

09 February 2023, Thursday



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



## Govt orders APMC to stop operations

**T**HE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has issued a cease-and-desist order (CDO) against Altai Philippines Mining Corp. (APMC) in Romblon Province in connection with the alleged illegal construction of a causeway in its mine site in San Antonio, Romblon and other activities.

The DENR also ordered its field offices in the Mimaropa Region to thoroughly investigate the alleged violations committed by APMC.

At the same time, the DENR also suspended the company's ore transport permit in view of the non-operation of its causeway.

The DENR also denied APMC's application for a Miscellaneous Lease Agreement for violating Commonwealth Act 141 (Public Land Act) and its related issuances.

Meanwhile, the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office of Romblon was ordered to file appropriate legal actions, if warranted, on the alleged illegal cutting of trees without necessary permits and investigate the alleged destruction of seagrass and other marine resources as a result of APMC's operations.

### February 1

THE orders were contained in a document issued by the DENR last February 6 but officially released to the media only last Wednesday. It was coursed through the DENR's Regional Offices of DENR, Mines and Geosciences Bureau and the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) in Region IV-B MIMAROPA to.

Beginning February 1, the DENR EMB in Mimaropa has issued "Notices of Violation" to APMC for violating Section 4 of Presidential Decree (PD) 1586 (Philippine Environmental Impact Statement System), Republic Act (RA) 6969 or the "Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Wastes Control Act of 1990," RA 9275 (Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004) and PD 705 for cutting trees without a permit.

"The DENR firmly assures the public, especially the residents of Sibuyan Island, that the Department continues to strictly implement environmental laws in order to ensure the safety of the community and promote inclusive development in the Province of Romblon," a statement released by the DENR read. *Jonathan L. Mayuga*



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# Mining company faces more raps

BY BELLA CARIASO

**T**HE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Wednesday said it has ordered the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (Penro) of Romblon to file appropriate charges against Altai Philippines Mining Corp. (APMC) amid the reported cutting of trees in Sibuyan Island.

The DENR also directed the Penro to probe the damage to sea grass and other marine resources

as a result of the construction of the causeway project of APMC. "The DENR informs the public

that it has issued a joint order to Altai Philippines Mining Corp. on Feb. 6, 2023 through Regional Offices of DENR, Mines and Geosciences Bureau, Environmental Management Bureau in Region 4B (Mimaropa) regarding the illegal construction of causeway and other related activities," it said.

The agency also ordered the APMC to stop the construction and operation of its causeway in Sitio Bato, Barangay España, San Fernando, Romblon.

"Ore transport permit issued to APMC is suspended, in view of the non-operation of its causeway and the APMC was directed to stop transporting ore from the contract site to the causeway," it added.

The department said APMC's application for miscellaneous lease agreement has been denied for its violations of Commonwealth Act 141 or the "Public Land Act."

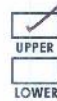
The DENR noted that the Environmental Management Bureau

in Mimaropa also issued notices of violation to APMC for violation of Section 4 of Presidential Decree 1586 or the "Philippine Environmental Impact Statement System," Republic Act (RA) 6969 or the "Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Wastes Control Act of 1990," RA 9275 or the "Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004" and Presidential Decree 705 for cutting trees without a permit.

"The DENR firmly assures the public, especially the resi-

dents of Sibuyan Island, that the department continues to strictly implement environmental laws in order to ensure the safety of the community and promote inclusive development in the Province of Romblon," it said.

Sibuyanons Against Mining Coordinator Elizabeth Ibañez has asked the DENR to revoke the mineral production sharing agreement of APMC, saying the actions of the DENR against APMC were not enough.



## Bakbakin, bakbakan ang mga sumisira sa Sibuyan



MARLO DALISAY

Mukhang aakyat sa Senado at sa Commission on Appointments (CA) ang balitaktakan ng nagbabanggang grupo sa Sibuyan bunga ng pagkakalantad ng pagkasira ng malaki-laki na ring bahagi ng naturang isla dahil sa pagmimina doon.

Ang Sibuyan ay bahagi ng lalawigan ng Romblon na ngayon ay unti-unti na ring dinadayo ng mga turista dahil sa mga natural na pasyalan at tanawin.

Pero sa kasalukuyan, ibang klaseng kasiraan na daw ang idinulot ng Altai Philippines Mining Corporation (APMC) sa lugar dahil ayon sa Alyansa Tigil-Mina na nakatutok sa lugar, apat na batas na ang nilalabag ng mga aktibidades nito.

Kabilang daw sa mga nalabag ay ang

Water Code ng bansa, Foreshore lease agreement, Environmental Compliance Certificate at pagpuputol ng mga punong kahoy na walang kaukulang permit.

Ang mga ito ay naipaalam na sa mga mambabatas at kumilos na ang Senado sa pamamagitan ng Senador Risa Hontiveros na malaman ang puno't dulo ng mga pangyayari.

