

21 February 2023, Tuesday



**DENR**

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# Manila Standard

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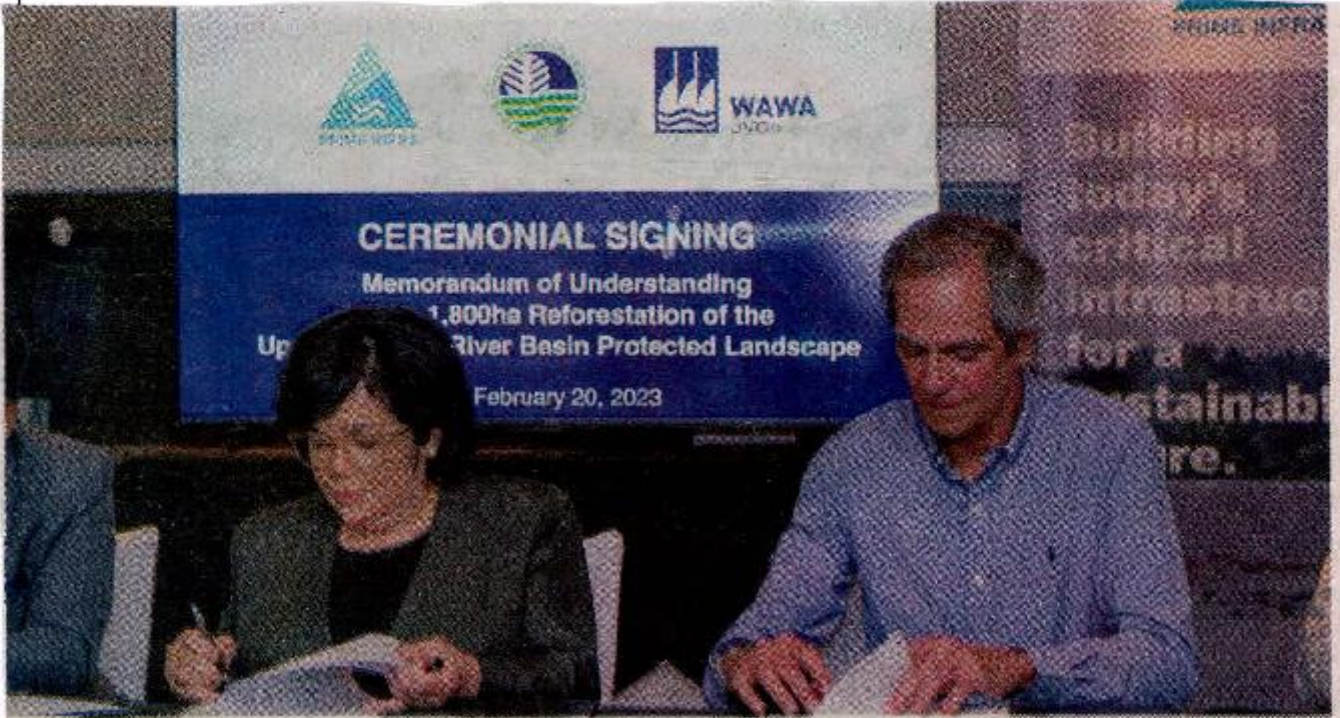
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**REFORESTATION PROGRAM.** Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga (left) and Prime Infrastructure Capital Inc. and WawaJVCo chairman Enrique Razon Jr. sign a memorandum of understanding for the reforestation of a 1,800-hectare area within the Upper Markina River Basin Protected Landscape. The milestone partnership is in line with the vision and mission of DENR and the Environmental, Social and Governance framework of Prime Infra that integrates sustainability thinking in resource management and decarbonization strategies.



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## Push for adoption of enhanced LSDF roadmap gains headway

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA  
@jonlmayuga

**T**HE new and enhanced Land Sector Development Framework and Roadmap (LSDF) 2019-2040 for efficient and effective land management in the country is getting the much-needed boost.

Together with the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) and German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)—Land Management Bureau successfully raised the pledges at the National Governance Summit held in Quezon City last month.

Lawmakers from the Senate, House of Representatives and national government agencies involved in land administration and management and various organizations attended the summit.

The enhanced LSDF—led by the Foundation for Economic Freedom (FEF) and supported by the DENR and GIZ—is a long-term strategic roadmap for the land sector that provides a relevant, responsive, holistic, and progressive approach in areas such as land administration, land information systems and management, land governance, and land valuation and market development.

In a statement, DENR Undersecretary for Legal and Administration Ernesto D. Adobo Jr. has emphasized the importance of “timely, evidence-based, and equitable policies and technology-driven” land governance amid the ever-growing population and the negative effects of climate change.

“Today, we will be looking at the improved LSDF with renewed excitement, as consultation and inputs from broader land agencies, local governments, the private sector and civil society groups have been incorporated, and its vision aligned with Ambisyon 2040,” Adobo said, referring to the framework that establishes national development goals and strategies for the next 20 years.

Anchored on the previous version of the LSDF 2010-2030, key land developments and policies, and rapid urbanization trends, the enhanced LSDF serves as a foundation to develop integrated policies for land administration and management reforms, and identify key areas of intervention and problems to be solved.

Funded under GIZ’s Responsible Land Governance in Mindanao

project, the framework underwent rigorous consultations from government and nongovernment groups, academe, professional organizations, and communities to develop an evidence-based and inclusive framework.

Lawmakers and government officials who expressed their commitment were La Union First District Rep. and House Committee on Agrarian Reform vice chairperson Francisco Paolo Ortega, Sen. Ana Theresia Navarro Hontiveros-Baraquel, Senator Raffy T. Tulfo, and Department of Finance Bureau of Local Government Finance OIC Executive Director Ma. Pamela Quizon.

Land Registration Authority Administrator Gerardo Sirios, Department of Agrarian Reform Secretary Conrado Estrella III, National Mapping and Resource Information Authority Undersecretary and Administrator Peter Tiangco, National Commission for Indigenous Peoples Chairman Allen Capuyan, Department of the Interior and Local Government Secretary Benjamin Abalos Jr., South Cotabato Governor and League of Provinces of the Philippines president Reynaldo Tanayo Jr. also conveyed their support through their representatives.

In addition, representatives from the academe, farmers and fisherfolk groups, indigenous peoples, and the urban poor, including Roel Ravanera of Xavier Science Foundation and Institute of Land Governance, Ireneo Cerilla of Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka, Ruperto Alerozo of Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Samahan sa Kanayunan, Giovanni Reyes of Bukluran, and Ruby Haddad of the Homeless People’s Federation Inc. expressed approval for the enhanced LSDF and called for more collaboration with land sector agencies.

FEF consultant Elmer Mercado said the updated version of the LSDF is broader and more comprehensive in scope as it also focuses on private land, valuation of ecological resources, alternative dispute resolution, and capacity-building of land agencies when it comes to technology.

In the areas of Land Administration, Land Management and Governance, Land Information Systems and Management, and Land Valuation and Market Development, the enhanced LSDF aims to contribute to tenure security, protection of natural resources, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and resilience.



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## DENR adopts enhanced roadmap for land sector

**By Joel dela Torre**

TWO development organizations have joined the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in leading the raising of commitments from among the land sector stakeholders to support the adoption of the "Enhanced Land Sector Development Framework and Roadmap (LSDF) 2019-2024.

The enhanced LSDF, led by the Foundation for Economic Freedom (FEF), is a long-term strategic roadmap for the land sector that provides a relevant, responsive, holistic, and progressive approach in areas such

as land administration, land information systems and management, land governance, and land valuation and market development.

It got the able support of Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) and German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) which promised all-out support to the 20-year roadmap for efficient and effective land management in the country.

