

07 September 2023 Thursday



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

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**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**





# DENR wants more women to lead mining sector

By DANESSA RIVERA

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is urging mining companies to provide women a platform to lead and harness their unique perspectives, knowledge and skills in the sector.

"Mining companies are urged to enhance women participation in their conservation and restoration projects, acknowledging the indigenous women's and other women's invaluable knowledge of local ecosystems. The mining industry can mainstream gender-responsive policies in their corporate strategies, not only to ensure that practices do not inadvertently harm women, but that they also build corporate resilience," DENR Secretary Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga said in her address before non-government organization Diwata (Women in Resource Development).

She noted that women are typically characterized as the most vulnerable to changes, and their multiple social roles can even lead to the intersectionality of their vulnerabilities.

The DENR chief said gender-

responsive approaches to community assessments, consultation and benefit-sharing are all vital to increase the success of the mining industry's climate mitigation and adaptation strategies.

"Let us harness our collective powers and unlock our potential and continue to chart the future of the Philippine mining industry where women stand shoulder to shoulder with men," she said.

Loyzaga further said that it is crucial to safeguard the rights of women in crafting environmental policies, social development and in decision-making through their inclusion in national and local level discourse on mining, climate, human security, and the environment.

The DENR has been working closely with stakeholders in the environment sector to advance the promotion of gender equality in the workplace.

Meanwhile, Diwata advocates for the responsible development of the Philippines' natural resources, principally extractive industries such as mining, oil and gas quarrying.

Earlier this year, the DENR said

it was looking to address gender gap in the mining sector amid various challenges faced by women in the sector.

Loyzaga cited a 2020 scoping study commissioned by the Philippine-Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) which laid down key issues women face in the mining industry.

The study showed that women constitute a minority of the workforce, with only a few occupying technical and leadership positions in mining companies.

The environmental problems linked to mining operations such as pollution of rivers and drying up of water sources also puts pressure on women as household managers and as providers.

The study also noted the lack of a sustainable livelihood outside employment of mining companies.

There is also an absence of guidelines on the inclusions of gender responsive projects in the Social Development and Management Program (SDMP) and the minimum participation of women in the development of these programs, according to the study.





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**BIZ BUZZ**



## Wanted: Women in mining

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has three words for the mining sector: let women lead.

Environment Secretary **Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga** has called on mining companies to allow women to take charge of the business and enhance their participation in conservation and restoration projects.

"Let us harness our collective powers and unlock our potential and continue to chart the future of the Philippine mining industry where women stand shoulder to shoulder with men," Loyzaga said in her speech before nongovernment organization Diwata (Women in Resource Development).

Gender-responsive approaches to community assessments, consultation and benefit-sharing are all vital to increase the success of the mining industry's climate mitigation and adaptation strategies, according to the DENR chief, who also stressed women's rights in crafting policies. — **JORDEENE B.**

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# MGB bares 'robust' metallic mineral output in H1 2023

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA | [@jonmayuga](#)

**M**ETALLIC mineral production value remained robust in the first half of 2023 with an 8.06 percent growth from P113.89 billion in first half of 2022 to P123.07 billion.

With this performance, the nickel industry's ambitious target of producing 50 million metric tons (MT) by year-end is within range as government regulators also announced the prospects of expansion with four more nickel mines going on stream between 2023 to 2025.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) attributed the growth in the metals production value to the upstanding performance of gold and nickel.

However, in terms of contribution to the total metallic mineral production value, nickel ore, nickel-cobalt mixed sulfide, and scandium oxalate led with P57.32 billion or 46.57 percent.

The production value of nickel

and nickel products combined went up from P53.72 billion to P57.32 billion, or up by P3.36 billion year-on-year.

Gold took the second spot with 41.62 percent or P51.22 billion. Copper came in third with 10.35 percent or P12.74 billion.

On the other hand, the collective values of silver, chromite, and iron ore accounted for about 1.46 percent or P1.79 billion of the total production value.

Breaking it down further, nickel direct shipping ore accounted for P31.70 billion, while nickel-cobalt mixed sulfide tendered P25.48 billion; scandium oxalate made P0.14 billion.

For the first half of 2023, the

top two producers for the first half were Taganito Mining Corporation (TMC) with 2,429,081 dry MT and Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corporation (RTNMC) with 2,117,610 dry MT; TMC and RTNMC supply all the low-grade limonite ore feed requirements of THPAL and CBNC plants, respectively.

