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DENR

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



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PHL TO PUBLISH NEW MAP SHOWING WPS, BENHAM RISE-NSC

BY MALOU TALOSIG-BARTOLOME

X @maloutalosisg

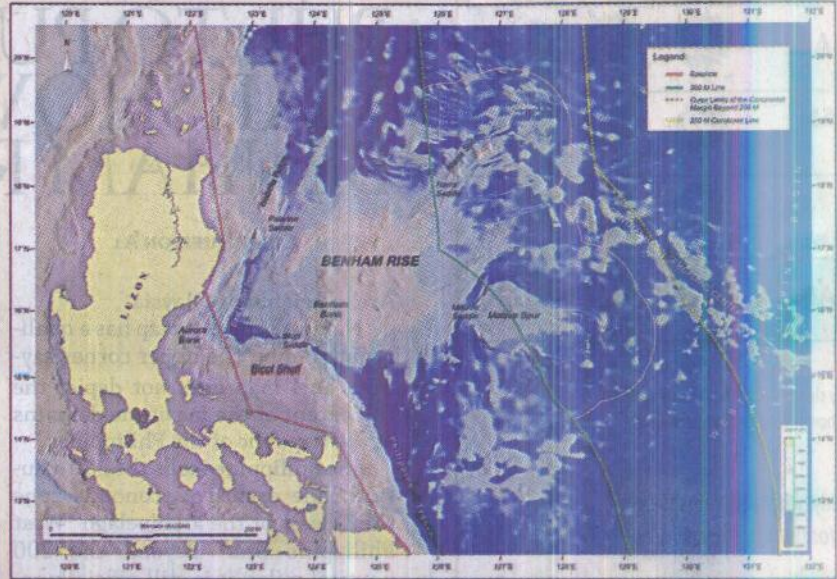
HAVE you noticed that the Philippine maps sold in bookstores or published in government websites do not indicate the West Philippine Sea and Philippine Rise?

Well, the National Security Council said they will soon remedy that.

NSC spokesman and Assistant Secretary Jonathan Malaya said the National Mapping and Resource Information Agency (Namria) will soon publish an updated map that will consolidate the sea or ocean areas where the Philippines have maritime entitlements as well as all land territories.

"We will soon update our maps to show our EEZs and continental shelf including the West Philippine Sea and the Benham Rise [Philippine Rise]," Malaya said.

Namria's current version of the administrative map of the Philip-



THE Philippine Rise PHOTO COURTESY OF THE COMMISSION ON THE LIMITS OF CONTINENTAL SHELF

pines includes the Kalayaan Island Group, Scarborough Shoal, Macclesfield Bank. West Philippine Sea and Benham Rise Region. It also shows

Sabah, which the Philippines claims but is not actively pursuing against

SEE "ASEAN," A2

PHL TO PUBLISH NEW MAP SHOWING WPS, BENHAM RISE-NSC

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Asean neighbor Malaysia.

Namria's current map has a qualifying note on the upper corner saying, "This map does not depict the full extent of the maritime domains of the Republic of the Philippines."

The Philippines calls the 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) west of the archipelago "West Philippine Sea." Beyond the 200 nautical miles, it is still officially referred to as "South China Sea."

This is the first time the Philippine government will publish an updated map showing the country's maritime entitlements, seven years after the United Nations-backed Arbitration Tribunal ruled some rock features in the Spratlys form part of the EEZs.

The UN Commission on the Lim-

its of the Continental Shelf earlier also approved the Philippines's application to extend its continental shelf limit beyond 200 nautical miles from the base shorelines east of the Luzon island. The 13-million hectare continental shelf, called Benham Rise by mariners, was renamed Philippine Rise.

Recently, China published its own map showing 10 dashes that form a U-shape in the South China Sea. The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and India protested the map.

Malaya said Namria updated the map, but they will have to undergo many layers of approval process to ensure that it is consistent with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Arbitral Award.

"We are just finalizing it. We will announce it when it's out," Malaya said.



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Bill calls for upgrade in earth balling method to save trees

A LAWMAKER has called for an upgrade of the government's earth-balling system, or the method of transferring full-grown trees from one place to another, amid the country's bid for full economic development amid growing risks of climate change.

Leyte Rep. Richard I. Gomez filed House Bill No. 9124, proposing the annual appropriation of funds to the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) for the procurement, maintenance, and use of at least one set of machinery known as "earth balling equipment" per region to be used in road improvement and other developmental projects.

Earth balling is defined as "the process of moving a tree by digging out the earth and the roots in a circular shape and leave most of the root system undisturbed and intact."

An earth-balling machine, on the other hand, is defined

as a mechanized apparatus, specifically designed to relocate trees that obstruct road-widening efforts.

Gomez said the earth-balling method "guarantees the survival and continued growth of the transplanted tree, thereby maintaining the environmental balance and ecological integrity of the area, adding this process is essential as it allows for the coexistence of infrastructure development and environmental sustainability."

