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DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Former DENR biodiversity chief Calderon named first Pinoy AFoCo executive director

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

January 8, 2021



File photo shows former Department of Environment and Natural Resources Assistant Secretary Ricardo Calderon addressing a DENR forum.

A former official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has become the first Filipino to assume the top post of the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCo).

Ricardo Calderon, the DENR's assistant secretary for Climate Change, Staff Bureaus and Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) on concurrent capacity, said he has accepted the offer to head the AFoCo as its executive director effective January this year.

He will be serve as executive director in the next two years, or until December 2022.

On October 12, 2020, Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. endorsed the nomination of Calderon as AFoCo executive director. Locsin, in his endorsement, cited Calderon as the country's "most eminently qualified candidate for the position given his 30 years of experience in forestry and natural resource management."

Founded on April 27, 2018, AFoCo is an intergovernmental organization established to strengthen regional forest cooperation by transforming proven technology and policies into concrete actions in the context of sustainable forest management to address the impact of climate change.

The Philippines is among the list of participating countries to the Dialogue for the Establishment of AFoCo. The other countries are Kingdom of Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Kingdom of Cambodia, Republic of Indonesia, Republic of Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, People's Democratic Republic of Lao, Malaysia, Mongolia, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Republic of Singapore, Kingdom of Thailand, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

"I've reached the peak of my career and it is now time to move on," Calderon told the BusinessMirror. "I've already talked to Secretary [Roy A.] Cimatú to let him know of my decision and he understands and gave his blessing," he added.

A forestry expert, Calderon served a total of 33 years in government service.

Image credits: [DENR](#)

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/01/08/former-denr-biodiversity-chief-calderon-named-first-pinoy-afoco-executive-director/>



Photo by Haron Deo Vargas, Boracay CENRO

Mga baby pawikan kinaaliwan sa Boracay

Enero 7, 2021 11:39am GMT+08:00
SINULAT NI: JUN ARIOLO AGUIRRE

BORACAY ISLAND —Kinagigiliwan ng ilang mga residente sa Boracay ang pagpakawala sa mga kapipisa lamang na mga baby pawikan sa baybayin ng isla, habang nag-uunahan ang mga ito patungo sa dagat.

Ayon kay Haron deo Vargas ng Community Environment and Natural Resources Office o CENRO umabot sa 135 na Ridley turtle ang pinakawalan.

Sa front beach ng Boracay pinakawalan ang may 102 na ridley turtle at 33 naman sa Bolabog beach sa likurang bahagi ng Boracay.

Maliban sa Ridley turtle, may dalawa ding hawksbill turtle ang pinakawalan ng CENRO. Napisa ang 102 na ridley turtle noong January 1 habang ang iba naman ay napisa noong January 3.

Sa bayan ng Numancia, Aklan kinagigiliwan din ng mga residente ang may 130 na itlog ng Green Sea Turtle noong January 6. Pansamantalang inipon ang mga ito na nakakalat sa baybayin ng Numancia at ibinaon sa mababaw na hukay. Hihintayin ng opisyal ng Municipal Agriculture Office ang ilang lingo bago mapisa ang mga itlog. —**LBG, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/balitambayan/promdi/770792/mga-baby-pawikan-kinaaliwan-sa-boracay/story/>



Ilocos Norte waste recycling facility breaks ground Friday

By Leilanie Adriano January 7, 2021, 12:20 pm



LITTER-FREE ILOCOS NORTE. Garbage compactors along with farm machinery were turned over to the different cities and municipalities of Ilocos Norte last December 2020. Ilocos Norte on Friday will break ground its model cluster plastic recycling and resource recovery facility. (Photo courtesy of the provincial government of Ilocos Norte)

LAOAG CITY – The province of Ilocos Norte is determined to reduce the volume of its solid wastes and turn them into something useful with the construction of a model cluster plastic recycling and resource recovery facility.

Situated in a more than 2,500-square meter government lot in Barangay Lydia, Marcos, Ilocos Norte, the facility is set to break ground on Friday (Jan. 8), according to Estrella Sacro, project coordinator of the Environment and Natural Resources Office of the provincial government of Ilocos Norte.

“Finally, we are happy to inform you that we will already break ground with our waste recycling facility project,” said Sacro in an interview Wednesday.

Since 2018, local officials here have waited for the facility to take off but for some reason, it has been delayed due to voluminous paper documents needed in the release of the budget.

Based on the proposed agreement, the Provincial Solid Waste Management Board shall allow the clustering of local government units for the solution of common solid waste management problems and provide logistical and operational support.

The Environment and Management Bureau (EMB) provided the PHP24 million fund for the project.

The first phase of the project includes the training of personnel and the procurement and fabrication of the plastic recycling and resource recovery facility. In support of the project, the provincial government recently distributed 17 garbage compactors to the different local government units.

“We are thankful that our governor gives priority on environment protection, particularly addressing our worsening problem on garbage collection and disposal,” Sacro said. (PNA)



SMC rids Tullahan of 83,600 MT of trash and silt, intensifies cleanup before rainy season

By ... -January 8, 2021



San Miguel Corporation (SMC) hopes to accelerate its dredging operations at the Tullahan-Tinajeros River System in the first two quarters of the year, before the rainy season sets in, to help reduce flooding at areas near the 27 kilometer-long tributary stretching from La Mesa Dam to the Manila Bay.

SMC president and chief operating officer Ramon S. Ang reported that the company was able to extract 83,600 metric tons of silt and solid waste from the river in 2020, despite limitations caused by the Luzon-wide lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The dredging complemented the flood mitigation measures implemented by the cities of Navotas and Malabon.

“We extract about 600 metric tons of waste daily from the Tullahan, and at this rate, we expect to extract 100,000 metric tons in a month’s time. The relatively dry months of January to May gives us an opportunity to intensify the cleaning, deepening, and widening of the river so that more areas can avoid flooding risks during the rainy season,” he said.

Launched together with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in early 2020, the project is a P1 billion corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative of SMC to help address flooding in parts of Metro Manila and Bulacan. SMC resumed the P1 billion dredging project in June, following the lifting of strict quarantine restrictions.

“Although we resumed only last June, we were able to gradually expand our operations even during the rainy season. By conducting operations during rainy season, we were able to immediately see the benefits of the dredging and even determine the areas where more dredging needs to be done. We will cover more areas in the coming months,” Ang added.

SMC is currently dredging the initial 5.25-kilometer Tullahan river section from Barangay Tanong in Malabon City, to the mouth of the river leading to Manila Bay in Navotas City. In two years, SMC is looking to dredge a total of 1 million cubic meters from the Navotas-Malabon section alone.

To further increase the river’s capacity to receive the heavy volume of rain water, Ang said the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) said the Tullahan River’s depth should be increased to five meters as many parts of the river’s depth has been greatly reduced to only one to two meters.

“With Navotas and Malabon, we found out that the greater handling capacity of the Tullahan River — the result of our dredging activities—has allowed water from these cities’ pumping stations to be easily channeled to the river going to Manila Bay. This has reduced large-scale flooding in these areas even during the previous typhoons that inundated many parts of Metro Manila and Luzon,” Ang said.



Ang said that SMC is adding dump trucks and excavators and will also purchase special equipment to handle sections of the river with very shallow waters and solid riverbed.

Earlier, SMC also announced that it will employ former residents of Barangay Taliptip in Bulacan for the Tullahan dredging project to further hone their skills in preparation for its Bulacan river systems and Pasig cleanup initiatives.

These former Taliptip residents recently graduated from heavy equipment courses funded by SMC under the Technical Education Development and Skills Authority (TESDA) and are looking to be employed in the upcoming construction of P740-billion Manila International Airport project.

Ang said that the former Taliptip residents who graduated from the heavy equipment courses will be utilized in the river channel improvement project for tributaries belonging to the Marilao-Meycauayan-Obando River System (MMORS) in Bulacan.

SMC plans to dredge, clean, widen, and deepen the Alipit or Taliptip River, Sta. Maria River, and the Meycauayan River as part of its flood mitigation strategy for the Manila International Airport that will also benefit the whole of Bulacan.



