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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Cimatu orders closure of small-scale mining op in Cotabato

December 9, 2020, 5:12 pm



Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu (*File photo*)

MANILA – Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu has ordered the Mines and Geosciences Bureau in Region 12 (MGB 12) to immediately shut down an illegal small-scale mining operation in Magpet town in Cotabato province.

The mining site is located some 10 kilometers away from the Mt. Apo Natural Park. It has not been declared a "minahang bayan" or a common area where small-scale miners are allowed to operate.

“Whether big or small, any illegal mining activity will have to stop,” Cimatu said, as he also ordered the filing of charges against those behind the illegal mining activity.

Cimatu’s directive was an offshoot of a joint operation conducted by the DENR, MGB, the local government of Cotabato, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines in Barangay Don Panaca on Dec. 7.

Acting on a tipoff, the team raided the area and discovered a five-meter tunnel indicating that the mining operation was still in its early stage.

Inside the tunnel were around 25 sacks, each containing approximately 90 kilograms of ore. Another sack was seen along Balingos River located beside the tunnel.

MGB 12 Director Felizardo Gacad Jr. said a cease-and-desist order will be issued against the illegal mining operation, while criminal charges are being readied against the illegal miners and their financiers.

“Records from the Provincial Mining Regulatory Board of Cotabato and MGB 12 show that there is no declared Minahang Bayan in the municipality of Magpet or in the province of Cotabato, hence, the operation is illegal,” Gacad said.

According to a MGB 12 report, there was no ongoing mining activity or operation at the time of the raid, but signs of recent extraction were observed.

The report also noted that there was also no heavy mining equipment found in the area, although three shovels and one metal bar were seen outside the tunnel which indicated that the operations were done manually.

The mining operation was a clear violation of Republic Act (RA) 7942 or the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR), as well as RA 7076 or the Peoples Small-Scale Mining Act of 1991 and its IRR. (**DENR PR**)



DENR closes illegal mining site near Mount Apo

Published December 9, 2020, 3:45 PM

by [Ellalyn de Vera-Ruiz](#)

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu has ordered the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) in Region 12 (Socsargen) to immediately close down an illegal small-scale mining operation near Mount Apo Natural Park in Magpet, Cotabato.



Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu (RTVM / FILE PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

The mining site, which is located just 10 kilometers away from the Mount Apo Natural Park, has not been declared a “minahang bayan” or a common area where small-scale miners are allowed to operate, the DENR said.

“Whether big or small, any illegal mining activity will have to stop,” Cimatu said.

The DENR chief also ordered the filing of charges against those behind the illegal mining activity.

Cimatu’s directive was an offshoot of a joint operation conducted by DENR, MGB, local government of Cotabato, and Armed Forces of the Philippines in Barangay Don Panaca on Dec. 7.

Acting on a tipoff, the team raided the area and discovered a five-meter tunnel indicating that the mining operation was still in its early stage.

Inside the tunnel, the team discovered around 25 sacks, each containing approximately 90 kilograms of ore.

Another sack beside the tunnel was seen on Balingos River.

DENR-MGB Socsargen Director Felizardo Gacad Jr. said a cease-and-desist order will be issued against the illegal mining operation, while criminal charges are being readied against the illegal miners and their financiers.

He cited records from the Provincial Mining Regulatory Board of Cotabato and MGB-Region 12 showing that there is neither a declared minahang bayan in the municipality of Magpet nor in the province of Cotabato, which means the operation is illegal.

According to a report prepared by the MGB-Region 12, there was no ongoing mining activity or operation at the time of the raid, but signs of recent extraction were observed.

The report also noted that there was also no heavy mining equipment found in the area, although three shovels and one metal bar were seen outside the tunnel which indicated that the operations were done manually.

The DENR pointed out that the mining operation was a clear violation of Republic Act 7942 or the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, as well as RA 7076 or the Peoples Small-Scale Mining Act of 1991.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/12/09/denr-closes-illegal-mining-site-near-mount-apo/>

DENR stops illegal small-scale mining ops in Magpet, Cotabato

By Jonathan L. Mayuga

December 10, 2020

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu has ordered the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) in Region 12 to stop an illegal mining operation in the Municipality of Magpet, Cotabato province.

The illegal mining operation was located some 10 kilometers away from the Mt. Apo Natural Park.

There is no Minahang Bayan in Magpet town or in Cotabato province, making any small-scale mining operation in the area illegal.

In a news statement, Cimatu reiterated that illegal mining activity is unacceptable.

“Whether big or small, any illegal mining activity will have to stop,” Cimatu said, as he also ordered the filing of charges against those behind the illegal mining activity.

Cimatu’s directive was an offshoot of a joint operation conducted by the DENR-MGB, the local government of Cotabato, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines in Barangay Don Panaca on December 7.

Acting on a tipoff, the team raided the area and discovered a 5-meter tunnel, indicating that the mining operation was still in its early stage.

Inside the tunnel were around 25 sacks, each containing approximately 90 kilograms of ore. Another sack was seen along Balingos River located beside the tunnel.

MGB 12 Director Felizardo Gacad Jr. said a cease-and-desist order will be issued against the illegal mining operation, while criminal charges are being readied against the illegal miners and their financiers.

“Records from the Provincial Mining Regulatory Board of Cotabato and MGB 12 show that there is no declared Minahang Bayan in the Municipality of Magpet, or in the Province of Cotabato, hence, the operation is illegal,” Gacad said.

According to a report prepared by the MGB 12, there was no ongoing mining activity or operation at the time of the raid, but signs of recent extraction were observed.

The report also noted that there was also no heavy mining equipment found in the area, although three shovels and one metal bar were seen outside the tunnel, which indicated that the operations were done manually.

The mining operation was a clear violation of Republic Act (RA) 7942, or the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR), as well as RA 7076 or the Peoples Small-Scale Mining Act of 1991 and its IRR.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/12/10/denr-stops-illegal-small-scale-mining-ops-in-magpet-cotabato/>



Cimatu orders closure of small-scale illegal mining in Cotabato

By: [Cristina Eloisa Baclig](#) - Content Researcher/Writer / [@CeBacligINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 03:58 PM December 09, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu has ordered the closure of an illegal mining operation in Magpet, Cotabato.

The environment chief also directed the filing of charges against those behind the illegal mining activity.

The mine site is located 10 kilometers away from Mt. Apo Natural Park and has not been declared a “minahang bayan” or a common area where small-scale miners are allowed to operate, according to DENR.

“Whether big or small, any illegal mining activity will have to stop,” Cimatu said in a statement on Wednesday.

The closure order stemmed from a joint operation conducted by DENR, its Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), Cotabato provincial government, and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in Barangay Don Panaca last December 7.

Operatives saw no mining activity during the raid but they found a five-meter tunnel indicating recent extraction or mining operation in the area.

They also found inside the tunnel 25 sacks of ore, each sack weighing 90 kilograms. Another sack of the natural rock that contains valuable minerals was discovered near Balingos River. Authorities likewise saw no heavy equipment at the site but seized three shovels and a metal bar during the raid.

“Records from the Provincial Mining Regulatory Board of Cotabato and MGB 12 show that there is no declared Minahang Bayan in the Municipality of Magpet or in the Province of Cotabato, hence, the operation is illegal,” said MGB Region 12 Director Felizardo Gacad Jr.

He also said a formal cease-and-desist order will be issued against the illegal miners and their financiers as criminal charges are likewise being readied against them.

The small-scale mining operation violated Republic Act (RA) 7942 or the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR), as well as RA 7076 or the Peoples Small-Scale Mining Act of 1991 and its IRR, according to DENR.

KGA

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1369851/cimatu-orders-closure-of-small-scale-illegal-mining-in-cotabato>

Small-scale mining operation sa Magpet, Cotabato ipinasara ni Cimatú



December 9, 2020 @ 6:44 PM 11 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Dahil sa pag-ooperate ng illegal mining activity, ipinag-utos ni Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatú sa Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) sa Region 12 ang agarang pagpapasara sa illegal small-scale mining operation sa Magpet, Cotabato.

Ayon sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), ang mining site ay nasa 10 kilometro ang layo sa Mt. Apo Natural Park.

Ito ay hindi pa idinedeclarang minahang bayan o lugar kung saan papayagan ang lahat ng small-scale miners na mag-operate.

“Whether big or small, any illegal mining activity will have to stop,” lahad pa ni Cimatú at idinagdag pa nito na sasampahan ng kaso ang lahat ng nasa likod ng illegal mining activity.

