

14 January 2023, Saturday



DENR

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DENR promoting eco-friendly toilet system

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has launched an eco-friendly toilet system to mitigate pollution in the Manila Bay area and Region 3 (Central Luzon).

DENR Region 3 Executive Director Paquito Moreno Jr. said a newly introduced facility built at Sibal II Mangrove Nursery and Eco-Tourism Park in Orion, Bataan promotes the use of a waterless toilet or dry toilet system as an alternate solution to water-flushed toilets.

Moreno added that the project, developed by Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Region 3 office, aims to lessen potential contamination of river systems and coastal areas from E. coli.

He cited studies showing E. coli is caused by untreated human sewage, failing septic tanks, livestock agriculture, pets, wildlife and illegal connections from home sewer systems to surface water.

"Through this initiative, the volume of pollutants draining to water bodies along the Manila Bay area may be reduced, which will eventually help us in achieving the coliform limit of 200 million parts per million per 100 ml Class C water classification," Moreno said.

He added that the first waterless toilet facility in the region supports the DENR's effort to integrate biotechnology as a powerful solution to address environmental concerns and mitigate effects of climate change.

Experts from the MGB explained that the eco-toilet system works by separating human waste from urine, which passes through the urine diverting dehydrating toilet bowls.

Upon separation, the nitrogen-rich solid waste is then covered with agro-industrial materials like fly ash, bentonite and zeolite, including organic rich matters such as shredded dried leaves and carbonized rice husks.

This creates an alternating layer of materials that can be used as basic components of fertilizer. The urine is likewise treated and processed into a liquid fertilizer.



■ Photo shows the waterless toilet or dry toilet system at the Sibal II Mangrove Nursery and Eco-Tourism Park in Orion, Bataan. PHOTO FROM DENR FACEBOOK PAGE



EDITORIAL

Flood mitigation

It's not the typhoon season, but in just the first two weeks of the year, 17 people have died from mudslides and torrential floods in parts of the Visayas and Mindanao as well as the Bicol region. The death toll is in addition to about 50 people who died, with 19 still missing, during the Christmas holidays.

Northern Mindanao or Region 10 has been the worst hit, with Misamis Occidental seeing the highest number of casualties. Weather experts attributed the incessant heavy rainfall to a series of low-pressure areas combined with a shear line – a point where warm and cold air meet, triggering rain.

Filipinos are used to the dangers posed by tropical cyclones of varying intensities, powerful storm surges and heavy rainfall induced by the monsoons. Disaster response contingency plans are set in motion depending on cyclone categories as well as rainfall and wind alerts issued by weather forecasters.

But many people, including local government executives who handle emergency rescue and disaster mitigation efforts, are still unfamiliar with the dangers posed by a shear line and off-season weather disturbances. Both the national and local governments also seem helpless in minimizing the destruction caused by heavy flooding.

This need not be the case. People build homes near waterways even if they are aware of the risks during heavy rainfall and floods. But experts

have pointed to possible interventions to mitigate flooding. Among some long-term solutions are reforestation and the revival of dwindling watersheds, and the construction of dikes and structures to redirect water flow. Other interventions include dredging and reduction of siltation, and the strict enforcement of no-build easement zones along waterways.

Along the Cagayan River, the longest in the country and the largest based on water volume, some local officials and communities have started developing walls of trees near the riverbanks to minimize the impact on inhabited areas when the water level rises. Water paths are also being redirected to reduce the destruction caused by the torrential floods that regularly hit the communities and farms in the Cagayan Valley. Reforestation and the campaign to fight illegal logging are continuing efforts that need to be boosted.

People who make a living from the sea also cannot be expected to relocate too far away from the shore. But effective evacuation protocols can be set in place, in coordination with the weather bureau and disaster mitigation offices, in case of weather disturbances.

Climate change is leading to more frequent extreme weather disasters. The Philippines, identified by experts as one of the countries most vulnerable to global warming, cannot afford to be caught unprepared.



Pasig closes restaurant for polluting creek

THE city government of Pasig City has shut down an unnamed fast-food restaurant in Barangay Kapasigan after it was caught discharging wastewater directly into a creek.

Mayor Victor Ma. Regis "Vico" Sotto announced the move on his social media platforms.

He said the restaurant does not have an environmental permit to operate.