In a privilege speech to highlight the importance of passing HB 9124, Gomez said a Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) memorandum issued in November 2009 states that the cutting of trees that obstruct road-widening projects is only allowed when earth-balling is already impractical.

However, the former mayor of Ormoc City noted that the DPWH is still undertaking "manual" or

"traditional" earth balling because "there was no budget for [the purchase of] earth balling machines."

"This is a laborious and expensive process. I believe that it is because of this complication that tree-cutting permits are methodically granted to DPWH for road-widening projects. Let us bring down the number of trees cut to the barest minimum," he said.

Gomez noted that there have been advances made in earth-balling procedures in the past few years.

In 2022, he said 228 trees were earth-balled in Cebu City because they were on the path of the Cebu Bus Rapid Transit project. The cost of earth-balling to save the trees was pegged at P17 million.

The local government unit of Puerto Princesa in Palawan, for its part, purchased an earth-balling machine in 2019 for P16 million to save Balayong

trees from road-widening projects. The trees were successfully replanted in a 7.3-hectare park, which is now poised to be another tourist attraction for the city.

Gomez underscored that "automating the earth-balling process is crucial due to its labor-intensive nature. Traditional manual transplantation requires a significant workforce and often leads to delays and increased costs. By integrating mechanization, we can enhance the efficiency of our road-widening projects while minimizing the environmental impact."

"And we can do this by simply mechanizing the process of earth-balling trees. I have filed a bill to mandate the purchase and use of earth balling machines by the DPWH, appropriating funds for the purchase of said equipment per region. I hope to get your support for this measure," he said. *Jovee Marie N. Dela Cruz*



A SNAPSHOT shared by fishers' group Pamalakaya shows residents on the shore of Navotas oblivious to the presence and activity of a nearby land-reclamation vessel.

Group says land-reclamation activities persist in Navotas despite Palace order

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

[@jonlmayuga](#)

DESPITE an order issued by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to suspend all land-reclamation activities in Manila Bay, dump-and-fill activities continue for a land-reclamation project in Navotas City, the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) reported.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, Pamalakaya said local members of the group reported seeing vessels engaged in reclamation activities in Navotas on Wednesday morning. Pamalakaya also shared photos of the alleged ongoing land-reclamation near the shore in Navotas.

Days after President Marcos' verbal order, officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) said the order was dutifully enforced, reporting that all 22 land-reclamation projects are not allowed to operate pending the result of a cumulative impact assessment by the state environment agency.

According to Pamalakaya, upon inquiry, fishermen in the

area reported that the vessels only briefly ceased operations following the President's order last August 7, but immediately resumed after a few days.

The land-reclamation activity, they added, is being undertaken daily with dumping activities even extending until dusk.

Pamalakaya vice chairperson Ronnel Arambulo said they are expecting the President to issue an executive order completely terminating reclamation in Manila Bay and across the archipelago.

Navotas fishermen, meanwhile, complained their daily earnings have plummeted by 80 percent since the reclamation project began in the city.

Starting September last year, the local government has been enforcing the removal of mussel farms (tahungan) and stationary fishing traps (baklad) in the area, which has adversely impacted over 1,000 individuals, including fishers, fish workers, and fishing structure operators.

This is to make way for the 650-hectare Navotas Coastal Bay Reclamation Project, which is one of the 22 projects authorized with an environmental permit issued by the DENR.



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WHAT SUSPENSION? Reclamation works and dump-and-fill operations apparently continue at the Navotas City portion of Manila Bay, more than a month after President Marcos supposedly ordered the suspension of such activities. The activist fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) drew attention to this site on Wednesday. —**PHOTO FROM PAMALAKAYA**



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DOJ opinion sought on DOE-DENR agreement for offshore wind projects

By MYRNA VELASCO

A legal opinion is being sought from the Department of Justice (DOJ) on a targeted memorandum of agreement (MOA) that will be signed by the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to sort out the concerns of investors on foreshore and seabed leases that will be enforced for offshore wind (OSW) projects.

Energy Undersecretary Sharon S. Garin disclosed that "there's already a draft MOA between the DENR and DOE; and we just have queries with the DOJ on our recommendations in the MOA—so that's already in the works."

The energy official did not provide the specific policies to be integrated in the MOA of the two agencies, but she stated that there are already firm recommendations from the DOE that will also be instituted in a department order that the agency will be issuing soon.

"I don't want to preempt because we're trying to fix the issues; and the MOA hasn't been signed yet by the two Secretaries...but what we're trying to address are those on foreshore and the seabed utilization agreements for offshore wind," she stressed.

The energy official added "we have a proposal of making it easier and feasible for the developers, but the

sensitivity of the seabed and foreshore concerns, we have to make sure that legally, our recommendations are feasible, so we just need to make sure that this is backed by a legal opinion; and it's better that we course it through proper channel, which is the DOJ."

On the foreshore lease arrangement, she said "what we're proposing is if: there's due delegation of power and if we're not violating the Constitution, so those are the things that we're asking the DOJ to provide us an opinion on."