Ito ay sa harap ng katotohanang kasama niya sa institusyon sa ilalim ng kasalukuyang Kongreso si Senador Sherwin Gatchalian na kapatid ni Kenneth Gatchalian na sinasabing may malalim na kaugnayan sa nabanggit na mining company.

Wala pang kumpirmasyon o pagtanggap ang pamilya Gatchalian sa impormasyon na ito pero para sa delikadesa dapat sigurong mag-inhibit ang mambabatas kapag ang kapulungan ay nag-umpisa nang mag-usisa sa naturang usapin.

Sa panig naman ni resigned Valenzuela Congressman na naging Department Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary Rex Gatchalian, nagsalita ito na titingnan niya ang naturang pangyayari.

Kaya nga marami ang napaisip matapos

ito dahil bakit nga naman daw magsasali-ta ang kalilim kung walang apektadong interes sa kanilang poder ng pangyayaring ito.

Kaya siguradong pagsalang niya sa Commission on Appointments, masasama ang usapin na ito sa uungkatin sa kanya lalo pa nga't miyembro rin ng komisyon si Hontiveros.

Sa pagdinig ng Senado, dapat din sigurong bigyan ng sapat na pagkakataon ang mga mismong residente ng Sibuyan na mai-kuwento nila ng personal ang mga pinag-gagawa ng kumpanyang ito bago pagbigyan ang paliwanag ng naturang mining company.

Ang lalawigan ng Romblon, kabilang ang isla ng Sibuyan ay kabilang sa mga bahagi ng Pilipinas na tukoy na maalaga sa kalikasan dahil nga hindi talaga pumapayag ang mga mamamayan nito na masalanta ng pagmimina ang kanilang kapaligiran.

Kung lalabas na may paglabag ang Atlat, kanselahin na ang permiso nito at ikulong ang lahat ng mga nagsabwatan para tibagin ang kabundukan ng Sibuyan.



## DENR-3 recognizes Bulacan governor

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Regional Office 3 (Central Luzon) has recognized Gov. Daniel Fernando's invaluable contribution and unwavering support to the programs of the agency towards the protection, conservation, and development of the country's environment and natural resources.

Fernando is the first provincial chief executive who received such recognition from the DENR-3.

Signed by provincial environment and natural resources officer Emelita Lingat and former regional director of Mines and Geosciences Bureau Engr. Alilo Ensom Jr., the award acknowledges Fernando's support to the government agency's programs towards the protection, conservation, and development of the country's environment and natural resources.

Fernando also recognized the efforts of Bulacan Environment

and Natural Resources head Atty. Julius Victor Degala and his team for the prompt and strict implementation of environment programs and laws in the province.

It can be recalled that Fernando successfully ordered and implemented the suspension of all mining-related activities and mineral-extracting operations for almost three months through Executive Order 21. He also ordered for the strict implementation of existing policies to minimize illegal mining and to avoid environmental degradation.

The governor also took the lead in replacing illegally cut trees by planting 11,000 seedlings in the province last year. The province's operation against illegal logging also led to the confiscation of more or less 3,173 board feet of illegal lumber and six unregistered chainsaws.

**FREDERICK SILVERIO**



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## DENR AT PHILSA, JOINT FORCES SA PAGLIKHA NG NATURAL RESOURCES AT GEOSPATIAL DATABASE

KAMAKAILAN lang ay inanunsyo ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na magbabakas sila at ang Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA) upang lumikha ng national environment and natural resources geospatial database.

Sakop ng partnership na pinasok ng dalawang ahensya ang progress monitoring para sa National Greening Program (NGP), at pagtatag ng komprehensibong national geospatial database para sa Environment and Natural Resource Accounting (ENRA) program, kasama na ang koleksyon ng impormasyon tungkol sa klima at pagsasagawa ng analysis.

Lilikha ang PhilSA ng mga mapa, systems, at tools sa national level para suriin ang mga kahinaan at epekto ng climate change at mga sakuna. Tutulungan din nito ang DENR sa pag-monitor ng mga NGP area at iba pang gubat sa pamamagitan ng remote sensing, artificial intelligence, at geographic information systems.

Magmumula sa DENR ang mga data na kailangan

May katanungan ka ba, reklamo o nais ihingi ng tulong? Sumulat sa WIN TAYONG LAHAT ni Kuya Win Gatchalian, BULGAR Bldg., 538 Quezon Ave., Quezon City o mag-email sa [surewin.bulgar@gmail.com](mailto:surewin.bulgar@gmail.com)

ng PhilSA.

Natutuwa tayo na gagamit ang pamahalaan ng siyentipikong pamamaraan upang tugunan ang mga isyung kinakaharap natin, lalo na sa pagprotekta sa kalikasan sa harap ng krisis sa klima.

□□□

Tinatalakay din namin sa Senado ang committee report para sa Cultural Mapping bill.

