

13 MARCH 2022, SUNDAY



# NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



# DENR Joins #WomenMakeChange Campaign

Saturday, March 12, 2022 [Journal Online](#)



Department of Environment and Natural Resources ([DENR](#)) Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna and Undersecretary for Finance, Information Systems and Climate Change and chair of the National Gender and Development (GAD) Focal Point System Atty. Analiza Rebuelta-Teh (4th and 5th from left, respectively) lead the ribbon cutting ceremony to open the celebration of National Women's Month with the theme "Women Make Change Amidst Climate Crisis and COVID-19," on March 7, 2022 at the DENR Central Office in Quezon City. A photo exhibit at the [DENR](#) lobby highlights the contributions of women on climate and disaster resiliency and COVID-19 response. Also present are (from left): Environmental Management Bureau Director William P. Cuñado, Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and International Affairs Atty. Jonas R. Leones, Undersecretary for Field Operations and Environment Atty. Juan Miguel T. Cuna, Assistant Secretary for Finance, Information Systems and Mining Concerns Nonita S. Caguioa, Assistant Secretary for Field Operations-Western Mindanao Joan A. Lagunda, Climate Change Service Director Elenida DR. Basug, and Policy and Planning Service OIC Director Glenn Marcelo C. Noble.

# Gender and Development Bulletin Board for Women

Friday, March 11, 2022 Journal Online



In celebration of the Women's Month, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (**DENR**) Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna (left) and Undersecretary for Finance, Information Systems and Climate Change and chair of the National Gender and Development (GAD) Focal Point System Atty. Analiza Rebueta-Teh (right) unveil the DENR GAD Bulletin Board on Monday, March 7, 2022 at the DENR Central Office in Quezon City. The GAD bulletin board has four sections — #GADleads, #GADmatters, #GADinforms, and #GADcares, which feature GAD focal persons, schedule of activities for the Women's Month, sustainable development goals on gender equality, and laws protecting women in workplaces. The Department's GAD Office also put up a GAD box to encourage all employees of the **DENR** to share experiences and ideas on how to make their work environment a safe space for everyone.



## DENR hands bins for used masks

The guidelines cover the proper handling and management of all Covid-related health care wastes generated by households and other facilities

Published 3 hours ago on March 13, 2022 04:20 AM

By **TDI** @tribunephil



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has turned over 100 yellow trash bins to the municipalities of Binangonan and Angono in Rizal province to ensure the proper segregation and disposal of household healthcare wastes such as used masks.

DENR Undersecretary Benito Antonio de Leon handed over 50 trash bins to Binangonan Mayor Cesar Martin Ynares and another 50 to Angono Mayor Jeri Mae Calderon in simple turnover rites at their respective offices on 7 March.

“As former Secretary Roy Cimatu manifested, and as pursued by our new Secretary Jim Sampulna, we need to proceed in the direction of behavioral change,” De Leon said.

He also commended the efforts of the two local executives for implementing the National Solid Waste Management Commission Resolution 1364-2020 on “Adopting the Interim Guidelines on the Management of Covid-19 Related Health Care Waste” issued in April 2020.

The guidelines cover the proper handling and management of all Covid-related health care wastes generated by households and other facilities.

Ynares said the donation was timely as it will help sustain the downward trend in Covid-19 positive cases in Binangonan.

Calderon also welcomed DENR’s support on their efforts to implement Angono’s solid waste management activities which, she said, was fine-tuned to address the increase in the volume of healthcare wastes generated during the pandemic.



# DENR dishes out trash bins for Covid waste in Rizal

Published 18 hours ago on March 12, 2022 02:10 PM

By **TDI** @tribunephil



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has turned over 100 yellow trash bins to the municipalities of Binangonan and Angono in Rizal province to ensure the proper segregation and disposal of household health care wastes such as used face masks.

DENR Undersecretary for Enforcement, Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns (LGUs) and Attached Agencies Benito Antonio T. de Leon handed over 50 trash bins to Binangonan Mayor Cesar Martin Ynares and another 50 to Angono Mayor Jeri Mae Calderon in simple turnover rites at their respective offices on March 7.

“As former Secretary Roy A. Cimatu manifested, and as pursued by our new Secretary Jim O. Sampulna, we need to proceed in the direction of behavioral change,” de Leon said.

He also commended the efforts of the two local executives for implementing the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) Resolution No. 1364 series of 2020 on “Adopting the Interim Guidelines on the Management of COVID-19 Related Health Care Waste” issued in April 2020.

The guidelines cover the proper handling and management of all COVID-related health care wastes generated by households and other facilities.

De Leon, who is also the NSWMC alternate chair, said the donation “goes a long way in equipping LGUs to mainstream sound solid waste management practices in their governance as public servants however small the donation may be and in the face of the huge challenges in changing people’s attitude and behavior towards wastes, particularly at the household level.”

Meanwhile, Ynares said the donation was timely as it will help sustain the downward trend in COVID-19 positive cases in Binangonan.

Calderon also welcomed DENR’s support to their efforts to implement Angono’s solid waste management activities which, she said, was fine-tuned to address the increase in the volume of healthcare wastes generated during the pandemic.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2022/03/12/denr-dishes-out-trash-bins-for-covid-waste-in-rizal/>



# Rizal LGUs get COVID-19 waste bins from DENR

[Rhodina Villanueva](#) - The Philippine Star March 13, 2022 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has turned over 100 yellow trash bins to the municipal governments of Binangonan and Angono in Rizal to help the local government units (LGUs) in the proper segregation and disposal of household health care wastes, such as used face masks.

DENR Undersecretary for solid waste management and LGU concerns Benito Antonio de Leon handed over 50 trash bins each to Binangonan Mayor Cesar Martin Ynares and Angono Mayor Jeri Mae Calderon on March 7.

“As former secretary Roy Cimatu manifested and as pursued by our new secretary Jim Sampulna, we need to proceed in the direction of behavioral change,” De Leon said.

He commended the two local chief executives for implementing National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) Resolution adopting the interim guidelines on the management of COVID-related healthcare waste issued in April 2020.

De Leon, who is also the alternate chairman of the NSWMC, said the donation would go a long way in equipping LGUs to mainstream sound solid waste management practices.

Ynares said the donation would help sustain the drop in COVID cases in his town.

Calderon welcomed the support of the DENR support in the implementation of their solid waste management programs, which she said were fine-tuned to address the increase in the volume of healthcare waste generated during the pandemic.



# 100 yellow trash bins for Binangonan, Angono

by [Maricel Cruz](#) [March 13, 2022, 12:20 am](#) in [National News](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has turned over 100 yellow trash bins to the municipalities of Binangonan and Angono in Rizal province to ensure the proper segregation and disposal of household health care wastes such as used face masks.

Benito Antonio de Leon, DENR Undersecretary for Enforcement, Solid Waste Management, and Local Government Units Concerns (LGUs) and Attached Agencies, handed over 50 trash bins to Binangonan Mayor Cesar Martin Ynares and another 50 to Angono Mayor Jeri Mae Calderon in simple turnover rites at their respective offices on March 7.

