

08 January 2023, (Sunday)



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MANILA BAY WATER QUALITY IMPROVES

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Saturday said that the water quality in Manila Bay has improved.

Jacob Meimban, executive director of the DENR Manila Bay Coordinating Office (MBCO), said the bay's fecal coliform level went down to 51,300-most probable number per 100 milliliters (MPN/100mL) from a high of 126,000 MPN/100mL in 2019.

He added that the decline in the fecal coliform level can be attributed to the implementation of the Operational Plan for the Manila Bay Coastal Strategy and the various geo-engineering initiatives by the inter-agency Manila Bay Task Force headed by the DENR.

"Following almost four years of rehabilitation efforts, the so-called Battle for Manila Bay resulted in

significant improvement in the water quality within the bay region as shown by the gradual decrease in the fecal coliform level since January 2019," Meimban said.

Meimban added that significant decreases in coliform levels were also recorded in other areas within Manila Bay as the coliform level in Region 4A's (Mimaropa) beaches dropped to 643 MPN/100mL from 3,040 MPN/100mL. Mimaropa is Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, Palawan.

He said in Central Luzon, the coliform level fell to 1,243 MPN/100mL from 5,099 MPN/100mL.

"It also went down in the river mouths or outfalls in Region 4A from 94,000 MPN/100mL to 47,000 MPN/100mL," he noted.

Meimban said more than

125,000 cubic meters of solid waste were collected through trash traps, trash boats and cleanup activities.

He also reported that 13,535 mangroves and 24,730 bamboo propagules were planted throughout the bay region.

Meimban said the Task Force Water Hyacinth collected 22,453.02 cubic meters of water hyacinths.

He said two of the seven projects in Manila Baywalk have been completed, including the solar-powered comfort rooms on Padre Faura and Abad Streets, and the security, operation and maintenance of a state-of-the-art sewage treatment plant (STP).

"At the moment, we are also working on the institutionalization of the MBCO to ensure continuity in the implementation of

the projects and activities under the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program," Meimban said.

At the same time, Meimban said that a total of 128.47 kilometers were delineated to comply with the 20-meter easement across the three regions of Manila Bay to address the problem of informal settler families and illegal structures.

He said alternative livelihoods were provided to the resettled individuals through the construction of floating restaurants and the development of an ecotourism area.

Meimban said a total of 1,694 metric tons of fish caught were recorded by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) while the DENR-NCR recorded 9,248 birds of 197 different species.

BELLA CARIASO



Manila Bay's water quality improving – DENR

By **CORY MARTINEZ**

THE water quality within the Manila Bay region continued to improve.

This was disclosed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) as it attributed this achievement to the faithful and efficient implementation of the Operational Plan for the Manila Bay Coastal Strategy (OPMBCS) and the various geo-engineering initiatives by the inter-agency Manila Bay Task Force (MBTF) headed by the DENR.

The DENR said that almost four years of rehabilitation efforts, the so-called "Battle for Manila Bay," resulted in significant improvement in the water quality within the bay region, as shown by the gradual decrease in fecal coliform levels since January 2019.

Manila Bay Coordinating Office (MBCO) Executive Director Jacob F. Meimban, on the other hand, reported that as of October 2022, the fecal coliform level in the National Capital Region (NCR) went down to 51,300 most probable number per 100 milliliters

(MPN/100mL) from a high of 126,000 MPN/100mL in 2019.

At the same time, the coliform level in the famous Manila Baywalk area has significantly decreased to 658,000 MPN/100mL from a high of 5.75 million MPN/100mL.

In terms of liquid waste management, the MBCO disclosed that as of the third quarter of 2022, a total of 1,202 establishments were surveyed and mapped, while 5,919 establishments were monitored, of which 61 were slapped with cease and desist orders, and 949 were issued notices of violation.

The MBCO said that in

terms of solid waste management, more than 125,000 cubic meters of solid waste were collected through trash traps, trash boats, and cleanup activities as of September 2022.

In managing informal settler families and illegal structures, a total of 128.47 kilometers were delineated to comply with the 20-meter easement across the three regions of Manila Bay.

Additional cleanup activities were conducted at the river system choke points to strategically eliminate the influx of water hyacinths due to the onset of the Habagat season.