Sinabi pa ng DENR ang direktibang ito ni Cimatú ay base na rin sa pinagsamang operasyon ng DENR, MGB, local government ng Cotabato at ng Armed Forces of the Philippines sa Barangay Don Panaca noong Disyembre 7.

Natuklasan ng grupo na ang sinalakay na lugar ay mayroong umanong five-meter tunnel na nagpapatunay na ang mining operation ay nagsisimula pa lamang.

Natagpuan sa tunnel ang 25 sako kung saan ay naglalaman ang bawat isa ng tinatayang 90 kilograms ng ore. Ang isa namang sako ay nakita sa kahabaan ng Balingos River na matatagpuan sa tabi ng tunnel.

Ayon kay MGB 12 Director Felizardo Gacad, Jr., maglalabas sila ng cease-and-desist order laban sa illegal mining operation habang sasampahan naman ng kasong kriminal ang mga illegal na miners at kanilang financiers.

“Records from the Provincial Mining Regulatory Board of Cotabato and MGB 12 show that there is no declared Minahang Bayan in the Municipality of Magpet or in the Province of Cotabato, hence, the operation is illegal,” sabi pa ni Gacad.

Napag-alaman pa sa ulat ng MGB 12 na walang inabutang nagmimina nang isagawa ang pagsalakay ngunit lahat ng ebidensiya ay nagpapakita na may nagaganap na pagmimina sa lugar.



Ang mining operation ay isang malinaw na paglabag sa Republic Act (RA) 7942 o ang Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) maging sa RA 7076 o ang Peoples Small-Scale Mining Act of 1991 and its IRR. (Santi Celario)



Cimatu orders closure of small-scale mining op in Cotabato

December 9, 2020 2 min read

MANILA – Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu has ordered the Mines and Geosciences Bureau in Region 12 (MGB 12) to immediately shut down an illegal small-scale mining operation in Magpet town in Cotabato province.

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Illegal mining site sa Mount Apo, ipinasara ng DENR

By [RadyoMaN Manila](#) - Dec. 10, 2020 at 4:22am



Ipinag-utos ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) sa SOCCSKSARGEN na agad na ipasara ang illegal small-scale mining operation malapit sa Mount Apo Natural Park sa Magpet, Cotabato.

Ayon kay Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, ang mining site ay matatagpuan 10 kilometro lamang ang layo mula sa paanan ng bundok at hindi pa naidedeklarang 'minahang bayan' o common area kung saan pinapayagan ang mga small-scale miners na mag-operate.

Pinakakasuhan din ni Cimatu ang mga nasa likod ng illegal mining activity.

Nabatid na nadiskubre ng team ang isang limang metrong habang tunnel o kweba na nangangahulugang nasa early stage na ang kanilang mining operation.

Sa loob ng kweba, makikita ang 25 sako na naglalaman ng nasa 90 kilo ng ore.

Sinabi ni DENR-MGB Region 12 Director Felizardo Gacad Jr. na maglalabas ng cease and desist order laban sa illegal mining operation, habang inihahanda na ang criminal charges laban sa illegal miners at sa kanilang financiers.



Iligal na pagmimina at pamumutol ng punongkahoy sa Mount Apo protected area natuklasan

By **Bombo Garry Fuerzas** -December 9, 2020 | 4:40 AM

CENTRAL MINDANAO -Nakatanggap ng ulat si Mindanao Development Authority (MinDa) Secretary Emmanuel “Manny” Piñol mula sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) hinggil sa pagkatuklas ng ilegal na pagmimina at pamumutol ng kahoy sa loob ng Mount Apo Protected Area sa Barangay Don Panaca Magpet North Cotabato.

Sangkot umano ang mga lokal na opisyal na protektado ng mga sundalo sa pagmimina at pamumutol ng kahoy natitirang kagubatan ng Mindanao.

Hekta-hektaryang kagubatan kung saan pinutol ang mga malalaking punong kahoy sa paanan ng Mount Apo ay tinaniman na ngayon ng saging (cavendish).

Inatasan ni Piñol ang mga kawani ng MinDa na makipag-ugnayan sa DENR’s Mines and Geosciences Bureau sa malalimang imbestigasyon sa illegal mining at pamumutol ng kahoy sa bayan ng Magpet.

Ang ulat ay isusumite agad kay pangulong Rodrigo Duterte para matigil na ang ilegal na pagmimina at pamumutol ng kahoy sa Mt. Apo Forest Reserves.



Pag-aalis ng mga sandbar sa 19 na priority sites sa Cagayan River, inaprubahan na ng DENR

By [RadyoMaN Manila](#) - Dec. 8, 2020 at 2:06pm



Ibinigay na ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu ang basbas ng pagsasagawa ng dredging ng mga sandbar sa 19 na mga prayoridad na lugar sa kahabaan ng Cagayan River.

Ito'y bilang bahagi ng agarang solusyon na gagawin upang maiwasang maulit ang mga pagbaha sa Cagayan Valley tulad ng nangyari noong manalasa ang Bagyong Ulysses.

Sinabi ni Cimatu na ang dredging ng mga sandbars ay immediate solution lamang.

Kabilang sa medium and long-term solutions na tinitingnan ng DENR sa Cagayan River ay ang paggawa ng flood control dams, paglalagay ng revetment structures sa kanyang dalisdis at reforestation sa watershed at easement areas.

Sa 19 sandbars na inirekomenda ng Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) bilang mga priority site para sa dredging, apat ang nasa bayan ng Alcala at tig-dalawa sa Tuguegarao City at mga bayan ng Enrile, Solana, Gattaran, Iguig, at Amulung.

Tig-isang sandbar naman sa mga munisipalidad ng Aparri, Lallo, at Sto. Niño.

Source: <https://rmn.ph/pag-aalis-ng-mga-sandbar-sa-19-na-priority-sites-sa-cagayan-river-inaprubahan-na-ng-denr/?fbclid=IwAR0MKxlo0QZ5N17Gx9PC0i4mgBvfnOFRnQ-cHOZwwIzMXtueJ1SILEMN57A>

Environment Sec. Cimatu, inilipat ang pamamahala ng Palawan wildlife facility sa isang corporate arm ng DENR

By [RadyoMaN Manila](#)

.Dec. 8, 2020 at 2:01pm



Iniutos ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu ang paglilipat ng pamamahala sa Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Center.

Ito’y mula sa Biodiversity Management Bureau patungo sa Natural Resources Development Corp., isang corporate arm ng DENR.

Ang PWRCC na dating kilala bilang Crocodile Farm and Nature Park ay isang breeding place para sa endangered Philippine crocodile at isa rin itong research and rescue center ng iba pang species na endemic sa Palawan tulad ng bearcats at Philippine cockatoos.

Base sa DENR Administrative Order No. 2020-10, layon ng hakbang na magkroon ng mahigpit na superbisyon sa PWRCC, makakuha ng mas mataas na kita at magkaroon ng “financial stability.”

Sa ilalim ng DAO, pinahihintulutan ang NRDC na baguhin o ayusin ang mga presyo, fees at charges na may kinalaman sa PWRCC commercial at business operations, na nakapaloob sa umiiral na batas, panuntunan at regulasyon.

Mananatili naman sa Biodiversity Management Bureau ang kapangyarihang magpatupad ng “regulatory authorities” sa crocodile ang iba pang wildlife species sa PWRCC.

Source: <https://rmn.ph/environment-sec-cimatu-inilipat-ang-pamamahala-ng-palawan-wildlife-facility-sa-isang-corporate-arm-ng-denr/?fbclid=IwAR0B-HZYr3eCw77xISs6UXSEpCcQOfBgi-mTKTtDJXbQnxrNRFIvzj-OqkY>



Carbon capture a tool in climate fight, but at what cost?

Published December 9, 2020, 12:20 PM

by [Agence France-Presse](#)

Technology for capturing carbon from industrial emissions and storing it may still be in its early stages, but proponents believe it can become a major tool in the fight against climate change.



Technology for capturing carbon from industrial emissions and storing it may still be in its early stages, but proponents believe it can become a major tool in the fight against climate change. (AFP / MANILA BULLETIN)

For its methods to rollout on a scale large enough to make a difference, though, experts and critics say carbon capture and storage (CCS) still has to overcome a host of logistical and financial hurdles.

CCS techniques are designed to capture and store carbon dioxide generated by power stations using fossil fuels as well as industrial plants from steelmakers to refineries and petrochemical plants.

