

08 May 2023 Monday



DENR

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DENR chief meets with US council on climate change

Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga has met with officials of the United States Council on Environmental Quality to explore possible areas of cooperation between the Philippines and the US on climate change.

Yulo-Loyzaga was part of the official delegation of President Marcos during his official visit to Washington.

She also met with professors of George Mason University in Virginia as part of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' continuous consultation with international experts.

According to Yulo-Loyzaga, the DENR has been re-framing its plans, programs and policies based on data-driven science and systems approaches.

Yulo-Loyzaga joined Marcos in several bilateral meetings aimed to expand the two countries' cooperation on several key areas, including environmental protection and climate action.

She was present during Marcos' meeting with Maxeon Solar Technologies, a global leader in solar technology and innovation, which operates in the country under the name of Sunpower Philippines Manufacturing Ltd. Maxeon Solar plans to expand its operations in the country and invest \$900 million for solar energy innovations.

Bill Mulligan, CEO of Maxeon which operates in all global markets including the United States, Canada and Japan, said the investment will provide more than 3,000 jobs in the next years.

Mulligan said they are start-

ing the expansion of their research and development facility in Cavite, providing around 2,000 engineering jobs in the area.

Maxeon, which also has major manufacturing facilities in Malaysia and Mexico, has been operating in the Philippines since 2003. It opened its first factory at the Laguna Technopark in Biñan City in 2004, and now has seven projects in Biñan consisting of manufacturing, IT and logistics.

Maxeon has trained a skilled local workforce of managers and solar engineers in the Philippines numbering more than 1,000.

The Marcos administration has continued to pursue measures and policies to ensure the availability of cheap and reliable energy through the promotion and utilization of renewable energy sources.

Yulo-Loyzaga said the DENR welcomes efforts and innovations from experts in the field of clean energy.

She vowed that the DENR and the Department of Energy would continue to work together to tap available support for the country's clean energy, climate and development goals.

At the same time, Yulo-Loyzaga underscored the importance of accessible and affordable energy, the availability of feasible alternative technologies for the country to achieve a net-zero emission future, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 7 which calls for affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all by 2030. - Bella Cariaso



TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP EYED

DENR TO REFORM EXISTING POLICIES TO PREVENT OIL SPILLS

By Jane Bautista
@janebautistaINQ

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is looking to reform existing policies to prevent future oil spills as it recently held discussions with local shipowners to form a technical working group.

"We need to prevent the risk and that needs to be translated in the policies, in the processes, and in the technical capacities of the people that are actually implementing these laws," Environment Secretary Antonia Loyzaga said in a recent statement.

According to the DENR, the shipping operators have reached out to the environment chief to see how they could support the agency in preventing and responding to future disasters.

Based on the discussions, they identified the classification of ships and the number of permits issued for specific purposes as one of the gaps in the existing policies.

"I have discussed with them the importance of identifying the gaps organizationally, functionally, legally, and policy—and practice-wise so that we can prevent another oil spill from happening again," Loyzaga said.

More than two months after a fuel tanker sank off the coast of Oriental Mindoro, the Philippine Coast Guard said the oil spill clean-

up was still ongoing.

The DENR estimated that a total of P7 billion worth of marine resources might potentially be affected by the massive oil spill.

"The total area extent of the three ecosystems (mangrove areas, seagrass beds and coral reefs) that fall within the oil spill trajectories across the three provinces is estimated to hold an economic value of around P7 billion," the DENR Biodiversity Management Bureau said, referring to the provinces of Oriental Mindoro, Palawan and Antique.

However, the actual value of the habitats affected by the spill has yet to be determined, as it would be based on on-ground validation through habitat impact assessments and further economic valuation exercises.

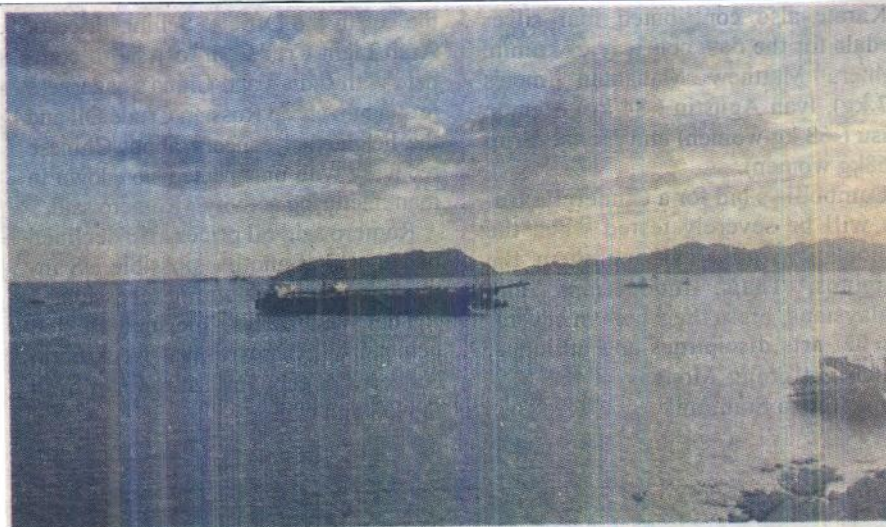
Liza Osorio, legal and policy director of Oceana Philippines, in a webinar pointed out that based on Republic Act No. 9483, the liability of oil spill pollution from ships could be measured through the cleanup operations expenses at sea or on shore.

The damages also include expenses for preventive measures, consequential loss or loss of earnings suffered as a direct result of an incident, and the pure economic loss or loss of earnings sustained by the fisherfolk and tourism sector. INQ



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ANOTHER OIL SPILL. A photo of the capsized MV Hong Hai 189 which has sunk in waters off Bataan. The Philippine Coast Guard said the vessel released about 30 to 50 liters of oil and other mixed substances. [PCG Facebook page](#)

Coast Guard: Capsized dredger sinks, spills oil off Bataan waters

By Charles Dantes

THE Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) said Sunday that the capsized MV Hong Hai 189 has sunk in waters off Mariveles, Bataan, and released

about 30 to 50 liters of oil and other mixed substances.

The MV Hong Hai, a Sierra Leone-registered dredger, sank 400 yards away from Sisiman Lighthouse in

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Coast... From A1

Mariveles at around 5:21 a.m. on Saturday, after colliding with the MT Petite Soeur, a Marshall Island-flagged chemical and oil product tanker in the waters off Corregidor Island.

PCG Station Bataan and the Marine Environmental Protection Unit helped install oil spill booms and absorbent bags.

The PCG reported the collision of the two vessels on April 29. Three people died, two were still missing, while 15 others were rescued.

The MV Hong Hai 189 came from Botolan, Zambales and had 20 crew members on board. The MT Petite Soeur left the port of Mariveles, Bataan before the incident, the PCG said.

Earlier, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) said they are mapping out plans to help local government units affected by the massive oil spill in Oriental Mindoro last February.