PHL bags top CHM award at UN biodiversity confab

MONTREAL, Canada—The Philippines received the gold CHM Award at the recent 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 15) in Montreal, Canada.

At the same time, Malaysia and Mexico bagged the bronze and silver, respectively.

The Asean Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM), on the other hand, received a certificate of achievement as an existing regional CHM.

The CHM serves as the CBD's platform for information sharing, with the CBD web site serving as its central node, National Clearing-House Mechanisms at the national level, and partner institutions at thematic or regional levels.

Making biodiversity information easily accessible contributes to the achievement of science-based and informed decision-making among policymakers working on biodiversity-relevant laws and regulations.

The Asean CHM serves as a single point of access to the national CHMs of the Asean member states (AMS).

It also offers a variety of services, such as biodiversity information and tools and resources for capacity development, to

assist the AMS with conservation planning, monitoring, and decision-making.

Additionally, it highlights the regional status of protected areas, among other regional assessments that can be utilised as a foundation for the prioritisation and conservation of species and protected areas.

CBD Executive Secretary Elizabeth Maruma Mrema said that the CHM awards were given to recognize parties with the most significant progress in the establishment and further development of their national and regional CHM platforms, and to encourage other countries to do the same.

The awardees were chosen based on the criteria of the CHMs' content, online services, layout and functionality, visibility and usage, content management, and governance.

This year's CHM Awards jury panel, or the internal advisory committee to the CHM, consisted of global experts in biodiversity information management.

Among them were Han de Koeijer from Belgium as the committee chairman; Rigobert Ntep from Cameroon and John Tayleur from the United Nations Environment Programme's World Conservation Monitoring Centre as jury members, and Tim Hirsch from the Global Biodiversity Information Facility as an observer.





EDITORIAL

Disaster planning saves lives

Hheavy rains and floods not only ruined the holidays for many Filipinos across the country, but also destroyed homes, agricultural crops, and infrastructure, and caused the deaths of 52. One death is already too many, but that so many deaths have not been prevented only shows how poorly the government has fared in disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM).

Over the last two weeks, parts of the Philippines experienced heavy rains due to the northeast monsoon (*amihan*) and the shear line—or that narrow corridor where the cold and warm air converge. It wasn't even a typhoon, not that the impact wouldn't have been any less because the weather disturbance still flattened huts made from light materials, uprooted trees in seaside villages, caused massive floods and landslides, as well as damaged roads and bridges. Aside from the 52 deaths—mostly from drowning and the landslides—18 are missing, and more than 680,000 people have been affected.

These facts are oft repeated every time a natural event hits: 1) the Philippines is visited by at least 20 typhoons every year; and 2) that its geographical location makes it one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. Not only are there typhoons, but earthquakes may also occur, and even bad weather brought about by a shear line can cause utter suffering and massive destruction amounting to the billions. And while the degree of devastation differs, it often brings about familiar scenes: families scrambling to seek shelter and local government units (LGUs) springing into action to rescue affected communities—as if previous disasters have not provided ample warning and cautionary tales on what could happen if there is no adequate and efficient disaster risk reduction and management plan.

Yet, despite the painful lessons from previous disasters like Supertyphoon "Yolanda," all the available information, scientific research, and warnings and advice from experts, there is a lack of anticipatory planning. A bloated bureaucracy makes the disaster response even more complicated and riddled with red tape.



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There was a proposal to establish a Department of Disaster Management that will centralize all disaster-related policies and programs. But President Marcos Jr. has thumbed it down because he wants to instead place the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), which is tasked to oversee the concerted efforts of national and local governments on natural and man-made disasters, under the Office of the President.

The NDRRMC, established under Republic Act No. 10121 or the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, is headed by the defense secretary, with the secretaries of science and technology, interior and local government, and social welfare and development, among others, as its vice chairs. But there is a need to revisit the law and review the functions of the NDRRMC as its hierarchical structure has impeded swift response and decision-making during emergencies—for example, during Yolanda in 2013, there was confusion among the responders on who was the boss and whose orders they should follow.