Ang cultural mapping ay tumutukoy sa sistematikong mga gawain at metodolohikal na proseso para sa paggalugad, pagdiskubre, pagdokumenta, pagsuri, pag-interpret, pagpresenta, at pagbahagi ng impormasyon tungkol sa mga pamanang-lahi ng mga komunidad sa bansa.

Kinikilala ng United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) ang halaga ng cultural mapping sa pagpreserba sa ating mga tangible at intangible cultural assets.

□□□

Layunin ng panukalang-batas na amyendahan ang Republic Act No. 10066 o National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009 at imamandato ang mga lokal na pamahalaan na magsagawa ng cultural heritage mapping ng tangible, intangible, natural, at built heritage sa kanilang mga komunidad.

Kikilalanin din ang karapatan ng ating mga indigenous peoples na magsagawa ng kanilang sariling cultural mapping.

Lilikha rin ng Cultural Mapping, Research, and Planning Division sa ilalim ng National Commission for Culture and the Arts, at ng Joint Congressional Oversight Committee upang matutukan ang implementasyon ng cultural mapping sa buong bansa.

Umaasa tayo na sa tulong ng panukalang-batas na ito ay maging mas matagumpay tayo sa pangangalaga sa pamana ng ating lahi na mahalagang salik ng ating kaakuhan bilang mga Pilipino.

□□□

Paalala lamang sa lahat na patuloy pa ring magingat sa paglabas ng bahay, magsuot ng face mask, ugaliing maghugas ng kamay, bigyang-halaga ang

kalusugan, at huwag kalilimutang magdasal.

Malalagpasan din natin ito.

Be Safe. Be Well. Be Nice!

□□□

Kung mayroon kayong nais idulog o ipaabot sa inyong abang lingkod, maaari kayong sumulat sa BE NICE TAYO ni Sen. Nancy Binay, BULGAR Bldg., 538 Quezon Ave., Quezon City o mag-email sa [benicetayo@gmail.com](mailto:benicetayo@gmail.com).

Paalala lamang na sana ay isama ninyo sa inyong mga lihan ang inyong contact number upang mas madali na nin kayong mapaglingkuran. Always Be Nice!

□□□

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## P1.49-M illegal lumber seized in Nueva Vizcaya

**SOLANO, Nueva Vizcaya:** Forest rangers and police officers seized P1.49 million worth of illegally cut narra lumber at the border control point in Barangay Tactac, Santa Fe, Nueva Vizcaya on Sunday afternoon, reports from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Santa Fe police said.

After a hot pursuit, the DENR workers assigned at the South Exit Monitoring Station in Calititan, Aritao town and operatives from the Santa Fe police collared the driver, 47-year-old Ronald De-

mate of San Agustin, San Miguel, Bulacan, who failed to present transport documents.

Demate did not reveal the owner of the lumber and was placed under the custody of Santa Fe Police Station while a case for the violation of forestry laws is being prepared against him.

According to the police, the forward van-wing type truck with registration plate number XPT-116 loaded with 2,975.333 board feet of narra flitches came from Apayao.

Demate's truck has been im-

pounded by the DENR at the Cagayan Valley Product Monitoring Station (Cavaprom) in Aritao.

On January 18, a truck from Paracelis in Mountain Province loaded with P2 million worth of wood products was also apprehended by authorities.

With the series of seized hot lumbers starting in the last quarter of 2022, the forest protection officers assigned at the Cavaprom led by Jay Marshal Jasmin, supervising ecosystems management specialist and checkpoint team leader, have committed to being more vigilant

in manning the checkpoints in collaboration with the law enforcement agencies in the province.

DENR Region 2 executive director Gwendolyn Bambalan said that an initial meeting among the regional executive directors of Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, and the Cordillera Administrative Region was held to strengthen inter-regional collaboration for the purpose of intensifying surveillance operation and monitoring of forest protection and law enforcement initiatives.

**VINCE JACOB VISAYA**



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## Sen. Villar pushes expansion of PA list, boost biodiversity protection

**T**O remove the Philippines from the list of world's biodiversity hot spots, Senator Cynthia A. Villar wants to include more protected areas (PA) through legislation.

Villar, chairman of the Senate committee on environment and natural resources, said there are still many places in the country experiencing high rates of habitat degradation and biodiversity loss.

In her opening remarks during the Senate hearing on the country's PAs, Villar lamented that hot spots have lost around 86 percent of their original habitat. "Hot spots are also considered to be significantly threatened due to man-made exploitation and by climate change," said Villar.

"Hence, there are still many areas in the country, such as wetlands, marine sanctuaries, tropical forests, watersheds, wildlife sanctuaries, among others, that remain underprotected and one certain way of affording protection to these areas is by designating them as PAs through legislation," she added.

The senator noted that adding more protected areas becomes even more urgent and relevant now due to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration,

which runs from 2021 to 2030.

This was declared so that all nations can massively scale up the restoration of destroyed ecosystems.

This is the opportune time, Villar said, to discuss the merits of the seven bills on six proposed protected areas.

