

07 January 2023, Saturday



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



# DENR gets 'satisfactory' ARTA rating

BY BELLA CARIASO

**T**HE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) received a "satisfactory" rating of 89.78 percent in the 2022 Report Card Survey (RCS) 2.0 conducted by the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) in compliance with Republic Act 11032, or the "Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act."

RCS 2.0 is a tool that measures effectiveness of the Citizen's Charter in reducing regulatory burdens, and the impact of human resource

systems and programs in delivering efficient government service.

Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, through

Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and International Affairs Jonas Leones, said the entire DENR community was honored and grateful for the award.

Leones also said that the high score received by the Environment department in the ARTA survey was a clear indication that the agency was "on the right track in its goal to deliver excellent and efficient public service."

"With a score of 89.78 percent, the DENR is challenged to work even better to serve the Filipino people through prompt action on

transactions done in all our offices. We remain committed to our duties as public servants," Leones said.

RCS 2.0 has been under pilot implementation since it was launched in 2021 as a feedback mechanism to improve government services.

Under the RCS rating system, agencies with a rating of 95 to 100 percent are classified as excellent agencies; 90 to 94.99 percent, very satisfactory; 85 to 89.9 percent, satisfactory; 80 to 84.99 percent, compliant; and 75 to 79.99 percent, needs improve-

ment; 74.99 percent and below, requires thorough review of RA 11032 requirements.

The awards committee looked into three processes of the DENR National Capital Region, including the issuance of tree cutting and earth-balling permits, tree cutting permit for planted trees and application for chainsaw registration.

A total of 50 offices and agencies providing government services were subjected to the pilot implementation of the survey. These include 30 national government agencies, five government-owned

and -controlled corporations, five local government units, five state universities and colleges, and five government hospitals.

Government agencies that obtained a "very satisfactory" rating, or an RCS rating of 90 to 94 percent, and bagged the Silver Award were the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Government Service Insurance System, the University of the Philippines-Diliman and the Philippine Children's Medical Center. No agency qualified for the Gold Award.



# DENR welcomes 2023 with 89.78 rating

By Joel dela Torre

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will start the year with a "satisfactory" rating of 89.78 percent in the 2022 Report Card Survey (RCS) 2.0 - an accomplishment officials described as a challenge to work even better to serve the people.

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Antonia Loyzaga, through Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and International Affairs Jonas R. Leones, said the DENR community was honored and grateful for the award.

"With a score of 89.78 percent, the DENR is challenged to work even better to serve the Filipino people through prompt action on transactions done in all our offices. We remain committed to our duties as public servants," Loyzaga said.

For his part, Leones said that the high score received by the DENR in the ARTA survey was a clear indication that the agency was "on the right track in its goal to deliver excellent and efficient public service."

RCS 2.0 is conducted by the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) in compliance with Republic Act 11032, or the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018.

It is a tool that measures effectiveness of the Citizen's Charter in reducing regulatory burdens, and the impact of human resource systems and programs in delivering efficient government service.

Together with other top performing government agencies, the DENR was feted during an awarding ceremony held last December 19 in Pasay City. DENR received a Certificate of Recognition, a Certificate of Participation, and its report card.

A total of 50 offices and agencies providing government services were subjected to the pilot implementation of the survey. These include 30 National Government Agencies, five government-owned and controlled corporations, five local government units, five state universities and colleges and five government hospitals.

Under the RCS rating system, agencies with a rating of 95 to 100 percent are classified as Excellent agencies; 90 to 94.99 percent, Very Satisfactory; 85 to 89.9 percent, Satisfactory; 80 to 84.99 percent, Compliant; and 75 to 79.99 percent, Needs Improvement; 74.99 percent and below, Requires thorough Review of RA 11032 requirements.

For this year, the Awards Committee looked into three processes of the DENR National Capital Region, including the issuances of tree cutting and earth-balling permits, tree cutting permit for planted trees, and application for chainsaw registration.

Other government agencies recognized as "Satisfactory Agencies" and received an RCS rating of 85 to 89.9 percent were the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-IBIG Fund), Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital, Philippine Statistics Authority, Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, Valenzuela City, Cooperative Development Authority, Bureau of Internal Revenue, and Polytechnic University of the Philippines - Main Campus in Sta. Mesa, Manila.