Supporters see the technology has great potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power production, industry in general and fossil fuel refining.

The captured CO₂ is transported and reinjected into hermetically sealed geological reservoirs — for example, in former oilfields — for permanent storage.

A portion can be reused meanwhile, a process known as carbon capture, utilisation, and storage (CCUS).

The procedure is not new, with the first site set up in Texas in the early 1970s.

Despite growing interest in the technology, however, to date only about 20 sites exist worldwide, according to the Global CSS Institute, as it fights popular suspicion that CCS distracts from the goal of moving away from fossil fuels.

The International Energy Agency says the technology has enormous potential and that it may play a “critical” role in helping to smooth the path to achieving net zero emissions.

“After years of slow progress, new investment incentives and strengthened climate goals are building new momentum behind CCUS,” the IEA said in a September report, pointing to 30 projects that have come on stream in the last three years.

The IEA maintains that CCUS has a positive role to play in sectors whose carbon footprint is hard to reduce significantly, such as cement production.



– *Advantages* –

Hydrocarbons producers see the technology as a means of justifying their use of natural gas to produce electricity or hydrogen.

The Oil and Gas Climate Initiative (OGCI), which groups major sector players, has made CCS a priority.

Oil giants such as BP, Equinor, Shell and Total are in the vanguard of its development.

Equinor, Shell and Total are partners in a large Norwegian project to stock CO₂ beneath the North Sea.

“Oil companies have advantages compared with other industries when it comes to operating in these CCUS activities,” says Moez Ajmi of Ernst & Young France.

“CO₂ capture activity is close, in size of projects and their complexity, to refining and petrochemical activities; CO₂ transport is close to transport of gas and finally storage requires geological knowledge which the oil exploration and production industries already possess,” Ajmi says.

– *‘False solution’* –

Still, a potential factor that could hold the technology back is “the limited number of sites to sequester the carbon,” says Nicolas Berghmans of the independent Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI).

Cost is another limiting factor.

“There would really have to be a regulatory framework with a much stronger and stable carbon price in due course allowing for industrial investment in the necessary infrastructure,” Berghmans says.

In France, the ecological transition agency Ademe has identified only limited capture potential in three industrial zones it has assessed.

The agency sees capture as “a risky solution which arrives as a last resort in a cost-benefit analysis.”

Environmental NGOs also remain sceptical of a process they have long regarded as a “false solution”.

Their criticisms include the risk of stocked CO₂ leakage, the likelihood of increased energy requirements in the actual deployment of capture and storage technology and the justification of maintaining emissions which comes with that.

“Public financial aid must be orientated as a priority to greenhouse gas emissions reduction at source,” said Cecile Marchand of Friends of the Earth.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/12/09/carbon-capture-a-tool-in-climate-fight-but-at-what-cost/>



Typhoons Rolly, Ulysses bear imprints of changing climate, say experts

Published December 9, 2020, 5:22 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Filipino climate scientists have confirmed that 2020 tropical cyclones, such as super typhoon Rolly and typhoon Ulysses, had certain characteristics that may have imprints of a changing climate.



(JANSEN ROMERO / MANILA BULLETIN)

In a statement titled “Climate Change and the 2020 Tropical Cyclones” issued on Wednesday, the National Panel of Technical Experts (NPTE) of the Climate Change Commission (CCC) pointed out that cyclones have unusual but consistent attributes that were partially controlled by regional weather phenomena exhibiting unusual behavior this year.

The NPTE, which is composed of the country’s foremost climate scientists, noted that only two to three weather disturbances are usually recorded during October and November.

The scientific advisory body said that typhoon Quinta, super typhoon Rolly, tropical storm Siony, tropical depression Tonyo, and typhoon Ulysses were “off-season” tropical cyclones.

They were also slightly higher in latitude compared to where tropical cyclones commonly enter during October-November, it said.

The NPTE, in particular, pointed out that the rapid tropical cyclone intensification in the case of super typhoon Rolly may have been influenced by the unusually high sea surface temperature consistent with a warming climate.

Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction (CCA-DRR) will become an even bigger challenge for the country if natural hazards will be less predictable in the future, it said.

The team of experts highlighted the need to conduct further studies on the changing behavior of tropical cyclones, translation of scientific data on climate change and its impacts on actionable information that will be useful on the ground, and enhanced cooperation among the national government agencies (NGAs), local government units (LGUs), and the scientific community on the implementation of climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) measures, which are now more timely and relevant.

“Climate change should not be used as the reason behind our inability to predict the weather and manage flooding but instead, it should challenge us to find ways of improving our forecasting accuracy, enhancing early warning systems, and responding to floods accordingly to prevent the unnecessary loss of lives and damage to properties,” the NPTE said.



The experts said that there is a need to initiate further studies on potential climate variability to improve the prediction of the track, timing, and intensity of tropical cyclones.

They also pointed out the revision of the dam release protocols that should consider the changes in climate change projections and hydrologic characteristics.

Moreover, the experts highlighted the need for scientists and professional communicators to work together in packaging scientific information into timely, accurate, and actionable warnings understood by all stakeholders.

Lastly, they urged the NGAs and LGUs to constantly seek the advice of mandated scientific advisory bodies when planning and implementing CCA programs and DRR interventions in all types of development plans.

CCC Vice-Chair Emmanuel De Guzman said the recommendations of the NPTE support the policy advocacy of the Commission for a whole-of-society approach in addressing the prevailing climate emergency.

“To survive and thrive in this era of climate change, we must heed the science and let it inform national and local development planning. In line with this, the Climate Change Commission has adopted a National Climate Risk Management Framework which provides direction and guidance to national government agencies, local government units, academe, and other key stakeholders in undertaking more comprehensive national and local risk assessments and formulating risk management strategies and interventions,” he said.

De Guzman also said that the Commission will continue to promote the value of science informing policy and practice in the context of climate action.

“Our goal is to bring our experts closer to our leaders and local communities to promote broader multi-stakeholder participation and to accelerate the mainstreaming of climate change mitigation and adaptation in national and local policy and planning processes,” he said.



DoH official says climate change bigger challenge than COVID-19

December 8, 2020 | 7:18 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/MICHAEL VARCAS

By **Angelica Y. Yang**

ADDRESSING climate change and protecting the environment will reduce the risk of disease outbreaks, with a government official saying that disrupted climates pose an open-ended threat with a range of impacts on public health greater than the threat posed by COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019).

“I think it’s right to say that climate change is more dangerous than COVID-19 in different ways... Climate change is happening over a longer time frame. There’s no clear start and end to this. It has been happening for many years. And of course, it’s not going to stop,” Dr. Ronald P. Law, the chief of the Preparedness Division at the Department of Health’s Emergency Management Bureau, told *BusinessWorld* in a video interview.

He added that while the COVID-19 problem is serious, with far-reaching consequences to public health and the economy, “the end is technically in sight” for the pandemic with numerous companies working towards developing effective vaccines.

“Once we attain a sufficient number of people immune, the so-called herd immunity, and of course with the arrival of a safe and effective vaccine, somehow, we can say that the end is in sight, technically. But we cannot say that for climate change,” Mr. Law said.

“(The) increasing temperature leads to our extreme weather events that are experienced through meteorological hazards,” he said, citing the casualties caused by heavy flooding during typhoons Rolly and Ulysses” (international names: Goni and Vamco).

According to Mr. Law, climate change also has indirect impacts on life support systems such as food and water. As a result, numerous diseases related to the phenomenon were on the rise. “Dengue, malaria, typhoid fever, cholera, leptospirosis — these are familiar cases to us but much of these are pretty much determined (or) exacerbated by impacts of a changing climate,” he said.



Gerry C. Arances, the executive director of the Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development, said Mr. Law's position is well-supported by health experts who have warned of the threats to health posed by climate change.

“For a member of the medical community to say that the pandemic is of less threat than climate change just goes to show how deep the ecological crisis we are in is... As devastating as COVID-19 is, it really is but a symptom of the bigger disease that is a polluting, exploitative economic system that fuels worsening climate disasters while exacerbating threats to the lives and health of vulnerable sectors,” Mr. Arances told *BusinessWorld* in an e-mail interview.

He hoped that Mr. Law's observations serve as a wake up call to ensure that “pandemic recovery plans... aid the climate-vulnerable Philippines.”

Addressing climate change and protecting the environment will help reduce the risk of disease outbreaks, according to Lia Mai Torres- Alonzo, the executive director of the Center for Environmental Concerns-Philippines.