In the recent National Governance Summit held in Quezon City, the DENR through the Land Management Bureau (LMB) expressed its gratitude

to the overwhelming pledges coming from stakeholders.

Those in attendance were lawmakers from the Senate and the House of Representatives, national government agencies involved in land administration and management, and various organizations.

In his keynote speech Undersecretary for Legal and Administration Ernesto D. Adobo Jr. emphasized the importance of "timely, evidence-based, and equitable policies and technology-driven" land governance amid the ever-growing population and the negative effects of climate change.

"Today, we will be looking

at the improved LSDF with renewed excitement, as consultation and inputs from broader land agencies, local governments, the private sector and civil society groups have been incorporated, and its vision aligned with Ambisyon 2040," Adobo said.

Anchored on the previous version of the LSDF 2010-2030, key land developments and policies, and rapid urbanization trends, the enhanced LSDF serves as a foundation to develop integrated policies for land administration and management reforms, and identify key areas of intervention and problems to be solved.



## Protecting, promoting forest cover important

**PRESIDENT Marcos has cited the importance of taking care of the country's forest cover to spur economic growth and development**

The President said the country's forest cover is a "very valuable asset for the Philippines".

"You can actually now monetize forest cover. You can give it a peso value, a dollar value," Marcos said. "We can take advantage of being more active in promoting and monitoring, regulating, and encouraging the care of our forest cover, of all our environmental assets. It's very, very important."

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources oversees 15 million hectares of land classified as forestlands.

In 2011, the country's forest cover was 6.8 million hectares but it increased by 5.6 percent or 7.2 million hectares, according to the recent 2020 data captured by the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority.

The DENR has already laid down strategic plans and programs for the forestry sector, which offers strong potential for driving growth to the Philippine economy.

The department also aims to establish a conducive investment climate by developing a real-time, single-point access forestry investment portal that will provide information and services about forestry investment and ready areas for development and utilization.

The portal would have links to

financial and credit facilities of partner financial institutions, including the Development Bank of the Philippines, which supports the DENR's agro-forestry plantation program.

It would also offer access to insurance packages of the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. for selected tree species in developed forest plantations.

The government would also continue promoting responsible mining to avoid a repeat of mishaps that occurred in the past, Marcos said as he acknowledged the important role of the mining sector in his administration's plan for the economy.

"And so, it is really a question of enforcing the law in terms of responsible mining and that is what we will continue to do," he said.



NOTHING FINAL YET, SAYS REMULLA

# DOJ, BUCOR: DEV'T PLANS FOR MASUNGI PROPERTY WILL BE PRO-ENVIRONMENT

By Jacob Lazaro  
and Dexter Cabalza  
@Team\_Inquirer

Justice Secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla and Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) acting Director General Gregorio Catapang Jr. assured the private caretaker of Masungi Georeserve on Monday that the development plans for the bureau's 270-hectare property within the protected area in Tanay, Rizal province, would be "pro-environment."

Catapang also said he was ready to talk to officials of the Masungi Georeserve Foundation Inc. and other environment advocates who earlier asked him to put the interest of the environment first.

"I'm very much willing to talk with them. We will sit down as soon as possible to talk about the plans for the property," he told reporters.

In a separate interview, Remulla said he had discussed the matter with Environment Secretary Toni Yulo-Loyzaga. "Secretary Loyzaga and I talked yesterday and will speak with one voice on this matter. There should be no problem. We're pro-environment, the environment is not our enemy," he stated, noting that "there are just some people who are alarmists about this."

"Don't make the mistake of thinking they are the only ones who can protect the environment; we have many others who want to protect nature," Remulla said.

According to him, they were still deciding whether to build a new prison for female offenders from Metro Manila or a new headquarters for BuCor on the Tanay property.

### Preservation

"We are exploring everything. Actually there's no final decision on that yet... but definitely, we will be needing some of the land that's not part of the reserve. But most likely we're thinking of [a prison] for young offenders or women offenders for the [National Capital Region]," Remulla said.

He clarified, however, that they would utilize only the "unused" portion of the geopark.

"What's important to Masungi is to preserve it. But the other land areas that are not being used will be used by the government," Remulla said, adding: "Even the title of Masungi belongs to the government. It's the heritage of the Filipino people, it does not belong to one foundation but to all the Filipino people."

Catapang, meanwhile, said



NEWS

## DOJ: Masungi dev't pro-environment

Justice Secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla and Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) acting Director General Gregorio Catapang Jr. said the environment would be prioritized while implementing a five-year development plan within the protected area in Tanay, Rizal. Among the structures to be built are a new BuCor headquarters, a training center and housing site for personnel.

—STORY BY JACOB LAZARO AND DEXTER CABALZA

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**PROTECTION ASSURED** The government assures the public that it will do its best to protect and preserve the Masungi Georeserve in Rizal province as it firms up plans to develop idle properties within the area. —NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

that the bureau's plan to move out of Muntinlupa City was part of the "BuCor Development and Modernization Plan 2023-2028," which he presented to reporters on Monday.

Aside from being the site of the new headquarters, the 270-ha land straddling four barangays within Tanay would also host the new Corrections National Training Institute for BuCor recruits, and a housing site for the bureau's personnel, including retirees.

A tenement-style housing was likewise being considered for around 1,000 families currently occupying idle lands on

the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) Reservation in Muntinlupa City, as well as an agro-business area.

But Catapang admitted that everything would ultimately depend on the findings of experts from the University of the Philippines' School of Urban and Regional Planning, which BuCor had asked to conduct a feasibility study.

"We will talk to them on how to best develop the area, because we also need the area [to achieve our five-year roadmap]. But it will be pro-environment, I assure you. We will not hurt our environment," he said.

Should the Department of

Environment and Natural Resources and Department of Justice (DOJ) tell him to defer his plans on the Tanay property, Catapang said he would follow.

"I have no problem with that. I am just a foot soldier. I am just an implementing arm of the DOJ. What the DOJ orders, I will just follow," he said.

BuCor acquired the right to the 270-ha property when then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed Proclamation No. 1158 on Sept. 9, 2006, designating the parcel of land as the new site for NBP.

The bureau, however, received the transfer certificate title of the property only in September last year.

Asked why he was intent on developing the Tanay property, Catapang said: "Actually I want to develop all of them (BuCor's idle lands)... We don't want these properties not to be used and neglected, and they would eventually be occupied by informal settlers, making us even lose [them]."

The bureau has yet to present its five-year development plan to President Marcos who will be asked to issue an executive order directing all national agencies and local governments to support BuCor's P177.2-billion endeavor. INQ



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# No final decision on BuCor's move to Masungi-Remulla

By JOEL R. SAN JUAN [@jrsanjuan1573](#)

**J**USTICE Secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla said on Monday there is no final decision yet on the planned relocation of the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) headquarters to a 270-hectare section of the Masungi Georeserve, a protected forest area in Rizal province.

Remulla made the statement after the plan drew criticism from environmental advocates who claim that it will damage the Upper Marikina watershed that has been under the protection of Masungi Georeserve

Foundation for several decades already.

"There should be no problem since we are proenvironment. There are people who are simply alarmist", Remulla said in an interview with reporters.

Bureau of Corrections Officer-in-Charge Gregorio Catapang Jr. also assured the public of a "environment-friendly" construction once the plan pushes through.

The BuCor plans to transfer its headquarters and Corrections National Training Institute to the said location. It also intends to build a residential area for its personnel and employees.

Its claim on the property is anchored on Proclamation 1158 issued by former President and now Senior Deputy Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, which set aside 270 hectares of the land as the new site of the NBP.

"What is important is to ensure that Masungi is preserved, but the other areas that are idle can be used by the government," Remulla said as he insisted that the title of Masungi belongs to the government.