"Grabe yung kapal ng sebo, wastewater nila diretso sa Parian Creek. Wala ring Environmental Permit to Operate (The grease is thick; the wastewater goes to

Parian Creek. They don't even have an environmental permit to operate)," Sotto said.

The mayor said the restaurant will only be allowed to reopen if it secures an environmental permit.

Sotto added that while he loves the fast-food chain restaurant, he said he had to make the city government's action public as a "warning" to other establishments.

Replying to Sotto's Twitter post, Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian said: "This is terrible, especially from a known brand."

ARIC JOHN SY CUA



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Pasig shuts down restaurant over wastewater disposal

A fastfood restaurant in Pasig was shut down by the city government for dumping wastewater into a creek.

Mayor Vico Sotto said they closed down the KFC Victoria branch in Barangay Kapasigan after an inspection revealed the restaurant had been disposing of used cooking oil and wastewater directly into the Parian Creek.

The establishment also did not secure an environmental permit to operate (EPO), he added.

Sotto said the KFC branch can only resume its operations if it fixes its wastewater treatment and secures an EPO.

Erring business establishments can face sanctions under Republic Act 9275, or the Philippine Clean Water Act.

- Emmanuel Tupas



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Dambuhalang buwaya nahuli sa Palawan

ISANG dambuhalang buwaya ang nahuli ng mga residente sa Barangay Sumbiling, Bataraza, Palawan, Miyerkoles ng gabi.

Sa pagsusuri ng Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD), nagtamo ng kaunting sugat ang buwaya dahil sa pagsilo ng mga residente dito.

Sa pag-iimbestiga, isang residente na nakatira malapit sa lugar ang sumasalok ng tubig sa ilog nang umatake ang buwaya. Mabuti na lamang at agad itong nakatakas.

Ayon kay Forester Jovic Fabelle, tagapagsalita ng PCSD, madalas talaga sa mga ilog ang mga buwaya.

"Ang mga ilog sa Bataraza ay

spot talaga ng mga crocodile at alam naman natin na nocturnal ang mga ito. Sumakto naghahanap ito ng pagkain at nadaanan 'yung prospect niya na nandoon itong tao pero buti na lamang rin at nakaiwas siya at nakaligtas," aniya.

Pero para mabawasan ang pangamba, nagdesisyon ang mga naninirahan sa lugar na hulihin ang hayop para makaiwas na ito ay mayroon pang mapinsalang tao o mga alagang hayop.

Nasa 15 talampakan at 70 sentimetro ang lapad ng lalaking crocodylus porosus na ginamot na ng mga eksperto bago ito ilipat ng kulungan sa Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Center.



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King cobra, natagpuan sa loob ng cabinet sa iskul

ISANG king cobra ang natagpuan sa loob ng cabinet sa isang eskwelahan ng Balao Elementary School sa Solana, Cagayan.

Ayon sa Cagayan Provincial Information Office, isang tawag ang kanilang natanggap nang matagpuan ng isang guro ang isang uri ng ahas habang naglilinis ng kanilang silid aralan.

Mabilis na rumesponde ang mga tauhan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR-Region 2) para hulihin ang venomous king cobra na may habang isa punto apat na metro.

Ligtas naman ang mga estudyante maging ang mga guro sa naturang paaralan habang agad ding pinakawalan ng mga tauhan ng denr ang nahuling ahas malayo sa lugar ng mga tao.



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Phl borrows P9 B for climate change efforts

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

The Philippines has secured 150 million euros (P9 billion) in loan financing from the French government to ramp up climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

This is part of the bigger 390 million euros (P23.29 billion) financed by the French Development Agency (AFD) and Asian Development Bank. The \$250 million (P13.78 billion) ADB loan was signed in June last year.

The loan financing aims to support the country in achieving its nationally determined contribution (NDC) and in its efforts to transform vulnerable sectors into a resilient, low-carbon economy.

In particular, the fund will aid public reforms aimed at setting up planning and financing systems to strengthen climate action, as well as strengthen the resilience of the population to the growing impacts of climate change.

It also targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the deployment of renewable energies, improving energy efficiency and deploying sustainable transport.

The Philippines has been one of the most climate-vulnerable countries over the past two decades. At present, over one percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) is directly lost due to earthquakes and typhoons.

An earlier report of the Department of Finance showed that the Philippines is bound to incur as much as P1.5 trillion in losses from natural disasters in the next five decades as impacts of climate change continue to worsen.

