

14 August 2022, Sunday



DENR

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Fighting dengue?

Let native

'butiki, gagamba,

palaka' do it

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

MOSQUITOES are the cause of the dreaded diseases like malaria or dengue, the cases of which continue to rise to alarming levels in the Philippines.

The exponential increase in the population of mosquitoes can be attributed to a number of factors. This includes the extinction of their natural predators—they can be your friendly neighborhood spider, or *gagambang bahay*, lizards, or *butiki* that occasionally crawls on your ceiling to hunt for insects, and frog, or *palaka* that dwells in your favorite potted plant.

Alarming health situation

THE Department of Health reported that 92,343 people were infected with the dengue virus as of July 23. This is 118-percent growth from the 42,294 cases recorded during the same period last year.

Apparently, this prompted the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), especially its Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), to warn the public against eliminating mosquitoes by releasing biological control agents like frogs or fish, saying that such practice can do more harm than good.

Releasing frogs and fish in swamps and stagnant water to combat dengue, according to Director Natividad Bernardino of the DENR-BMB, can disrupt the ecological balance of the surrounding environment.

Diverse diet

FISH and frogs have diverse diet and are not particularly fond of eating mosquitoes alone, Bernardino said.

Citing a 2016 study by biologist Jodi Rowley on frogs' effectiveness in combatting the Zika virus, Bernardino said that "mosquitoes make up only less than 1 percent of the frog's diet, referring to the cane toad (*Rhinella marina*).

In a news release, the DENR-BMB chief said releasing potentially harmful biological control agents like frogs or fish is not a scientifically

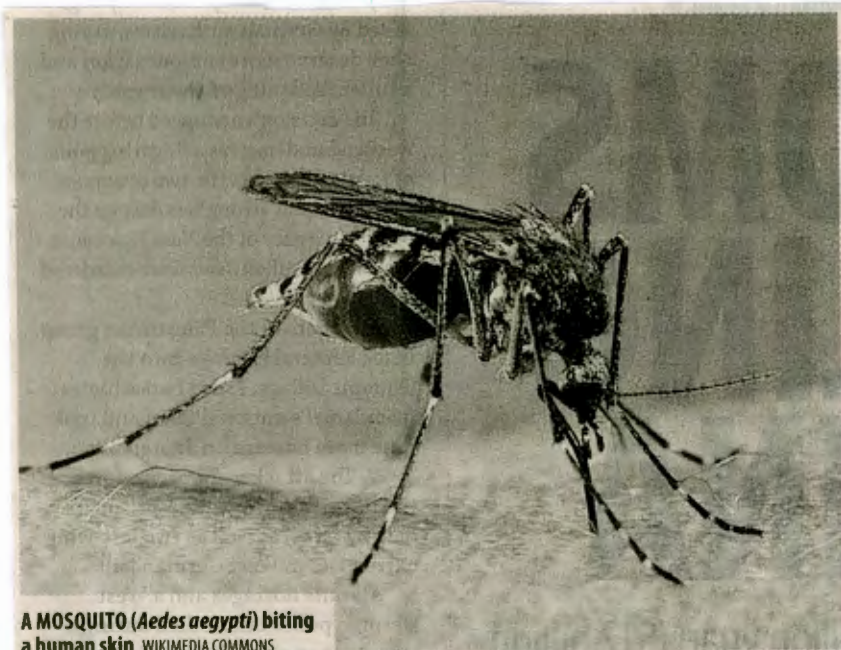


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A MOSQUITO (*Aedes aegypti*) biting a human skin WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

proven effective solution to get rid of dengue-causing mosquitoes.

Invasive alien species

THERE are frogs or fish species that are actually considered as invasive alien species that can cause the extinction of other native species, hence, disrupting the ecological balance in a particular ecosystem.

Some local government units, Bernardino said, are releasing cane toad supposedly to combat dengue, not knowing that they are one of the worst invasive alien species in the world

"When introduced to a new environment, non-native species of frogs and fishes may become invasive and alter the biodiversity of the area," she warned.

New species, new disease

THE Convention on Biological Diversity defines invasive alien species as "organisms that are non-native to an ecosystem, and which may cause economic, environmental harm or adversely affect human health."

True enough, invasive species can negatively affect human health by directly infecting humans with new diseases, serving

as vectors for certain diseases, or causing wounds through bites, stings, allergens, or other toxins, Bernardino warned.

Zoonotic diseases—infectious disease that is transmitted between species from animals to humans, or vice versa—can cause a global outbreak that can lead to enormous economic setbacks or worse, declaration of a public health emergency that requires extreme measures, such as community quarantine or lockdowns to prevent death as in the Covid-19 virus.

Timely and appropriate

INTERNATIONAL biodiversity expert Theresa Mundita S. Lim, executive director of the Asean Centre for Biodiversity said the advisory of the BMB is quite apropos.