DILG Secretary Benjamin Abalos, Jr. has recommended to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. that fishing areas be shared after meeting with local leaders and affected fishermen in the area.

"The DILG and BFAR will adopt a cluster approach to ensure that all affected fishers will have a place to go and congestion in one fishing area will be avoided," Abalos said.

The DILG chief said affected municipalities of San Teodoro and Baco may do their fishing in the municipal waters of Paluan and Abra De Ilog in Occidental Mindoro. Tayabas Bay and Mindoro Strait are also proposed as fishing areas for the two affected municipalities.

On the other hand, those in Calapan City, Naujan, and Pola will also be allowed to go fishing in the municipal waters of Boac, Gasan in Marinduque, as well as Tayabas Bay.

Municipalities of Pinamalayan, Gloria, and Bansud can fish in the municipal waters of Concepcion in Romblon and portions of Mindoro Strait.

The last cluster, which includes fishermen of Bongabong, Roxas, Mansalay, and Bulalacao, can go fishing in Tablas Strait and the municipal waters of San Jose and Magsaysay in Occidental Mindoro.

Abalos said this sharing could go on until fish samples in the affected areas are okay.

Aside from identifying alternative fishing grounds, the DILG will also review policies on the management of municipal waters.



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OVER DESTRUCTION OF CORALS, SEAGRASS

EASTERN SAMAR TOWN EYES RAPS VS CHINESE VESSEL OWNER

By **Joey Gabieta**
@joeygabiettaINQ

GUIUAN, EASTERN SAMAR—Mayor Annaliza Gonzales-Kwan of this town has started looking into possible legal actions against the owner and crew of a Chinese vessel that ran aground off Sulangan Island last April 19.

While there was no oil spill in the area, Gonzales-Kwan said that MV Zhe Hai 168, manned by an all-Chinese 20 crew members, damaged coral reefs and other marine resources, the amount of which has yet to be determined by authorities.

“We will only learn the extent of the damage to our coral reefs and seagrass once MV Zhe Hai 168 is completely refloated. They (ship owner and crew members) have to pay us, especially that Guiuan is a protected area,” she said in an interview on May 2.

Master divers

MV Zhe Hai 168, loaded with 55,000 metric tons (MT) of nickel ore valued at P300 million, was on its way to China from Homonhon Island, also in Guiuan town, when it encountered a strong sea current that drove the ship to a



STUCK MV Zhe Hai 168 remains in shallow waters off Sulangan Island in Guiuan, Eastern Samar, as shown in this April 28 photo, nine days after it ran aground and damaged corals in the area. —PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GUIUAN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

shallow portion of the sea.

Gonzales-Kwan said dive masters would be needed to refloat the vessel led by Capt. Shangjun Jiang and it would likely take weeks to do so due to the strong water current in the area.

“MV Zhe Hai 168 ran aground where the mouth of the Pacific Ocean is. That was why divers found it hard to refloat the vessel because of the strong current,” she said.

Emir Mineral Resource Corp., which operates on Homonhon Island where the nickel ore was

extracted, sought the services of SMIT Salvage Singapore which subsequently contracted its local partner, the Manila-based Malayan Towage and Salvage Corp., to refloat the ship.

Past incidents

Gonzales-Kwan said she was informed that at least 14,000 MT of nickel ore inside the vessel have to be unloaded during the refloating process estimated to be completed on May 23.

The Chinese captain and crew members of the vessel

opted to stay inside MV Zhe Hai 168 while waiting for the refloating procedures.

This was not the first time that a Chinese vessel encountered a problem in the waters off Guiuan’s island village of Suluan.

On Jan. 26, Kai Dai 899, a vessel with seven Chinese crew members, also drifted off the island.

In August 2021, Chinese vessel MV Ambition Journey, which was also hired by Emir Mining, ran aground off Sulangan Island due to engine trouble.

The local government was able to collect P11 million from Emir Mining for the damage the vessel caused to coral reefs. Of the amount, P5 million went to the local government, P1 million to Sulangan village and the remaining P5 million to the Guiuan Protective Management Office.

The Guiuan Protected Landscape and Seascape, also known as the Guiuan Marine Reserve, covers the Guiuan Island Group located off the coast of Guiuan town. The town’s water was re-proclaimed as a protected landscape/seascape in 1994 under the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 1992. INQ



'House fast-tracking bill on salt industry revival'

BY JOVEE MARIE N. DELA CRUZ

@joveemarie

THE House of Representatives is now fast-tracking its deliberations on a substitute bill aimed at boosting domestic salt production, in support of the government's drive to save this dying industry, a senior lawmaker said on Sunday.

Camarines Sur Rep. LRay Villafuerte said that a technical working group (TWG) of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food has been "working double-time" on the draft substitute bill proposing a comprehensive plan to revitalize the salt industry.

Villafuerte expressed the hope that the committee would be able to endorse to the plenary soon enough a final bill revitalizing the salt industry, in time for its House approval before the 19th Congress ends its first regular session on June 2.

This substitute measure being drafted by the panel is a consolidation of six same-topic bills, including House Bill (HB) 7357, which Villafuerte had introduced with fellow CamSur Reps. Luis Miguel Villafuerte and Hiyoshi Anthony Horibata plus Bicol Saro Rep. Brian Raymund Yamsuan.

"Considering the expansive coastlines of the Philippines, it truly baffles us why our archipelago was reported in 2021 to be producing only 7 percent of the national salt requirement and importing the other 93 percent equivalent to around 550,000 MT [metric tons]," he said. "Hence, we are hoping that new legislation would enable our moribund salt industry to become competitive once more in both the domestic and international markets."

"Our goal is for the Congress to help the Marcos administration revitalize the local salt industry by providing it with the right government support services for its protection and direction, specifically those that involve production and development."

The revival of the salt industry is one of the priority measures of

President Marcos.

Both chambers of the Congress are on their summer break and are set to reopen on Monday.

Villafuerte traced the local salt-making industry back to the 18th century, saying there was a time when Las Piñas and Malabon were the top salt producers before Pangasinan eventually became the country's leading area for salt production.

Among the topics discussed by the TWG during its recent second meeting were the identification of priority areas for salt production, requirements for the exportation of local salt, possible tax breaks and the implementation of the salt iodization law or Republic Act (RA) 8172.

During that second TWG meeting, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Officer-in-Charge (OIC) Demosthenes Escoto said one of the goals in reviving the industry is to raise domestic production of salt, which is 11 percent locally produced and 89 percent imported.

Escoto had supported the proposals to reclassify salt as an agricultural commodity instead of as a mineral, and to place the salt industry under the supervision of BFAR.

At the same meeting, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary Ignatius Rodriguez did not object to this proposal to place the salt industry under the jurisdiction of BFAR.

Masterplan

IN HB 7357, Villafuerte and its three other authors have proposed the creation of an interagency Philippine Salt Industry Development Council (PSIDC) to craft a 5-year masterplan to expand areas devoted to salt-making, boost domestic salt output, promote investments in this sector and market Philippine products made from this essential nutrient, among others.