“As climate change and environmental destruction worsen, we can expect the emergence of more diseases that could cause other pandemics. Apart from the plethora of negative impacts of climate change, the aggressive trend of encroachment of human activities on forests and other ecosystems causes the spillover of pathogens,” she told *BusinessWorld* in a separate e-mail interview.

She said climate change and COVID-19 should “not be treated separately.”



Sparky & Benny on climate change

[FROM THE STANDS](#) - [Domini M. Torrevillas](#) (The Philippine Star) - December 10, 2020 - 12:00am

If many adults turn their eyes and ears away from the issue of preserving the environment, how can one transmit the message of climate change to children?

Environmental scientist Janice Lao-Noche admits that climate change is a “complicated topic, and explaining it to adults is tough enough.” But she and her young daughter Esther Noche have written a small volume that explains in simple, fairy-tale like language what climate change is all about. Quite intriguing is their use of sea animals to explain the phenomenon. The volume, titled Sparky & Benny’s Big Home Mystery, was launched a couple of weeks ago.

The book’s major characters are Sparky Mono, a narwhal, and Benny Donti, a beluga whale, both belonging to the whale family. Sparky, as a narwhal, has a horn on his head, sometimes called a tusk tooth. The best friends live under the ice of the Arctic Ocean. Benny, who is the main story teller in the book, says his home under the ice is beautiful. “The water just under the ice has a tinge of green and yellow, reflecting the algae that live at the surface... As you go down deeper into the water, the surface becomes darker and darker, like the night. There are football- and cone-shaped jellyfish that light up, and anemone corals with wily arms swaying on the seafloor as they prey on anything that passes through them. The beauty of our home is so magical.”

Sparky is bothered by the conversation between his parents about their losing their home and all the homes in the village. Perplexed, Sparky wants to know who is causing the destruction of his home. Together with his best friend Benny and their Grade V teacher Miss Rose and other whale teachers, they go up to the ocean surface to get some air. As they get closer, they see ships docked in an area where ice is thinning. From a marine biologist and science and math engineer, they learn about the changing climate that destroys their homes.

Then they see two polar bears standing on a small piece of floating ice that could melt and have them drowned. Sparky and Benny and company move them to a safer place, and from Larbi, the older bear, they learn more things about climate change.

The book authors have Benny ask questions about climate change, the conversation is simple and the effect is that it helps adult readers understand climate change. For example, Benny asks, “...Our ice is melting too early this season. Is our climate getting warmer or colder?” Larbi says, “Something is happening to make earth much warmer than usual. It might be caused by burning and cutting down forests and other materials.”

“What’s a forest?” Sparky asks.

“A forest is a huge group of tall plants. It’s a bit like seaweed, but on land. The forests near where we live are called taiga. Do you see the gray cloud in the sky over there? ...that is smoke from a big fire there.”

“We don’t have any forests in our home,” Benny says. “How can burning plants on another part of earth make our own home warmer?”



“We live in different places, but we all share the same atmosphere. Our atmosphere is like a bubble around our planet. Burning materials change that atmosphere and makes it warmer.”

Sparky and company have no idea of the animals aboard the ships, then later meets two of them – humans named Med and Miguel. The whales shudder with fear, but Med explains that humans have been using materials from the earth like coal or oil to make electricity or to make cars move, and wood from the forests to make paper, to cook and grow food, or to build new homes. “When we use these materials, they create what we call ‘greenhouse gases’ that cause heat and make the earth warmer. The more we use and burn these materials, the more it creates heat, and the warmer it gets.”

The whales and the humans vow to inform their communities and work together to find solutions and take action to stop the destruction of the earth.

Author Janie Lao-Noche says the book ends with “a call to action and belief in our common humanity, empathy, understanding and perseverance. If human innovation, invention and imagination have brought so much development to the world today, we can harness this same energy to solve climate change.”

A free curriculum guide with this book is available at: www.janicelao.com/big-home-mystery.

* * *

Anthony A. Marquez, MD MHA, who is assistant medical director of the Pasig City General Hospital, sent me his idea on measures to take regarding forthcoming vaccine distribution.

“The COVID-19 vaccine is on its final phase before inoculation to the population,” he writes. “Local leaders should develop prioritization schedules based on CDC guidelines, should consider operational capacity, the amount of vaccine available, available staff and facility requirements in their locality.”

For the local government units, Dr. Marquez, who happens to be one of my medical doctors, cites the challenges surrounding vaccine distribution and the things needed to solve them as follows:

- Find special freezers or refrigerators to accommodate them (outsourced).
- Make a thorough inventory of storage equipment in each hospital, barangay or city (including personal protective equipment such as gloves, hypodermic needles and disinfecting wipes) that will be useful in overall planning.
- Educate people on the importance and benefits of vaccination, citing previous good effects of old vaccines and safety issues to avoid vaccine hesitancy. Patients should be informed about all treatment options’ risks and benefits.



- Use existing staff, as well as BHW, EMS, police, fire to help staff vaccination sites including private health providers, clinics, government-run points of dispensing and others that will need to make requests to the national government for the vaccine.
- Establish different vaccination sites like drive-through clinics, clinics established at schools and other vaccine delivery models.
- Other pandemic response strategies (e.g., prompt treatment, wear face masks, social distancing, engineering controls in workplaces, changing work practices to reduce close contact with others, good hand washing) should still be applied.

* * *

Email: dominitorrevillas@gmail.com



Hungary, PH deploy mobile water treatment plant to Catanduanes

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora December 9, 2020, 7:32 pm



DONATION. Deputy State Secretary István Joó, Hungarian co-chair of the Joint Committee on Economic Cooperation hands over the donation to Fr. Anton Pascual of Caritas Manila (*Photo courtesy of the Office of Civil Defence/Hungary Embassy in Manila*)

MANILA – Hungary's donated mobile water treatment plant to the Philippine government has been deployed to Catanduanes, one of the hardest-hit areas when Typhoon Rolly made landfall in the country last month.

"In the aftermath of Super Typhoon Rolly (Goni), this unit has now been successfully deployed in Catanduanes, the area hardest hit by the calamity, to alleviate the shortage of drinking water there," the Hungarian Embassy in Manila said Wednesday.

On top of this, it announced some USD25,000 (approximately PHP1.2 million) in humanitarian assistance to help other families affected by the devastating typhoon.

Hungary, through its aid agency the "Hungary Helps", will partner with Caritas Manila to deliver the relief at the earliest to the victims of "Rolly".

The Embassy said the financial support "will contribute to the relief of the victims and will help to assist the long term mitigation of disasters in the affected region".

Hungary's portable water treatment plant, meanwhile, will be operated by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC).

The unit, manufactured by the Hungarian Water Technology Corporation (HWTC) is specifically designed to be "highly efficient and deployable" at a moment's notice wherever clean drinking water is needed.

"Water management is a field where Hungary has ample experience, cutting edge technology and know-how to deliver assistance to its partners. The country is proud to be able to assist the Philippines as a friend in times of need and to be able to contribute with its knowledge and technology to the betterment of the infrastructure and livelihoods here," the Embassy said.

Previously, Hungary installed a water treatment plant in Eastern Samar in the aftermath of the devastation caused by Typhoon Yolanda in 2013. (*PNA*)



From left: A Filipino farmer gathering his abaca harvest; face masks made of Filipino-produced abaca
The STAR/File; Project POCEAN

Philippine-made abaca masks seen as global solution vs 'COVID-19 waste'

[Kata Dayanghirang](#) (Philstar.com) - December 9, 2020 - 6:19pm

MANILA, Philippines — From exclusively for hospital use, face masks are now undeniably an everyday necessity.

But while face masks protect people from deadly diseases like COVID-19, there are, however, lives that are put into danger with the kinds of masks that are mostly used these days. They may save mankind, but these masks can kill different kinds of lives other than man's in the long run.

Surgical masks and N95 masks are not biodegradable, and since these take tens and thousands of years to decompose, these can threaten the lives of sea creatures, who might mistake these masks as food. Such surgical waste can backlash by polluting man's sources of food and livelihood from the seas, oceans, rivers and other bodies of water.

Did you know that masks and COVID-19 essentials like gloves and bottles of hand sanitizers are now contributing to the continuous and insurmountable problem of ocean pollution across the globe?

The French non-profit organization Operation Mer Propre did its regular litter picking along the Cote d'Azur in France early this year and found these "COVID wastes" mixed in with disposable cups and aluminum caps.

