

29 January 2023, Sunday



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



## LGUs strengthen ENR framework

By **CORY MARTINEZ**

**THE Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Framework being drafted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will now be strengthened with the incorporation of the inputs and insights gathered from the local government units (LGUs) during a recently-held forum.**

Juan Miguel T. Cuna, DENR Undersecretary for Field Operations-Luzon, Visayas and Environment, said that the integrated framework will be the "foundation" for science-based, data-driven, and so-

cially, politically, and culturally sensitive environmental policies and programs for the country.

The DENR initiated the Visayas Multistakeholder Forum held in Iloilo City on Jan. 18-19 in order to strengthen and expand collaboration with the LGUs in promoting environmental protection and working towards sustainable development.

The two-day forum gathered over 250 stakeholders, during which local chief executives from the region shared best practices, contextualized solutions, and valuable insights on environmental protection and sustainable development.

During the plenary ses-

sion for the local government sector, officials from the provinces of Iloilo and Samar, as well as the cities of Ormoc (Leyte), Bayawan (Negros Oriental), and Bago (Negros Occidental) presented their respective flagship environmental programs realized through collaboration with partner agencies, particularly the DENR.

Cuna added that the consultation centered on the importance of inclusive and community-based programs to foster active involvement and promote ownership of projects with the LGUs' constituents, as well as collaborative efforts with other sectors for inclusive and sustainable development.



## Altai mining operation sa Romblon, pinalagan

Nagbarikada nitong Sabado, Enero 28, ang mga residente ng San Fernando, Romblon para harangin ang naglalakihang mga trak ng Altai Philippines Mining Corporation na naghahakot ng mga lupa na ilalabas ng Sibuyan Island.

Ginawang barikada ng mga residente ang kanilang mga sasakyan sa harap ng itinatayong pantalan ng Altai sa Sitio Bato España sa bayan ng San Fernando.

Kinontra ng mga residente ang umano'y ilegal na operasyon ng Altai dahil sa kawalan

ng kinakailangang permit at mga kaukulang dokumento para sa kanilang mining operation.

Ayon kay Elizabeth Ibañez, coordinator ng Sibuyanons Against Mining at miyembro ng Council of Leader ng Alyansa Tigil Mina, dapat imbestigahan ang Altai sa ilegal na aktibidad nito sa kanilang bayan.

Kinalampag niya ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at ang Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) para ipatigil ang mining operations ng Altai.



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# Presenting the first KLIMA-likasan Awards winners

In celebration of the 2022 National Climate Change Consciousness Week, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Globe recognized the efforts of individuals, groups, and local government units to address climate change, contribute in disaster risk reduction, and promote cultural and behavioral shifts.

In line with its commitment to climate resiliency, Globe partnered with the DENR Climate Change Service and is the lone private sector co-presenter of the 2022 Mga Kuwentong KLIMA-likasan: A Climate and Disaster Resiliency Recognition Awards.

Entries were evaluated based on their Climate and Disaster Resiliency content (60 percent), visual appeal of photos and videos (30 percent), and the geographical reach of the initiative (10 percent).

The board of judges, composed of representatives from the Climate Change Commission, Office of Civil Defense and Globe, chose individuals, groups, and local government units that have come a long way in their efforts to address climate change impacts within their communities or beyond.

As the county's leading digital solutions provider, Globe recognizes that climate change is a huge challenge that requires collective action, hence the need to support and highlight the efforts of Filipinos from around the country.

"We see technology, which is a key enabler of industries, as helping accelerate the just transition to a green economy," said Yoly Crisanto, chief sustainability and corporate communications officer of the Globe Group.

"Let us all work together to build a sustainable and climate-resilient Philippines. It is our fervent wish that by giving recognition, *ang Mga Kuwentong Klima-likasan ay magbibigay ng mas malawak na inspirasyon para sa ating lahat upang tumugon sa pangangailangan ng ating kalikasan,*" (the Mga Kuwentong Klima-likasan [Awards] will provide us greater inspiration to address the needs of our environment), she added.

The first prize winners for the individual, group, and LGU categories, who won P30,000-P50,000 in cash, were:

- Moises Butic: The Ifugao Muyong: Perpetuating a Forest Legacy.

- iRISE UP: Intelligent, Resilient, and Integrated Systems for the Urban Population.

- CDRRMO Baguio City: Smart and Gender-Inclusive Flood Early Warning and Mitigation System.