The increasing incidence of dengue cases has again brought out various creative means to address this public health problem, Lim told BUSINESSMIRROR via Messenger on August 9.

"This is not the first time that authorities have resorted to introducing predators to try to control pest populations. In most cases, this has resulted in unintended tragic consequences, like the extinction of wild populations of an entire species, citing the



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CANE toad WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

case of the Partula snail in the Polynesian islands, she said.

Mosquito fish dilemma

CLOSER to home, Lim noted that there were also introductions of the so-called mosquito fish (*Gambusia affinis*) by a fisheries agency in the past, when she was still with the DENR.

The purpose of releasing the mosquito fish is to feed on mosquito larvae in creeks, but apparently, the move was not properly coordinated with the concerned government agency, such as the DENR-BMB.

"We called the attention of the agency at the time, pointing out that the fish, because of its aggressive and predatory behavior, has been recorded to negatively affect populations of small fish through predation and competition," Lim, a former DENR-BMB director, said.

Environmental impact study

LIM said before releasing a non-native species, an environmental impact study, including the assessment of the potential or actual impacts of the introduction to fisheries, to biodiversity and to ecosystem services must be conducted.

"In a healthy, balanced ecosystem, there is a good number of natural predators that keeps the population of pest naturally occurring in the area under control," she said.

According to Lim, managing pests and emerging diseases require an integrated solution that must ensure that the natural predators continue to exist and perform their ecological functions.

Habitat protection, reducing threats

SHE said a variety of actions—such as natural habitat protection, reducing threats and pollution, and proper waste disposal, such as reduction of breeding grounds for mosquitoes—should be considered before releasing non-native species into the wild.

Lim noted that integrated solutions include addressing poaching and illegal wildlife trade, such as the case of the tokay gecko population some years ago owing to overcollection that has been linked to rising in mosquito-borne diseases, as reported in a paper by Dr. Angel Alcalá, et al, in 2012.

Introducing invasive species may not only affect the natural predator population but also

result in the predation and depletion of other vulnerable species that are not the target pests intended for control, she warned.

According to Lim, there must be an institutionalized coordination mechanism among the different sectors that will take into account links between public health, domestic and wild animal health, and environmental health in the planning and implementation of a prevention program.

'Destroy' breeding ground

FOR his part, Gregg Yan, founder of Best Alternatives Campaign, said there are more ways in fighting dengue. One is by destroying mosquitoes' breeding ground.

"The best way to fight dengue is to leave as few places for mosquitoes to breed. This means removing stagnant pools of water or vessels that can collect rainwater in and around our homes," Yan told the BUSINESSMIRROR via Messenger on August 9.

According to Yan, biological control mechanisms, such as releasing fish in waterways, have proven somewhat effective in curbing mosquito populations in other countries.

"However, Best Alternatives cautions against doing this locally, because the fish used are usually not native to a particular country, like the guppies, mollies and mosquito fish introduced in Philippine waterways to eat mosquito larvae," Yan added.

'Green' control measures

FOR biological control mechanisms to be truly "green" then it should have as few unintended impacts on the environment as possible, he said.

"We recommend conducting research on native species that eat mosquito larvae. They need not be fish. Many of our native bats, lizards, and amphibians also love making a buffet out of mosquitoes," he said.

"So the next time you see a 'gross-looking' *gagamba* or *butiki* on your wall, please think twice about killing it. It might have been protecting you from dengue or malaria all along," he said.



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Giraffes, parrots, oak trees among species facing extinction



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF UN

NEW research finds that parrot species around the world are threatened with extinction due to wide-spread habitat destruction.

The current biodiversity crisis will be exacerbated, with catastrophic results for humanity, unless humans interact with nature in a more sustainable way

Around one million species are facing extinction, according to a report from IPBES, an independent intergovernmental science and policy body supported by the United Nations (UN).

It may be surprising to learn that even giraffes, parrots, and oak trees are included in the list of threatened species, as well as cacti and seaweed.

Seaweed is one of the planet's great survivors, and relatives of some modern-day seaweed can be traced back some 1.6 billion years. Seaweed plays a vital role in marine ecosystems, providing habitats and food for marine lifeforms, while large varieties — such as kelp — act as underwater nurseries for fish. However, mechanical dredging, rising sea temperatures and the building of coastal infrastructure are contributing to the decline of the species.

The world's trees are threatened by various sources, including logging, deforestation for industry and agriculture, firewood for heating and cooking, and climate-related threats, such as wildfires.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF UN

KELP, a type of seaweed, can be fed to animals and could help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



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It has been estimated that 31 percent of the world's 430 types of oak are threatened with extinction, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of threatened species. And 41 percent are of "conservation concern," mainly due to deforestation for agriculture and fuel for cooking.

Giraffes are targeted for their meat, and suffer from the degradation of their habitat due to unsustainable wood harvesting and increased demand for agricultural land. It is estimated there are only around 600 West African giraffes left in the wild.