The limonite ores delivered to THPAL and CBNC were included in the total ore production of TMC and RTNMC. Total limonite ore delivered to CBNC by RTNMC was 1,485,597 dry MT while TMC delivered 969,475 dry MT to THPAL, which is about 70 percent and 40 percent of the total nickel ore first half production of RTNMC and TMC, respectively.

## Gold, silver prices up

WHILE the price of nickel went down this year, prices of precious metals gold and silver went up by 3.17 percent and 1.18 percent, respectively.

Gold prices realized a \$59.48 markup from \$1,874.47 per troy ounce in H1 2022 to \$1,933.95 per troy ounce in H1 2023.

On the other hand, silver gained \$0.27 from \$23.30 per troy ounce to \$23.57 per troy ounce, year-on-year. However, base metals, nickel, and

copper posted declines during the period at 15.27 percent and 10.73 percent, respectively.

## Taxes, royalties

IN terms of mining taxes and fees paid to the national government during the first semester of 2023, the estimated excise tax collected was pegged at P3.25 billion, the MGB report said.

Meanwhile, the estimated collection from the royalties derived by the government from the development and utilization of the mineral resources within mineral reservation areas is about P932.02 million. There are 21 mining projects located within the mineral reservation areas, 20 nickel mining projects, and a chromite-mining project.

## Unexpected

PHILIPPINE Nickel Industry Association (PNIA) President Dante Bravo said nickel's performance in the first half is somehow surprising, considering the sluggish value of nickel during the period.

"We are not expecting this. In my personal view, this was a surprising outcome," he said, adding that with less shipment of nickel ore and nickel products due to bad weather, he wasn't expecting any increase in

the production output year-on-year.

Bravo said he was expecting a better performance for nickel in the 2nd half of 2023 throughout the 1st quarter of 2024 due to developments in Indonesia.

## Bold prediction

THERE are around 30 nickel mines that are currently operating in the Philippines. Last week, Bravo boldly predicted that the combined production of these companies this year could top the 50 million MT production output.

"With the price of nickel going up, and some mining operations in Indonesia stopping due to environmental concerns, we are expecting a better performance and bigger share in the market," he said, basically referring to the demand from China.

The MGB shares this optimism, when it reported that nickel ore production is expected to expand further, with four-nickel mining projects commencing mining operations between 2023 to 2025 as part of the Priority Projects for Phase II and I. These are Zambales Chromite Mining Company Inc., Macroasia Mining Corporation, Stagno Mining Corporation, and Aam-Phil Natural Resources Exploration and Development Corporation.





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## PBBM gets \$22 M in investment offers; PH, ASEAN members sign pacts

PT WIR Asia Tbk, and Pasifik Satelit Nusantara (PSN).

PT Vaksindo Satwa Nusantara intends to cooperate with its local partner, Univet Nutrition and Animal Healthcare Company (UNAHCO Inc.) Philippines, on veterinary vaccines. It will pursue an infusion of \$2 million in investments this year. They will soon provide the Philippines with an avian influenza vaccine.

In addition, PT WIR Asia Tbk made a commitment to invest \$20 million. WIR is an Indonesian publicly listed company that develops augmented reality (AR) technology integrated with virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI). It is considered the first Metaverse company in Indonesia.

President Marcos also met with Pasifik Satelit Nusantara (PSN) which provided an update on the fruition of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed last year involving the launching of a satellite in December 2023 that could help improve digital connectivity in the Philippines.

PSN signed the MOU with WIT Philippines Inc. in September last year during the President's state visit to Indonesia.

The allocation of 13.5 Gbps of bandwidth for the Philippines from a new satellite that PSN is scheduled to launch within the year, allows WIT to fulfill its intentions to develop a bigger market for both government and consumer markets in the Philippines.

### MOUs on agri, climate change

Aside from the investment offers of Indonesian business firms, the private sector from the Philippines and eight other Southeast Asian Nations signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for agriculture cooperation and small business development, seeking to boost the efforts of the ASEAN toward economic integration.

According to Malacañang, the

signing of the MOU took place during the ASEAN-Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC) roundtable discussion here on Tuesday, Sept. 5.

In a statement, the Palace said the MOU aims to jointly conduct "studies and mentorship channels with Filipinos for potential agriculture, agriculture technology, food security, agri-preneurship business models and value chain development among small, medium, and large farmers, enterprises, and government entities."