Government agencies that obtained a "very satisfactory" rating or an RCS rating of 90 to 94 percent, and bagged the Silver Award were the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Government Service Insurance System, the University of the Philippines-Diliman, and the Philippine Children's Medical Center. There was no recipient of the Gold Award last year.



# Marcos hopeful of less tension in West PH Sea after China visit

By BETHEENA V. UNITE

BEIJING, China – President Marcos is hoping the harassment and tension in the West Philippine Sea will be lessened following his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Marcos revealed in an interview with the Philippine media delegation on Thursday, Jan. 5, that he proposed to Xi the establishment of a closer communication between the Philippines and China through teams that would have direct access to their respective presidents.

He brought this up hoping the incidents involving Filipino fishermen, the Coast Guard and Navy in the WPS

will be minimized.

“That’s entirely the point of having the bilateral team, that is continuing to discuss as I said, to raise the level of discussion into the ministerial level that have direct access to both Presidents,” he said. “The intention of course is to minimize all of these ‘incidents,’ sana mabawasan na yun (I hope it will lessen). And I think it will.”

The President also stressed the plight of Filipino fishermen—that they be allowed to fish in their natural fishing ground without being harassed by Chinese authorities at sea—is a “very important issue” that was discussed during his three-day

state visit here.

“Clearly, that’s a very important issue for us and siguro naman (perhaps) after we came to an agreement with President Xi—this is an important aspect of our relationship,” he said.

He further said the Foreign Affairs secretary and his Chinese counterpart “will finalize the organization of that and the situation of our fishermen.”

‘If you fly a rocket, tell us’

The chief executive said he wants both sides to have a team that could easily consult and report to their respective presidents any situation that may arise in the disputed waters in

order to arrive at a prompt resolution.

He noted that improved communication between the two countries would play a big role in case untoward incidents take place at sea.

“Ang aking proposal ay i-akyat ang mga member ng mga bilateral. Sabi ko ang maganda sana yung Chinese members of the bilateral group have direct access to the President; ako naman on my part, titiyakin ko ang bilateral team natin ay may direct contact sa akin para direktos para nothing could be lost in translation, hindi magkakaproblema sa misinformation na maaaring mangyari (My proposal is to elevate members of the bilateral team. I said it would

be good if Chinese members of the bilateral group have direct access to their President, while on my part, I will ensure that our bilateral team will have direct contact to me so nothing could be lost in translation and we won’t be facing problems on misinformation),” Marcos explained.

“Sabi ko gumawa tayo ng paraan para kung may problema from either side, magsasabi kami sa inyo. Sabihan n’yo rin kami agad, kung magpapalipad kayo ng rocket, sabihin nyo samin. Kung may bumagsak sa Pilipinas, ire-recover namin, wala naman kaming interes na itago ‘yan (I said let’s find ways so that when problems arise from either side, we will notify you. Let us also know immediately if you’ll fly a rocket, tell us. If something falls in Philippine territory, we will recover it, we have no interest in it, anyway),” the President stressed.

He said he was able to discuss this with Xi, saying “we talked about strengthening the communications between governments and also at the ministerial level and also at the Coast Guard and Navy level.”

After their bilateral meeting on Wednesday, Marcos disclosed that the Chinese President promised to find a compromise and solution so that Filipino fishermen will be able to fish in their natural fishing grounds.

Marcos concluded his three-day state visit to China on Jan. 5. He was the first state leader to visit the country this year and since China closed its doors due to Covid surge.

House Speaker Martin Romualdez said mutual respect and sincerity were evident when Marcos and Xi talked about the maritime dispute.

“Well the President was able to personally convey to President Xi, the concerns of the Filipinos, the fishery issues, the maritime claim issues,” Romualdez said. “These [are] very sensitive issues but it was brought up, you know, you know in an atmosphere of mutual respect and equality and that’s why this state visit was so successful because we could see the rapport, the personal exchanges between the two presidents, and the confidence.”

‘Risky’ move

Meanwhile, talks about joint oil and gas exploration in the West Philippine Sea is a “risky undertaking.”

In a statement, Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) spokesman Ronnel Arambulo voiced out the group’s disappointments, saying it is “simply enraging” how President Marcos can even consider having a joint venture with China.