"It's the heritage of the Filipino people. It does not belong to one foundation at all but to all the Filipino people," he said.

Earlier, Remulla defended BuCor's plan, saying the choice of location was within its mandate to improve the country's penal management system.

On the other hand, Catapang said the BuCor will consult with all stakeholders, including environment advocates to explain their plan and also hear their arguments opposing the planned relocation of the BuCor's headquarters and the setting up of a training center.

"We are very much willing to talk to all of them. We will sit down with them," he said. Catapang said he is also planning to talk to the UP School of Urban and Regional Planning on how best to develop and preserve the area.





# DoJ: Masungi government-owned

The BuCor said that it will not use the land as a prison site as it eyes to construct a new bureau headquarters and residential compound for personnel

BY ALVIN MURCIA  
*@tribunephil\_alvi*

Department of Justice Secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla on Monday stressed that the Masungi – an environmental heritage site – does not belong to one foundation, saying that government is the rightful owner of the 270-hectare land in Tanay, Rizal, where Masungi Georeserve is located.

During the culmination activity where 416 persons deprived of liberty were released Monday morning at the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa City, Remulla reminded claimants that the land is an environmental heritage and does not belong to one foundation but to all Filipinos.

He also cautioned them against laying claim over the disputed land.

To recall, the Bureau of Corrections clarified that the land was awarded to them by former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as the site for the New Bilibid Prison under Presidential Proclamation No. 1158 issued on 8 September 2006.

However, the BuCor said that it will not use the land as a prison site as it eyes to construct a new bureau headquarters and residential compound for personnel.

The land, originally belonging to the national government, was transferred to BuCor under

Transfer Certificate of Title NR. 069-20220110986 on 28 September 2022.

The controversy arose when the Masungi Georeserve Foundation Inc. claimed ownership over the land, citing agreements with former Department of Environment and Natural Resources and BuCor officials that they have the registered land title over the property.

Meantime, BuCor officer-in-charge Gregorio Catapang Jr. maintained that the BuCor is the rightful owner of the disputed land as the land title was awarded to them last September 2022.

In an interview on Monday, Catapang stressed that the bureau will continue with its plans to establish not only the BuCor headquarters on the subject property, but also other prison and penal facilities in regions where prison facilities are not yet present, as long as the title to the subject property under the name of BuCor remains valid.

He reiterated that they are also environmentalist and would not allow the area to be abused.

Those overseeing the reserve had raised the alarm that the area may be used by BuCor as a relocation site for the New Bilibid Prison presently occupying over 300 hectares of prime land in Muntinlupa City.



## DOJ: No final decision yet on BuCor transfer to Rizal

BY ASHZEL HACHERO

JUSTICE Secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla yesterday said there is no final decision yet on the planned relocation of the Bureau of Corrections headquarters to a 270-hectare section of the Masungi Georeserve, a protected forest area in Rizal province, that has earned criticisms from environmental advocates.

Remulla said the BuCor is still in the exploratory stage of the plan, with BuCor officer in charge Gregorio Catapang Jr. assuring the public that they will consult with all stakeholders and such construction would be "environment-friendly."

"Actually, wala pa namang final decision doon (Actually, there is no final decision yet on the matter). But definitely, we will be needing some of the land na hindi kasama sa reserve," Remulla told reporters in an ambush interview at the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa City after he presided over the release of over 400 inmates.

"There should be no problem since we are pro-environment. Hindi natin kalaban ang environment dito. There are people who are simply alarmists," he added.

He said the DOJ is allowing BuCor to explore all possibilities, adding that his office is not micro-managing the latter on the issue, even though it is an attached agency.

Remulla said what is important is that the 350-hectare Masungi geopark is preserved in the event the BuCor's plan pushes through.

Remulla had earlier defended the BuCor's plan, saying the choice of location was within its mandate to improve the country's penal management system.

Remulla added the proposed transfer was in line with the plan of the DOJ to build regional prison facilities in order to decongest the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa City, the site of the current BuCor headquarters.

Catapang assured the public that the plan to relocate the BuCor headquarters and set up a training center in the area will not ruin the

reserve's environment. He also clarified that the BuCor will not put up a prison facility in the area.

Catapang said the BuCor will consult with all stakeholders, including environment advocates to explain their plan and hear their arguments opposing the planned relocation of the BuCor's headquarters and the setting up of a training center.

He said he also plans to talk to the UP School of Urban and Regional Planning on how best to develop and preserve the area.

### ARROYO PROCLAMATION

Catapang also explained the plan to put up a facility in the area comes from Proclamation No.1158 signed by former president Gloria Mapapagal Arroyo.

The proclamation reserved some 270 hectares in Barangay Cuyambay, Tanay, Rizal as "a new site of the New Bilibid Prison and field office site of DENR-Calabarzon"

It allocates 30 hectares of the area to the DENR Calabarzon field office.

Catapang said he only learned of Arroyo's proclamation days after he was appointed by Remulla to take over as BuCor chief in an acting capacity in October 2022 after its chief, Gerald Bantag, was tagged as the alleged mastermind in the killing of veteran radio broadcaster Percival "Percy Lapid" Mabasa and Bilibid inmate Cristito Palana Villamor alias Jun Villamor, the alleged middleman in Lapid's ambush-slay.

The Masungi Georeserve Foundation Inc. (MGFI), the government-designated caretaker of the area since 2017, earlier appealed to Catapang to "reconsider" the relocation plan. MGFI also pointed out that the proposed site was mountainous and not suitable for building offices or housing facilities.

The group also called on President Marcos Jr. and Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga to intervene in the brewing dispute.



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## Remulla: Masungi Georeserve 'will be protected'

By Rey E. Requejo

DEPARTMENT of Justice (DOJ) Secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla on Monday assured that the Masungi Georeserve in Tanay, Rizal will be protected.

"We are pro-environment. The environment is not our enemy. It seems that there are just some people who are alarmist about the matter," Remulla said, in an interview.

The protection of the park was assured by Remulla after the Masungi Georeserve Foundation aired its concerns on the plans of the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) to relocate its Headquarters and erect housing

for its personnel in the Georeserve.

He also said that the BuCor has a title for certain portions of georeserve park.

"What is important is for Masungi to be preserved and the other unused areas are used by the government," he stressed.

According to him, Masungi is "the heritage of the Filipino people" and "does not belong to one foundation at all but to all the Filipino people."

"These people should not make the mistake that they are the only ones who can protect the environment. There are a lot of people who want to protect the environment," he stressed.

Remulla revealed that he has talked with Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga on the issue. "We will speak in one voice on this matter," he said.

At the same time, Remulla explained that it is not yet certain if the proposal of the BuCor to relocate its headquarters and put up housing for its personnel at the property in Tanay will push through.

"It's not yet sure. It is still being explored," he said, adding that they are also looking into using the property to house youth or female offenders from the National Capital Region (NCR).



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## NATIONWIDE ROUNDUP

### BuCor to tap UP planning experts for proposed HQ inside Masungi reserve

THE BUREAU of Corrections (BuCor) plans to tap experts from the University of the Philippines (UP) School of Urban and Regional Planning for its proposed new headquarters (HQ) within a 270-hectare section of the Masungi Georeserve, the country's prison chief said on Monday.

"We also need the area, but it will be pro-environment I assure you," BuCor Director General Gregorio P. Catapang told a livestreamed news briefing in mixed English and Filipino.

"We will not cause harm to the environment," he said.

The Masungi Georeserve — located in Baras, a town just east of Metro Manila — is a conservation area and park. An ongoing reforestation project in the area is positioned to protect the Upper Marikina Watershed, which is critical to protecting the capital region from flooding.

