

28 September 2022 (Wednesday)



**DENR**

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THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



PAGE



UPPER  
LOWER



PAGE 1  
STORY



BANNER  
STORY



EDITORIAL



CARTOON

TITLE:

PAGE

1/2

DATE

09-28-22

## CA confirms DENR, DOT, DAR secretaries

By MARIO B. CASAYURAN

The bicameral Commission on Appointments (CA) confirmed on Tuesday, Sept. 27, the appointments of three members of the Marcos Cabinet.

They are Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Secretary Conrado M. Estrella III, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, and Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Ma. Esperanza Christina Codilla Frasco.

Estrella was recommended for confirmation by the CA agrarian reform commit- ► **11**



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
SINCE 1900  
**MANILA BULLETIN**  
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PAGE 1  
STORY



BANNER  
STORY



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CARTOON

09-28-22

TITLE:

PAGE

2/2

DATE

## CA confirms DENR, DOT, DAR secretaries 1◀

tee chaired by Sen. Nancy Binay, while Loyzaga was recommended by Sen. Loren Legarda, chair of the CA environment committee. Frasco was recommended by the CA tourism committee chair Rep. Jose Gay Padiernos.

When Rep. Rodante Marcoleta asked whether Yulo has divested from the entities or corporations under her or family's name, Sen. Cynthia A. Villar said one does not divest from inheritance.

Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri said Yulo-Loyzaga belongs to the rich Yulo family in the 50s to 60s "and would never accept a single centavo."

Zubiri threw 101 percent of his support for Loyzaga's confirmation.

Legarda expressed her appreciation for the nomination of Yulo-Loyzaga who understands that decisions related to the environment

must be based on science and that resilience must be done not just by one government agency but by every agency for a whole-of-government and whole-of-nation approach.

"I welcome you to government and thank you for taking the sacrifice..." Legarda said.

Sen. Grace Poe said one of the biggest problems of the environment in our country is really trash.

"And we know that other progressive countries have found a way to manage it by incineration. Thailand does it. Advanced European countries do it, too," she said.

"And not that I'm in support of this at this point, but may I request the good secretary to please submit to us the studies being done by the DENR with regard to incineration and if I may ask her now if she is open to study the possibility of having that in our country," she said.

"Because as you see, when we dump trash in an open area, that eventually will also seep into the soil; and sometimes they dump it near beaches that obviously will go to the ocean as well. So, weighing the disadvantage and advantage of that with regard to the environment, may I ask the good secretary what she thinks about possibly having this policy in the near future," she added.

Sen. Risa Hontiveros asked Estrella about his plans for the remaining land acquisition and distribution (LAD) balance and how he plans to accelerate and complete it during the Marcos administration.

She pointed out that the Duterte administration targeted to complete the LAD of almost 550,000 hectares of agricultural land.

Data from DAR showed the workable balance as of June 30 was 173,344 hectares of land.

"How will you combine the foolishness of the old and the wisdom of the new in your team to implement and accelerate the remaining LAD balance?" the senator asked.

In response, Estrella pointed out that DAR, under his leadership, would prioritize the speedy resolution of legal cases of contested lands and also speed up land validation.

### 63 AFP generals confirmed

Meanwhile, 63 generals/flag officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) were also confirmed.

Their confirmation was recommended by the CA national defense committee chaired by Rep. Jurdin Jesus Romualdo.

Among those confirmed were Gabriel C. Viray and Joannis Leonardi B. Dimaano as major generals, Donn L. Mirafior as rear admiral, and Carlo V. Lagasca as commodore. Confirmed as brigadier generals were Llewellyn S. Banaag, Vicente Mark Anthony P. Blanco, Francis Marlon S. Wong, Doroteo Jose M. Jalandoni, Romeo Jerome M, Dirilo, Giovanni T. Franza and Jose Demar A. Pauly.

The others are colonels or Navy captains.



## Environment, agrarian reform chiefs get CA nod

BY RAYMOND AFRICA

THE Commission on Appointments yesterday approved the appointments of Agrarian Reform Sec. Conrado Estrella III and Environment Sec. Ma. Antonio Yulo-Loyzaga.

Also approved by the Commission was the promotion of Lt. Col. Cesar Candelaria, of the AFP Medical Corps, to full-fledged colonel despite his pending case over the death of a Philippine Military Academy plebe in 2019.

Before his confirmation, Estrella vowed to accelerate and complete the remaining land acquisition and distribution (LAD) balance of almost 550,000 hectares of agricultural land during the past administration.

Data from DAR showed that the workable balance as of June 30 was 173,344 hectares

of land.

Estrella, whose grandfather Conrado Sr. also became DAR secretary during the time of President Marcos Sr., said the department, under his leadership, would prioritize the speedy resolution of legal cases of contested lands.

Records showed more than 4,000 cases pending before the DAR Adjudication Board.

"We will hasten providing agrarian justice so that there would be more titles that can be distributed. Secondly, we will use our network for the validation. And thirdly, we will have enough funds but if you will augment this, we will not refuse," he said in a mix of Filipino and English.

Estrella said he also plans to "digitalize" the DAR's information database, empower young

See ENVIRONMENT > Page B3

### ENVIRONMENT

farmers, and extend support services for farmers.

He said he is not against land conversion as long as the concerned land is not irrigated, which he said is consistent with the position of President Marcos Jr.

"That is the instruction of the President. If it is irrigated or irrigable, do not convert. If it is in highly-urbanized areas and already ripe for commercial or residential or industrial purposes, which will open up or create additional business and livelihood opportunities for our people, why not?" he added.

The CA approved the appointment of Loyzaga as DENR secretary upon the motion of CA Chairperson and Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri that was seconded by CA panel Chairperson and Senate president pro tempore Loren Legarda and Sen. Risa Hontiveros.

Loyzaga was asked by Rep. Rodante Marcoleta about her inheritance of 34 properties as reflected in her sworn disclosure of business, financial, personal, professional connections, and interests that was submitted to the committee and asked that she "divest" of such properties.

But Sen. Cynthia Villar told Marcoleta that a person cannot divest something that was inherited.

"(That is) inheritance. You cannot divest inheritance," Villar said.

Marcoleta insisted, however, that

Loyzaga's connections with the 34 entities should still be raised.

Zubiri stepped in, saying that Loyzaga came from a rich family "that's why I know there will be no corruption, kasi (because) she will never accept a single centavo out of corruption because their family is a family of integrity.

"She comes from a very wealthy family and these are all... none of them of which are ill-gotten. Mana 'yan from mga ninuno niya (Those were inherited from their forefathers)," Zubiri said.

Loyzaga said she is in favor of small-scale mining "as a means to lift certain populations out of their condition, socio-economically" but the department needs to "strengthen our capacity to observe, to evaluate the environment impacts of these activities at the local level."

She said the DENR has initially held a dialogue with the Department of the Interior and Local Government on the monitoring of small-scale mining activities "in order for us to be able to maintain some integrity in the ecosystem despite the necessity of this activity being made available to communities."

She said there are 50 Minahang Bayan which are presently recognized by the DENR, adding the department will review the approval of other small-scale mining since only 50 were approved after the Small-Scale Mining Act was passed 31 years ago.

Villar cautioned Loyzaga that small-scale mining may be used as a front by big mining companies.

Candelaria was among the 63 Flag

Officers and senior officers of the armed forces whose appointments were deliberated upon by the CA panel.

Hontiveros said Candelaria should be exempted in the list of confirmed promotions due to his inclusion in the death of Cadet 4th Class Darwin Dormitorio, which prompted the panel to suspend the hearing.

When hearing resumed, Rep. Jurdin Jesus Romualdo, CA panel chairperson, said the committee always considers the manifestations of its members to any appointments but after a short discussion, Hontiveros said she considered "further converting that into a motion to defer that one appointment.

"But out of consideration to the appeal of the (committee chairperson Rep. Jurdin Romualdo), I will simply leave my non-seconding of his confirmation on the record as a clear and strong sign to the Dormitorio family who is still pursuing justice for their son, and also as a clear signal and desire that such a death may never happen again," Hontiveros said.

Candelaria was the commanding officer of the PMA Station Hospital where Dormitorio became its frequent patient due to physical injuries he sustained from the maltreatment of upper classmen until his death on September 18, 2019.

Prosecutors included Candelaria in the case after he and other hospital officials allegedly "grossly failed to provide adequate medical care to Dormitorio which later caused his death."



# CA confirms new Cabinet appointees

By PAOLO ROMERO

The Commission on Appointments (CA) confirmed yesterday President Marcos' Cabinet appointees to the Departments of Tourism, Agrarian Reform and Environment and Natural Resources, as well as 63 generals and senior military officers.

Confirmed were Tourism Secretary Ma. Esperanza Christina Frasco, Environment Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo Loyzaga and Agrarian Reform Secretary Conrado Estrella III.

While the confirmation hearings of the individual Cabinet officials and military officers were relatively quick, the entire CA proceedings, including in plenary, took over seven hours given the number of the appointees.

Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri, who chairs the CA, said the apparent cramming of appointees and promotions on the table of the bicameral body is in preparation for the congressional break starting next week.

Deferring their confirmation meant the officials are considered bypassed and Marcos would have to reappoint them when Congress resumes session next month, he said.

Zubiri issued the statement before the CA plenary after Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano said the apparent cramming would prevent the members of the body from asking more questions to some officials, like Public Works Secretary Manuel Bonoan, who is scheduled to face them today.

Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda, who chairs the CA committee on environment, cited the experience and expertise of Loyzaga, who earlier declared that environ-



The Commission on Appointments confirmed yesterday the appointments of Conrado Estrella III as agrarian reform secretary, Ma. Antonia Yulo Loyzaga as environment secretary and Christina Frasco as tourism secretary, along with 63 generals and senior officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. GERMANY PINTOLO

ment programs must be based on science.

Estrella, meanwhile, was quizzed by Sen. Risa Hontiveros on his plans to accelerate the distribution of land.

Estrella said there is an estimated 173,344 hectares "workable balance" of land for distribution but the figure could go up pending validation.

He also vowed "to bring government closer to the people." His late grandfather, Conrado Estrella Sr., held the same post under the administration of former president

Ferdinand Marcos Sr.

Frasco told CA members that infrastructure improvements and development are key to boosting tourism to make it a top revenue earner for the country.

She said that one of the basic improvements is to put up clean and working rest rooms in tourism sites throughout the country.

Sen. Grace Poe backed Frasco's plan to focus on improving facilities even as she suggested promoting the country as a go-to site for international film makers.



## Three Cabinet officials get CA approval

By Macon Ramos-Araneta

THE Commission on Appointments confirmed on Tuesday the ad interim appointments of Secretary Conrado Estrella III of the Department of Agrarian Reform, Secretary Antonia Loyzaga of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Secretary Christina Frasco of the Department of Tourism, and 62 military officials.

Estrella vowed before the CA that he will not be an "armchair" executive. "I shall bring the government closer to the people," he said.

CA members acknowledged Estrella's role in the one-year moratorium on unpaid land amortization of agrarian reform beneficiaries approved by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

Meanwhile, Loyzaga assured the DENR will be under an ethical, science-informed, and risk-based stewardship and will be "inclusive, consultative, and transparent."

"We will pursue these goals very carefully but also expeditiously," she said.

On the other hand, Frasco said she is focused on using tourism as a major economic tool to contribute to the economic resurgence.

"Notwithstanding all the difficulties that the country has faced, all of the upheavals that our people have suffered through, none of these have served to dampen the beauty of our natural resources and none of these have served to diminish in any way the strength and spirit of Filipino people which we intend to herald under the helm of the Department of Tourism," the former mayor of Liloan town in Cebu said.



TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

## Estrella, Loyzaga, Frasco get CA nod

THE Commission on Appointments (CA) on Tuesday confirmed the ad interim appointments of three Cabinet secretaries and the promotion of 63 senior officials of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

The CA gave its nod to Conrado Estrella 3rd as Agrarian Reform secretary, Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga as Environment Secretary, and Ma. Esperanza Christina Frasco as Tourism secretary.

Sen. Lorna Regina "Loren" Legarda sponsored the confirmation of Estrella.

"Secretary Estrella, in less than three months as head of the DAR, immediately looked into the situation of the ARBs (agrarian reform beneficiaries), identified the various problems that they face, prioritized the steps and actions needed to address these concerns," Legarda said.

She also sponsored Yulo-Loyzaga's confirmation.

Legarda said the secretary's "deep and comprehensive understanding of the interconnectivity between the environment, climate action, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable development will be crucial."

Sen. Mary Grace Poe agreed with Frasco's opinion that infrastructure is "key" for the Philippines to be able to boost the tourism industry. "Right now, I believe that in 2019 or preceding that, our aver-

age income from tourism is about 5-6 billion [dollars]."

"Whereas, Thailand's income is about \$40 billion or more. From our OFWs (overseas Filipino workers), we make roughly \$28 billion. Can you imagine, if we just reach the level of the tourism industry of Thailand — even a little less — maybe less of our people will have to work elsewhere," Poe pointed out.

The DAR chief was asked on pending land distribution cases and his plans to encourage the youth to take agriculture courses in tertiary education, among others.

Estrella vowed "to bring government closer to the people." His late grandfather, Conrado Estrella Sr., held the same post under the administration of former president Ferdinand E. Marcos Sr.

Sen. Ana Theresia "Risa" Hontiveros asked Estrella about his plans for the remaining land acquisition and distribution balance.

The senator pointed out that the previous Duterte administration targeted 550,000 hectares of agricultural land.

Data from the DAR showed that the workable balance as of June 30 was 173,344 hectares of land.

Estrella said that the department will prioritize the speedy resolution of cases of contested lands and speed up land validation.

**BERNADETTE E. TAMAYO**



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TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

PAGE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### **DAR, DENR, DOT chiefs lusot na sa CA**

Nakalusot na sa makapangyarihang Commission on Appointment (CA) ang ad interim appointment nina Department of Agrarian Reform Secretary Conrado Estrella III, Environment Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo Loyzaga at Tourism Secretary Ma. Esperanza Christina Frasco.

Si Senator JV Ejercito ang nagrekomenda para sa CA plenary approval sa appointment ni Estrella na sinagundahan naman ni Pangasinan Rep. Ramon Guico Jr.

Bago makalusot, nagpahayag si Estrella na hindi siya tutol sa anumang land conversions basta't ang lupa ay hindi irrigated land.

Samantala nausisa naman si Loyzaga sa kanyang posisyon patungkol sa small-scale mining, open-pit mining, isyu ng Masungi Georeserve at ang usapin sa kanyang mga inheritance o mana.

Mas nasentro ang pagdinig sa ad interim appointment ni Loyzaga nang unghatin ni SAGIP Rep. Rodante Marcoleta ang 34 entities na pag-aari ng Kalihim bago ito naitalaga sa DENR.

Iginiit ni Marcoleta na kailangang i-divest o ilipat ang mga negosyo at kung ano pang pinansyal, personal at kumpanyang pag-aari ni Loyzaga nang sa gayon ay malinis at hindi mapag-isipan ng publiko lalo't mahalaga ang posisyon na ibinigay sa kanya ng Pangulo.

Subalit agad kinontra ni Sen. Cynthia Villar si Marcoleta at sinabing hindi maililipat ang mga pag-aari at negosyo na nakuha mula sa mana.

Sinuportahan din nina Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri at Senator Loren Legarda ang integridad ni Loyzaga na ito ay mula sa angkan ng mga pinakamayayaman sa bansa noong 1950s at 1960s.

Mabilis namang nakalusot sa CA panel si Frasco na inendorso para sa plenary approval ni CA Majority Leader Rep. Luis Raymund Villafuerte. Si Frasco ay dating alkalde ng Liloan, Cebu at naging tagapagsalita noong halalan ni Vice President Sara Duterte.

Samantala, nakalusot na rin ang ad interim appointment ng may 63 military officers. (*Gemma Garcia*)





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## Allowing nature to help us

BY DR. THERESA MUNDITA S. LIM

**S**UPER Typhoon Noru battered the Philippines with strong winds and heavy rains as it landed on September 25. Noru, locally called Karding, is by far the strongest storm hitting the Philippines this year, hoisting sustained wind speeds of 195 kilometres per hour tagged with heavy rainfall affecting many areas of Luzon, displacing thousands and more being affected.

This occurrence only follows a series of flooding incidents that are also happening in many parts of the Asean region: the massive flooding affecting 16 provinces in Cambodia; the "surprise" floods in Kuala Lumpur—leaving millions worth of properties destroyed, communities displaced, and scores dead. All these are haunting reminders that the Asean region is among the most disaster-prone areas in the world. Data from the Asean show that with

1,218 disasters occurring from 2012 to 2018, estimated damages of \$15.9 billion annually, equivalent to three times the Asean's collective annual gross domestic product.

We offer our deepest sympathies to the victims of these massive floods. We also commend the efforts of the government, civil society organizations, and individuals conducting disaster relief and support to affected survivors.

While the times always demand

**We cannot wait for another disaster to remind us how much benefit we can derive from nature. Climate change may have something to do with the extreme weather conditions we are experiencing now, and indeed new technologies can be developed and adopted to reduce its impacts. But for the Philippines and the rest of Asean, the most cost-effective solution may just be right in front of us—the rich biological diversity that our region has been blessed with to help us weather the storm.**

an effective and decisive immediate response, these disasters are imminent invitations for everyone to look

at the bigger picture: to see how we can further allow nature to help us. In the Philippines, the Sierra

Madre mountain acts as a resilience backbone that weakens the impact of disturbances from the East. The range, which covers the Quezon province all the way up to Cagayan, is strategically located as a breaker of strong winds originating from the Pacific. Together with the diverse ecosystems found inside it, the range absorbs large amounts of rainfall, thanks to the diversity of ecosystems found in the area.

Similarly, the Mekong River in Stung Treng Province, Cambodia, designated as a wetland of international importance, not only regulates water flow and minimizes inundation, most especially during the monsoon seasons, but also helps

SEE "LIM," A15



TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

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SEE "LIM," A15



TITLE:

Allowing nature...

PAGE

2/2

DATE

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CONTINUED FROM A14

purify water and replenish ground sources. The wetland harbors young fish and seasonally flooded forests that provide aquatic resources for food and livelihoods for many communities in the region.

In Malaysia, the Titiwangsa Mountain Range that covers Peninsular Malaysia and adjacent areas of Thailand makes up a complex river system that regulates the water flow in several localities. Its diverse riparian vegetation and terrestrial makeup contribute to the regulation of voluminous rainwater, especially during the monsoon season.

These ecosystems are just some of the nature-based solutions that shield us from devastating hazards. Thus, our response should always integrate the protection of remaining natural ecosystems and the restoration of degraded ones. Not only are they useful as natural barriers in times of disaster, but they can also be sources of food and first aid when assistance is not immediately available because accessibility has been affected.

In the case of the Philippines, experts have zeroed in on the power of nature: contact with the eastern seaboard dulls the power of these disturbances on a regular basis. Much like the towering mountain ranges and the dense forests of Sierra Madre, a combination of the coastal mangroves in the eastern portion of Isabela and Aurora provinces as well as the healthy mesophotic reefs of the Philippine Rise are also key in curbing the impacts of strong typhoons. The pristine coral ecosystems of the Philippine Rise are the "refuge of the future," offering an effective buffer against strong typhoons and a potent rehabilitation area to reseed destroyed shallow coral reef areas.

For a region as rich in biodiversity as the Asean, the same can be said with how vital its ecosystems are in the overall discourse of resilience-building. Being endowed with abundant natural heritage, we have a high stake in sustainably harnessing nature as our solution to current challenges. Thus, the protection of ecosystems and the diversity of flora and fauna species found within them will only yield tangible benefits for both people and nature: providing clean water, ensuring food security, facilitating natural healing, and regulating a host of diseases.

We cannot wait for another disaster to remind us how much benefit we can derive from nature. Climate change may have something to do with the extreme weather conditions we are experiencing now, and indeed new technologies can be developed and adopted to reduce its impacts. But for the Philippines and the rest of Asean, the most cost-effective solution may just be right in front of us—the rich biological diversity that our region has been blessed with to help us weather the storm.

While the Asean region continues to work towards an efficient response in the face of crises, recovering fully and building a truly greener, better, and more resilient community entails collective actions from everyone. By building on measures that sustainably harness the power of nature as a solution, truly, we can address challenges together.

*Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim is the Executive Director at the Asean Centre for Biodiversity*



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COMMUNICATION  
AND  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE

TITLE :

PAGE

DATE

## Save Sierra Madre

Legend has it that Sierra was a dedicated mother of two kids, Iloco and Tagalo, who protected her children from threats, real or imagined.

Bugsong Hangin, the king of the mighty easterly winds, so goes the myth, often made his presence felt on the land where Sierra and her kids lived.

In their younger days, the fierce wind used to court Sierra, but Sierra was in love with Lusong, a valiant warrior. Valiant as he was, Lusong later succumbed to Bugsong Hangin's fierce attacks.

He died in the arms of Sierra, but the myth says before Lusong breathed his last, he had Sierra promise that she'd love and protect their two sons, no matter what.

**EYES WIDE  
OPEN**



**IRIS GONZALES**

This is a Filipino myth passed on to generations and generations, and reposted by different publications, including the Philippine Insider.

Ours is no doubt a country and a people replete with stories.

The story of the breathtaking Sierra Madre, the longest mountain range in the country, is poignant as it is beautiful, and today is as good a time as any

to remember the myth.

On Monday, we learned how the 540-kilometer mountain range, which runs from the province of Cagayan down to the province of Quezon, protected us from the onslaught of Super Typhoon Karding.

### 'Backbone of Luzon'

PAGASA administrator Vicente Malano said the mountain range served as a barrier, which eventually weakened the strength of the super typhoon, turning it into a typhoon.

It is, thus, important, Malano told ABS-CBN, that we continue protecting the Sierra Madre and perhaps every mountain range in our country, every forest, every single tree, and every protected area that we have.

The image from earth.nullschool was striking and it was almost like magic. It showed Karding's wind pattern significantly weakening in the area of the Sierra Madre mountain range.

No doubt, and as science has shown, the "backbone of Luzon" spared the island from most of the super typhoon's harsh winds.

The Philippines is blessed with east-facing mountain ranges, including the Eastern Pacific Cordilleras.

Unfortunately, threats against Sierra Madre and many of our natural resources remain present. There's deforestation, urbanization, industrialization and many more.

### Sept. 26: Save Sierra Madre Day

On Monday, the day after Karding made landfall, most of us in Metro Manila woke up to a pleasant surprise.

The sun shone brightly and the morning was surprisingly calm. It was like Noah's Ark the day after the great flood.

It was also Save Sierra Madre Day. This was perhaps no coincidence, a fitting reminder that as the mountain range saved us from more damage the typhoon could have brought upon us, we should also do our part in protecting it.

In 2012, then president Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III issued Proclamation 413 to remember how the damage and destruction experienced during Ondoy, which battered the country in 2009, was caused by deforestation in the mountain range.

"[T]he issuance of a Proclamation declaring 26 September of every year as Save Sierra Madre Day will help boost awareness among the general public on the importance of preserving our forests, as well as protecting, managing, and properly utilizing the natural resources of the country; and

[I]t is proper and fitting to make 26 September of every year as Save Sierra Madre Day to remind our people of the risks and dangers, which a lack of concern and action for the Sierra Madre

Mountains may bring about," Aquino said.