Separate MOUs were signed for each cooperation with Thailand, Brunei, Singapore, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar, and Indonesia through their respective ASEAN-BAC representatives.

The Philippines was represented by ASEAN-BAC Philippines chairman and Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion.

### Trade and investment opportunities

The development of trade and investment opportunities in various agricultural commodities is expected to be explored under this joint cooperation. These commodities include rubber, rice, corn, fruits, vegetables, and other agricultural services.

"All member-states also agreed to jointly promote effective strategies in addressing climate change and ensure a sustainable agribusiness environment," the Palace said.

The Philippines has already signed the same MOU with Malaysia during President Marcos' state visit to Malaysia in July 2023.

In his intervention during the ASEAN-BAC, the President particularly pushed for increased tie-ups in agriculture, energy, digitalization, and supply chain.

"I cannot say now how happy I am to be able to have met with you, some of you again, and to have this opportunity so that we can hopefully explore many areas that we have re-



WELCOME TO INDONESIA - President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. (second from left) and First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos (left) are welcomed by Indonesia President Joko Widodo (second from right) and First Lady Iriana Widodo upon their arrival for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Summit in Jakarta, Indonesia on Tuesday, Sept. 5, 2023. (AFP)

ally not spoken about before but are particularly relevant when it comes to partnerships between our two countries both in the private and the public sectors," he said at the roundtable of the ASEAN-BAC with invited CEOs.

"We have adopted a policy of very close coordination and cooperation with the private sector and that I think is also the element that will add to the possibilities to excel," he added.

### Enhanced cooperation through RCEP

Marcos said the Philippines is keen on fostering deeper economic ties with ASEAN partner countries through the ratification of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which he claimed would sustain the momentum of ASEAN's growth and post-pandemic recovery.

"It is a catalyst that is seen to bring in even more collaboration

among ASEAN member states," he said, noting that the RCEP entered into force in the Philippines on June 2. "We are positive that RCEP will further deepen economic integration and significantly contribute to the economic growth of the region."

According to the President, the Philippines, through the Department of Trade and Industry, is intensifying efforts to increase awareness and fully utilize the benefits of the said agreement, like the Philippine Export Development Plan (PEDP) 2023-2028 which was launched on June 15, and the RCEP campaign during the International Trade Forum.

### Post-pandemic reforms

Marcos shared with the business leaders the reforms the Philippines has undertaken to make the country more conducive to business growth, especially while the country is still recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic. He mentioned the country's move to amend the Public Service Act, which now allows foreign firms to own 100 percent of corporations involved in the production of renewable energy.

He also noted the Foreign Investments Act which now allows qualified non-Philippine nationals to do business in the country or invest in a domestic enterprise up to 100 percent of its capital.

"These legislative amendments

will further open up the economy to foreign investments and thereby hasten the country's growth through the entry of more foreign direct investments," Marcos said. "We are optimistic that we can develop globally competitive and innovative industries that support inclusive and sustainable growth."

### Agriculture

Meanwhile, President Marcos said the agriculture situation in the regions has been exacerbated by the looming El Niño phenomenon. He noted that the Philippines has taken some emergency measures like the imposition of a ceiling on the price of rice.

Marcos also mentioned the avian flu and the swine flu the region is suffering from now. But he said he was looking forward to the news that the vaccines for the livestock are slowly going to become available.

### Other areas of cooperation

According to Marcos, the Philippines is continuing its infrastructure buildup which is the most important and absolutely critical in any developing country.

"Of course, digitalization is a given. We all have... that you will be working and to make things better, to be more productive—the key is always to make people more productive, make our economic activities more productive," he added.





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## PBBM calls for climate action at the start of 43rd ASEAN Summit

**T**he Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), composed of various nations, is currently having its 43rd summit in Jakarta, Indonesia. It opened on Sept. 5, 2023, with leaders wasting no time to address a host of issues and challenges faced by the region.

During a plenary session, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. urged member-countries of the ASEAN to strengthen their commitment to combat climate change, considering this as the "most urgent threat to progress."

"The impact of climate change... is a looming reminder of the injustice of disproportionate impact on our people," the President said. "At the upcoming COP28, ASEAN must call on developed countries to heighten the implementation of their commitments — climate finance, technology development and transfer, and capacity building in order to drive ASEAN's capabilities to prevent, mitigate, manage, and adapt to the impacts of climate change."