Catastrophic results for humanity

The current biodiversity crisis will be exacerbated, with catastrophic results for humanity, unless humans interact with

nature in a more sustainable way, according to UN experts.

"The IPBES report makes it abundantly clear that wild species are an indispensable source of food, shelter and income for hundreds of millions around the world," Susan Gardner.

Ecosystems Division director at the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), said. "Sustainable use is when biodiversity and ecosystem functioning are maintained while contributing to human well-being. By continuing to use these resources unsustainably, we are not just risking the loss and damage of these species' populations; we are affecting our own health and well-being and that of the next generation," Gardner explained.

Indigenous knowledge

The report illustrates the importance of indigenous people being able to secure tenure rights over their land, as they have long understood the value of wild species and have learned how to use them sustainably.

Examples of the kinds of transformative changes that are needed to reduce biodiversity loss include an equitable distribution of costs and benefits, changes in social values, and effective governance systems.

Currently, governments around the world spend more than \$500 billion every year in ways that harm biodiversity to support industries like fossil fuels, agriculture, and fisheries. Experts say these funds should be repurposed to incentivize regenerative agriculture, sustainable food systems, and nature-positive innovations.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF UN

WOMEN in Rio Negro prepare the soil for planting.



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Legarda files bill to save weaving livelihood of IPs

By PS JUN M. SARMIENTO

SAYING that the country's indigenous peoples (IPs) need much-needed livelihood assistance in these trying times, Senator Loren Legarda has filed a bill to provide support for the country's local textile industry, weavers, and artisans, saying that local weavers and artisans continuously safeguard our country's rich heritage.

She added that the weaving industry needs support to cope with the increasing price of raw materials and marketing

concerns.

"We must give our weaving industry a fighting chance. Our handwoven fabrics deserve recognition," Legarda noted.

Eyeing the promotion of the country's weaving industry, the four-term senator Loren Legarda recently filed SB 241, or the "Philippine Handloom Weaving Industry Development Act of 2022", which seeks to empower weavers and mainstream government programs to develop the local textile industry.

Under the proposed measure, a National Handloom Weaving Department Council will be established composed of representatives

from the National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), and the Garments and Textile Industry Development Office of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

The council will generate the National Handloom Weaving Industry Development Policy to generate a roadmap for the industry, intellectual property framework for textiles, innovation, and promotion of textile-related technical skills and vocational education and training.

"Our handwoven fabrics deserve recognition," Legarda noted, adding that handloom weaving is one of the country's most time-honored industries and generates income in rural areas," Legarda pointed out.

Legarda, who is a patron of the country's first permanent textile gallery, "Hibla ng Lahing Filipino", also authored RA 9242 or the "Philippine Tropical Fabrics Law", which has previously provided support through the Philippine Fiber Development Authority (PHILFIDA) for the establishment of weaving centers and cotton processing facilities nationwide.