SMC rushing river dredging before onset of rainy season

posted January 07, 2021 at 10:50 pm by **Manila Standard**

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Angeles wants BCDA land for forest park, watershed



ANGELES CITY WATERSHED. Angeles City Mayor Carmelo Lazatin Jr. and Chief Adviser and Tactician Director IC Calaguas visited the Angeles City Watershed to discuss the programs for its rehabilitation. Lazatin vowed to prioritize the protection of the 400 hectare watershed of Angeles City located in Barangay Sapangbato. Also present during the visit were Abong Tayag and Sonny Dobles. (Angeles City Information Office)

January 07, 2021

ANGELES City Mayor Carmelo Lazatin Jr. has asked the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) to entrust to the city the management of its 560-hectare land in Barangay Sapangbato, so it can be transformed into a protected forest park and watershed.

Lazatin's Chief Adviser and Tactician Director IC Calaguas, also the project director, said the 560-hectare land is part of the military reservation area covered by the Bases Conversion law and under the authority of BCDA.

Calaguas said that in order to protect water source and steady supply of water for Angeles, the Sapangbato watershed must be protected.

Part of the plan is to secure the area and conduct massive reforestation to increase water reserves which will benefit the city and the Metro Clark area.

"The City Government aims to continue strengthening the protection of our water source," Calaguas stressed.

"Water is life," Calaguas added.

In a letter addressed to BCDA President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Secretary Vivencio Dizon, Lazatin has endorsed Resolution 9312, S-2020, passed by the City Council, led by Vice Mayor Vicky Vega-Cabigting, stating the request of transfer of management and stewardship of their 560 hectares of land to the Angeles City Government.

With this, if the BCDA agrees, the City Government will manage the property for 50 years and will allot a budget of P3 million for each year. This is to ensure the reinforcement of massive reforestation in the area.

In relation to this, Lazatin will request the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to declare it as a protected area and tree reservation park.

Calaguas has discussed the initial plans with BCDA Senior Vice President Joshua Bingcang.



According to Lazatin, the City Government is optimistic that the BCDA will assist in this endeavor.

He said that the City will comply with the requirements set by the BCDA to facilitate the transfer of management and is willing to sign a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with their terms.

For this project, Lazatin will also tap the help of the Abacan River and Angeles Watershed Advocacy Council Inc., (Araw-ACI) led by businessman and environmentalist Renato Tayag for the reforestation.

Araw-ACI is a non-profit and non-stock organization registered under the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

It can be recalled that when Lazatin took office, part of his priority programs is to devise medium-and-long term programs to protect the water source of the city. **(PR)**



Pangilinan touts alternatives to single-use plastics

Published January 7, 2021, 9:31 PM

by [Vanne Elaine Terrazola](#)

Senator Francis Pangilinan on Thursday appealed to local manufacturers to start being “green” this year and produce alternatives to single-use plastics.



Sen. Francis Pangilinan

Pangilinan said manufacturers in the Philippines should take the cue from consumer giants that have already switched to plant-based plastics that can break down within a shorter period.

“Magandang opportunity itong pandemya dahil sobrang dami ng mga nagpapa-take-out o nagpapadeliver. Kung merong biodegradable alternatives, tiyak na magiging matagumpay ito (This pandemic is a good opportunity because many people are now opting for take-outs or deliveries. If there are biodegradable alternatives, I’m sure that they will succeed),” he said in a statement.

The senator called for the passage of his Senate Bill 40, which proposes a ban on the use, manufacture, and importation of single-use plastic and seeks to encourage the research and development of biodegradable alternatives.

He said it would also incentivize individuals and groups, including businesses, that manufacture biodegradable alternatives under the Philippine Cooperative Code of 2008, the Barangay Micro-Business Enterprise Act of 2002, the Magna Carta for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, the Omnibus Investment Code of 1987, or the Green Jobs Act of 2016.

The bill is pending with the Senate Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Climate Change, chaired by Senator Cynthia Villar.

Likewise, Pangilinan called on the consumers to reduce their use of single-use plastics and bring reusable utensils and containers.

“Pag makakabuti sa health ng ating environment, makakabuti rin sa health natin ito (If this benefits the health of our environment, this benefits our health, too),” he said.

Citing a 2015 study by the United Nations Environment Programme, Pangilinan said Filipinos produce about 6.2 million kilos of plastic waste every day, 81 percent of which end up in the ocean.

Pending the passage of the proposed Single-Use Plastics Regulation and Management Act, he said: “Marami na tayong pwedeng gawing mga simpleng bagay para sa kalikasan. Gumamit tayo ng mga alternatibo kagaya ng mga eco bag at i-recycle din natin and mga plastic sa tahanan (We can already do several, simple things for our environment. Let us use alternatives like eco bags and recycle plastics in our home).”

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/01/07/pangilinan-touts-alternatives-to-single-use-plastics/>



PH celebrates National Zero Waste Month

Published January 7, 2021, 2:32 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

As the country celebrates the National Zero Waste Month, environment groups called on the government and the public to recognize this period as a crucial time to heighten environmental awareness and action among Filipinos.

Proclamation No. 760 was signed in 2014 by former President Benigno Aquino III, declaring January of every year as Zero Waste Month.

Philippine environment groups belonging to the Break Free From Plastic (BFFP) movement said the celebration aims to guide people in changing their lifestyles and practices to emulate sustainable natural cycles where all discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use.

“Zero Waste Month is pursuant to Republic Act (RA) 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, so this is a crucial time to really heighten our call for environmental awareness and action among Filipinos, as well as in the development of national and local integrated, comprehensive and ecological waste management policies and programs,” said BFFP PH Project national coordinator Rei Panaligan.

EcoWaste Coalition zero waste campaigner Jove Benosa noted that the country generates over 40,000 tons of garbage per day, “not to mention the pile up of disposable face masks due to the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“After the holiday festivities, we find our bins filled to the brim again as if we are not yet throwing enough throughout the year. This is what we coined as ‘holitrash’ meaning trash that we accumulate from the holiday season composed of disposable food containers, plastic and other packaging wastes, and food leftovers,” he said.

Benosa pointed out that celebrations need not make the garbage situation worse.

“By consuming sustainably and by willfully segregating, reusing, recycling or composting discarded materials, we can all be part of the solution. For instance, food leftovers can be recycled and bring on new twists to be utilized again by the households. Biodegradable discards such as fruit and vegetable peelings, can also be composted at home or at the barangay composting facility. These simple ways of managing food leftovers can reduce what is going into the bins or landfills” he said.

Mother Earth Foundation chair Sonia Mendoza said business-as-usual scenario for corporations and policymakers should not be allowed to continue.

“Let us also bear in mind that we are still in a pandemic and climate emergency. Thus the celebration of Zero Waste Month is a very important event to call them out to drop the legalization of practices that will continue to pose threats to public health and violate environmental laws such as the continued production and consumption of single-use plastics and garbage incineration in the guise of waste-to-energy plants,” Mendoza said.

Glenn Ymata of No Burn Pilipinas urged policymakers to pass sustainable and comprehensive waste management policies and support safer practices that would reduce waste with respect to the Clean Air Act and Ecological Solid Waste Management Act including the international Paris agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The groups have lined up several activities during the month-long celebration with “zero waste” as an advocacy campaign to guide people, businesses, and institutions in changing their lifestyles and practices towards sustainable systems in an ethical, economical, and efficient way, and to ensure that wastes become valuable for other uses.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/01/07/ph-celebrates-national-zero-waste-month/>



Bulk of garbage troubles flash flood-affected residents in Victorias

[TERESA D. ELLERA](#)

January 07, 2021

RESIDENTS of Barangay 19A South Bacayan, Victorias City are troubled by the bulk of garbage brought about by the flash floods that hit the area on New Year's Day.

Punong Barangay Lucia Duran said although the city government of Victorias has been sending two dump trucks, it still needs more dump trucks to unload mountains of garbage that were carried by floodwater.

"We are worried about the health of our residents if this garbage stays in our area," Duran said.

She said they have been thankful for the help of some neighboring local government units like Silay City for sending additional dump trucks, but they need more to get rid of the garbage.

Duran also said they are thankful for the assistance extended to affected residents.

On Thursday, January 8, 2020, food aid from Senator Francis Pangilinan were distributed to affected residents. Third District Rep. Jose Francisco Benitez has also extended assistance, Duran said.