“As former Secretary Roy Cimatu manifested, and as pursued by our new Secretary Jim O. Sampulna, we need to proceed in the direction of behavioral change,” de Leon said in a statement Saturday.

He also commended the efforts of the two local executives for implementing the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) Resolution No. 1364 series of 2020 on “Adopting the Interim Guidelines on the Management of COVID-19 Related Health Care Waste” issued in April 2020.

The guidelines cover the proper handling and management of all COVID-related health care wastes generated by households and other facilities.

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# Healthcare Waste Trash Bins from DENR

Saturday, March 12, 2022 Journal Online



**Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)** Undersecretary for Enforcement, Solid Waste Management, Local Government Units Concerns and Attached Agencies Benito Antonio T. de Leon (left) hands one of the 50 yellow trash bins to Binangonan Mayor Cesar Martin Ynares (right) in support of the municipality's heightened campaign on proper waste segregation and disposal of household healthcare wastes from COVID-19. The bins will be used solely for the disposal of face masks, face shields and personal protective equipment. The donation was held at the [Binangonan Municipal](#) Hall last March 8, 2022. Fifty yellow trash bins were also given to Angono Mayor Jeri Mae Calderon on the same day.





# DENR urges: Use plastic wastes as cement raw material

Published 5 hours ago on March 13, 2022 02:30 AM

By **TDI** @tribunephil



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) on Saturday called on cement makers to explore ways to utilize plastic waste as raw material to help reduce the country's solid waste generation by at least 40 percent.

DENR-EMB director William Cuñado said that there are already several cement firms who adopted the conversion of plastic waste into energy in the country. "When all these cement plants will participate, we can dramatically reduce the volume of plastic waste which will be now regarded as raw materials of the cement plants in their current processing," Cuñado said.

"This measure will reduce by 40 to 60 percent the volume of plastic waste," he added.

The DENR-EMB chief also said that the participation of the local government units through their solid waste management efforts will contribute to the decrease in plastic waste volume.

Cuñado noted that the conversion of plastic waste into raw material for cement plants will result in the reduction of plastic wastes generated in cities and municipalities.



# DENR bats for plastic waste for cement

Published 17 hours ago on March 12, 2022 02:15 PM

By TDT @tribunephil



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) urged cement makers to explore ways to utilize plastic waste as raw material to help reduce the country's solid waste generation by at least 40 percent.

"When all these cement plants will participate, we can dramatically reduce the volume of plastic waste which will be now regarded as raw materials of the cement plants in their current processing," said DENR-EMB Director William Cuñado, citing that several cement firms have already adopted the conversion of plastic waste into energy in the country.

"This measure will reduce by 40 to 60 percent the volume of plastic waste," he pointed out.

The DENR-EMB chief also said that the participation of the local government units through their solid waste management efforts will contribute to the decrease in plastic waste volume.

Cuñado noted that the conversion of plastic waste into raw material for cement plants will result in the reduction of plastic wastes generated in cities and municipalities.

DENR Undersecretary for Policy, Planning, and International Affairs and spokesperson Atty. Jonas R. Leones also cited that campaign materials made out of plastics that are used for the May 2022 elections can be recycled by cement plants.

"Plastic tarpaulins are also used in co-processing, in energy. These are mixed into cement as fillers; sometimes these are used to create pots," Leones said.

"Plastic tarpaulins are melted to have some other products out of these plastics," he added.

Leones also reiterated the continuing efforts of the DENR in addressing the problem of single-use plastics.

"The DENR has already approved the national plan of action to address the plastic litter and in addressing single-use plastics. We are supporting the principle of circular economy and extended producer responsibility or EPR," Leones said.

"For us, we are just preparing the policy that would hopefully give incentives to the industries for them to avoid using single-use plastics," he added.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2022/03/12/denr-bats-for-plastic-waste-for-cement/>



# Use of plastic as raw materials for cement to reduce waste by 40%

March 12, 2022, 2:54 pm



**ROAD REPAIR.** Construction workers mix gravel, sand, and cement for drainage cement casting along Zapote Road in Caloocan City on Jan. 11, 2022. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources recommends that cement makers explore ways to utilize plastic waste as raw materials to help reduce the country's solid waste by at least 40 percent. (PNA photo by Oliver Marquez)

**MANILA** – Campaign materials made out of plastics that are being used by candidates in the May 9 elections can be recycled by cement plants, a move that can help reduce the country's solid waste generation by at least 40 percent.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) thus urged cement makers to explore ways to utilize plastic waste as raw materials, noting that several cement firms have already adopted the environment-friendly conversion.

“When all these cement plants will participate, we can dramatically reduce the volume of plastic waste which will be now regarded as raw materials of the cement plants in their current processing,” DENR-EMB Director William Cuñado said in a news release on Saturday. “This measure will reduce by 40 to 60 percent the volume of plastic waste.”

Cuñado said the participation of the local government units through their solid waste management efforts will contribute to the decrease in plastic waste volume.

DENR Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and International Affairs and spokesperson, lawyer Jonas Leones, said tarpaulins such as those used by candidates are melted to make other products out of the plastics.

“Plastic tarpaulins are also used in co-processing, in energy. These are mixed into cement as fillers. Sometimes these are used to create pots,” he said.

Leones said the DENR has already approved the national plan of action to address the plastic litter and in addressing single-use plastics.

“We are supporting the principle of circular economy and extended producer responsibility or EPR,” Leones said. “For us, we are just preparing the policy that would hopefully give incentives to the industries for them to avoid using single-use plastics.”



Meanwhile, the DENR turned over 100 yellow trash bins to the municipalities of Binangonan and Angono in Rizal province on March 7 to ensure the proper segregation and disposal of household health care wastes, such as used face masks.

DENR Undersecretary for Enforcement, Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns and Attached Agencies, Benito Antonio de Leon, handed over 50 trash bins each to Binangonan Mayor Cesar Martin Ynares and Angono Mayor Jeri Mae Calderon.

"As former secretary Roy Cimatu manifested and as pursued by Secretary Jim Sampulna, we need to proceed in the direction of behavioral change," de Leon said. **(PR)**



# Sampulna to DENR Employees: Embody Public Servant's Oath

Friday, March 11, 2022 Journal Online



**Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)** Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna challenges officials and rank-and-file employees of the Department to live up to the oath of government employees during the resumption of the agency's flag raising ceremony on March 7 after a two-year hiatus due to the threats of COVID-19. Sampulna, who turned emotional while sharing his rise-through-the-ranks story, encouraged the rank-in-file employees to work hard and to pursue further studies to advance their respective careers. The DENR chief committed to expedite the process of filling up vacant positions in **DENR** offices nationwide which is often raised during budget hearings in Congress. Sampulna, a native of Mindanao, took over the Department after former Secretary Roy A. Cimatú resigned in February due to health reasons.