It is widely acknowledged that the Philippines ranks among the world's most disaster-prone nations, a fact painfully underscored in recent weeks as devastating typhoons have wrought havoc on our infrastructure, decimated crops, and tragically claimed lives. With each passing year, natural calamities exact a heavy toll, resulting in the destruction of assets worth billions of pesos.

Inherently linked to climate change is the threat to food security. Intense heat leaves land drier than ever before; while during typhoon season, it is difficult to grow anything. These situations not only escalate food prices due to supply shortages, but pushes more families to the brink of hunger — a great injustice in these modern times.

What the President recommended at the ASEAN Summit is to harness the power of international

cooperation that will make ASEAN "climate-smart" and "disaster-ready."

"In achieving food security, we must build on cooperation that will harness the transformative potential of our agricultural sector to ensure that food production is responsible and will be of benefit for future generations," he said.

Aside from calling for climate action, the President also expressed the country's readiness to chair the ASEAN Summit in 2026.

Just a few months ago, in May, also in Indonesia, the President already called for unity among ASEAN member-states in urging developed countries to fulfill their longstanding commitments to the Paris Agreement.

"Developed countries have a moral obligation to support adaptation and mitigation efforts of the most vulnerable countries through technology transfer, capacity building, and climate financing; to address loss and damage; and to achieve necessary breakthroughs for climate action at a global scale," he said. "Although developing countries, such as the Philippines, only account for less than one percent of global emissions, our countries bear the brunt of the devastating impacts of climate change."

The President's call for immediate and bolder climate action is not a mere alarmist stance or just a complaint about "spilled milk." It is rooted in the harsh reality that we face a catastrophic future if climate issues remain unaddressed by this generation. As the President steadfastly champions the cause of our planet in the global stage, it is our fervent hope that ASEAN members will support and stand with him. Eventually, citizens of the world will realize that it takes all of our voices, minds, and spirit to truly save our planet for the future.





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THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Roni Santiago  
MANILA BULLETIN  
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## Climate change worsening heat waves, air quality

**GENEVA:** Climate change is driving more intense and more frequent heat waves, which in turn generate a "witch's brew" of pollutants, threatening the health of humans and other living things, the UN warned Wednesday.

The wildfire smoke recently suffocating cities from Athens to New York may be the most visible sign of air pollution brought on by heat waves.

But extreme heat can also induce a whole host of other chemical processes that are hazardous for human health, the United Nations' World Meteorological Organization said in its annual Air Quality and Climate Bulletin.

"Heat waves worsen air quality, with knock-on effects on human health, ecosystems, agriculture and indeed our

daily lives," WMO chief Petteri Taalas said in a statement.

A recent study by the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago (EPIC) indicated that fine particulate air pollution from things like vehicle and industrial emissions but also sand and wildfires, is "the greatest external threat to public health" worldwide.

Taalas stressed that "climate change and air quality cannot be treated separately."

"They go hand-in-hand and must be tackled together to break this vicious cycle."

### 'More extreme'

While Wednesday's report was based on 2022 data, Taalas cautioned that

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## ■ WORSENING FROM A1

# Climate change worsening heat waves

in terms of temperatures, "what we are witnessing in 2023 is even more extreme."

On Wednesday, the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service said the Earth had just had its hottest three months on record, with last July the hottest month ever recorded, followed by August and that 2023 was on track to become the hottest year on record.

That is bad news for air quality levels.

"Air quality and climate are interconnected because the chemical species that affect both are linked, because the substances responsible for climate change and for the degradation of air quality are often emitted by the same sources, and because changes in one inevitably cause changes in the other," WMO said.

It pointed for instance to how the combustion of fossil fuels emits carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxide into the atmosphere, which are not only heat-trapping greenhouse gases but can lead to the formation of pollutants like ozone and nitrate aerosols.

Researchers meanwhile widely agree that climate change is causing more intense and more frequent heat waves, and that this in turn is leading to a growing risk of more severe wildfires, WMO said.

## 'Closely linked'

"Heat waves and wildfires are closely linked," said Lorenzo Labrador, a WMO researcher at the Global Atmosphere Watch network which compiled Wednesday's Bulletin.

"Smoke from wildfires contains a witch's brew of chemicals that affects not only air quality and health, but also damages plants, ecosystems and crops — and leads to more carbon emissions and so more greenhouse gases in the atmosphere," he said in the statement.