She said the flash floods on January 1 were very unexpected that the depth of the water reached up to the rooftop of some houses.

Meanwhile, the Provincial Disaster Management Program Division (PDMPD) along with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will investigate the cause of the floods in northern Negros, particularly in the 3rd district, last January 1.

Dr. Zeaphard Caelian, PDMPD head, said among the angles they are currently looking into are quarrying in the rivers.

However, since they do not have any technical knowledge, Caelian said they will coordinate with the DENR and will ask them about the situation and the suspected contributions that led to the flooding.

Aside from quarrying, the PDMPD also suspects that garbage may have clogged some of the creeks in the area.

The PDMPD and the DENR assessed the situation of the rivers and tributaries in the area Thursday.

Aside from Victorias City, flash floods also hit the cities of Silay and Talisay, and E.B. Magalona town that caused at least one fatality.

The capitol reported more than P1.7-million damages and the flash floods affected more than 3000 farmers in the Third District.

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1882155/Bacolod/Local-News/Bulk-of-garbage-troubles-flash-flood-affected-residents-in-Victorias>



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Inayawan village chief files charges against Cebu City officials for uncollected garbage

By: Delta Dyrecka Letigio - CDN Digital Multi-Media Reporter | January 07,2021 - 05:50 PM



Uncollected garbage in Barangay Inayawan in Cebu City since mid-December 2020.

CEBU CITY, Philippines — Inayawan Barangay Captain Kirk Bryan Repollo has filed charges of gross neglect of duty against Cebu City Mayor Edgardo Labella and Department of Public Services (DPS) head, Lawyer John Jigo Dacua, for failing to collect the garbage in his barangay since mid-December 2020.

Repollo said in his affidavit that the barangay was not informed that the contract between the city government and the private hauler managing the transfer station in the barangay has ended. Inayawan has been the location for the already closed landfill and the garbage transfer station for years.

Since the second week of December 2020, the garbage in the barangay has not been collected by the city's DPS, Repollo alleged. The barangay has been using its three trucks accommodating up to three tons to collect the residents' garbage.

The village chief said the barangay's trucks cannot collect all garbage in the barangay because the travel time for each truck going to the dumping area at a private facility in Barangay Binaliw takes three hours per truck.

“With the status quo on garbage disposal, the Cebu City Government and its Department of Public Services (DPS) had not been giving assistance to Barangay Inayawan in its garbage collection,” said Repollo.

The failure of the city government has become detrimental to the environment in the barangay and the health of the residents as well.

Repollo filed charges of Gross Negligence of Duty in relation to the Solid Waste Management Act at the Office of the Ombudsman against the city officials on January 7, 2021.



“This only shows incompetency, inefficiency, and inefficacy of the Cebu City Government and of the City’s DPS in addressing the garbage problems of Cebu City,” said the village chief.

He noted that the city government has the responsibility of coming up with an efficient waste management plan and ensure its implementation.

He also mentioned that the Commission on Audit (COA) already noticed the lack of a Ten Year Solid Waste Management Plan of the city that should have been approved by the National Solid Waste Management Commission.

Repollo is hoping that the Ombudsman would find grounds in the charges he filed and give justice to the sufferings of the residents.

Dacua, for his part, refused to comment on the case saying he has not received the complaint yet and will await a copy from the Office of the Ombudsman.

Mayor Labella has not yet commented on the issue as well. /rcg



No renewal for Didipio mines – Bugkalots

By Leander C. Domingo, TMT

January 8, 2021

NAGTIPUNAN, Quirino: The municipal government and the indigenous people community are strongly against the mining license renewal of Australian mining firm, OceanaGold (Philippines), Inc. or OGPI.

The Nagtipunan municipal government led by Vice Mayor Amel Fiesta expressed support for the Bugkalot-Ilongot tribe’s claim of ancestral domain ownership over the area being mined OceanaGold.

OceanoGold’s financial and technical assistance agreement (FTAA) is set for renewal.

Led by its overall chieftain Rosario Camma, more than 6,000 individuals belonging to the Bugkalot-Ilongot tribe has earlier appealed to President Rodrigo Roa Duterte through a petition not to renew the FTAA of OceanaGold because of its “blatant disregard” of the ancestral domain right of the indigenous peoples (IP).

Hosting OGPI’s gold and copper project, Barangay Didipio is among the 12 villages claimed by the Bugkalot tribe in their existing application for Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title. It is also one of the contested villages particularly between Nagtipunan town of Quirino province and Kasibu town of Nueva Vizcaya province.

To support the Bugkalot-Ilongot tribe, the Sangguniang Bayan (Municipal Council) of Nagtipunan town also vowed to work against the issuance of a regulatory permit for OceanaGold and cease the operation of the Didipio gold and copper project.

Vice Mayor Fiesta noted that the 13 contested villages are within the territorial jurisdiction of Nagtipunan under Batas Pambansa 345, which established the municipality in 1983.

He added that the Bugkalot-Ilongot tribe had also been known to traditionally occupy these areas “since time immemorial.”

Fiesta said through Sangguniang Bayan Resolution 1, Series of 2021, the local government unit (LGU) of Nagtipunan also demands that OceanaGold should observe the social acceptability protocol under the Local Government Code of 1991.

“It is high time that the LGU of Nagtipunan should seek for accountability on the part of the mining firm, not only because it brazenly violates the ancestral domain rights of our aboriginal constituents who are the Bugkalots-Ilongots but also on account of OceanaGold’s adamant refusal to settle its local business taxes due to the municipality,” the Nagtipunan municipal council said.

The municipal council members’ resolution also endorsed to President Duterte a petition submitted before them by the Bugkalot-Ilongot IP communities in Nagtipunan and Kasibu town which also demanded the non-renewal of the FTAA.

Meanwhile, the Bugkalot-Ilongot tribe has criticized and condemned the National Cultural Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) issuance of a certificate of non-overlap (CNO) to OGPI to “illegally” fast-track the renewal of its FTAA.



Camma said the issuance of the CNO to OceanaGold by NCIP Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) office in Tuguegarao City was “premature and baseless” and was “rigged without undergoing the due process” in favor of OceanaGold only to expedite the renewal and approval of the expired FTAA by the President.



PAGBANGON SA GITNA NG PANGGAGAHASA SA KALIKASAN? (IKALAWANG BAHAGI)



January 8, 2021 @ 12:05 AM 7 hours ago

ALAM ba ninyo na bago gibain ng Filminera ang dating forest reserve na ito ay walang nagugutom sa Aroroy dahil kumikita kahit paano ang mga minero sa ilang lugar na sinakop na ngayon ng nabanggit na kompanya?

Ipalagay nating ginagampanan naman nito ang social responsibility na alituntunin ng dayuhang negosyante alinsunod sa Mining Act of the Philippines ngunit ilan lang ba sa libo-libong minero ang nabigyan ng trabaho bilang mga gwardya na itinuturong responsable sa mga kaso ng panggigipit at pagtataboy sa mga residente kahit nasa labas na ng bakuran ng kompanya, na kumakalkal ng mga batong basura na rin naman ngunit pinagtatiyagaan ng mga pobre upang pantawid-gutom nila?

Pagtupad ba sa obligasyon ang pagbibigay ng scholarship sa ilang daan lang na estudyante ng mahihirap na pamilyang nawalan ng hanap-buhay mula nang tabasin ng dayuhang kompanya ang kabundukang nasa larawan at pakinabangan nito ang yaman ng Aroroy?

At kung pagmamasdan ang hitsura ngayon ng dating makapal sa mga punongkahoy na mga bundok, ito ba ang nginangakngak ng Filminera na responsableng pagmiminang animo'y hindi maintindihan kung anong uri ng kalamidad ang dumaan dito?

Masasabi rin bang responsible mining ang ginagawa nito samantalang hanggang ngayon ay marami pa rin ang tumatangis na may-ari ng lupaing kinamkam na nito ngunit hindi pa rin binabayaran ng kompanya kabilang ang kay Kapitan Noriel Quintal sa Goldbug ng naturang bayan?

Ilang lugar kaya sa bansa ngayon ang sinira na ang kabundukan bunsod ng walang habas na open pit mining na dahilan din ng lumalalang kahirapan sa nasasakupang lalawigan may operasyon nito?