Mr. Catapang said their construction plan, which will be subject to consultation with the university's experts, includes the development of farmlands to boost food security in the country.

In a statement last week, the Masungi Georeserve Foundation said the prison relocation project went against the nation's sustainable development agenda. It also said the area supposedly awarded to BuCor is "mountainous and geologically unbuildable." — **John Victor D. Ordoñez**

### Senate panel to recommend CAAP exemption from some gov't rules

THE CIVIL Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) will be recommended for exemption from some government rules to allow it to offer more competitive pay for critical positions and improve overall efficiency, a Senate panel chair said on Monday.

Senator Mary Grace S. Poe-Llamanzares, who heads the committee on public services, said their report on the investigation into the Jan. 1 airport system glitch will include recommendations on CAAP's exemption from regulations on salary standardization and revenue spending for equipment and services.

The report will be released by next week, she said in a statement on Monday.

Ms. Poe-Llamanzares said there is also a suggestion to create another agency that will handle some of CAAP's responsibilities.

"There's a proposal to put up an airport authority just like the ports authority, so that CAAP will not be operating and doing the policies for running the airport at the same time," she said.

The report will center on the panel's findings into the cause of the incident, recommendations to remedy the system, and possible liabilities for negligence and incompetence in managing the system's maintenance. — **Alyssa Nicole O. Tan**

### House leaders back RCEP ratification

HOUSE leaders have joined calls for the immediate ratification of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), citing its benefits to the Philippine economy.

"By immediately ratifying the RCEP Agreement, the Philippines can sooner benefit and take the advantages of this mega-trade deal that could attract more foreign investors, create more job opportunities, and curb the unemployment and poverty rates in the country," Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez said in a statement on Monday.

Mr. Romualdez is one of the principal authors of House Resolution No. 728, which supports the Senate's ratification of RCEP.

Senate President Juan Miguel F. Zubiri previously said the upper chamber is expected to ratify the agreement this quarter.

The RCEP is a free trade agreement that aims to foster economic trade and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. Its participants are the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member-states, China, Australia, New Zealand, and South Korea.

The Foundation for Economic Freedom said in a statement on Monday that participating in the RCEP can increase the Philippines' overall welfare by \$541.2 million, ensure a 1.93% real gross development product growth, and decrease poverty incidence by 3.62% in 2030.

Agriculture stakeholders, however, said Filipino farmers are at risk as they would not be able to compete because of insufficient resources. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

### FULL ROUNDUP

Read the full story by typing the link  
< [bit.ly/BWTtheNation](https://bit.ly/BWTtheNation) >



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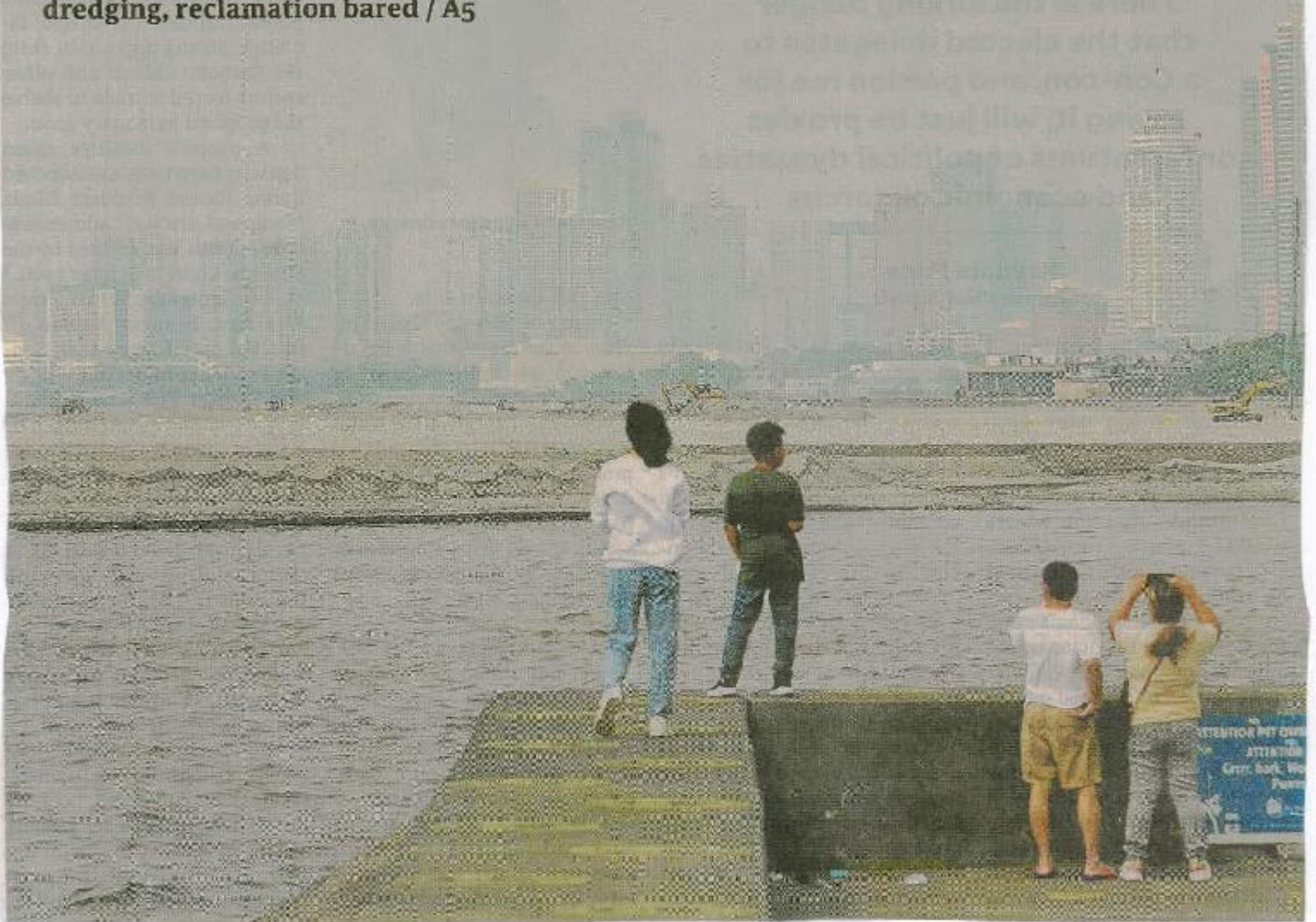
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# CHANGING SKYLINE

Adverse impact of Manila Bay  
dredging, reclamation bared / A5



**UNFAMILIAR TERRAIN** Manila Bay has become an unfamiliar landscape to longtime residents of the national capital as dredging and reclamation activities continue. Once development is finished, this portion of the bay in Pasay City near shopping malls and hotels will alter Metro Manila's skyline.—RICHARD A. REYES



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BIGGER WAVES, DWINDLING FISH CATCH

## ADVERSE IMPACT OF MANILA BAY DREDGING, RECLAMATION BARED

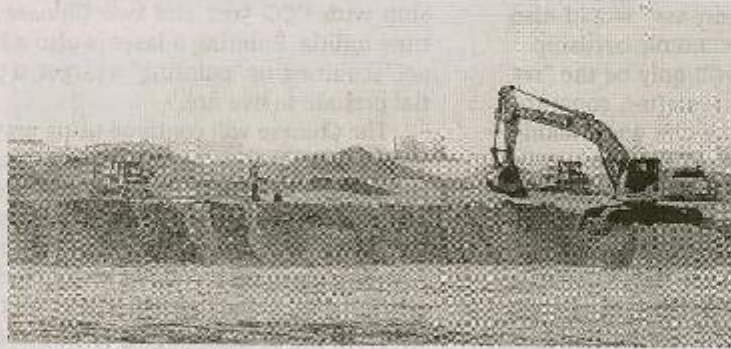
By Jane Bautista  
@janebautistaINQ

The dredging activities in Manila Bay have resulted in bigger waves and increased tidal currents affecting the catch of fishermen in Cavite province, according to a fisherfolk group.