The surge of COVID-19 wastes could add up to the 13,000 tons of plastic that goes into the oceans every year, according to a recent United Nations Environment estimate.

This number can be lessened, though.

Project POCEAN is among those who have been working at reducing these numbers. The team is composed of King's College of London students who researched for months before finally conceptualizing the idea of making biodegradable abaca fiber masks for its Series I collection.



The good news is, these masks are made here in the Philippines, in the Bicol region, which is known as the top producer of abaca as confirmed by the Philippine Statistics Authority in its quarterly report from July to September 2020. It said that Bicol Region is still the top abaca fiber producer with 8.71 thousand metric tons or 43.7 percent of production for that quarter.

In an article by Bloomberg Green (July 2020), a preliminary study by the Department of Science and Technology found abaca paper to be "more water resistant compared to commercial N95 masks." It also found that the abaca paper's pore sizes falls "within the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention's recommended range to filter hazardous particles."

Abaca fiber is durable as a polyester and decomposes within 2 months. These are qualities that make a good mask, in addition to the fact that abaca masks can be washed and reused for up to four months.

Project POCEAN's initiative has created a three-pronged approach to valuing life — the life of the mask wearer, the livelihood of the farmers and artisans of Bicol, and the lives of sea creatures, oceans, seas and bodies of water.

In addition, a portion of each sale of the mask will be set aside for the students of the Dumagat tribe. Project POCEAN also plans to invest the profit from the masks into a "Sea-bin," which essentially demonstrates a conscientious effort to preserve life by producing eco-friendly masks and spending in a program that collects all the wastes thrown into the ocean and seas.

The pandemic has reminded man that life — that ability to be able to breathe virus-free air — is the most precious valuable he can ever have. But it is better to know that there are many forms of life that abound in this wonderful world called Earth and as stewards of the planet, it is important for man to note that all lives are worth the air they breathe.



TINGNAN: 2 grupo ng mga dolphin, namataang naglalaro sa baybayin sa Tagum

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Dec 09 2020 10:38 PM

TAGUM CITY— Namangha ang ilang residente na malapit sa baybayin ng Brgy. Libuganon sa lungsod na ito nang makita nila ang dalawang pod o grupo ng mga dolphin na tumatalon sa dagat at tila naglalaro nitong Sabado ng hapon.

Sa video ni Giovanni Rellon, makikitang malapit lang sa bangka nila ang mga dolphin na tinatayang nasa dagat na may 200 hanggang 600 metro ang lalim.



"It seems nag-rest sila from migration at feeding. Isang grupo ng adult dolphin at another group of youngster ang nakita namin," ayon kay Rellon.

Ilang beses na rin umanong may sightings ng dolphin doon, pero unang beses itong nangyaring naglalaro sila malapit sa bangka.

Ayon kay Rellon, hindi na niya ibibigay ang eksaktong lokasyon ng mga dolphin para hindi maistorbo ng mga tao.

Umaasa rin siyang mapangalagaan ang mga marine species para lalo pa itong dadami sa Davao Gulf.

Batay sa pag-aaral ng World Wildlife Fund (WWF) noong 2004, kinilala ang Davao Gulf, na may lawak na 650,000 hectares, na isa sa mga top diversity sites para sa mga whales at dolphins sa bansa.

Kabilang sa mga sightings sa naturang marine area ang 10 whale at dolphin species gaya ng sperm whale, dwarf sperm whale, Fraser's dolphin, Risso's dolphin, short-finned pilot whale, killer whale, long-snouted spinner dolphin, Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin, at Cuvier's beaked whale.

Patuloy na nanawagan ang mga awtoridad at mga environmentalist na huwag pakialaman ang mga marine mammals na madalang makita sa Davao gulf, at kinakampanya na huwag magtapon ng mga basura sa dagat dahil mapanganib ito sa mga marine species.--Ulat ni **Hernel Tocmo**

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/12/09/20/tingnan-2-grupo-ng-mga-dolphin-namataang-naglalaro-sa-baybayin-sa-tagum>



Plastics recyclers seen hampered by lack of incentives

December 9, 2020 | 7:46 pm



PHILSTAR/MICHAEL VARCAS

THE plastics recycling industry, specifically the small- and medium-sized firms that engage in such activities, has been offered few incentives, causing the Philippines to lag other countries in the percentage of high-value plastics it recycles, an expert said Wednesday.

“There is a lack of... investment incentives that actually target recycling, and the type of businesses that recyclers often are — which are small to medium enterprises,” Amita S. Baecker, the senior project manager of the Singapore research and strategy firm GA Circular, said in a webinar organized by the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines.

She said there was a general lack of understanding about the availability of government support and an absence of data on the industry’s needs.

The main types of plastic typically subjected to recycling are polyethylene terephthalate, high-density polyethylene, low-density polyethylene and polypropylene, according to Ms. Baecker.

“The industry has capacity to recycle about 11% of the consumption, meaning we have a gap in recycling capacity of 89% which is very significant and considerably higher than the other study countries,” she said, citing data from one of GA Circular’s reports.

Some firms which are working to reduce plastic pollution in the country are Republic Cement Group, through its co-processing arm ecoloop, and the Philippine operation of Nestlé SA, which is seeking to transition to paper packaging from plastic. The executives of these companies were present during the forum.

Crispian N. Lao, the vice chairman of the National Solid Waste Commission, said that the Philippines has a long way to go in enforcing the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (Republic Act 9003), even though it has “made some strides.”

“The law mandates segregation at source. That’s one of the biggest challenges for us really. (Our) segregated collection (and) waste diversion goals now at 50%,” he said at the forum. He added that the current Philippine Development Plan has set the goal at 80% segregation in two years’ time. — **Angelica Y. Yang**

Source: <https://www.bworldonline.com/plastics-recyclers-seen-hampered-by-lack-of-incentives/>



Activists hold protests against waste incineration

Published December 9, 2020, 6:45 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

A series of nationwide protest actions were held on Wednesday urging the government to scrap proposals on waste-to-energy (WTE) incineration and show its sincerity in declaring a climate emergency in the country.

In observance of the National Day of Action on Climate Emergency, protest actions led by No Burn Pilipinas and Break Free From Plastic PH Project (BFFP) called on the government to drop the legalization of garbage incineration in the guise of waste-to-energy plants and instead pass sustainable and comprehensive waste management policies and safer practices that would reduce waste.



(Zaldy Comanda / FILE PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

The groups stressed that allowing waste-to-energy incineration amid the declaration of climate emergency in the country will continue to pose threats to public health and violate environmental laws, such as the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act and the Clean Air Act.

“We need the government’s sincerity in addressing the climate emergency. There must be a comprehensive plan including policies in mitigating the climate crisis and to disallow the funding of dirty energy projects by corporations that greatly contribute to climate change which endanger the health of citizens due to the release of poisonous chemicals such as dioxins and furans. Among these projects are waste-to-energy incineration facilities that proponents argue will solve the garbage crisis,” Glenn Ymata of No Burn Pilipinas said.

Aileen Lucero of EcoWaste Coalition said a climate emergency declaration must consider the environment and communities in all policies, decision making and implementation processes.

“Senator Win Gatchalian’s Waste-to-Energy Bill must be scrapped immediately and lawmakers should approve the green laws pending in the 18th Congress, such as the National Single-Use Plastics Ban and National Land Use Act as well as ordinances that would hold culprits accountable of climate disaster and crisis,” Lucero added.

Derek Cabe of Nuclear Free Bataan Movement, meanwhile, reiterated the need to have immediate and long-term sustainable plans and decisive actions that are comprehensive in addressing the adverse impacts of climate change and disasters.

The groups said petitions will be submitted to the Senate to counter the issuance of any laws, permits and certificates for the operation of WTE facilities “so that lawmakers will be obliged to allocate resources in building safer waste management facilities and sustainable practices.”

‘Reject waste incineration’ – environment groups

No Burn Pilipinas appeals to city government to refuse proposed Joint Venture Agreement (JVA) for waste-to-energy project

By: Delta Dyrecka Letigio - CDN Digital | December 09, 2020 - 02:07 PM



No Burn Pilipinas holds a protest rally outside the Cebu City Hall, calling for a stop to the proposed waste-to-energy incineration project of the city. CDN Digital photo | Delta Letigio

CEBU CITY, Philippines — Environmental groups are calling on the city government to refuse a proposed Joint Venture Agreement (JVA) for a waste-to-energy (WTE) project here.