The following bills are:

■ Bill expanding the area of an existing legislated PA;

■ Senate Bill (SB) No. 354 and SB No. 1259 referring to the Paoay Lake Protected Landscape in Ilocos Norte;

■ SB No. 1536 referring to the expansion of the Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park, a protected area in Las Piñas and Parañaque;

■ SB No. 1691, which refers to the San Francisco Protected Landscape (commonly known as the Mulanay Watershed Forest Reserve) in Quezon Province;

■ SB No. 1725 referring to the Alibijaban Protected Landscape and Seascape also in Quezon Province;

■ SB No. 355 referring to the Taklong and Tandog Group of Islands Natural Park in Guimaras; and

■ SB No. 517, which refers to the Bantayan Group of Islands Protected Landscape and Seascape in Cebu.





## NATIONWIDE ROUNDUP

### Villar pushes for new, expanded protected areas

SENATOR Cynthia A. Villar is pushing for the passage of several bills that will create new protected areas and expand declared sites to remove the Philippines' tag as a biodiversity

"hotspot" where ecosystems are under serious threat by human activities.

"Hotspots are also considered to be significantly threatened due to man-made exploitation and by climate change," she said in a statement on Wednesday.

Ms. Villar, chair of the Senate environment and natural resources committee, said many places in the country are seeing high rates of habitat degradation and biodiversity loss.

"Hence, there are still many areas in the country, such as wetlands, marine sanctuaries, tropical forests, watersheds, wildlife sanctuaries, among others, that remain under-protected and one certain way of affording protection to these areas is by designating them as protected areas through legislation," she said.

Legislating more protected areas, she added, has also become more urgent due to the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, which aims to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean from 2021 to 2030.

There are seven pending bills relating to the declaration of new or expanded protected areas.

These include the Paoay Lake Protected Landscape in Ilocos Norte; Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park; San Francisco Protected Landscape and Alibjaban Protected Landscape and Seascape in Quezon province; Taklong and Tandog Group of Islands Natural Park in Guimaras; and Bantayan Group of Islands Protected Landscape and Seascape in Cebu.

According to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Philippines is one of 18 mega-biodiverse countries of the world, containing two-thirds of the earth's biodiversity and between 70% and 80% of the world's plant and animal species. —

**Alyssa Nicole O. Tan**



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## Cynthia seeks more 'protected areas' to protect biodiversity

By CAMILLE P. BALAGTAS

**TO remove the Philippines from the list of the world's biodiversity hotspots, Senator Cynthia A. Villar wants to include more protected areas through legislation.**

Villar, the chairperson of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, said there are still many places in the country experiencing high rates of habitat degradation and biodiversity loss.

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REGIONS

## Late ex-DENR chief a hero to fisherfolk

DUMAGUETE CITY—Fisherfolk from Apo Island took a 45-minute banca ride to this city to join environmentalists and the academic community in paying their last respects to the late National Scientist and former Environment Secretary Angel Alcala, whom many in coastal villages in Negros Oriental consider as a “hero” for helping them preserve marine resources. —STORY

BY IRMA FAITH PAL

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### TRIBUTES POUR IN FOR FORMER ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY

# LATE NAT'L SCIENTIST ALCALA A HERO TO APO ISLAND FISHERFOLK

By Irma Faith Pal  
@inquirervisayas

DUMAGUETE CITY—Fisherfolk from Apo Island took a 45-minute boat ride to this city to join environmentalists, residents and the academic community in paying their last respects to National Scientist Angel Alcala, whom many in coastal villages in Negros Oriental consider as their “hero.”

In a Facebook post on Feb. 5, former Apo Island village chief Liberty Pascobello Rhodes thanked Alcala, who died on Feb. 1 at the age of 93, for sharing his knowledge about marine resources and their preservation with her fishing community, remembering the scientist’s visits during her teens.

“You are our hero because with you, people on Apo Island now have better lives and a better future,” said the 62-year-old Rhodes.

Alcala’s wake is held at Silliman University (SU) here. The National Academy for Science and Technology will lead the state funeral for Alcala, also a former secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, on Friday.

As a national scientist, Alcala could have been interred at Libingan ng mga Bayani. However, his family opted to have his remains buried at The Gardens Memorial Park here.

Alcala, a Filipino biologist who was named national scientist in 2014, was known for his fieldwork to build sanctuaries and to promote biodiversity in the aquatic ecosystems of the country.

#### Protecting marine resources

Mary Aldeon, one of the members of the Development Women Active Network which Alcala helped establish in the 1980s, said she first heard about the scientist’s work when she was 22.

At that time, she said Alcala went to Barangay Apo Island, off the coast of the southern town of Dauin, to talk to them about their marine resources.

Alcala, she said, had told them they did not have to stay home as housewives all day, as they could take an active role in the fishing industry.

Aldeon, now 64, manages five bancas (small boats with outriggers) that shuttle residents and divers and other guests between Apo Island and its jump-off point at Malatapay in Zamboanguita town.