Sabihin na nating ipinangangalandakan ng ilang opisyal na kumita ang gobyerno ng 179 bilyong pisong excise taxes mula sa mining industry noong nakaraang taon at kikita pa ng dagdag na 20 bilyong piso bawat taon kung pahihintulutan na nitong ibalik ang operasyon ng ilang higanteng kompanyang mapanira sa kalikasang ipinasara ni Tatay Digong ngunit sapat ba ang halagang ito sa pinsalang idinulot nito tulad ng malawakang pagbaha, pagkalason ng mga ilog at karagatan at iba't ibang klase ng sakit dito.



Ilang nga ba ang namatay at nasirang ari-arian sa Cagayan at iba pang lalawigan sa Northern, Central at Southern Luzon noong nakaraang bagyong Ulysses maging ang Rolly dahil inilubog sa baha ang mga lugar na 'yan?

Lumalabas sa ulat ng Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM) na ang bansa natin ay lubhang malala ang epekto ng kalamidad tulad ng bagyo dahil sa walang habas na pang-aabuso sa kalikasan at pagkakalbo ng kabundukan.

Hayaan na natin ang kinabukasan ng susunod pang henerasyon dahil matagal pa 'yan subalit isipin na lang sana ng ilang ganid na opisyal ng gobyernong nasa likod ng walang puknat na open pit mining, ang kada taong dumarating na malalakas na bagyong mistulang delubyo ang pinsalang iniwan sa sambayanan.



Typhoons, floods linked to drop in crocodile population in Isabela

By: [Villamor Visaya Jr.](#) - Correspondent / [@VillVisayaJrINO](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:30 AM January 08, 2021

SAN MARIANO, Isabela — The typhoons and floods that hit Isabela province late last year might have caused the population of crocodiles in four sanctuaries to dwindle, a conservation group said on Wednesday.

Marites Balbas, executive officer of Mabuwaya Foundation Inc., said only 10 of the 32 crocodiles recorded in these sites last September were sighted by December.

“We received no records of crocodile killing in 2020, so we hoped and presumed that some might have been staying in safe areas, like creeks and lakes,” she told the Inquirer.

But she said raging floods would have either drowned the crocodiles or swept them away, causing them to get entangled in fishing nets or caught in traps.

Balbas urged villagers not to harm these reptiles and instead report sightings to authorities to protect the species and their sanctuaries.

Mabuwaya Foundation has been studying the ecology of the Philippine freshwater crocodile in the wild since 2000 to help conserve its population in Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park and in nearby areas. It uses a community-based approach to raise awareness about the reptile and the need for conservation.



IN THE WILD Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park in Isabela province provides the critically endangered Philippine freshwater crocodile (*Crocodylus mindorensis*) an environment suitable for its survival in the wild. —PHOTO COURTESY OF MABUWAYA FOUNDATION INC.

Critically endangered

Balbas said preserving the crocodile’s remaining wild population and its natural habitat would help avert its extinction.

Other natural crocodile sanctuaries in Isabela would also be monitored as part of efforts to spot more crocodiles, she said.

Philippine freshwater crocodiles (*Crocodylus mindorensis*), classified as critically endangered, are found in sanctuaries in San Mariano and in the neighboring town of Divilacan. Ilocanos refer to these reptiles as “bukarot.”



An adult freshwater crocodile measures only 3 meters long and is smaller than other crocodile species.

In September last year, Mabuwaya Foundation found five crocodile hatchlings in a creek at Barangay Cadsalan, San Mariano, after incessant rains caused rivers to swell near a nesting site.

Washed away

Balbas said her group only recovered a few hatchlings, although an adult female freshwater crocodile could lay 16 to 27 eggs. “The other hatchlings could have been washed away or some of the eggs rotted away,” she said.

The group also found eight baby crocodiles in Dunoy Lake, also in Cadsalan, last August and brought them to the foundation’s breeding station. These would be returned to the sanctuary once they reach 50 to 75 centimeters long, Balbas said.

On Nov. 4 last year, Isabela and Cagayan provinces experienced widespread flooding as Typhoon “Ulysses” (international name: Vamco) dumped heavy rains in Cagayan Valley.

The floods, said to be the worst to hit the region in the last 40 years, affected 47,600 families or 164,400 people.



Boracay, Palawan pasok sa Top 10 Best Island Beaches sa World list



January 7, 2021 @ 4:51 PM 14 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Pasok ang Boracay at Palawan sa top 10 tourist attractions sa isang travel publication sa buong mundo.

Sa ulat, pumangalawa ang Boracay sa Condé Nast Traveler's sa 25 Best Island Beaches in the World: Readers' Choice Awards in 2020.

“Boracay is a screensaver brought to life, with dazzling white sand, so-clear-you-can-see-your-toes water, and a lush jungle backdrop, available to anyone willing to make the journey,” batay kay Caitlan Morton ng Condé Nast Traveler ng picturesque travel destination.

“The island used to fly under the radar with one of the most beautiful beaches in the world—but the secret's out.”

Lumagay naman sa pang-siyam ang El Nido, Palawan.

“El Nido alone is home to around 50 white sand beaches—it's impossible to choose just one—all of which are set around dramatic limestone formations and have the finest and whitest sand you'll ever see,” saad ni Morton.

“And the sunsets? Well, they'll ruin you for life. Consider yourself warned.”

Welcome naman sa Department of Tourism ang pagkakasama ng dalawang pasyalan sa kanilang listahan.

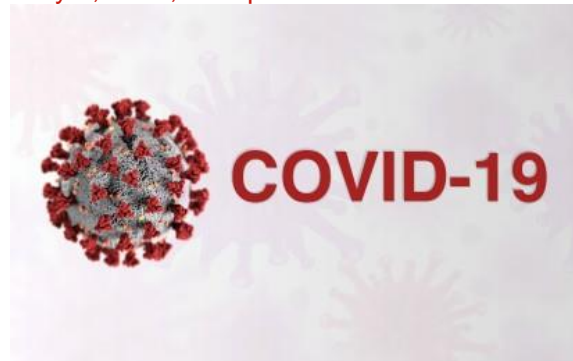
“We draw inspiration from this warm reception and solid vote of confidence from our satisfied patrons. As our destinations gradually reopen with health and safety measures in place, we will continue our conservation and protection efforts of these areas,” ani Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat. **RNT/FGDC**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/boracay-palawan-pasok-sa-top-10-best-island-beaches-sa-world-list/>



PH Covid-19 recovery tally rises by 360 to 449,052

By Ma. Teresa Montemayor January 7, 2021, 6:35 pm



MANILA – At least 360 more patients have recovered from the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19), pushing the country's overall tally of recovered cases to 449,052 on Thursday.

In its 4 p.m. case bulletin, the Department of Health (DOH) said the figures represent 93.1 percent of those who tested positive for the virus that has so far beaten the illness.

The agency also reported 1,353 new confirmed cases and nine new deaths.

These figures brought the overall tally of active cases to 23,675 and the death toll to 9,356.

The DOH said about 82.3 percent of the active cases are mild, 8.4 percent are asymptomatic, 3.1 percent are severe, 0.48 percent are moderate, and 5.8 percent are in critical condition.

"There were seven duplicates removed from the total case count, and, of these, five recovered cases have been removed. Moreover, three cases previously tagged as recovered was reclassified as deaths," it added.

Rizal topped the list of places that logged the most number of new cases with 63 infections.

It was followed by Laguna with 62; City of Manila with 60; Quezon City with 58; and Davao City with 54.

DOH data on Jan. 6 showed that 995 or 5.2 percent of 19,152 who were tested turned out positive for Covid-19.

Currently, there is a 21,300-bed capacity dedicated to patients with Covid-19.

Available are 61 percent of 2,100 intensive care unit beds, 64 percent of 16,100 isolation beds, and 76 percent of 7,600 ward beds.

About 76 percent of 2,100 ventilators are available for Covid-19 patients' use. (PNA)



'Worst is over' sa laban vs COVID-19 - Palasyo

By [Malou Escudero](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon) - January 8, 2021 - 12:00am



Ito ang inihayag ni Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque tungkol sa laban ng bansa sa COVID-19 bilang pagkontra sa pagtaya ng Moody's Analytics na ang Pilipinas ang pinakahuling bansa sa Asia Pacific na tulu-yang makakabangon sa kahirapan na idinulot ng pandemya at makakabangon lamang ang ekonomiya sa ikalawang quarter ng 2022.

