



NEWS ROUNDUP

02 August 2022 (Tuesday) [as of 09:00am]

- Climate change: More studies needed on possibility of human extinction
- This giant 'water battery' under the Alps could be a game-changer for renewable energy in Europe
- Environment lovers plant thousands of tree seedlings in Baguio
- Iloilo governor backs disaster response in ROTC
- 5.2 quake strikes Abra anew; More shocks expected
- [OPINION] Renewable energy
- US Senate Democrats hope for green light on \$430 billion climate, drug bill
- Abra delaying school opening due to earthquake damage
- Go makes pitch for disaster resilience agency
- PH will not rejoin ICC – Marcos

BBC NEWS

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They argue that the world needs to start preparing for the possibility of what they term the "climate endgame"

CNN

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By: Rebecca Cairns

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MANILA BULLETIN

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By: Willie Casas

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PANAY NEWS

[Opinion] Renewable energy

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

US Senate Democrats hope for green light on \$430 billion climate, drug bill

By Reuters

Washington — U.S. Senate Democrats on Monday were awaiting a ruling from the chamber referee this week on whether they can override the legislature's normal rules to pass a \$430 billion drugs, energy and tax bill despite Republican objections.

RAPPLER

Abra delaying school opening due to earthquake damage

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THE MANILA TIMES

Go makes pitch for disaster resilience agency

By Bernadette E. Tamayo

Sen. Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go cited the urgency to have his proposed measure that establishes the Department of Disaster Resilience (DDR) approved in the aftermath of the magnitude 7 earthquake that hit Northern Luzon on July 27.

PH will not rejoin ICC – Marcos

By: Kristina Maralit

The Philippines "has no intention" of rejoining the International Criminal Court (ICC), President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. said on Monday.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BBC NEWS

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Catastrophic climate change outcomes, including human extinction, are not being taken seriously enough by scientists, a new study says.

The authors say that the consequences of more extreme warming - still on the cards if no action is taken - are "dangerously underexplored".

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They want UN scientists to investigate the risk of catastrophic change.

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- **Meet the people fighting climate doomism**
-

According to this **new analysis**, the closest attempts to directly understand or address how climate change could lead to global catastrophe have come from popular science books such as *The Uninhabitable Earth* and not from mainstream science research. In recent years climate scientists have more often studied the impacts of warming of around 1.5C or 2C above the temperatures seen in 1850, before the onset of global industrialisation.

These studies show that keeping temperatures close to these levels this century will place heavy burdens on global economies, but they do not envisage the end of humanity.

Researchers have focussed on these lower temperature scenarios for good reasons. The Paris climate agreement saw almost every nation on Earth sign up to a deal that aims to keep the rise in global temperatures "well below" 2C this century, and make efforts to keep it under 1.5C.

So it's natural that governments would want their scientists to show exactly what this type of change would mean.

But this new paper says that not enough attention has been given to more extreme outcomes of climate change.

"I think it's sane risk management to think about the plausible worst-case scenarios and we do it when it comes to every other situation, we should definitely do when it comes to

the fate of the planet and species," said lead author Dr Luke Kemp from the University of Cambridge.

The researchers found that estimates of the impacts of a temperature rise of 3C are under-represented compared to their likelihood.

Using climate models, the report shows that in this type of scenario, by 2070 around 2 billion people living in some of the most politically fragile areas of the world would be enduring annual average temperatures of 29C.

"Average annual temperatures of 29C currently affect around 30 million people in the Sahara and Gulf Coast," said co-author Chi Xu of Nanjing University.

"By 2070, these temperatures and the social and political consequences will directly affect two nuclear powers, and seven maximum containment laboratories housing the most dangerous pathogens. There is serious potential for disastrous knock-on effects," he said.

The future impacts of extreme climate change have not been fully explored. The report says that it is not just high temperatures that are the problem, it's the compound and knock-on effects such as food or financial crises, conflicts or disease outbreaks that have the potential for disaster.

There should also be more focus on identifying potential tipping points, where increasing warmth triggers another natural event that drives temperatures up even more - such as methane emissions from melting permafrost or forests that start emitting carbon rather than soaking it up.