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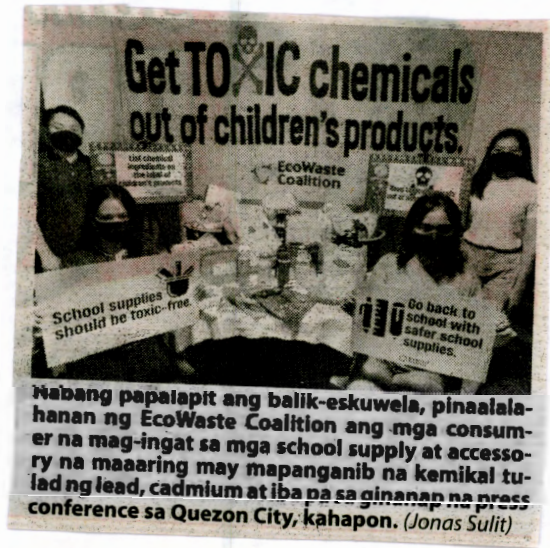
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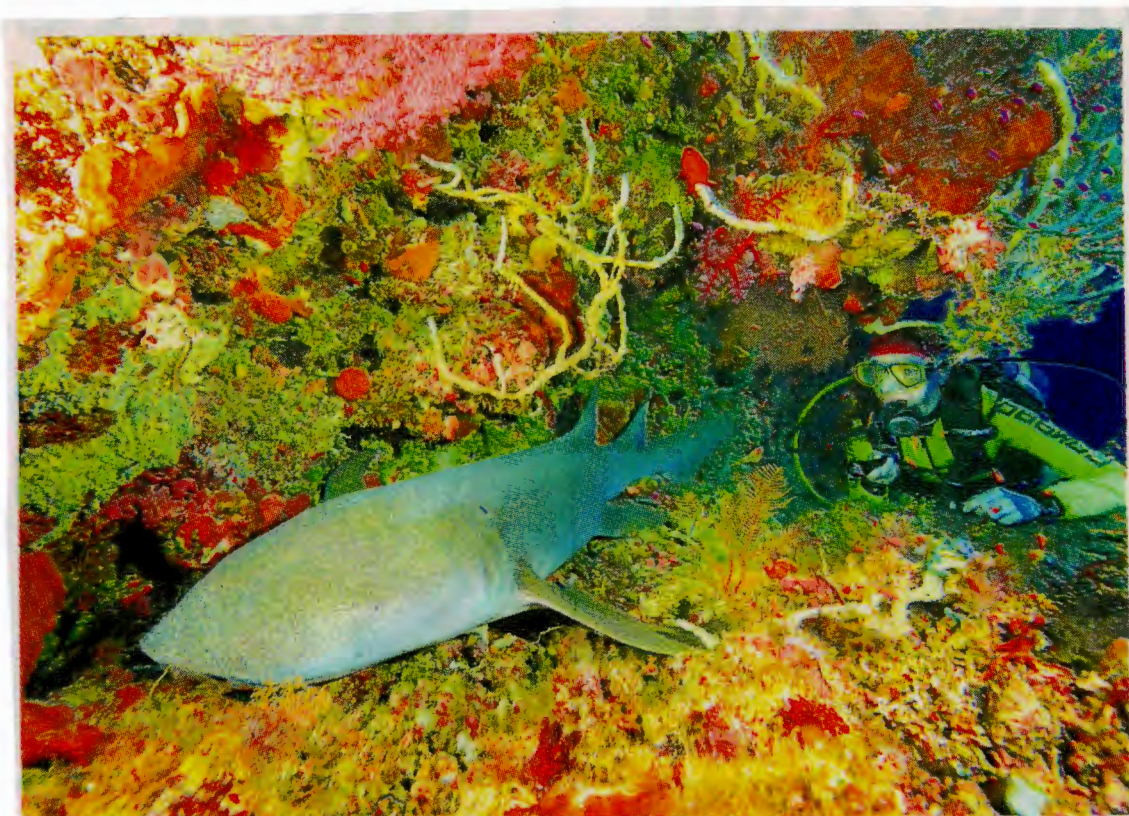
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How Tubbataha's park rangers didn't miss a beat during COVID

This, in the face of infection, Typhoon 'Odette' and government red tape that has deprived them of better living quarters in the middle of Sulu Sea



Diver with sleeping nurse shark in Tubbataha—YVETTE LEE



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By Alya B. Honasan
@Inq_Lifestyle

Last March, to the delight of scuba divers, the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park (TRNP) opened up to visitors for the first time in two years. It was indeed cause for celebration; although the whale sharks didn't come around to say hello to us on our trip last June (they did for other groups), we on board the dive boat Discovery Palawan were still blessed with the presence of an abundance of sharks, big fish, dozens of delightful bumphead wrasses, and a highlight of the trip, an encounter with graceful mantas, one of which passed and paused right in front of our ecstatic group.

It was also a welcome chance to revisit the Tubbataha Ranger Station in the North Atoll, one of two atolls that make up the reefs in this Unesco World Heritage Site that is easily the most spectacular dive destination in the Philippine archipelago. In fact, just last Aug. 11, the international marine conservation organization Mission Blue, headed by renowned marine biologist Dr. Sylvia Earle, recognized TRNP as a Hope Spot.

The Tubbataha Rangers are a composite group (whose existence, along with that of Tubbataha's multisectoral management board, was facilitated by President Fidel V. Ramos, recently deceased and already missed), composed of members of the Philippine Coast Guard, the Philippine Navy, the municipality of Cagayancillo, and members of the Tubbataha Management Office (TMO). These rangers rotate on two-month shifts to live in the station on a sandbar, kilometers away from land, going on regular patrols to make sure the reefs remain protected. This time, as divers flocked to the station to buy merchandise, the goods were brought down from storage, and the rangers all kept their masks on as a COVID-19 precaution.



Tubbataha Park Rangers (and COVID-19 survivors) Jeffrey David and Cris Caranay of the Tubbataha Management Office

—ALYA B. HONASAN

Monitoring

The boys have to be careful, as their ranks were not spared by the pandemic—especially since, even as Tubbataha remained closed, the rangers still reported for duty, did their patrolling, and did the work for the Park's regular Ecosystem Research and Monitoring Program, when experts made the trip to conduct surveys and censuses of sea birds, fish, marine species, and corals. After all, according to the Park's 2021 primer, the 97,030-ha park is also an Asean Heritage Park, a refuge for 181 endangered species (including whale sharks and sea turtles) and 80 of 110 of the planet's coral genera, and

Meanwhile, Cresencio Caranay, 31, also with the TMO, tested positive before leaving for his tour of duty to Tubbataha, which is why he was delayed for an additional two weeks. "That was one of our fears," he says in Filipino. "That you would have to stay longer because the weather was bad, or you wouldn't be relieved on time, because the next shift also had to quarantine and they were strict about people leaving the city."