KLIMA-likasan also gave out the Climate Technology for Resilience Awards. Winners for this category were chosen based on their contributions and initiatives that highlighted the role of digital technologies in building resilience, including the use of artificial intelligence, robotics, sensor-driven tools, smartphone applications, the Internet, SMS, and social media, among others.

Awarded were:

- Raheemah Hafsa Pangarungan's BIOPHIL, which intends to provide cleaner, cheaper, and more accessible energy source and products from water hyacinth, an invasive plant species within Lake Lanao.

- iRISE UP's Intelligent, Resilient, and Integrated Systems for the Urban Population, which aims to streamline the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Information System of Quezon City.

- CDRRMO Baguio City's Smart and Gender-Inclusive Flood Early Warning, Information and Mitigation System for its online system, realtime data capture system, and flood mitigation action plan.

"The stories that we received from 16 regions in the country only say one thing: There are already significant actions happening on the ground. We need to take note of them, document them, map them, and see how we can scale up the initiatives to expand to other areas in their community," DENR Undersecretary Analiza Rebuelta-Teh said.

To view the complete list of winners and be inspired to become a climate change warrior like them, visit: <https://www.denr.gov.ph/index.php/news-events/press-releases/4704-denr-names-winners-of-klima-likasan-awards-for-climate-and-disaster-resiliency>.

To learn more about Globe's sustainability initiatives, visit <https://www.globe.com.ph/about-us/sustainability.html>.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF GLOBE

THE 2022 Klima-likasan Awards recognized individuals, groups, and LGUs that actively support efforts and campaigns on climate action and disaster risk reduction. Seen in this screen shot are the 10 winners and representatives from the DENR Climate Change Service, Climate Change Commission, Office of Civil Defense and Globe.



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# BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

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## ACB: There's high hopes for mangroves in Asean





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BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

**‘U**NCERTAIN future looms for Philippine, Southeast Asian mangroves,” said the headline of a news release from University of the Philippines-Diliman College of Science (UPD-CS) scientists, who conducted a comprehensive survey of over 300 mangrove studies across the Philippines and the rest of Southeast Asia.

The survey said the Philippines is the second worst country in the Asean in terms of mangrove losses, suffering a 10.5-percent decline between 1990 and 2010, citing independent studies included in the survey.

The Philippines is surpassed only by Myanmar, which suffered a 27.6 percent loss between 2000 and 2014, the survey undertaken by UP Ph.D. Biology student Maria Elisa Gerona-Daga and Institute of Biology Associate Professor Dr. Severino Salmo III revealed.

### Stark wake-up call

ACCORDING to the UPD-CS scientists, the findings are a stark wake-up call, given the international declaration from 2021 to 2030 as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, that aimed at preventing, stopping and reversing the degradation of ecosystems worldwide.

“With the countdown well-underway of existing mangrove restoration, research helps identify ways to achieve the [Southeast Asia] region’s restoration targets and safeguard their biodiversity,” the scientists added.

The study, titled “A systematic review of mangrove restoration studies in Southeast Asia: Challenges and Opportunities for the United Nation’s Decade on Ecosystem Restoration,” provides a systematic and quantitative synthesis of 335 mangrove restoration studies in the region that were published before February 2022.

The investigation has also identified regional successes and failures in mangrove restorations.

### Recommendations

GERONA-DAGA and Salmo suggested five priority topics for improving the science and practice of mangrove restoration to realize the UN’s targets by 2030.

These are: restoration areas and methods; mangrove restoration in climate change adaptation and mitigation programs; monitoring recoveries of biodiversity and ecosystem services; policies, governance, and community en-

agement; and strengthening of the Asean network.

Among others, the UPD-CS scientists and researchers proposed to add more mangrove faunal and floral species as bases for selecting and prioritizing sites for restoration, thereby furthering the UN’s biodiversity goals and potentially generating useful data on genetic diversity.

### Important ecosystem

MANGROVE forest ecosystems provide the ideal environment for a large variety of animals ranging from mammals, birds, reptiles to fish, crab, shrimp and mollusk species to live and thrive, according to the Asean Centre for Biodiversity.

They also serve as nurseries for many fish species.

Mangroves also provide natural defense against storm surges and protection to coastal communities and are good carbon sink, reducing, if not limiting, greenhouse gas emission into the atmosphere.