After 10 years since the late former president made the issuance, we are given another stark reminder of what needs to be done.

### Stop extractive activities

Indeed, our policymakers, non-government organizations, the private sector and all of us citizens must work together to ensure that our mountain ranges, such as the Sierra Madre, and other natural resources will be preserved for generations and generations to come.

There must be serious and long-term planning on the part of the government to prevent land developers and land grabbers from destroying our forests.

Save Sierra Madre Network Inc. chairperson Araceli Mercado, was quoted by ABS-CBN as saying that unfortunately, there are now more extractive activities happening than 10 years ago. Mining and logging are just some of these destructive activities.

The typhoon left many homeless and injured and killed at least five rescuers in Bulacan. We must honor their heroic deeds by doing all that we can to protect our environment from damage and harm.

### The third world war

World War III is here and it's not between countries and superpowers, but against climate change.

We should be alarmed that super typhoons are now becoming a regular occurrence. This should be constant reminders to us that rising temperatures are real and we should all do our part in reducing our carbon emissions.

Sierra, the beautiful mother of two children, can only protect us so much. We must also do our part in preserving what's left of our environment.

Iris Gonzales' email address is [eyesgonzales@gmail.com](mailto:eyesgonzales@gmail.com).

Follow her on Twitter @[eyesgonzales](https://twitter.com/eyesgonzales). Column archives at [eyesgonzales.com](http://eyesgonzales.com)



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SERVICE

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

PAGE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

# The mother of all mountains

**M**illions of years ago, when giants roamed the world, there was a family: Lusong, a great warrior; Sierra, a loving mother; and their two sons, Iloco and Tagalo. They lived by the sea, where they pulled up fish from the waters, hunted in the nearby woods, and settled on the rocky shore.

Their only problem was Bugsong Hangin, the King of the Easterlies. He had once courted Sierra, but when she chose the mighty Lusong as her groom, the ruler of the winds always came to show his wrath.

He would rip trees from their roots, raise the rage of the seas, pour down torrents of rain. He would not stop, for he loved the beautiful Sierra—but because she did not love him, he then vowed to bring the greatest force of his army to destroy everything that she held dear.

One day, the attacks finally killed Lusong. Before he perished, however, Lusong made Sierra promise that she would always protect their sons.

Sierra made a final sacrifice that would stand eternal against the madness. She laid herself down upon the coastline, her back forever to the winds, her arms cradling her boys.

Bugsong Hangin would bring storms and destruction, but the loving mother would always keep him out. Upon her body grew forests, and in those lush wilds were beasts and birds like no other. Bugsong Hangin would always retreat to the ocean, to rethink his strategies, reassemble his troops, sharpen his weapons—but always, his army would break apart when it met the crests and valleys and curves of the Sierra Madre.

The myth of a jealous god and a protective mother has been around for ages, and it gives insight into how we, as a people, see the mother of all Philippine mountain



## QUESTION THE BOX

INEZ PONCE DE LEON

ranges. The Sierra Madre stretches 500 kilometers from Cagayan down to Quezon, covering over a million hectares of land, cradling peaks sometimes close to two kilometers high. While the mountains look thick with greenery, they are shadows of their old selves: Since the Spanish occupation, the Sierra Madre has lost as much as 90 percent of its original forest cover to quarrying, illegal logging, and exploitative development.

Like its namesake from myth, the Sierra Madre protects much of Luzon from typhoons. Over the Pacific Ocean—Bugsong Hangin's domain—open water feeds rapidly rotating storms, allowing them to pack energy. By the time a storm's edge hits the uneven peaks of the Sierra Madre, the serrated mountains cut like a saw through a spiral, diminishing the storm's power.

For as long as the Sierra Madre is untouched and unmolested, it will have the right shape and size to counter the storms that brew over the Pacific. Even the tiniest changes to its topography, however, can diminish its ability to hold a catastrophe back.

Remove just a few trees, and we lose the root systems that keep the mountain's structural integrity intact; lose the structural integrity, and the rain of the mountains will come flooding down into the towns at its base.

There is little regard for protecting the Sierra Madre, it seems, at higher levels of government. Kaliwa Dam, touted as the solution to Luzon's water and flooding problems, is, ironically, about to contribute more to flooding if it is indeed built. Dams have historically been created to control floods, but the act of constructing them worsens flooding: Indigenous peoples are displaced, large areas of forests are wiped out, and roads, bridges, and canals are built to transport goods and people.

The dam is a temporary solution meant to destroy a long-term barrier. It is like cutting out a door in a protective wall to get a bit of fresh air, at the cost of allowing invaders to come through.

Planting trees will not be enough. Today's saplings won't be able to hold up the mountains for a few decades yet. Flood barriers? Useless when the Sierra Madre fails to keep out storms.

As I write this, I can hear the last of the NDRRMC's alerts. After days of a clanging, blaring Signal No. 4, Sierra has once again sliced up "Karding" the way she dismantled "Ompong," "Lawin," "Milenyoy," and many other typhoons that would have been deadly without her protection.

Maybe we will finally recognize that this backbone of Luzon needs us to have a backbone as well, to act in its defense—and especially when our leaders barely understand the true gravity of their duties.

[iponcedeleon@ateneo.edu](mailto:iponcedeleon@ateneo.edu)



STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
AND  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE

09-28...22

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

PAGE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

# Lawmakers file bill to protect Sierra Madre

By SHEILA CRISOSTOMO

With Sierra Madre shielding Northern Luzon from the devastation of Super Typhoon Karding, a lawmaker from Rizal province once again called for the protection of the longest mountain range in the country.

Rizal 4th District Rep. Fidel Nograles recently filed House Bill 1972, which seeks to establish the Sierra Madre Development Authority (SMDA) to preserve the mountain range, one of the country's 68 protected areas.

"Amid the threat of Karding, Sierra Madre has once again shown just how crucial it is in protecting us against extreme weather events. The SMDA will help us preserve this shield in the face of a worsening climate crisis," Nograles said in a statement.

Karding made landfall in the Philippines on Sept. 26, which happened to be observed as Save Sierra Madre Day by virtue of Proclamation 413, a reminder of the dangers of the continuous degradation of the mountain range, which is known as the "backbone" of Luzon.

Under the bill, the SMDA will lead the government's anti-illegal logging and reforestation campaigns in Sierra Madre.

It will prevent the construction of unwarranted and illegal infrastructure, enhance and develop indigenous resources in the areas that can be utilized for development and educate people on the importance of the mountain range.

The body will also be tasked to conduct a comprehensive survey of the Sierra Madre region's physical and natural resources.

It will draft a comprehensive plan to conserve and utilize them to promote the region's social and economic development, among other functions.

The measure showed that Sierra Madre plays a key role in Metro Manila's major water demands, along with the provinces of Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Nueva Ecija, Quirino, Aurora, Quezon, Rizal, Laguna and Bulacan.

Sierra Madre is located on the eastern side of Luzon on the Pacific coast, spanning about 500 kilometers from the province of Cagayan in the north to Quezon in the south.

In a related development, a key official of the House of Representatives yesterday spearheaded an inquiry into reports of alleged degradation of Sierra Madre.

Dasmariñas City Rep. Elpidio Barzaga Jr., who chairs the House committee on environment and natural resources, authored House Resolution 430 and reiterated the "urgent need" to investigate the degradation of the mountain range and "how it shall be protected."

Meanwhile, the government should invest more in technologies that can help prevent and mitigate disasters, according to Sen. Sonny Angara.

Angara cited the use of tools, like Project NOAH in previous administrations, that provide open data, including hazard maps, to government agencies and the general public that help reduce casualties.

"If we have the right data, the right equipment, I think we should be investing in technology, using science to predict a lot of disasters ... all these things that help us react better. Sustainability should be at the core of everything we do," Angara said in an interview with "The Chiefs" aired on Cignal TV's *One News* the other night.



TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

## Honoring Sierra Madre

**A**s we write this column, Super Typhoon Karding had just made landfall in the town of Burdeos in Quezon Province, battering Polillo Island and Baler, Aurora with winds of up to 195 kilometers per hour and gustiness of more than 200 kilometers per hour.

We are writing this column on a Sunday afternoon. Just a few hours ago, Antipolo City, most of Rizal province and the National Capital Region were wrapped in what we call the proverbial "calm before the storm." People had gone to church earlier during the day, praying that Karding would not be as strong and devastating as news reports had predicted.

There has been one interesting development during the day: in social media and Twitter in particular, the hashtag "#Sierra Madre" trended. There were close to 40,000 tweets by the afternoon, hailing the protective role of this mountain range, citing the "shield" it has provided most parts of Luzon, and calling for its preservation and for it to be spared from further damage.

One twitter mirrored the sense of gratitude shared by many.

She tweeted: "Goosebumps. We're so lucky to have the Sierra Madre. With more powerful storms and extreme weather today, we really have to do our best to protect and preserve the mountain range".

Former Commission on Elections Commissioner Rowena Guanzon tweeted: "Sierra Madre doing all the work keeping all those winds away from Luzon."

Another tweet summed up the sentiment of the 40,000-plus posts using the hashtag: "Feel so sad that people only remember Sierra Madre when they needed protection."

We agree. It is about time that Sierra Madre is given the honor, respect and recognition that this God-given gift deserves. It is unfortunate that it had to take a giant howler to get the public to see the value of this

There was a brochure published in the past by a non-governmental organization of which Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno is a member of the Board of Trustees - the Forest Foundation Philippines. In the brochure, the Foundation described Sierra Madre as "the backbone of Luzon".

"Rising above the flatlands of northeastern Luzon, the majestic Sierra Madre Mountain Range serves not only as a sanctuary for the flora and fauna within it, but also as a stalwart protector against the typhoons that affect the Luzon," the Foundation brochure said.

With the photos of the Luzon "spine" came calls for Filipinos to protect Sierra Madre.

The call has been sounded many times in the past. Typhoon Karding and Twitter made that call sound even more urgent and for good reason.

The Forest Philippine Foundation pointed out in its brochure that Sierra Madre is our "storm wall." "Sierra Madre's elevation makes it an effective barrier against storms coming into the eastern Luzon area from the Pacific Ocean," the Foundation said. "Any storm passing through the range is slowed, allowing more time to spread rain," it pointed out.

"The slowed movement also gives meteorologists and disaster risk reduction agencies time to identify and notify areas that need to be evacuated," it added.

In addition, Sierra Madre is home to many of our unique plants and animals, including the Philippine eagle and rare species of crocodiles and turtles. It houses many of the ancestral land of native brethren. It is the sanctuary of 44 percent of the country's remaining forest cover. Its rivers and streams irrigate countless hectares of farmland from Cagayan Valley in the north to Quezon province in the south.

Sierra Madre needs protection - from illegal loggers and from human activities, many of which are legal under Philippine laws - which threaten its rich resources and ability to protect and nurture life. These include mining and quarrying - commercial activities that are permitted by national government agencies and which abound in portions of Sierra Madre located in Rizal Province.

These activities pose serious risk to the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape, used to be referred to as the Marikina River Watershed - an area where the river that flows through the Antipolo City and the Rizal towns of Montalban, San Mateo, Tanay and Baras empties into the Lower Marikina River which flows through its namesake city.

Rizal province and Antipolo City local governments have attempted several times to put a permanent halt to these legal activities. Concerned national government agencies opposed the move, and the court has ruled that the province and the city do not possess the power to stop them.



### THE VIEW FROM RIZAL

DR. JUN YNARES



STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
AND  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE

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

9  
PAGE

UPPER  
 LOWER

PAGE 1  
STORY

BANNER  
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

09-28<sup>TH</sup> 22

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

PAGE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

That the Sierra Madre is Luzon's "backbone" is true scientifically, geographically and visually.