“We were so innocent when Dr. Alcala first taught us the value of industry in a fishing village, and how to care for our resources,” she said.

Fish catch was abundant around Apo Island at that time but most fishers were into cyanide fishing and “muro-ami,” the now-illegal fishing technique



Angel Alcala —SILLIMAN UNIVERSITY

where even the fishers’ children pound on the coral reefs and drive the fish into the nets.

At that time, many fishers on Apo Island believed that the scientists from SU’s Marine Laboratory, now the Institute of Environmental and Marine Sciences, led by Alcala and social workers just wanted to buy their island and make it another Silliman property.

But Alcala persisted despite rumors in the community. He continued to talk to the people, telling them that keeping a quarter of their marine area as off-limits to fishing activities provided space where the fish could spawn and reproduce and eventually yield more and bigger fish.

Former Environment Undersecretary Ben Malayang III said Alcala was one person who was “not easy to give up on what he saw was the truth.”

On Wednesday, faculty and

students of the SU Institute of Environmental and Marine Sciences took turns extolling the virtues of Alcala, the founder of the university’s research facility.

“There is a planet needing to be healed and saved,” said Hilconida Calumpong, former director of the SU Marine Laboratory.

#### Simple man

Another faculty member, Aileen Maypa, remembered how Alcala challenged her to take her doctorate. “Fish is, our primary resource; our country needs people who know fish,” said Maypa, recalling Alcala’s words.

Mario Pascobello, 53, village chief of Apo Island, said he was only 7 years old when he met Alcala in their community.

“He was a very simple man. He would just sleep on the beach or inside the old chapel when it rained,” he said.

At night, Alcala would set up a black-and-white television attached to a small power generator set.

“It was our first time watching television. Sir Alcala would show movies about fishes, corals, and the life of fishermen in the Philippines. Afterward, he would explain to us what we had just watched,” Pascobello said.

“His advocacy for the marine environment transformed me and my family from being reef destroyers to reef rangers,” he added. **INQ**



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### **P2b kinita ng Pampanga sa quarry**

AABOT sa mahigit 2 billion pesos ang quarry collections ng Pampanga sa loob ng 41 months, simula Hulyo 2019.

Sa report, mas malaki ang collection ng Pampanga Provincial Government ngayong taon, aabot sa 88.2 million pesos.

Patunay lamang ito sa mahusay na pangongolekta ng buwis ng Provincial Treasurers Office at quarry regulatory unit mula sa sand at gravel galing sa Mt. Pinatubo.

Samantala, ang dagdag na pondong ito ay ginagamit ng Pamahalaang Panlalawigan para sa karagdagang serbisyo sa mga Kapampangan.



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PHILIPPINE DAILY  
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# Angel Alcalá: Loving God's creatures

**A**ngel Chua Alcalá, 93, died on Feb. 1, 2023, in Dumaguete City, mourned by scientific, academic, and multiple communities, here and abroad. Alcalá stands tall—*primus inter pares*, first among equals—for his three decades of service as biologist, university professor and president (Silliman), Cabinet secretary, marine scientist—the list goes on and on, as do the accolades and awards he has garnered: Outstanding Sillimanian (1988), Ramon Magsaysay awardee for public service (1992), National Scientist (2014), Asean Biodiversity Hero (2017), Pew fellowship in marine conservation, and a host of other awards.

Hailing from a coastal village in Negros Occidental, the young Alcalá and his brother helped their father breed milkfish (*bangus*) in ponds for sale locally, on occasion catching crabs and shrimp for a family feast. Living close to sea and shore, it is no wonder Alcalá would eventually make their protection his life's calling.

Graduating from Silliman University (SU) in 1951 magna cum laude in BS Biology, Alcalá later proceeded to Stanford University for his master's and doctorate degrees in biology studies, supported by scholarship grants.

Alcalá's numerous awards are mere shorthand for his enduring contributions to science and society: identification of 50 new species of amphibians and reptilians, setting up a marine protected area (MPA) in 1974, which is a "no take" zone that bans fishing, mining, drilling, and extractive activities,

## HIGH BLOOD

JURGETTE HONCULADA

pioneering artificial coral reefs in the '70s as Department of Environment and Natural Resources secretary, which now number over 1,000 throughout the country, a best practice adopted in the Southeast Asian region. His work has also informed the inclusion of MPAs in both the Local Government Code and the Fisheries Code. Alcalá founded two research institutions: the Silliman Marine Laboratory (now the Institute of Environmental and Marine Sciences) and the Angelo King Center for Research and Environmental Management.

Undergirding all this was his "deep faith in God and the traditions and teachings of the church," according to Silliman University pastor Noriel Capulong. The latter speaks of Alcalá's "unwavering and active involvement" in the life and ministry of the SU church as elder and council member, and as a preacher on numerous occasions. More recently, Capulong notes, Dr. Alcalá, as a member of the SU board of trustees, "expressed deep concern on the leadership crisis" besetting the national church (United Church of Christ in the Philippines or UCCP) for many years. In 2018, some UCCP members filed charges against its national leadership for illegally leasing land in Tacloban City to the Gaisano conglomerate.