The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Pamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) on Monday said the ongoing dredging activities in the towns of Ternate, Naic and Rosario in Cavite, have disrupted and driven away fish while pollution and stressors have caused a drastic decline in fish stocks.

The group has officially written Demosthenes Escoto, officer in charge of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), to appeal for a dialogue to discuss the adverse impact of the dredging activities in the bay.

"We want to get the commitment of BFAR on this particular issue that we will present to them. The said agency has a responsibility to secure our fishing grounds and municipal fisherfolk," Aries Soledad, provincial coordinator of Pamalakaya-Cavite, said in a statement.



LAND AHOY! Bulldozers and backhoes are seen at a reclamation project along Manila Bay in Pasay City near SM Mall of Asia and behind Seascape Village and Sofitel. —RICHARD A. REYES

In 2021, the group also opposed the P12-billion project between the government and Silverquest Mining Resources Inc. for seabed quarrying covering 2,124 hectares of municipal waters off Ternate and Naic.

Pamalakaya said they resisted the project as it involved dredging of mud, silt, sand and other quarry materials for the 318-ha Manila Waterfront Project in the City of Manila.

Pamalakaya is also planning to share incidents of fishing nets being hauled by dredging equipment along with the sand.

"Other issues to be raised by

Pamalakaya in the dialogue with BFAR include the effects of reclamation projects to the marine and fishery resources in the entire Manila Bay and the Fisheries Code's burdening provisions against municipal fisherfolk," it said.

### Illegal activities

As this developed, the National Coast Watch Center (NCWC), an inter-agency maritime surveillance and coordination unit, has flagged the alleged illegal activities of Chinese vessels operating dredgers in Manila Bay and rivers in Zambales where they dredge

sand and transport it to the reclamation areas in Manila Bay.

The NCWC has listed "suspicious activities" of the Chinese dredgers that were found to be "operating outside their approved areas of operation" issued by the Maritime Industry Authority.

In its special report, the NCWC also noted that the Chinese dredgers were operating without clearance from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), no environmental compliance certificate from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)-Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), no memorandum of agreement between the DENR and the dredging company, no accreditation from the DENR-MGB and no ore transport permit.

Another violation flagged by the NCWC was that the Chinese dredgers had been operating with false Automatic Identification System (AIS) to properly monitor and record their exact movements inside Philippine territorial waters, and that they turned off their AIS during operation and while berthed. **INQ**



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## Marina probes illegal Chinese dredgers

By EMMIE V. ABADILLA

The Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) is conducting a probe on six Chinese vessels after inter-agency maritime surveillance from the National Coast Watch Center (NCWC) alerted the agency about "suspicious" dredging outside the ships' permitted areas in Manila Bay.

Earlier, the NCWC, led by the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), reported that the Chinese vessels were operating without a dredging clearance from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

Also, the vessels don't even have an Environmental Compliance Certificate from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)-Mines and Geosciences

Bureau (MGB).

The NCWC confirmed that the Chinese dredgers have no Memorandum of Agreement with the DENR and no accreditation from the MGB.

Furthermore, the Chinese dredgers failed to secure a "No Objection Clearance" from the Office of the National Security Adviser, according to Marina.

"Based on the special report of NCWC, the foreign vessels were allegedly engaged in suspicious activities and were observed to be operating outside their approved areas of operation as against the issued special permit by Marina," the agency stated in its report.

In addition to these issues, the Chinese dredgers are operating with

false Automatic Identification System (AIS) which allows maritime authorities to monitor and record the exact movements of the ships inside Philippine territorial waters.

However, the Chinese vessels turned off their AIS during operation and while berthed.

The Chinese vessels dredge sand in Manila Bay and in rivers in Zambales then transport the sand to the first phase of the Pasay reclamation project between the SM Smart City Infrastructure Development Corp. and China Harbor Engineering Corp.

Once Marina finds the vessels guilty of violations, the agency will revoke their special permits and impose the corresponding sanctions and penalties.



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# Marina sanctions illegal Chinese dredger linked to Manila Bay reclamation project

BY LORENZ S. MARASIGAN [@lorenzmarasigan](#)

**T**HE Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) has imposed fines and sanctions against the Chinese dredgers that allegedly conducted "illegal activities" in Manila Bay and rivers in Zambales, a government official said.

In a text message to the BUSINESS-MIRROR, Marina National Capital Region Director Marc Anthony Pascua said the agency has conducted an investigation into the report submitted by the National Coast Watch Center (NCWC) and has taken action against the alleged perpetrators.

"Those vessels were already investigated by the Marina. We have

already issued show-cause orders, and they were accordingly penalized. Further, these vessels have already settled their penalties," he said.

The NCWC earlier flagged Chinese vessels that allegedly conducted dredging and transport of reclamation sand to reclamation areas in Manila Bay.

The report listed "suspicious ac-

tivities of the Chinese dredgers that were found to be operating outside their approved areas of operation as against the issued Special Permit" from Marina.

NCWC is an inter-agency maritime surveillance and coordinated unit led by the Philippine Coast Guard. It is attached under the Office of the President through the Office of the Executive Secretary.

NCWC also noted that Chinese dredgers were allegedly "operating without a dredging clearance" from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), "had no Environmental Compliance Certificate" from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Mines and Geosciences Bureau (DENR-MGB), "had no memorandum of agreement" between the DENR and the dredging company, "had no accreditation" from the DENR-MGB, "had no ore transport permit" from the

DENR-MGB, and "had no" Notice To Proceed for their operations.

The NCWC also asserted that the Chinese dredgers allegedly failed to secure a "No Objection Clearance" from the Office of the National Security Adviser. It also flagged the said dredgers of "operating with false Automatic Identification System [AIS]," which essentially allows the authorities to properly monitor and record their exact movements inside Philippine territorial waters.

Allegedly, they turned off their AIS during operation and while berthed, according to the NCWC.

"The Marina would also like to reiterate that vessels whose Special Permits have been revoked and have paid the corresponding penalties may nonetheless apply for another permit so long as they are going to comply with the requirements of the relevant Marina Circular," Pascua said.





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# 'Illegal' dredgers penalized — Marina

## *Fined P1 million for operating vessels outside approved areas*

BY MARIA ROMERO AND RAFFY AYENG

The Maritime Industry Authority on Monday said foreign vessels doing suspicious activities in Philippine Waters have been penalized to

protect local resources from any possible intrusion.

Marina made the clarification after the National Coast Watch Center or NCWC, an inter-agency maritime surveillance unit under

the Office of the Executive Secretary, flagged the "suspicious activities" of Chinese dredgers allegedly operating illegally in Manila Bay and rivers in Zambales.

The NCWC said in a special report

that the Chinese workers had been "operating outside their approved areas" in violation of the special permit granted them by the Marina.

"These vessels were already

investigated by the Marina. We have already issued show-cause orders and [they] were accordingly penalized. Further, these vessels have already settled their penalties," Marina National Capital Region Director Engr. Marc Anthony Pascua said in a text message to the *Daily Tribune* on Monday.

In an interview later, Pascua said that based on a memorandum circular released by Marina last 7 February, the Chinese dredgers were fined P1 million for operating the vessels out of line and in violation of the special permits given to them.

On the other hand, the Chinese worker's agents were also fined P170,000.

"These Chinese workers paid their fines two weeks after the decision was released," he said.