This is about 7.7 percent of the country's nominal GDP of P19.187 trillion as of 2021.

For this year's budget, almost nine percent has been allocated for programs related to climate change mitigation and adaptation to meet the country's own NDC targets.

French Ambassador Michèle Bocoz said that France remains engaged in the fight against the climate crisis, which has become a big problem for the Philippines.

France has earmarked six billion euros each year until 2025 to help developing countries, including the Philippines, finance their transition and cope with climate disasters.

AFD implements France's policy on international development and solidarity.

It was in 2009 when AFD started its operations in the country with a focus on addressing climate change. Since then, AFD has mobilized more than 1.14 billion euros in financing for the Philippines.



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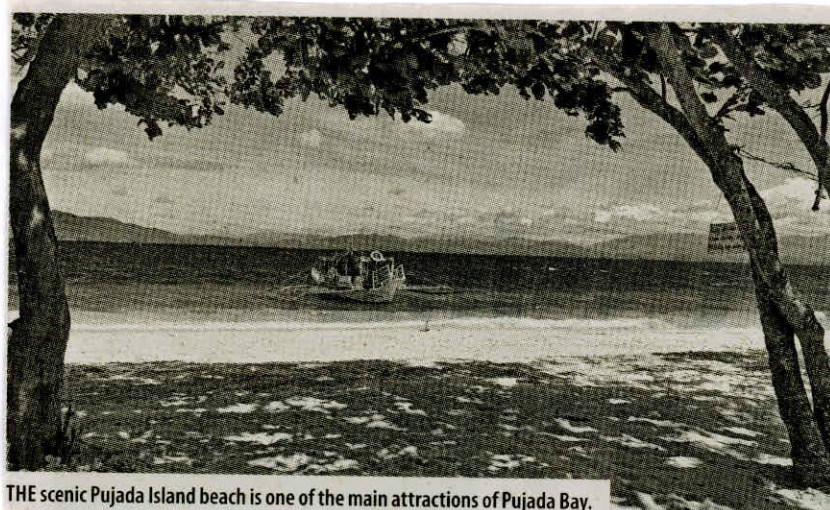
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DISCOVER

PUJADA BAY,

ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL

BAYS IN THE WORLD



THE scenic Pujada Island beach is one of the main attractions of Pujada Bay.

STORY & PHOTOS BY ARABELLE JIMENEZ

Underwater Photography by Rodney Jao

PUJADA Bay is included as one of the most beautiful bays in the world bestowed by the Paris-based Les Plus Belles Baies Du Monde (The Most Beautiful Bays in the World) Club. It is one of only two Philippine bays awarded by the UNESCO-supported club, together with Puerto Galera Bay back in 2005.