This father of two claims his family understands the nature of his work and the long absences, but it got especially difficult during the pandemic. During the four-month diving season, there are usually many visitors, so the lockdowns were

one of four East Asian-Australasian Flyway partners meant to protect migratory waterbirds and their habitats. Case in point: the decrease in the population of the endangered Black Noddies on Bird Islet had the rangers building nesting structures on the islet, "virtual 'condominiums' where the birds can nest in relative peace and safety."

Take ranger Jeffrey David, 36, now 10 years with the TMO, and a father of three. David was hit so bad during the first wave of COVID-19, he was intubated and confined for a month, no thanks to some comorbidities, and had to rest for another three months. "But I recovered, and we're still here," he says in Filipino. "We even caught some illegal fishermen here during the pandemic, trying to enter the park from other provinces. They probably thought there was nobody guarding this place. But we're still prioritizing security."



Tubbataha Protected Area superintendent Angelique Songco at the North Atoll with the half-built ranger station

—ALYA B. HONASAN

particularly lonely. “That’s why we put up a basketball court, so we can get some exercise, and the TMO takes care of our antigen tests.” The rangers’ supply of vitamin C was given by some Tubbataha supporters.

Condemned

“It’s taking some getting used to, now that we’re open again,” adds David. “We still have to be careful, though.” Also, the rangers, who take care of repairing their now 22-year-old station, felt the full fury of Typhoon “Odette,” which blew away parts of the roof and flooring. In fact, reports TRNP Protected Area superinten-

dent Angelique Songco, a Puerto Princesa engineer has practically condemned the ranger station, declaring that it will not survive another storm like “Odette.”

Which brings us to another issue plaguing these hardworking men. Construction started in 2020 on a new ranger station, as well as a small research station and a helipad, with money from the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), implemented by the provincial government. Phase 1 has been completed—but Phase 2 can’t get off the ground because the government

won’t release Tubbataha’s money. “In the meantime,” says Songco, “that”—she gestures towards the half-built structures, with iron rebars exposed to seawater—“is just standing there getting rusty.”

The money is there, all P87 million of it, P58 million for Tubbataha and P29 million for the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG); at least, it’s supposed to be. In 2013, the USS Guardian, an American Navy ship, ran aground on the reefs. In an article by Matikas Santos published on Feb. 18, 2015 in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, “US pays P87M for Tubbataha Reef damage,” the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) confirmed this in a statement.

“On 20 January 2015, the Philippine government received from the US government the full requested amount of P87,033,570.71 as compensation for the damage caused to Tubbataha Reef by the grounding of the USS Guardian,” the DFA statement said. “The compensation will be utilized for the protection and rehabilitation of Tubbataha Reef Natural Park, a Unesco World Heritage Site. Portions of the fund will also be used to further enhance capability to monitor the area and prevent similar incidents in the future ... DFA also said that the US will help the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) upgrade their facilities in the Tubbataha Reef area ... In addition to the compensation received, the US government is also providing additional assistance to the Philippine Coast Guard to upgrade the PCG Substation in Tubbataha.”

DENR is helping TMO claim the money, which is now with the Bureau of Treasury (BTr), after the bureau asked for a certification from the PCG. It took several calls, letters, appeals to the authorities (including former President Rodrigo Duterte) and finally, a call to Duterte’s

Citizen’s Complaints Hotline, 8888, before the PCG issued the certification.

Red tape

The red tape is because the TMO is not on the list of government offices (read: they do not get any government funding, and subsist mainly on park entrance fees paid by tourists), which is why the DENR is “representing” Tubbataha.

“The money is being held in trust, and DENR is helping us ask the BTr to release it,” Songco says. “BTr must now issue their own certification that the cash is available so the Department of Budget Management can issue a notice of cash allocation to be processed.”

One inevitably wonders whether or not the money is still there, nine years later; the ball is now obviously in the BTr’s court. In the meantime, the rangers recently wiped down the rusty rebars, waiting for the day when construction continues.

During our group’s visit to the station, the half-finished structures were certainly an eyesore. Although the rangers kept a safe distance from the partying divers, you could still see how happy they were to have visitors, as we brought them snacks, soda, and other supplies, lovingly turned over by their “Mama Ranger,” Songco. Ours was the boat’s second-to-the-last trip of the dive season during the Philippine summer, so it was going to be quiet again for a while out on the sandbar.

For now, they were all smiles, despite the rusting beams and flimsy roofing of their precarious, groaning quarters. Surely the Tubbataha Marine Park Rangers, who didn’t miss a beat during the pandemic, deserve a hell of a lot more than this. INQ



The wrongs dragging 'rightsizing' efforts



SUNDAY
STORIES

MARLEN V.
RONQUILLO

EVEN with the diminished influence of the US over global affairs, many of its agencies have to be organized and structured to effectively attend to its continents — spanning, sprawling concerns, the US State Department in particular. The State Department's vast bureaucracy is a dictate of the agency's many functions in a world roiled by turmoil and uncertainty, the flexible and ever-changing nature of diplomacy, the requirements of diplomatic outposts in both the old democracies and troubled nations led by unpredictable tin-pot dictators.