No Burn Pilipinas, a coalition of environmental groups in the country, held a 10-minute rally in front of the Cebu City Legislative Building on Wednesday, December 9, 2020, for the National Day of Action on Climate Energy being celebrated nationwide.

According to Teody Navea of No Burn Pilipinas, the proposal of New Sky Energy Philippines will put to risk the lives, livelihood, and the health of residents in Cebu.

He said that WTE incineration should not be associated with climate or sustainable solution to the garbage problem, which persists in the city because it lacks an operational landfill.

“The incineration of one metric ton (Mt) of municipal waste in municipal-level incinerators is associated with the production/released of about 0.7 to 1.2 Mt of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂). The Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) estimates that about 2.9 Mt of CO₂ is released into the atmosphere when 1 Mt of plastic packaging is incinerated,” said No Burn Pilipinas in a statement.

The group is hoping that the city government will reconsider its stand on the proposal of New Sky Energy for a WTE incineration facility and find other sustainable means to solve the garbage problem.

Navea added that if the city would resort to WTE incineration, the consequences may be irreversible.

Aside from WTE Incineration, the group also urged the city government to stop conducting trials for burning solid waste inside their facility in Barangay Binaliw. The group claims that the facility is violating the Philippine Clean Air Act for conducting these trials.



“Amo lang gusto ipahibaw sa katawhan unsa ang tinud-anay nga nahitabo sa Binaliw. Magtukod pa daw silag water treatment facility para sa septic tanks. Ang mga taga Binaliw mag-antos ani,” said Navea.

(We only want the people to know what is happening at Binaliw. They even said a water treatment facility will be built for septic tanks. The people of Binaliw will be the ones who will suffer for this.)

No Burn Pilipinas Coalition is hoping that Mayor Edgardo Labella would respond to their appeal and choose a sustainable path for Cebu City.
/bmjo



Confronting environmental protests and bureaucratic ineptitude

[BIZLINKS](#) - [Rey Gamboa](#) (The Philippine Star) - December 10, 2020 - 12:00am

The country just lost another year and potentially, could be more in the planned construction of the P12-billion Kaliwa Dam project, seen as the answer to Metro Manila's threatening water shortage problem in the coming years.

The Kaliwa Dam project's planned groundbreaking had been scheduled last year after the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) gave China Energy Engineering Corporation (CEEC) the green light to proceed with a detailed engineering and design.

High-profile protests by groups associated with staunch environmentalists and concerned indigenous peoples have made any meaningful progress difficult this year with the pandemic, limiting work to project-related road clearing activities.

Recently, Quezon Governor Danilo Suarez joined in opposition to the project, calling to attention the resulting possibility of floods and landslides from big dam projects, a reality that often happens with other similar mega undertakings.

Quezon Province is home to the towns of Real, Infanta, and General Nakar where flashfloods and mudslides in 2004, which killed more than a thousand people, still evokes anxiety. Quezon had also been badly affected by the recent typhoon Ulysses.

Alternative to big dams

Environmental scientists are challenging big dam projects, citing not just the destruction of the forest ecosystem, but also the resulting siltation over time that reduces water-impounding benefits.

They, instead, propose a shift to micro and small hydro projects that are less capital intensive, less intrusive to the ecological balance, and will not endanger the ancestral lands that belong to indigenous people (IP).

Such a position, of course, runs counter to Chinese interests of having a stake in the country's water infrastructure projects, and subsequently adding more flesh to its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative plan which largely focuses on investing in huge infrastructure projects in its poor Asian neighbors.

In the Philippines, aside from the Kaliwa Dam project, China is also deeply interested in a dam and power project in Mindanao that will harness the powerful flow of the southern section of the Pulangi River to produce 250 megawatts of power.

To be built at a cost of \$800 million, also by Chinese state-owned CEEC, the proposed 143-meter dam will submerge more than 2,800 hectares of IP lands in four towns, affecting residents of at least 20 communities where some 30,000 people live.

Influencers

The concerns of affected locals is being taken up environmental and human rights groups active in Mindanao, but in a more suppressed manner given the degree of militarization in the remote parts of the island. In a sense, getting the Pulangi project off the ground would be easier.

In the case of the Kaliwa Dam project, being more accessible to Metro Manila and the seat of the country's political power has allowed a freer play of opposition, which also includes local religious groups that still hold some influence in local affairs.



The plan to tap Sierra Madre's Kaliwa River to supplement water supply from Angat Dam and Ipo Dam has been in the works for close to five decades now, but has always been miffed by protests. Water rationing has already begun in the metropolis, which has been rapidly growing in area and population.

Pressure to find new sources of water has yielded to the President signing an administrative order that aims to expedite the review and approval process involving flagship projects that would affect water security, notably including the Kaliwa Dam project.

The play of forces gets more interesting, and seeing a resolution to this long-standing issue will be in the nation's best interest. Perhaps looking at other alternatives that would be acceptable to everyone's interest would be timely.

Worse than getting a passport

The current mess involving the order of the Department of Transportation (DOTr) to migrate all toll users to a cashless system is proof of bureaucratic ineptitude, and of poor advice and action by concessionaires Metro Pacific Tollways and San Miguel Corporation.

In the first place, having vehicles installed with electronic passes should have been pushed by the DOTr ages ago, even before the quarantines, instead of allowing the concessionaires to invest in building more lanes to respond to the growing number of vehicles passing through the toll roads.

Then again, during the last few months while under quarantine, installation of radio frequency identification (RFID) stickers on vehicles could have been done in batches, i.e., trucks first, then commercial vehicles, light vehicles by plate ending numbers, and motorcycles.

This would have minimized the mad rush by almost everyone to meet the Dec. 1 deadline, which laughably had to be postponed again after motorists, including myself, could not get an Autosweep RFID despite following all the rules.

This has turned out worse than getting a passport; for many, the online queuing to get an appointment to have an Autosweep installed was already in late January 2021. Thus, it's small consolation that the DOTr announced a moratorium on fines during the Christmas season for not having an RFID.

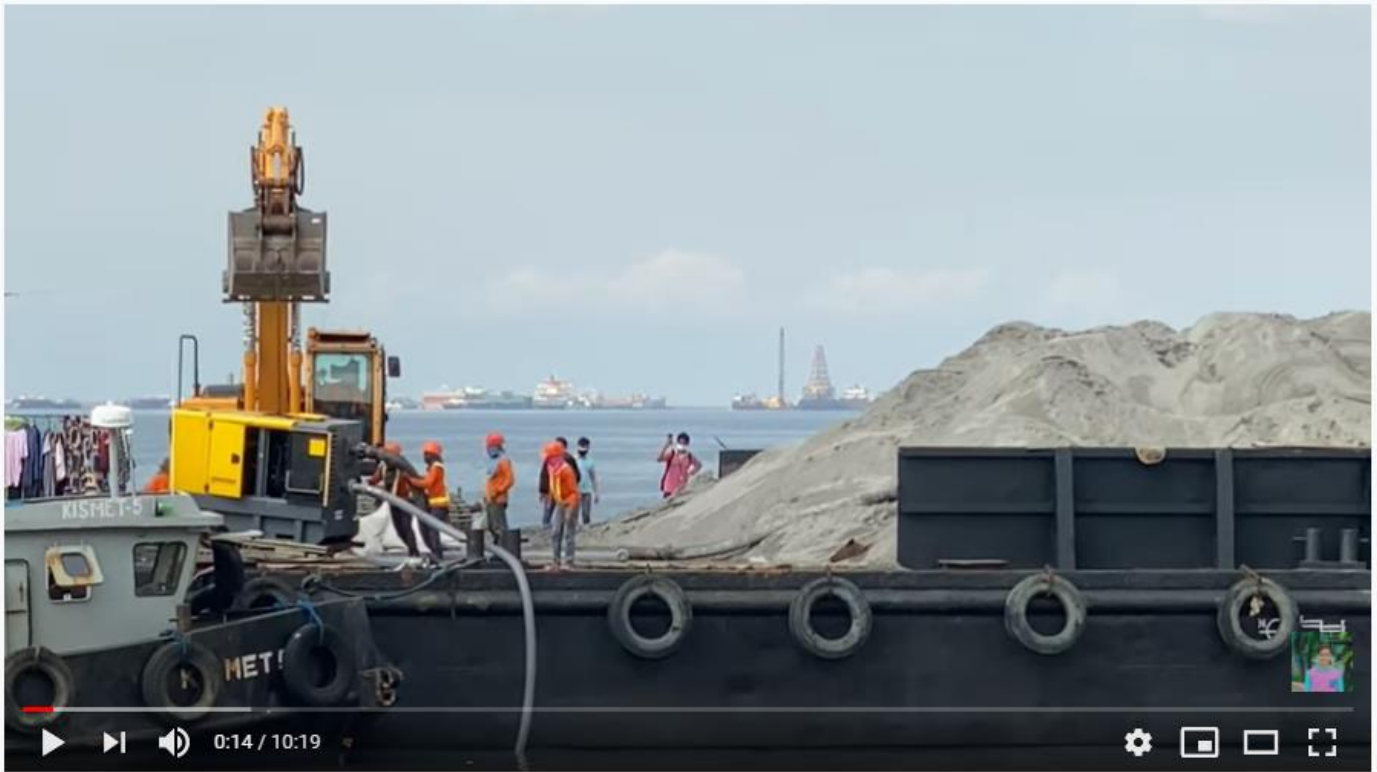
Definitely, better foresight is something that needs to be instilled in our government agencies that would allow them to avoid bringing about such needless controversies.