This structural problem extends to the drafting and implementation of local disaster risk reduction and management plans (LDRRMPs), which can be affected by politics. After every elections, especially when a new set of local officials takes over, the old LDRRMPs often end up in the bin and a new plan is drafted. How, then, can LGUs progress in DRRM if there is no continuity in the policies and plans? Add to this the perennial complaint about the lack of funds, especially of poor LGUs. This affects training for staff members and the implementation of programs that could help communities prepare better for typhoons, earthquakes, etc.

Aside from reviewing RA 10121, there is also a need to enact a national land use policy that would identify high-risk and danger-prone locations. Mr. Marcos has asked Congress to pass this measure to “provide for a rational and holistic management and development of [the] country’s land and water resources.” At least 17 bills are pending in the House of Representatives and four in the Senate—one of them filed by Sen. Risa Hontiveros which requires, aside from a clear delineation of land use categories to ensure food security and sufficiency, the completion of a geohazard mapping program that will provide up to date information for land use planning nationwide.

Filipinos are very much aware of the dangers that natural events pose, but vulnerable communities need institutional support. The government needs to plan ahead and help get them out of harm’s way. This is the only way to prevent deaths and keep the damage and losses to a minimum. It can start by zoning off disaster-prone areas, relocating vulnerable communities to safer locations, and providing permanent shelters that are easily accessible.

There is no need for rescue operations if there is a sound and institutionalized disaster risk reduction and management plan. This will not only maximize the government’s limited resources but will, even more importantly, save lives.



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UPD-CS green model may help LGUs become environmentally sustainable

PHILIPPINE communities may soon be environmentally sustainable. The solution may be found in the green model that the University of the Philippines-Diliman College of Science (UPD-CS) developed through an automated environmental monitoring technology and other environmental testing procedures.

UPD Chancellor Dr. Fidel Nemenzo, who prioritized the protection and preservation of UP Diliman's natural environment in his vision for the campus, appointed a multi-sectoral Task Force on Environmental Sustainability (TFES) to create a possible model for a green campus.

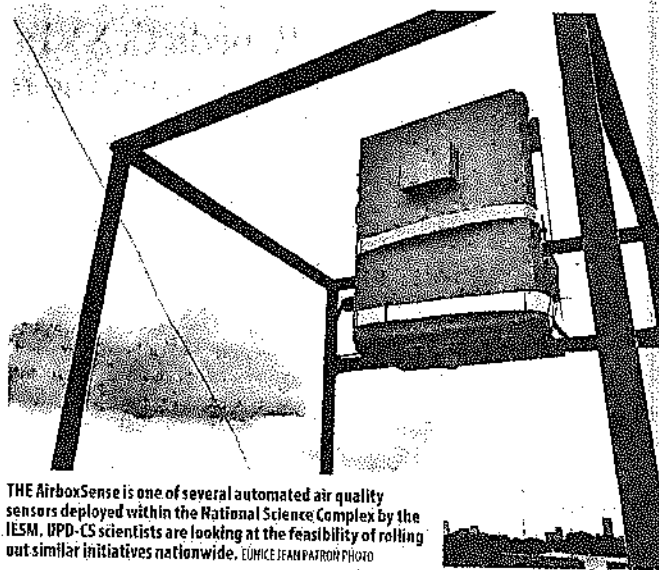
The UPD-CS recently steered other colleges and institutions in the university in setting up sophisticated sensors on the environment.

The project is seen to serve as the prototype for green spaces nationwide.

The expert team determined two key action points. These are the deployment in the UPD-CS's 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).

Dr. Mylene Cayetano, a professor at the UPD-CS's Institute of Environmental Science and Meteorology (IESM) and a member of the UPD TFES, said: "Air-quality monitoring using AirboxSense in the NSC started in August 2022. It's an initiative between the Philippines, Malaysia and India to put up these monitoring devices for air quality control." Cayetano is also the Philippine principal investigator for the AISTIC.



THE AirboxSense is one of several automated air quality sensors deployed within the National Science Complex by the IESM. UPD-CS scientists are looking at the feasibility of rolling out similar initiatives nationwide. LUIS JEAN PATRÓN PHOTO

To complement the AirboxSense data, Cayetano said the IESM undertakes regular monitoring of the university's various creeks and streams.

They collected water samples at least once a month and analyzed them in the laboratory to assess factors, such as the presence of excessive nutrients and suspended solids, irregular pH, and alkalinity, among other parameters.