MANILA, Philippines — "So huwag po kayong mag-alala, the worst is over sabi nga nila we've hit rock bottom and the only way to go is up."

Ito ang inihayag ni Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque tungkol sa laban ng bansa sa COVID-19 bilang pagkontra sa pagtaya ng Moody's Analytics na ang Pilipinas ang pinakahuling bansa sa Asia Pacific na tulu-yang makakabangon sa kahirapan na idinulot ng pandemya at makakabangon lamang ang ekonomiya sa ikalawang quarter ng 2022.

Naniniwala si Roque na nalampasan na ng Pilipinas ang pinakamabigat na pagsubok na dala ng pandemya.

"Huwag kayong mag-alala, we will disprove that forecast wrong. At ito po ang dahilan kung bakit nagbubukas tayo ng ekonomiya at palaging sinasabi sa ating mga kababayan: Pag-ingatan ang buhay ng tayo po'y makapaghanapbuhay," ani Roque.

Ipinaliwanag pa ni Roque na isa sa mga dahilan kung bakit ayaw mangutang ng todo-todo ng gobyerno ay upang hindi maapektuhan ang credit rating ng bansa at lalong tumaas ang interes na babayaran.

Aminado si Roque na hindi pa tiyak kung hanggang kailan tatagal ang krisis na dulot ng COVID-19 kaya hindi sinasagad ang pangungutang.

"Kasi kapag tayo ay na-ngutang nang todo-todo, maaapektuhan din iyong ating credit rating, tataas din iyong mga interest na babayaran natin at hindi nga tayo sigurado kung kailan pa tatagal itong kri-sis na ito na dulot ng CO-VID-19. So, ang ini-aim niya, nandoon lang tayo sa gitna ng mga pangungutang ng daigdig," ani Roque.



Ipinahiwatig ni Roque na mas mahihirapang makabangon ang ekonomiya kung tuluy-tuloy ang gagawing pag-utang.

Umaasa rin si Roque na mababakunahan ang nasa 50-70 milyong Filipino ngayong taon na magi-ging hudyat para matapos na ang pandemya.

“Kaya lang po samantala habang wala pang bakuna, paulit-ulit po – si Presidente naman po ang nakikiusap nito ha, patuloy po kayong mag-mask at natutuwa naman po ako sa isang pag-aaral, 93% ng Pilipino ay nagsusuot ng mask ‘no so ipatuloy po natin iyan,” ani Roque.



Gov't issues IRR on regulatory relief to private projects under Bayanihan 2

Published January 7, 2021 5:59pm

By TED CORDERO, GMA News

The government has issued the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) for the identification of private sector projects that will qualify for regulatory relief under certain conditions in the Bayanihan To Recover As One Act or Bayanihan 2.

In a statement on Thursday, the Department of Finance (DOF) said Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III, Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez, and Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu signed the IRR.

The IRR took effect following its publication in a newspaper general circulation on January 7, 2021, according to the DOF.

It said the Office of the National Administrative Registrar of the University of the Philippines (UP) Law Center, the official repository of all IRRs issued by the different agencies of the government, were provided three certified copies of the new IRR.

The DOF leads a committee - with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) as members - tasked to identify the specific permits, licenses, certificates, clearances, consents, authorizations, or resolutions that shall be waived in accordance with the IRR of the Bayanihan 2 provision.

Under Republic Act No. 11494 or Bayanihan 2, private projects determined to be “nationally significant,” “with high economic returns” or “with high employment potential” may have certain permits, licenses or other requirements waived, “to avoid delays in their implementation, and immediately stimulate economic activity and create jobs during the state of national emergency declared by the President as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Such regulatory relief measures exclude those relating to taxes, duties, border control and environmental laws and regulations, as stated in Bayanihan 2 and in Section 6 of the IRR.

Meanwhile, Section 4 of Bayanihan 2 states that the authority of the DOF-led committee “shall be valid during the state of national emergency as declared by the President and the economic rehabilitation period or until the last day of June 2022, whichever is later.”

Under the IRR, the DOF shall serve as the committee secretariat, where the private sector proponent of the project is required to submit the application for regulatory relief.

In identifying which covered projects shall be granted regulatory relief and the specific requirement or requirements that shall be waived, the committee is mandated to evaluate them on a per-requirement basis; and determine the economic and social impact of the project based on economic returns, job generation potential, effect on the delivery of critical services on both the national and local economies.



The committee shall also consider the impact of the lack of the requirement to be waived on the operations and quality of the output of the covered project, and the health and safety of the personnel working on the project, among other factors as stated under Section 5d of the IRR.

Taking into account the new normal, the IRR states that covered projects under the following sectors may also be considered by the committee as projects of national significance:

- housing and resettlement in support of the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program (BP2P)
- water supply and sanitation to accelerate achievement of full coverage
- watershed rehabilitation and protection
- power generation, transmission and electrification to support the digital economy
- provision of other critical services that contribute to providing security and promoting peace

In determining the national significance of a project, the committee shall consider “the significant sectors that would accelerate the recovery and bolster the resilience of the Philippine economy” and may also take into account “the project’s direct and indirect contribution to economic growth and development, implementation readiness, and such other facets that would stimulate the local economy.”

“As such, the total project cost of the covered project is not necessarily the sole basis in determining national significance,” the IRR states.

Section 10 of the IRR prohibits any court, except the Supreme Court (SC), from issuing any temporary restraining order (TRO), preliminary injunction or preliminary mandatory injunction against the committee and the operation of the covered project granted regulatory relief.

A technical working group (TWG) composed of representatives from the DOF, DTI, DENR and other government agencies identified by the committee may be created to serve as its technical arm in evaluating applications, the IRR states.

The TWG is responsible for conducting the necessary inter-agency coordination and consultation in evaluating the applications for regulatory relief; and in submitting a comprehensive report to the committee with its recommendations supported by factual, technical and legal reasons.

The procedures and requirements in applying for regulatory relief and the limitations and coverage of such relief measures are outlined in the IRR.

It also states that “(t)he Committee shall not be held liable if there will be a subsequent finding by the appropriate agency that the application should be disapproved.”

Under the IRR, any approval of regulatory relief by the Committee may be revoked at any time in case the project “is determined to have violated any condition given in the grant of such relief.”—
LDF, GMA News



Gov't debt climbs to P10T

By Angela Celis -January 7, 2021



The national government's (NG) outstanding debt as of end-November 2020 reached P10.13 trillion, posting a 1.1 percent hike from the previous month's level primarily due to higher domestic borrowing, the Bureau of the Treasury (BTr) said.

The BTr statement released yesterday showed the outstanding NG debt surged by 31.4 percent from its year ago level, while the NG debt stock has grown by 31.1 percent from the start of the year, owing to higher funding requirements to respond to the coronavirus pandemic and other socio-economic measures.

Of the total outstanding debt stock, 29 percent were sourced externally while 71 percent are domestic debt.

NG domestic debt amounted to P7.19 trillion, 1.6 percent higher compared to the end-October level due to the net issuance of domestic government securities, the BTr said.

To date, domestic debt has increased by 40.3 percent, while it went up 40.6 percent from the end-November 2019 level.

On the other hand, the NG external debt of P2.94 trillion was 0.3 percent lower from the previous month.

"For November, the lower figure was primarily due to the P10.74 billion net effect of currency adjustments, particularly peso appreciation offsetting net foreign loan availments amounting to P2.55 billion," the BTr said.

From the start of the year, NG external debt has increased by 13 percent, while it went up 13.4 percent from a year ago.

Meanwhile, NG domestic borrowing for the year amounted to P2.38 trillion as of end-November 2020. Net treasury bills totaled P465.31 billion, while treasury bonds and retail treasury bonds reached P631.74 billion and P738.54 billion, respectively, net of the P88.56 billion domestic bond exchange.

Short-term borrowing from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas amounted to P540 billion.

NG external financing registered an inflow of P583.64 billion for January to November 2020.

For the period, project loan availment totaled P32.93 billion while program loans amounted to P364.64 billion.

Offshore bond issuances totaled P186.06 billion.