As proposed by Villafuerte's group, the PSIDC will craft a Philippine Salt Industry Development Roadmap (Roadmap) comprising programs and projects for the development and management, processing, utilization, business devel-

opment, and commercialization of Philippine salt.

This proposed PSIDC will provide the overall policy and program directions and coordinate the activities of the various agencies and instrumentalities to ensure the implementation, accomplishment, periodic review and enhancement of the road map.

Villafuerte said he and his fellow authors have proposed that the road map focus on expanding salt-producing areas, ensuring sustainable production and harvesting in these areas, promoting investments in salt industry development programs, advancing market access for Philippine salt products locally and internationally, and providing continuous training and capacity-building in salt industry development.

They also said the road map aims to extend technical and financial assistance for the development, processing, commercialization and marketing of Philippine salt products; require the use of locally-produced salt in the fertilization of coconut farms by the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA); provide technical and financial assistance in the local design and fabrication of high-capacity processing equipment for this industry; and develop categories of salt-farming areas into places for artisan salt production, gourmet salt production, iodized salt production and salt ecotourism sites.

Villafuerte had traced the decline of the salt industry to the ratification of the Philippines of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in 1994, which was seen as the reason for the influx of cheap salt imports and enactment of RA 8172, or the Act for Salt Iodization Nationwide Law in 1995, which required the addition of iodine to salt to address the country's micronutrient malnutrition.

"The capital requirement for the machinery and technology for salt iodization was a heavy burden for local salt makers, leading many of them to drop one by one and shift to other livelihood sources," said the authors in their bill.



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'UNRELENTING SALE' OF LEAD-BASED PAINT PRODUCTS DEPLORED

AN environmental group called out the "unrelenting sale" of spray paints with high lead content despite a national ban.

The EcoWaste Coalition said the leaded paints were actually being marketed as "lead-free."

In a statement, the group said that based on tests it conducted Monday, May 1, 2023, there were seven old and new variants of a paint brand on sale in Caloocan City that violated the ban on the use of lead on all types of paints as per Administrative Order 2013-24 or the Chemical Control Order for Lead and Lead Compounds of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

One of the items purchased was a medium yellow spray paint, which the government banned in 2020, along with 36 other aerosol paints, which allegedly exceeded the 90 parts per million (ppm) lead content limit.

According to the chemical screening performed by the group using a handheld Olympus M Vanta Series X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) device, the seven green and yellow paint products contained lead above 90 ppm.

The group said the old 400-ml spray paint carries the "no Pb" pictogram (Pb is the chemical symbol for lead), while the new 250-ml paint aerosol is labeled "lead free."

"The old variants, sold for a discounted price of P66.50 each (P95.00 before), were manufactured in 2020 and the new variants costing P68.00 each were manufactured in 2021 and 2022, way past the phase-out deadlines for lead-containing decorative paints in 2016 and lead-containing industrial paints in 2019," it said.

Both the old and new variants provided no information about the company that manufactured, imported or placed the product in the local market, as well as the country where the product was made.

According to independent laboratory tests commissioned by the EcoWaste Coalition in 2022, nine

* paint products were among the 85 analyzed with lead content ranging from 1,700 to 85,800 ppm.

Lead is a toxic metal used in paint to give it color, make it opaque, protect it from degradation due to exposure to sunlight, make it dry faster, and inhibit rust or corrosion.

Alternatives to lead-based pigments, driers and anti-corrosive agents are commercially available and have been used to produce lead-safe paints.

As stated in the 2022 report "Imported Lead-Containing Spray Paints Sold in the Philippine Market" published by the EcoWaste Coalition and the International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN),

"socially responsible paint manufacturers have shifted to non-lead pigments, driers and anti-corrosive agents in order to prevent children's exposure to lead from paints, as well as to reduce workers' exposures to lead-based paint hazards."

According to the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint, "lead can cause serious impacts on human health, including permanent brain and nervous system damage, problems with kidney function, and blood and reproductive damage," adding "children under 6 years of age, and pregnant women (whose developing fetus can be exposed) are especially vulnerable."

To protect vulnerable populations from lead exposure, the EcoWaste Coalition urged paint manufacturers, importers and distributors to only offer duly verified lead-safe products; retailers to only stock paints with no added lead and to take wrongly labeled lead-free paints off the shelves; online shopping platforms to delist non-compliant paint product listings; consumers to ask for and use lead-safe paints and contractors; and workers and others to refrain from disturbing surfaces coated with leaded paints and to observe proper lead-based paint removal to avoid scattering lead-containing paint chips and dust. **FRANCIS EARL CUETO**



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Maynilad projects underway to boost water supply amid El Niño

Maynilad Water Services Inc. said that various projects are underway to boost the water supply for its customers, particularly those in Las Piñas and Parañaque City, and minimize the impact of the El Niño phenomenon.

According to the water concessionaire, among the supply augmentation projects is the reactivation of eight deep wells.

As of March 2023, the eight deep wells

were generating at least 5.6 milliliters per day. Maynilad said it targets to source 32 mld from 66 deep wells by the end of the year.

Aside from the deep wells, Maynilad said it is also building at least four modular treatment plants in Cavite: two each in Imus and Bacoor.

"The two modular treatment plants

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from a creek that carries the runoff from BGC.

"I was intimately involved in the renovation and improvement of the water conservation/recovery system of the course in 2005 to 2015. In late 1998 to early 2000, we experienced a similar heatwave and water problem in the metropolis, and the authorities then began clamping down on water usage and golf courses were an obvious target..."

Raoul said they renovated the course and "increased the size of their aquifer capacity in four areas namely, lake/hole 14 - 10 million gallons, hole/lake 13 - two million gallons, hole/lake 16 - three million gallons, and utilized the old water tank on old hole 3 - two million gallons. This was precisely to store and reuse our water.

"The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) closed all the deep wells on the property so we had to find ways to store and more importantly reuse our water. We also built a wastewater treatment plant next to hole/lake 14, as it also was connected to the runoff area of BGC's canals. We also had an irrigation system installed that is computer driven to know exactly which areas of the course need more water so we do not waste water by just watering at random.

"In fact, Manila Golf was cited by no less than the NWRB for having a wastewater treatment facility to irrigate the golf course in 2008 and asked other golf courses to follow the design of our waste water treatment.

"All fairways and greens are self-reliant. We are only allowed to use water that went back into the ponds/lakes from rain and actual sprinkler use, as well as runoffs from BGC that were treated (grey water) and excess from the clubhouse kitchen and bath water drains.

"The only water we get from the concessionaire is for bathing and cooking for the clubhouse kitchen. And that's subsequently recycled."

I am told Wack Wack and Ayala Alabang have similar water systems. Maybe the MWSS official was thinking of the smaller golf courses, notably those with the military that must adjust their water use to this looming crisis.

Imagine this heat and not a drop to drink... or take a nice cool bath with. Water is now as precious as gold.