Even the new mission to lead a climate-change effort has to be annexed by the seemingly unlimited mandates of global diplomacy.

► Ronquillo A5

So, in what ways is the vast bureaucracy of the US State Department related to the "rightsizing" initiative of the government of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.? If you were observant enough, you would readily see that despite the rightsizing declaration, a priority program of Mr. Marcos Jr., many line departments of our government seem to find their inspiration from the organization of the US State Department. The bureaucracy in many line departments tends to be vast and overwhelming and bloated. An outright defiance, if not a mockery, of the rightsizing effort.

Put simply, the Philippine bureaucracy is stricken with bureaucratic overstretch.

Here goes the organizational chart of a line department: After the department secretary, you can mostly find six undersecretaries. Under the six undersecretaries are six assistant secretaries. All these sub-Cabinet functionaries have support layers of executive assistants, secretaries, drivers and other factotums. This is just the first layer of obvious personnel bloat. Question: What functions are actually carried out by, say, "undersecretary for special concerns"? The undersecretary for special concerns may truly perform critical tasks. On the other hand, he can also perform the task of resident sycophant. Telling the Big Boss, the Cabinet secretary, this: "Ang galing, galing mo Boss." If not that, run mundane errands for the Big Boss, the undersecretary as gofer. We have seen that on a

grander scale. The Trump Cabinet survived on sycophancy. You can't serve Trump long if you believe in the sacred tenets of the rule of law and fidelity to the Constitution.

At the regional level here, most of these line departments have regional executive directors for each and every region. Under the regional executive director are the regional technical directors, the so-called REDs and the RTDs. These executive regional directors and regional technical directors require various types of assistants and staffers, maybe fewer than what is required by the undersecretaries and assistant secretaries with their unlimited number of factotums, but still sizable enough to qualify as bureaucratic bloat.

If you count the actual number of sub-Cabinet officials (plus their factotums and aides) and the regional government executives (with their factotums and aides) their sheer size and sprawl would be enough to form a fighting contingent that we can send to Ukraine to help out in the efforts to drive out the Russian invaders. A line department can have a dozen agencies under its operational and administrative supervisions. And many of these agencies under the line departments maintain their own regional offices.



RONQUILLO FROM A1

The wrongs dragging 'rightsizing' efforts

Can we have a rough calculation of the monthly gas/diesel expenditures of this bureaucratic bloat?

The government can do away with half of this top-level and middle-level bloat without hurting the efficiency of the state and the

delivery of basic services. Should rightsizing venture into this territory, well and good.

The rightsizing should also make removing lowly-paid government employees Plan B or Plan C. It should first review all agency creations since the 1990s. I skipped the years of Mrs. Aquino because that was precisely the time a total of 32 state agencies, mostly non-performing government corporate entities, were abolished under a massive government reorganization program. The rightsizing of Mr. Marcos Jr. should also muster the political will to abolish or collapse government agencies, including Cabinet creations, that currently serve marginal purposes.

If you ask experts in government structures and organizations, the last agency creation that is worth the effort and the time of the two chambers of Congress, was the creation of the Department of Information Communications and Technology (DICT). The transitioning on a global scale to a "knowledge society" made the creation of the DICT an imperative. Even if the DICT is still not sure of what grand directions to take to help realize the Great Leap Forward in computing, artificial intelligence, machine learning, etc., it is without doubt an agency whose time has come. OK, it has to make building of tech innovation hubs near university towns its first priority.

The fact that the business process outsourcing sector and related tech services generate close to \$30 billion a year in revenues and is

about to match the earning power of another acronym — the OFW (overseas Filipino worker) — can justify the creation of a tech-centric government department.

The 21st century also made the coupling of transportation and information technology under the then Department of Transportation and Communications (DoTC) untenable. Before it was split into two, the then DoTC had more than two dozen corporate entities and agencies under its administrative and operational jurisdiction. Managing port services (Philippine Ports Authority) and regulating the maritime industry including processing of shipping franchises (Marina) are not that compatible with laying the environment for AI and cloud computing to prosper.

Congress can also defer the creation of a Department of Water Management (DWM) for the next 20 years without prejudice to the able management of the country's water resources and also without prejudice to consumers of potable water, farms that need irrigation water, or the power generators dependent on our water resources. A DWM will just be an addition to the state bloat, without a clear purpose for its existence and being.

Rightsizing requires political will, the spine and tenacity of Nancy Pelosi, a lot of tough decision-making to carry out.