Source: https://malaya.com.ph/index.php/news_business/govt-debt-climbs-to-p10t/



'Bulacan airport, ecozone to benefit entire country'

By Jovee Marie de la Cruz

January 8, 2021



Blueprint of San Miguel Corp. Holdings's proposal for the Bulacan Airport

The co-chairman of the House Economic Cluster on Thursday said the enactment of Republic Act (RA) 11506 which grants San Miguel Aerocity Inc. the franchise to construct domestic and international airports in Bulacan is expected to bring economic development in the area.

In a statement, AAMBIS-OWA Rep. Sharon Garin lauded the enactment of RA 11506 as she recognizes the role of the aviation industry as a primary driver of socio-economic growth. The law mandates the grantee to secure the appropriate permits and licenses for the construction, development, establishment, operation and maintenance of its airport properties or facilities from the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines.

Garin, principal author of the law, said the New Manila International Airport (NMIA) to be established is expected to decongest Ninoy International Airport (Naia) and elevate both the passenger experience while maximizing the country's revenue potential.

"Our country relies heavily on tourism and we want to support the industry by providing better facilities that will be ready to accommodate the expected influx of foreign tourists once this pandemic is over," she said.

Citing the 2019 report of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), Garin added the substantial contribution of the air transport industry to the Philippines, including airlines and its supply chain, contributing roughly P131 billion to the country's GDP. On top of this, around 1.2 million jobs are supported by the air transport sector.

Meanwhile, Garin added another proposed measure, House Bill (HB) 7575 or Bulacan Airport City Special Economic Zone and Freeport Act, is set to complement the newly-enacted law. HB 7575 creates the Bulacan Airport City Special Economic Zone and Freeport Authority or BACSEZFA, which shall manage and operate the Bulacan Ecozone.

The measure said the BACSEZFA shall have an authorized capital stock of P2 billion no par shares at a minimum issue of P10 each, the majority shares of which shall be subscribed and paid for by the national government and the LGUs embracing the BACSEZFA.

Garin said the Bulacan Ecozone shall be equipped with transportation, telecommunications, and other facilities needed to attract legitimate and productive investments, generate linkage industries and employment opportunities for the people of Bulacan and its neighboring towns and cities.



With the proposed measure hurdling third and final reading last September 15 2020, Garin said she remains optimistic that HB 7575 will also be enacted into law before the start of the third regular session.

Albay Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda, chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means, said the Bulacan Airport, with a P740-billion investment, will be the single biggest infrastructure item in the country's history.

"We expect the ecozone around it to be a hub for economic growth and development for North and Central Luzon. Its downstream effects on investment and the economy will benefit the entire country. This item is also larger than any stimulus measure we could readily fund."

Image credits: [D.O.T.R. Photo](#)



This picture taken on August 3, 2018 shows steam coming out from cooling towers of the Maibarara Geothermal plant in Santo Tomas, Batangas, south of Manila.

AFP/Noel Celis

Gov't offers 170-MW potential renewable project sites to investors

[Ian Nicolas Cigaral](#) (Philstar.com) - January 7, 2021 - 2:24pm

MANILA, Philippines — Potential geothermal and hydropower sources with estimated capacity of over 170 megawatts are up for grabs for companies who wish to develop these untapped resources as part of a state policy shift toward renewables.

In a statement on Thursday, the Department of Energy identified 17 potential hydropower and five geothermal projects that qualified energy firms may develop. The proposed projects have a projected combined capacity of 177.4 MW and were presented to potential bidders during the start of third Open and Competitive Selection Process (OCSP3) last Tuesday.

Broken down, the proposed hydropower projects have a potential capacity of 90.4 MW while the geothermal projects could generate an estimated 87 MW. According to the energy department, the planned projects have caught the attention of some companies during Tuesday's presentation with stakeholders.

"We have obtained encouraging results from the series of online stakeholders' consultation we undertook in July 2020 and that we are very optimistic in this OCSP 3," Energy Assistant Secretary Robert Uy said.

Despite having some of the world's largest untapped sources of volcanic heat, the Philippines continues to rely on coal and oil for majority of its energy supply, which in 2019 occupied a combined share of 57.6% of the energy mix.

That government is proposing clean energy projects is good news to augment a declining share of RE in the energy supply from a high of 46.14% in 2006 to just 31.8% in 2019, albeit still one of the highest in Southeast Asia.

These efforts to shift to clean power will now be put to a test through the OSCP 3. Last month, the energy portfolio said no foreign investor had so far expressed interest to construct geothermal and biomass energy plants locally despite an announcement in October allowing 100% foreign ownership on geothermal energy plants worth at least \$50 million. That move was coupled with a ban on new coal power plants for the time being.



Based on the DOE's report, foreigners can own 100% of three out of five proposed geothermal projects located in Benguet, Laguna and Camarines Norte. The last day to submit bid documents is on February 15.

Meanwhile, awarding of contracts for non-Financial and Technical Assistance (FTAA) projects is scheduled on April 14, while those covered by the FTAA will be endorsed to the Office of the President for approval by April 19.

"(Energy) Secretary (Alfonso) Cusi himself reiterated the commitment to promote our renewable energy, with the hope that in time, renewables will figure prominently in the country's energy future," Energy Undersecretary Emmanuel Juaneza said.



Sacrificing not just for him but also for the motherland

[GOTCHA](#) - [Jarius Bondoc](#) (The Philippine Star) - January 8, 2021 - 12:00am

Smuggling and unauthorized COVID-19 vaccinating was wrong. Still Rody Duterte and aides commend the presidential guards for it. In their view, the soldiers braved likely adverse effects to protect fully the highest official – a heroic sacrifice.

The nobler sacrifice by our fighting men is for the motherland. Our seas are being invaded. As our people cry out, the aggression heightens. Our troops must train and equip to defend our sovereignty.

Everyone knows who the aggressor is. China is taking advantage of our distraction by the pandemic that spread from Wuhan. While we struggle with deadly infections and economic slump, Beijing tightens its hold on reefs stolen from us. That is the way of the ruling Chinese Communist Party. Mao Tse-tung Thought draws from Sun Tzu: “When the enemy rests, attack; when the enemy retreats, pursue.”

Last Christmas day China landed its biggest warplane on Kagitingan (Fiery Cross) Reef. Satellite monitors were inconclusive on what the Y-20 transported. But the South China Morning Post quoted experts as saying the airlifter can carry armored vehicles and missile launchers.

Clearly Beijing continues to militarize the West Philippine Sea, said international maritime lawyer Jay Batongbacal, PhD. In 2015 Chinese president and CCP secretary general Xi Jinping had vowed to not warmonger in the region. The following year the People’s Liberation Army landed fighters and troop transports on Kagitingan. Xi also chairs the CCP Central Military Commission, to which the PLA reports.

Days after the Y-20 mission, the PLA Southern Theater Command began three simultaneous practices in Hainan waters 648 nm away. The show of force ended last Monday. In a recent visit to the PLA unit, Xi told the generals to “polish their commanding.” Since 2018 the Command has been offering exchanges and exercises with the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Its “friendliness” is part of propaganda and united-front work of CCP commissars in the PLA.

Kagitingan is outside China’s 200-nm exclusive economic zone. The Hague arbitral court outlawed in 2016 Beijing’s spurious “nine-dash line” claim over EEZs of the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam and Indonesia.

The reef is within the Philippines’ extended continental shelf. China grabbed it in 1988 along with five others in the Philippine EEZ: Zamora (Subi), Calderon (Cuarteron), McKennan (Hughes), Burgos (Gaven) and Mabini (Johnson South). Beijing concreted them into island-fortresses starting 2014. Panganiban (Mischief) Reef was taken and fortified in 1995. Missile pads and signal-jammers have been installed in Kagitingan, Zamora and Panganiban reefs.



Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal was occupied in 2012. Chinese gunboats machine-gun and water cannon Filipino boats that venture to our traditional fishing grounds. Chinese coastguards protect Hainanese maritime militia that poach fish, sea turtles, giant clams and fan corals. Beijing has announced to soon build air and naval bases, and thereafter enforce an air defense identification zone. Philippine ships and aircraft passing through the WPS will be required to seek PLA permission.