Boo Chanco's email address is bchanco@gmail.com. Follow him on Twitter @boochanco



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in Imus will be operational within 2023 while the two modular treatment plants in Bacoor will be operational by the fourth quarter of 2024," Maynilad said.

Maynilad said that the Anabu modular treatment plant will generate 5.5 mld by May 2023 and 18 mld by September 2023; Julian modular treatment plant, four mld by October 2023; Molino modular treatment plant, five mld by the third quarter of 2023; and Ligas modular treatment plant, 18 mld by the fourth quarter of 2024.

It said that a new water treatment plant will be built in Parañaque City that can generate at least five mld.

According to Maynilad, efforts are also being made to recover water from leak repairs and replacement of old pipes.

"At least 64 mld were generated from January to April 2023. The target recovery by yearend is 100 mld, 79 mld from the north, like the Angat-Ipo water system and 21 mld from the south," Maynilad said.

Maynilad said that it is also tapping the cross border supply through the purchase of treated water from Manila Water by tapping points in the distribution system.

"To date, at least 24.65 mld were generated from five tapping points as there are plans to increase volume purchased with cooperation of Manila Water," it said.

At the same time, Maynilad said that it is now developing the Poblacion Water Treatment Plant, the third treatment plant sourcing raw materials from Laguna Lake.

Maynilad said it targets to generate at least 50 mld from the Poblacion Water Treatment Plant and full 150 mld by first quarter of 2024.

In an earlier interview with **The STAR**, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) Administrator Leonor Cleofas said that the agency does not see a possible water shortage after the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) raised the El Niño alert amid the threat of the dry spell.

According to the weather bureau, El Niño will start in June, July and August and may persist until the first quarter of 2024.

Cleofas added that Metro Manila customers, particularly those being serviced by Maynilad, will not experience another rotating water interruption.

"If ever, the worst-case scenario is there will be a decrease in the water pressure," Cleofas said.

Cleofas added that while the National Water Resources Board only approved the 52 cubic meters per second (cms) allocation until May, the MWSS regularly conducts assessments on the water level of Angat Dam.

"Even though the approval of 52 cms is up to May, we regularly meet every two weeks to assess the current situation. So, ahead of time we will be able to really assess the current situation at Angat Dam," Cleofas added.

Maynilad customers in Manila, Quezon

City, Makati, Caloocan, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Navotas and Malabon; the cities of Cavite, Bacoor and Imus and the towns of Kawit, Noveleta and Rosario in Cavite had experienced at least eight to 14 hours of daily water cut off



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in the latter part of March and first two weeks of April.

"As of now, we don't see a possible water shortage, but we still need to be concerned about water conservation as based on the projection of PAGASA, the impact of El Niño will be on the later part of this year and next year. We will have an opportunity to refill our dams," Cleofas said.

As of 6 a.m. on Sunday, the water level of Angat Dam dropped to 194.04 meters or 0.16 meters less compared to its previous level of 194.20 meters.

Angat Dam supplies more than 90 percent of Metro Manila's potable water needs and provides for the irrigation needs of 25,000 hectares of farmlands in Bulacan and Pampanga.

Fishers' group worry over El Niño

Meanwhile, a leader of fishers' group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) yesterday expressed apprehension at the impending impact of the El Niño phenomenon on the country's fisherfolk.

In a radio interview, Pamalakaya national chairperson Fernando Hicap said the livelihood of fisherfolk was already affected by the reclamation and dredging at Manila Bay.

"This early, we are already worried about the effect of El Niño on the survival of fishermen amid the high cost of living, and the limited areas where small fishers can fish because of various municipal ordinances," Hicap said.

He added that fishers already lost 80 percent of their source of income amid the ongoing reclamation projects at Manila Bay.

"El Niño will exacerbate the situation of the fisherfolk. It will result in hunger for many fishers," Hicap said.

"We've been pushing for a P15,000 subsidy so that we can afford to go to the deeper part of the oceans where the fish are located," he added.

Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources chief information officer Nazario Briguera has warned of increased incidents of red tide and fish kill amid the impending occurrence of El Niño.

"Red tide is a natural phenomenon. What we can only do is close monitoring of fishing areas to ensure that these are negative of the red tide, and if there is an outbreak of red tide, we can immediately issue a warning to the public," Briguera said.

He added that only shellfish and *Acetes sp.* or *alamang* are affected by toxic red tide.

"Other marine resources are safe for human consumption," Briguera added.

At the same time, he said that fish kill occurs due to the drop in the level of water in the fishponds.

"This happens when the water level in the fishponds drops, causing the dissolved oxygen level to also decrease," Briguera added.

He gave assurance that mitigating measures are in place to prevent the incidents of fish kill.

- Bella Cariaso



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Water: Precious as gold

We take water for granted because we think we have so much of it.

True, we have a lot of fresh water we are just throwing out to the Pacific Ocean, reason enough to build that Kaliwa Dam so thirsty Metro Manila can use that precious resource. But we can't seem to get the political will to do that. I imagine we are also wasting so much water in many other parts of our country due to the absence of proper water infrastructure.

Singapore, a country whose size is a lot smaller than Mega Manila, gets its water from Johor, Malaysia. The Malaysian

DEMAND AND SUPPLY



BOO CHANCO

government would sometimes threaten to cut off the water lifeline for political or economic reasons. The Singaporeans recognize this vulnerability and have treated water availability as a national security concern.

For a country that has no watersheds, Singapore has become the model of water management for Southeast Asia. Singapore also has the largest desalination plant in the region.

On the other hand, we in Metro Manila are almost totally reliant on Angat Dam that sits on top of an active earthquake fault line.

The Singaporeans tackled their water problem in a systematic and scientific way. The whole island of Singapore is a catchment for rainwater. That means the rainwater that drains from the streets and elsewhere ends up in a reservoir. Sewage or used water is recycled and treated into ultra-clean, high-grade reclaimed water, cushioning Singapore's water supply against dry weather and moving Singapore towards water sustainability.

They call the recycled water NEWater, and NEWater is added into raw water reservoirs. The blended water undergoes further treatment in conventional waterworks to create drinking water. NEWater was introduced to the Singaporean public in 2003.

An international group of experts in engineering, biomedical sciences, chemistry, and water technology also found that NEWater's quality was consistently safe and high, and well within the WHO and US EPA's requirements for drinking water. Singapore is one place where you can drink the water from your hotel bathroom faucet.

The World Resources Institute, World Bank, and even the newly approved Philippine Sewage and Sanitation Master Plan completed in 2020 already identified NCR/Calabarzon and Central Luzon as areas with acute water crisis... and what are we doing about it? Absolutely nothing. That's what we get for electing idiots.

As Angat also supplies the irrigation requirements of Bulacan, a drought situation will mean that our farmers in Bulacan (and parts of Pampanga) may be told not to plant for their second cropping season to ensure water for Metro Manila. This will impact on the livelihood of those farmers, food security, and prices.