## PH, Japan strengthens drive for decarbonized, sustainable society

March 11, 2022 2 min read

By Rjhay E Laurea

MANILA — The Philippines and Japan have further solidified their cooperation towards a decarbonized and sustainable society during the recent Bilateral Environment Policy Dialogue which is part of the First Philippines-Japan Environmental Week.

Through PH's Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Ministry of the Environment Japan (MOEJ), the two countries formally inked their partnership to address the adverse effects of climate change.

DENR Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna said the Bilateral Environmental Policy Dialogue served as an avenue for further collaboration between the DENR and MOEJ to ensure the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and protection against the impact of climate change.

“The Philippines as an archipelagic country is one of the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Our country has faced several typhoons in the past. Partnering with Japan in terms of technology and know-how on measures to mitigate climate change is indeed vital at this time,” Sampulna said.

For his part, DENR Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and International Affairs Jonas R. Leones said the department is looking forward to more fruitful cooperation between the governments of the Philippines and Japan.

“This dialogue is such a fitting example of our strategy to reach out to development partners to work on improving environmental conservation and protection in the country,” Leones said.

Meanwhile, MOEJ Vice Minister Tokutaro Nakai said the agency is deepening its cooperation with the DENR based on existing cooperation programs through strategies such as Initiative on Fluorocarbons Life Cycle Management, Joint Crediting Mechanism, transparency reporting on greenhouse gas emissions, city-to-city collaboration, and knowledge and tools sharing on climate adaptation projects, and waste management technology support. (ai/mtvn)

Source: <https://maharlika.tv/2022/03/11/ph-japan-strengthens-drive-for-decarbonized-sustainable->



# DENR, Arescom to reforest Region 2

By [Leander C. Domingo](#) March 13, 2022



Cagayan Valley. Photo from wikipedia

TO rehabilitate denuded forestlands, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) forged an agreement with the Philippine Army Reserve Command (Arescom) for a reforestation project in Region 2 (Cagayan Valley).

On Friday, DENR assistant secretary Joan Lagunda signed a memorandum of agreement with Arescom, represented by Maj. Gen. Fernando Felipe and Col. Wilfredo Adquilen Jr.

DENR Region 2 Executive Director Gwendolyn Bambalan was represented by Assistant Regional Director Marcos Dacanay.

The agreement states that the partnership intends to enrich the existing plantation or forest cover and hasten the regeneration or greening of denuded and degraded forestlands as well as cogonal areas and protect them from any unauthorized interference.

A reservist with the rank of lieutenant colonel, Lagunda underscored the mission of the DENR to mobilize the citizenry in protecting, conserving, and managing the environment and natural resources.

"Caring for the environment is not solely for DENR, but all of us. It is a whole-of-nation approach," she said, ordering field officials to monitor the progress of the project and conduct periodic evaluation or assessment of the plantations.

Lagunda also expressed thanks to DENR Region 2 for accepting the partnership, highlighting the importance of collaborative governance and sharing her experience in maximizing the brigades and battalions of the National Capital Region in different environmental activities.

Meanwhile, Felipe said the Army reserve group earlier committed to support the DENR in the National Greening Program.

He said the vision of the reserve force is nation-building and economic development, and that their efforts are focused on environmental protection to bring back the beauty of natural resources.

"Taking care of the natural resources is one of the best forms of volunteerism and patriotism," Felipe said.

Corie Corpuz, DENR Region 2 information office, said the project covers a non-contiguous area of about 20 hectares of existing forest plantation in every province in Region 2.

The region comprises the provinces of Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya and Isabela and the island province of Batanes.



Citing the partnership agreement, Corpuz explained that the 2nd Regional Community Defense Group-Arescom shall plant or replant seedlings of endemic species in areas to be identified by the DENR.

Corpuz said the community defense group shall exert effort for a high survival rate of the newly planted species and must consider replacements only when required.

She also explained that the reserve force is tasked to treat the area and its immediate vicinities with special protection and care, as well as protect the existing living species found threatened against any unauthorized interference.

The reserve force shall ensure that the area will be free from any unregulated activity and shall be maintained in its suitable condition to nurse the newly planted species, Corpuz said.

The DENR, meanwhile, shall execute all prefatory activities, supply planting materials, and provide technical assistance and expertise in the entire implementation of the project, she added.





## ISANG BAHAGI NG DOLOMITE BEACH, GAGAWING SWIMMING POOL

by **DWIZ 882** March 12, 2022



Gagawing swimming pool o paliguan para sa turista ang isang bahagi ng Manila Baywalk Dolomite Beach.

Ayon kay DENR Acting Sec. Jim Sampulna, dito na nakatuon ang ahensya para hindi na lalayo pa sa Metro Manila ang mga residente ng rehiyon para lamang mamasyal.

Sa ngayon aniya, nasa finishing touches na lamang sila at posibleng buksan na ito pagtapos ng mahal na araw na perfect din sa pagsisimula ng tag-init sa bansa.

Maliban dito, nakalatag na rin ang pagsasapinal ng Memorandum of Agreement sa pagitan ng DENR at Department of National Defense (DND) at Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) para sa planong cannon replica ng Corregidor Island na ginamit noong ikalawang digmaang pandaigdig.—**sa panulat ni Abie Alño-Angeles**



## Birds in the city

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

MARCH 13, 2022



Pacific Golden Plover in Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park Photos by

Have you seen a bird in your backyard lately? Or have you heard them sing when you wake up in the morning?

Even in the urban jungles like Metro Manila, birds that are left alone are known to survive—and thrive and help make the city parks or even your home garden alive.



Not to be confused with “domesticated” birds like the homing or racing pigeons, these birds are wild as they can be shy and still elusive to humans—with who they share space occasionally.

### Targeted, lost and found

Even in the city, these birds are being targeted with slingshots, or worse, with pellet or air guns.

In public markets, or even in front of elementary schools, unscrupulous vendors discreetly sell live birds offering them as “pets.” Worse, some sell bigger birds like “tikling” for exotic food or bar chow.

Birds being brought at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources’ (DENR) Wildlife Rescue Center, however, have different stories.



The white-collared kingfisher’s “ka-ka-ka” calls can be heard hundreds of meters away.



“Many of the birds are actually city dwellers who were accidentally injured,” Glenn Maguad, the head of the rescue center told the BusinessMirror via telephone interview on March 9.

He said falcons and birds of prey are often brought by concerned citizens after smashing glass window panes or glass walls of tall buildings.

Some herons, he said, are also among the list of rescued animals that get lost in the city.

“Sometimes, fledgling birds get lost or confused and find their way in cities,” he said in Filipino. This happens at a time when the juvenile herons are still learning to fly and get soaked in the water too long, making it hard for them to fly resulting in their capture.

### City dwellers

The Eurasian tree sparrow, commonly known as “maya”—that was said to be brought by Europeans in the Philippines allegedly to combat loneliness and homesickness in the 1900s—continues to thrive in Metro Manila.