### Earth’s secret weapons

“MANGROVE forests are some of Planet Earth’s ‘secret weapons’ in stopping climate change,” said Best Alternatives Director Gregg Yan.

“Their branches, leaves and roots passively absorb and store incredible amounts of carbon dioxide. The 2020 book, Carbon-Based Material for Environmental Protection and Remediation, states that mangal or mangrove forests store three to four times more carbon dioxide per hectare than terrestrial or land-based forests,” Yan told the BUSINESSMIRROR via email on January 25.

According to Yan, some estimates even claim that mangroves absorb up to 10 times more carbon dioxide than other forest types.

Unfortunately, the world’s mangrove forests have receded

due to continuing coastal development, clearing for brackishwater aquaculture, charcoal-mining and other destructive activities.

Fortunately, there are numerous sustainable alternatives to these threats, from switching to briquettes made from pressed corn husks to promoting mangrove forests as preferential tourist destinations, especially for bird-watchers.

“Once considered fetid swamps, we should look at the protection of the world’s mangroves as one of our best answers to the ongoing climate crisis,” he pointed out.

### Alarming problem

RONNEL ARAMBULO, Pamalakaya national spokesman, said the UPD-CS study should raise an alarm to the national government and its agencies concerned with the environment.

“This reflects the previous administrations’ neglect to preserve and protect our marine and coastal resources. Mangroves are crucial to coastal and marine biodiversity, as they serve as habitat of a wide array of fish species,” Arambulo told the Business Mirror via Messenger on January 20.

According to Arambulo, the Marcos Jr. administration should direct the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to seriously and immediately take on the problem.

“Specifically, we call on the DENR to reject all forms of coastal destruction activities, such as reclamation. We have yet to hear from DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga on her stand on this environmentally destructive project since she took the post,” he pointed out.

### Ray of hope

ON a positive note, ACB Executive Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim



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said members of the Asean, including the Philippines, are very much aware of the challenges brought by the degradation of the coastal and marine environment, including the shrinking mangrove forest cover.

"Though there indeed have been a decline of healthy mangrove areas in Southeast Asia, efforts have not been scarce to protect the remaining mangroves and restore degraded mangrove ecosystems in the Asean as reflected in the Asean Biodiversity Outlook 3, which was recently launched at the CBD COP15 [Convention of Biological Diversity 15th Conference of Parties] in Montreal [in December 2022]," Lim told the Business Mirror via Messenger on January 30 when asked to comment on the UPD-CS report.

According to Lim, the increased awareness of Asean member states (AMS) on the value of mangroves as ecosystem-based adaptation measure against climate change impacts has accelerated restoration initiatives. This already take into account various science-based methods to rehabilitate damaged and degraded mangrove areas.

"Because of these, the ACB has high hopes for mangroves in the Asean, and will continue to support existing efforts of the AMS in protecting and restoring their mangrove areas, in line with the Asean Green Initiative as well as their commitments to achieve the objectives of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework," she said.

### Encouraging scenario

THE ACB's compilation of AMS efforts to restore and rehabilitate mangrove ecosystems provides a positive and encouraging scenario of the mangroves in the Asean.

For instance, a report by the

Provincial Department of Natural Resources and Environment in Thua Thien Hue province in Vietnam's northern coast, stated that from 2015 onward, 23 fishery community-based protection zones with total land area of 6.14 square kilometres were established in Tam Giang and Cau Hai lagoons.

Local fishermen have been actively supporting this community-based management model and followed the development plan and guidelines for implementation

The ACB report also revealed that Myanmar's community forestry-based enterprises underscore best practices like the nationwide greening of dry zones and forest landscape restoration, promotion of biodiversity, mangrove rehabilitation and coastal management, and reform strategy to boost private sector investments in social forestry/community forestry.

### Ecosystem approach

MALAYSIA and the Philippines enhanced conservation efforts by implementing the Ecosystem Approach for Fisheries Management, which entails the monitoring and rehabilitation of coral cover and coastal mangroves.

Myanmar is moving toward sustainable forestry through a certification system. Fisherfolks have accelerated the use of sustainable techniques at all aquaculture sites. These efforts are complemented with mangroves reclamation, provision of extension services, and capacity building.

In the framework of its National Voluntary Land Degradation Neutrality Targets and Measures, Cambodia targets to maintain and enhance ecosystems and their services by inter alia restoring at least 8 percent of degraded and depressed protected areas, conservation areas, agroecosystems,

and forest ecosystems including mangroves.

