



Second Week of July 2023

SLB Weekly

Bongbong Marcos signs Maharlika Investment Fund into law

LOCAL POLITICS

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. signed the controversial Maharlika Investment Fund (MIF) bill into law at the Malacañan Palace. The bill has faced widespread criticism due to concerns about potential investment pitfalls. Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel III called for a veto, citing the diversion of resources from urgent issues like education and healthcare. Despite criticism, the bill passed both chambers of Congress with an overwhelming majority, with only seven lawmakers voting against it. The MIF aims to establish a sovereign wealth fund and has been promoted as a tool for boosting investments in the country. While some politicians acknowledge the potential benefits, they also note that the positive impact may not be immediate.

Read more at:

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1802684/bongbong-marcos-signs-maharlika-investment-fund-into-law>

International Criminal Court rejects Philippine attempt to block drugs war killings probe

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has rejected the Philippine government's appeal to block an investigation into former President Rodrigo Duterte's "war on drugs." The investigation will look into possible "crimes against humanity" during Duterte's tenure, during which over 6,000 people were killed in anti-drug operations. Independent monitors suggest the actual death toll may be much higher, with most killings occurring in the poorest areas of the country. Despite the country's withdrawal from the ICC, the court retains jurisdiction over crimes committed during its membership period (2016-2019) when the investigation will focus.

Read more at:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2023/07/18/asia/philippines-icc-war-on-drugs-judgment-intl-hnk/index.html>

Catholic Church embraces varied gestures for 'Our Father' prayer, CBCP says

CHURCH

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has declared that churchgoers may use varied gestures while reciting or singing the "Our Father" prayer during Mass. The CBCP's liturgy body stated that worshippers may choose different gestures, such as raised hands, joined hands, or holding each other's hands while reciting the prayer. Archbishop Victor Bendico, chairman of the CBC Episcopal Commission on Liturgy, emphasized that the faithful can use the gesture that helps them experience and express themselves as God's children. Manila Archbishop Jose Cardinal Advincula urged respect for each person's chosen gesture, emphasizing that the Lord's Prayer is a program for Christian life based on Jesus' teachings and demands a conversion of life, leading to love for others.

Read more at:

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2023/07/15/2281293/catholic-church-embraces-varied-gestures-our-father-prayer-cbcp-says>

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5 areas selected to pilot DSWD's food stamp rollout

ECONOMY

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) launched a food stamp program in five pilot areas on July 18, including Tondo in Manila, Cagayan Valley, Bicol, Caraga, and the Bangsamoro in Mindanao. The "Walang Gutom 2027" program aims to provide food credits worth P3,000 per month for six months to 3,000 identified families in these regions, eventually providing food credits to one million food-poor households nationwide. The program will initially be funded by grants from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and support from the World Food Program.

Read more at:
<https://www.rappler.com/nation/areas-selected-dswd-launches-food-stamp-program/>

Oil spill-hit communities, advocates say crisis far from over

ENVIRONMENT

Despite efforts to siphon oil from the sunken motor tanker MT Princess Empress off Oriental Mindoro, impacts on livelihoods, welfare, and the environment remain unaddressed four months after the tanker sank. The Pola town mayor Jennifer Cruz, noted that coastlines are still not fully cleared of leaked oil, and compensation and alternative livelihood opportunities are needed for affected fishers. Advocates stressed the importance of accountability, rehabilitation plans, and prevention measures to truly resolve the crisis. Assessments found oil spill residues and tar balls along shorelines, including areas adjacent to marine protected areas. A fishing ban remains in place in Pola.

Read more at:
<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/climate-and-environment/2023/07/19/2282227/oil-spill-hit-communities-advocates-say-crisis-far-over>

Marcos told to focus on real reforms than launching 'Bagong Pilipinas' branding

SPECIAL STORY

Representatives of the Makabayan bloc have criticized President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s launch of the government branding "Bagong Pilipinas," urging him to focus on concrete reforms to address poverty and economic challenges faced by Filipinos. ACT Teachers Rep. France Castro likened the new slogan to the "Bagong Lipunan" branding used during the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr.'s regime. Gabriela Rep. Arlene Brosas emphasized the need for significant wage increases, national industrialization, and agrarian reform to achieve fundamental economic changes. Kabataan Partylist's executive vice president Renee Co warned against a perceived "scam" in the new slogan's launch, citing previous slogans like "Change is Coming" and "Bangon Bayan Muli" that lacked substantial progress in meeting people's demands.

Read more at:
<https://news.tv5.com.ph/breaking/read/new-slogan-marcos-told-to-focus-on-real-reforms-than-launching-bagong-pilipinas-branding>

Questions for Discernment

How can we, as a community, be more vigilant in how public funds are being used?

Do you think the "Walang Gutom 2023" project will provide long-term and sustainable solutions to hunger and poverty? Why or why not?

For Feedback & Suggestions

For any feedback and/or suggestions, email us at contact@slb.ph

For Link to the Full Briefer

You can also check out the SLB Briefers for this week via this [link](#).