“We reiterate our strong opposition on the planned joint oil and gas exploration with China in the West Philippine Sea. It is simply enraging to think that Marcos can comprehend entering a joint venture with a country that illegally occupies and plunders our territorial waters,” he said. “Marcos is quick to demonstrate his subservience and puppetry through his defeatist stance against China’s aggression in the West Philippine Sea. Similar to his predecessor (former president Rodrigo) Duterte, Marcos seems to set aside this pressing matter for the sake of securing foreign loans and investments from China with hefty and onerous terms of payments.”

During his visit to China, Marcos disclosed that the Philippine side asked for sovereign rights in the potential joint exploration.

“I think the central issue there is the difference between sovereignty and sovereign rights,” the President stated. “What we are asking for are sovereign rights. We are not demanding sovereignty over those areas. This is... the wiggle room that we have to negotiate with. I think that’s the direction that those talks would take.”

The fishers’ group, however, believes that “nothing favorable to the Philippines” could come out from the joint exploration.

“We assert that nothing favorable to the Philippines could come out from this joint exploration with China that blatantly disregards our sovereign rights and territorial integrity. Rather, this shady deal would only institutionalize and further the Chinese plunder of our marine and energy resources in the West Philippine Sea,” Arambulo stressed. “Instead, Marcos should make China pay for its destruction of our coral reefs and marine resources, as well as its illegal occupation of our sea features for a decade now. This risky undertaking must be opposed by local marine scientists and researchers as well, who for many years have been neglected of government support, hindering us to develop and utilize our own energy and mineral resources.” (With reports from Ellson A. Quismorio and Jel E. Santos)



MANILA BULLETIN  
JANUARY 7, 2023 GM

## Marcos' fruitful state visit to China enhances PH economic recovery efforts

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.'s state visit to China has yielded productive results that strengthen what he describes as "the positive trajectory" of the two countries' relationships. Since 2018, the Philippines-China relations had been elevated to the Comprehensive Strategic Cooperation phase.

The visit fortified the two countries' robust trade and investment partnerships. China is a leading import source for the Philippines and is also the second largest export destination. China has committed to increase agricultural imports from the Philippines, including durian, mango-steen, specialty rice varieties and fruits to bridge the current trade imbalance. In 2021, the Philippines imported \$26.8 billion worth of products, while exports to China were valued at \$11.5 billion.

In a series of roundtable meetings focusing on renewable energy, agri-business, nickel processing, battery and electric vehicle manufacturing, Chinese companies presented their investment plans in the Philippines, totaling US\$22.8 billion and trade purchase intentions of close to US\$2.1 billion.

President Marcos reported that his comprehensive discussion with President Xi on the overall state of bilateral relations between the Philippines and China covered important facets of bilateral relations, particularly agriculture, energy, infrastructure, trade and investment, science and technology, and people-to-people ties. Diplomatic relations between the two countries began in 1975 during the administration of President Ferdinand E. Marcos, Sr.

On the sensitive issue of the West Philippine Sea, the two leaders agreed to establish a more effective system of direct communication lines "at various levels up to the highest level...to avoid pos-

sible misunderstanding and miscalculation." An agreement has been signed between the two countries' foreign ministries that would operationalize "bilateral mechanisms to promote further mutual trust and confidence in each other," in dealing with issues in the disputed waters.

The two leaders witnessed the signing of 14 government agreements "that will broaden and deepen our ties in many vital important areas" including agriculture, education, energy, environment, infrastructure, science and technology, trade, and people-to-people exchanges, as well as new areas of cooperation, such as e-commerce, digital cooperation.

President Marcos also reported that "we agreed to resume discussions on oil and gas development and explore opportunities for renewable energy, such as solar, wind, photovoltaic energy, and even touched upon nuclear energy."

Aside from President Xi, President Marcos met with Premier Li Keqiang and "conveyed to him our country's openness to enhance the economic and socio-cultural aspects of our relationship." With Chairman Li Zhanshu of the National People's Congress, he discussed "how we could enhance cooperation between our two legislatures, building on the strength of party-to-party relations."