These targets are operationalised in three provinces (Kampong Thom, Preah Vihear and Siem Reap), where Forest Landscape Restoration and Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology approach are being implemented.

### Increasing mangrove forest

AMID the bleak situation gathered by the UPD-CS scientists, the Philippines' mangrove forest cover and mangrove cover within forest lands have increased by a total of 1,852.5 square kilometres from 2010 to 2015.

"This may have stemmed from interventions that were introduced to address mangrove rehabilitation in 2014, when the government included the Mangrove and Beach Forest Development Project as a component program under the National Greening Program," the ACB report said, citing the Philippines own country-report.

"Singapore has also undertaken mangrove restoration projects after it observed many of its important mangrove sites to be undergoing severe erosion," the ACB report added.

One such site is on Pulau Tekong, which is home to one of Singapore's largest remaining patches of mangrove habitat, stretching about 3 kilometres along the offshore island's coast, with a size of approximately 0.92 square kilometres.

### Continuing mangrove conservation initiatives

AMS continue to support mangrove conservation initiatives throughout the region, the Asean report said.

For instance, Malaysia's permanent forest estate now includes 5,440.32 square kilometres of mangroves, with five sites designated as Ramsar Sites, or wetlands of international importance.

In Thailand, a community beekeeping enterprise was established in Nai Nang Village, Krabi province to aid in the conservation efforts of mangroves around their village as well as to provide alternative sources of income to villagers.

In Indonesia, a mangrove conservation project in the Mootilango Village, Gorontalo province, involves five women groups, of which 50 members were trained in mangrove-based food processing as an alternative source of income.



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## Number of Asian waterbirds in Lemery, Batangas, declining

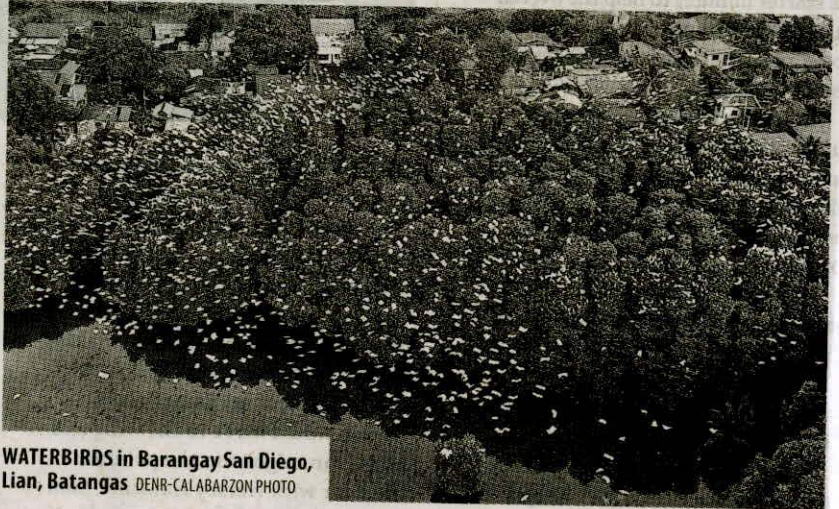
**C**ONTINUOUS decrease in the number of Asian waterbirds was observed during the monitoring conducted in Palanas, Lemery, Batangas, while numerous birds were still observed in Barangay San Diego, Lian, Batangas, a news release said.

Asian Waterbird Census is conducted annually every January to provide basis for estimates and monitor changes in waterbird population in all types of natural and man-made wetlands, including, rivers, lakes, reservoirs, ponds, freshwater swamps, mangroves, mudflats, coral reefs, rice fields and sewage farms.

Birds from other countries migrate to the Philippines to escape the winter, find shelter, feed, and some of them even breed.

This January, a team from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources's Calaca Environment Natural Resources Office (DENR-Centro) Calaca Conservation and Development Section conducted monitoring of Asian waterbirds in Barangay Palanas and Barangay San Diego.

Most of the waterbird species observed in both areas were: Little Egret and Great Egret, with a total count of approximately



**WATERBIRDS in Barangay San Diego, Lian, Batangas** DENR-CALABARZON PHOTO

3,320 in Barangay San Diego, and 950 in Barangay Palanas.

This shows a decline in the number of waterbirds observed in Barangay Palanas, said the DENR-Calabarzon in a news release.