The 2022 data detailed in the report showed how heat waves last year triggered wildfires in the Northwestern United States, leading to unhealthy air.

Soaring temperatures in Europe, accompanied by unusually high amounts of desert dust reaching the continent, meanwhile led to increased concentrations of both particulate matter and ground-level ozone pollution, it said.

While high-altitude, or stratospheric ozone provides humans with vital protection from harmful the ultra-violet rays of the sun, ozone close to the Earth's surface is harmful to human health.

It also reduces crop yield, with ozone-induced losses averaging 4.4-12.4 percent globally for staple food crops, and wheat and soybean losses as high as 15-30 percent in parts of India and China.

**AFP**





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## It's official: Meteorologists say this summer's swelter was a global record breaker for heat

BY JAMEY KEATEN  
& SETH BORENSTEIN  
*The Associated Press*

**G**ENEVA—Earth has sweltered through its hottest Northern Hemisphere summer ever measured, with a record warm August capping a season of brutal and deadly temperatures, according to the World Meteorological Organization.

Last month was not only the hottest August scientists ever recorded by far with modern equipment, it was also the second hottest month measured, behind only July 2023, WMO and the European climate service Copernicus announced Wednesday.

August was about 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than pre-industrial averages, which is the warming thresh-

old that the world is trying not to pass. But the 1.5 C threshold is over decades—not just one month—so scientists do not consider that brief passage that significant.

The world's oceans—more than 70% of the Earth's surface—were the hottest ever recorded, nearly 21 degrees Celsius (69.8 degrees Fahrenheit), and have set high temperature marks for three consecutive months, the WMO and Copernicus said.

"The dog days of summer are not just barking, they are biting," United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a statement. "Climate breakdown has begun."

So far, 2023 is the second hottest year on record, behind 2016, according to Copernicus.

Scientists blame ever warming human-caused climate change

from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas with an extra push from a natural El Nino, which is a temporary warming of parts of the Pacific Ocean that changes weather worldwide. Usually an El Nino, which started earlier this year, adds extra heat to global temperatures but more so in its second year.

"What we are observing, not only new extremes but the persistence of these record-breaking conditions, and the impacts these have on both people and planet, are a clear consequence of the warming of the climate system," Copernicus Climate Change Service Director Carlo Buontempo said.

Copernicus, a division of the European Union's space program, has records going back to 1940, but in the United Kingdom and the

United States, global records go back to the mid 1800s and those weather and science agencies are expected to soon report that the summer was a record-breaker.

Scientists have used tree rings, ice cores and other proxies to estimate that temperatures are now warmer than they have been in about 120,000 years. The world has been warmer before, but that was prior to human civilization, seas were much higher and the poles were not icy.

So far, daily September temperatures are higher than what has been recorded before for this time of year, according to the University of Maine's Climate Reanalyzer.

While the world's air and oceans were setting records for heat, Antarctica continued to set records for low amounts of sea ice, the WMO said.





## Mayon's sulphur dioxide emission, rockfall events surge anew

Sulphur dioxide emissions and rockfall events in Mayon Volcano have increased again as its abnormal parameters continued to fluctuate.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said 502 rockfall events and sulphur dioxide emissions of 6,652 tons per day were recorded in the past 24 hours.

Paul Alanis, Phivolcs resident volcanologist at the Lignon Hill Observatory in Legazpi City in Albay, said this means that Mayon is neither showing a sustained decline nor an upsurge in its abnormal signs.

Alanis said Phivolcs has yet to decide whether to lower Mayon's alert level even though volcanic earthquakes and pyroclastic density currents (PDCs) were low.

Eight volcanic earthquakes and 10

PDCs were recorded in the past three days.

"Mayon remained in a high level of unrest because of the high rockfall events and sulphur dioxide emissions. This means that fresh magma continued to ascend to the crater," Alanis said.

Meanwhile, Phivolcs said increased seismic activity was monitored in Kanlaon Volcano on Negros island in the past three days.

Thirty-six volcanic quakes, including 34 that were volcano-tectonic in nature, were recorded.

Kanlaon remains under Alert Level 1.

State seismologists said the alert level may be raised to warn the public of the volcano's increasing unrest.