Photos of the map of Luzon highlighting the Sierra Madre proliferated in social media as the island awaited the onslaught of Karding. The highlighted mountain range visually resembled the human spine, curved like the backbone of a mother protecting her child wrapped in her arms and clutched in her bosom.

With the rediscovery of Sierra Madre's value to our existence, we hope that there would be greater collaboration at all levels of government to protect this valuable resource – so that Sierra Madre can continue on with its role of protecting and nurturing life.

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





STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
AND  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE

3  
PAGE

UPPER  
 LOWER

PAGE 1  
STORY

BANNER  
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

09-28, 22

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

PAGE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**MOUNTAIN OF PROTECTION —**  
The Sierra Madre Mountain range casts an imposing presence in this photograph taken in Quezon City on Tuesday, Sept. 27, 2022, two days after Super Typhoon Karding battered many parts of Luzon. The World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines (WWF-Philippines) and other concerned Filipinos renewed their call for the preservation of Sierra Madre, which they said, protected Luzon from the full brunt of Karding.  
(Mark Balmores)





STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
AND  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE

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A4  
PAGE

UPPER  
 LOWER

PAGE 1  
STORY

BANNER  
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

09-28<sup>TH</sup> 22

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

PAGE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_



### BACKBONE OF LUZON.

The Sierra Madre mountain range is pictured from the Ortigas Business District two days after Typhoon Karding battered several parts of Luzon. It is considered the barrier or backbone of Luzon that protects the island from the onslaught of typhoons. **Manny Palmero**



TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

PAGE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## SIERRA MADRE

SALAMAT sa Panginoong Diyos sa pagdinig sa ating mga panalangin sa kaligtasan laban sa "Super Typhoon Karding".

Salamat din sa bundok Sierra Madre na kanyang nilikha dahil malaki ang naitutulong ng kabundukang ito upang mabasag ang malalakas na hangin ng bawat bagyong dumadaan sa mainland ng Luzon Island.

Ang kabundukan ng Sierra Madre ay ang tinaguriang pinakamahabang bulubundukin sa Pilipinas.

Nagsisilbi itong 'backbone' o gulugod ng isla ng Luzon na may habang 540 kilometro na bumabaybay

mula sa lalawigan ng Cagayan sa hilaga hanggang sa lalawigan ng Quezon sa timog sa may hangganan ng Kabikulan.

Makaki ang papel ng kabundukan ng Sierra Madre laban sa lakas ng hanging dala ng mga bagyong dumaraan sa isla ng Luzon, pinakahuli na nga rito ay ang Super Typhoon Karding na nanalasa ng Setyembre 25-26, 2022.

Ngayong nakita na natin ang kahalagahan ng kabundukang ito ay narapat na maging bukas tayo na pangalagaan ang Sierra Madre, tutulan ang pag-sira rito sa mga banta ng pagpuputol ng mga puno



REMATE

## SULO NG BAYAN

PAPS REX AVILLA DEL ROSARIO

at pagmimina.

Pangalagaan natin ang bahagi ng kapaligiran lalo na ang mga likas na yaman sa pamamagitan ng pagtanim ng mga halamang magiging puno at paglahan ito sa banta ng pagmimina.

Malaki ang magagawa natin upang malabanan ang climate change na sanhi ng malalakas na bagyo, ang isa sa magagawa natin ay magsisimula

tayo sa pangalagaan sa kabundukan ng Sierra Madre.

Gawin din natin ang pangangalaga sa iba pang kabundukan sa Pilipinas tulad hang pag-aalaga natin sa ating sarili at pamilya sapagkat isang paraan din ito sa pangangalaga sa ng mamamayan ng bawat nasyon.

Bago mehuli ang lahat, kailangang kumilos na tayo!



## EDITORIAL

### MAHALIN, PROTEKTAHAN ANG INANG KALIKASAN

MALAKI ang nagawang tulong ng Sierra Madre, ang kabundukang nakahimlay mula sa Cagayan sa norte hanggang Quezon sa kung kaya't hindi nakapaminsala ng todo si "Super Typhoon Karding" na nanalasa sa Luzon noong Linggo.

Sa tuwi-tuwi na lang na binabayo ang ating bansa ng bagyo, ang mga kabundukan natin ang nagsisilbing tagaharang sa malakas na hangin na bumabayo sa ating bansa kapag tag-ulan o panahon ng bagyo.

Kaya nga bukod sa pasasalamat, dapat nating bigyang pansin ang pangangalaga sa ating kalikasan sapagkat kahit paano ay bahagi ito ng ating kaligtasan, buhay at kabuhayan.

Para maisaayos ang ating Inang Kalikasan at iba pang likas na yaman, dapat lang na paigtingin ang mga batas kaugnay sa pangangalaga sa kalikasan.

Bahagi nang pangangalaga ang pagpigil sa pagkakaingin at pagmimina na lubhang nakasisira ng ating likas na yaman na umano'y kadalasang pinupuhunan ng mga tiwaling negosyante at politiko.

Bukod sa pagmimina at pagkakaingin, isama na natin ang iwas sa pagtatapon ng basura na nakasisira sa ating mga daanang tubig na posibleng maging sanhi rin ng trahedyang buunga ng galit ng kalikasan na maaaring danasin ng mamamayan.

Mahalin at protektahan natin ang kalikasan upang hindi mapinsala ng mga bagyo at iba pang sakuna nang sa gayun ay abutin pa ng mga susunod na henerasyon.



TITLE:

PAGE

DATE



## EDITORIAL

# Save Sierra Madre!

If something saves lives, people should generously return the favor.

The Sierra Madre plays a key role in Metro Manila's major water supply demands, along with the provinces of Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Nueva Ecija, Quirino, Aurora, Quezon, Rizal, Laguna, and Bulacan.

The vast mountain range runs along Luzon's northeast coast from the provinces of Cagayan to Quezon.

Meteorologist Ariel Rojas confirmed that the range, considered the backbone of Luzon, weakened the Super-typhoon Karding's power and mitigated its impact.

Former Ifugao governor and environment advocate Teddy Baguilat said the Sierra Madre acts as a buffer against typhoons.

The Save Sierra Madre Day is observed annually on September 26 by virtue of Proclamation 413 as a reminder of the dangers of the continuous degradation of the mountain range, which is known as the "backbone" of Luzon.

It also commemorates the massive flooding caused by Tropical Storm Ondoy in 2009.

Rizal 4th District Rep. Fidel Nograles has thus renewed his call for the passage of House Bill 1972 seeking to create the Sierra Madre Development Authority.

Nograles made the call on Monday, which coincides with the commemoration of the Save Sierra Madre Day in the aftermath of Super Typhoon Karding which hit many areas in Luzon.

Once enacted into law, SMDA would be tasked with conserving and managing the 540-kilometer mountain range, Nograles said.

"Amid the threat of Karding, Sierra Madre has once again shown just how crucial it is in protecting us against extreme weather events. The Sierra Madre Development Authority (SMDA) will help us preserve this shield in the face of a worsening climate crisis," Nograles said.

He also noted that the Sierra Madre houses most of the 68 protected areas in the country.

"Many are saying we are lucky to evade the massive havoc brought by Karding. However, we must not depend on luck for our welfare. We must act, and we must act now. We have to be more aggressive, strategic, and comprehensive in our efforts to mitigate the effects of the climate crisis. The SMDA will be a massive help in unifying our efforts," the lawmaker said.

Karding, which ravaged Metro Manila and most parts of Luzon, is the strongest typhoon to hit the country so far this year and first made landfall in the Polilio Islands in Quezon at 5:30pm Sunday, with sustained winds of 185 kilometers per hour, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.



TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

PAGE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## Avert climate change disasters -- solon

TIME to mitigate effects of natural calamities in the future. This was the call of Isabela Rep. Inno Dy following the onslaught of Typhoon Karding particularly in the Central Luzon.

Dy is pushing for the passage of two bills that both seek to address the climate change crisis and its effects on the people.

"We dodged a bullet because Sierra Madre once again protected us from the threat of wind and rain, helping us avert a more wide-scale disaster. But we cannot leave our fate and the next storms to chance," Dy said.

"I urge the leadership of the House of Representatives to prioritize all bills that seek to address the climate crisis and its effects on our people," he added.

Dy is the author of House Bill No. 1214 proposing the creation of the Sierra Madre Conservation and Development Authority (SMCDA).

The said government body is eyed to lead the formulation and implementation of a comprehensive long-term plan to conserve and protect the resources within the 540-kilometer mountain range within the framework of sustainable development.

As the lead agency for the Sierra Madre, the SMCDA will be uniting and coordinating the efforts of various LGUs and government agencies.

Dy highlighted the role of the Sierra Madre as Luzon's "storm barrier" protecting the lives of more than 50 million Filipinos, and emphasized the need to put a stop to its continued degradation. He also urged for deliberations on House Bill No. 1136 that would create the Cagayan River Basin Development Authority (CRBDA).

The CRBDA would be tasked with the rehabilitation, development, and protection of the waterways forming the Cagayan River Basin.

It would also provide overall planning and management, coordinating the efforts of the various agencies, institutions, and local government units for the preservation of the basin formed by the 520-kilometer-long river, which runs along the provinces of Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, and Quirino. *Jester Manalastas*



STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
AND  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE



PAGE

UPPER  
 LOWER

PAGE 1  
STORY

BANNER  
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

09-28-22

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

PAGE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_



NEWS IN A FLASH

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# Tempo

'Save  
Sierra  
Madre'

Page 2

5 fallen  
rescuers  
honored

Page 2

THE Sierra Madre mountain range as seen from C-5 Katipunan Ave., Quezon City yesterday, Sept. 27, two days after Super Typhoon Karding battered many parts of the country and submerged parts of Central Luzon. The World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines and other concerned Filipinos once again called for the preservation of Sierra Madre, considered as the barrier or backbone of Luzon that protects the island from storms. (Mark Balmores)



# 'SAVE SIERRA MADRE'

Rizal 4th District Representative Fidel Nograles has renewed his call for the passage of House Bill 1972 seeking the creation of the Sierra Madre Development Authority (SMDA).

Nograles made the call on Monday, which coincides with the commemoration of the "Save Sierra Madre Day" in the aftermath of Super Typhoon Karding which hit many areas in Luzon.

Once enacted into law, SMDA shall be tasked with conserving and managing the 540-kilometer mountain range, Nograles said.

"Amid the threat of Karding, Sierra Madre has

once again shown just how crucial it is in protecting us against extreme weather events. The Sierra Madre Development Authority (SMDA) will help us preserve this shield in the face of a worsening climate crisis," Nograles said.

He also mentioned that the Sierra Madre houses most of the 68 protected areas in the country.

Nograles added that SMDA would also lead the government's anti-illegal logging and reforestation campaigns, prevent the construction of unwarranted and illegal infrastructure, enhance and develop indigenous resources in the

areas that can be utilized for development, and educate people on the importance of the mountain range.

The proposed government body is also mandated to conduct a comprehensive survey of the Sierra Madre region's physical and natural resources and draft a comprehensive plan to conserve and utilize them to promote the region's social and economic development.

The Save Sierra Madre Day is observed annually on Sept. 26 by virtue of Proclamation No. 413 as a reminder of the dangers of the continuous degradation of the mountain range, which is known as the "backbone" of Luzon. (PNA)





SIERRA MADRE MOUNTAIN RANGE



**EDITORIAL**

## An effective barrier

**THE 540-kilometer long Sierra Madre mountain range plays a critical role in protecting Luzon against powerful and destructive typhoons and storms coming from the vast Pacific Ocean.**

Teeming with wildlife facing extinction, the mountain range showed anew "just how crucial it is in protecting us against extreme weather events," according to Rizal Rep. Fidel Nograles.