Changes in geographical features in Barangay Palanas occurred after the Taal Volcano Eruption in 2020.

It was observed that there was an increase in the level of river of about 1 meter, which

further cause the destruction of estimated 4 hectares of mangrove areas that serves as the roosting site of the waterbirds.

The mangrove area in the barangay is continuously being observed for its possible restoration.

On the other hand, waterbirds in Barangay San Diego, are still abundant in the past few years, the DENR-Calabarzon release said.





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## Muntinlupa taps Japan tech to depollute Laguna de Bay

BY RODERICK L. ABAD  
*Contributor*

**I**N its new attempt to improve the overall quality of Laguna de Bay, one of the primary sources of freshwater fish in the country that is now facing environmental issues, the City of Muntinlupa is now using a Japanese proven technology.

The city's Lake Management Office (LMO), in partnership with Rotary Club of Muntinlupa City Central and Rotaract Club of Alabang Bagong Paraiso, launched "Project ADBokashi" at the Muntinlupa City Fish Hatchery in Bayanan Baywalk on January 22.

It is a partner initiative to enhance bodies of water in the

locality and across the country.

Mayor Ruffy Biazon welcomed the collaborative work toward improving water quality in Laguna de Bay for the long-term, in relation to his administration's 7K Agenda for the environment.

Population pressure and industrialization, invasive species and overfishing are of concern for the lake, impacting its contribution to both local and national economies.

More than 1,000 bokashi balls were released into the lake. The activity was part of a two-year experiment to make the water quality improve and to thwart the effects of rapid urbanization around the lake.

The release of bokashi into Laguna de Bay will be done at least every six months with

periodic water quality testing to be conducted by the LMO.

Made of organic materials such as garden soil, effective microorganisms, molasses and rice hulls, the bokashi balls break down toxins and bad bacteria in water.

Dubbed locally as "mabuhay balls," bokashi were also proven in Japan to "deodorize" bodies of water and reduce siltation.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources recently used them to improve the water quality in Boracay's wetlands as part of the rehabilitation of its beaches.

In 2008, the Asian National Institute in Angono, Rizal, introduced the organic deodorizer balls to the country.

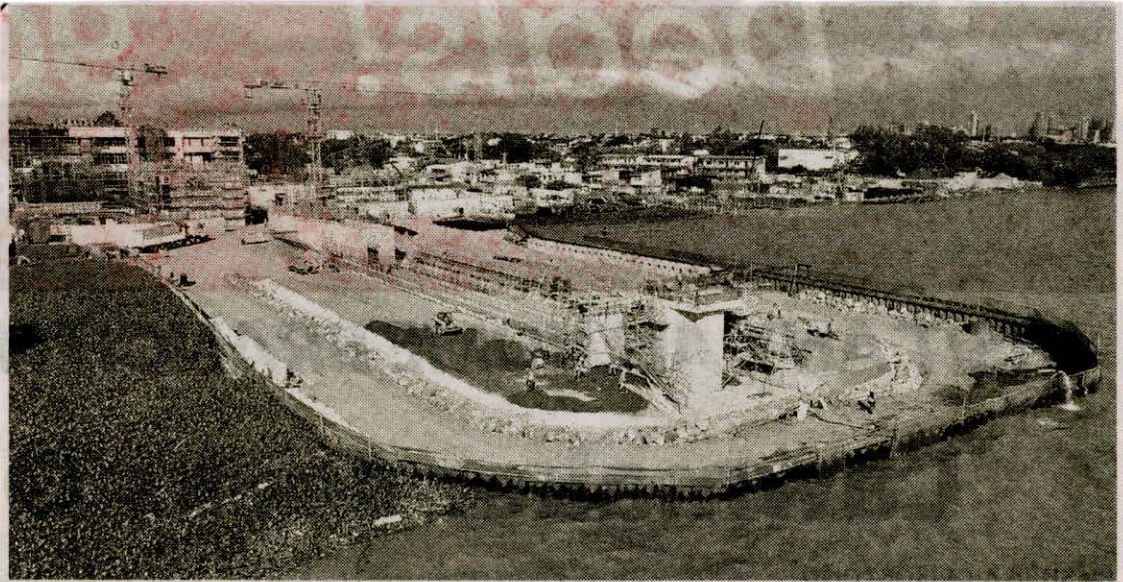
Prior to their recent release into Laguna de Bay, an initial batch counting at 6,000 was first used in Muntinlupa in 2019 in Jamboree Lake in Poblacion, which is known as the smallest natural lake in the country.