- Cet Dematera, Romina Cabrera, Gilbert Bayoran



# New map, new law of the sea, new world order: What is China trying to do?

First word

By **YEN MAKABENTA** discussing its new



**OBSERVER**  
**YEN MAKABENTA**

standard "10-dash line" map, China has paradoxically galvanized international opposition and rejection of its massive territorial claims in the South and East China Seas. Its neighbors in Southeast Asia and East Asia have been roused into action. Japan is itching to rearm. Japan and South Korea have moved closer to each other.

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## ■ MAKABENTA FROM A1

# New map, new law of the sea, new world order: What is China trying to do?

When combined with the West's strong and united opposition to China's creation of a new world order and its own rules, there is no way Beijing can achieve this vision outside of full-scale war and its total victory.

The Philippines was the first to sound the alarm about China's new map and to reject its grab of sovereignty over our country's exclusive economic zone and sovereign rights in the South China Sea.

Five of China's Asian neighbors have also rejected China's new map. They have individually issued strong and unyielding statements denouncing China's outright grab of territory and rights in the disputed waterway. Each country has similarly asserted their own rights in the South China Sea, from which they clearly will not budge.

### 6 countries reject China's new map

Six of China's neighbors have rejected its new standard national map, which features a '10-dash line' against the previous 'nine-dash line' it used to stake its claims in the South China Sea, according to a report by Aldgra Fredly in the Epoch Times (Sept. 4, 2023).

The revised map, published by China's Ministry of Natural Resources on August 28, showcases China's extensive claims in the disputed South China Sea, with an additional dash to the east of Taiwan.

It also includes the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh and Aksai Chin on the Himalayan border, which China controls but India also claims, as well as the Russian territory of Bolshoy Ussuriysky Island.

The day after the map was made public, the Indian government filed a strong protest against China through diplomatic channels and said that Beijing's territorial claims were completely baseless.

"We reject these claims as they have no basis. Such steps by the Chinese side only complicate the resolution of the boundary question," Indian foreign ministry spokesman Arindam Bagchi said in a statement.

Beijing published the map ahead of the G20 summit in India, scheduled for September 9-10. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has decided to send Chinese Premier Li Qiang in place of CCP leader Xi Jinping to the summit.

Malaysia's foreign ministry also rejected China's 'unilateral maritime claims' and said that the new map encroached upon Malaysia's claims in its states of Sabah and Sarawak.

'Malaysia does not recognize

China's claims in the South China Sea, as outlined in the "China Standard Map 2023 Edition," which covers Malaysia's maritime area,' the ministry stated.

Malaysia said that territorial issues are 'complex and sensitive' and should be resolved through dialogue in accordance with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos).'

In Nepal, the government urged Beijing and other nations to respect the political map approved by its parliament in 2020.

The Tribune newspaper of India reported that China's new map appears to recognize Limpiyadhura, Kalapani, and Lipulekh — which are all claimed by Nepal — as part of India.

"Nepal stands firm and clear on its political and administrative map unanimously approved by the Parliament of Nepal in 2020," Nepal's government said in a statement on Sept. 1.

Meanwhile, Taiwan declared that it was not a part of China and said that Beijing had never ruled the island.

"No matter how the Chinese government distorts its claims to Taiwan's sovereignty, it cannot change the objective fact of our country's existence," Taiwanese foreign ministry spokesman Jeff Liu told reporters.

The CCP, which rules China as a one-party state, views Taiwan as a renegade province that must be united with the mainland by any means necessary, even though Taiwan has never been ruled by the CCP and has its own democratic government.

Vietnam's foreign ministry spokesperson, Pham Thu Hang, said in a statement that China's new map violated Vietnam's sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly islands in the South China Sea.

"China's sovereignty and maritime claims based on this dotted line, as showcased in the above map, are null and void. Such claims go against international law, particularly the Unclos 1982," Pham said.

### PH rejects '10-dash' map

The Philippines was the first state to reject the 2023 version of China's map, which features a new 10-dash line that defines China's boundaries in the South China Sea.

The map, published by Beijing's state-owned newspaper, Global Times, covers a large part of the South China Sea, including the Philippines' exclusive economic zone in the West Philippine Sea.

"This latest attempt to legitimize China's purported sov-

eighty and jurisdiction over Philippine features and maritime zones has no basis under international law, particularly the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos)," the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said.

The 2016 arbitral award "invalidated the nine-dash line," the DFA stressed in its statement.