To properly assess all these risks, the authors are calling on the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change** to carry out a special report on catastrophic climate change. The researchers said that seriously studying the consequences of worst-case scenarios was vital, even though it might scare people.

They said that carrying out this research would allow scientists to consider emergency options such as climate engineering which might involve pumping coolants into the atmosphere. Researchers would be able to carry out a risk analysis for these drastic interventions compared to the worst effects of climate change. Focussing on the worst-case scenarios could also help inform the public - and might actually make the outcomes less likely.

"Understanding these plausible but grim scenarios is something that could galvanise both political and civil opinion," said Dr Kemp.

"We saw this when it came to the identification of the idea of a nuclear winter that helped compel a lot of the public efforts as well as the disarmament movement throughout the 1970s and '80s."

"And I hope if we can find similar concrete and clear mechanisms when it comes to thinking about climate change, that it also has a similar effect."

The plea for serious study of more extreme scenarios will chime with many younger climate activists, who say they are often not addressed for fear of frightening people into inaction.

"It is vital that we have research into all areas of climate change, including the scary reality of catastrophic events," said Laura Young, a 25-year-old climate activist. "This is because without the full truth, and all of the potential impacts, we won't make the informed choices we need, and we won't be driving climate action with enough pressure."

"For years climate change has been hidden, misinformed, and avoided and this has to stop now. Especially for the younger generations who are going to be left to deal with the consequences of years of pushing the Earth to its limits."

The study has been published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

(BBC News Climate and Science reporter Ella Hambly contributed to this report.)

CNN

This giant 'water battery' under the Alps could be a game-changer for renewable energy in Europe

By: Rebecca Cairns

Switzerland has unveiled its latest renewable energy innovation: a giant water battery.

Beginning operations last month, the water battery, called Nant de Drance, is a pumped storage hydropower plant that provides the same energy storage capacity as 400,000 electric car batteries.

Located high in the Swiss Alps in the canton of Valais, the plant is equipped with agile, reversible turbines that offer new levels of flexibility, says Robert Gleitz, a delegate of the board of directors of Nant de Drance: with the flick of a switch, the plant can go from storing energy to providing electricity.

The massive project took 14 years to complete. Around 17 kilometers (10.5 miles) of subterranean tunnels were excavated through the Alps while the six turbines are stored 600 meters (1970 feet) below ground, in a giant cavern the length of two football fields.

Nant de Drance repurposed two existing reservoirs, raising the upper one by 21.5 meters (71 feet) to double its capacity -- it now holds more water than 6,500 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

As one of the largest facilities of its kind, the \$2 billion project could play a vital role in stabilizing Europe's electricity grid as the continent transitions to renewable energy, says Gleitz.

Making a splash

Pumped storage hydropower plants, which have been around for over a century, are particularly important for renewable energy because wind and solar rely heavily on the weather and don't provide a consistent power supply.

"We can take energy (from the grid) when there is too much, and generate it again when it's needed," says Gleitz.

Unlike many of the plants that preceded it, Nant de Drance uses variable speed pump-turbines, says Pascal Radue, CEO of GE Renewable Energy Hydro which supplied equipment for the facility.

The turbines help to stabilize the electricity grid, says Radue.

"With a fixed speed turbine, you have to wait until the power plant is running at exactly the right speed to be synchronized to the grid," says Radue, adding that this wastes time and energy. Variable speed turbines supply electricity to the grid immediately so there's less risk of blackouts.

A big impact

Historically "open-flow" pumped storage hydropower stations, which are built on river systems and require dam construction, disrupted wildlife and damaged ecosystems. In Switzerland, where the first pumped storage hydropower plant was built in 1890, almost half of total river lengths have been artificially altered, with very few Alpine rivers in a natural state.

That's why modern projects favor closed-loop systems, like Nant de Drance, which don't impact river systems, says Andrew Blakers, a professor of engineering at the Australian National University.