Further, it said that accordingly, the respondent submits to the payment of the penalty for the violation committed and begs the indulgence of Marina to allow its Special Permit to remain valid.

"In view of the foregoing, we now resolve the case. The alleged violation was not only established to have been committed by the respondent by the Special Report of this Authority's Enforcement Service, but also by the respondent's admission thereof," the decision said.

"The Marina would also like to reiterate that vessels whose Special Permits have been revoked and have paid the corresponding penalties may nonetheless apply for another permit so long as they are going to comply with the requirements of the relevant Marina Circular," Pascua added.

NCWC claimed the Chinese were operating without clearances and permits from, among other agencies, the public works and environment departments, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, and the Office of the National Security Adviser.

**The Chinese dredgers were fined P1 million for operating the vessels out of line and in violation of the special permits given to them.**

The Chinese dredgers have also been operating with a false automatic identification system, the NCWC report said, and at times turning them off so Philippine authorities could not track their movements and locations.

The dredgers were operating without the



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following according to NCWC: Clearance from the Department of Public Works and Highways; environmental compliance certificate from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-MGB; memorandum of agreement with the DENR; accreditation from the DENR-MGB; ore transport permit and a notice to proceed from the DENR-MGB.

The NCWC also asserted that the Chinese dredgers failed to secure a "no objection clearance" from the Office of the National Security Adviser.

Per a Marina resolution, Chinese vessels and their crew are not allowed to do business in local waters unless they secure a special permit from the agency.

As such, Pascua said Marina, an agency mandated to develop and regulate the maritime industry, is on full alert for any intrusion of giant dredging vessels that may endanger both local maritime resources and workers.

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## MARINA slaps fines on Chinese vessels operating in Manila Bay

By Darwin G. Amojelar

THE Maritime Industry Authority said Monday said it penalized Chinese vessels that were allegedly engaged in "suspicious" activities in Manila Bay.

MARINA NCR regional director Marc Anthony Pascua told reporters in a text message that the agency issued show cause orders, and "they [Chinese vessels] were accordingly penalized."

Pascua said the vessels had settled the penalties.

"The MARINA would also like to reiterate that our decisions are without prejudice from them to re-file or operate again, provided that they will settle their penalties, and that they have valid permits to operate," he said.

The National Coast Watch Center, an inter-agency maritime surveillance and coordinated response facility, earlier asked MARINA to investigate several foreign vessels that were allegedly engaged on "suspicious activities" and were observed to be operating outside their approved areas of operation as against the special permit issued by the

maritime authority.

The NCWC, led by the Philippine Coast Guard, earlier reported that the Chinese vessels were operating without a dredging clearance from the Department of Public Works and Highways and no environmental compliance certificate from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

NCWC also said the Chinese dredgers had no memorandum of agreement with the DENR and no accreditation from the MGB.

"The NCWC also asserted that the Chinese dredgers allegedly failed to secure a 'No Objection Clearance' from the Office of the National Security Adviser," MARINA said.

Another issue flagged by the NCWC was that the Chinese dredgers had been operating with false Automatic Identification System which allows the authorities to properly monitor and record their exact movements inside Philippine territorial waters, and that they turned off their AIS during operation and while berthed.



## Sanctions imposed on Chinese dredgers in Manila Bay, Zambales – Marina

BY MYLA IGLESIAS

THE Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) yesterday said it has imposed sanctions against the Chinese dredgers that allegedly conducted illegal activities in Manila Bay and rivers in the province of Zambales.

MARINA has investigated the report of the National Coast Watch Center (NCWC) that several foreign vessels have supposedly been engaged in suspicious activities and have been observed to be operating outside their approved areas of operation covered under special permits issued by the agency.

“Those vessels were already investigated by the Marina. We have already issued show-cause orders and we have accordingly penalized (them). Further, those vessels have already settled their penalties,” said Marc Anthony Pascua, director of Marina’s National Capital Region (NCR).

Pascua said vessels whose special permits have been revoked and have paid the corresponding penalties may apply for new permits as long as they comply with the requirements of relevant MARINA circulars.

NCWC, an inter-agency maritime surveillance and coordinated response facility, has said that

Chinese dredgers were operating without a dredging clearance from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), have no Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Mines and Geosciences Bureau (DENR-MGB), have no memorandum of agreement with the DENR, have no accreditation from the DENR-MGB, have no ore transport permit from the DENR-MGB and, have no notice to proceed for their operations.

The Chinese dredgers also supposedly failed to secure a “No Objection Clearance” from the Office of the National Security Adviser.



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## 200,000 sign online petition vs Kaliwa Dam

THE online petition urging President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to stop the construction of Kaliwa Dam has so far gathered 200,000 signatures.

Stop Kaliwa Dam project convenor and Save Sierra Madre Network Inc. Executive Director Convenor Conrad Vargas said that the seven-day "Alay Lakad" which started last Feb. 15, 2023, will end Wednesday in Malacañang. The group aims to gather 500,000 signatures by Feb. 23, 2023.

"Our online signature petition to

stop Kaliwa Dam has reached 200,000. It coincided with the arrival of our members of indigenous group Dumagat-Remontado who have walked for nine days," Vargas said.

According to the online petition, the 2019 water crisis was used to expedite the approval of the project.

"We stand against the Kaliwa Dam project because this project will affect the ancestral forests where 5,000 Dumagat-Remontados reside in the Sierra Madre, and submerge at least six

sacred sites," it said.

It added that the Kaliwa Dam will destroy the biodiversity and habitat of 126 species, submerge 291 hectares of forests, and endanger 100,000 residents downstream with the risk of massive flooding.

"We thus call on President Marcos and all government leaders to revoke the Kaliwa Dam project in this rapidly changing climate. We believe that this project will not address the problem but also make conditions worse for

the Philippines. Alternative water solutions that are practical, long-term and more sustainable have been offered by various experts. We urge the Philippine government to invest in these long-term, better solutions for all," the group said.

Vargas contradicted the claim of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System that the Kaliwa Dam project got the approval of the affected indigenous peoples in the area.

**BELLA CARIASO**



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## Free patent land title

Dear Atty. Chris Liquigan,

I have been residing within a residential lot for 13 years already. Lately, I learned that the lot is untitled. Can I apply for the title of the lot? Will my years of stay matter? Thank you, Attorney.



Grace



LEGAL FORUM  
ATTY. JOJI ALONSO  
& ASSOCIATES

Dear Grace,

For your information, the law that addresses your situation is Republic Act 10023, otherwise known as "An Act Authorizing the Issuance of Free Patents to Residential Lots."

The Act provides the following:

"Section 1. Qualifications. — Any Filipino citizen who is an actual occupant of residential land may apply for a Free Patent Title under this Act. Provided that in highly urbanized cities, the land should not exceed 200 square meters; in other cities, it should not exceed 500 square meters; in first class and second class municipalities, it should not exceed 750 square meters; and in all other municipalities, it should not exceed 1,000 square meters. Provided, further, that the land applied for is not needed for public service and/or public use."

"Section 3. Application. — The application on the land applied for shall be supported by a map based on an actual survey conducted by a licensed geodetic engineer and approved by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and a technical description of the land applied for together with supporting affidavit of two disinterested persons who are residing in the barangay of the city or municipality where the land is located, attesting to the truth of the facts contained in the application to the effect that the applicant thereof has, either by himself or through his predecessor-in-interest, actually resided on and continuously possessed and occupied, under a bona fide claim of acquisition of ownership, the land applied for at least 10 years and has complied with the requirements prescribed in Section 1 hereof."