Dr. Alcalá was involved in mediation proceedings, which failed when the leadership refused to submit basic documents.

We pay tribute to Dr. Alcalá for the MPAs that ensure that our coasts and seas heal from overfishing, thus restoring sustainable livelihoods to impoverished fishing communities. His healing formula is called the "25 percent solution" based on years of research: If an MPA rehabilitates 25 percent of coral reefs in that area, this will protect 25 percent of fishery species in the same area and "the spillover effects of ... no take rehabilitation will enable an ecosystem to thrive long enough to protect itself." We also thank Dr. Alcalá for the countless learning modules drawing on outputs of the research institutes and on the books and over 160 scientific papers he has written.

Angel Alcalá has preached—in action—the gospel of life abundant for the fisherfolk of Negros (and elsewhere) from whence he came. A man of few words, his deeds and advocacies now serve to heal the earth and to teach young and old alike that all creatures that creep and crawl and fly and swim are part of God's creation—by naming and providing them sanctuary.

Rest in peace, Dr. Alcalá.

Jurgette Honculada, in her mid-70s, is from Zamboanga City. She is a member of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines and the advocacy group Pagmata.



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Members of the Manila Bay para sa Tao Network hold a protest in front of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources office in Quezon City yesterday to mark their fourth anniversary and denounce the DENR's inaction on reclamation projects in Manila Bay.

JESSE BUSTOS



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# BULGAR

ROSES NG MASA, MATA NG BAYAN

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*Nagsagawa ng protesta sa labas ng opisina ng DENR sa Quezon City ang grupong The Manila Bay Para sa Tao Network na kung saan inakusahan ang mga opisyal sa pagwalangbaha-lal umano sa pagkawasak ng karagatan sa pamamagitan ng pagtatambak at pagsagawa ng reclamation. -Jesse Bustos-*





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**Ipinagdiwang ng Manila Bay Para sa Tao Network ang kanilang ika-4 na anibersaryo sa pamamagitan ng protesta sa harap ng DENR office sa Quezon City, kung saan inakusahan nila ang ilang opisyal ng ahensya na nakakalimot na maprotektahan ang karagatan dahil sa patuloy na pag-tatapon, reclamation, at quarrying activities. Iginlit nila ang madaliang pag-aksyon ng tanggapan sa kanilang mga hinaing. (Kuha ni Jesse Bustos)**



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REMATÉ OPINION

## ANG INYONG LINGKOD

NI DR. HILDA C. ONG

BASE sa PHILIPPINE ATMOSPHERIC, GEOPHYSICAL AND ASTRONOMICAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (PAGASA), noong ika-7 ng Pebrero, bandang alas-6 ng umaga, ang antas ng tubig sa Angat Dam ay nasa 212.93 metro. Ibig sabihin nagsisimula na ang pagbaba ng antas lalong-lalo na at papasok na ang panahon

ng tag-init, mas maraming gagamit ng tubig.

Noong 1968 ginawa ang dam kaya nasa limangputlimang taong na ngayon. Dati-rati, kakaunti lang ang mga establishment, industriya at mga taong naninirahan sa Metro Manila, ilan lang ang kumokonsumo ng tubig na nanggagaling sa Angat Dam kaya sapat ang tubig kahit sa panahon ng

tag-init."

Todo na ang pagbabantay ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB) sa naturang dam upang maiwasan 180 meters.

Ang panawagan ni Dr. Sevillo D. David Jr., Executive Director ng NWRB, bawasan ang inyong paggamit ng tubig kung kayo ay nasa trabaho o nasa public area, tulad ng malls at restaurant o nasa loob ng inyong tahanan.

Ang pagtitipid ng bawa't pamilya ay maaaring gumawa ng malaking pagkakaiba kung lahat tayo ay nagkakaibang maging responsible sa paggamit ng tubig.

Sa panahon ng tag-init, siguradong tataas din ang konsumo ng tubig at kuryente.

Kaya naman, para makatulong sa mag-asawa sa kanilang pagtatabad.

Palagiang tandan, maging responsible sa paggamit ng tubig, siguradong makatipid sa mga gastusin sa bahay. Ipinapaalala ang tamang pagtitipid ng tubig:

- Huwag iwanang nakabukas ang gripo habang nagsisipilyo.

- Huwag hayaan umagos ang tubig kapag naghuhugas ng mga prutas, o gulay sa halip ay gumamit ng palanggana sa paghuhugas ng mga ito. Pagtapos itabi ang tubig na nagamit at ilaan sa iba pang paglilinis sa bahay gaya ng pagdidilig ng halaman.

- Gumamit ng mga mali-

nis na baunan at lalagyan ng pagkain para makaimbak ng tubig pangluto at pang-inom. Bago inumin, pakuluan muna ang tubig.