The only new water infrastructure for Metro Manila is Ricky Razon's Wawa dam. The first phase of 80 million liters per day can start operations either this month or next. Balance in 2025. But that's just the weir or water collection. We still need a treatment plant and about five kilometers of conveyance pipes.

Water availability is also a critical consideration for attracting potential foreign investors. Water is an element in semiconductor manufacturing. Water is critical to steel plants since steel-making equipment all needs to be water-cooled. While steel plants do not need super clean water, lack of water can stop the operations of steel mills.

Weirdly enough, the Manila Observatory actually projected that Region 3 and NCR may receive higher than average rainfall over the next 25 years. But without the proper infrastructure to store and manage this water, water availability will continue to be a concern. Our water problem is not because of scarcity, but bad government management.

El Niño will just make bad water management more severely felt by us.

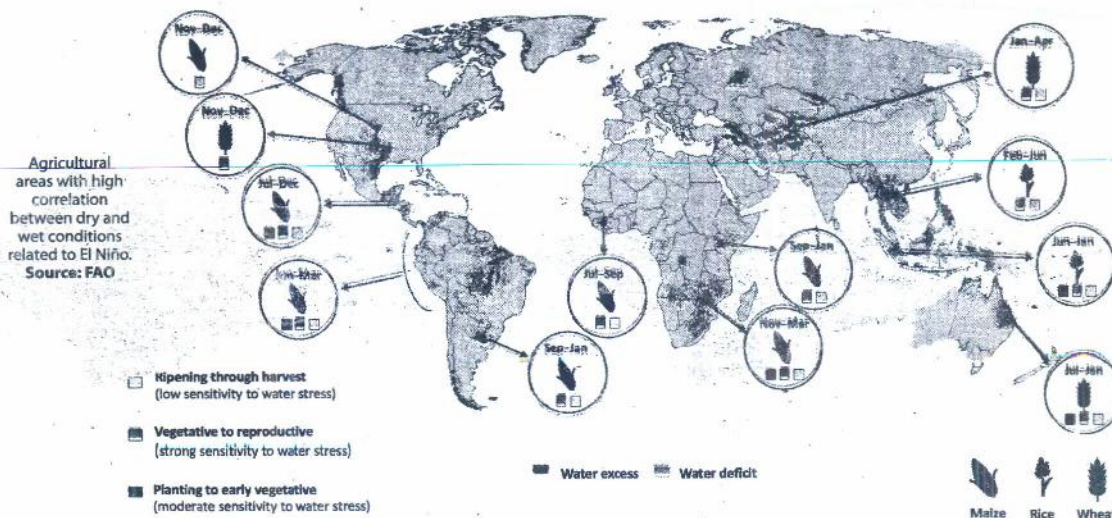
But there is good news. Raoul Romulo, a not-so-distant cousin on my mother's side from Camiling, Tarlac, wrote to let me know that as far as the Manila Golf Club is concerned, the greens are watered by a system of reclaimed water, including



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FAO maps out El Niño regions, readies actions to reduce risks

FAO maps out El Niño regions, readies actions to reduce risks

ROME—The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is mapping out the areas in the globe that are especially vulnerable to El Niño and preparing actions that could be taken to mitigate its risks.

The FAO noted that the protracted three-year presence of La Niña is leaving the global atmospheric scene and is making way for a likely imminent transition to El Niño, a meteorological event that typically distributes weather patterns in the opposite way.

La Niña has brought relief for some drought-afflicted areas such as the Horn of Africa, but the opposite weather phenomenon could spell trouble for other parts of Africa, Central America and Far East Asia.

According to a new report by FAO, Southern Africa, Central America and the Caribbean and parts of Asia are of particular concern, as a number of countries in these regions already face high levels of acute food insecurity and key cropping seasons fall under the typical El Niño weather

patterns of drier conditions.

Northern areas of South America are also at risk to potential dryness, while Australia normally experiences suppressed rainfall.

“Early warnings mean that we have to take early and anticipatory action, and we will support our Members in these efforts, to the full extent resources allow,” said Rein Paulsen, head of FAO’s Office for Emergencies and Resilience.

In the wake of the El Niño episode of 2015 and 2016, which affected over 60 million people in around 23 countries, FAO has carefully worked with member-nations—including many of those where food security is likely to be impacted by the coming El Niño—and other UN agencies to establish action plans and protocols.

Standard operating procedures have been crafted to expedite timely interventions such as setting up community seed stores, assessing strategic food reserves and bolstering animal health surveillance campaigns.

FAO has developed anticipatory action protocols for drought in Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger, southern Madagascar, Malawi, Zimbabwe, the Philippines, Pakistan and in Central America, and is ready to act early should the forecasts materialize.

Given the most recent forecasts that have raised the likelihood of an El Niño event occurring from June onwards,

FAO is already setting in motion initial preparations to support affected countries.

“Forecasts at this point are clear but inevitably can only be put forth with low confidence due to their low power during the May-June-July period,” explained Oscar Rojas, FAO agro-meteorologist.

El Niño events typically occur every two to seven years, with La Niña episodes and neutral conditions filling the years in-between. Catalyzed by a warming of Pacific Ocean waters, El Niño has a major influence on temperature and precipitation patterns over many parts of the world, driving extreme weather events including drought, flooding and storms.

While El Niño events and impacts are never alike, the broadly typical patterns enhance predictable regional consequences. FAO’s approach has been to map changes in vegetation conditions across the globe’s croplands and combine this analysis with crop calendars to better understand how rainfall deficits may affect production—the effects of water stress vary throughout a crop’s life cycle. This approach helps identify areas at higher risk, or those where dry conditions impact the entire crop cycle, and guides the type of interventions that should be implemented.

Under the standard operating procedures for early action to El Niño/La Niña episodes by the UN Interagency Standing Committee, anticipatory action initiatives

advance in step with the likelihood that an El Niño event is brewing. FAO, OCHA and the WMO together with other partners are monitoring the situation to determine the countries at highest risk later in the year.

While rain will be a welcome relief to farmers in Argentina and Near East Asia, El Niño can also cause severe flooding, which can harm agriculture and increase the risk of disease. That’s a particular risk FAO has examined in relation to East Africa, which has faced four years of extreme rainfall deficits and where recovery will at any rate take a long time even if rainfall finally returns.

Australia, Brazil and South Africa, all major cereal producers and exporters, are among the countries at risk of dry conditions, as are a host of other countries in Central and West Africa, Southeast Asia and the Caribbean.

The inverse risk of excessive rainfall holds for exporters such as Argentina, Turkey and the United States of America, as well as for countries in Central Asia.

El Niño typically raises the global average temperature and was associated with the record high registered in 2016, when various carbon-releasing calamities occurred, including forest and peatland fires in Indonesia and billions of trees decimated by drought in the Amazon.

FAO news



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Offshore miners' group says PHL on track for full economic recovery

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

[@jonlmayuga](#)

THE Philippines is on the right track to making a full economic recovery in the next five years, a group of offshore miners boldly predicted.