Alternative to big dams

We are actively using two social networking websites to reach out more often and even interact with and engage our readers, friends and colleagues in the various areas of interest that I tackle in my column. Please like us on www.facebook.com/ReyGamboa and follow us on www.twitter.com/ReyGamboa.

Should you wish to share any insights, write me at Link Edge, 25th Floor, 139 Corporate Center, Valero Street, Salcedo Village, 1227 Makati City. Or e-mail me at reydgamboa@yahoo.com. For a compilation of previous articles, visit www.BizlinksPhilippines.net.



Source: <https://www.philstar.com/business/2020/12/10/2062640/confronting-environmental-protests-and-bureaucratic-ineptitude>



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Coastal clean-up in Bagac, Bataan

December 9, 2020 1 min read

THONY DELA PENA ARCENAL/BENJAMIN CUARESMA

LAGUNA — Members of the Charlie Company, 48th Infantry (Guardians) Battalion under 1LT Oscarito Tobias roll out a clean-up drive together with Barangay Quinawan Officials headed by Barangay Chairperson Lorenzo A. Laguna at the coastal areas of Barangay Quinawan in Bagac, Bataan. **(A/FC/MTVN)**

Source: <https://maharlika.tv/2020/12/09/coastal-clean-up-in-bagac-bataan/?fbclid=IwAR0ag8TINPshR8oBbcPoTDaiuttdP1bUhAnYLFzu1FOOETbj0lpSZPwLJwk>



Senate, House approve 2021 national budget

Published 5 hours ago on December 10, 2020 12:20 AM

By **Hananeel Bordey** @tribunephil_hana



The 2021 General Appropriations Bill containing the P4.5-trillion national budget is one step away from approval after Congress, through the bicameral committee, approved the final version of the spending bill on Wednesday morning.

This means the 2021 national budget will be sent to Malacañang for President Rodrigo Duterte's signature.

On Wednesday morning, contingents from both houses of Congress reconvened the Bicameral Conference Committee on the 2021 national budget for a hybrid meeting at the Makati Shangri-La to approve the final version of the bill.

In a press conference after the bicameral conference committee approval, Senate Finance Committee chairperson Sonny Angara and House Appropriations Chairman Eric Go-Yap said the final version of the spending bill gives priority to calamity recovery and the COVID-19 response of the government.

The House Appropriations chairperson said localities severely devastated by the recent series of calamities were given priority and around P23 billion worth of funds were realigned to rehabilitate provinces such as Cagayan, Bicol, among others.

Yap said P23 billion was sourced from infrastructure projects which were considered "unimplementable."

For the COVID-19 response, the lawmakers did not provide exact figures as the funds related to it are spread out over different agencies.

The programmed funds for the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines are still set at P2.5 billion — the same amount proposed under the National Expenditure Program (NEP) submitted by the Executive Department.

On top of this P2.5 billion programmed funds, Angara said there will be at least P70 billion unprogrammed funds for the purchase, storage, and distribution of the vaccines.

"At least P70 billion for vaccine. If that amount is fully utilized in 2021, a big portion of our population can get vaccinated," Angara said.

Angara assured that the "probability" of the vaccines being funded is "large" as they were assured by the Department of Finance that money will be sourced from non-tax revenues.



“It’s still unprogrammed, but the target for unprogrammed is lower this year,” he said.

“What’s important is the funding is there and can be accessed and in the case of unprogrammed funds, the triggers for release is exceeding non-tax revenues which have been done in past years and are very likely for 2021. We have been assured,” he added.

To ensure that there are other sources of funds for the COVID-19 vaccines, Angara said Congress will legislate a bill extending the validity of Bayanihan to Recover as One Act (Bayanihan 2) in which P10 billion unprogrammed funds were lodged as stand-by funds for additional COVID-19 testing and vaccines.

The 2021 GAA will likewise be extended as some projects were stalled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following the Constitution, the education sector received the highest allocation with P708.2 billion.

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) obtained the second-highest budget with P695 billion.

The health sector ended up as the third top recipient of the national budget bill with P287.5 billion.

This includes funding for the Department of Health, DoH’s Health Facilities Enhancement Program, Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, specialty hospitals, Philippine Institute for Traditional and Alternative Health Care, and the COVID-19 vaccination program.

The Department of the Interior and Local Government followed with P247.5; Department of National Defense with P205.5 billion; Department of Social Welfare and Development with P176.7 billion.

The transportation and agriculture sectors received P87.4 billion and P68.8 billion allocations, respectively.

The Judiciary obtained P44.1 billion budget while the Department of Labor and Employment received P36.6 billion. **(With Michelle Guillang)**



Bicam approves report on 2021 nat'l budget

By Filane Mikee Cervantes December 9, 2020, 12:25 pm



APPROVED. The bicameral conference committee approves on Wednesday (Dec. 9, 2020) the proposed PHP4.5-trillion national budget for 2021. Both chambers of Congress are expected to ratify the panel report later in the afternoon. From left are senators Pia Cayetano and Sonny Angara; and representatives Eric Yap, Bernadette Herrera, and Mikee Romero. *(Photo courtesy of Deputy Speaker Mikee Romero)*

MANILA – The bicameral conference committee on Wednesday approved the proposed PHP4.5-trillion national budget for 2021.

House of Representatives appropriations committee vice chair, Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, said both chambers of Congress are expected to ratify the panel report later in the afternoon.

“The ball will be in the President’s court early, so there is almost no risk that we will face a delayed budget enactment this year. That can only mean well for 2021 economic recovery,” Salceda said.

He noted that the early passage of the 2021 General Appropriations Act, along with the expected adoption of the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises (CREATE) Act, would be strong foundations for the country’s economic “bounceback”.

“With these reforms done, we can focus on economic relief and the vaccine rollout,” Salceda said.

Apart from the PHP1.1 trillion-allocation for infrastructure, he said, the 2021 budget also includes PHP7.6 billion in additional spending for adapting to the post-Covid life, including items on telecommunications enhancements.

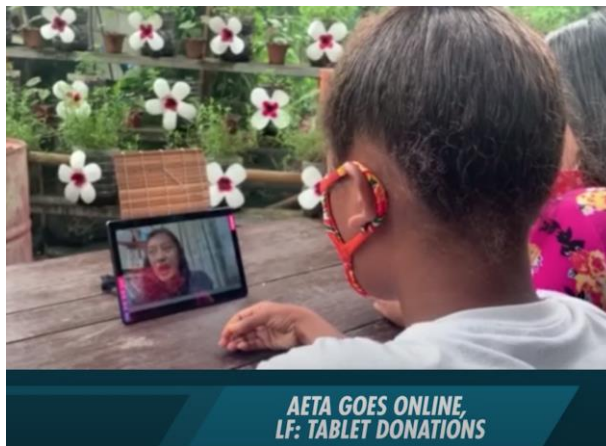
Salceda said the budget also includes PHP203 billion for health care.

While the 2021 budget deficit is expected to be at 8.5 percent of the gross domestic product, this can still be narrowed, he said.

“The actual budget deficit ultimately depends upon how fast we spend, how quickly the economy recovers, and how well we collect revenues. We cannot slow down spending during the recovery. It is vital that we spend quickly. But we can make collection more efficient,” Salceda said.