Whiskered Tern on Manila Bay

The little brown birds with tiny black beaks build their nest almost everywhere and anywhere—the tree in your backyard, your ceiling or garage, abandoned house or buildings, or even under metal frames of your community’s covered basketball courts or gymnasium.

Some of the species of birds commonly found in Metropolitan Manila are the yellow-vented bulbul, pied fantail, chesnut munia, olive-backed sunbird, zebra dove, black-naped oriole, pied triller, collared kingfisher, and Philippine pygmy woodpecker.

Jasmin Meren, an expert birdwatcher and photographer, said 232 are known to exist in Metro Manila.

“Many of these birds can tolerate human disturbance. In fact some can even be found where I live in the heart of Manila,” Meren said.

She cited the endemic Philippine pied fantail “which I always find hopping on the electric wires in front of our house every morning, along with olive-backed sunbird and yellow-vented bulbul,” she added.

According to Meren, during migratory season she often see a brown shrike on her neighbor’s roof, sometimes seen eating a lizard or large insect.

But for habitat, she said nothing beats a good, old forest, which harbors more species, many of which are endemic or found only in the country.



## Urban green spaces

But urban green spaces have been observed to provide home and food for wildlife, she noted. “Birds thrive in city life, as long as there is vegetation like trees and shrubs, and some flowering and fruiting trees, which may be found in forest parks, open grassy areas and even pocket gardens,” she said.

In the case of Metro Manila, aquatic habitats also provide foraging grounds for many birds, especially to migratory species like the endangered black-faced spoonbill and far eastern Curlew.

“These habitats are found in the mudflats and fishponds of Navotas, along Pasig River, and the mangrove park in Las Piñas-Parañaque,” she said.

Via Messenger, Juan Carlos Tecson Gonzalez, an ornithologist and natural history artist, told the BusinessMirror on March 8 that it is not surprising for birds or even other wildlife to be seen or even to be dwelling in the cities, especially if the cities are near forested areas.

Subic, Baguio-La Trinidad, Puerto Princesa and Davao are examples of cities or developed areas with substantial forest cover that have outstanding biodiversity, and have many birds. Since Los Banos is a special Natural and Science City, it is included in this category too with its Mount Makiling, Tecson added.

## ‘Shooting birds’

Passionate bird lovers, even in Metro Manila, made it a habit of “shooting” birds for fun, without killing them through photography.

“The cities [developed by humans] are expanding, while the world’s natural habitats—the forests, wetlands and scrublands—are shrinking. But some animals have proven resilient enough to adapt to life in human communities, eking out a living in our farms, towns, and cities,” said Best Alternatives Executive Director Gregg Yan told the BusinessMirror via e-mail on March 9.

An expert wildlife photographer and explorer, Yan said an assortment of bird species flit and fly within Manila, Cebu, Davao and other urban hubs.

“We’re not just talking about the ubiquitous maya, which were introduced to the Philippines by our Spanish colonizers, or feral pigeons cooing around our parks and towns. We have incredibly colorful blue kingfishers, yellow orioles, green parrots, red munias and rainbow-hued sunbirds, most of which go unnoticed because they’re pretty good at hiding. The usual indication that they’re around is if you can hear their birdcalls, which differ per species,” he said.

## Unnatural habitat

International biodiversity expert Theresa Mundita Lim, executive director of the Asean Centre for Biodiversity, in an interview with the BusinessMirror on March 7 said it is not natural for birds to dwell in cities, but some are able to adapt and become part of the human “ecosystem”

“The cities are ‘unnatural,’ so the birds are just around areas where their natural habitats or wintering grounds [for migratory birds] used to be,” Lim said via Messenger.



“Some birds are more resilient than others, so they can thrive in the remaining greeneries and replanted areas [eg. yellow-vented bulbuls, and munias, the migratory brown shrike], or even on garbage dumps [crows]. Other birds were introduced [the Eurasian tree sparrow], and have adapted to city-living, nesting in house ceilings,” she explained.

### **Institutional support**

To make Metro Manila an ideal birding site like Singapore, Lim said the remaining green spaces should be managed and maintained as such or better, provide a policy environment that is friendly to urban biodiversity.

“A local ordinance or any form of a policy can be issued to ensure that an area is to be used primarily as ‘green space,’ maybe to designate it as a city botanical garden, a tree park, etc., critical habitats, or what can be considered other effective area-based conservation measures, and that this will not be developed for hard infrastructure,” she said.

Local government units can further identify other vacant public areas as green spaces or wetlands, and restore them using native species, as far as practicable, she added.

“If there is not enough vacant public land to use for ecosystem restoration, innovative means can also be adopted, such as vertical gardening, greening rooftops, ecological bridges for wildlife, or constructed wetlands,” she pointed out.

Image credits: [Jasmin Meren](#), [Gregg Yan](#)



# Japan aids Philippines in waste management

[Louise Maureen Simeon](#) - The Philippine Star March 13, 2022 | 12:00am



In 2018, plastic imports grew by 1.5% and was valued at US\$ 180 million.

File photo

MANILA, Philippines — The Japanese government has collaborated with the Philippines to promote proper waste disposal as threats to public health and the environment continue to worsen.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan's bilateral aid agency, and the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) are working to establish guidelines for the accurate characterization of wastes for the use of local government units.

A Waste Analysis and Characterization Study (WACS) manual was developed by the Ministry of Environment of Japan.

The manual sets technical standards in analyzing waste characteristics to guide LGUs in making and implementing waste reduction and management programs.

JICA Philippines senior representative Yo Ebisawa said implementing solid waste management programs requires serious policy investments.

“But, when you think about their impact on promoting a circular economy and effectively managing solid waste, such investments on solid waste management are definitely worth it,” he said.

Data from the government showed that biodegradable wastes make up 52 percent of the country's total wastes generated.

The average per capita waste generation rate is around 0.40 kilograms per day.

Considering the increasing Philippine population, JICA said the total amount of waste in the country is expected to increase further which means that improper solid waste management can lead to serious health and environment consequences.

The Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) earlier said the Philippines was facing a waste crisis, perhaps of an “unimaginable scale.”

The country is producing 2.7 million metric tons of plastic waste per year, out of which 17 percent of the collected plastic waste and 31 percent of the uncollected waste is leaked into the ocean.



Government projections showed that generated waste would reach 23.6 million MT by 2025 from 21.4 million MT in 2020.

Aside from assistance in solid waste management, JICA has initiatives for environment conservation and management in the Philippines including cooperation in forestland management, coastal conservation, water improvement, septage management, and sharing of Japanese innovations in recycling technologies, among others.



# Candidates urged to be environment friendly

By [Ruth Palo](#) March 13, 2022

THE Davao City-based environmental group Interfacing Development Interventions for Sustainability (IDIS) has urged all candidates in the May elections to be responsible for their waste and to spare the trees as posts for their campaign materials.