In a statement, the Offshore Mining Chamber of the Philippines Inc. (OMCPI) expressed confidence the Philippines is making headway to full economic recovery due to the new initiatives that the country's chief executive is aggressively taking in the field of clean energy transition and the critical green minerals it is employing to fight climate change.

OMCPI Chairman Michael Ray-

mond R. Aragon reacted to the statement of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. during his recent speech in the United States addressing the influential Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington before leaving for London to attend the coronation of King Charles.

"The Clean Energy Transition [CET] that the world is attempting to do in our common fight [against] Climate Change will pave the way to our country's full economic recovery in the next five years of the Marcos administration," Aragon predicted.

"To advance our common climate agenda...energy and green metals cooperation is an important piece of our engagement and must be prioritized,"

Marcos was quoted as saying.

"As President Marcos accurately declared in his CSIS speech in Washington recently that critical green minerals like cobalt and nickel just to name a few that the world critically needs to transition from dirty to clean energy source is abundant in the Philippines," Aragon said.

"Our country is so blessed with these critical green minerals that humanity crucially needs in our clean energy transition to fight climate change and save mankind from species extinction," he added.

However, Aragon said these critical minerals must be mined in a clean and green way to protect the environment.

"Unfortunately, our country does not possess these highly advanced and expensive green technologies. Thus we need to partner with countries like Japan and the United States for the Philippines to be involved in this novel critical or rare mineral global trade and industry. The new blue economy sector [beyond just fishing] that our offshore mining chamber is helping to develop here locally is a cleaner mining option for these abundant critical green mineral resources that the Philippines can share with the whole world to fight the global climate emergency," Aragon said.

He said the organization supports the Marcos's initiatives to get the Philippines actively involved in this critical green mineral global trade and industry for the Philippines to recover economically "while in doing so we also help in the fight versus worldwide climate change."



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Clean, green initiatives breathe new life into City of Biñan

By RODERICK L. ABAD
CONTRIBUTOR
PHOTOS BY JERY JIMENEZ

BESIDES the iconic puto—apparently with a lively festival dedicated to celebrate the city's popular delicious version of this native rice cake every 15th day of May—Biñan created much buzz with the so-called “Taal brick.”

This breakthrough Earth-friendly concrete product earned the attention not only here but also abroad when it gained extensive local and foreign media mileage right after the eruption of the smallest volcano in the world last January 2020. The last time it erupted was in 1977.

Biñan was among the affected neighboring areas of Taal in Batangas when its world-renowned volcano erupted three years ago. A plume of steam and tephra blanketed this city and the surrounding areas with a thick layer of ash, mud and falling debris speckled by the explosion of its main crater from magmatic and hydrovolcanic activity. Seeing a silver lining from the situation back then, the visionary mayor of Biñan, Atty. Walfredo R. Dimaguila Jr., was innovative and resourceful enough to turn the tragedy into an opportunity. In fact, he asked the City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO), led by Rodolfo V. Lee, to try mixing the ashfall with other raw materials of the eco brick produced at the Biñan City Centralized Material Recovery, Waste Processing and Transfer Station Facility or the Ecopark.

“We did it and had it tested by an independent testing company and by the Department of Science and Technology. And yes, it's stronger compared to a commercial brick,” he told in mixed English and Tagalog during an interview with the BusinessMirror. “That was the time when Biñan became more popular.”

Environmental degradation
THE fame that Taal brick brought to Biñan is a product of the hard labor, bold efforts and, of course, creativity of the succeeding administrations. They brought the city back to life with a clean surrounding and healthy environment.

Down memory lane, Biñan also had its share of the solid waste problem faced by many local government units (LGU) in the county at the turn of the century. Managing it well became a pressing concern as rapid urbanization and

industrialization amid population explosion resulted in a garbage crisis.

This could be attributed to the lack of environmental laws, according to Lee. Per relevant provisions of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Government Code, the LGUs are mainly responsible for handling solid waste in their areas of jurisdiction. But the absence of a national framework on waste management led to deficient waste disposal practices of the localities.

“So there were no guidelines. That's why indiscriminate dumping or throwing of waste was very rampant,” he said.

Proof of which were the dirty roads and other public places and clogged drainage canals and waterways filled with a massive volume of waste dumped. Not to mention, of course, was the toxicity of its contaminants that jeopardized the peoples' health and polluted the air, land and water.

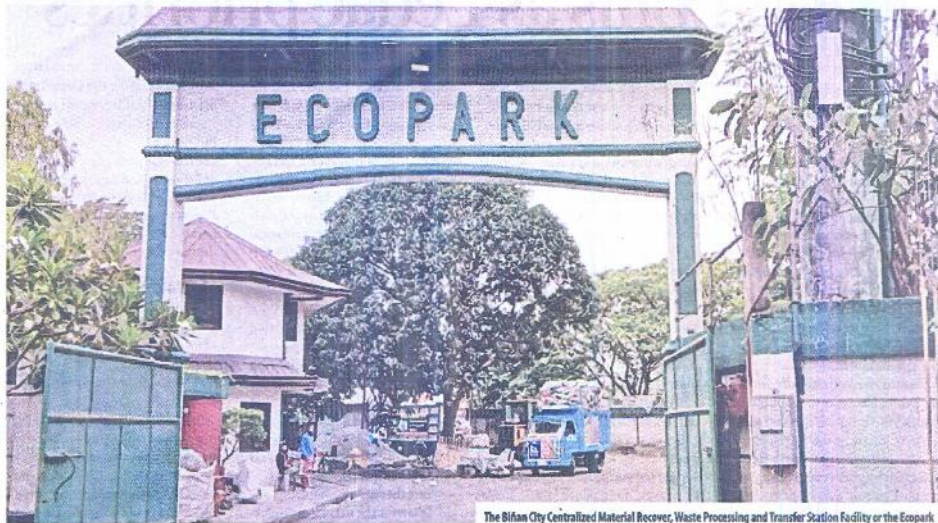
To address these problems, the national government enforced the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (Republic Act or RA 9003), Clean Water Act (RA 9275) and Clean Air Act (RA 8749) to shield both the environment and public health.

The rise of Ecopark

In compliance with these “green” policies and support to the protection of the environment and the Manila Bay Clean Up, Rehabilitation and Preservation Programs, Biñan implemented several eco measures in its own way.

“Little by little, we crafted our 10-year Solid Waste Management Plan. So we had guidelines to follow and now being implemented,” Lee emphasized.

Pursuant to RA 9003 that provides for the establishment of an LGU Material Recovery Facility (MRF), such an amenity came into being in 2005. A few months after it became operational, however, it broke down and was left non-functional. Good thing its rehabilitation came during the time of Congresswoman Marilyn “Len” Alonte-Naguilat. It was realized until Mayor Dimaguila



The Biñan City Centralized Material Recovery, Waste Processing and Transfer Station Facility or the Ecopark

Jr. ordered in 2017 its revival to what it is today—the Ecopark.