Unless, of course, the whole intent is to make rightsizing one of those quotable state buzzwords, worth zero and accomplishing nothing.



Heat, drought, wildfires during warmest July

Using data from the European Commission's Copernicus Climate Change Service, the UN weather agency confirmed that Europe had its sixth warmest July

Amid extreme heat, drought and wildfires, many parts of the world had just experienced one of three warmest Julys on record, the UN weather agency said last week.

According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), temperatures were close to 0.4 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 average across much of Europe, with southwestern and western Europe being the most above-average regions, because of an intense heatwave around mid-July.

"This is despite the La Niña event that's meant to have a cooling influence," WMO spokesperson Clare Nullis explained.

"We saw this in some places, but not globally," she added.

She noted that it was "one of the three warmest (Julys) on record, slightly cooler than July 2019, warmer 2016 – but the difference is too close to call."

Record temperatures

Portugal, western France and Ireland broke record highs, while England hit 40 degrees Celsius readings for the very first time.

National all-time records for daily maximum temperatures were also broken in Wales and Scotland.

Spain also had its hottest month on record in July, with an average national temperature of 25.6 degrees Celsius – with a heatwave from 8 to 26 July that was the most intense and longest lasting on record.

Using data from the European Commission's Copernicus Climate Change Service, the UN weather agency confirmed that Europe had its sixth warmest July.

The heat traveled further north and east ushering very high temperatures across other countries, including Germany and parts of Scandinavia, with local July and all-time records broken at several locations in Sweden.

Temperature anomalies

At the same time, from the Horn of Africa to southern India, and much of central Asia to most of Australia experienced below-average temperatures.

It also dominated a band of territory stretching from Iceland, across Scandinavia via the Baltic countries, continuing as far as the Caspian Sea.

Moreover, temperatures were generally below average in Georgia and throughout much of Türkiye.

Polar ice shrinking

July also saw the lowest Antarctic Sea ice on record, a full seven percent below average.

Arctic Sea ice was four percent below average, ranking 12th lowest for July, according to satellite records.

WMO cited the Copernicus Climate Change Service in saying that Arctic Sea ice concentration was the lowest for July on satellite record, which started in 1979, and sea ice there was the 12th lowest ever.



LOCALLY, July 2022 was one of three warmest Julys on record.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF UN



EDITORIAL

Collective assertion

IT is a national assertion of sovereign rights requiring a national mindset or consciousness – and national participation.

Therefore, it demands all hands on deck to guarantee success.

Various government agencies would be mandated to strengthen the country's assertion of rights over the West Philippine Sea if Senate Bill 405 is passed into law.

Sen. Francis Tolentino, the vice-chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations who filed the bill, said the proposal seeks to "institutionalize" the WPS claim by formalizing the designation of its nomenclature as part of the existing laws of the land.

As patriotic citizens, he said Filipinos should assert their sovereign rights over the country's Exclusive Economic Zone for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving, and managing its natural resources, whether living or non-living, of the waters superjacent to the seabed and of the seabed and subsoil with the concomitant duty to protect and preserve the marine environment.

Section 2 of SBN 405 mandates the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority to produce and publish charts and maps of the Philippines reflecting the nomenclature "West Philippine Sea" or the Kanlurang Dagat ng Pilipinas.

It also mandates the national government through the Department of Foreign Affairs to deposit a copy of the measure if passed into law, and other relevant documents with the Secretary General of the United Nations and notify accordingly all relevant International and intergovernmental organizations, such as the United Nations Statistical Commission, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, and the International Hydrographic Organization.

SBN 405 also seeks to direct all departments, subdivisions, agencies, and instrumentalities of the government to use and employ the name West Philippine Sea or Kanlurang Dagat ng Pilipinas in all communications, messages, and public documents, and "to popularize the use of such name with the general public, both domestically and internationally."

It also proposes to require that all private institutions, organizations, and establishments, whether organized under Philippine law or foreign law, operating within the country, or transiting in Philippine territory are hereby directed to use the name West Philippine Sea or Kanlurang Dagat ng Pilipinas in all communications, announcements, and messages, both domestically and internationally.



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Menu has carbon footprint

The menu at The Canteen in southwest England doesn't just let diners know how much a dish costs. They can also check its carbon footprint. **Turn to page A6**



Menu has carbon footprint

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The carrot and beetroot pakora with yoghurt sauce is responsible for just 16 grams of CO2 emissions. The aubergines with a miso and harissa sauce with tabbouleh and Zaatar toast caused 675 grams of carbon dioxide.

As customers weigh their options, the menu at the vegetarian restaurant in Bristol includes a comparison with a dish that it does not serve: The emissions from a UK-produced hamburger.

"Three kilos for a burger, wow! I can't believe it," exclaimed Enyioma Anomelechi, a 37-year-old diner sipping a beer outside in the sunshine.

The menu notes that a real beef burger's emissions is "10 times the amount of its vegan alternative."