Note that the rugged terrain of Sierra Madre weakened super Typhoon Karding, reducing its strength before battering the Metropolitan Manila (MM) area and other Luzon provinces.

The onslaught of the howler thrust outfront anew the need to hasten the passage of House Bill No. 1972, which seeks the creation of the "Sierra Madre Development Authority (SMDA)."

Congressman Nograles called for the immediate approval of the proposed legislation on Monday, September 26, when the Filipino people celebrated the annual "Save Sierra Madre Day."

Every year, the people celebrate "Save Sierra Madre Day" to remind the public of the dangers of the continuous degradation of the 540-kilometer long mountain range in Luzon.

Under HB No. 1972, SMDA is tasked to conserve and manage the mountain range, which serves as an effective barrier against typhoons and storms emanating from the Pacific Ocean.

Aside from housing most of the country's 68 "protected areas," the vital mountain range also plays a key role in Metropolitan Manila's major water supply demands.

That's why we cannot overemphasize the importance of protecting and preserving the Sierra Madre mountain range in the face of the worsening of climate change.

As Rizal Rep. Fidel Nograles said, the Filipino people ought to "act now...and fast."



STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
AND  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE

PEOPLES  
JOURNAL  
**Tonight**



PAGE



UPPER

LOWER



PAGE 1  
STORY



BANNER  
STORY



EDITORIAL



CARTOON

09-28..22

TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

## Protection of Sierra Madre pushed

THE chairman of the House committee on natural resources on Tuesday filed House Resolution (HR) No. 430 seeking a congressional probe into the degradation of the Sierra Madre mountain range to look for ways to protect it.

Cavite Rep. Elpidio Barzaga Jr. said there is a need to conduct an investigation in aid of legislation on

the alleged degradation of Sierra Madre Mountains "and how we shall protect our "Mother Mountain Range" to prevent the occurrence of floods in various places in the Philippines."

"There is an urgent need to determine whether human activity such as illegal logging, gold mining, limestone mining, construction aggregate quarrying, deforestation and dam construction are

being conducted at the Sierra Madre Mountains," Barzaga said in the resolution.

If such acts are being conducted, the administration lawmaker said "there is a need to confirm if there were corresponding permits issued by the concerned government agencies."

"If indeed permits were issued, were there environmental impact assessments regarding their effect to the

Sierra Madre Mountains?" asked the lawmaker, a member of the National Unity Party (NUP).

The resolution cited Article 2, Section 16 of the Constitution which provides that the state shall "protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature".

Ryan Ponce Pacpaco



TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

## MALAWAKANG PAGBAHA SA BULAKAN ISINISI SA MGA QUARRY SA SIERRA MADRE

**NANINIWALA** ang lokal na pamahalaan ng San Miguel, Bulacan na ang quarrying activities sa mga kabundukan ang dahilan ng mabilis na pagbaha sa kanilang lugar, kasunod ng pananalasa ng super typhoon na Karding.

Sa briefing ng Laging Handa, sinabi ni San Miguel Mayor Roderick Tiongson na nasa 49 barangay sa kanilang bayan ang lumubog sa baha.

Aniya, kailangan nang kumilos ang lahat upang hindi na maulit pa ang mga ganitong insidente.



Sinabi ng alkalde na kailangang panatiliin o i-preserve, ingatan, at pangalagaan ang mga kabundukan.

Binigyang-diin nito na kung hindi dahil sa proteksyong ibinigay ng Sierra Madre, tiyak aniya na ganap na naramdaman ng kanilang bayan ang lakas ni Karding.

"Ang pagku-quarry sa kabundukan ay iyan ang

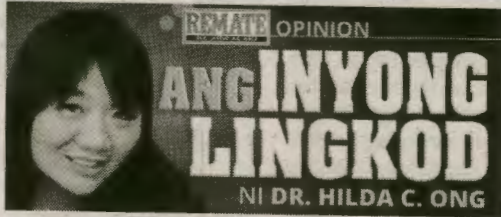
nagiging sanhi ng mabilisang pagbaha ng ating lalawigan ng Bulacan. Panatilihin o mai-preserve at mapag-ingatan at pangalagaan ang ating mga kabundukan ng kalikasan dahil kung hindi po dahil sa Sierra Madre ay siguro po tumama po ng buong-buo sa bayan ng San Miguel ang Bagyong Karding," diin ni Tiongson.



TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

PAGE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_



REMATE OPINION

## ANG INYONG LINGKOD

NI DR. HILDA C. ONG

SA panayam ng inyong Agarang Serbisyo kay Dr. Seville David, Jr. Executive Director ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB), ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam ay tumaas ng 7 meters kaya mahigit na sa minimum operating level na 180 meters, ngunit, mababa pa rin kung ikukumpara sa normal high-water level (NHWL) na 210 meters, malayo pa rin sa

end of the year target na 212 meters.

Malakas at walang tigil ang naging pagbuhos ng ulan, tumaas ang antas ng tubig, sana tuloy-tuloy ang malakas ng pagbuhos ng ulan sa bahagi ng Norzagaray, Bulacan, habang gumagamit tayo ng tubig.

Kung ikukumpara natin ang ulat ng Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) noong

	September 23	September 27	
Angat dam	176.24	185.67	
Ipo dam	100.61	100.10	
La Mesa dam	79.56	79.27	

## BAGYONG KARDING, NAGPATAAS NG LEBEL NG TUBIG SA ANGAT DAM

Dahil sa patuloy ang pag-ulan mula sa Super Typhoon # KardingPH sa Angat watershed, tumaas sa 9.43 meters ang antas ng tubig ng Angat dam.

May payo si Dr. David, sa mga tahanan at industriya, dapat samantalain ang malalakas na pag-ulan sa pamamagitan ng pag-iimpok nito sa proseso ng "Rain Harvesting" kung saan ang tubig ulan ay kinukolekta at puwedeng gamitin sa irigasyon, sa mga malalaking industriya, at maging sa mga tahanan.

Gawing alternatibong paraan sa paglilinis ng bahay, sa pagdi-dilig ng mga pananim, pangbanlaw ng mga damit na nilabhan, panghugas, pam-

buhos sa banyo at iba pa.

Isa nga sa binigyang punto ni Pangulong BBM sa kanyang 23 minutes speech sa United Nations General Assembly at maging sa kanyang pagharap sa mga mahahalagang pulong kasama ang American business group, Asia Society, at World Bank kaugnay sa kanyang working visit sa New York, United States, ay ang water resources and management na lubhang maaapektuhan ng lumalalang climate change and global warming.

Kasalukuyang gumugulong sa Kongreso ang panukala para sa pagbuo ng isang Department of Water Resources and Management para maging iisa na lamang ang kumpas

ng pamahalaan pagdating sa usapin ng panga-ngalaga sa malinis na tubig sa bansa.

Isa ito sa legislative agenda ng Marcos administration at inaasahan na maide-deliver ito ng kasalukuyang 19th Congress.

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



09-28...22

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DATE \_\_\_\_\_

# Dolomite Beach garbage removed

The DENR official recommended the temporary closure of the beach to allow workers and other volunteers to clean the area further

BY PAULA ANTOLIN  
*@tribunenphl\_phan*

A total of 2,350 sacks of garbage had been removed from Manila's Dolomite Beach following the onslaught of typhoon "Karding," the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources reported Tuesday.

The DENR said its so-called "Estero Rangers" were joined by personnel of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and the Department of Public Services of the city government of Manila in the undertaking.

According to DENR MEO-West OIC Director Rodelina de Villa, the

collected wastes were composed mostly of wood debris and plastic packaging materials.

"Most of these wastes come inland, improperly disposed of by people living up or midstream the tributaries of Manila Bay," De Villa explained.

"Until we are able to properly manage our waste at source, we'll continue to see trash in our rivers and shorelines," she warned.

The DENR official recommended

the temporary closure of the beach to allow workers and other volunteers to clean the area further. The recommendation was approved by Manila Bay Dolomite Beach ground commander Reuel Sorilla.

Last week, the DENR Metro Manila office also conducted simultaneous planting of bamboo in and around the La Mesa Water Reservation area in Quezon City.

The planting coincided with World Bamboo Day.



09-28-22

TIME:

PAGE

DATE

## 'Hike funds for hazard waste program'

**By Maricel V. Cruz**

A CONGRESSIONAL leader has urged Congress to increase funding for the infectious healthcare waste program of the Environmental Management Bureau under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (EMB-DENR).

House Deputy Majority Leader and Iloilo Rep. Janette Garin made the appeal as she noted the country continues to struggle with its COVID-19 medical waste more than two years since the pandemic hit.

The Department of Budget and Management has approved a P1.22 billion budget for the EMB-Environmental Regulations and Pollution Control Program under the DENR 2023 proposed budget, which is P1.53 billion or 55.7% less than its allocation of P2.75 billion in 2022.

Because of the funding cuts, programs under the EMB will be greatly affected, including the implementation of the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Solid Waste Management Act and hazardous waste management regulations.



# German firms see Phl market potential

BY RAFFY AYENG  
*@tribunephil\_raf*

Officials of German firms dealing with recycling and waste management have arrived in the country to look for prospective partners, as part of the 2022 German-Philippine Business Conference in Dusit Thani Manila focusing on the Recycling and Waste Management sector.

German companies find a big market potential in the Philippines in the field of waste management and recycling, as the country is currently the third largest producer of solid waste in Southeast Asia and is one of the largest plastic emitters in the world with around 60 billion plastic bags in circulation.

Organizers of the said event revealed that according to their study, about 16.6 million tons of solid waste were generated in 2020. And by 2030, it is estimated that there will be an additional five kilograms of solid waste per capita, per year.

That's why the business mission participants, namely: 2G Energy AG, BOMAG GmbH, CUTMETALL plus Carbide Germany GmbH, EUWELLE Environmental Technology GmbH and Vecoplan AG, are in consensus in saying that waste reduction, reformed waste recycling and pollution control are fundamental elements that are helping the Philippines transition to a more sustainable economy.

"We are elated to see again the large interest of German firms by traveling to the Philippines to explore cooperation, engage potential

partners and see the eagerness of their Philippine counterparts. We hope that this delegation will pave the way for more collaboration in the recycling and waste management industry of both the Philippines and Germany," German-Philippines Chamber Commerce and Industry executive director Christopher Zimmer, said.

"Overall, we are pleased to provide the platform that further bolsters bilateral business relations between the Philippines and Germany," he added.

For his part, Philippine Alliance for Recycling and Material Sustainability founding president and commissioner Crispiano Lao disclosed that 44,610 tons of waste are produced in the Philippines daily.



## House solon presses more funding for EMB

By **RYAN PONCE  
PACPACO**

### *To better regulate waste disposal amid COVID-19*

AS the country continues to struggle with its coronavirus disease-19 (COVID-19) medical waste more than two years since the pandemic hit, House Deputy Majority Leader and Iloilo Representative Janette Garin on Tuesday urged Congress to increase funding for the infectious healthcare waste program of the Environmental Management Bureau under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (EMB-DENR).

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has approved a P1.22 billion budget for the EMB-Environmental Regulations and Pollution Control Program under the DENR 2023 proposed budget, which is P1.53 billion or 55.7% less than its

allocation of P2.75 billion in 2022.

Because of the funding cuts, programs under the EMB have been greatly affected, including implementing the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Solid Waste Management Act, and hazardous waste management regulations.

Garin, vice chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, believed that it is very much "untimely" to slash the budget for healthcare waste programs because the country is still amid a pandemic and COVID cases are still being reported daily, indicating that it continues to generate waste.

According to DENR data, a total of 634,687.73 metric tons of healthcare waste were generated in 2021, which is equivalent to 52,890 metric tons each month, a roughly 500% increase from the pre-

COVID baseline figure.