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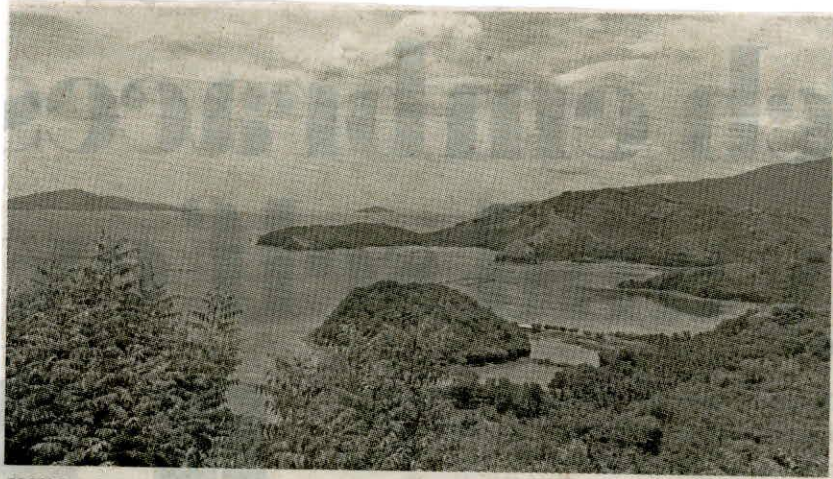
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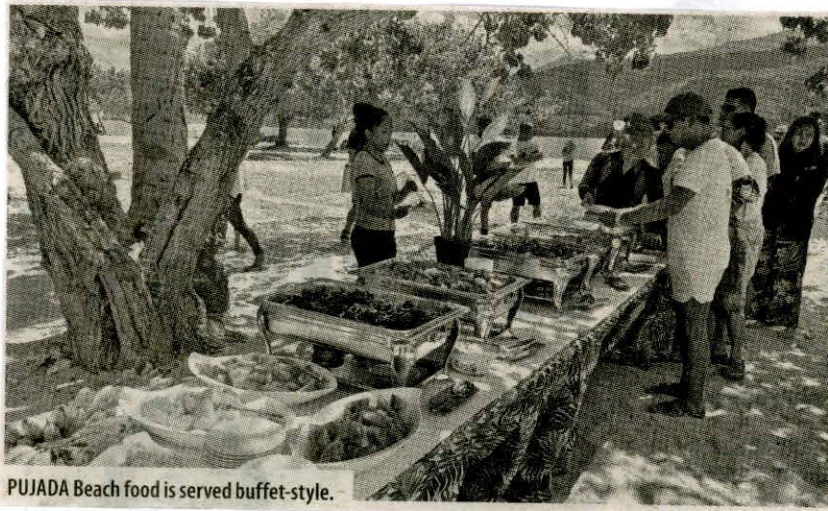
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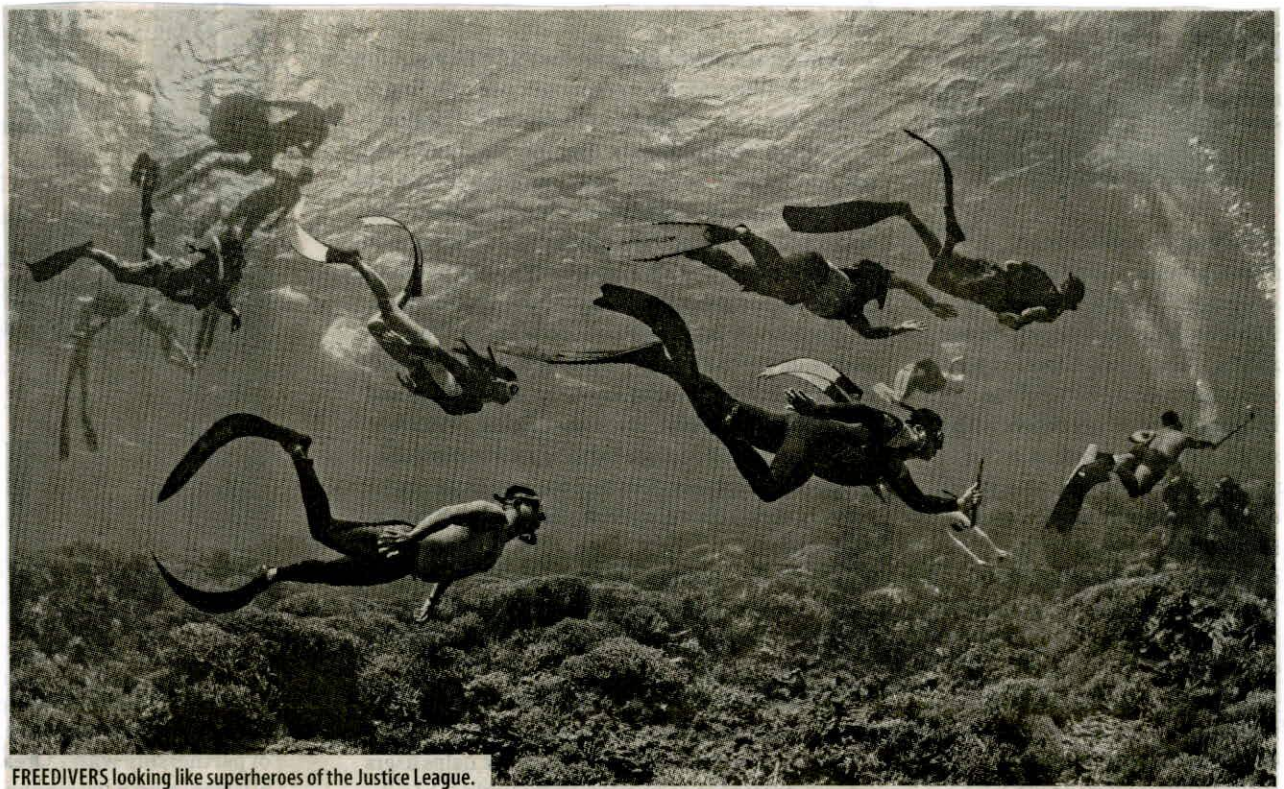
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FROM Pujada Bay, this is the stunning view that overlooks Sleeping Dinosaur Island.