He conveyed an invitation to President Xi and Madame Peng Liyuan to visit the Philippines, too, while expressing regrets over his inability to meet with the Filipino community in Beijing on account of health and safety protocols arising from the coronavirus pandemic situation.

As his administration deals with external headwinds and internal bureaucratic challenges, President Marcos' productive visit to China provides the propulsion and impetus to further advance the country's economic recovery efforts.



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## Groups seek end to single-use plastics

ENVIRONMENTAL groups on Friday pushed for the elimination of single-use plastics with the start of the International Zero Waste Month.

The Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) Asia Pacific, EcoWaste Coalition, Mother Earth Foundation and Zero Waste Youth Volunteers held a flash mob at Trinoma, Quezon City to demand policymakers and businesses to eliminate the use and production of single-use plastics as part of the solution to the climate and plastic pollution crises.

"As a product of fossil fuels, plastic is one of the main drivers for the climate crises. Continued plastic production and consumption heats up global climate temperatures, depletes our resources, intoxicates the environment and creates public health issues, feeds incinerators, and chokes landfills and oceans," the group said.

GAIA is a network of grassroots groups as well as national and regional alliances representing more than 1,000 organizations from 92 countries advocating against incineration.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has yet to issue the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) 11898, or the "Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act of 2022."

The EPR law mandates big corporations to process their plastic packaging waste.

The DENR-EMB was tasked to formulate the IRR within 90 days after RA 11898 lapsed into law on July 23, 2022.

RA 11898 amended RA 9003, or the "Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000."

Under the new law, companies will have to establish EPR programs for plastic waste reduction, recovery and diversion.

Through EPR, "obliged enterprises," or through their producer responsibility organizations, will have to recover or offset their generated plastic product footprint by 20 percent in 2023 to 80 percent by 2028.

Among the plastic packaging covered by the EPR Law include single or multilayered plastics such as sachets, rigid plastic packaging products like food and drink containers, single-use plastic bags and polystyrene.

Penalties for the noncompliance of EPR duties range from P5 million to P20 million, or "twice the cost of recovery and diversion of the footprint or its shortfall, whichever is higher."

Apart from the EPR scheme, the law also reconstituted the composition of the National Solid Waste Management Commission and enhanced the functions and duties, and changing of guards of the National Ecology Center.

The law also provides for the expansion and simplification of fiscal incentive schemes to encourage stakeholder involvement both for solid waste management and EPR activities.

Meanwhile, the Pollution Adjudication Board is designated to resolve cases relating to EPR obligations under RA 11898. **BELLA CARIASO**



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# PH jobless rate falls to over 17-year low of 4.2% in Nov.

By CHINO S. LEYCO

**U**nemployment rate in November fell to its lowest level in over 17-years, signaling the strong recovery of the economy from the prolonged pandemic, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) said yesterday January 6.

The Philippine Statistics Authority reported on Friday, Jan. 6, that the level of joblessness dropped to 4.2 percent in November last year from 6.5 percent in the same month a year ago. It is also down from 4.5 percent in October.

The latest jobless rate was also the lowest since April 2005.

In a briefing, National Statistician Claire Dennis S. Mapa said wholesale and retail trade as well as manufacturing registered the highest month-

on-month increase in the number of employed persons.

Mapa also noted that employment in accommodation and food service activities; agriculture and forestry; and public administration and defense have also improved.

In terms of magnitude, there were about 2.18 million jobless Filipinos in November 2022. This was lower than the 2.24 million in October and 3.16 million a year earlier.

Accordingly, the employment rate increased to 95.8 percent or an additional 4.2 million persons. This brings the total employment to 49.7 million.

"The services sector continued to dominate the employment market, having the largest share of employed persons of about 60.5 percent. The agriculture and the industry sectors accounted for 21.4 percent and 18.1 percent of the employed persons,

respectively," Mapa said.

The country's labor force participation rate also picked-up at 67.5 percent in November, translating to about 51.88 million Filipinos 15-years old and above who were either employed or unemployed.

However, underemployed Filipinos, or those who are already employed full-time yet still looking for additional work, increased to 14.4 percent from 14.2 percent in October.

But this level was lower compared with 16.8 percent in November 2021.

NEDA Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan said the strong labor market signifies the steady recovery of the Philippine economy.