Solar-powered campus

UPD-CS also aims to lessen its ecological footprint through solar power installations throughout the NSC, Cayetano added.

Cayetano and her colleagues were able to determine the best ways to address the campus's energy needs and save energy by considering the optimal size and placement of solar panels.

"Together with UPD-CS scientists Dr. Lillian Jennifer Rodriguez and Jelaine Gan, we calculated the area of all rooftops of CS buildings. We

determined the surface area of the rooftops facing south. Then we proposed how many solar panels we need to install in CS to lessen our dependence on fossil fuels, and eventually we will transform into an efficient campus," Cayetano explained.

"UPD-CS Dean Giovanni Tapang presented the idea to Chancellor Fidel [Nemenzo], and it aligns with the Chancellor's initiative to make UPD an environmentally sustainable campus," she added.

Beyond UP

PURSUING its green agenda does not stop at UP-Diliman.

The UPD-CS and the IESM collaborated with the Rotary Club of Makati on adapting a system that reports real-time data on air quality through the Airtoday.ph website.

The system was 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 area.

"Picking up from this initiative, more initiatives arose toward a smart campus and environmental sustainability," Cayetano said.

She cited the UPD Electrical and Electronics Engineering Institute for helping automate the AirboxSense through the UP Center for Air Research program.

The Robust Optical Aerosol Monitor developed by Dr. Len Herald Lim of the Institute of Chemistry could be deployed outside UPD in the future, she cited.

Nationwide deployment

THE projects are of nationwide significance, Cayetano pointed out.

She noted that the information they gather and the data they record will greatly help organizations and institutions across the country in finding solutions to environmental issues.

"These [information and data] will eventually tell the numbers. Where are we now? Where's the baseline? What were the emissions when there were no activities because of the pandemic?" Cayetano said.

She added that they "want to get the rate of increase of emissions during the resumption of activities, such as face-to-face classes and the opening of the UPD campus and offices."

By knowing these, she said, "we know where to stand. By knowing those numbers, we will know how to manage the impacts on the environment of such activities."

Through this and other projects, UPD's TFES is spearheading the creation of "tailor-fit approaches" to environmental challenges that can be implemented outside the campus.

Data collected from these initiatives can also be used by local governments and other decision-makers in managing localized environmental activities, Cayetano said.

Rizal Raouf Reyes



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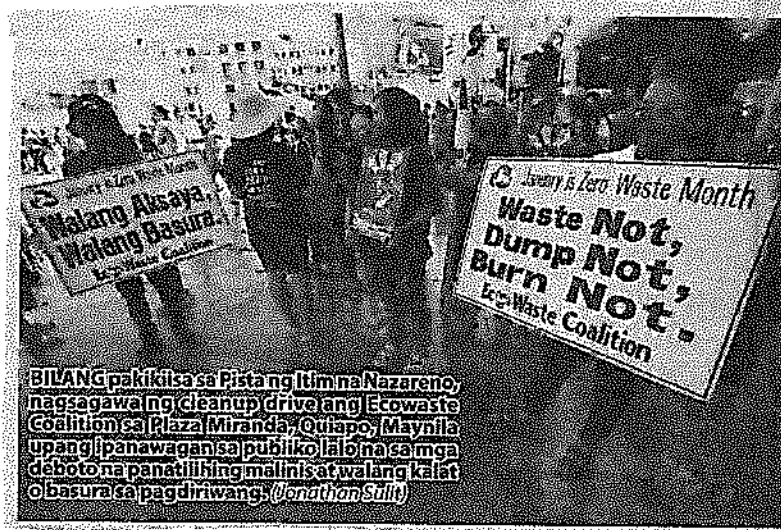
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BILANG pakikilala sa Pista ng Itim na Nazareno, nagsagawa ng cleanup drive ang Ecowaste Coalition sa Plaza Miranda, Quiapo, Maynila upang ipanawagan sa publiko lalo na sa mga debotona panatilihin malinis at walang kalat o basura sa pagdiriwang. (Jonathan Silit)



Balik Scientist invents Nipahol as alternative fuel to LPG



BALIK Scientist Dr. Fiorello Abenes discusses the cooking stove prototype he developed that is powered by energy innovations from nipa sap. The technology is seen as an alternative fuel to LPG. BSP

WITH the current high prices of fuel, including liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), a project of a Balik Scientist hosted by the Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) in Laoag, Ilocos Norte, may be a cheaper and environmental-friendly alternative to it.