PUJADA Beach food is served buffet-style.



FREEDIVERS looking like superheroes of the Justice League.



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Located in Mati, Davao Oriental, Pujada Bay is once again the center of attraction during the first edition of the Bay Deep Mati Free Diving Festival. Dubbed the biggest freediving festival in the country, the event brought together more than 50 freedivers and scuba divers from different parts of the Philippines to showcase Mati's rich biodiversity and its clear waters, and to promote the area as a world-class diving destination.

"We, at the Department of Tourism, have long recognized the potential of freediving and we continue to support initiatives that highlight and promote these emerging recreational water sports," said DOT XI Regional Director Tanya Rabat-Tan, who is also a certified scuba diver. "Its purpose is not only to bring in tourists, but also to create a livelihood for our community that advocates a sustainable lifestyle, and respect of

nature without harming the ecology," she added.

The event is also an important venue to underscore the importance of responsible, ethical and sustainable diving tourism, as well as the global significance of conserving the country's biodiversity.

The kick-off at Mati City also served as a venue to meet and greet celebrity freedivers from Belgium such as YouTuber Gert Leroy, pioneering freediving instructor JP Francois, and our very own Filipino freediving record holder, Imam Gulisan of the Sama tribe of Davao.

This dive tourism event was also graciously hosted by Davao Oriental Governor Cora N. Malanyaon, with the presence of the Philippine Commission on Sports Scuba Diving headed by Commissioner Dr. Fred Medina, and PCSSD Executive Director Marco Angelo Ancheta.

The freediving participants who

completed their certification on time for the Bay Deep Mati Freediving Festival were also individually recognized on stage.

As a PADI Certified Rescue Diver and a pioneering Professional Mermaid, I have had the privilege of visiting many dive spots in the Philippines. Over the past 25 years of diving here and in other countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, I have come to appreciate our very own waters as we do have the best and most diverse marine ecosystems in the world.

Preserving the beauty of marine life, and advocating for its protection comes naturally. I am happy to share with you this piece of paradise under the Mati sun.

Sights from Davao City to the City of Mati

IT is a three-hour drive from Davao City to the City of Mati, but I admire the view of the countryside. We stopped at some places of interest like the City of Mati Baywalk, the viewpoint of Pujada Bay (where we had our first glimpse of this beautiful bay), and a visit to the Subangan Davao Oriental Provincial Museum, where we were mesmerized by the famous Davos, the 53-foot long sperm whale's bones on exhibit.

Pujada Bay and its Islands

THE biggest island in the bay is Pujada Island, a 156-hectare gem with majestic mountain ranges as its backdrop, powdery white sands, and crystal blue

waters, truly a paradise for divers and non-divers alike. This island is open to the public with some make-shift cottages with tables, which is perfect for a day of picnic frequented by local tourists. We also visited the vanishing islets of Oak and Ivy, which are white sandbars that shine under the sun.

Beyond the beach, nothing compares to the wonders of the underwater world, and needless to say, the rich marine life of Mati deserves to be recognized. New markets abroad now see the Philippines as a richly diverse destination for underwater adventure, and this is the perfect opportunity to take the plunge.

The 21,200-hectare Pujada Bay is a protected landscape and seascape. Sightings of the dugong (sea cow),



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THE author is about to scuba dive in the clear waters of Pujada Bay.

whale sharks, sea turtles, and dolphins at different times of the year have been reported. Home to migratory sea cows, these gentle sea creatures play an integral role in achieving marine ecosystem balance in all the areas that they pass through.

The success of the first edition of the Bay Deep Mati Freediving Festival is the primary step in promoting tourism in the City of Mati. The event concluded with Mayor Michelle Nakpil Rabat, together with the Department of Tourism Region XI, and the local government unit working hand-in-hand in promoting dive tourism, putting Mati on the world diving map, and securing its commitment to protecting the region's marine life.

After the revelation of Mati's abundant underwater resources, divers and other participants became more vigilant and motivated to further their cause. We fully support these events advocating responsible dive tourism that could help its local community prosper for future generations.