Balisacan said an additional 3.2 million Filipinos, of whom 2.5 million are women, entered the labor force. This development increased women's

labor force participation to 57.8 percent from 52.2 percent last year.

"We see a more dynamic labor market as flexible work arrangements and digitalization provide easier access to employment opportunities for Filipinos who also attend to other essential tasks such as parenting and pursuing higher education, among others," Balisacan said

"Creating an enabling environment to attract investments that can create more and high-quality employment while improving the employability of Filipinos are among the major strategies to advance economic and social transformation," he added.

The NEDA chief added that measures to attract investments include the upgrading and expanding of infrastructure, and improving regulatory and bureaucratic efficiency.



# Chinese firms to invest \$7.32 B in nickel, EV, steel, electronics projects in PH

By BERNIE CAHILES-MAGKILAT

Trade and Industry Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual reported that Chinese firms have committed to invest \$7.32 billion in nickel processing, power batteries, electric vehicles (EV), electronics, and steel as they got wind of the Philippines' plan to ban the export of raw minerals.

Pascual said that Chinese firms made the investment pledges during a Roundtable Meeting (RTM) on Strategic Industries during President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. visit to China. The roundtable was also attended by Former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, House Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, other members of the Cabinet, and representatives of Chinese businesses.

The RTM revolved around a discussion to encourage Chinese investments in the Philippines, particularly in strategic industries in the manufacturing sector. "In total, about \$7.32 billion investment pledges from Chinese companies were secured in the aforementioned sectors," said Pascual.

The Philippines supplies 60-70 percent of China's total imports of nickel ore and concentrates. Chinese companies are also increasingly interested in the Philippines' policy discussions on discouraging the export of unprocessed nickel ore.

"The processing of nickel and manufacturing of battery and e-vehicles are vital to the Philippines' economic transformation. Both sectors can create lasting impact on our country's industrialization, economic development,

clean energy future, and climate resilience," Pascual stated.

Moreover, Pascual boasted that the Philippines now has a healthy and competitive business environment that will enable strategic and sustainable manufacturing companies to thrive. He underscored that the Philippines is a key player in the green metals sector, which are vital to the global transition to clean energy, saying that, "the Philippines has over nine million hectares of land with mineral potential, 92 percent of which have yet to be responsibly utilized. We also have over 450 million metric tons of nickel reserves. Our country is home to nickel mines, nickel processing plants, and copper mines. And we are keen to have investments in value-adding mineral activities."

The metals industry is vital to the Philippine economy as it provides employment opportunities to a significant portion of the population, both directly and indirectly.

Further, the trade chief said that the metals industry spurs both national and regional development as companies also invest in infrastructures and other metals processing facilities.

Meanwhile DTI Undersecretary Ceferino Rodolfo led the Philippine business delegation in a site visit to the wafer fab facility of Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corporation (SMIC) during the President's visit.

During the visit, Rodolfo reported that SMIC mentioned their interest to partner with the Philippines to promote the development of the communications technology sector and contribute in the digital transformation of the Philippines.

SMIC is one of the lead-

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ing foundries in the world and the largest wafer fab business in China. They are also considered as a frontrunner in manufacturing capability, scale, and comprehensive service within the Chinese Mainland.

The factory visit was arranged through FiberHome, a major Chinese networking and telecommunication equipment provider, which is a sister company of SMIC. Wuhan FiberHome International Technologies Co. Ltd.

Chairman Taurus Fan led in welcoming the DTI representatives and members of the Philippine business delegation to Beijing.

FiberHome continues its expansion in the Philippines, which started in 2011. The Company now has 14,967 Filipino employees (out of a total of 15,340), 110 offices, and 58 warehouses, with their Fiber To The Home (FTTH) systems/devices reaching about 10 million Filipino homes.





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## Globe greens more sites

By EMMIE V. ABADILLA

Globe Telecom Inc. has shifted ten more of its facilities in Luzon and Visayas to renewable fuel, bringing the total of its clean energy sites to 24 to date.

To reduce carbon emissions, Globe recently partnered with ACEN, the renewable energy platform of the Ayala Group, to run its Cavite, Cebu, Quezon City, Manila, Marikina, and Laguna sites on clean energy.