Seated on a 5,000-square meter (sq m) parcel of land owned by the city government in Brgy. Timbao, this P18 million facility serves the communities in Biñan. With its institutionalization, the City Hall equipped it with modern equipment and machineries such as conveyor belts for sorting, pressurized sanitizer sprayer for treating garbage, a payloader, heavy duty shredding machines, mechanized concrete product maker and plastic densifier used for recycling/converting refuse, specifically plastic waste, into useful products or as raw materials for the production of concrete products.

The collection and disposal of solid waste in Biñan is handled by the barangays, LGU and a private contractor. Apart from the city's centralized Ecopark and composting facility as well as trash collecting vehicles, all communities have their own MRFs and garbage trucks.

How does the Ecopark work? Basically, the plastic wastes that are brought to the Ecopark by the city and community garbage collectors undergo final sorting. They are then shredded and used as raw materials for the production of eco bricks like Taal brick, hollow blocks, and pre-cast fences, among others.

The production of the concrete products here takes a maximum of three days a week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday). On a daily basis, it runs at eight to 10 hours, depending on the demand for the product.

Capacity-wise, the Ecopark can accommodate 75 tons of solid waste every day. In terms of production, it can make up to 7,000 eco bricks or 2,000 hollow blocks per day (10-hour) of operation. From July 2017 to June 2021, the facility already produced more or less 1,231,750 eco bricks and 240,000 hollow blocks.

What makes the eco brick pro-environment is its plastic component at 30 percent by volume or 0.0012 percent by weight which is equivalent to 0.03 kilogram. Thus, 210 kilograms of plastic wastes are diverted for a day's operation. Its spinoff, the revolutionary Taal brick, is composed of a mixture of the volcano's ashfall (40 percent), shredded plastics (30 percent), white sand (20 percent), and cement and water (10 percent).

“It's really innovative,” the CENRO official noted, adding that it's more economical or almost half the price of a commercial brick and brings savings to them. “We don't buy more sand with our utilization of the ashfall, residuals or shredded single use plastics as added raw materials.”

Apart from being an MRF, the Ecopark also doubles as a transfer station where the residual wastes brought by the city and barangay trash gatherers are subjected for last sorting and collection by the private garbage contractor for disposal into a sanitary landfill. It was designed in a way that the waste carried by the LGU garbage trucks are moved directly into those of the private garbage contractor so as to avoid the physical contact of the trash with the MRF's pavement/flooring. This is operational for 16 hours a day.

“Our Ecopark is budgeted from P4 million to P5 million per annum, including the brick-making component and operation of the MRF,” he shared.

To complement this, another transfer station was established in Bgy. Dela Paz. The LGU, likewise, built in 2016 a City Composting Facility located in Brgy. Langkwa, complete with two building structures (one funded by Environmental Management Bureau or EMB) and equipped with seven bioreactors (one donated by Sen. Cynthia Villar and two from the EMB), four shredding machines (two from EMB) and other composting equipment.



Almost all of the public school grounds in Biñan are made of the eco-bricks.



Biñan City Mayor Arnan Dimaguila inspects an eco-hollow block produced by the Ecopark facility.



Biñan City Environment and Natural Resource Officer Rodolfo V. Lee



The sacks of volcanic ash found in the background of this photo are mixed with shredded plastic waste and other garbage to produce those eco-bricks.



The City Government of Biñan recently inaugurated the Biñan City Command, Control & Communication Center which is made of eco-hollow blocks and bricks from the Material Recovery Facility of Biñan City.

A portion of the biodegradable waste generated in the City Public Market and Barangay Langkwa Market such as vegetable and fruit trimmings are processed into compost/soil conditioner in the latter facility and then tested by the DOST. On the average, this P2 million site can produce three tons of compost per month.

Job opportunities

THESE biological facilities not only help protect the environment, but also provide a green pasture for the people.

The Ecopark, for instance, is manned by 15 employees composed of sorters, machine and heavy equipment operators and helpers supervised by the CENRO. Eighty percent or 12 of them were former scavengers.

“In a way, it uplifts their status in life. From picking up garbage on the streets, they now have a stable job. And they are one of the priority beneficiaries for the city government's rising housing project—Villa Agulla—in Bgy. San Antonio,” Lee said.

The transfer station and the composting facility in Barangays Dela Paz and Langkwa are operated by the eight employees of the City Community Affairs Office and five workers under the CENRO, respectively.

Well managed city wastes

THEIR hard labor and dedication to work and mother nature are complemented well by the city government's proper implementation of the laws and constant environmental investments. These, in turn, have turned the table in so far as waste management is concerned.

“As present, the garbage situation here in



Biñan is okay,” he pointed out. “All the systems are in place. There's a budget allocation yearly and, then, the processes of innovations and initiatives are up and running unlike before. So there's no garbage crisis anymore.”

Based on the results of the city's Waste Analysis and Characterization Study, each Biñanense has 0.364 milligrams per capita waste generation daily. Given the latest official population count of 407,437, per the official census of the Philippine Statistics Authority in 2020, Biñan's waste generation is at 148,307 kilograms or roughly 150 tons per day.

But with the waste diversion initiatives, Lee estimated that roughly 60 percent or 90 tons of their wastes are diverted into useful things.

“Those are being sold in junk shops, reused and made into eco bricks at the Ecopark, and the compost produced in our composting facility, etc.,” he said, while citing the remaining 40 percent or 60 tons are disposed by the city's private hauler to its own landfill in Calamba. “So in that sense, the city has savings in waste disposal expenditures.”

Social ROI, future plans

BECAUSE the Ecopark was put up mainly to help resolve the piling garbage and environmental concerns, the top CENRO executive underscored its many social returns on investment (ROI).

Presently, almost all public schools grounds in the city were paved by the eco-

bricks, including the byproduct of the ashfall, produced in the facility and soon all sidewalks will follow. Together with the hollow blocks, they are similarly used by the barangays and homeowners' associations in their projects.

On the other hand, it also inspired the people, business establishments and industries to do their share by bringing their recyclable wastes to the facility. What's more, the proceeds of the Taal bricks brought by end-consumers and contractors were donated to the four towns badly hit by the eruption, namely, Agoncillo, Laurel, San Nicolas and Taal.

“Glad to see that there's a community participation in it. That's the social ROI. It's priceless,” Lee said, while revealing the city government's future plan to sell the eco-concrete products commercially once the adjacent 5,000 sq m property is acquired this year for the expansion of the facility.

“The contractors of city government's projects have agreed to patronize our products. So we will sell to them the excess supply to the LGU's requirements. Of course, that will be another income for the city, which can be used for the Ecopark's operational expenses. In that way, it will become self-sustaining,” he added.