It is clear from the cited provision that a Filipino citizen, who is an actual occupant of a residential lot not exceeding 750 square meters in municipalities, may apply for free patent title. Thus, you may secure a free patent title of your residential lot as long as you comply with the requirements of Section 3 as above stated.

Hope this helps.

Atty. Chris Liquigan



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# CAGAYAN COUNCIL INTENSIFIES FIGHT VERSUS ILLEGAL LOGGING

**TUGUEGARAO CITY:** The Cagayan Valley Regional Law Enforcement Council (Relec) has intensified its monitoring and surveillance operations against illegal forest activities particularly in "hot spot areas" in Region 2 (Cagayan Valley).

Relec Chairman Gwendolyn Bambalan has recently convened the council and underscored the importance of trees in ensuring the sustainability of all life forms and in mitigating global warming.

Bambalan said there is a need to focus their operations in the towns of Baggao and Peñablanca in Cagayan province and Jones in Isabela province.

"While we cannot avoid apprehending and confiscating unauthorized forest products passing through the region, it is best to stop cutting down trees in the forest," said Bambalan, who is also the Department of Environment

and Natural Resources (DENR) Region 2 executive director.

During the meeting, DENR Enforcement Division chief Joel Daquioag presented their accomplishments for 2022, including 105 joint apprehensions by the DENR and Philippine National Police (PNP) and a total confiscation of 59,218.44 board feet of forest products and 41 conveyances.

To renew the commitment of council members to this year's forest protection and law enforcement implementation programs, DENR Region 2 legal chief Richard Jayson Garan presented and facilitated the review of duties and responsibilities of council members to include the Philippine Air Force and Land Transportation Office.

Bambalan also recommended a review of DENR policies through the conduct of reorientation

on DENR Administrative Order (DAO) 97-32 known as "1997 Rules for the Administrative Adjudication of Illegal Forest Products and the Machinery, Equipment, Tools and Conveyances used in Connection Therewith."

She said they will be inviting all chiefs of police and representatives from the different municipalities and cities in Cagayan Valley which comprises the provinces of Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino and Batanes.

According to Bambalan, the inclusion of Relec activities in the Regional Development Council Sub-Committee has been proposed to the council.

"This is to further discuss a strategic mechanism to curb illegal forest activities," she said.

Also at the meeting were DENR Region 2 Assistant Executive Director for Technical Services

Marcos Dacanay, who discussed the meeting's objectives, and lawyer Johnlee Rumusud of the DENR Legal Division, who explained the salient features of DAO 97-32.

It was in 2020 when Relec was established under a memorandum of agreement among the regional heads of concerned national agencies and the religious sector, including the DENR, PNP, Philippine Coast Guard, Philippine Information Agency, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Department of Justice, National Bureau of Investigation, and the Archdiocese of Tuguegarao.

"The creation of this council aims to protect and conserve our trees. The council members play a vital role in protecting our forests," Bambalan said.

**LEANDER C. DOMINGO**



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## Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino get P80-M facilities to mitigate climate change risks

TWO provinces in the Cagayan Valley region in northeastern Philippines have received P80 million worth of support facilities to mitigate risks from climate change and natural disaster.

The provinces of Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino received the agroforestry support facilities through a joint project of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

"I hope that you are now more capable and empowered, ready to sustain our efforts in conserving our forest, protecting our environment, and mitigating climate change and disaster risks," JICA Senior Representative Ido Saichiro said during the turnover ceremony, based on a press release from the agency.

The facilities are part of the Forestland Management Project, an 11-year

program that seeks to conserve forests in the river basins of Upper Magat and Cagayan, Pampanga, and Jalaur, according to JICA.

JICA and DENR are using community-based forestland management strategies for the project, which includes partnering with and assisting people's organizations (POs) for their enterprises.

"The project also assisted their 45 partner people's organizations in said

provinces in developing their enterprises. They have been working also on agroforestry value chain for coffee and high value fruits, which is expected to generate further incomes for farmers," JICA said.

The Forestland Management Project has so far developed 71,300 hectares of tree and agroforestry plantations, which are being maintained and protected by partner POs.





## 3 environment-friendly port terminals in Luzon set for inauguration – PPA

By AARON B. RECUENCO

The Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) will be inaugurating environment-friendly port terminals around the country in March this year, including one in Calapan City in Oriental Mindoro which will be the country's biggest Passenger Terminal Building (PTB).

Aside from the PTB in Calapan City, PPA General Manager Jay Santiago said they will also inaugurate next month the new Port Operations Building (POB) in Masbate and the new PTB in Coron, Palawan.

The Port Operations Building in Masbate will be inaugurated on March 8 while the Port Operations Building in Palawan on March 15.

On the other hand, the Passenger Terminal Building in Calapan City will be inaugurated on March 21.

"The public can expect that these three activities will happen within the first three weeks of March (2023) because we intend to make all of them operational just before the Holy Week," said Santiago in a press briefing on Monday, Feb. 20.

The construction of the three major terminals in Luzon is expected to be a big relief to hundreds of thousands of ship and ferry passengers who go on exodus during long weekends, including Holy

Week, All Saints' and All Souls' Days, and Christmas season, to be with their family or take advantage of the long break for a family or vacation with friends.

Santiago said that in the construction of port terminals, they made sure that it goes with the current trend of being environment-friendly.

The lighting for instance, he said, would use LED lights which means reduction of power consumption from regular electricity sources.

He said the design also includes efficiency in the air conditioning system and soon, he said, they would push for the use of solar power in all port terminals.

"Fifty percent of the terminals now are constructed with resilient and weather proof glass, so that the lighting would not be expensive in electric consumption. And we also call this waste water in our terminal operations, we're improving our water treatment," said Santiago.

Santiago also disclosed that in the construction of new terminals with new and environment-friendly design, all of them were developed by PPA architects and engineers.

"We do not get foreign consultants to design our terminals, we made sure that they are all home-grown talent," said Santiago.



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## Replicating Marikina bamboo projects to solve flooding woes

By **CORY MARTINEZ**

**THE 20-hectare Karugo and 10-hectare Puray bamboo projects in Marikina Watershed must be replicated nationwide to prevent flooding.**

This was the proposal of the Philippine Bamboo Industry Development Council (PBIDC), saying that replicating the said projects can now be implemented in every town in the country since it is now coordinating all bamboo projects and agencies.

PBIDC Vice Chairman Deogracias Victor B. Savellano disclosed that the

Karugo and Puray bamboo projects in Montalban, Rizal are an "ideal multi-agency collaboration that involves a minimal budget."

"Our best examples (for bamboo propagation) are those in Puray and Karugo. It's something that's not difficult to do. It is a joint effort between the government, Rotary International, Indigenous People (IP), and the community. It's a beautiful model that should be replicated all over the Philippines," said Savellano.

Rotary raised a minimal P1.5 million in district grants for the Karugo project.

Savellano also disclosed that the "Kilusang 5K" (Kawayan: Kalikasan, Kaunlaran, Kabuhayan, Kinabukasan), which he founded, has supported the organization of Puray and Karugo projects.

The bamboo propagules planted in 2022 in Karugo are estimated to multiply 142,000 bamboo culms in five years and 228,000 culms in eight years.



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## PBIDC urges bamboo projects to support tribal livelihood

THE Philippine Bamboo Industry Development Council (PBIDC) is proposing to replicate nationwide the 20-hectare Karugo and 10-hectare Puray bamboo projects in the Marikina watershed that give livelihood to tribes and help prevent Metro Manila flooding.

The Karugo and Puray bamboo projects in Montalban, Rizal are an ideal multi-agency collaboration that involves minimal budget, PBIDC Vice Chairman Deogradas Victor Savellano says.

Yet, these projects have harnessed and consolidated multiple resources that redound to upland economic benefit and protect the environment.

