos buong South China Sea ay ilegal.

(Mylene Alfonso)



Lahat ng paraan sa West Phl Sea susubukan - PBBM

Nakahanda si Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. na subukan ang lahat ng posibleng paraan para maresolba ang iringan sa isyu ng West Philippine Sea.

Muli ring inulit ng Pangulo na hindi ibibigay kahit isang pulgadang parisukat ng teritoryo ng Pilipinas.

Hindi anya nagbabago ang kanyang paninindigan sa isyu at ang kanyang patakarang panlabas at uunahin ang kapayapaan at pambansang interes.

Idinagdag niya na ayaw niyang maikumpara sa kanyang hinalinhan na si dating Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte, na dumistansya sa US at naghanap ng mas malapit na relasyon sa China.

Nang tanungin kung mas gusto niya ang isang bilateral o isang multilateral approach sa pagresolba sa problema, sumagot ang pangulo ng: "I will prefer any approach that will work. Let us try everything."

"Kung saan tayo makalusot, eh 'di maganda. Eh pero kung minsan hindi mo ma-expect kung saan talaga lalabas 'yung ano eh 'yung opportunity. Anuman ang gumagana, kung gayon iyon ay magiging mahusay. Minsan hindi mo inaasahan kung saan darating ang isang pagkakataon. Kaya subukan natin ang lahat," dagdag niya.

Sa isang forum na inorganisa ng non-profit Asia Society, sinabi ni Marcos na patuloy na makikipagtulungan ang Pilipinas sa China at iba pang claimant states para resolbahin ang mga isyung kinasasangkutan ng West Philippine Sea sa pamamagitan ng diplomasya at sa pamamagitan ng diyalogo.

Nanindigan din si Marcos na pag-aari ng Pilipinas ang ilan sa mga teritoryong inaangkin ng China.

Bagama't ang patakarang panlabas ay hindi talaga pinagkakaabalahan ng mga ordinaryong mamamayan, nagiging isyu ito ng "pagkain ng tao" kung saan ang mga mangingisda ay hindi pinapayagang magpatuloy sa kanilang kabuhayan upang mangisda.

Pero nanindigan din si Marcos na hindi dapat mauwi sa armadong tunggalian ang West Philippine Sea.

"Nobody wants to go to war. Ang isang bagay na kailangan nating iwasan ay ang shooting war," ani Marcos.

Malinaw din aniya na hindi maaaring ikumpara ang militar ng Pilipinas at China sa kakayahan at lakas.

Pero naniniwala rin si Marcos na ang lakas na maaaring imagamit ng gobyerno ay mula sa mga pakikipagtulungan sa mga bansa tulad ng Australia at mga miyembro ng ASEAN, kasama ang iba pa nating mga kaibigan at kaalyado sa rehiyon. (*Malou Escudero*)



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UN told: Pakistan floods signal global climate crisis

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif warned on Friday (Saturday in Manila) that his country's worst-ever floods were a sign of climate catastrophes to come around the world as he urged justice for developing nations that bear little responsibility for warming.

Unprecedented monsoon downpours flooded a third of the country — an area the size of the United Kingdom — killing nearly 1,600 people and displacing more than seven million.

"What happened in Pakistan will not stay in Pakistan," Sharif said in a passionate address to the United Nations General Assembly, adding that lost homes, decimated livelihoods and deluged cropland had meant that for many, life had "changed forever."

Sharif said injustice was inherent in the crisis, with his country of 220 million people at "ground zero" of climate change, but responsible for less than 1 percent of carbon emissions.

"Why are my people paying the price of such high global warming through no fault of their own? Nature has unleashed her fury on Pakistan without looking at our carbon footprint, which is next to nothing," he said.

"It is therefore entirely reasonable to expect some approximation of justice for this loss and damage," he continued, adding his voice to growing calls among developing countries for financial compensation from rich polluters.

The issue of "loss and damage" payments is deeply contentious.

Supporters argue that historic polluters have a moral imperative to pay for the loss and damage already caused by multiplying extreme weather events, which have not been prevented by measures to mitigate or adapt to global warming.

The idea has so far been shot down by rich nations, but UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres endorsed the proposal a few days ago, and it is due to be discussed at the next UN climate summit in Egypt.

Pakistan has estimated total financial losses at \$30 billion, and on Friday its finance chief Miftah Ismail tweeted that the South Asian country was seeking debt relief from bilateral creditors.