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The Poblacion Water Treatment Plant will be Maynilad's third facility to tap Laguna Lake as an alternative raw water source to the Angat Dam.

## *Maynilad treatment plant dev't in full swing*

West Zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services (Maynilad) aims to produce 50 million liters per day (MLD) of additional water supply by December 2023 – an initial output of a treatment plant it is constructing in Poblacion, Muntinlupa.

The construction of the new Poblacion Water Treatment Plant (WTP), Maynilad's third facility to tap Laguna Lake as an alternative raw water source to the Angat Dam, is now 53 percent complete.

When fully operational by the first half of 2024, this facil-

ity will have the capacity to produce 150 MLD of potable water for the southern portion of Maynilad's concession area, particularly in the cities of Parañaque, Las Piñas and Muntinlupa as well as in the province of Cavite.

At present, Maynilad has two treatment plants in Putatan, Muntinlupa providing 300 MLD of water for around 1.7 million customers in the south.

"Our production of 300 MLD is stretched to meet the current requirements of our customers in the south. Hence,

whenever extreme conditions necessitate reduced production, there is no extra supply. So, some of our customers experience service disruption. The additional output that we will get from the Poblacion WTP will help to address that," said Randolph Estrellado, Maynilad's chief operating officer.

The Poblacion WTP is part of Maynilad's P220-billion service enhancement program from 2023 to 2027 that is focused on promoting strengthened water sustainability and climate resiliency.



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# House panel endorses Hagedorn bill

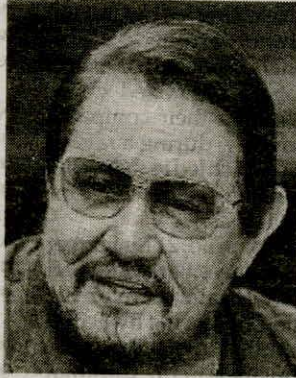
**A LAWMAKER thanked the House of Representatives for giving importance to his measure on environmental protection and preservation.**

Palawan Representative Edward Hagedorn's House Bill 6373 was approved by the House Committee on Natural Resources chaired by Cavite Rep. Elpidio Barzaga Jr. aimed at protecting and preserving the waters surrounding the Kalayaan Island Group and the West Philippine Sea.

House Bill No. 6373 seeks to declare all low-tide elevations and high-tide features, and an area of three nautical miles around the Kalayaan Island Group and Scarborough Shoal as a Marine Protected Area.

The committee is now preparing its report before transmitting the proposed measure for plenary deliberations.

CIBAC Party-list Representative Eduardo "Brother Eddie" Villanueva, who sponsored the bill and presented it to the committee on behalf of Hagedorn, stressed that the bill is focused on the protection of the marine environment of the



**Hagedorn**

Kalayaan Island Group and Scarborough Shoal and not on the territorial disputes in the West Philippine Sea.

"We cannot afford not to act because the habitat of marine life in our waters, which benefits not only the Philippines but also adjacent countries like China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei, is being destroyed," Villanueva said.

Known West Philippine Sea advocate and retired Supreme Court Justice Antonio Carpio gave his full support to the bill, saying that it was "long over-

due."

The Armed Forces of the Philippines also expressed its full support for H.B. 6373.

Hagedorn reiterated his belief that environmental protection will serve as a common ground and shared interest among Filipinos and even other regions

"It is my sincerest belief that pushing for environmental protection for the Kalayaan Island Group and Scarborough Shoal is a common ground that every Filipino could rally behind," he said.

"We do hope that this environmental lens would be likewise used by other coastal states surrounding the West Philippine Sea and the South China Sea to promote cooperation and environmental protection for greater peace, stability and prosperity for the entire region," the solon added.

Hagedorn also thanked House Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez; Barzaga; Palawan 2nd District Rep. Jose Alvarez; and retired Supreme Court Justice Carpio for their insights and support for the

bill.

The bill is an operationalization of proposals from local and international marine experts to declare the surrounding waters of the KIG and Scarborough Shoal as protected areas.

A 2014 study by the Asian Development Bank showed that the Kalayaan Islands comprise 30 percent of the country's total coral reefs and serve as a breeding ground of fishes and marine species in the country.