"With the ongoing national campaign, election materials are visible everywhere. There are already numerous tarpaulins and advertisement banners — not to mention the balloons and confetti at every political rally. More of these types of wastes will be added to our current waste issues at the start of the local campaign on March 25," IDIS said in a statement Friday.

The group expresses worries that these advertisement banners installed every election made with plastic do not decay well when buried and release toxic materials into the air when burned.

"Like the illegally dumped wastes below the campaign materials, this type of waste is always left unattended," the statement said.

"The banners are generally made of not recyclable materials and do not break down easily. We have called their use a setback to environmental goals, but the problem has largely been ignored when campaigning."

IDIS believed that the single-use plastic waste generated during the campaign causes choking of drainage, ingestion by stray animals, land and water pollution, thereby causing adverse impact on human health and the environment.

Mark Peñalver, IDIS executive director, said that this has been a recurring problem every election period.

"We can see tarpaulin banners everywhere, even if not in their designated area — worst, several campaign materials are nailed through a tree. And after the election period, these materials will be left unattended, adding to the pile of waste at our landfill site," he said.

He said these are also prohibited by the law.

Section 9 of the Fair Election Act of 2001 (Republic Act 9006) states that posting of campaign materials may only be allowed in common poster areas in public places such as plazas, markets, barangay centers and the like.

Comelec Resolution 10730, dated Nov. 17, 2021, emphasized that "in no instance shall an election officer designate as common poster areas any trees, plants, shrubs in any public grounds."

IDIS has called on the poll body to make sure that candidates will strictly comply with its policies, considering the problems already plaguing the city due to plastic pollution, climate change and Covid-19.

"We also urge government agencies to champion much-needed policies and practices that will protect our environment from further degradation due to the political activities leading to the 2022 elections."

They also called on all candidates to clean up, win or lose, the wastes they produced during the campaign period.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2022/03/13/news/regions/candidates-urged-to-be-environment-friendly/1836097>





## Kalat na mukha ng 6 presidentiables 'nakaka-kanser' – EcoWaste



March 12, 2022 @ 1:14 PM 18 hours ago

MANILA, Philippines – Hiniling ng pro-environmental group na EcoWaste Coalition (EWC) sa pambansang pamahalaan na i-phase out ang paggamit ng kemikal sa mga plastik na materyales matapos makakita ng nakakakanser na kemikal sa mga campaign poster ng anim na kandidato sa pagkapangulo.

Sa isang pahayag, binanggit ng grupo na may natukoy na cadmium sa tarpaulin posters nina dating Sen. Bongbong Marcos, Vice President Leni Robredo, Sen. Ping Lacson, Sen. Manny Pacquiao, Manila Mayor Isko Moreno, at labor leader Leody de Guzman.

Natuklasan ng mga eksperto sa EWC ang cadmium mula 607 hanggang 775 parts per million (ppm) sa maraming kulay na tarpaulin at cadmium sa pagitan ng 384 hanggang 546 ppm sa puting plastic sheet. Nililimitahan ng European Union ang cadmium sa jewelry plastic sa 0.01 percent by weight o 100 ppm.

Bukod sa sanhi ng cancer, sinabi ni EWC Plastic Solutions Campaigner Coleen Salamat na ang pagkakalantad ng cadmium ay pangunahing nakakaapekto sa mga bato at buto, at idinagdag na kabilang ito sa listahan ng World Health Organization ng “10 chemicals of major public health concern.”

Alinsunod dito, hiniling ng grupo sa gobyerno na maglabas ng supplemental directive dahil ang cadmium sa mga produkto at materyales ay wala sa saklaw ng Chemical Control Order para sa Cadmium at Cadmium Compounds na inisyu ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) noong 2021.

“A supplemental regulation phasing out cadmium in plastics will be in sync with the global consensus to address the full lifecycle of plastic, including its production, design, and disposal, to end plastic pollution,” sabi ni Salamat.

“Win or lose, we hope candidates, especially those eyeing national posts, will support our push to get cadmium and other toxic chemical additives out of plastics for the sake of public health and the environment,” dagdag pa ni Salamat. **Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/kalat-na-mukha-ng-6-presidentiables-nakaka-kanser-ecowaste/>



# Government told to integrate digital solutions with climate change push

BY BUSINESSMIRROR MARCH 11, 2022

An advocacy group championing environmental stewardship is urging the government to incorporate digitalization into their climate initiatives, after the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change last week issued yet another update warning the world of the extreme and irreversible effects of global warming.

“The government has to match the initiatives of the private sector,” said Engineer Felix Vitangcol, co-convenor of the Philippine Business for Environmental Stewardship [PBEST]. “We are running out of time.”

Vitangcol said the private sector had already made headway in this regard. “Some companies have already integrated digital technologies in their environment, social, and governance initiatives to boost effective stewardship of the environment.”

“These will upgrade and make our communities more sustainable and resilient,” he said. “Digital tools will lead to enhanced community infrastructure and deliver reliable information for better and timely decision-making.”

“A good model is data-backed Liveable Cities Challenge [LCC] Dashboard project in partnership with the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation [PDRF] and Globe which contain multi-year data on local communities’ basic information such as labor, education, local economy, doing business, mobility and connectivity, health, urban environment, resiliency and emergency response, and safety and security,” Vitangcol said.

The LCC dashboard utilizes data and innovation to help local communities and their governments spot local trends and their correlations for the community stakeholders’ timely and effective decision-making and help determine areas for improvement. Still, these are not enough.

## Prone to climate change effects

Erratic, intense, and frequent weather patterns like typhoon “Odette” have long been battering the Philippines, an archipelago, and have caused untold damage in lives, properties, livelihoods and infrastructure.

“The Department of Finance [DOF] reported that about 98.2 percent or P506.1 billion of the Philippines’ total economic losses, during the period of 2010 to 2020, can be attributed to climate-related events,” Vitangcol said.

He added that according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), when the country was hit by three consecutive typhoons in the last quarter of 2020, infrastructure and agricultural damages amounted to P30.76 billion. But when the country was hit by Odette alone during the last quarter of 2021, infrastructure and agricultural damages already amounted to P29 billion.

## Bound to get worse

“PBEST underscores that with today’s increasingly unpredictable occurrences of climate-risks, Philippines’ economic losses will continue to increase,” Vitangcol said.



## Top agenda for next leaders

Vitangcol underscored the importance of choosing the right leaders in the May 2022 elections.

The next administration should prioritize enabling the country's immediate transition to a data-driven and digital-enabled economy, Vitangcol said.

"This is to advance the efficient monitoring of real-time environmental conditions and create opportunities to develop new plans of action anchored on long term sustainability, stewardship of the environment, and climate resiliency."

He added: "The next administration should recognize the urgency of this complex challenge."



# Asean agency kicks off program for youth biodiversity storytellers

BY BUSINESSMIRROR MARCH 13, 2022



Today's youth are innate storytellers—inspiring movers to protect our region's natural heritage.

The Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) is tapping into the power of the youth to tell stories about biodiversity, its values, and the many ways to safeguard it.