Turning his attention to neighboring Afghanistan, Sharif urged the international community to heed a \$4.2-billion UN appeal for humanitarian and economic assistance and release the country's financial reserves, frozen since the Taliban seized power in August last year.

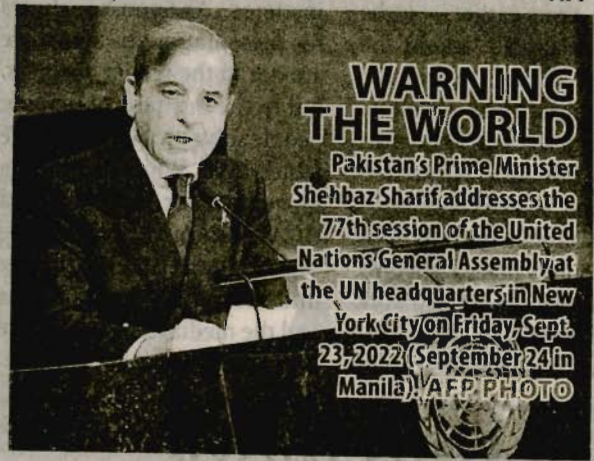
"Pakistan is working to encourage respect for the rights of Afghan girls and women to education and work. Yet, at this point, isolating the Afghan interim government could aggravate the suffering of the Afghan people, who are already destitute," he said.

The United States recently set up an outside fund to manage Afghanistan's frozen assets, saying it did not trust the Taliban.

On Kashmir, the Himalayan territory disputed between Pakistan and India since the two countries' independence from the UK in 1947, Sharif accused New Delhi of embarking on "illegal demographic changes" by opening the Muslim-majority region to mass migration by Hindu Indians.

He called on India to "walk the path of peace and dialogue by reversing its illegal steps of 15 August 2019," when New Delhi revoked Kashmir's constitutional autonomy.

AFP





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ONE of 14 dead sperm whales lies washed up on a beach at King Island, north of Tasmania, Australia, on September 20. DNRE TASMANIA VIA AP

14 dead sperm whales found beached on Australian island

CANBERRA, Australia—Australian wildlife authorities are investigating the deaths of 14 young sperm whales that were found beached on an island off of the southeastern coast, officials said.

The whales were discovered on Monday afternoon on King Island, part of the state of Tasmania in the Bass Strait between Melbourne and Tasmania's northern coast, the state Department of Natural Resources and Environment said in a statement.

A government Marine Conservation Program team traveled to the island on Tuesday and was conducting necropsies of the whales to try to determine their cause of death.

Photos distributed by the department showed whales lying on their sides in shallow water on the rocky shore of the island.

Authorities were planning to conduct an aerial survey to determine whether there were any other whales in the area.

The department said it is not unusual for sperm whales to be sighted in Tasmania and the area where they were discovered on the beach was within their normal range and habitat.

"While further inquiries are yet to be carried out, it is possible the whales were part of the same bachelor pod—a group of younger male sperm whales associating together after leaving the maternal group," the Environment Department said.

In the meantime, surfers and swimmers were being warned to avoid the immediate area in case the corpses of the whales attract sharks to the waters nearby.

Two years ago, about 470 long-finned pilot whales were found beached on sandbars off of Tasmania's west coast in the largest mass-stranding on record in Australia.

After a weeklong effort, 111 of those whales were rescued but the rest died. AP



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Climate migration: Indian kids find hope in a new language

BY ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL
AP Science Writer

BENGALURU, India—Eight-year-old Jerifa Islam only remembers the river being angry, its waters gnawing away her family's farmland and waves lashing their home during rainy season flooding. Then one day in July of 2019, the mighty Brahmaputra River swallowed everything.

Her home in the Darrang district of India's Assam state was washed away. But the calamity started Jerifa and her brother, Raju 12, on a path that eventually led them to schools nearly 2,000 miles (3,218 kilometers) away in Bengaluru, where people speak the Kannada language that is so different from the children's native Bangla.

Those early days were difficult. Classes at the free state-run schools were taught in Kannada, and Raju couldn't understand a word of the instruction.

But he persisted, reasoning that just being in class was better than the months in Assam when submerged roads kept him away from school for months. "Initially I didn't understand what was happening, then with the teacher explaining things to me slowly, I started learning," he said.

The children were born in a low-lying village, flanked by the Himalayas and the river. Like many parts of northeastern India, it was no stranger to heavy rains and naturally occurring floods.