Dr. Fiorello B. Abenes is leading the technology transfer and commercialization of MMSU's Village-Scale Nipahol Technology (VSNT). Abenes is a Professor Emeritus in California State Polytechnic University, Pomona in California, USA, and a recipient of the Balik Scientist Program of the Department of Science and Technology, the DOST-BSP said.

Nipahol Technology may be used as cooking fuel and is seen to replace LPG fuel for stoves.

"Dirty cooking is still a problem in many of the rural areas of the Philippines. The use of firewood or charcoal emit unhealthy levels of particulates and noxious gases that affect the respiratory track, mostly affecting women [who do household cooking]. Ethanol as cooking fuel is cleaner," Abenes said.

Nipahol Technology is an innovation produced from extracting sap from nipa into "Nipahol" at a facility housed at the National Bioenergy Research and Innovation Center of the MMSU, the DOST-BSP explained.

"We have developed a prototype that we hope we can scale up and make into a cooking stove suitable for indoor use and in commercial establishments," he added.

Although the stove prototype is yet to be developed as pressurized, Abenes and his team successfully created a Nipahol-fueled stove with burner and functions through the pull of gravity, DOST-BSP said.

The successful adoption of MMSU's VSNT rests on finding more uses for the ethanol produced from nipa.

The use of Nipahol as cooking fuel is seen to accelerate the commercialization of the VSNT technology.

Technologies from nipa is seen to provide a multitude of uses, given its commercial viability in different portions of the value chain.

The Balik Scientist Program aims to promote information exchange and accelerate the flow of new technology into the country through strengthening the scientific and technological manpower of the academe and public and private institutions.

The program encourages Filipino scientists, technologists, and experts abroad to return to the Philippines and share their expertise in order to promote scientific, agro-industrial, and economic development, including the development of the country's human capital in science, technology, and innovation.

The enactment of the Balik Scientist Act in June 2018 also paved the way for the DOST to grant returning Filipino scientists with competitive benefits, such as daily subsistence allowance, health insurance and roundtrip airfare.



Angat at Ipo dam, nagpakawala ng tubig

Nagbawas ng tubig ang Angat Dam at Ipo Dam sa Norzagaray, Bulacan dahil sa patuloy na nararanasang pag-ulan doon dulot ng amihan.

Ayon sa PAGASA, nagbukas sila ng tatlong gate sa Angat ng 8.5 meters dahil malapit nang maabot ng dam ang spilling level nito samantalang ang Ipo ay nagbukas ng anim na gate na may 9.2 meters.

Ang reservoir Water level (RWL) ng Angat kahapon ng umaga ay nasa

215.03 meters na mataas sa spilling level o normal high water level (NHWL) na 212 meters.

Samantala ang RWL ng Ipo Dam ay naitala sa 101.04 meters malapit sa NHWL na 101.10 meters.

"Tuluy-tuloy ang pag-release ng Angat Dam dahil tuluy-tuloy pa rin ang pag-ulan kahit na light rains.

Pero yung mga tubig ulan na bumagsak sa kabundukan ay kasalukuyan pa lang na bumababa sa watershed ng Angat kaya continuous

po ang release niya," sabi ni Ailene Abelarado, hydrologist ng Hydrometeorology Division ng PAGASA.

Sinabi ni Abelarado na ang mga komunidad na apektado ng paglabas ng tubig ay mga bayan ng Angat, San Rafael, Bustos, Baliwag, Pulilan, Plaridel, Calumpit, Paombong at Hagonoy.

Ayon sa PAGASA, patuloy na nakakaranas ng mga pag-uulan sa ibat ibang bahagi ng bansa dahil sa epekto ng amihan. (*Angie dela Cruz*)



ANGAT AT IPO DAM NAGPAKAWALA NG TUBIG, 4 NA LUGAR SA BULACAN LUBOG

MAHIGIT 500 pamilya ang napilitang lumikas mula sa kani-kanilang bahay sa Norzagaray, Bulacan kasunod ng naranasang pagbaha.