"The era of dam building is nearly over," says Blakers, adding that these closed loop power plants take up a relatively small space given the energy security they provide. He estimates that to power a city with one million inhabitants for 24 hours would require around two square kilometers of flooded land, adding that pumped storage hydropower offers one of the highest efficiency energy storage solutions currently available.

Nant de Drance returns around 80% of the electricity it takes in back to the grid, and stores around 20 hours of backup energy, says Gleitz.

Transitioning to renewables

Hoping to become the "first climate-neutral continent," Europe has big ambitions for renewable energy: in 2020, just over one-fifth of the continent's total energy came from renewable sources but in May this year, the European Commission increased its 2030 renewables target from 40% to 45%.

To achieve this, new, high-capacity storage facilities are essential, says Blakers. The European Association for Storage of Energy estimates that the continent will need 200 gigawatts of storage by 2030 -- more than four times its current storage capacity. In the decade between 2010 and 2020, just 8 gigawatts of storage was added to the grid.

That's why Nant de Drance is so significant. Located at the geographical heart of Europe, Switzerland could offer stability to the grid across the continent, says Rebecca Ellis, energy policy manager at the non-profit International Hydropower Association. Nant de Drance has increased Switzerland's installed energy capacity by 33%, says Ellis, adding that it "shows the leadership of Switzerland" in the transition to renewables.

However, as the nation is not a member of the European Union, regulations are currently a barrier, says Gleitz. "The market rules are not easy," he says. "We still need to have closer agreements with the EU."

Pumped storage hydropower could provide energy security outside of Europe, too: Blakers and his team have identified around 600,000 potential sites for closed loop systems -- although just 1% of these would be needed to meet total global energy storage needs, he adds.

As the climate crisis intensifies, Gleitz hopes that Europe embraces the potential of the "clean energy storage" provided by pumped storage hydropower plants. "If we want to go

in the direction of having clean power, Nant de Drance is one of the stepping stones on this path," he says.

MANILA BULLETIN

Environment lovers plant thousands of tree seedlings in Baguio

By: Comanda Rizaldy

Baguio City – The City Environment and Parks Management Office (CEPMO) reported that environment lovers have committed to planting some 4,385 saplings/tree seedlings in city parks and available venues up to the end of September in Baguio City.

CEPMO head Atty. Rhenan Diwas said planting activities done with the theme 'Only One Earth,' are in line with the city's program on re-greening and reforestation efforts to help curb climate change and rejuvenate the environment.

Diwas however calls for more planters as the target is 10,000 seedlings to be planted in various venues from June to September.

He said groups and civic organizations include the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) offering 50 personnel to plant 400 tree saplings/seedlings at the Diplomat hotel area.

Thirty active senior citizens of East Modernsite Aurora Hill plan to plant and nurture 100 ornamental jacaranda at Bayan Park, Aurora Hill.

The Pines City National High School (PCNHS) planted 250 seedlings at the Arboretum, with 50 personnel present; while 25 personnel from the Baguio City National High School (BCNHS) planted 100 pine seedlings at Forbes Park.

Fifty members of the University of Baguio Science High School (UBSHS) commit to plant 150 saplings in Irisan, while 200 personnel from the university promised to plant 300 seedlings at the Busol Watershed.

The Pilando building staff of 60 chose to plant 150 trees in Lucban Elementary School (LES), while the same number of personnel from the Parole and Probation Office planted 200 assorted seedlings at Burnham Park.

Fifty members of the Philippine College of Physicians took time out from their busy hospital schedules to plant 150 seedlings at the Pine Trees of the World park, while 50 Baguio-Benguet Medical Society members planted 100 trees at the same venue.

The Sto. Tomas elementary school area shall be planted with 500 seedlings by 200 staff, teachers, parents and pupils; 50 representatives from the National Institute of Information Technology (NIIT) planted 150 at Wright park; Ten members of the Chemical Engineers Institute add 50 seedlings at the Arboretum.

Lately, ten members of the Alliance of Legally Married Police wives cleared an area at the Botanical garden and planted 50 seedlings; fifteen members of the Saint Louis University Extension Institute of Small Scale Industries Foundation (EISSIF) planted ten

seedlings each; 35 Philippine National Police members planted 36 alnus and 65 pine trees, both at the Arboretum.