"While COVID-19 cases in the country have started to decline, virus-contaminated healthcare wastes generated by the situation have continuously become a challenge, and addressing the issue of proper healthcare waste disposal is still of paramount concern," Garin said.

She also asked the DENR to address the complaints of some local government units (LGUs) whose healthcare waste is not collected on time from their preliminary treatment and storage facilities.

"LGUs have been told to store these medical waste, however, ang tagal na sa storage, may ilang LGUs ang hindi agad nakakapagtapon ng kanilang medical waste sa mga sanitary landfill dahil walang kumukuha. We are asking the DENR to

look into this as the consequences of improper handling and disposal of medical waste are serious," Garin averred.

Under the DENR-Waste Management Program, the agency has to assist LGUs, particularly those in remote areas, in funding their own special waste facilities, which will serve as a temporary and transit point for COVID 19-related healthcare waste before it is transported to treatment, storage, and disposal (TSD) facilities.

The COVID-19 healthcare waste program for LGUs is solely intended to store medical waste collected from households, vaccination sites, and quarantine facilities. It does not cover handling medical trash received from hospitals, which is collected directly by registered TSD and transported to landfills.





# YGC, Sierra Madre IP start Ph4 Mt. Bangkaan reforestation

THE Yuchengco Group of Companies (YGC) recently embarked in a forward-looking project of planting 50,000 native trees within a sprawling 100 hectares in Mt. Bangkaan in the Sierra Madre, the longest mountain range in the country.

Such a massive project will benefit not only Sierra Madre's biodiversity but also the entire population of Greater Metro Manila, from a sustainable watershed protection.

The choice of Mt. Bangkaan is crucial, being part of the micro basin of the Laiban Watershed, a vital

potential source of water for Metro Manila.

"We thank our dedicated partners, namely the DENR for the 100 hectares that they have entrusted to us for this project and for continuously sharing their expertise on forest management, and to the Indigenous People (IP) of Mt. Bangkaan- the Dumagats and Remontados who have warmly embraced this project from the start and have faithfully nurtured and protected the trees as their own," Helen Yuchengco Dee, Chairperson of YGC, said.

After 10 years, the once



Members of the Corporate Services Inc. of the Yuchengco Group of Companies (YGC) pose with Indigenous People of Tanay for a 100-hectare Reforestation Project in Sierra Madre.

denuded forest is now teeming with life of flora

and fauna, Felomen Antonio, DENR Superinten-

dent on Protected Areas, said.

Ka Lito Aran, the president of the People's Organization, said that birds like luklaks and malkohas and mammals like jungle chickens, sand lizards and musangs - are now regular life creatures in the mountain.

To date, there are 23,000 forest trees planted along the 58-hectare plant site, most of which are now over 20 feet high.

Now that YGC has completed 58 hectares with fully grown-up trees, the next big step for the project is to cover the remaining 42 hectares under Phase 4. The beneficiaries for Phase 4 will be 21 IP families, 11 of which

have been working with YGC for more than 10 years.

A total of 6,000 high grade saplings, including Guimaras mango, RCF avocado, Haitian star apple, Bangkok santol, and R5 rambutan, have been hauled and are now ready for planting.

The life cycle of Phase 4 will be between three to five years, the timeframe required for trees to start to bear fruits. And it is at this stage of bearing fruits where IPs socio economic objectives are expected to be attained and YGC's Sustainable Life Program for the IPs are likewise to be met.



## Tinistis na narra nasilat sa van

Mahigit P1.2 milyong halaga ng tinistis na kahoy ng narra ang nasamsam ng mga awtoridad sa kasagsagan ng bagyong Karding sa Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya sakay ng isang van, kamakalawa, ayon sa Aritao Police Station (APR).

Ayon sa APR, nahuli ang driver ng van na si Rommel Mercado, 37 anyos, at kasamahan nitong si Warwin Cruz, 19, kapwa taga-Masalipit, San Miguel, Bulacan.

Sa ulat ni APS officer-in-charge P/Capt. Roger Visitation, nag-

papatrulya ang pulisya kasama ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources sa isang checkpoint sa Brgy. Calitlitan nang kanilang parahin ang isang puting van.

Dito, nakita sa loob ng sasakyan ang 104 pirasong kahoy na may 2,520.75 board-feet na nagkaka-halagang P1.2 milyon.

Agad na hinuli ang dalawang suspek nang walang maipakitang dokumento hinggil sa pagbiyahe ng mga narra. (Allan Bergonia)



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DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## Mga pulis, LGU exec na may resort sa Masungi 'huhubaran'

INATASAN ni Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Benjamin 'Benhur' Abalos Jr. ang Philippine National Police (PNP) na masusing imbestigahan ang mga ilegal na negosyo sa loob ng Masungi Georeserve Protected Area sa Baras, Rizal na sinasabing pagmamay-ari umano ng mga aktibo at retiradong pulis at maging ng mga opisyal ng local government unit (LGU).

"Elected officials of the government and police of-

ficers are bound by their mandate to protect the environment. They should lead a good example to our fellow citizens and be part of the solution, not the other way around. Tayo dapat ang nangangalaga sa Masungi, hindi ang sumisira dito," ayon kay Abalos, sa isang pahayag, kasunod nang pagbisita sa naturang conservation site.

Nauna rito, nakatanggap ng ulat ang kalihim na ilang aktibo at retiradong opisyal ng PNP at mga

LGU officials ang nagtayo ng resort at mga commercial establishments sa naturang conservation site.

Nagbabala pa ang DILG chief na, "Hindi tayong papayag na kamakamin ito ng iilang tao. Kaya sa lahat ng magtatangkang magtayo pang negosyo at iba pang ilegal na istraktura sa loob ng Masungi, binabalaan ko po kayo. Itigil n'yo na po ito dahil ipinagbabawal po ito ng ating batas." (Dolly Cabreza)



## The Philippine eagle that drowned

**A** PHILIPPINE eagle was found dead, washed ashore in Barangay Daliwo, Maasin, Sarangani, on September 19. It apparently died from drowning. Anything Philippine eagle-related is always newsworthy. It is, after all, our national bird and icon. According to the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF), this was the third recorded case of an eagle crashing into the coastal seas of Maasin, Sarangani. And it is the eighth overall in Mindanao. For me the story does not end there. I wanted to know, why are the Philippine eagles drowning?

The Philippine eagle is one of the world's largest eagles. It has a wingspan of 7 feet and a crown to tail measure of 3 feet. It was known historically in local folklore and by its scientific name as the "monkey-eating eagle" because it eats monkeys. As an apex predator it also eats other mammals, lizards, snakes and birds. In the late 1970s, through the efforts of renowned ornithologist and conservationist Dr. Bob Kennedy, who was then filming the Philippine eagle for research, President Ferdinand E. Marcos issued a proclamation changing the raptor's name into a more dignified "Philippine Eagle." In 1995 it was legally named the national bird.

According to the PEF, Philippine eagles are solitary and territorial. They mature sexually and find a mate for life at 5 to 7 years. The



### URBANISTA

**DAPHNE  
OSEÑA PAEZ**

pair needs 4,000 to 11,000 hectares of forest land in order to thrive in the wild. Here lies the big problem. Despite the many laws protecting natural habitats like our rainforests, illegal loggers are still able to cut down trees. Philippine eagles nest on large dipterocarp trees like the native lauau species. A pair can lay a single egg every two years. They keep their offspring for at least two years before releasing it into the wild. The young eagle flies solitary until it reaches sexual maturity. It is the young eagles that are often the ones that get into trouble.

This Philippine eagle, one of the most powerful birds of prey, the king of birds, the apex predator of our rainforests, cannot swim. It can hunt its prey while walking on the jungle floor like a velociraptor. It has the most powerful talons. Its wings are so big and powerful, it can clasp a tree trunk. But it cannot swim. Then again, most birds cannot and do not have to swim, right? But apparently, other eagles are capable of swimming, like the American bald eagle.

The Philippine eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*) is endemic to the Philippines and is one of the rar-

est eagles in the world. It is listed as "critically endangered" in the IUCN Red List (International Union for Conservation of Nature) due to a continuous decline of an already small population in the past three generations because of extensive deforestation. There are only 400 pairs left in the wild in the rainforests of Luzon, Samar, Leyte and Mindanao.

Like many critically endangered species around the world, the loss of natural habitat is the usual cause of the decline. For our Philippine eagle, shooting is also a major threat. Most rescued eagles brought to the PEF are shooting victims. They are rehabilitated and released back to the wild with a GPS tracker. The PEF includes community-based education and habitat protection in its conservation program. The PEF has been able to successfully produce 28 eagles in captivity via natural pairing and cooperative artificial insemination.

Our drowned eagle in Sarangani was a juvenile female Philippine eagle. It was less than 4 years old, which means it was still unpaired and without a territory. It was untagged. X-ray showed it had an air gun pellet lodged in its thigh apparently from an old shooting attempt. It survived a shooting attempt in the past, but it did not survive its freedom in the wilderness of Mindanao.

Juvenile Philippine eagles need a big enough forest to find trees to rest in. It is the classic case of the effects of habitat loss.

The drowned Philippine eagle shows that there are still a few eagles born in the wild, which is a good thing. But it also means they are still being hunted and shot at. Perhaps this young one ventured out too far, got tired, couldn't find a tree, and just crashed into the sea.

I have only seen the Philippine eagle in captivity at the Philippine Eagle Center. Even in their cages, they look mighty, beautiful and fierce, especially if you catch one flexing its crown of feathers. I can only imagine the Philippine eagle in its full glory over the rainforests, dodging bullets, and looking to find a tree before it flies too far out to sea and drowns.



Ingming Aberia is on extended leave. His column will resume publication next year.

\*\*\*



Marlen Ronquillo is on leave. His 'Midweek Comments' will return next Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022.

\*\*\*

The 'Let's Face It' rotating column is expected to resume publication soon.



## Manila gov't seeks to revive 'nilad' plant

Manila is seeking to bring back the "nilad" plant, from which the city is believed to have derived its name, as part of the local government's greening program.

Mayor Honey Lacuna yesterday led the planting of *nilad* plants at the Manila Zoo. She rode a boat across a waterway inside the zoo to go to a riverbank where she planted *nilad*.

She was accompanied by the contestants of the Manhunt International.

"It was during the precolonial period when the *nilad* plant grew abundantly in the southern part of Pasig River," Lacuna said.

"Believing that it is near extinction, we should do our best to promote planting, growing and protecting *nilad* plants in the city," she added.

According to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the *nilad* plant used to be endemic in the shores of Manila Bay. The plant thrives in mangrove areas.

The city government aims to grow the *nilad* plant along the Manila Baywalk and Baseco beach in Tondo.

- Marc Jayson Cayabyab



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A7  
PAGE

UPPER  
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PAGE 1  
STORY

BANNER  
STORY

EDITORIAL

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09-28..22

TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

# Manila Zoo fully open by 15 Nov.

No ticket booths will be constructed at the gate and visitors must pre-register and pay their tickets online

BY PAT SANTOS

The renovated new Manila Zoo will open fully to the public by 15 November although walk-ins would still not be allowed, facility director Alipio Morabe told *Daily Tribune* yesterday.

Morabe said that tickets must be secured by visitors by pre-registering for available dates through the GOMANILA apps. No ticket booths will be constructed at the gate.

He said the measure is to help minimize the spread of Covid-19. Only a thousand visitors will be accommodated each day in keeping with health protocols, he added.

The zoo management is expecting the arrival of more wildlife from abroad and local habitats to make more varied the species on display for the public enjoyment, Morabe revealed.

Final ticket pricing will still be determined by the Manila City Council, but proposals are P250 for non-Manila residents and P150 for Manila residents. There's a proposal to provide Manila's senior citizens free entry to the zoo.

He said tentative operating hours for the zoo would be from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. as the animals also need to rest away from the prying eyes of visitors.