Sa gitna ng walang tigil na pag-ulan sa lugar ay minabuting magpakawala nang tubig ang Angat at Ipo Dam na nagpatindi sa pagbaha.

Nabatid mula sa lokal na

panahalaan na kabilang sa mga komunidad na apektado ng pagbaha ay ang mga barangay ng Poblacion, Matic-tic, San Mateo at San Lorenzo.

Sinasabing umapaw na ang Angat River na nasa bahagi ng Norzagaray.

Mula pa noong Biyernes ay patuloy na nagpapakawala

ng tubig ang mga dam ng Angat at Ipo at hanggang kahapon ng umaga ay mayroon pa ring mga nakabukas na gate.

Patuloy nang sinusuyod ng mga tauhan ng Norzagaray rescue ang mga bantang barangay upang tulungan ang mga hindi pa nailikas na residente. (P. Reyes)



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BULGAR

BOCES NG MASA HATA NG BAYAN

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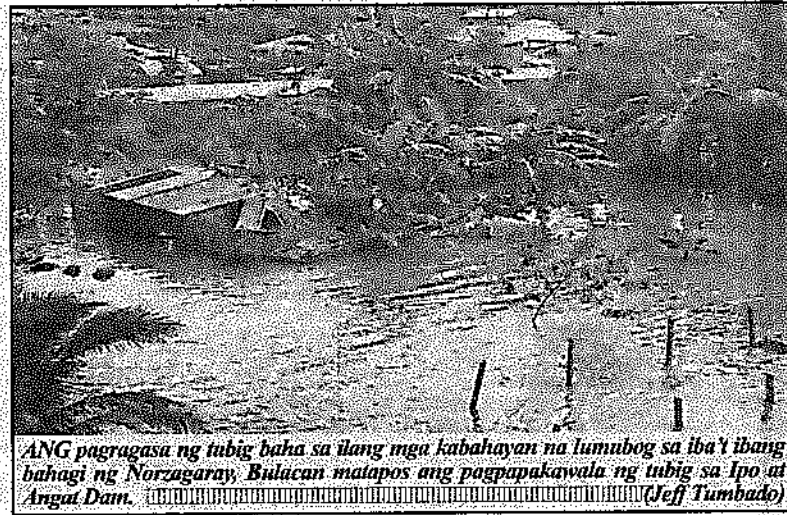
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ANG pagragasa ng tubig baha sa ilang mga kabahayan na lumubog sa iba't ibang bahagi ng Norzagaray. Bulacan matapos ang pagpapakawala ng tubig sa Ipo at Angat Dam. (Jeff Tumbado)



Baha ibinabala sa paligid ng Angat River

NAGBABALA ang mga awtoridad sa mga nakatira sa mga mabababang lugar malapit sa Angat River, lalo na sa Norzagaray, Angat, San Rafael, Bustos, Baliuag, Putilan, Plaridel, Calumpit, Paombong at Hagonoy na maging maingat sa posibleng mga pagbaha.

Sa inilabas na flood situationer kahapon, sinabi ng Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) na kapwa ang Angat at Ipo Dam ay naglabas na ng tubig ng alas-8:00 nang umaga kahapon.

"The water level of Angat Dam is at 214.82m and slowly decreasing. It is still expected to receive light rains caused by the current weather system. The spilling operation as of 8 a.m. today [had] a total discharge of 1,236 cms. [Meanwhile,] the water level of Ipo Dam as of 8 a.m. is at 101.04m with a total discharge of 1,227.30cms." sinabi sa bahagi ng flood situation report.

Ang basin average na 21mm rainfall ay naitala sa nagdaang magdamag. Sa susunod na 24 oras, isang basin average ng 5 to 10mm na ulan ang inaasahan.

Sinabi pa ng Pagasa na ang hydrological condition ng Angat River ay patuloy na binabantayan.

Kasabay nito ay pinaalalahanan ang nasa mababang lugar na dapat ay laging maging alerto. (Catherine Reyes)



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Alpine slopes face snow shortage in warm winter

GENEVA—Much of the Alps just don't look right for this time of year. Sparse snowfall and unseasonably warm winter weather in Europe's central mountains are allowing grass to blanket hillsides across the region, causing headaches for ski slope operators and aficionados of Alpine white.