Foreign investors who signed up for 100-percent service contracts in their offshore wind projects are in a bind when it comes to foreshore lease agreement, because it is being proposed that they will need to tap a local partner for just a negligible parcel of land that will be traversed eventually by their facilities.

As prescribed under prevailing rules, the salvage zone for foreshore land extends 20 meters from the interior limit of the shoreline which is determined between the highest and lowest tide. Typically, that is covered with a 25-year foreshore lease agreement with the

DENR.

Apart from foreshore lease deal, OSW investors are also seeking regulatory and policy clarifications on seabed lease arrangement because that could inflate the scale of investments that the sponsor-firms will be coughing up for their respective offshore wind projects.

"These are the concerns of investors because they would be using the seabed for some components of their offshore wind projects, but they will not be extracting from underneath, instead they would be harnessing wind for electricity generation, so those are the questions that we need to settle," Garin noted.

She asserted that what the energy department will be lodging with the DOJ "is a long letter stating all the issues raised by investors, but we have yet to submit it."

The energy official stressed "once we secure that legal opinion from the DOJ, then we can fine-tune or we can already proceed with the signing of the MOA with DENR, and then we also issue the corresponding department order to support the policies."



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Unauthorized cosmetic products pose health risks, FDA warns

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued a strong warning to the public against purchasing and using 'unauthorized' cosmetic products that have not been subjected to the agency's meticulous evaluation process.

As of Sept. 12, the FDA has identified two cosmetic products that are "not safe for use."

The unauthorized products as per FDA include "FRESH FACE BEAUTY KOREAN GLUTA BODY LOTION SPF85" and "QIAOYIMEI LIP GLOSS."

The FDA's verification process, conducted through post marketing surveillance, has revealed that both of these products lack a valid Certificate of Product Notification (CPN) as of Aug. 23, 2023.

Given that these unauthorized cosmetic products have not undergone its notification process, the agency cannot vouch for their quality or safety, the FDA said.

It was also noted that the

utilization of such non-compliant products may pose serious health risks to consumers.

These potential hazards, as the FDA stated, could result from the inclusion of ingredients that are prohibited in cosmetic products or from contamination by heavy metals.

The FDA emphasized that using substandard and potentially contaminated cosmetic products could lead to severe reactions, including skin irritation, itchiness, anaphylactic shock, and even organ failure.

In light of these concerning findings, the public was strongly advised against purchasing the aforementioned unauthorized cosmetic products.

The FDA has also issued a directive to all concerned establishments, warning them not to distribute these violative cosmetic products until they have fully complied with the FDA's rules and regulations. (Zekinah Elize Espina)



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Miners say taxes 'regressive,' hobble investments, growth

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA [@jonmayuga](#)

COMPANIES belonging to the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) cited two studies commissioned by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Finance (DOF) that revealed the country's mining taxes are already high.

The COMP used the results of these studies to flag the current mining tax regime as "regressive" and "not competitive." Yet the industry continues to be faced with a clamor for higher taxes, particularly on those operating outside Mineral Reservations (MRs), according to the industry group.

The miners warned that any further increase in taxes threatens the Marcos administration's plan to promote mining metals that are essential for the transition to renewable energy. The increase can also throw a monkey wrench on government's plan to encourage investment in and strengthen the country's downstream minerals processing capacity, added COMP.

The group that represents the industry's major players noted that the increase was due to the doubling of the excise tax to 4 percent after the enactment of Republic Act (RA) 11534, or the Create law (Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act), in 2018.

In a statement, the miners added the doubling is "on top of the local business tax and royalty to indigenous peoples if operating in ancestral domains."

All of these are applied to gross revenues, the organization said through the statement.

"For those operating inside MRs, there is an additional royalty of 5 percent. In addition, the Financial or Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA) mining permit requires a top-up of taxes to 50 percent of income if all taxes paid fall below such threshold," the COMP added.

The miners' group cited a study commissioned by the DENR in 2022 that said "all three existing Philippine fiscal systems (on mining) were regressive, largely due to a significant number of taxes based on gross sales revenue or market value."

The tax systems refer to those imposed on mining projects under the Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA), those operating inside MRs and those under the FTAA.

Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Fiscal Affairs Department, in its June 2012 study on the Philippine mining tax commissioned by the DOF, said that "the current FTAA regime is not competitive internationally." Moreover, "the current FTAA regime is a 'tough' regime for investors compared to fiscal regimes of other countries," the study said as cited by the COMP.

Should a higher tax for those outside MRs be unavoidable, an income-based royalty with increasing tax rates at higher operating margins—as opposed to yet another revenue-based tax—is the preferred scheme.

The miners' organization noted that such mining tax regime is not unique to the Philippines as both Chile and Peru, the Number-1 and Number-2 top copper producers in the world, respectively, follow the formula. Canada, a top mineral producer, has a similar income-based royalty.

"These countries have no tax impositions on their mineral resource industries that are based on revenues. While Australia does have revenue-based royalties, the rates are tiered to metal prices such that the higher the price, the higher the rate," the COMP explained through its statement.