Thirty members of the Philippine Army planted 50 pine, 50 alnus and 50 rainbow cypress seedlings at the Dominican Heritage Park, while 45 personnel of the University of the Cordilleras added 150 to the foliage at Wright Park.

Fifty Landbank personnel shall plant two seedlings each at the Arboretum, while 125-strong Garb and Clarita's closet personnel planted 250 seedlings at Dominican heritage site and 200 seedlings at Forbes Park.

Fort del Pilar residents planted 300 various tree species in their surroundings; Gabriela Silang residents plant 60 trees at the Botanical garden, the Masons of Baguio help re-green the Buyog watershed with 100 saplings, and 30 Quezon Hill National High School (QCNHS) personnel added 75 seedlings at the Botanical Garden.

CEPMO foresters Amor Bacullo, Floro Bastian are responsible for briefing the planters on proper planting techniques, for a higher chance of survival for the trees and inspect, assign the planting venues.

Iloilo governor backs disaster response in ROTC

By Tara Yap

Iloilo City – Gov. Arthur Defensor Jr. of Iloilo backs the integration of disaster response in the proposal to make the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) mandatory.

"I agree with this. This is a good direction," said Defensor as he supported the call of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

"It is very important to have a disaster response component to the ROTC given that we experience many calamities in this country," Defensor added.

Marcos had earlier said that the ROTC revival is not solely for national defense but also harnessing the role of disaster preparedness.

"When there is civil defense capability, it teaches the young to be prepared especially that we are also facing the impacts of climate change," Defensor said.

The Iloilo governor also backed the proposal to create a Department of Disaster Resilience (DDR).

"It's equally important as disaster response has evolved as important as environmental protection," Defensor said.

His younger brother, Iloilo Rep. Lorenz Defensor, was one of the principal authors for bill to create DDR in the previous Congress.

Defensor said he made a similar move on the local level when the Provincial Civil Defense Service of Iloilo (ProCiD Serv Iloilo) was created last May 2021.

The ProCiD Serv Iloilo prioritizes disaster risk reduction and management, public safety, peace and order, disease control and prevention, climate change response, and environmental crime prevention.

MANILA STANDARD

5.2 quake strikes Abra anew; More shocks expected

By: Willie Casas

A magnitude 5.2 earthquake hit Abra at 2:48 a.m. on Monday, five days after it was hit by a deadly 7.0-magnitude quake last Wednesday that damaged structures in the region and killed at least 10 people.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said the tremor's epicenter was three kilometers from Villaviciosa town at a depth of 22 km.

The following intensities were felt in Abra and nearby provinces: Intensity V – Bantay, Ilocos Sur; Intensity IV – Bangued, Abra; and Intensity III – Baguio City.

Instrumental Intensities were: Intensity V – Vigan City, Ilocos Sur; Intensity IV – Pasuquin, Ilocos Norte; Intensity III – Laoag City, Ilocos Norte; Sinait, Ilocos Sur; Intensity II – Tabuk, Kalinga; Claveria and Penablanca, Cagayan; and Intensity I – Baguio City; Dagupan City, Pangasinan; Ilagan, Isabela.

Phivolcs said it expects damage and aftershocks from the quake.

The number of individuals affected by the magnitude 7 earthquake is now at 381,614, the state disaster response agency said Monday.

According to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, this translated to 100,665 families. Of the tally, some 3,781 individuals or 1,070 families are staying in evacuation camps.

In its latest report, the NDRRMC also said the number of fatalities remained at 10 while those injured have reached 394.

Damage to infrastructures such as roads, bridges, health facilities, schools, and cultural heritages in Cagayan Valley, Cordillera Administrative Region, and Ilocos Region was pegged at P704 million.

According to the NDRRMC, some 354 houses were destroyed by the major tremor while 24,547 were damaged.

Meanwhile, power in 48 cities and municipalities has been restored. Water service is also back in three out of four cities and municipalities.

The NDRRMC said 27 cities and municipalities were declared under a state of calamity. So far, assistance worth P25 million has been provided to victims of the earthquake.