- Huwag mag-imbak ng tubig sa mga lalagyan na dating pinag-imbakan ng mga nakalalasang kemikal.

Kung nais ninyo malaman ang TAMANG IMPORMASYON, TAMANG SERBISYO ni AGARANG SERBISYO LADY, i-search sa YOUTUBE CHANNEL, "HILDA ONG" at sa Facebook Fanpage "TV RADIO HILDA ONG". Huwag kalimutan i-click ang salitang "SUBSCRIBE", "LIKE" at "SHARE".



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## Cynthia seeks more 'protected areas' to protect biodiversity

By CAMILLE P. BALAGTAS

**TO remove the Philippines from the list of the world's biodiversity hotspots, Senator Cynthia A. Villar wants to include more protected areas through legislation.**

Villar, the chairperson of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, said there are still many places in the country experiencing high rates of habitat degradation and biodiversity loss.

In her opening remarks during the Senate hearing on the country's protected areas, Villar lamented that hotspots had lost around 86% of their original habitat.

"Hotspots are also considered to be significantly

threatened due to man-made exploitation and by climate change," said Villar.

"Hence, there are still many areas in the country, such as wetlands, marine sanctuaries, tropical forests, watersheds, wildlife sanctuaries, among others, that remain under-protected, and one certain way of affording protection to these areas is by designating them as protected areas through legislation," she added.

The senator noted that adding more protected areas becomes even more urgent and relevant now due to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, which runs from 2021 to 2030.

This was declared so that all nations can massively scale up the restoration of destroyed ecosystems.



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# Climate change is slowly having an impact on human health—expert

By RORY VISCO  
Contributor

**E**VER wondered why the world's polar caps are melting? Did your heart melt when you saw a polar bear standing precariously atop a small chunk of ice that came from melted polar caps?

According to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), global warming is created with the burning of "fossil" fuels such as coal, crude oil and gas. Although these fuels answer the energy needs to produce light in our homes, run our cars and operate factories to produce our daily needs, it also fuels global warming by creating immense amounts of carbon dioxide emissions that are then trapped in the planet's atmosphere, thus creating climate change. This means the more carbon dioxide in the air, the hotter the climate gets.

In her presentation during the "Stop COVID Deaths" webinar titled "Climate Change and post-Covid-19 Health Security" that was organized by the University of the Philippines and the UP Manila NIH National Telehealth Center together with the UP Philippine General Hospital (UP-PGH), Dr. Susan Pineda Mercado, co-Chair of the National Panel of Technical Experts of the Philippine Climate Change Commission, said that fossil fuels create greenhouse gases that account for 80 percent of carbon dioxide leading to global warming and ocean acidification.

"The Philippines still has coal-fired plants though they should have been phased out completely. Currently, the greatest emitter of fossil fuels in the world is China and unless the bigger countries bring down their emissions, we all suffer. The bigger countries are the ones that have to cut down on their use of fossil fuels though that's really very contentious," she said.

Right now, Dr. Mercado said scientists are aiming for only a 1.5-degree Centigrade increase in temperature by 2030 but they themselves believe it's not realistic with what's happening today. They believe an increase of more than 1.5 degrees (some estimates peg it at four degrees) poses a scenario where only reptiles will be able to survive.

## Climate Change: the impact on human health

SHE said that rising temperatures, extreme weather, rising sea levels and increasing carbon dioxide levels can result in air pollution, which increases the risk for asthma and cardiovascular disease, changes in vector ecology such as malaria, dengue, encephalitis, Hantavirus, Rift Valley fever, Lyme disease, Chikungunya, and

West Nile Virus. Increasing allergens contribute to respiratory allergies and asthma, water quality impacts could result in cholera and other kinds of water-borne disease. Water and food supply impacts can lead to malnutrition and diarrhea, while environmental degradation can result in forced migration, civil conflict and mental health impact. Extreme heat causes heat-related illness and death, cardiovascular failure, and severe weather can lead to injuries, fatalities, and mental health impacts.

## Slow-onset events—what to do next?

CLIMATE change, according to Dr. Mercado, will bring about what is called "Slow Onset Events" or SOEs, events that happen so slowly that are hardly noticeable. These include increasing temperature, "desertification" where fertile land becomes a desert due to climate change and other human activities, loss of biodiversity, land and forest degradation, glacial retreat, sea level rise, ocean acidification and salination, where salt water intrudes into ground water.

Climate change is said to be the greatest threat to public health, a threat seen as an existential one due to concerns where humanity's survival hangs in the balance. Thus, Dr. Pineda pointed out that there should be substantial investments in public health, particularly in the areas of surveillance, laboratories, vaccine production, workforce development and emergency management.

Some of the constraints at the early onset of Covid-19, she noted, was slow testing. "We had only one bio-safety level laboratory 3. Testing was slow since we were not prepared for an outbreak. There was also no local Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) production so health workers

got infected resulting to death, and that serious mistake where hospitals not geared up for infection control accepted Covid-19 patients."