Online registration and payment will be the only mode available.

Manila Mayor Honey Lacuna led the planting of the iconic Nilad tree inside the Manila Zoo. The name of the capital city was said to have been derived from the said tree.

She was accompanied by other city hall officials and representatives from the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources.

Lacuna has vowed to continue the clean and green program of her predecessor, former mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso, in planting more trees in city enclaves like the Arroceros Forest Park across the historic Pasig River.



PHOTOGRAPH BY PAT SANTOS FOR THE DAILY TRIBUNE  
MANILA Mayor Honey Lacuna leads the planting of Nilad trees inside the Manila Zoo Tuesday as part of preparations to fully open the attraction on 15 November.



## Lacuna, Servo lead 'Nilad sa Maynila' tree planting

**MANILA** Mayor Honey Lacuna-Pangan and Vice Mayor Yul Servo Nieto led the simultaneous "Nilad Sa Maynila" tree planting activity at the Manila Zoo and Asean Garden in Intramuros yesterday before noon.

Kayle Nicole Amurao, Officer-in-Charge of the Department of Public Service (DPS) said the activity aimed to revive the dwindling population of

Nilad plants which were once abundant on the coast of Manila Bay and where the name of the country's capital came from.

She said the "Nilad Sa Maynila" was first launched by the Manila city government on December 29, 2020 at the Baseco Compound and entered into an agreement with the Department of Environment and Natu-

ral Resources-Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (DENR-ERDB) which was attended by Lacuna who was then the Vice Mayor of the city.

While Mayor Honey Lacuna led the tree planting activity at the Manila Zoo, Vice Mayor Yul Servo Nieto ushered the same undertaking at the Asean Garden in Intramuros. Edd Reyes



## Mayor Honey, nanguna sa 'Nilad planting activities'

**PINANGUNAHAN** ni Manila Mayor Honey Lacuna nitong Martes ang sabayang 'Nilad planting activities' sa kabisera ng bansa upang itaguyod ang halaman kung saan nagmula ang pangalan ng Lungsod ng Maynila.

Sinamahan ang kauna-unahang babaeng alkalde ng Maynila sa sabayang pagtatanim nina department of tourism chief Charlie Dungo, parks and recreation bureau chief Pio Morabe, barangay captain Evelyn de Guzman, city engineer Armand Andres, department of public services chief Kaye Nicole Amurao and Manila Traffic and Parking Bureau

head Zenaida Viaje.

Ang planting activity na ginawa sa New Manila Zoo ay layuning makapagtanim at paramihin pa ang ang halamang 'Nilad'.

Pinasalamatan ni Lacuna ang kápartner ng lungsod sa pagtatanim na walang iba kundi ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources "who always lend their hands in our desire for a green, livable and healthy city" at ang mga kandidato sa nalalapit na 'Manhunt International Pageant' na nagmula pa sa iba't-ibang panig ng mundo upang makilahok sa isang makabuluhang gawain.

Binigyang-diin ni Lacu-

na ang kahalagahan ng 'Nilad' sa pamanang kultura ng lungsod.

Nabatid na ang mga itinanim na halamang 'Nilad' nitong Martes ay nagmula pa sa Barangay Alitas sa Infanta, Quezon. May kabuuang 140 Nilad ang itinanim sa bisinisad ng Manila Zoo habang may 70 naman ang itinanim sa paligid ng Intramuros, kung saan si Vice Mayor Yul Servo-Nieto ang siyang nanguna.

Ayon kay Dungo, ang mga kalahok sa 'Manhunt International Pageant' na kumakatawan sa mga 34 bansa ay nagtanim din ng sarili nilang 'Nilad' kung saan minarhan ang lugar na pinagtaniman at nilagyan ng pangalan ng bansa kung saan sila nagmula.

Nagpahayag din ang lady mayor ng maagang paanyaya para siya ay saluhan at saksihan ang mga gawain sa selebrasyon ng Manila Day sa Hunyo sa darating na taon, partikular ang pagdaraos ng commemorative event para sa halamang 'Nilad' na tinawag na, 'Nilad Festival'.

Ang Manila o Maynila, ay mula sa salitang Nilad, isang uri ng puno ng bakawan na may puting bulaklak na kung tawagin ay 'Nilad' kung saan napakaraming tumutubo nito sa to Pasig River, kung saan inilalarawan ng mga mamamayan ng lugar bilang "may nilad" o kung nasaan naroon ang nilad.

(ANDI GARCIA)





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PAGE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## Mayor Honey, VM Yul Servo nanguna sa 'Nilad Sa Maynila' tree planting

### NI EDD REYES

**PINANGUNAHAN** nina Manila Mayor Honey Lacuna-Pangan at Vice Mayor Yul Servo Nieto ang magkasabay na pagsasagawa ng pagtatanim ng halamang Nilad kaugnay sa proyektong "Nilad Sa Maynila" sa Manila Zoo at Intramuros, Mar-  
tes ng umaga.

Ang naturang akti-  
bidad, ayon kay Kayle Ni-

ole Amurao, Officer-in-Charge (OIC) ng Department of Public Service (DPS) ay naglalayong muling maibalik ang naglalahong populasyon ng halamang Nilad, kung saan nalikha ang pangalan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, na aniya ay dating namumutiktik sa dami sa baybaying dagat ng Manila Bay.

Sa kanyang pagsasalita, sinabi ni Amurao na ang "Nilad Sa Maynila"

ay unang inilunsad ng Pamahalaang Lungsod ng Maynila noong Disyembre 29, 2020 sa Baseco Compound matapos pumasok sa isang kasunduan ang lokal na pamahalaan, sa pamamagitan ng kanilang tanggapan, sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (DENR-ERDB) para sa pagpaparami ng tanim na noon

ay dinaluhan din ng alkalde na dating bise pa ni dating Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso.

Kasabay ng ginawang pagtatanim na pinangunahan ni Mayor Honey Lacuna sa compound ng Manila Zoo, nanguna naman si Vice Mayor Yul Servo Nieto sa pagtatanim din ng halamang Nilad sa Asean Garden sa Intramuros.



## Budget monitor urges Congress to ensure GAA aligned with recovery, climate change goals

A NON-GOVERNMENT organization that monitors budget spending said Congress needs to review the government's spending plans thoroughly to ensure they aid the economic recovery and help mitigate climate change, adding that legislators must not be rushed by the Palace's certification of the 2023 budget bill as urgent.

The proposed P5.268-trillion budget for next year must, first and foremost, be up to the task of helping the Philippines whether the foreseeable economic challenges and worsening effects of climate change, it said.

"Certifying it as urgent shouldn't mean preventing scrutiny of controversial budget items," I-Lead Executive Director Zyza Nadine M. Suzara said in a Messenger chat. "The 19<sup>th</sup> Congress should ensure that the national budget is responsive to the needs of ordinary citizens."

Citing the upcoming Congressional recess, Ms. Suzara acknowledged that "there is reason" to certify the 2023 General Appropriations Act (GAA) as urgent.

"A delayed budget legislation process would be a worse scenario," she said. "It could mean having a reenacted budget which could negatively affect the achievement of the Development Budget Coordination Committee's (DBCC) macroeconomic targets."

An urgent certification allows bills to skip some steps in the legislative process. The urgent certification is designed to keep the budget timetable on track and avoid the months-long delays that accompanied the 2019 budget.

Budgets are re-enacted when the spending plan for the new year is not passed in time, forcing the government to operate on the basis of the previous year's spending plan.

Re-enacted budgets mean delays in the delivery of public services, according to Representative Stella Luz A. Quimbo, House appropriations committee vice-chair, said in a statement.

Citing the government's economic planning agency, she said the re-enacted budget in 2019 cost the country 1-1.2 percentage points of growth that year.

The 2019 budget was passed in April of that year, meaning that the public works spending that the previous government depended on for growth missed a large portion of the dry-season window deemed ideal for construction before the rainy season set in.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and credit company S&P Global Ratings recently lowered their growth forecasts for the Philippines, citing tightening monetary policy aimed at tempering inflation and the economic slowdown in major economies such as China and the US.

The IMF lowered its Philippine growth forecast for this year to 6.5% from the 6.7% estimate issued in July. Economic managers expect growth of 6.5-7.5% this year.

S&P, which lowered its own growth forecast to 6.3% from 6.5% previously, said it expects elevated core inflation to "drive up policy rates materially further" in the Philippines, Australia, India, New Zealand, and South Korea.

Press Secretary Trixie Cruz-Angeles, in a briefing, said Philippine fundamentals remain "strong" and that the economy is experiencing "a resurgence."

"Our economic managers forecast higher growth. They are in a much better position to make that determination," she said when asked to comment on the IMF growth downgrade. "We will have to see in the end whether that forecast is going to be more accurate than the local forecast."

Ms. Suzara said the 2023 proposed budget is not sufficient to generate new jobs.

"There is also no allocation for COVID-related expenditures like booster shots and the compensation and benefits of COVID-19 healthcare frontliners," she added.

The Philippines has relaxed mobility restrictions and outdoor face mask rules in a bid to reopen the economy further, including to foreign travelers. On Monday, the Department of Health (DoH) reported more than 17,000 infections in the Sept. 19-23 period.

Ms. Suzara said Congress also needs to provide for the activities prescribed by the Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation and Disaster Risk Reduction Roadmap.

According to the Budget department, the climate change adaptation (CCA) budget increased to P453.1 billion in the proposed 2023 budget from P289.7 billion in the 2022 General Appropriations Act.

"These aggregate figures are meaningless if they do not talk about them vis-à-vis timebound plans and investment requirements for CCA," Ms. Suzara said.



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4/51  
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UPPER  
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09-28-22

TITLE:

Budget Monitor

PAGE

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Ms. Quimbo said legislators are expected to wrap up plenary debate for the budget bill on Wednesday, Sept. 27.

"It is the second stage of the budget process where Congress members dedicate another pair of eyes to review the proposed budget," she said. "So far, we have terminated debates for (the budgets of) 61 agencies and constitutional bodies, leaving us with 14 more to deliberate."

Ms. Quimbo said the budget is expected to be passed in the House before Oct. 1 and be approved by both chambers of Congress by the end of the year.

"The lack of significant growth in the agriculture budget outside of rice and corn is also troubling given that we have issues related to food security and sustainability," said Philip Arnold P. Tuaño, dean of the Ateneo School of Government, in a Viber message.

"The decreases in the budget for the Departments of Health and Social Welfare and Development, given the ongoing pandemic, are worrisome," he added.

Mr. Tuaño hopes the government expands its engagement with civil society and the academic community in preparing the budget. — **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**



# Helpless

**B**EING out of town since Saturday, Sept. 24, I was watching with grave concern the progression of typhoon "Karding" as it gained strength and changed course as it neared the country. Of course, part of me was "happy" I would miss the wrath of the typhoon but my thoughts also were of my friends and kin as well as the old house in Laguna which I now am responsible for.

As fate would have it, the typhoon spared Metro Manila and Laguna from the worst of its wrath, but provinces north of Manila, including some areas of NCR, still had to go through hell and high water, a burden that is becoming more and more commonplace these days.

News coverage repeated a theme: We need more than ever to respond to climate change.

We do?

Truth to tell, we do. But in the greater scheme of things the Philippines contributes 1/2 of 1% to GHG emissions so even if we were to all stop using fossil fuel energized vehicles, ban plastics, stop eating beef and all, we will still be at the mercy of



## MAROON BLOODED

JOSE BAYANI BAYLON

super typhoons, for two reasons. First, because the biggest GHG contributors (China, the US, the EU) still have a long way to go to make up for all the damage they've done to the environment during their industrializing phase — of which today's climate change is the consequence. And second, because by the work of God our islands have been situated at a geographic location where we are almost always the landfall area of some of the world's worst

*Our authorities, for one reason or another, do not have the political will to put their foot down on this matter and the consequence is an annual litany of victims bemoaning lack of support.*

tropical disturbances. And there's nothing we can do about where our country is located, unless we choose to move to another country!