On July 12, 2016, the Philippines won its arbitration suit before an arbitral tribunal convened under Unclos at the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) at the Hague after the tribunal invalidated Beijing's claim of historic rights over almost the entire South China Sea.

China refuses to accept the arbitral tribunal's ruling.

The DFA said the ruling "categorically stated that maritime areas of the South China Sea encompassed by the 'nine-dash line' are contrary to the Convention and without lawful effect to the extent that they exceed the geographic and substantive limits of China's maritime entitlements under the Convention."

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said the release of the 2023 edition of the map was "a routine practice in China's exercise of sovereignty in accordance with the law."

### Asean strives to unite at 43rd summit

The 43rd summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) formally began on September 5, with Indonesian President Joko Widodo stressing the importance of unity amid challenges.

"Distinguished Asean members, we are all aware of the magnitude of current global challenges, and the main key to addressing them is Asean's unity and centrality," said Widodo in his opening speech.

Widodo did not specify the challenges, but the Asean summit is being held amidst new tensions in the South China Sea, especially with China's recently expanded claim in the disputed waters with a new 10-dash line map.

"Asean must be able to work harder, become more solid, bolder, and more agile," Widodo added.

Widodo likened Asean nations to a ship responsible for steering its population through a storm.

"Asean, as a large ship, also has a major responsibility towards the hundreds of millions of people who are sailing together on it, and despite having to sail through a storm, we as Asean leaders must ensure that this ship

can continue to sail and that we have to be captains of our own ship to achieve peace, to achieve stability, to achieve prosperity," said the Indonesian president.

"We have to be captains of our own ship to achieve peace, to achieve prosperity together," he said.

There are clear differences, however, among Asean members in their policies on the South China Sea dispute. Some states, with claims and EEZs in the waterway, are sternly opposed to China's extravagant claims and bullying tactics. Other states, however, typified by Cambodia and Myanmar, are indifferent to Unclos rules and have been seduced by Chinese loans and trade into supporting China's claims.

The 45th summit is not projected to bridge these differences. Asean is nowhere close to finally approving its long-sought Code of Conduct in the South China Sea because China was absurdly designated to draft it. Not surprisingly, the COC has not moved forward.

### China's vision of new world order

What is China trying to do with its recent moves to create its new map, write its own law of the sea, and grab all resources for itself from the South and East China seas?

According to several geopolitical and security analysts and experts, China is advancing here its vision of a new world order, which it will design and wherein it will be supreme.

Victor Davis Hanson, one of America's most respected historians and scholars, wrote in an opinion published in the Daily Caller in April this year that the US' seeming retreat from global leadership has emboldened China to embark on its incredible project to create a new world order on its own.

Hanson, a historian at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University and the author of "The Second World Wars: How the First Global Conflict Was Fought and Won," sought to explain why US rivals have been emboldened to attempt foolhardy projects like invading Ukraine in the case of Russia and inventing a new world order in China's case.

With America in descent and without America, Hanson said, "The result is a new Chinese order in which, to quote the historian Thucydides, 'The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.'"

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## Map offers proof that PH's Iranūns plied disputed waters many centuries ago

**DIPLOMATIC DISPATCH**  
Malou Talosig-Bartolome

**L**AST week, I met a group of Maranaos who trace their roots from the Austronesians and are the descendants of the Iranūn ethnic group—the prehistoric seaborne race from the Pacific islands. They claim that they have evidence to prove that their ancestors were the first to have conquered the South China Sea/West Philippine Sea (SCS/WPS).

To understand the Maranaoan claim, one needs to study the heritage of the Iranūn tribe or "race." And for someone who has not read much about Filipino-Muslims, I begged the indulgence of Maranaoan royalties who were kind enough to give me a crash course on their history.

"Philippine history is based on the accounts of the Spanish and the Americans," Nasser Sharief told the BUSINESSMIRROR. "Remember, Mindanao was not conquered by [either,] and that's because of the Iranūn."

Sharief is a certified public accountant by profession and a retired overseas worker from Saudi Arabia. He immersed at finding more stories about his ancestors' past because of the dearth of historical accounts in the Philippine history's annals. So he started doing his own research from libraries worldwide, genealogy and oral history. What he found was a rich historical trove of the Iranūns dating back from the 3rd Century—thousands of years before the Spanish conquest of the Philippines.