From the island-outposts, the PLA-Navy harasses sealifts to Filipino marines in Ayungin (Second Thomas) Shoal and civilians in Pagasa Island. Chinese buoys regularly are dropped off at Sabina Shoal near Palawan preparatory to takeover. Chinese exploration vessels are escorted to oil- and gas-rich Recto (Reed) Bank. In April a Chinese destroyer aimed weapons at a Philippine patrol near Malampaya gas field. Months before a Chinese armada trespassed and provocatively zigzagged in Sibu Strait, Tawi-Tawi.

All this is happening in the midst of ASEAN, China talks for a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea. Crucial in the CoC is status quo of forces. The pandemic has delayed the drafting. The CCP is using the lull to escalate PLA presence in the WPS and Vietnam's Paracel archipelago. That way, status quo would cover Beijing's new encroachments. The PLA continues to land bombers in the Paracels' Woody Island.

China's sea aggression aims not only to steal small neighbors' marine wealth. It is also a stage-off to retake Taiwan, which Beijing regards as a renegade province. The CCP's target is between the 70th anniversary of its rise to power in 2019 and its centenary in 2021.

PLA squadrons routinely trespass the waters off Batanes and Babuyan islands near Taiwan. Chinese companies are applying to lease Fuga island there, and Grande and Chiquita islands at the mouth of Subic Bay near Panatag. A foothold on Fuga will afford China access to Benham Rise, east of Luzon. Ostensibly to build an international airport, the state firm that reclaimed the seven Philippine reefs is striving to dislodge the Philippine Navy from Sangley Base at the entrance to Manila Bay. Another state firm, through its Filipino partner, has been allowed to put up cell sites inside AFP camps, exposing those to potential eavesdropping and cyber-sabotage.

Chinese companies and citizens are obligated to support overseas and domestic espionage, and to keep such participation secret. Even Duterte, though friendly to Beijing, can be targeted. Presumably state firm Sinopharm sized up the strengths and weaknesses of the Presidential Security Group to which, Duterte indicated, it supplied the unregistered vaccines.

* * *

"Gotcha: An Exposé on the Philippine Government", is available as e-book and paperback. To order, simply click <https://jariusbondoc.com/#subscribe>

Plus, get a FREE copy of "Chapter 1: Beijing's Bullying and Duplicity" when you subscribe to my newsletter.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2021/01/08/2068946/sacrificing-not-just-him-also-motherland>



Flash flood, landslide still threaten Davao Region

By Catherine Teves January 7, 2021, 1:33 pm



MANILA – Flash floods and rain-induced landslides will still threaten Region 11 (Davao) even if the weather there may begin improving on Friday (Jan. 8).

"Rainfall in Davao may lessen -- that's improving weather -- but can still trigger such hazards so people concerned must be alert to this possibility," said Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) hydrologist Aileen Abelardo.

She noted that parts of Davao can be saturated already due to previous rains, making these areas prone to flooding and landslides.

New rain there may set off such occurrences, she said.

In its daily weather forecast on Thursday, PAGASA said cloudiness with scattered rain showers and thunderstorms are possible in Mindanao's Davao, Caraga and SOCCSKSARGEN regions due to the intertropical convergence zone (ITCZ).

Thunderstorms may also bring moderate to heavy rainfall that can cause either flash floods or landslides in those regions, noted PAGASA weather forecaster Raymond Ordinario.

He said weather in Mindanao may begin improving this Friday as the ITCZ will likely move away from the area.

He said the ITCZ may eventually move towards Mindanao's southeastern portion where Region 11 is. However, cloudiness, with scattered rain showers and thunderstorms are again possible there on Sunday (Jan. 10) and Monday (Jan. 11).

Generally, fair weather can be expected on both days in the rest of Mindanao since the ITCZ will likely affect the region's southeastern portion only, he noted.

According to PAGASA, rains may affect Region 11 waterways particularly Davao Oriental province's Cateel, Dapnan, Baganga Mahan-ub, Manorigao, Caraga, Casaunan, Quinonoan, Bagwan, Mayo, Bitanayan, Sumlog, Tangmoan, Dacongbonwa, Kabasagan, Manay, Maya and Sumlao/Cuabo; Davao City's Davao, Talomo and Lipadas, Davao del Sur province's Tagulaya Sibulan, Digos and Padada Mainit; as well as Davao Occidental province's Panglan, Malita, Batanan, Lais, Lawan, Latuan, Calian, Lamita, Lawayon, Culama, Caburan Bi, Maubio, Karabana, Tubayo, Kayapung, Malala, Capisolo, Tanoman Bi, Tanoman Smal, Kalbay, Butua, Nuin, Butula, Baki, Malagupo, Balagona and Batulaki.

Also likely to be affected are Davao de Oro province's Matiao and Hijo, as well as Davao del Norte province's Tagum-Libuganon, Tuganay, Saug and Lasang, PAGASA continued.

Abelardo said the ITCZ rain can raise water level in those waterways, possibly causing these channels to overflow.

The overflowing water will spill into areas near such waterways so flooding can occur there, she added. (PNA)

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1126634>



2 NegOcc cities placed under state of calamity

By Nanette Guadalquiver January 7, 2021, 6:30 pm



NEW YEAR'S DAY FLOOD. One of the flooded areas in Talisay City, Negros Occidental, following heavy rains early morning of Jan. 1, 2021. The City Council of Talisay placed the entire locality under a state of calamity on Wednesday (Jan. 6, 2021). (Photo courtesy of Talisay CDRRMO, Negros Occidental)

BACOLOD CITY – Two cities in northern Negros Occidental hit by flash floods on New Year's Day have both declared a state of calamity.

On Thursday, the City Council of Victorias passed a resolution placing the entire locality under a state of calamity while on Wednesday, the City Council of Talisay also approved a resolution declaring the same based on the recommendations of Mayor Neil Lizares III.

In Victorias, 9,028 families in 19 villages were affected by the floods. Some 46 houses were totally damaged while 183 others were partially damaged.

“We can now utilize the calamity fund to assist the affected families,” Mayor Francis Frederick Palanca said.

He added that the city government will also allocate PHP25 million to procure a dredging machine.

In Talisay, 4,661 families in 17 barangays were also affected while 21 houses were considered totally damaged and 244 partially damaged.

Lizares said he is pushing for a quick response assistance to the victims and for long-term solutions to address flood problems.

An initial step is the dredging work in the city's two main river systems and waterways.

The City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office is also set to discuss with the Office of Civil Defense the donation of equipment for the city and the plan to build a command center.

Also being planned are the inventory and future relocation of informal settlers residing under bridges, granting of livelihood projects to the affected families, revisiting of the local drainage plan, and greening of the city.

“More work is ahead of us in our effort to protect the environment which will result in saving lives and property,” Lizares said. (PNA)



What are ‘native forests’?

[AFP Relaxnews](#) / 04:50 PM January 07, 2021



Inspired by the ‘Miyawaki method,’ native forests aim at afforesting urban zones and counter pollution. Image: Getty Images/Yuuji via AFP Relaxnews.

Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki’s method of planting “native forests” is gaining visibility. In France, the Boomforest association has started work on several projects based on his technique, with the goal to afforest several urban zones in the Ile-de-France region surrounding Paris. But what exactly are “native” forests?

Native forests, also known as “rapid growth micro-forests,” are designed to reintroduce greenery to areas altered by human activity. The “Miyawaki method,” which refers to the Japanese botanist that developed this method is an ecological engineering practice that aims at creating a real ecosystem in urban areas while adapting to its environment.

The Miyawaki method is based upon several principles that pay extra attention to carefully selected soils to host these new micro-forests. The terrain is carefully chosen and prepared to maximize the chances of creating a new ecosystem. The addition of organic nutrients enhances soil fertility. The abundance of local tree species also contributes to the creation of sustainable native forests.

Boomforest is testing the planting of such micro-forests in the Greater Paris area. The association recently took over a plot of land measuring about 250 sq meters (around the size of ten car parking spots) on the university campus in the city of Nanterre, in order to plant a mini-forest close to the expressway.

The association’s website outlined that it planted trees with the help of students and the innovative LABEESS student association, as part of the tree planting project of Nanterre University.

Its main goal is to plant 600 trees of 30 different species in order to reduce noise and absorb the air pollution around certain zones. To do so, volunteers looked to local species capable of growing ten times faster than “primary” forests, natural ones that are not human-created.