As of 10 a.m. Monday, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology recorded 2,042 aftershocks, ranging from magnitude 1.4 to 5.1.

Phivolcs earlier warned that aftershocks may occur for several days and even up to weeks.

Some 177 health facilities were affected or damaged by the earthquake that hit Abra last Wednesday, the Department of Health (DOH) said Monday.

In a CNN Philippines interview, DOH Officer-in-Charge Maria Rosario Vergeire said these facilities consist of hospitals, rural health units, barangay health stations, and city and municipality health offices.

“The one that is really badly affected is the Abra Provincial Hospital. We were able to go to this hospital easily and we were able to set up tents and deploy equipment for them,” she said.

Vergeire said that a Philippine Medical Emergency team composed of specialists from various government hospitals is already assisting the said hospital so there would be no disruption of medical services.

“We will continue to monitor them. We are going to go around these damaged facilities so that we can see how we can be able to assist, and so that repairs can be made in the facilities so they can be used again. Although they are functional, we need to restructure them and ensure that they are safe for our patients,” Vergeire added.

DOH alternate spokesperson Undersecretary Beverly Ho earlier said that they have sent trucks carrying 20 tents, 200 cot beds, hygiene kits, medicines, and other supplies to affected areas by the earthquake.

PANAY NEWS

[Opinion] Renewable energy

It was great to hear President Marcos talk about renewable energy in his State of the Nation Address. Indeed, our search for new power sources should always be with an eye to improving the mix of the energy supply between traditional and renewable sources.

Jeepney drivers are reeling from the incessant increases in the prices of fuel thus they are seeking a hike in fares. Their problem can be traced to the country being largely dependent on the importation of fossil fuels, mainly from the Middle East. When the world supply falls short – and it will fall short in due time – our country will be in big trouble if we have no other alternatives available.

There are alternative sources of energy that are already within the reach of Filipinos. Wind power, as shown in Guimaras Island and the Ilocos region, offers bright prospects. Solar energy in sun-scorched Philippines offers great potential.

We have natural gas deposits near Palawan which the national government ought not to sell to foreign interests. It may not be an inexhaustible supply but there may be enough of it to keep us going as we develop other renewable sources of energy.

We have a law promoting the use of bio-fuels. This is a step in the right direction as ethanol from sugarcane can be blended with gasoline and diesel. And we have plenty of sugarcane. Take the experience of Brazil. They made their staple crop, corn, a renewable source of alcohol for specially developed locally manufactured car engines. Today, they do not depend as much on imported oil anymore.

By exploring other renewable sources of energy right now, the country will be protected in the future from the whims of oil-exporting countries and the ever-present threat of war in the Middle East. Doing so will also be economical because renewable energy sources are always cheaper in the long run. They are environment-friendly, too, because these sources of energy do not harm the ecosystem.

With the fluctuating prices of oil in the world market, it is high time for the country to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels and focus on tapping renewable energy resources that are also environment-friendly.

We fervently hope that the Marcos administration succeed in this regard.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

US Senate Democrats hope for green light on \$430 billion climate, drug bill

By Reuters

Washington — U.S. Senate Democrats on Monday were awaiting a ruling from the chamber referee this week on whether they can override the legislature's normal rules to pass a \$430 billion drugs, energy and tax bill despite Republican objections.

The decision by the referee, officially known as the "parliamentarian," will have a profound impact on President Joe Biden's domestic agenda heading into the Nov. 8 midterm elections, when Republicans are favored to win back control of the House of Representatives and perhaps the Senate amid voter discontent over inflation.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer on Monday confirmed that he planned to begin debate this week.

Under the "reconciliation" procedure Democrats are hoping to use to pass the bill, only a simple majority of votes in the 100-member chamber would be needed to steer the bill towards passage, instead of the 60 needed for most legislation.

With the Senate split 50-50 among Democrats and Republicans, the process would allow for passage as Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris could break any tie vote and secure a victory for Biden.

The bill being reviewed by the Senate parliamentarian was crafted by Democratic Senator Joe Manchin, who has often stood in the way of key Biden priorities, and with the blessing of Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer.