### 'Vikings of Asia'

THE Iranūns are believed to be originally from the Sultanate of Maguin-danao. They expanded their influ-

ence in Mindanao, as far as Sulu, before and during the Spanish rule of Luzon and the Visayas. They engaged in major trading activities in Champa—the former kingdom of what is now Vietnam and some parts of Cambodia. They also had political and trade ties in Borneo and other areas of the Malay Peninsula.

In Western historical records, the Iranūns were labeled as "pirates," because they attacked the Spaniards, Portuguese and later on, the Americans and British, in the high seas. But from their own accounts, the Iranūns were excellent sailors and mariners, and they raided foreign ships to protect their territory. Southeast Asian historians called them the "Vikings of Asia."

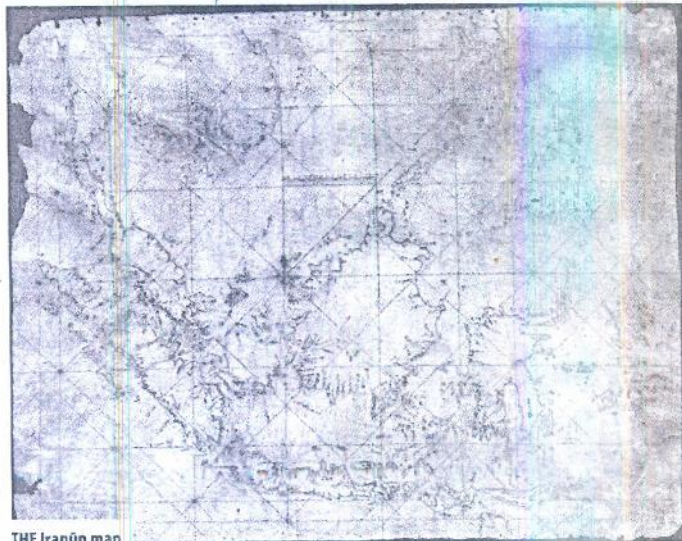
Their excellent seafaring skills were evident from their ability to ply the Champa Sea, or what is now known as the "South China Sea." It is one of the most difficult bodies of water to navigate due to high waves during storms.

"Spain tried to conquer the rest of Southeast Asia from the Philippines, but they could not," Sharief narrated. "Their ships always sank along the way."

### Over troubled waters

USING Palawan as their starting point mainly for trading, the Iranūns were able to proceed to Champa, which underwent upheavals for hundreds of years. The Iranūns aided Cham refugees migrate to Palawan, and had to pass "Sulawan," or the Spratlys.

As proof of the Iranūns' mastery of the sea, Sharief pointed to a map



THE Iranūn map

stored in a Spanish museum which details the region's geography, along with the body of water.

The map called "Carta Indigena Filipina" by curators of the Museo Naval de Madrid was seized from a "Moro pirate ship," which the Spanish navy turned over in the 18th Century, along with other artifacts and heirlooms.

Said artifact was found cased in a bamboo tube inside a ship that was captured near the Sulu Archipelago. The 72 centimeters x 90 cm cartographic chart was drafted in ink on cowhide (not on paper), with highlights in various colors. The map contained the "unorthodox route" the Iranūns took to "short-cut" their way to Southeast Asian territories. The chart has a profusion of dots which, in the view of Sharief, are points that Iranūns used during battles, including the forward bases, settlements and haunts.

He said this is the first "indigenous map" showing the Philippine conquest of, not just the Spratlys, but the entire SCS/WPS. Sadly, it is devoid of labels to provide documented proofs to those claims.

Sharief said they have traced the genealogy of the present-day

Maranao royalties as descendants of a princess from Pulo Condor in southern Champa (Vietnam). They have oral histories passed down from generations through songs.

"The connection between Pulo Condor and Palawan is through Sulawan (Spratly Islands)," he pointed out. "There was a princess in Pulo Condor: Princess Mabay. And that's in our genealogy—we are [her] descendants."

### What's next?

SULTAN Tomas Reyes Cabili Jr., an Iranūn descendant, hopes the national government would pursue their story to manifest the country's "patrimony" over the SCS/WPS.

"Our trump card is much, much better than the Chinese. [They say they own the SCS/WPS because they are traditional fishing grounds. Ours is...a long history of usage of the said waters as a] trade route and as jump-off points for refugees from Champa," Sharief insisted.

Both believe that the Iranūn's history would "complement" the Philippine claim, and further cement the gains made with the UNCLOS or the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea's arbitral ruling favoring the Philippines.





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