She reiterated the need to create a good laboratory and surveillance network, which is what many countries have done already, to test and determine if there is a new virus or if there are mutations happening that could impact the country's control measures. "Creating a good laboratory and surveillance network should be made a part of an overall plan for pandemic preparedness by putting in the necessary investments," Dr. Mercado emphasized.

She also pointed to having a body of technical experts who are highly skilled in surveillance, a body that is somewhat similar to the US Centers for Disease Control and Protection, our own Philippine CDC. "We have to purposely be better at surveillance and start looking at how we're going to manage all infections in the country and not just Covid-19."

Dr. Mercado also suggested the "repurposing" of the Quezon Institute, which used to be the center for tuberculosis, into a National Center for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, and to stockpile PPEs that can be given to health workers when they need it. Given the conditions of climate change, she said, another pandemic may hit the world again.

Many people, Dr. Mercado pointed out, don't notice SOEs but they are slowly affecting people's lives and they don't seem to be acting as much as they should. "It's happening so slowly that unless you step back, you don't realize that at the Earth is actually on fire or under water in many places and you think it's just something that happened to you today not realizing how widespread it is."



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## Warming oceans threaten sea turtles

**PARIS:** Rising sea temperatures are threatening sea turtle populations by warming their nesting sites on beaches across the world, a new study found Wednesday.

The climate change-fueled phenomenon could cause local extinctions of the already threatened reptiles, which have a long breeding cycles and are slower to adapt than many other species, such as birds or butterflies.

Sea turtles dig holes and lay their eggs in the sand, which has become warmer in recent years thanks to rising sea temperatures caused by global warming.

Warmer nest temperatures produce more female offspring, thus risking overwhelmingly female populations that will have trouble finding mating partners in the future.

Many nesting sites are heavily female-biased today, suggesting rising temperatures are already having an impact.

High temperatures at nesting sites can also decrease hatchling production.

Wednesday's study looked at whether sea turtles could shift their breeding period to cooler parts of the year in order to bring nest temperatures down.

In the first global study of its kind, researchers modelled how sea turtles could mitigate the impact of a global temperatures rise of 1.5 degree Celsius — the best case scenario outlined by the United Nations — at 58 nesting sites around the world.

On current trends, the world is headed for an increase of 2.6 C above the preindustrial benchmark.

They found that moving the breeding period mitigated about 55 percent of sea water warming, meaning that in about 45 percent of cases the nesting was at risk.

### 'Band-aid' fixes

"These findings underscore concerns for the long-term survival of this iconic group," said the report published in the *Royal Society Open Science Journal*.

Lead author Jacques-Olivier Laloë said the findings point to the "really worrying" possibility that local extinctions could ensue.

The work found that sea turtles breeding at higher latitudes did benefit when they moved their nesting period to a period with cooler weather.

But this was harder for sea turtles living near the equator where temperatures are less likely to fluctuate seasonally, the report said.

Scientists warn that global temperatures are likely to warm beyond 1.5 C, possibly by mid-century, which means the study's findings are likely "optimistic results," said Laloë of Australia's Deakin University.

"In reality, it's likely that sea turtles have less adaptive potential to climate change," he said.

There are a few ways that humans can help to cool the nests, such as providing shade or watering the sand. But these are "temporary 'band-aid'" fixes, according to the authors.

"Solutions to address climate change, like reducing greenhouse gas emissions, switching to renewable energies and changing land-use patterns, are required to reduce future climate change impacts," the study said.

The researchers said the modeling could apply to other reptiles whose breeding success is temperature-dependent and thus vulnerable to climate change, such as crocodiles and tortoises.

The research looked at all seven sea turtle species, six of which are already on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species.

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# Magnitude 5.1 lindol niyanig Camarines N.

Ni JUN I. LEGASPI

INUGA ng magnitude na 5.1 na lindol ang probinsiya ng Camarines Norte, Martes ayon sa Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

Sa monitoring center ng ahensiya, naitala ang sentro ng lindol sa 15 kilometer northeast ng Tinaga Island 9:46 p.m. (Pebrero 7) at tectonic ang origin ng lindol.

Mariing nagbabala ang Phivolcs dahil na rin sa mababa ang lalim nito sa lupa kaya inaasahan ang posibleng aftershocks.

Sanhi ng malakas na lindol, naramdaman ang Intensity V sa lugar ng Mercedes, Camarines Norte, Intensity IV naman ang naramdaman sa Daet, Camarines Norte, Intensity III sa Ragay, Camarines Sur, Intensity II sa Tabaco, Albay, Iriga City, Samarines Sur, Guinayangan, at Polilio probinsiya ng Quezon.

Intensity I naman ang naramdaman sa mga lugar ng Legazpi City, Albay; Lopez, Gumaca, Mulanay, Mauban, sa Quezon.