The carbon footprints of businesses and consumers have come under growing scrutiny as countries scramble to limit global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius and to achieve net-zero emission by 2050.

The Canteen became in July the first restaurant to agree to put its carbon footprint on the menu under a campaign spearheaded by UK vegan campaigning charity, Viva!

The restaurant's manager, Liam Stock, called the move a way to "see what we are doing: To understand and improve ourselves."

The average British person has an annual carbon footprint of more than 10 tons, according to UK government figures.

Britain has set the ambitious goal of reducing harmful emissions by 78 percent by 2035, compared with 1990 figures, in order to meet its international climate change commitments.

Switching to a plant-based diet is one of the most effective ways for an individual to reduce their carbon footprint, experts from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said in April.

Stock said he knew his restaurant's dishes would score low carbon footprints, as most of his ingredients are sourced regionally.

"We didn't have to change anything," he said, while admitting some surprises, such as learning that imported spices drive up emissions.

To calculate the dishes' footprints, The Canteen sent its recipes and the source of the ingredients to a specialized company called MyEmissions.

It is able to calculate the carbon impact from "cradle to store," taking into account farming, processing, transport and packaging.

"If I was choosing between two dishes, maybe depending on how hungry I was, I might choose the one with a lower footprint," said Nathan Johnson, a 43-year-old diner at the restaurant.

That day, he opted for the chef's salad, which racks up 162 grams of carbon.

Another diner, 29-year-old Emma Harvey, also backed the idea of increased awareness of carbon footprints "and the ethical effects of the food that we're eating."

"We have to incorporate things (like) that into everyday life," she said.

AFP



Landslide sa Davao mga bahay natabunan, 1 patay

TODAS ang isang lalaki matapos matabunan ng gumuhong lupa ang kanilang bahay sa Talaingod, Davao del Norte nitong Biyernes.

Ang nasawi ay kinatawan ng si Lily Linsagan. Sugatan naman ang maybahay niyang si

Evelyn Linsagan.

Batay sa Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office ng Davao del Norte, natabunan din ng lupa ang anim pang bahay sa Upper Mesolong.

Matinding pagbuhos ng ulan ang sanhi ng

landslide kung saan ito ang unang beses na naranasan ng mga residente sa naturang barangay.

Dinala na sa evacuation center ang mga apektadong indibidwal. (Ansherina May Jazul)



TAAL VOLCANO GENERATES 6 TREMORS, PLUME

By ELLALYN V. RUIZ

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said yesterday that Taal Volcano had generated six volcanic tremors and a 3,000-meter tall plume in the past 24 hours.

In its 8 a.m. bulletin, Phivolcs said the volcanic tremors lasted three to seven minutes.

Likewise, a 3,000-meter or three-kilometer tall "voluminous" plume had emanated from Taal

Volcano. It was expected to drift north, northeast, and southwest of the volcano's main crater.

Phivolcs said Taal's sulfur dioxide or SO2 emission averaged 13,572 tons per day when it was last measured on August 11. The upwelling of hot volcanic fluids also continued, causing volcanic smog or "vog" over the Taal Volcano and neighboring communities.

Phivolcs said Taal Volcano remained under Alert Level 1, which means it was still in an abnormal condition and

should not be interpreted to have ceased unrest nor ceased the threat of eruptive activity.

"Should an uptrend or pronounced change in monitored parameters forewarn of renewed unrest, the alert level may be raised back to Alert Level 2," it said. "Conversely, should there be a return of monitoring parameters to baseline levels after a sufficient observation period, the alert level will be further lowered to Alert Level 0," it added.



TAAL Volcano as seen from Tanauan, Batangas yesterday morning. (Contributed photo).



Strong quakes jolt Antique, Maguindanao

By ELLALYN V. RUIZ

A magnitude-5.8 earthquake jolted Maguindanao yesterday.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) located the epicenter of the quake 11 kilometers northwest of South Upi, Maguindanao.

The earthquake at 2:25 p.m. was felt at Intensity V (strong) in Cotabato City, Intensity IV (moderately strong) in General Santos City, Intensity

II (slightly felt) in Davao City and Kidapawan City, and Intensity III in Zamboanga City.

Two hours earlier, a magnitude-5.1 earthquake rocked Antique.

Phivolcs initially measured the tremor as magnitude-4.8 but later revised it to magnitude-5.1.

Phivolcs said the quake's epicenter was 20 kilometers (kms) southwest of Anini-y, Antique.

It was felt at Intensity IV as

a "moderately strong" tremor in Anini-y, Tobias Fornier, and San Jose de Buenavista in Antique.

Belison and Sibalom in Antique and Iloilo City felt the quake at Intensity III (weak). Bugasong, Barbaza, and Patnongon in Antique felt it at Intensity II (slightly felt).

Phivolcs noted that the two earthquakes were tectonic in origin, caused by the movement of active faults near them.