Aside from The Globe Tower in Taguig, the telco has other facilities already running on green energy, six in Quezon City, five in Cavite, three in Cebu, two in Makati, and one

each in Mandaluyong, San Juan, Manila, Marikina, Laguna, Batangas, and Tarlac.

Globe started its decarbonization journey in 2019 by buying renewable energy bundled with verified carbon offsets through Power Purchase Agreements (PPA).

This recent shift harnessed the Department of Energy's Green Energy Option Program (GEOP).

It allows consumers, with a monthly average peak demand of 100 kilowatts (KW) and above, to directly engage with renewable energy suppliers and ensure that the facility consumes energy from renewable resources.



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## Globe shifts 10 more facilities to RE

DIGITAL solutions platform Globe Telecoms increased their roster of sites in Luzon and the Visayas running on renewable energy (RE) as it pursues its goal to reduce carbon emissions.

In a statement, Globe said it recently partnered with ACEN, the renewable energy platform of the Ayala Group, in shifting 10 more facilities located in Cavite, Cebu, Quezon City, Manila, Marikina and Laguna to clean energy, raising to 24 the total number of high-energy utilization facilities now running on RE.

Aside from the Globe Tower in Taguig, the company has other facilities already running on green energy: six in Quezon City; five in Cavite; three in Cebu; two in Makati; and one each in Mandaluyong, San Juan, Manila, Marikina, Laguna, Batangas and Tarlac.

Globe said it started its decarbonization journey in 2019 by

buying RE bundled with verified carbon offsets through power purchase agreements.

This recent shift harnessed the Department of Energy's Green Energy Option Program, which allows consumers with a monthly average peak demand of 100 kilowatts and above, the option to directly engage with renewable energy suppliers and ensure that the facility consumes energy from renewable resources.

The company's recent partnership with ACEN enables its facilities to utilize the energy firm's RE portfolio, specifically solar and geothermal.

By purchasing renewable energy from retail energy suppliers, Globe said it aims to encourage more investments toward clean energy in support of the Philippines' commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 75 percent in 2030 through the Na-

tionally Determined Contribution of the Paris Agreement.

Last year, the Ayala Corp. committed to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The conglomerate is a major shareholder in both Globe and ACEN. With this, both companies fully support the conglomerate's commitment to respond to an urgent call-to-action for companies to set emission reduction targets in line with a 1.5 degree Celsius future.

"This shift to renewable energy is part of Globe's overall climate action roadmap and in support of both the country and the Ayala Group's goal to reduce carbon emissions. We are continuously shifting our high energy utilization facilities to renewable energy sources and are looking forward to enrolling more eligible facilities as we proactively address climate-related risks,"

Rizza Maniego-Eala, chief finance officer, treasurer and chief risk officer at Globe, said.

Globe is part of the United Nations-backed Race to Zero campaign to halve global emissions by 2030 and deliver a healthier, fairer zero-carbon world by 2050.

It also supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly UN SDG 13, which underscores the importance of climate action in saving lives and people's livelihoods to address climate emergencies.

Globe claims to be the first and only Philippine publicly listed company recognized by the Science Based Target Initiative to commit to set science-based targets aligned with the Paris Agreement's ambition to limit global warming to 1.5 C compared to pre-industrial levels.

FRANCIS EARL CUETO



## DTI SEES BILLIONS OF DOLLARS POURED INTO CLEAN ENERGY SECTOR

By Alden M. Monzon  
@AldenMonzonINQ

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) on Friday said the country was seeing a significant increase in investment interest after it lifted foreign ownership restrictions in the renewable energy sector.

The trade department said these prospects, worth in the billions of dollars, were focused on solar and wind energy, including manufacturing of equipment such as wind turbine generator towers, foundations, blades and other wind turbine parts.

Trade Secretary Alfred Pascual highlighted the importance of the renewable energy sector in achieving economic development.

"For industries to flourish in our country, we need a secure, resilient and competitive supply of energy," Pascual said, adding:

"In the face of climate change and the worldwide shift to green development, the Philippine government finds renewable energy to be a long-term solution to our sustainable development."

The DTI said the coun-

try has secured \$13.76 billion worth of investments in renewable energy from China alone during the three-day state visit of President Marcos there from Jan. 3 to Jan. 5.