He added that the House ways and means committee has measures worth PHP651 billion in revenue-raising potential that could be enacted immediately but imposed post-2022.

“We can postpone the effectivity of new revenue measures to after the recovery, but I am confident that these will be priced into our credit ratings nonetheless. So, we should be fine,” Salceda said. *(PNA)*



Pampanga Aetas face discrimination over 'bat diet' amid COVID pandemic

Published December 9, 2020 12:38pm

By JOVILAND RITA, GMA News

The indigenous Aeta group Mag-Indi in Porac, Pampanga have experienced discrimination over their diet that includes bats.

In a press briefing on Sunday, a study by the University of the Philippines and the United Nations Economic, Social, and Cultural Organization presented challenges of the IPs in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic that reportedly began from bats in China.

"...Sinasabi ng mga taga-patag na sa Aeta nanggaling ang COVID-19 na naka-ugat sa diskriminasyon," one of the researchers July Sumayop said.

According to the report, some Kapampangans alleged that the virus actually came from the Aeta because they eat bats. Thus, they are avoided when they go downtown or to the lowlands.

"The non Aytas of Pampanga were reportedly spreading the rumor that the COVID-19 virus came from the IPs as they too eat bats, where the virus is reported to have emanated from in China," it said.

Even the Aetas already have reservations in making contact with outsiders as they believe they are more prone to the infection, which they do not want to carry back to their community.

Aside from the discrimination, Aetas also faced challenges in getting help from the government and accessing personal protective equipment to protect them from COVID-19.

Sumayop noted that a cash subsidy for only 27 families were given to 250 Aeta families from the Social Amelioration Program, a cash assistance of the government to households affected by the pandemic.



“Hindi rin lahat ng katutubo ay nabigyan ng tama at sapat na ayuda. Sa Barangay Planas, pinaghatihatian ng mahigit kumulang 250 na pamilya ang ayuda na dapat ay sa 27 na pamilya lamang,” he said.

He added that Aetas lacked of access to PPEs required by the local government. Due to this, they have resorted to creating makeshift banana leaf face masks just to comply with the regulation.

According to Sumayop, the Aytas were also left behind in education as the learning modules provided to them are not written in their own dialect.

“Dahil na rin sa programa ng DepEd na blended learning program na isinusulong ngayong pandemya, ay isinantabi nito ang department order na nagpapatibay sa kahalagahan ng Indigenous Peoples (IP) education curriculum integration,” he said.

“Ang mga module ay nakasulat sa Ingles, Tagalog, at Kapampangan, ngunit walang module na nakasulat sa Aeta Mag-indi,” he added.

The study of UP’s Center for Integrative and Development Studies, Program on Alternative Development with the UNESCO covered the accounts of Aetas from Barangays Camias and Planas in Porac.

Aside from the Aetas, the report titled “Marginalized Societies and the State in the time of Pandemic: The Philippine Case” also conducted a study on the impact of the pandemic to a Lumad “Bakwit” School teaching staff, urban poor community, women’s social enterprise cooperative, and community health worker’s group. —**LBG, GMA News**



Agencies urged to boost emergency preparedness in the workplace

By CSC Published on December 9, 2020

QUEZON CITY. Dec. 9 -- After the onslaught of strong typhoons in the country, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) called on government agencies to immediately establish or strengthen their emergency preparedness to protect government workers from hazards brought by disasters.

"Sadly, there are government workers who get caught in the middle of a disaster, calamity, or emergency while on official duty," said CSC Chairperson Alicia dela Rosa-Bala.

In May this year, the CSC, with the Department of Health and Department of Labor and Employment, signed Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) No. 1, s. 2020 that aims to institutionalize Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) standards in government workplaces.

Among the requirements for government agencies is to establish a Risk Reduction Management System and a Crisis Management Plan and Contingency Program to mitigate the effects of emergencies and improve their response capacity. In establishing these emergency response systems, agencies must include and consider emergency occurrences such as, but not limited to, earthquakes, typhoons, floods, fires, emergence of infectious diseases, occupational-related accidents, among others.

"A well-crafted Risk Management System, Crisis Management Plan and Contingency Program can help agencies to analyze and address potential risks in times of disasters or emergencies to ensure safety and provide appropriate assistance/interventions for their employees." added the CSC Chairperson.

The JMC also mandates agencies to conduct trainings and drills on disaster risk reduction and management for employees; ensure that emergency supplies such as fire extinguishers and first aid kits, among others, are adequate and available at all times; a first aider trained and duly certified or accredited by the Philippine Red Cross or by any authorized organization qualified shall administer first-aid during emergencies; and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement with the nearest government health facility that can provide emergency medical services in case of accidents or injuries.

Agencies should have their own OSH Program, create a Safety and Health Committee and/or a Special Investigation Committee, and appoint or designate a Safety Health Officer, to ensure their compliance with OSH Standards and the promotion and effective implementation of OSH in their workplaces.

CSC-DOH-DOLE Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1, s. 2020 was published 7 May 2020 in a newspaper of general circulation and took effect on 22 May 2020. The complete text of the policy can be accessed on the CSC website at www.csc.gov.ph. (CSC)

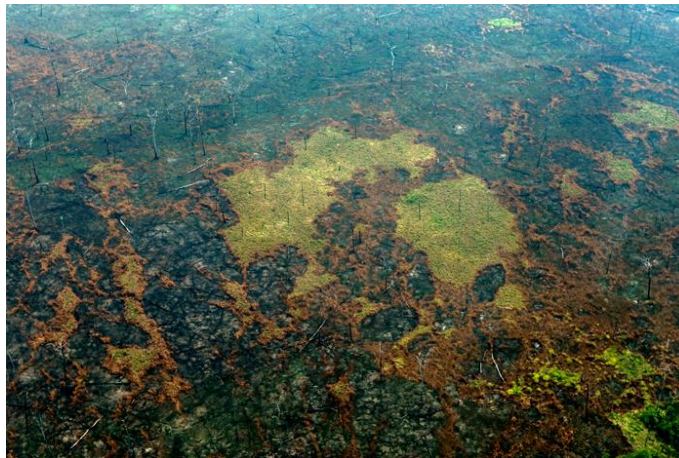


Deforestation wiped out 8% of Amazon in 18 years: study

posted December 09, 2020 at 06:30 am

by [AFP and Paula Ramon](#)

Deforestation in the Amazon destroyed an area bigger than Spain from 2000 to 2018, wiping out eight percent of the world's largest rainforest, according to a study released Tuesday.



Aerial file photo taken on August 24, 2019 of burnt areas of the Amazon rainforest, near Boca do Acre, Amazonas state, Brazil, in the Amazon basin. - The Amazon lost 500,000 km² -an area equivalent to the one of Spain- due to deforestation between 2000 and 2018, according to a study of a regional net of investigators and civil organizations released on December 8, 2020. Lula Sampaio / AFP

The Amazon plays a vital role in curbing climate change, but destruction of the rainforest has only accelerated in recent years, found the study by the Amazon Geo-Referenced Socio-Environmental Information Network (RAISG).

Since the turn of the millennium, 513,016 square kilometers (198,077 square miles) of the rainforest have been lost, according to the updated Amazon atlas produced by the organization, a consortium of groups from across the region.

It is RAISG's first such atlas since 2012.

"The Amazon is far more threatened than it was eight years ago," RAISG said in a statement.

The consortium found that after making gains against deforestation early in the century, the Amazon region has again slipped into a worrying cycle of destruction.

Deforestation hit a high of 49,240 square kilometers of forest loss in 2003 -- a record for this century -- then eased to a low of 17,674 square kilometers in 2010, the report said.

But the destruction has since surged to startling levels.

"Deforestation has accelerated since 2012. The annual area lost tripled from 2015 to 2018," the study found. "In 2018 alone, 31,269 square kilometers of forest were destroyed across the Amazon region, the worst annual deforestation since 2003."

The destruction is fueled by logging, farming, ranching, mining and infrastructure projects on formerly pristine forest land.

"The statistics presented by RAISG are an alarm bell on the increasing pressures and threats facing the region," said researcher Julia Jacomini of the Socioenvironmental Institute (ISA), a Brazilian environmental group that is part of RAISG.

The atlas "shows the importance of building an alliance of Amazon countries, which is non-existent at the moment, to fight those growing pressures and threats," she told AFP.



World problem

The report comes as world leaders prepare for a virtual summit this weekend aimed at breathing new life into the 2015 Paris climate accord, whose goals on slowing the warming of the planet are currently set to be missed.