Through its newest program, the Young Asean Storytellers (YAS), the ACB is calling all Asean youth to showcase their skills and talents in storytelling as an essential part of the bid to highlight what life in harmony with nature would look like.

Twenty budding content creators and storytellers from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam will get first-hand experience in impactful storytelling for biodiversity conservation.

“We at the ACB believe that this generation is the torchbearer of our region’s future. We see that the youth of today are more driven to contribute to saving our planet, most especially in conserving the region’s rich natural and cultural heritage, and we are proud to be amplifying their voices through this programme,” said ACB Executive Director Theresa Mundita Lim.

Lim also underscored the importance of the youth’s role in connecting with others, given their knack for using innovative online platforms and their wide reach. These platforms and tools can cross boundaries and connect communities across the region to find solutions to the multiple environmental challenges we collectively face.

Asean youth aged 18 to 35, who are eager to explore, passionate about nature and are good storytellers are encouraged to be part of YAS.

Stories created through photography, writing, art, filmmaking, or other forms of creative storytelling and conveying ideas are welcome.

Exciting opportunities await the young aspirants. Besides the grant that they will be receiving to produce their stories, they will undergo a series of learning sessions with biodiversity and storytelling experts, as they embark on an immersive trip to the region’s “cream of the crop” protected areas—the Asean Heritage Parks.



The YAS will create compelling biodiversity stories that will be shared across media platforms. Applications are open until March 31, and the results will be released in May.

The YAS program is supported by the European Union, through the Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in Asean Project; and the Asean-Germany Cooperation in Biodiversity through the Second Phase of the Institutional Strengthening of the Biodiversity Sector in the Asean Project and the Small Grants Programme.

Interested parties may visit the web site: Young ASEAN Storytellers (YAS) | AYBP ([aseanbiodiversity.org](http://aseanbiodiversity.org)).

Image credits: [Thant Zhin](#)



# La Union fisherfolk, environmentalists free whale shark

[Artemio Dumlao](#) - Philstar.com March 12, 2022 | 4:17pm



Fishermen, beachgoers and environmentalists help free a whale shark on March 11, 2022 in San Juan, La Union.

The STAR / Artemio Dumlao

BAGUIO CITY, Philippines — Fishermen, beachgoers and environmentalists successfully freed a young whale shark who got entangled in a fishing net Friday morning in San Juan, La Union.

Upon seeing the whale shark in their net at around 9 a.m., fishermen tried to free the creature immediately, according to ocean conservationist Carlos Tamayo, chief of the sea turtle conservation group CURMA.

But the fishermen failed and brought the whale shark on the shore. With the help of beachgoers, they succeeded freeing the endangered specie, Tamayo said.

Quick response teams from the municipal environment office, policemen and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources also came to assist and supervise.

“Eventually [the whale shark] got to swim back into its ocean, its home,” Tamayo added.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2022/03/12/2166820/la-union-fisherfolk-environmentalists-free-whale-shark>

# President Tsai Joins Women Leaders to Reaffirm Climate Commitment

TAIPEI, TAIWAN - [Media OutReach](#) - 11 March 2022 - President Tsai Ing-wen made a commitment on Tuesday to climate justice through policy that places equal emphasis on environmental integrity, economic development, and social justice at a time when women around the world have borne the brunt of climate change.



*President Tsai attends the evening events with female members of the diplomatic corps, supporting climate actions together.*



*In response to the main theme of UN CSW66, Taiwan displays women for climate actions during Taiwan Gender Equality Week (TGEW).*

She made the pledge at Women's Power Night, an event in celebration of International Women's Day that was jointly organized by the Foundation for Women's Rights Promotion and Development (FWRPD) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and brought together female members of the diplomatic corps and NGO and social enterprise leaders. Also to be held would be nearly 30 virtual international conferences that are part of an ongoing initiative to make clear to the world Taiwan's resolve to strive for gender equality and climate justice.

During the event, president Tsai stated, "Taiwan continues to pursue broad engagement with like-minded nations and international organizations to promote women's empowerment. We have joined Indo-Pacific partners in innovative regional initiatives for women's economic empowerment. And our civil society organizations maintain a robust presence at the NGO Forum of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Thanks to their efforts, we have been able to share our experiences with the world, particularly in achieving Sustainable Development Goals for gender equality and women's empowerment, and also to forge stronger links with global partners."



Women have sustained greater impact of climatic and environmental disasters than men, the FWRPD said, but they stand out not only as first victims but also as frontline defenders. Many parties concerned about climate justice and equal rights have thus been welcomed on board the 2022 Taiwan Gender Equality Week ([www.tgew.org](http://www.tgew.org)) as partners to learn more about the key role women play in climate action and explore possible ways to take effective environmental action. Indeed, collective change and action is needed as we all have to work together toward climate justice and gender equality.

The issuer is solely responsible for the content of this announcement.

SOURCE: Foundation of Women's Rights Promotion and Development



13 MARCH 2022, SUNDAY



# NEWS ALERTS

# NEWS CLIPPINGS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



## Rizal LGUs get COVID waste bins from DENR

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has turned over 100 yellow trash bins to the municipal governments of Binangonan and Angono in Rizal to help the local government units (LGUs) in the proper segregation and disposal of household health care wastes, such as used face masks.

DENR Undersecretary for solid waste management and LGU concerns Benito Antonio de Leon handed over 50 trash bins each to Binangonan Mayor Cesar Martin Ynares and Angono Mayor Jeri Mae Calderon on March 7.

"As former secretary Roy Cimatú manifested and as pursued by our new secretary Jim Sampulna, we need to proceed in the direction of behavioral change," De Leon said.

He commended the two local chief execu-

tives for implementing National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) Resolution adopting the interim guidelines on the management of COVID-related health-care waste issued in April 2020.

De Leon, who is also the alternate chairman of the NSWMC, said the donation would go a long way in equipping LGUs to mainstream sound solid waste management practices.

Ynares said the donation would help sustain the drop in COVID cases in his town.

Calderon welcomed the support of the DENR support in the implementation of their solid waste management programs, which she said were fine-tuned to address the increase in the volume of healthcare waste generated during the pandemic.



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COMMUNICATION  
AND  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE

# Daily Tribune

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B15  
PAGE

UPPER  
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PAGE 1  
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BANNER  
STORY

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TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

PAGE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## DENR urges: Use plastic wastes as cement raw material

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) on Saturday called on cement makers to explore ways to utilize plastic waste as raw material to help reduce the country's solid waste generation by at least 40 percent.

DENR-EMB director William Cuñado said that there are already several cement firms who adopted the conversion of plastic waste into energy in the country.

"When all these cement plants will participate, we can dramatically reduce the volume of plastic waste which will be now regarded as raw materials of the

cement plants in their current processing," Cuñado said.

"This measure will reduce by 40 to 60 percent the volume of plastic waste," he added.