According to the miners, these are examples of progressive tax regimes, in contrast to the country's current mining tax regime that, apart from the income tax, is all based on revenues using static numbers and is, thus, considered a regressive regime.

The COMP further pointed out that the windfall-profits tax is yet another new imposition on the industry that applies to all mining com-

panies, whether operating in MRs or not. Because it is like a "windfall," it starts at an operating margin of 35 percent with the tax rate increasing as margins increase—another example of a progressive tax.

The proposed reduction in the 5-percent royalty rate to 3 percent for those operating in MRs is meant to encourage investments within such areas, already reserved for mining purposes. Equalizing the tax structure of the FTAA with that of the MPSA is also meant to encourage investments from large and responsible foreign mining companies. It should again be noted that the FTAA tax structure is inordinately expensive as pointed out by the IMF and the Deloitte studies. Only two companies are operating under the FTAA permit, COMP explained.

"The industry has already been hit with a moratorium on new mining permits that were in place for nine long years, as well as a ban on open-pit mining, the most widely used mining method in the world. While these policies have since been reversed, investors are taking a wait-and-see attitude while yet another challenge of higher taxes is being resolved," the COMP's statement read.

The miners' organization maintains that the industry cannot absorb any further tax impositions on revenues, or the indigenous mineral resources—particularly those metals that are critical to the energy transition and green economy—will not be developed.

Moreover, the government's desire to develop further downstream processing and participate in the minerals value chain will not materialize, the COMP said.



ADB okays \$303-M loan for PH flood control

By LEE C. CHIPONGIAN

Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB) announced Wednesday, Sept. 13, that it has approved a \$303-million loan to finance the country's flood control and climate risk-related projects.

In a statement, ADB said the loan will "protect people and livelihoods in three major river basins in the Philippines, one of the most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change and disasters caused by natural hazards."

The loan will finance upgrades and construction of the Integrated Flood Resilience and Adaptation Project - Phase 1 in the Abra river basin in the

northern Luzon region, and the Ranao/Agus and Tagum-Libuganon river basins in the southern Mindanao region.

ADB said the infrastructure is for "future climate change impacts" with "nature-based solutions such as restoring and reconnecting old river channels for natural drainage and reinforcing riverbanks with mangroves and vegetation planting."

According to ADB Senior Water Resources Specialist Junko Sagara, the project will reduce climate risks and help improve the income and livelihood of "the poor and vulnerable."

"Climate change is expected to raise risks from extreme weather events. These river basin communities are highly vulnerable to climate-related

hazards, as we have seen in recent years when typhoons destroyed infrastructure, displaced families, and damaged crops," said Sagara.

The ADB further stated that the project they will finance should strengthen the country's flood risk management planning as it will include training for government officials, installing equipment for weather and river flow monitoring and early flood warning, and introducing an asset management information system.

The infrastructure is expected to benefit about 22 local government units and some 150 barangays. These areas will have updated climate and disaster risk assessments and integrating flood risk management once the project has

been completed.

"Training activities will be conducted to build the capacity of communities in climate change adaptation and managing flood risks. The project will include civil society organizations and beneficiary groups in its planning and implementation," said ADB.

Meanwhile, ADB said its Infrastructure Preparation and Innovation Facility supported the project's feasibility study and design, therefore it has up-to-date technology and innovative designs.

The \$303 million project is part of the government's 2011-2028 National Climate Change Action Plan, and under the 2023-2028 Philippine Development Plan.

"It is complemented by policy reforms being pursued under ADB's Climate Change Action Program, which is the bank's first climate action policy-based loan, and the Competitive and Inclusive Agriculture Development Program, which aims to lift agriculture resilience and productivity and enhance food security," said ADB.



ADB OKs P17 B Phl loan to boost climate resilience

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$303-million (P17.2 billion) loan to address the persistent flooding problem in the country amid worsening climate change.

In a statement yesterday, ADB said it has approved the loan meant to reduce flood and climate risks, as well as protect people and livelihoods in three major river basins in the Philippines.

This, as the Philippines remains one of the most climate-vulnerable countries over the past two decades.

The loan will finance the first phase of the Integrated Flood Resilience and Adaptation Project which aims to reduce flood risks in three major river basins, namely Abra, Agus (Ranao), and Tagum-Libuganon River Basins, and enhance flood and climate change resilience.

It will fund the upgrade and construction of flood protection infrastructure in the three major river basins in Luzon and Mindanao.

The infrastructure takes into account future climate change impact and incorporates nature-based solutions such as restoring and reconnecting old river channels for natural drainage and reinforcing riverbanks with mangroves and vegetation planting.

ADB senior water resources specialist Junko Sagara said the river basin communities are highly vulnerable to climate-related hazards, especially as climate change is expected to raise risks from extreme weather events.

"The project will help lessen these risks and improve income and livelihood opportunities, especially for the poor and vulnerable," Sagara said.

Further, the project will help strengthen the country's capacity to perform flood risk management planning.

This will be done by providing training for government officials, installing equipment for weather and river flow monitoring and early flood warning, and introducing an asset management information system.