But their father, Jaidul Islam, 32, and mother Pinjira Khatun, 28, knew something had changed. The rains had become more erratic, flash floods more frequent and unpredictable. They were among the estimated 2.6 million people in the Assam state affected by floods the year they decided to move to Bengaluru, a city of over 8 million known as India's Silicon Valley.

No one in their family had ever moved so far from home, but any lingering doubts were outweighed by dreams of a better life and a good education for their children. The couple spoke a little Hindi—India's most widely used language—and hoped that would be enough to get by in the city, where they knew nearby villagers had found work.

The two packed what little they could salvage into a large suitcase they hoped to someday fill with new belongings. "We left home with nothing. Some clothes for the kids, a mosquito net, and two towels. That was it," said Islam.

The suitcase is now filling up with school exercise books—and the parents, neither with any

formal education, said their lives center on ensuring their kids have more opportunities. "My children will not face the same problems that I did," the father said.

The family fled the low-lying Darrang district, which receives heavy rainfall and natural flooding. But rising temperatures with climate change have made monsoons erratic, with the bulk of the season's rainfall falling in days, followed by dry spells. The district is among the most vulnerable to climate change in India, according to a New-Delhi based think tank.

Floods and droughts often occur simultaneously, said Anjal Prakash, a research director at India's Bharti Institute of Public Policy. The natural water systems in the Himalayan region that people had relied on for millennia are now "broken," he said.

In the past decade, Prakash said, the number of climate migrants in India has been growing. And over the next 30 years, 143 million people worldwide will likely be uprooted by rising seas, drought and unbearable heat, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reported this year.

India estimates it has around 139 million migrants, but unclear is how many had to move because of climate change. By



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TITLE: climate migration: Indian kids find hope in a
new language

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2050, cities like Bengaluru are predicted to become the preferred destination for the nearly 40 million people in South Asia forced by climate change to leave their homes, according to a 2021 World Bank report.

"Especially if you've aspirations for your second generation, you have to move," said Prakash.

In the suburban area where Jerifa and her family now live, most people are from Assam state, many forced to migrate because of climate change and dreaming of a better future: There is Shah Jahan, 19, a security guard who wants to be a YouTube influencer. There is Rasana Begum, a 47-year-old cleaner who hopes her two daughters will become nurses. Their homes, too, were washed away in floods.

Pinjira and Jaidul have both found work with a contractor who provides housekeeping staff to the offices of US and Indian tech companies. Jaidul earns \$240 a month, and his wife about \$200—compared to the \$60 he'd made from agriculture. Raju's new private school fees cost a third of their income, and the family saves nothing. But, for the first time in years, in their new home—a 10 feet by 12 feet (3 meters by 3.6 meters) room with a tin roof and sporadic electricity—they feel optimistic

about the future.

"I like that I can work here. Back home, there was no work for women. ... I am happy," said Pinjira.

For now, Raju dreams of doing well at his new school. He has benefitted from a year-long program run by Samridhi Trust, a non-profit that helps migrant children get back to the education system by teaching them basic Kannada, English, Hindi and math. Teachers test students every two months to help them transition into state-run free schools that instruct in Kannada—or in some cases, like Raju's, English.

"My favorite subject is math," said the 12-year-old, adding that his favorite time of day was the bus ride to school. "I love looking out of the window and seeing the city and all the big buildings."

His sister, who wants to be a lawyer someday, has picked up Kannada faster than he has and chats happily with new classmates at her nearby government school, switching easily between her native and adopted tongues.

Their parents work alternate shifts to ensure somebody is home in case of emergencies. "They are young and can get into trouble, or get hurt," said Khatun. "And we don't know anybody here."

Their anxiety isn't unique. Many parents worry about safety

when they send their children to schools in unfamiliar neighborhoods, said Puja, who uses only one name and coordinates Samridhi Trust's after-school program.

Children of migrants often tend to drop out, finding classes too hard. But Raju considers his school's "discipline" refreshing after chaotic life in a poor neighborhood.

His mother misses her family and speaks with them over the phone. "Maybe I'll go back during their holidays," she said.

Her husband does not want to return to Assam—where floods killed nine people in their district this year—until the children are in a higher grade. "Maybe in 2024 or 2025," he said.

Every afternoon, the father waits patiently, scanning the street for Raju's yellow bus. When home, the boy regales him with stories about his new school. He says he now knows how to say "water" in Kannada, but that none of his new classmates know what a "real flood" looks like.