The DENR-EMB chief also said that the participation of the local government units through their solid waste management efforts will contribute to the decrease in plastic waste volume.

Cuñado noted that the conversion of plastic waste into raw material for cement plants will result in the reduction of plastic wastes generated in cities and municipalities.



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03-13-22  
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## DENR hands bins for used masks

The guidelines cover the proper handling and management of all Covid-related health care wastes generated by households and other facilities

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has turned over 100 yellow trash bins to the municipalities of Binangonan and Angono in Rizal province to ensure the proper segregation and disposal of household healthcare wastes such as used masks.

DENR Undersecretary Benito Antonio de Leon handed over 50 trash bins to Binangonan Mayor Cesar Martin Ynares and another 50 to Angono Mayor Jeri Mae Calderon in simple turnover rites at their respective offices on 7 March.

"As former Secretary Roy Cimatu manifested, and as pursued by our new Secretary Jim Sampulna, we need to proceed in the direction of behavioral change," De Leon said.

He also commended the efforts of the

two local executives for implementing the National Solid Waste Management Commission Resolution 1364-2020 on "Adopting the Interim Guidelines on the Management of Covid-19 Related Health Care Waste" issued in April 2020.

The guidelines cover the proper handling and management of all Covid-related health care wastes generated by households and other facilities.

Ynares said the donation was timely as it will help sustain the downward trend in Covid-19 positive cases in Binangonan.

Calderon also welcomed DENR's support on their efforts to implement Angono's solid waste management activities which, she said, was fine-tuned to address the increase in the volume of healthcare wastes generated during the pandemic.



STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
AND  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE



7  
PAGE

UPPER  
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PAGE 1  
STORY

BANNER  
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

03-13-22

TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

# DENR urges cement makers to use plastic waste

By joel dela Torre

**CEMENT makers are urged to explore ways to utilize plastic waste as raw material to help reduce the country's solid waste generation by at least 40 percent.**

According to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), several cement firms have already adopted this conversion of

plastic waste into energy in the country as it called on on all (cement) companies to join the cause.

DENR's Environment Management Bureau (EMB) director William Cunado said that should all these cement plants will participate, it can dramatically reduce the volume of plastic waste which will be now re-

garded as raw materials of the cement plants in their current processing.

"This measure will reduce by 40 to 60 percent the volume of plastic waste," he pointed out.

The DENR-EMB chief said the participation of the local government units through their solid waste management efforts will contribute to the decrease in plastic waste volume.

Cunado noted that the conversion of plastic waste into raw material for cement plants will result in the reduction of plastic wastes generated in cities and municipalities.

DENR Undersecretary for Policy, Panning, and International Affairs and spokesperson Atty. Jonas R. Leones said campaign materials made out of plastics that are used for the May 2022 elections can be recycled by cement plants.

"Plastic tarpaulins are also used in co-processing, in energy. These are mixed into cement as fillers; sometimes these are used to create pots," said Leones, adding that plastic tarpaulins are melted to have some other products out of these plastics.

"The DENR has already approved the national plan of action to address the plastic litter and in addressing single-use plastics. We are supporting the principle of circular economy and extended producer responsibility or EPR," Leones added.



## Cement makers urged to use plastic waste as 'raw' material

By **CORY MARTINEZ**

"EXPLORE more ways to utilize plastic waste as raw material to help reduce the country's solid waste generation by at least 40%."

This is the appeal of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Manage-

ment Bureau (DENR-EMB) to cement makers in the country saying that their participation will dramatically reduce the volume of plastic waste.

DENR-EMB Director William Cuñado said that these plastic wastes will now be regarded as raw materials of the cement plants in their current processing.

"This measure will re-

duce by 40 to 60% the volume of plastic waste," said Cuñado as he cited that several cement firms have already adopted the conversion of plastic waste into energy in the country.

He also stressed that the participation of the local government units (LGUs) through their solid waste management efforts will contribute to the decrease in plastic waste volume.

Cuñado noted that the conversion of plastic waste into raw material for cement plants will result in the reduction of plastic wastes generated in cities and municipalities.

Atty. Jonas Leones, DENR Undersecretary for Policy, Planning, and International Affairs and spokesperson, on the other hand, cited that the campaign materials made out

of plastics that are used for the May 2022 elections can be recycled by cement plants.

"Plastic tarpaulins are also used in co-processing, in energy. These are mixed into cement as fillers; sometimes these are used to create pots," Leones said.

"Plastic tarpaulins are melted to have some other products out of these plastics," he added.

Leones also reiterated the continuing efforts of the DENR in addressing the problem of single-use plastics.

"The DENR has already approved the national plan of action to address the plastic litter and in addressing single-use plastics. We are supporting the principle of circular economy and extended producer responsibility or EPR," Leones said.



STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
AND  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE

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## Paggamit ng plastic waste sa paggawa ng semento, giit ng DENR

Hinikayat ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) ang mga cement makers na maghanap na paraan upang magamit ang plastic waste bilang raw material para mabawasan ang solid waste generation ng bansa ng halos 40 porsiyento.

"When all these cement plants will participate, we can dramatically reduce the volume of plastic waste which will be now regarded as raw materials of the cement plants in their current processing," saad ni DENR-EMB Director William Cuñado.

Anyang may ilang cement firms na ang nag-

sasagawa ng conversion ng plastic waste bilang enerhiya sa bansa.

"This measure will reduce by 40 to 60 percent the volume of plastic waste," paliwanag ni Cuñado.

Anyang ang pakikiisa ng mga local government units sa pamamagitan ng kanilang solid waste management efforts ay

makatutulong upang mabawasan ang nalilikhang plastic waste.

Paliwanag din ni Cuñado na ang paggamit ng plastic waste bilang raw material sa cement plants ay magresulta para mabawasan ang nalilikhang basura sa mga lungsod at munisipalidad. (Angie dela Cruz)



## DENR, Arescom to reforest Region 2

TO rehabilitate denuded forestlands, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) forged an agreement with the Philippine Army Reserve Command (Arescom) for a reforestation project in Region 2 (Cagayan Valley).

On Friday, DENR assistant secretary Joan Lagunda signed a memorandum of agreement with Arescom, represented by Maj. Gen. Fernando Felipe and Col. Wilfredo Adquilen Jr.

DENR Region 2 Executive Director Gwendolyn Bambalan was represented by Assistant Regional Director Marcos Dacanay.

The agreement states that the partnership intends to enrich the existing plantation or forest cover and hasten the regeneration or re-greening of denuded and degraded forestlands as well as cogonal areas and protect them from any unauthorized interference.

A reservist with the rank of lieutenant colonel, Lagunda underscored the mission of the DENR to mobilize the citizenry in protecting, conserving, and managing the environment and natural resources.

"Caring for the environment is not solely for DENR, but all of us. It is a whole-of-nation approach," she said, ordering field officials to monitor the progress of the project and conduct periodic evaluation or assessment of the plantations.