These facilities are just some of the environmental initiatives of the City Government of Biñan. Others include the hiring of job order employees of the Task Force Linis Log and Linis Bayan, which clean the river, creeks, drainage canals and streets daily; establishment of barangay MRFs/ MRS and eco-gardens; as well as the City Organic Farm; installation of river trash traps and STPS in the City Public Market and City Hall Compound; energizing the city with 30 percent solar power, operation of an air quality monitoring equipment (Differential Optical Absorption Spectroscopy) installed by the ENR; implementation of livelihood program on water hyacinth and residual handicraft making under the Gender and Development Office; operation of mechanized street sweepers; relocation of informal settler families along riverbanks, coastline of Laguna Lake and danger areas; massive information and education campaign; as well as constant monitoring activities and enforcement of local environmental laws, such as the Anti-Littering Law, Segregation of Source, etc.

Such efforts earned for the City of Biñan its 2017, 2018 and 2019 Seals of Good Local Governance; the 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 Platinum Award on Manila Bay Rehabilitation Environmental Compliance Audit of the Department of Interior and Local Government; the 2019 Kampeon ng Laws Award given by the Laguna Lake Development Authority during the World Water Day Awards; the 2019 Best LGU Solid Waste Management Implementer in the Province of Laguna with Special Recognitions on Innovation/Initiatives on Recycling, Waste Diversion, and Residual Waste Management; and a recognition by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-EMB of the city for having an outstanding practice on Solid Waste Management Technology through its “Eco-bricks Making” project given last June 2021.

All these, plus the various green endeavors in the pipeline, indeed, are a testament that the “City of Life” that is Biñan is alive and kicking.



A worker inspects the shredded plastic waste and garbage before it is mixed with the volcanic ash.



This is the machine that produces the eco-bricks.



The City of Biñan was conferred the MANILA BAYAN Awari in the city category in 2022 for its contribution in the rehabilitation and protection of the Manila Bay watershed.



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Bike park rises at former Payatas dump

The Quezon City government has opened a new bicycle park and trails at the Payatas Controlled Disposal Facility (PCDF) as part of its bid to provide more green and open spaces for residents.

Following its closure in 2010, the PCDF is being developed by the city government as a public recreational area in line with Mayor Joy Belmonte's 14-point agenda to build a liveable, green and sustainable city.

The city government said that aside from the bike park, the PCDF will also have a bamboo park, a dog park, an open-air museum and a plant nursery, among others.

In 2020, Belmonte created a technical working group tasked with the redevelopment of the former dump into a public open space for recreational and environmental awareness purposes.

"The (PCDF) Bike Park is proof to the

international community that Quezon City can create a safe and green community. From being an area of mounds of garbage, the facility is now pleasant and safe for recreational activities," Belmonte said in a statement in Filipino yesterday.

The PCDF Bike Park will have four designated routes utilizing its asphalt roads and off-road trails.

These include a 900-meter "beginner route" with three detours leading to "view deck route" with a scenic view of the park.

The other two routes are the "beginner trail" and the "perimeter trail," which feature trails for mountain biking, gravel routes and mild steep ascents and descents.

The city government said that to date, it has established 167 kilometers of protected national and city bike lanes as well as 15 bike ramps strategically located in

the city's overpasses and underpasses.

As of April, the city has over 200 parks and open spaces. The goal of Belmonte's administration is to double this number by 2030.

The city government said its engineering department, together with private partner Woodfields Consultants Inc., is conducting a geotechnical investigation and slope stability analysis of the PCDF to ensure the safety of the area.

The city government said that the analysis, so far, revealed that under normal conditions with no extensive rainfall or any seismic activity, the "Old Mound" and portions of the landfill can be utilized for various activities such as biking, jogging and zumba, "but with strict limitations on the number of visitors to avoid crowding."

— Elizabeth Marcelo



Toyota pushes for carbon neutrality on Earth Month

A GROUP of volunteers led by Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. (TMP) headed to the coast of Lian, Batangas for a mangrove-planting activity as part of the "All-Toyota Green Wave Project" (Green Wave).

This project is TMP's expansive and multisectoral effort toward carbon neutrality (CN) and biodiversity conservation within the company's network amid the serious threat of global climate change.

In observance of Earth Month, TMP gathered over 50 volunteers from its own workforce, parent company, subsidiaries, the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the local government unit (LGU).

The group, led by TMP President

Atsuhiko Okamoto, planted 5,000 mangrove propagules at Sitio Sulok, aiming to reforest a coastline that is part of the Verde Island Passage (VIP), which is considered as the world's center of the center of marine shore fish biodiversity.

"TMP's multi-pathway approach to CN goes back to Toyota's commitments announced in 2015 under the global 'Toyota Environmental Challenge 2050 (TEC 205)'. Under this, Toyota has outlined the company's targets to achieve zero CO2 emissions and net positive environmental impact by the year 2050," Okamoto said.

TMP has since 2020 adopted a 10-hectare mangrove plantation at Barangay Binubusan in Lian municipality. This adoption is under the National



■ Toyota Motor Philippines volunteers during the mangrove-planting activity in Lian, Batangas. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Greening Program, which is the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) nationwide reforestation program aimed at "involving and enhancing private sector participation towards carbon neutrality."

In collaboration with Lian's Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (Menro) and fisherfolk association, TMP has planted a total

of 20,000 mangrove propagules and is nearing project completion.

Lian Menro head Alvin Jonson said the project's success is linked to the mangroves' survival and maturity rate, as the reforested areas are expected to later contribute to livelihood of fisherfolks and serve as a natural barrier to protect nearby communities from calamities such as storm surges.



'Dangerous' heat experienced in 15 areas on May 7

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

Fifteen locations had heat indices above the "danger" threshold on Sunday, May 7, according to

the monitoring of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

PAGASA defines the heat **▶4**

'Dangerous' heat experienced in 15 areas on May 7 **1◀**

index as the measurement of how hot it feels when relative humidity is factored in with the actual air temperature.

The areas with the highest heat indices observed on Sunday were Dipolog, Zamboanga del Norte (45°C); Daet, Camarines Norte (44°C); Legazpi City, Albay (44°C); Zamboanga City, Zamboanga del Sur (44°C); Aparri, Cagayan (43°C); Iba, Zambales (43°C); Infanta, Quezon (43°C); Masbate City, Masbate (43°C); Roxas City, Capiz (43°C); Catarman, Northern Samar (42°C); Dagupan City, Pangasinan (42°C); Laoag City, Ilocos Norte (42°C); Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Pasay City (42°C); San Jose, Occidental Mindoro (42°C); and Sinait, Ilocos Sur (42°C).

PAGASA said heat indices between 42°C and 51°C carry impending

"danger" as "heat cramps and heat exhaustion are likely" and "heat stroke is probable with continued activity."

Based on PAGASA's data, the highest heat index recorded since March 1, 2023, was 49°C on April 16 in Guiuan, Eastern Samar.

In the next 24 hours, PAGASA said the Kalayaan Islands will have cloudy skies with scattered rain showers and thunderstorms due to a low pressure area.

It warned of moderate to occasional heavy rains that could cause flooding or landslides in the Kalayaan Islands.

Meanwhile, the rest of the country will continue to experience partly cloudy to cloudy weather with isolated rain showers or localized thunderstorms due to the easterlies.