Still unknown, however, is whether Democratic Senator Krysten Sinema, like Manchin a maverick in the caucus, will lend her support.

A Sinema spokesperson said she was still reviewing the bill and would also wait to see which provisions, if any, the parliamentarian allows to stay in the bill.

Without Sinema's vote the entire effort could be doomed, as no Republicans were expected to vote yes on what Democrats are calling the "Inflation Reduction Act of 2022."

It would provide new federal funding for a significant reduction in U.S. carbon dioxide emissions that contribute to climate change and allow Medicare, the federal health insurance program for the elderly and disabled, to negotiate lower pharmaceutical prices. Tax increases aimed at the wealthy would partially offset the costs, with lower drug prices also saving the government money, the bill's backers say.

But Republicans have been attacking the measure, arguing it will violate a Biden pledge to not raise taxes on those earning less than \$400,000 annually. Senator Mike Crapo, top Republican on the Senate Finance Committee, criticized the bill as he released an analysis he requested from the Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT), a nonpartisan congressional panel.

The JCT report said the bill's tax provisions would indirectly raise the effective tax burden on Americans with incomes of \$200,000 or less, by \$16.7 billion in 2023.

The tax burden effect in the JCT analysis is due to small estimated reductions of incomes from potential wage cuts that could result from companies' higher tax bills, or lower stock values, said Kimberly Clausing, a tax law professor at the University of California-Los Angeles and a former U.S. Treasury tax official.

The legislation would raise the tax burden by another \$14.1 billion on taxpayers with annual incomes of between \$200,000 and \$500,000, according to the JCT analysis.

Democrats on the finance committee, which oversees tax policy, say the analysis is "incomplete."

"A family making less than \$400,000 will not pay one penny in additional taxes," Ashley Schapitl, spokeswoman for the Senate Finance Committee Democrats, said in a statement. "It doesn't include the benefits to middle-class families of making health insurance premiums and prescription drugs more affordable. The same goes for clean energy incentives for families."

RAPPLER

Abra delaying school opening due to earthquake damage

Manila, Philippines – Abra province will delay the opening of classes for school year 2022-2023 due to the big number of schools destroyed or damaged by the July 27 magnitude 7 earthquake, the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council announced during a briefing on Sunday, July 31.

The PDRRMC released an order reiterating Governor Dominic Valera’s July 27 executive order, suspending classes in all levels at private and public schools.

It ordered the resumption of work in government offices on Monday, August 1, but asked that provincial units use temporary spaces until safety inspectors green light the use of their buildings and offices.

The PDRRMC order suspending classes also covers remedial sessions for students who have fallen behind in the remote or blended mode of education implemented during more than two years of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The province has not announced a date for school opening. An order by Department Education Secretary and Vice President Sara Duterte set the school opening nationwide on August 22.

The Abra disaster body said the extent of damage to the province’s schools could force the retention of modular blended, hybrid, or ed-tech modality of classes.

Duterte’s first order as education chief mandated a return to face-to-face classes beginning November 2. But a backlash from students, parents, and teachers prompted President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to call a review to allow for the blended mode in vulnerable areas.

The DepEd on Thursday, July 28, said 9,539 schools in 58 divisions in the Ilocos Region, the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) , and Cagayan Valley sustained damage from the earthquake.

Abra, the landlocked province at the epicenter of the quake, has reported 218 classrooms destroyed and 403 classrooms with major damage, according to the DepEd-CAR.

THE MANILA TIMES

Go makes pitch for disaster resilience agency

By Bernadette E. Tamayo

Sen. Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go cited the urgency to have his proposed measure that establishes the Department of Disaster Resilience (DDR) approved in the aftermath of the magnitude 7 earthquake that hit Northern Luzon on July 27.

Go said he will not stop pitching for the bill's passage into law. But he clarified that he will support any action of President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on the matter amid the government's plan to "rightsized" the bureaucracy.

In an interview on Sunday after providing aid to earthquake victims in Bangued and Lagangilang towns in Abra, he said he is agreeable to the creation of a smaller office if the establishment of a DDR is not feasible.