The project also aims to boost community-based flood risk management (FRM) by supporting 22 local government units and about 150 barangays in updating their climate and disaster risk assessments and integrating flood risk management in local development plans.

Training activities will be conducted to build the capacity of communities in climate change adaptation and managing flood risks. The project will include civil society organizations and beneficiary groups in its planning and implementation.

Meanwhile, based on earlier documents, the second phase of the project targets to reduce the flood and climate vulnerability of the population, built-up areas, and agricultural lands by rehabilitating, upgrading, and constructing flood protection and mitigation infrastructure.

Structural interventions that combine conventional engineering solutions and nature-based approaches will also be undertaken throughout the target basins.



ADB OKs \$303-M PHL infra loan vs floods, climate risks

BY ANDREA E. SAN JUAN [@andreasanjuan](#)

THE Asian Development Bank (ADB) said Wednesday it has approved a \$303-million loan for an infrastructure project that is expected to reduce flood and climate risks and protect people and livelihoods in three major river basins in the Philippines.

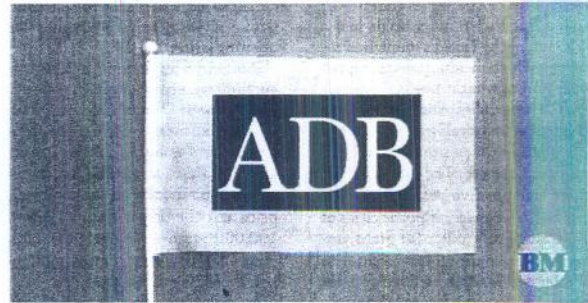
In a statement on Wednesday, ADB said Phase 1 of the Integrated Flood Resilience and Adaptation Project will upgrade and construct flood protection infrastructure in the Abra river basin in the northern Luzon region and the Ranao/Agus and Tagum-Libuganon river basins in southern Mindanao.

The multilateral development bank said the infrastructure takes into account future "climate change impacts" and incorporates nature-based solutions such as restoring and reconnecting old river channels for natural drainage and reinforcing riverbanks

with mangroves and vegetation planting.

ADB Senior Water Resources Specialist Junko Sagara emphasized that the project will help lessen the risks from extreme weather events and improve income and livelihood opportunities, especially for the poor and vulnerable.

"Climate change is expected to raise risks from extreme weather events. These river basin communities are highly vulnerable to climate-related hazards, as we have seen in recent years when typhoons destroyed infrastructure, displaced families, and damaged



crops," Sagara said.

Moreover, ADB said the project will help strengthen the Philippines's capacity to perform flood risk management planning by providing training for government officials, installing equipment for weather and river flow monitoring and early flood warning, and introducing an asset management information system.

According to ADB, the project also aims to boost community-based flood risk management by supporting 22 local government units (LGUs) and about 150 barangays in updating their climate and disaster risk assessments and integrating flood risk management in local development plans.

"Training activities will be conducted to build the capacity of communities in climate change adaptation and managing flood risks," ADB said in a statement on Wednesday.

The project, it added, will include civil society organizations and beneficiary groups in its planning and implementation.

ADB said the feasibility study and design for the project were supported by ADB's Infrastructure Preparation and Innovation Facility, which has been helping Philippine government agencies access information on up-to-date technology and innovative designs in building major infrastructure projects since 2017.



ADB approves \$303-M flood, climate risk loan

THE Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$303-million loan to reduce flood and climate risks in the disaster-prone Philippines.

The Manila-based lending institution on Wednesday said that the Integrated Flood Resilience and Adaptation Project-Phase 1 would be used to improve and build flood protection structures in the Abra River basin in Northern Luzon and the Ranao/Agus and Tagum-Libuganon river areas in Southern Mindanao.

"Climate change is expected to raise risks from extreme weather events," Junko Sagara, ADB senior water resources specialist, said in a statement.

"These river basin communities are highly vulnerable to climate-related hazards, as we have seen in recent years when typhoons destroyed

infrastructure, displaced families and damaged crops," Sagara added.

"The project will help lessen these risks and improve income and livelihood opportunities, especially for the poor and vulnerable."

The ADB said that the proposed infrastructure would take into account future climate change effects and include eco-friendly methods such as revitalizing and linking old river pathways for natural drainage and fortifying riverbanks with mangroves and vegetation.

The project is expected to enhance the Philippines' ability to conduct flood risk management planning, which will be achieved through the training of government officials, setting up weather and river flow monitoring and early flood warning equipment, and introducing an asset

► Loan B2

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ADB

management information system.

Assistance will be provided to 22 local government units and approximately 150 barangay (villages) with regard to updating their climate and disaster risk assessments while integrating flood risk management into local development plans.

The initiative includes training activities to empower communities in handling climate change adaptation and flood risk management. Civil society organizations and beneficiary groups will also be involved in the project's planning and execution.

The project's feasibility study and design received support from ADB's Infrastructure Preparation and In-

novation Facility, said to have been aiding Philippine government agencies in accessing information about modern technology and creative designs for infrastructure projects since 2017.