### Interest in energy production

Pascual also touted a "healthy and competitive" business environment in the country, which he said would enable renewable energy companies to thrive.

"Investors will find that the Philippines, with its geographical advantage, is home to abundant sources of renewable energy," he said.

"This should help the Philippines increase renewable energy's share to 50 percent of its total energy supply by 2040," he added.

The DTI said Chinese energy companies have responded positively toward the Philippines' policy directions, conveying interest to help the country achieve its National Renewable Energy Program 2020-2040 goals.

The government wants to increase to 35 percent renewables' share in the Philippines' power generation mix by 2030, and to 50 percent by 2040. (INQ)



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PROTECTING AND PRESERVING SCHOOL'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

## DEVELOPING AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE CAMPUS

Communities across the Philippines could become more environmentally sustainable, thanks to the University of the Philippines-Diliman College of Science (UPD-CS) spearheading the use of automated environmental monitoring technology and regular environmental testing procedures for possible deployment nationwide.

At the behest of UPD chancellor Fidel Nemenzo, who prioritized the protection and preservation of UPD's natural environment in his vision for the campus, the UPD-CS led other colleges and institutions in the university in setting up sophisticated sensors for keeping an eye on the environment around the clock. The Chancellor appointed the multisectoral Task Force on Environmental Sustainability (TFES) to create environmental action points for a possible model for a green campus, which could then serve as the prototype for green spaces nationwide.

Two key action points determined by the expert team are the deployment in the UPD-CS' National Science Complex (NSC) of the AirboxSense system for real-time air quality reporting to the general public, and the establishment of an air and water quality monitoring network with the Diliman Environmental Management Office.

The AirboxSense was co-developed by UP and foreign university partners with funding from the Asia-India Science, Technology, and Innovation Cooperation (AISTIC). "Air quality monitoring using AirboxSense in the NSC started in August 2022. It's an ini-

tiative between the Philippines, Malaysia and India to put up these monitoring devices for air quality control," said Dr. Mylene Cayetano, a professor at the UPD-CS Institute of Environmental Science and Meteorology (IESM), a member of the UPD TFES, and the Philippine principal investigator for the AISTIC.

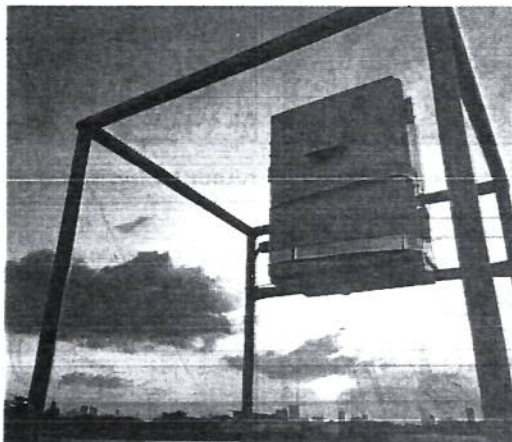
To complement the AirboxSense data, the IESM undertakes regular monitoring of the university's various creeks and streams: water samples are collected at least once a month and analyzed in the laboratory to assess factors such as the presence of excessive nutrients and suspended solids, irregular pH and alkalinity, among other parameters.

The UPD-CS also aims to

  
**A task force was appointed to create a possible model for a green campus which could eventually serve as a prototype for green spaces nationwide**



**TESTING THE WATERS** The UPD-CS also developed water testing procedures to regularly monitor the university's creeks and streams. —SCRENGRAB VIA UPD-CS FACEBOOK PAGE



**AIR CONTROL** The AirboxSense, one of the automated air quality sensors deployed within the National Science Complex by the IESM. —EUNICE JEAN PATRON

lessen its ecological footprint through solar power installations throughout the NSC. By considering the optimal size and placement of solar panels, Dr. Cayetano and her colleagues

were able to determine the best ways to address the campus' energy needs. Solar panels can save energy for the UPD-CS by lessening the dependency on fossil fuels during the daytime.

"Together with UPD-CS scientists Dr. Lillian Jennifer Rodriguez and Jelaine Gan, we determined the surface area of the rooftops facing south. Then we proposed how many solar panels we need to install, and eventually we will transform into an efficient campus," said Dr. Cayetano.