Go refiled Senate Bill (SB) 188, establishing the DDR, a highly specialized agency that will ensure adaptive, disaster-resilient and safe communities.

He said the DDR will bring together all essential functions and mandates scattered among various disaster-related agencies.

"We should have a Cabinet-secretary level department that can coordinate [disaster preparedness and relief operations]," Go said.

While he agrees with the elimination of non-functioning roles in government offices, Go said a disaster resilience department is necessary because of the country's vulnerability to natural disasters.

Under SB 188, an Integrated Disaster Resilience Information System will be set up to serve as a database of all relevant disaster risk reduction and climate change information.

It also seeks the establishment of a Humanitarian Assistance Action Center, a one-stop shop for the processing and release of goods, equipment and services, to guarantee the timely delivery of assistance to disaster-stricken areas.

It provides for remedial measures for areas under a state of calamity, such as the imposition of price ceiling on basic necessities and prime commodities, programming or reprogramming of funds for the repair of public infrastructure, and grant of no-interest loans by lending institutions to vulnerable groups or individuals.

PH will not rejoin ICC – Marcos

By: Kristina Maralit

THE Philippines "has no intention" of rejoining the International Criminal Court (ICC), President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. said on Monday.

The President said in a briefing on Monday that he met last week with his administration's legal team of Solicitor General Menardo Guevarra, Department of Justice (DoJ) Secretary Jesus Crispin "Boying" Remulla, and Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Juan Ponce Enrile, along with Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo and former presidential spokesman Harry Roque, an ICC-recognized lawyer who will now serve as private counsel, to discuss the international tribunal's plan to reopen its investigation of the Duterte government's bloody campaign against illegal drugs.

P243.33-M worth of irrigation projects - NIA

Ateneo opens undergraduate application for AY 2023-2024

Bill Russell, NBA star and civil rights pioneer, dies at 88

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The President said in a briefing on Monday that he met last week with his administration's legal team of Solicitor General Menardo Guevarra, Department of Justice (DoJ) Secretary Jesus Crispin "Boying" Remulla, and Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Juan Ponce Enrile, along with Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo and former presidential spokesman Harry Roque, an ICC-recognized lawyer who will now serve as private counsel, to discuss the international tribunal's plan to reopen its investigation of the Duterte government's bloody campaign against illegal drugs.

"Sinasabi ngayon na itutuloy ang imbestigasyon. Sinasabi naman namin may imbestigasyon naman dito at patuloy rin naman ang imbestigasyon. Bakit magkakaroon ng ganoon (ICC is saying now that the investigation will continue. What we're saying is we have our own investigation and it's a continuing investigation. So why have another probe)," Marcos said.

He said the choice is whether the Philippines will respond or not to the ICC request.

Another option is to fully ignore the ICC's request, he said.

The President called for the meeting more than a week after the international court urged the Philippines to reply to the ICC prosecutor's request to reopen the probe into the killings attributed to the war on drugs.

At least 12,000 persons were killed during the crackdown, and 2,500 of the killings were attributed to the Philippine National Police (PNP).

Human rights groups have accused former president Rodrigo Duterte of sanctioning extra-judicial killings.

The ICC gave the country until September 8 to comment on its request.

Marcos said a response to ICC needed to be carefully studied.

"I said you have to thoroughly study the procedure so that we do the right thing. Our actions might be misinterpreted, so we must clarify what really needs to be done, who to write, what should be written down," the President said.

On March 17, 2018, Duterte ordered the withdrawal of the Philippines from the Rome Statute just weeks after former ICC chief prosecutor Fatou Bensouda announced that the body has begun a preliminary examination into the Duterte administration's alleged crimes against humanity committed during his campaign against illegal drugs.

The Rome Statute, signed in 1998, gives the ICC authorization to investigate crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes and crimes against aggression committed in the territory of the signatories.

The Philippines is a signatory to the statute.

After cutting off ties with the ICC, Duterte warned that any foreign entity who will act "beyond bounds of the Philippine law" will be "held accountable to the highest degree."

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