The flood resilience project also aligns with climate goals outlined in the country's National Climate Change Action Plan for 2011-2028 and the Philippine Development Plan for 2023-2028.

It also complements policy reforms carried out under ADB's Climate Change Action Program, the bank's initial climate action policy-based loan, and the Competitive and Inclusive Agriculture Development Program, which aims to strengthen agricultural resilience, productivity and food security.

NIÑA MYKA PAULINE ARCEO



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ROXAS BLVD. PROMENADE COMING UP. Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chairman Romando Artes (second from left) leads the signing ceremony for the Roxas Blvd Promenade, stemming from the agency's Adopt-a-Park project that aims to promote an active lifestyle and contribute to the overall wellness of Metro Manila residents through rehabilitation and development of parks and open spaces. **Norman Cruz**

MMDA set to build 800-m park along Roxas Blvd.

By Joel E. Zurbano

THE Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) on Wednesday signed an agreement with the Philippine Reclamation Authority to establish the Roxas Boulevard Promenade from Epifanio de los Santos Avenue to Libertad Extension in Pasay City.

The MMDA has earmarked P70 million to construct the 800-meter park along the scenic boulevard, aiming to create a "greener, more vibrant, and more inter-

connected metropolis."

The park will feature biking and jogging lanes, a pet park, and a football pitch, a space for family bonding, fitness advocates, and or just plain leisure.

Construction was expected to be completed in time for the holiday season.

MMDA chairman Romando Artes said the project was an offshoot of the agency's Adopt-a-Park project and aims to promote an active lifestyle and contribute to the overall wellness of Metro Manilans through the rehabilitation and develop-

ment of parks and open spaces within the metropolis.

Funding will be sourced from the MMDA's budget, but maintenance will be shared with the local government of Pasay.

Pasay City Mayor Imelda Calixto Rubio welcomed the development, urging everyone to participate in this advocacy for the well-being of the people while taking care of the earth.

The MMDA was also in talks with the Parañaque City government and the PRA to extend the promenade until NIA Road.



Fishermen oppose construction of seawall

LINGAYEN, Pangasinan: Fishermen groups from this town and neighboring Binmaley called on authorities to stop the construction of a seawall along the coastline of the Lingayen Gulf that stretches from Lingayen to Binmaley.

In a letter to the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (provincial board) last week, the fishermen said that the seawall will reduce the area where they can dock their fishing boats.

The fisherfolk also fear that their wooden boats will be smashed into the concrete seawall by huge waves and strong winds during thunderstorms.

And if this happens, the fishermen added, they will lose their only source of livelihood. Five leaders of fishermen's groups from Lingayen and Binmaley signed the letter.

The seawall project is reportedly aimed at protecting the coastal villages of this town and the capitol complex from flooding and storm surges.

The website of the Department of Public Works and Highways did not list a seawall project from this town to Binmaley, but it listed the "construction/maintenance of flood mitigation structures and drainage systems, construction of flood mitigation facilities at Lingayen-Binmaley, Pangasinan."

The project cost is P130.14 million, and construction began on June 14, 2023, the website said.

The fishermen also said that with the seawall, the area where they can pull their fishing nets will become smaller.

Some residents here begin their day by fishing using a traditional seine technique locally called kalukor. This is a standard



NOT GOOD? Sheet piles, which mark the extent of the Lingayen-Binmaley seawall, configure the shoreline of Lingayen Gulf as construction of the seawall continues despite the protests from local fishermen groups. PHOTO BY GABRIEL CARDINOZA

200-meter-long net deployed by a boat and pulled from the shore strategically by two groups of people holding the ropes until the seine reaches the shore with the catch.

The fishermen clarified that they are not against government projects, especially those that will benefit poor people like them, but they claim that the seawall would bring them more harm than good.

The provincial board has scheduled a public hearing on the seawall project at 9 a.m. on Thursday, September 14, at the Pangasinan Training Center here.

GABRIEL CARDINOZA



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Report: Phl still worst in Asia for environment defenders

By JANVIC MATEO

More than a week after two environmental activists were seized in Bataan, a new report showed that the Philippines remains the worst country for environment defenders in Asia.

The report, published by non-profit Global Witness yesterday, said that 11 of the 16 killings it monitored in Asia last year occurred in the Philippines, three were in Indonesia and two in India.

Worldwide, the Philippines ranked fifth after Colombia with 60, Brazil with 34, Mexico with 31 and Honduras with 14.

There were at least 177 killings of land and environment defenders worldwide in 2022, bringing the total number documented by Global Witness since 2012 to 1,910.

Although lower than those reported in the Amazon, the situation in the

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Philippines stands out as it consistently remains on top of the ranking in the region for the past decade.

According to the report, at least 281 killings of environment defenders were reported in the Philippines since 2012.

A third involves those who speak out against company operations linked to the mining sector.

"The criminalization of defenders and rights advocates is widespread, with 'red-tagging' – the government practice of accusing activists of being communist insurgents – commonly used to silence critics and communities," read the report.