Going beyond the confines of the university, the UPD-CS, and the IESM collaborated with the Rotary Club of Makati on a system that reports real-time data on air quality via the Airtoday.ph website. The system was also initially designed to record and display air quality data on other areas outside the UPD, including the Lung Center of the Philippines and Edsa Muñoz.

Dr. Cayetano cited the UPD Electrical and Electronics Engineering Institute for helping automate the AirboxSense through the UP Center for Air Research program. Dr. Cayetano also talked about the Robust Optical Aerosol Monitor developed by Dr. Len Herald Lim of the Institute of Chemistry, which could be deployed outside UPD in the future.

Dr. Cayetano believes that these projects are of nationwide significance: the information they gather and the data they record will greatly help organizations and institutions across the country in finding solutions to environmental issues. —CONTRIBUTED INQ

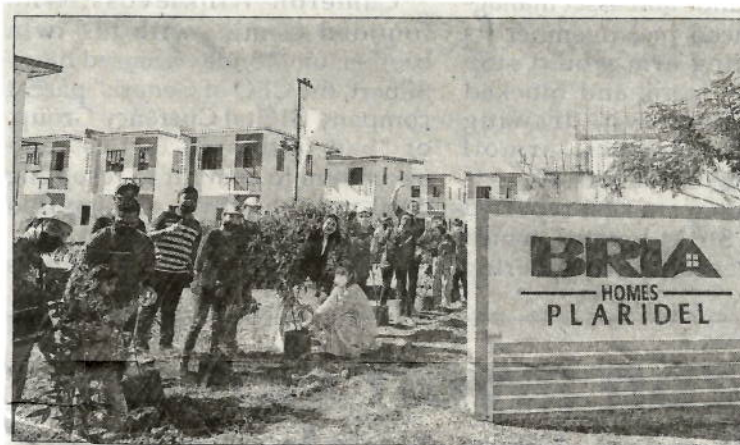


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**TREE PLANTING AT BRIA HOMES PLARIDEL:** Villar-owned Bria Homes recently organized a tree-planting event at its Plaridel, Bulacan community in line with its traditional Plantahan program. The activity was participated in by Bria officers, employees and agents supportive of the company's thrust toward the protection of the environment.



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## Manila Water building P2.5-B plant in Antipolo

By DANESSA RIVERA

East zone concessionaire Manila Water Co. Inc. is set to complete its P2.5-billion sewage treatment facility in Antipolo City to serve over 160,000 residents by 2025.

The Hinulugang Taktak sewerage system project, that includes a 16 million-liter-per-day sewage treatment plant (STP) and four-kilometer combined sewer network, aims to provide better sewerage and sanitation services for its increasing customers in the east zone of Metro Manila, particularly in Antipolo City.

Manila Water said the project is 30 percent completed, with works on a pumping station, a force main network, and a gravity network already underway.

The construction is expected to be completed by December 2025.

In 2020, Manila Water entered into an agreement with the local governing unit of Antipolo City for the construction of the STP. The agreement covers the use of the 8,646-square-meter property of the Antipolo LGU along Taktak Road in Barangay Santa Cruz as the build site.

To minimize the cutting of trees and the leveling of the ground, the project site was re-

located to a lot with a total land area of 4,200 square meters, adjacent to the initial location.

Manila Water wastewater supply headline project manager Joyce General said the massive improvement of the sewerage system would also help rehabilitate the Hinulugang Taktak Falls, one of the city's popular tourist destinations.

In 2021, the consortium of Toshiba Water Solutions Private Ltd. (TWS) and local construction firm Frey-Fil Corp. bagged the contract to construct the project.

TWS will be responsible for the design, supply, installation, testing, and commissioning of process and electro-mechanical equipment as well as the operation and maintenance of the plant for one year.

The Hinulugang Taktak STP is the fifth and largest wastewater treatment facility that Manila Water has built in Rizal.

By 2037, the completed network is expected to serve 160,692 residents of Antipolo City.

Manila Water currently serves the east zone, including parts of Makati, Mandaluyong, Pasig, Pateros, San Juan, Taguig, Marikina, most parts of Quezon City, portions of Manila, and several towns in Rizal.