Patches of grass, rock and dirt were visible in some of Europe's skiing meccas—like Innsbruck in Austria, Villars-sur-Ollon and Crans-Montana in Switzerland, and Germany's Lenggries and far beyond.

The dearth of snow has revived concerns about temperature upheaval linked to climate change.

On a swath stretching from France to Poland, but with the Alps at the center, many parts of Europe were enjoying short-sleeve weather. A weather map showed Poland racking up daily highs in the double digits Celsius in recent days.

It's a sharp contrast to the frigid weather and blizzards in parts of the United States late last year.

Swiss state forecaster MeteoSuisse pointed to some of the hottest temperatures ever this time of year. A weather station in Delemont, in

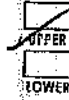
While slopes above 2,000 meters have gotten snow, lower down, "the order of the day is patience" for skiing buffs, she said.

The shortage has been particularly burdensome around Switzerland's Adelboden, which was set to host World Cup skiing, and generally draws 25,000 fans for a single day of racing.

Resorts like these look for such races to offer up bucolic winter time images to draw amateur skiers, but grassy, brown sides to the course can mar the landscape—and dampen the appeal.

Course director Toni Hadi acknowledged that the race will be run on 100 percent artificial snow this year.

"The climate is a bit changing but what should we do here? Shall we stop with life?" he said by phone,



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WARM WINTER

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Other cities and towns followed suit with records.

MeteoSuisse quipped on its blog: "... this turn of the new year could almost make you forget that it's the height of winter."

Forecaster Anick Haldimann of MeteoSuisse said a persistent weather system that brought in warmer air from the west and southwest has lingered, locking in warmer temperatures expected to last through the week.

The start to 2023 picked up where many countries had already left off: Last year was the hottest on record in both Switzerland and France.

More broadly, the United Nations' World Meteorological Organization says the past eight years are on track to be the eight warmest on record. Its final tally on global temperature figures for 2022 will be released in mid-January.

Next door in France, national weather agency Meteo France said

2022 ended with some of the warmest weather the country has ever experienced at this time of year—capping an exceptionally warm year that saw temperature records broken and rampant forest fires and drought conditions.

Meteo France says the southern Alps and, in the northern Alps, slopes above 2,200 meters, have seen close to normal snowfalls. But snow is notably lacking at lower altitudes in the northern Alps and across the Pyrenees, it said.

To be sure, the Alps cover a lot of territory and not all of it is bereft of snow. Perhaps counterintuitively, some of the best snowfall has been reported in the Italian Dolomites, to the south of the Swiss Alps.

Early in the ski season, fortunes looked bright for snow lovers. In France, freezing weather into mid-December raised hopes that ski resorts in the Alps, the Pyrenees and elsewhere might see plenty of early snow and the lasting sub-zero temperatures needed to keep runs open.

But exceptionally warm weather followed, prompting some resorts at lower altitudes to close down as snow cover melted away.

"There was a good start to the season with a cold wave in mid-December which provided some white to pretty much everyone. Then, last week, there was quite a bit of rain and warm temperatures, so a certain

number of runs had to close again," Laurent Reynaud of the Domaines Skiabiles de France industry group that represents French ski resorts, lift operators and others, said on C-News television.

Germany too has seen unusually springlike temperatures—as high as 16 degrees Celsius in parts of the country early in the past week.

New Year's Eve is believed to have been the warmest since reliable records began. The German Weather Service reported readings of 20 Celsius and just above at four weather stations in southern Germany, news agency dpa reported.

Wim Thiery, a professor of climate science at the University of Brussels, said the same jet stream that pulled down cold air from the Arctic into the US has fanned warm air from subtropical zones into Europe.

He warned that climate change hasn't finished its work—unless people cut use of fuels that trap heat in the atmosphere.

"By the end of the century [it's] just going to be over ... skiing in the Alps as we know it," he said, adding that lower-altitude mountain areas already feel the impact.

"In the future, these problems will get worse, because the snow will continue to melt as long as the climate warms," he added. *Jamey Keaten and John Leicester/Associated Press*