And so, in many ways we are helpless before the onslaught of Mother Nature. And yet in a few ways there is something we can do or do better.

Here's a basic one.

How many LGUs have actually mapped their disaster-prone areas? From storm surges to landslides

to rampaging flood water river, these areas should be designated as off-limits to beings, much more to be of the informal or the form. To let people continue to r such areas is to court disaster. We do not have the resources to properly respond to a disaster series of disasters. Worse, who live in danger zones cue workers in danger, to we have seen how the here some people cost them the

Our authorities, for one or another, do not have the will to put their foot down on this matter and the consequence is an annual litany of victims lamenting lack of support.

"Karding" is a fact of life. It will be more like him. Still More frequent. Less frequent. When a "Karding" forms in the Pacific there's little we can stop what happens next. But not helpless when it comes to the most basic precaution of protecting ourselves out of harm's way.

If only we can do that and well, a "Karding" will be but need not be a tragedy every



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PAGE

DATE

# WTO chief warns world edging into 'global recession'

THE World Trade Organization's chief said Tuesday she believes the world is heading toward a global recession due to multiple colliding crises, and called for radical policies to revive growth.

WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said Russia's war in Ukraine, the climate crisis, food price and energy shocks plus the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic were creating the conditions

for a world recession.

"Now we have to weather what looks like an oncoming recession," she told the opening of the global trade body's annual public forum in Geneva.

"I think a global recession. That's what I think we are edging into. But, at the same time, we have to start thinking of the recovery. We have to restore growth." She noted that the World Bank and the

International Monetary Fund had both downgraded global growth forecasts, while indicators on trade numbers were "not looking too good."

Okonjo-Iweala added: "We have security shocks, we have climate shocks, we have energy shocks, we have food price shocks, and all of this hitting countries at the same time, so we cannot afford to do business as usual."

The former Nigerian finance and foreign minister said central banks were in a tight spot, with little choice over the course ahead.

"Central banks don't really have too much of a choice but to tighten and increase interest rates — but the repercussions on emerging markets and developing countries are quite severe because they too are tightening an increase in inter-

est rates," she said.

"But what happens in the developed countries affects their debt burdens, affects what they have to pay to service debt, affects the flight of capital from their economies back into the developed countries.

"But right now, I think there's not much choice but for central banks to act because inflation really hits at the poor very badly."

She stressed the need for central banks to determine whether inflation was being caused by strong demand or whether the rise in prices was linked to structural problems on the supply side.

Okonjo-Iweala said her top concern was how to ensure food security, followed by access to energy.

"The specter of not having enough food is one that worries me," she said.

AFP



OPINION WEDNESDAY  
**SKETCHES**  
ANA MARIE PAMINTUAN

**Explosive intensification**

**T**hat was fast... and worrisome. Within hours last Sunday, tropical cyclone Karding intensified into a super typhoon as it pounded Luzon.

President Marcos wanted to know: is that the new normal in typhoons?

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said that yes, the "period of explosive intensification" – a phenomenon in which a tropical cyclone's peak winds intensify by over 65 kilometers per hour within 24 hours – could become a normal occurrence, complicating preparedness and emergency response. (Karding's peak winds intensified by 90 kph.)

PAGASA said explosive intensification also occurred when Super Typhoon Rolly slammed the country in 2020; it became the strongest cyclone recorded in the world in that year.

And yes, Marcos was told, climate change is the culprit in extreme weather.

Explosive intensification has now been added to our growing lexicon of disasters that are becoming regular occurrences in the Philippines.

Metro Manila, for example, first became familiar with storm surges on Sept. 27, 2011, when Typhoon Pedring spawned a surge up to 20 feet high emanating (improbably, or so we thought at the time) from Manila Bay, destroying the breakwater and the Roxas Boulevard seawall and causing massive flooding all the way to Taft Avenue.

The ground level of Sofitel Philippine Plaza hotel with its popular Spiral restaurant were destroyed as well as other bayfront structures including part of the US embassy chancery.

Storm surges later also hit what used to be considered as secluded bays. Mindanao, long believed to be out of the path of typhoons, was battered by Typhoon Sendong in December 2011, leaving about 900 dead in Cagayan de Oro City and over 400 in Iligan. In December 2012, Mindanao was again hit by Typhoon Pablo, which killed over 1,000 people. And many people still remember the storm surges of Super Typhoon Yolanda that killed at least 6,352 people and flattened large swaths of Eastern Visayas.

Residents of the National Capital Region at least breathed a sigh of relief that Karding, which struck on the same day in 2009 that Ondoy shocked the NCR with torrential rainfall and devastating floods, did not unleash the same level of destruction.

Putting this in context, a resident of Marikina who evacuated to safer ground on Sunday, leaving only their father to guard their house, said the flood this time reached only the second floor instead of the third floor.

"We may have been lucky this time," Marcos said at the briefing on typhoon preparedness and relief efforts.

Weather experts confirmed viral posts that the Sierra Madre Mountain Range broke the strength of Karding as it roared across Luzon. There are proposals to make Sept. 26 Save Sierra Madre Day. It refers to efforts to protect the country's longest mountain range, particularly from the construction of the Kaliwa Dam.

This, unfortunately for such advocates, will have to be balanced with the need to develop direly needed additional sources of fresh water for Metro Manila.

Timely evacuations helped minimize Karding's death toll. Tragically, among the casualties were five rescuers in Bulacan, who were swept away by powerful currents after their boat was hit by a wall that collapsed at the height of the typhoon.

A big headache for BBM is the massive damage to crops in the country's rice granary, coming just weeks before the harvest. His P20 a kilo "aspiration" for rice may have to wait six years to be attained.

In the aftermath of Karding, there is a renewed push for the creation of a Department of Disaster Resilience.

I don't know why, when faced with a problem, the go-to response of policy makers is not to implement structural reforms for efficiency, but to further bloat the bureaucracy, by creating a new department or agency that they can pack (at taxpayers' expense) with beneficiaries of their patronage.

Rightsizing of the bureaucracy is supposed to be a priority of the new administration, especially with the country buried in trillions in debt incurred for the pandemic response.

So what is being done along this line? New agencies are being created. Gerrymandering continues, to make room for more dynasty members and patronage beneficiaries stuffing their faces on the public trough.

If we returned to the original number of seats in the House of Representatives in the first post-EDSA Congress, we'd save enough for COVID response until we reach the real end of the pandemic tunnel.

The savings can also be channeled to climate change mitigation, such as in developing communities where residents of areas at high risk for rising sea levels can be relocated.

PAGASA's climate scientist has warned that sea levels are rising three times faster than the global average in the Philippines.

Around Manila Bay, this problem can only be aggravated by ongoing massive reclamation projects, with more in the pipeline. One day there will be nothing left of that bay, and the Manila port will have to relocate. Rodrigo Duterte made noise about opposing such projects, but in the end it turned out to be nothing but hot air.

One official who has truly and successfully opposed such projects is Sen. Cynthia Villar. She even managed to get her pet project, the 175-hectare Las Pifas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area, declared a protected Ramsar wetland of international importance, effectively putting it beyond the reach of vested commercial and political interests.

The wetland's lush mangrove forest serves as a significant flood barrier in that area.

But elsewhere around the bay, the coastal island village of Pariahan in Bulacan town, Bulacan is being swallowed up by the sea.



The wetland's lush mangrove forest serves as a significant flood barrier in that area.

But elsewhere around the bay, the coastal island village of Pariahan in Bulacan town, Bulacan is being swallowed up by the sea.

In Navotas and Malabon, the indiscriminate reclamation of the natural catchment lagoon in Dagat-Dagatan – a pet project of the President's mom Imeldific when she was Metro Manila governor – has caused heavy flooding in that area even during high tide. The western section of the city of Manila, meanwhile, has been sinking gradually for decades.

Flooding is also horrendous around Laguna de Bay, with heavy siltation endangering water supply in Metro Manila. This is due to the indiscriminate reclamation around the bay, combined with the proliferation of fish pens owned mostly by local politicians.

BBM, addressing the United Nations General Assembly last week, called for concerted global action on climate change, eliciting a scoffing remark from Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg. Marcos might have to work first on concerted action among his political allies to deal with the threats posed by global warming.

With "explosive intensification" of super typhoons now added to the climate threats the country faces, the task becomes more urgent.

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DATE

# Makati first resilience hub in Phl, Southeast Asia - UNDRR

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction has recognized Makati as the first ever resilience hub in the Philippines and Southeast Asia, the city government said yesterday.

The local government announced the news to its constituents on its

Facebook page.

*"Buong karangalang ibinabahagi ni Mayor Abby Binay ang pinak-abagong pagkilala sa Makati bilang lungsod na nagpapakita ng best resilience practices and high-level resilience commitments,"* the post read.

Binay, in her column in *Pilipino*

*Star* on Monday, said she is pushing for Makati to be certified as a resilience hub in the country and Southeast Asia to serve as an inspiration in formulating disaster risk reduction and climate action plans.

*"Sa nakaraang mga taon, nagsilbing*

*model city ang Makati sa ibang mga lungsod pagdating sa best practices in disaster risk reduction and management, climate action and sustainability,"* she said.

Binay said Makati was chosen as the head of the disaster cluster in the next four years of CityNet, an

association of urban stakeholders pushing for sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region.

It is composed of 173 municipalities, non-government organizations, private companies and research centers.

- Emmanuel Tupas



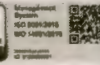
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### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

On the **ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE REPORT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN (EPRMP)** of the proposed **CEMENT GRINDING PLANT EXPANSION PROJECT** of the **ABBAH KING CEMENT CORPORATION** located in **BARANGAY MALBANG, MAASIM, SARANGANI**.

Notice is hereby given to all parties who wish to give their opinion regarding the implementation of the proposed **CEMENT GRINDING PLANT EXPANSION PROJECT** to attend the Public Hearing on:

Date	Time	Venue
13 October 2022 (Thursday)	9:00 AM <i>Registration starts at 8:00a.m.</i>	Barangay Malbang Covered Court, Maasim, Sarangani

The Public Hearing is being conducted in connection with the review of the EPRMP of the aforementioned project by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The following is the project information:

<b>Project Name</b>	Cement Grinding Plant Expansion Project
<b>Project Location</b>	Barangay Malbang, Maasim, Sarangani
<b>Project Capacity</b>	600,000 MTPY
<b>Proponent</b>	Abbah King Cement Corporation

All interested parties who wish to attend or participate in these Public Hearings should preferably confirm their attendance/participation and may give their opinion(s) in a concise position paper to the **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION (EIAMD)** of this Office through mail or through e-mail at [eia@emb.gov.ph](mailto:eia@emb.gov.ph), at least three (3) days before the Public Hearing schedule. Those who will not be able to register or submit written positions may be given the opportunity to share their issues on the day of the hearing itself

The project's EPRMP and Executive Summary for the Public are downloadable at our website: [www.eia.emb.gov.ph](http://www.eia.emb.gov.ph) (*kindly access the Notice of Public Hearing/Consultation link found in our website*) while copies will be available in the following offices:

- EMB Region XII**  
DENR-Environmental Management Bureau XII  
Regional Government Center, Barangay Carpenter Hill,  
City of Koronadal, South Cotabato  
Tel. No. (083) 228-1071; 877-3312
- Maasim Municipal Hall**  
Maasim, Sarangani Province

For more details, please contact the EIAMD Division at this Office at telephone number (02) 8539- 4378 loc. 116 through the project casehandlers Engr. Dexter Tabada and Ms. Amber Hagada MNSA.

(PDI - Sept. 28 & Oct. 5, 2022)