"Our best examples (for bamboo propagation) are those in Puray and Karugo. It's something that's not difficult to do. It is a joint effort between government, Rotary International, indigenous people and [the] community. It's a beautiful model that should be replicated all over the Philip-



**Puray farmers earn P300 per day from potting for bamboo seedlings.**

**CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**  
pins," Savellano adds.

Rotary has raised a minimal P1.5 million in district grants for the Karugo project.

The Kilusang 5K (Kawayan: Kalikasan, Kauniaran, Kabuhayan, Kinabukasan) Foundation, founded by Savellano, has supported the organization of the Puray and Karugo projects. The bamboo propagules planted in 2022 in Karugo are estimated to multiply to 142,000 bamboo culms in five years and 228,000 culms in eight years.



## Another Adopt-A-Park launched in Caloocan

CALOOCAN City Mayor Dale Gonzalo "Along" Malapitan and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Acting Chairman Atty. Don Artes led the launching of the Adopt-A-Park project, a city's joint venture with the MMDA on Thursday at Caloocan Nature Park, Barangay 179.

The local chief executive extended his gratitude to MMDA for the opportunity to aid in the rehabilitation and development of the said park, providing more open green spaces to the city's residents.

"Sa pamamagitan po ng Adopt-A-Park program ng MMDA, mabilis po nating nagawa ang naturang proyekto upang mapaganda at maayos pa ang ibang bahagi Caloocan Nature Park," Mayor Along said. "Maraming salamat kina Chairman Artes at MMDA General Manager Popoy Lipana na naging katawang natin sa naturang proyekto."

According to the Mayor, the goal of the program is to help further develop the remaining 0.78 ha of the said park and likewise improve the areas that were already developed.

"Layunin po nitong mas mapa-unlad pa ang ating open green spaces sa lungsod at mas mapangalagaan ang 1.11 ektarya na ating na-develop at maisaayos pa ang natitirang 0.78 ektarya ng nasabing parke," Mayor Along said.

He likewise emphasized that as Caloocan moves toward progress and continuous development in infrastructure, the city government shall continue to be a steward of the environment and conserve its natural resources.

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## Alternergy secures NWRB permit

ALTERNERGY Holdings Corp. said its subsidiary Ibulao Mini Hydro Corp. (IMHC) has secured a water permit from the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) for the development of a run-of-river hydro power plant in Ifugao province.

Eduardo Martinez Miranda, IMHC president and chief executive officer, said further permitting activities will be pursued, particularly the consent from the indigenous peoples, following the issuance of the NWRB permit for the Ibulao 2 hydro project.

"In the coming months, we will commence the conduct of the activities to obtain the Free and Prior Informed Consent of our host indigenous cultural communities. This a long and tedious process but we already gained experience from our other projects. We are confident in due course we will have the consent of the communities," said Miranda, in a statement.

Alternergy said the development of Ibulao 2 also involves the development, construction and operation of 7.4 megawatts (MW) hydropower

power to be located in Barangay Bolog in Kiangyan and in Barangay Caba in Lagawe that will harness a portion of the flow of water from the Ibulao River to convert to energy.

The company said Ibulao 2 forms part of its portfolio of hydro projects in Ifugao that includes the 17.4 MW Asin-Hungduan and Ibulao 1 in Kiangyan as well as the 6.3 MW Lamut project in the municipalities of Lamut and Asipulo.

Alternergy said part of the proceeds of its upcoming initial public offering will be used to fund pre-development activities of projects in the pipeline including the Ibulao 2 project.

The company is set to be listed at the Philippine Stock Exchange on March 24.

Alternergy aims to develop up to 1,370 MW of additional wind, offshore wind, solar and run of river hydro projects.

The company also has an ongoing partnership with Shell Overseas Investment B.V. to pursue offshore wind projects in the Philippines. -Jed Macapagal



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## 4.8 magnitude na lindol, tumama sa Quezon

**LUCENA CITY**—Nasa 4.8 magnitude na lindol ang yumanig sa talawigan ng Quezon kahapon ng umaga, ayon sa Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

Ayon sa Phivolcs, bandang alas-11:09 ng umaga nang tumama ang lindol sa Polillo nasabing lugar at hindi rin nagtagal ang pagyanig.

Sa talawigan ng Phivolcs, ang 4.8 magnitude na lindol ay tumama sa karagatang sakop ng Jomalig Island.

Naitala ang epicenter ng pagyanig sa 76 kilometro hilagang-silangan ng Jomalig Island na may lalim na dalawang kilometro.

Intensity 2 naman ang naramdaman sa Dingalan at Baler, Aurora; at Intensity 1 sa Malolos City at Plaridel, Bulacan; Mercedes, Camarines Norte; Gapan City at Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija; at Infanta, Alabat, at Guinayangan, Quezon.

Sa kabila nito, walang naging epekto ang pagyanig sa mga gusali at

ibang istruktura sa island municipalities na POGI o Polillo Group of Islands na kinabibilangan ng Jomalig, Patnanungan, Polillo, Panukulan at Burdeos.

Ayon kay Earl Aizell Abanica, operation and warning officer ng MDRRMO Polillo, bahagyang pagkaalog lang ang naramdaman ng mga tao partikular ang mga kawani ng lokal na pamahalaan bagama't naglabasan ang mga ito sa kani-kanilang tanggapan. (Tony Sandoval)



# UN ocean treaty talks resume to save biodiversity

UNITED Nations members gather Monday in New York to resume efforts to forge a long-awaited and elusive treaty to safeguard the world's marine biodiversity.

Nearly two-thirds of the ocean lies outside national boundaries on the high seas where fragmented and unevenly enforced rules seek to minimize human impacts.

The goal of the UN meetings, running through March 3, is to produce a unified agreement for the conservation and sustainable use of those vast marine ecosystems. The talks, formally called the "Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction," resume negotia-

tions suspended last fall without agreement on a final treaty.

"The ocean is the life support system of our planet," said Boris Worm, a marine biologist at Canada's Dalhousie University. "For the longest time, we did not feel we had a large impact on the high seas. But that notion has changed with expansion of deep sea fishing, mining, plastic pollution, climate change," and other human disturbances, he said.

The UN talks will focus on key questions, including: How should the boundaries of marine protected areas be drawn, and by whom? How should institutions assess the environmental impacts of commercial activities, such as

shipping and mining? And who has the power to enforce rules?

"This is our largest global commons," said Nichola Clark, an oceans expert who follows the negotiations for the nonpartisan Pew Research Center in Washington, D.C. "We are optimistic that this upcoming round of negotiations will be the one to get a treaty over the finish line."

The aim of the talks is not to actually designate marine protected areas, but to establish a mechanism for doing so. "The goal is to set up a new body that would accept submissions for specific marine protected areas," Clark said.

Marine biologist Simon In-

gram at the University of Plymouth in England says there's an urgent need for an accord.

"It's a really pressing time for this — especially when you have things like deep-sea mining that could be a real threat to biodiversity before we've even been able to survey and understand what lives on the ocean floor," Ingram said.

Experts say that a global oceans treaty is needed to actually enforce the UN Biodiversity Conference's recent pledge to protect 30 percent of the planet's oceans, as well as its land, for conservation.

"We need a legally binding framework that can enable countries to work together to actually

achieve these goals they've agreed to," said Jessica Battle, an expert on oceans governance at World Wide Fund for Nature.

With nearly half the planet's surface covered by high seas, the talks are of great importance, said Gladys Martínez de Lemos, executive director of the nonprofit Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense focusing on environmental issues across Latin America.

"The treaty should be strong and ambitious, having the authority to establish high and fully protected areas in the high seas," she said. "Half of the world is at stake these weeks at the United Nations." **AP**