"At the time of writing, a bill seeking to protect human rights defenders and punish acts of intimidation or violence against them has just been approved

at the committee level at the House of Representatives – marking a positive step for the protection of defenders. However, a government statement called the bill 'dangerous and destructive' for the country," it added.

Global Witness' list of environment defenders killed in the Philippines last year included the so-called New Bataan 5 slain in Davao de Oro on Feb. 24, 2022.

Volunteer Lumad teachers Chad Booc and Gelejurain Ngujo II, community health worker Elgyn Balonga and drivers Tirso Añar and Robert Aragon were killed in what the military claimed was an encounter with the New People's Army.

The victim's families and various human rights groups have denied they were communist rebels.

The list also included poet-activist Ericson Acosta as well as Richard

Mendoza, Joseph Jimenez, Silvestre Fortades Jr., Rose Marie Galias and Eugene Lastrella.

"For too long, those responsible for lethal attacks against defenders have been getting away with murder. Violence, intimidation and harassment are also being inflicted to silence defenders around the world," said Shruti Suresh, co-director of campaigns at Global Witness.

"Governments around the world must urgently address the senseless killings of those who stand up for our planet, including for the protection of its most precious ecosystems, which have a critical role to play in tackling the climate emergency. United action is needed at regional, national and international levels to end the violence and injustice they face. Far too many lives have already been lost. We cannot afford to lose any more," Suresh said.



Plant-based food may reduce greenhouse gas emissions – study

PARIS: Replacing half of the pork, chicken, beef and milk products we consume with plant-based alternatives could reduce global greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture and related land use by nearly a third, and virtually halt forest loss, according to research published on Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila).

Population growth and higher incomes are on track to increase global demand for these key animal products, which can bring damaging environmental consequences.

Forests are cleared to make way for cattle and the grain needed to feed them, while cows belch methane, a potent greenhouse gas whose warming effect is much more powerful than carbon dioxide.

The study, published in the journal *Nature Communications*, used modeling to analyze the impact of a worldwide dietary shift towards plant-based alternatives to pork, beef, chicken and milk with the same nutritional value.

It suggested that greenhouse gas emissions connected to agriculture and land use could be cut by 31 percent in 2050 compared to 2020 levels if consumption were reduced by half.

In that scenario, the amount of land dedicated to agricultural uses falls by 12 percent instead of continuing to expand.

The extent of forests and other natural land areas would remain nearly the same as in 2020, as land earmarked for livestock and production of feed is spared

►GreenhouseA2

GREENHOUSE FROM A1

Plant-based food may reduce greenhouse gas

rather than burned or cleared.

The increased use of nitrogen for crops is almost half of what it would otherwise be on expected trends, while water use drops 10 percent.

'Critical opportunity'

A massive shift to plant-based foods would also improve global food security, with the number of undernourished people falling by 31 million by 2050, the researchers said.

In addition, it would boost biodiversity. Restored land area could contribute between 13 and 25 percent of the estimated land restoration needed by 2030 under a target set in a global treaty hammered out at the end of last year.

The decline of life-sustaining ecosystems on current trajectories would be more than halved by 2050, the study suggested.

"Plant-based meats are not just a novel food product but a critical opportunity for achieving food security and climate goals while also achieving health and biodiversity

objectives worldwide," study co-author Eva Wollenberg said.

Sub-Saharan Africa, China and Southeast Asia would see the biggest reductions in biodiversity losses, while carbon sequestration levels would improve the most in sub-Saharan Africa and South America, notably Brazil.

Freeing up cropland would especially affect China, the world's top consumer of pork and chicken meat.

Replacing beef alone would provide around half of the emissions reductions achieved through reducing consumption of all four animal products.

The researchers cautioned that such changes should take into account the importance of livestock in some cultures and to small-scale farmers, but noted that climate change also represented a major risk to them.

The pricing of plant-based products will greatly determine the evolution of the market, while the speed and fairness of the change will depend much on public policies, they said.

AFP



PUBLIC ADVISORY

REGARDING PD 324 & CLAIMS OF FREE PATENTS IN UPPER MARIKINA WATERSHED

Please be informed of the following critical details:

- 1. PD 324 is No Longer Valid.** PD 324, which was issued in 1973, has been superseded and rendered null by the subsequent issuances of PD 705 in 1975 and PP 1636 in 1977.
- 2. Beware of Misinformation:** Certain parties are falsely promising free patents within the Marikina Watershed, specifically in Sitio San Roque, Bgy. Pinugay, Baras, Rizal, based on PD 324. This is incorrect and misleading.
- 3. Legal Precedents:** While PD 324 initially declared the area as alienable and disposable, both PD 705 and PP 1636 later restricted its alienation.
 - **PD 705, 1975:** States that no land with a slope of 18% or more should be classified as alienable or disposable. Any land previously declared as such must revert to forest land classification, subject to certain conditions. Land in PD 324 slopes 18 degrees and steeper and is therefore inalienable and nondisposable.
 - **PP 1636, 1977:** This proclamation withdrew certain lands in various provinces, including the area covered by PD 324 and other parts of the Marikina Watershed, from any sale, settlement, or exploitation, designating them as National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, and Game Preserves.
- 4. Important Considerations:** Between 1973 and 1975, no private rights, especially free patents, could have been established given the 30-year continuous occupation requirement. Furthermore, any alienation under PD 324 was specifically intended for woodland and agricultural purposes, not for activities such as quarrying or the establishment of swimming pool resorts.
- 5. Avoid Falling for False Claims:** Please disregard and be cautious of any posters or advertisements circulating that claim the availability of free patents based on PD 324. Such claims are misleading and can be categorized as "fake news." Many have already suffered losses, both financially and in terms of time, due to these false promises.