H.B. 6373 will prohibit and penalize certain acts and activities within the waters of the 3-nautical mile area to guarantee protection of marine habitat. However, traditional fishing will still be allowed as it is considered generally harmless to the marine ecosystem.

The bill will also create a Kalayaan Island Group and Scarborough Shoal Protected Area Management Office (KIGSS-PAMO) and a Joint Congressional Oversight Committee to ensure effective implementation of the provisions of the proposed measure. *Jes*  
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## 5.5 quake jolts Eastern Samar, Leyte

A magnitude 5.5 earthquake hit Homonhon Island, Guiuan in Eastern Samar early Saturday morning. According to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs), the earthquake shook the area at 4:25 a.m. on Saturday. The epicenter was recorded west of Homonhon Island with a depth of 80 kilometers. The earthquake was felt at Intensity 4 in Guiuan, Lawaan, Mercedes and Salcedo in Eastern Samar; Abuyog, Alangalang, City of Baybay, Dulag, Javier, La Paz, Palo, Santa Fe, Tabontabon, Tanauan and Tolosa in Leyte and San Francisco in Southern Leyte. It was felt at Intensity 3 in Babatngon, Barugo, Leyte, Pastrana and Tunga in Leyte, General MacArthur in Eastern Samar and in the City of Tacloban. Intensity 2 was experienced in Maydolong in Eastern Samar, Albura in Leyte and Ormoc City. Areas in the city of Cebu reported Intensity 1. The Phivolcs said there was no expected damage from the earthquake, but warned of aftershocks.

—ANGEL YABUT



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Roni Santiago  
MANILA BULLETIN  
JANUARY 29, 2023

# Think about driving an electric or hybrid vehicle

**I**t is time to put more serious thought on why you, your neighbor and your friends should shift to electric or hybrid vehicles. Or why commuters should expect more government action to encourage motorists to drive green vehicles.

First, a review on why: "Burning fossil fuels like gasoline and diesel releases carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere. The buildup of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and other greenhouse gases like methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) is causing the Earth's atmosphere to warm, resulting in changes to the climate we are already starting to see today." (US Environmental Protection Agency)

And a statement from the United Nations: "Climate Change is the defining issue of our time and we are at a defining moment. From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rising sea levels that increase the risk of catastrophic flooding, the impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale."

In addition to the reasons why we need to help save the planet, the need to consider green modes of private transportation is now more urgent to the consumer because of the steady increase in the prices of fuel which had even gone up to more than ₱70 a liter sometime last year. Today, fuel is about ₱63 to ₱66 a liter but the possibility of price increases is still there mainly because of the Russia-Ukraine war.

But going EV (electric vehicle) or hybrid may not be an easy decision. First: prices of EVs and hybrid vehicles are more expensive than the fuel-fed vehicles which most still drive in the country.

Second, there is the "range anxiety" factor in driving an EV as there is a limited number of charging stations especially outside Metro Manila. The EV vehicles now available in the Philippine market have

batteries that can travel from 200 to 550 kilometers before going empty.

The practical choice may be the hybrid vehicles, the ones that run on both electric power and fuel, with a system that will shift the source of power from the fuel-fed engine to electric engine at a certain speed range. But hybrids are not zero emission vehicles, unlike the EVs.

Ayala, Robinsons and SM Malls have started installing EV charging stations at selected malls in Metro Manila.

Pilipinas Shell also launched its first Shell Recharge site in Shell Mamplasan, as the first Shell-branded charger and currently the most powerful DC high performance fast charger located along Philippine expressways.

Ayala-led Integrated MicroElectronics, Inc. (IMI) has announced plans to put up at least 20 charging stations by next year.

Solarius EV recently announced plans to launch a network of nationwide public EV charging stations, targeting 180 charging stations by end of 2023 and more than 500 by 2025. The Fairmont Raffles Hotel in Makati is Solarius' first location partner in Metro Manila to provide EV charging facilities for its guests.

While the infrastructure for EVs is being rolled out, the Electric Vehicle Industry Development Act (EVIDA) law was recently passed to hasten the shift to EVs which have zero emissions. The law provides for certain tax exemptions and several non-fiscal incentives for distributors and buyers of EVs, such as tax exemptions to lower its prices. It also exempts EVs from the coding scheme, allowing the cars on the road seven days a week.

Will all these factors hasten the shift to EVs or hybrids?