And it’s not Boomforest’s first project. The French association launched its first initiative back in March 2018, planting a “Miyawaki forest” on an embankment of the Paris ring road on its eastern side at Porte de Montreuil.



Other micro-forest projects have also been launched elsewhere in France, in Toulouse by the “Micro-foret de Toulouse en transition” collective or in the Greater Paris area with “Semeurs de forets.”

This renowned method has also been widely implemented in the rest of the world, notably in Japan, but also in Europe, India, Thailand, Brazil and China, where Miyawaki himself (who is 92) launched a native forest project. *CC*



Indonesian baby sea turtles make a break for freedom

[Agence France-Presse](#) / 06:55 PM January 07, 2021



The shores of Mera Batiri National Park in Indonesia are nesting grounds for several species of turtle. Image: AFP/Agnes Anya

Newly hatched, dozens of baby turtles flipped and flopped their way down a beach towards the crashing waves of the Indian Ocean, under the watchful gaze of conservationists at an Indonesian national park.

Small enough to fit into the palm of a hand, some ended up on their backs, wriggling their tiny flippers helplessly as they tried to get back on track.

But the conservationists did not interfere, as they wanted the creatures to “map” their surroundings and then return to lay eggs decades later.

“Sea turtles mature at 25 years old, so if they’re released today, we’ll probably meet them again 25 years from now,” said Ardhini Estu Wardana, a forest ranger at Meru Betiri National Park on the eastern edge of Java.

Its beaches are nesting grounds for several species of turtle.

The night before, a giant female, over a meter long, laid more than 160 eggs on the shore, sweeping mounds of sand over them to protect them from predators.

Turtles, under threat from poaching and habitat destruction, are protected under Indonesian law.

Their eggs are considered a delicacy and they are also slaughtered for their meat, skin and shells.

Six of the world’s seven turtle species can be found in Indonesia, an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands and home to a dizzying array of exotic wildlife. *CC*

Source: <https://technology.inquirer.net/107073/indonesian-baby-sea-turtles-make-a-break-for-freedom>



Young orca stranded on beach freed by divers

By: [Ryan Arcadio](#) - [@RArcadioINO](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 06:10 PM January 07, 2021



The young orca (Image: Emma Neave-Webb and Imogen Sawyer via Facebook/@BDMLR)

A group of divers helped an orca get back to sea after it had ended up on the shores of a beach in Orkney, Scotland.

Colin and Heather Headworth contacted the British Divers Marine Life Rescue when they spotted the stranded animal from their home on Jan. 5. The team's medics soon approached the young animal, which they noted was in good condition.

The orca was lying on its side on the sand parallel to the sea, as seen in the group's Facebook [post](#) on the same day.

"After putting out a shout to local residents for more manpower, the team immediately set about up-righting the animal to aid breathing and to ensure the blowhole was out the water," the team explained. "As the tide came in and more water helped to lift the young animal, the Medics were able to rotate it to face the incoming sea and slowly move the new dolphin stretcher under the animal."

Once it was in an upright position, the orca began lifting its head and showed that it could steady itself in the water. Around an hour later, the mammal swam off into the sea.

"It rolled a couple of times and then submerged and continued straight out away from the beach without looking back," the divers added.

Though the team is confident the orca is already safe, they will monitor the coast in the coming days as a precaution.

Following the rescue, the group stated that it was a 3.4-meter-long male and was about 3 or 4 years old. While orcas are regularly spotted in the area, stranding is an "incredibly rare" incident.

The team also believes that this was the first successful rescue of an orca in the United Kingdom. /ra

Source: <https://technology.inquirer.net/107050/young-orca-stranded-on-beach-freed-by-divers>



Namibia sees steady downward trend in rhino and elephant poaching

Reuters / 10:23 PM January 07, 2021



FILE PHOTO: A southern white rhino is seen inside Nairobi National Park in Kenya, June 15, 2020. REUTERS/Baz Ratner/File Photo

WINDHOEK — Namibia saw a continued downward trend in rhino and elephant poaching last year after stepping up patrols and sharply increasing fines, the government said on Thursday.

Citing intensified intelligence operations by authorities and collaboration between the government and the private sector, environment ministry spokesman Romeo Muyunda said 30 rhinos had been poached last year compared with 50 in 2019 and 79 in 2018.

Only 11 elephants were poached in 2020 compared with 13 a year earlier.

“The reduction is attributed to many factors, one of them is increased patrols by our staff,” Muyunda said.

Collaborative efforts between the police, central intelligence, members of the public, civil society, and the private sector had also helped turn the tide against poachers.

Namibia has increased fines for poaching to 25 million Namibian dollars (\$1.66 million) from 200,000 and prison sentences have risen to 25 years from 20.

The southern African nation is home to the second-largest white rhino population in the world after South Africa, according to non-profit organization Save the Rhino Trust. Namibia also holds one-third of the world’s remaining black rhinos.



FILE PHOTO: A veterinarian attends to a tranquilized rhino before it is dehorned in an effort to deter poaching, amid the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), at the Pilanesberg Game Reserve in North West Province, South Africa, May 12, 2020. This picture was taken on May 12, 2020. REUTERS/Siphiwe Sibeko/File Photo



It is also home to the only free-roaming black rhinos left in the world, who are growing in number after nearly becoming extinct some years ago from poaching and drought.

Save the Rhino Trust estimates that there are over 200 free-roaming black rhinos in Namibia, mainly in the north-east.

Rhino poaching has plagued southern Africa for decades, especially in South Africa and Botswana, leading to anti-poaching programs, including de-horning and strict policing.

Africa's rhino population has been decimated over the decades to feed demand for rhino horn, which, despite being made of the same stuff like hair and fingernails, is prized in East Asia as a supposed medicine and as jewelry.



Elephant ivory still being sold on eBay despite 12-year ban

By Jack Guy, CNN Business

Published Jan 6, 2021 8:02:29 AM



(CNN)— Elephant ivory is still being sold on eBay despite the online marketplace introducing a ban more than a decade ago, researchers have found.

Sellers are misrepresenting the materials used in certain items and sometimes using "code words" to disguise illicit listings, researchers from the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology at the University of Kent, in England, said in a statement on Monday.

In 2008, eBay announced it was introducing a global ban on the sale of ivory starting on January 1, 2009.

"Despite eBay's strict policy on Animal and Wildlife Products, there is still an ongoing trade in ivory, mostly concealed as other non-restricted materials," said co-author David Roberts in a statement.

He said detecting illegal sales of ivory items can be difficult, as the word "ivory" can be used to describe a color. But "companies like eBay have the resources and data" that could be mobilized to tackle the illegal wildlife trade, Roberts added.

A spokesperson for eBay said the company is a founding member of the Coalition to End Wildlife Trafficking Online and works with the World Wildlife Fund and the International Fund for Animal Welfare.

"We have global teams dedicated to upholding standards on our marketplace, and over a recent two year period we blocked or removed over 265,000 listings prohibited under our animal products policy," said the eBay spokesperson in a statement to CNN Business.

But Roberts told CNN Business that he would like to see independent verification of the listings data, adding that he and other researchers have had limited success in getting illicit listings taken down using eBay's report function.

Roberts and fellow researcher Sofia Venturini found that some descriptions of netsuke — carved objects which are often made of elephant ivory and attached to Japanese kimonos — are misrepresenting the items.

Listings of netsuke which were made of elephant ivory were frequently described as bone, according to researchers, who were able to identify ivory items by checking images of the products for Schreger lines — a unique pattern found on the material.

Only 1.3% to 6.9% of ivory netsuke items had been removed by eBay when researchers checked the listings again after a month, they said. More than 50% had been sold, while half of the unsold examples had been relisted.

"If eBay was effectively enforcing its policy... on ivory, these items would have been removed," researchers said.



Roberts praised sites such as Etsy and Preloved as doing a "fantastic job" limiting sales of items linked to the illegal wildlife trade. "If other companies can do it certainly eBay and the like can also do it," he added.

The researchers' paper has been published in the journal Tropical Conservation Science.

This story was first published on CNN.com, "[Elephant ivory still being sold on eBay despite 12-year ban.](#)"

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