**Stay informed, and protect yourself from misinformation.
Help conserve our dwindling forests & national patrimony
for future generations.**



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MAGNITUDE 6.3 OFF DALUPIRI ISLAND

5 HURT, SCHOOLS DAMAGED AS STRONG QUAKE JOLTS CAGAYAN

TUGUEGARAO CITY—At least five family members were injured after a magnitude 6.3 earthquake struck off Dalupiri Island in Calayan town, Cagayan, on Tuesday night.

In a report on Wednesday, the municipal disaster risk reduction and management office (MDRRMO) of Calayan said

two children—identified as Baby Caty dela Cruz, 13, and her younger sister, Carmela, 12—suffered from “brain trauma and head concussions” while three other family members had minor injuries after a wall in their house in Barangay Centro 2 collapsed as the quake jolted the province at 7:03 p.m.

The Dela Cruz sisters were taken to the Calayan infirmary and had been declared in safe condition.

According to the MDRRMO, 27 families, or 90 people, had to flee their homes and stay in temporary shelters due to the damage to their houses.

Calayan Mayor Joseph Llopis ordered the suspension of classes at all levels in both public and private schools on Wednesday to allow officials to inspect buildings and other structures in the town.

Large cracks were reported in the buildings of the main campus of Calayan High School,

Calayan West Central Elementary School and Magsidel National High School.

According to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs), the quake’s epicenter was at 26 kilometers north of Dalupiri and at a depth of 10 km.

Phivolcs reported at least

104 aftershocks as of Wednesday afternoon.

In its earlier bulletin issued at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, Phivolcs noted that the aftershocks varied in magnitude—from 1.8 to 3.7—and occurred at depths ranging from 8 to 29 km.

—REPORTS FROM VILLAMOR VISAYA JR. AND ABBY BOISER INQ



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POOR DRAINAGE, HEAVY DEV'T

METRO CEBU EXECS SEEK LASTING SOLUTION TO FLOODS

By Ador Vincent Mayol
and Nestle Semilla
@inquirervisayas

CEBU CITY—A portion of Legaspi Street in downtown Cebu City collapsed on Wednesday afternoon as heavy rains that spawned floods continued for the third day.

The sunken area was about 15 meters long and caused the adjacent concrete fence of Patria de Cebu to crumble. Patria de Cebu, a property of the Archdiocese of Cebu, was undergoing reconstruction.

In a statement posted on its social media site, the Cebu City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (CDRRMO) said a stretch of Legaspi Street in Barangay Santo Niño caved in around 3 p.m. No one was hurt.

CDRRMO chief Harold Alcontin said the soil in the area had softened due to nonstop rains since Monday.

Heavy rains in Metro Cebu prompted local government and school officials to suspend classes in several schools to allow students to go home early and avoid floods and the ensuing gridlock.

Since Monday, the cities of Cebu and Mandaue have been experiencing heavy rains that transformed major streets into waterways. Several establishments and houses were swamped as floodwater rose to as high as 2 meters (6.5 feet).

In Mandaue City, at least 130 families (375 people) were evacuated due to flooding in the villages of Ibabao-Estancia and Maguikay.

Mandaue City Mayor Jonas Cortes on Wednesday ordered the suspension of in-person classes in all levels in the city's public schools.

In Cebu City, Councilor Jerry Guardo, chair of the council's



AFTERMATH A section of Legaspi Street in Cebu City caves in on Wednesday amid heavy rains and floods this week. —PHOTO COURTESY OF CEBU HILIG UG MOTO

committee on infrastructure, said their reports indicated that floods hit areas in the northern section of the city.

'Unusual'

Initial investigation showed that poor drainage system and the heavy development in the city's northern section contributed heavily to the flooding.

"Water [kept rising] because many [sections] of these flooded areas [had been paved with] concrete. It's hard for water to subside," said Guardo.

Among the villages worst hit were Maboloc, Apas, Banilad and Talamban, all of which lead to Mandaue City.

"What happened on Monday was really unusual. Because contrary to our expectations, the downtown area of Cebu City was not flooded. The northern portion of the city was," Guardo said.

He said his office and the Department of Public Works and Highways and the city's Department of Engineering and Public Works would investigate Monday's severe flooding.

"We want to come up with short-term and long-term solutions to the problem," he said. INQ