Editor's Note: This story is part of an ongoing series exploring the lives of people around the world who have been forced to move because of rising seas, drought, searing temperatures and other things caused or exacerbated by climate change.



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Asian coastal cities sinking fast — study

NEW DELHI, India (AFP) - Sprawling coastal cities in South and Southeast Asia are sinking faster than elsewhere in the world, leaving tens of millions of people more vulnerable to rising sea levels, a new study says.

Rapid urbanization has seen these cities draw heavily on groundwater to service their burgeoning populations, according to research by Singapore's Nanyang Technological University (NTU), published in the journal Nature Sustainability last week.

"This puts cities experiencing rapid local land subsidence at greater risk of coastal hazards than already present due to climate-driven sea-level rise," the study says.

Vietnam's most-populous urban centre and main business hub, Ho Chi Minh City, was sinking an average of 16.2 millimeters (0.6 inches) annually, topping the study's survey of satellite data from 48 large coastal cities around the world.

The southern Bangladeshi port of Chittagong was second on the list, with the western Indian city Ahmedabad, Indonesian capital Jakarta and Myanmar's commercial hub Yangon also sinking more than 20 millimeters in peak years.

"Many of these fast-subsiding coastal cities are rapidly expanding megacities, where... high demands for groundwater extraction and loading


from densely constructed building structures, contribute to local land subsidence," the study said.

Sinking cities are not of themselves a result of climate change, but researchers said their work would give a better insight into how the phenomenon would "compound the effects of climate-driven mean sea-level rise."

More than one billion people will live in coastal cities at risk of rising sea levels by 2050, according to UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

The IPCC says that global sea levels could rise by up to 60 centimeters (24 inches) by the end of the century even if greenhouse gas emissions are sharply reduced.





Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES BOARD
8th Floor NWRB, EDSA, Quezon City, Philippines 1105

PRIMEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE CORP.,
Applicant. Case No. 22-3412

NOTICE OF HEARING

This is an application for Certificate of Public Convenience to operate and maintain a waterworks system within Iriga City, province Camarines Sur, with the following proposed rates:

PROPOSED TARIFF

Residential and Institutional

Pipe Size	0-5 m3 (min)	6-10 m3	11-20 m3	21-30 m3	31-40 m3	Over 40 m3
½"	P168.50	34.00	36.80	39.90	44.20	49.40
¾"	P269.50	54.40	58.90	63.90	70.70	79.10
1"	P539.50	108.80	117.90	127.70	141.40	158.10
1 ½"	P1,348.50	272.00	294.70	319.30	353.50	395.30

Residential and Commercial

Pipe Size	0-5 m3 (min)	6-10 m3	11-20 m3	21-30 m3	31-40 m3	Over 40m3
½"	P168.50	34.00	36.80	39.90	44.20	48.40
¾"	P269.50	54.40	58.90	63.90	70.70	79.10
1"	P539.50	108.80	117.90	127.70	141.40	158.10

Commercial and Industrial

Pipe Size	0-15 m3 (min.)	16-30 m3	31-500 m3	501-1000 m3	Over 1000 m3
½"	P1,102.50	79.80	98.80	120.90	120.90
¾"	P1,762.50	127.70	158.10	193.40	193.40
1"	P3,526.50	255.50	316.30	386.80	386.80
1 ½"	P8,815.50	638.70	790.70	967.10	967.10
2"	P22,041.00	1,596.60	1,976.70	2,417.80	2,417.80
3"	P39,672.00	2,874.00	3,558.00	4,352.00	4,352.00
4"	P79,345.50	5,747.90	7,116.00	8,703.90	8,703.90

Bulk		Others	
Pipe Size	Per cu.m.	Pipe Size	Per cu.m.
1"	P215.90	¾"	P108.00

This application will be initially heard by the Board on 10 October 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.

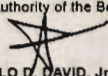
At least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled hearing, applicant shall publish this notice once in a newspaper of general circulation in the province of Camarines Sur and serve by personal delivery or registered mail a copy of the (i) application and its attachments, and (ii) this notice, to all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

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 8th day of August 2022.

By Authority of the Board:

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

Affected Parties:

The Secretary
Sengguniang Panlungsod
Iriga City, Camarines Sur

The Barangay Chairman
All the affected Barangays w/in
Iriga City, Camarines Sur

The General Manager
Iriga City Water District
Rufino Llagas, Sr. St.,
San Roque, Iriga City, Albay 4431

MT - Sept. 25, 2022