Lagunda also expressed thanks to DENR Region 2 for accepting the partnership, highlighting the importance of collaborative governance and sharing her experience in maximizing the brigades and battalions of the National Capital Region in different environmental activities.

Meanwhile, Felipe said the Army reserve group earlier committed to support the DENR in the National Greening Program.

He said the vision of the reserve force is nation-building and economic development, and that their efforts are focused on environmental protection to bring back the beauty of natural resources.

"Taking care of the natural resources is one of the best forms of volunteerism and patriotism," Felipe said.

Corie Corpuz, DENR Region 2 information office, said the project covers a non-contiguous area of about 20 hectares of existing forest plantation in every province in Region 2.

The region comprises the provinces of Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya and Isabela and the island province of Batanes.

Citing the partnership agreement, Corpuz explained that the 2nd Regional Community Defense Group-Arescom shall plant or replant seedlings of endemic species in areas to be identified by the DENR.

Corpuz said the community defense group shall exert effort for a high survival rate of the newly planted species and must consider replacements only when required.

She also explained that the reserve force is tasked to treat the area and its immediate vicinities with special protection and care, as well as protect the existing living species found threatened against any unauthorized interference.

The reserve force shall ensure that the area will be free from any unregulated activity and shall be maintained in its suitable condition to nurse the newly planted species, Corpuz said.

The DENR, meanwhile, shall execute all prefatory activities, supply planting materials, and provide technical assistance and expertise in the entire implementation of the project, she added.

**LEANDER C. DOMINGO**





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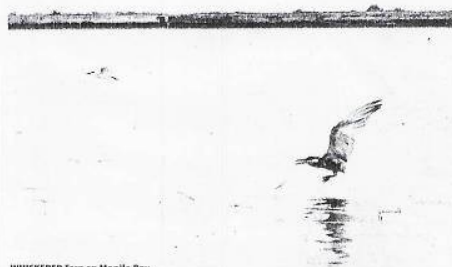
# Birds in the city



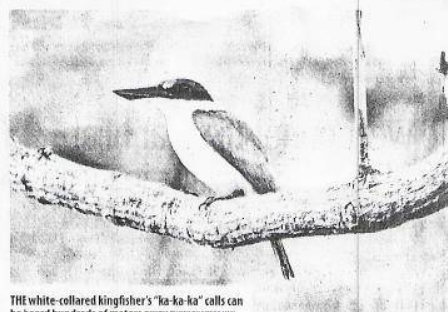
PACIFIC Golden Plover in Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park. PHOTO BY JASMIN MEREN



COLASITI in La Mesa Eco Park in Quezon City



WHISKERED Tern on Manila Bay



THE white-collared kingfisher's "ka-ka-ka" calls can be heard hundreds of meters away. PHOTO BY GREGG YAN

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

**H**AVE you seen a bird in your backyard lately? Or have you heard them sing when you wake up in the morning?

Even in the urban jungles like Metro Manila, birds that are left alone are known to survive—and thrive and help make the city parks or even your home garden alive.

Not to be confused with "domesticated" birds like the homing or racing pigeons, these birds are wild as they can be shy and still elusive to humans—with who they share space occasionally.

### Targeted, lost and found

EVEN in the city, these birds are being targeted with slingshots, or worse, with pellet or air guns.

In public markets, or even in front of elementary schools, unscrupulous vendors discreetly sell live birds offering them as "pets." Worse, some sell bigger birds like "tikling" for exotic food or bar chow.

Birds being brought at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) Wildlife Rescue Center, however, have different stories.

"Many of the birds are actually city dwellers who were accidentally injured," Glenn Maguad, the head of the rescue center told the BUSINESSMIRROR via telephone interview on March 9.

He said falcons and birds of prey are often brought by concerned citizens after smashing glass window panes or glass walls of tall buildings.

Some herons, he said, are also among the list of rescued animals that get lost in the city.

"Sometimes, fledgling birds get lost or confused and find their way in cities," he said in Filipino. This happens at a time when the juvenile herons are still learning to fly and get soaked in the water too long, making it hard for them to fly resulting in their capture.

### City dwellers

THE Eurasian tree sparrow, commonly

known as "maya"—that was said to be brought by Europeans in the Philippines allegedly to combat loneliness and homesickness in the 1900s—continues to thrive in Metro Manila.

The little brown birds with tiny black beaks build their nest almost everywhere and anywhere—the tree in your backyard, your ceiling or garage, abandoned house or buildings, or even under metal frames of your community's covered basketball courts or gymnasium.

Some of the species of birds commonly found in Metropolitan Manila are the yellow-vented bulbul, pied fantail, chestnut munia, olive-backed sunbird, zebra dove, black-naped oriole, pied triller, collared kingfisher, and Philippine pygmy woodpecker.

Jasmin Meren, an expert bird-watcher and photographer, said 232 are known to exist in Metro Manila.

"Many of these birds can tolerate human disturbance. In fact some can even be found where I live in the heart of Manila," Meren said.

She cited the endemic Philippine pied fantail "which I always find hopping on the electric wires in front of our house every morning, along with olive-backed sunbird and yellow-vented bulbul," she added.

According to Meren, during migratory season she often see a brown shrike on her neighbor's roof, sometimes seen eating a lizard or large insect.

But for habitat, she said nothing beats a good, old forest, which harbors more species, many of which are endemic or found only in the country.

### Urban green spaces

BUT urban green spaces have been observed to provide home and food for wildlife, she noted.

"Birds thrive in city life, as long as there is vegetation like trees and

shrubs, and some flowering and fruiting trees, which may be found in forest parks, open grassy areas and even pocket gardens," she said.

In the case of Metro Manila, aquatic habitats also provide foraging grounds for many birds, especially to migratory species like the endangered black-faced spoonbill and far eastern Curlew.

"These habitats are found in the mudflats and fishponds of Navotas, along Pasig River, and the mangrove park in Las Piñas-Parañaque," she said.

Via Messenger, Juan Carlos Tecson Gonzalez, an ornithologist and natural history artist, told the BUSINESSMIRROR on March 8 that it is not surprising for birds or even other wildlife to be seen or even to be dwelling in the cities, especially if the cities are near forested areas.

Subic, Baguio-La Trinidad, Puerto Princesa and Davao are examples of cities or developed areas with substantial forest cover that have outstanding biodiversity, and have many birds. Since Los Baños is a special Natural and Science City, it is included in this category too with its Mount Makiling, Tecson added.

### 'Shooting birds'

PASSIONATE bird lovers, even in Metro Manila, made it a habit of "shooting" birds for fun, without killing them through photography.

"The cities [developed by humans] are expanding, while the world's natural habitats—the forests, wetlands and scrublands—are shrinking. But some animals have proven resilient enough to adapt to life in human communities, eking out a living in our farms, towns, and cities," said Best Alternatives Executive Director Gregg Yan told the BUSINESSMIRROR via e-mail on March 9.

An expert wildlife photographer and explorer, Yansaidan assortment of bird species flit and fly within Manila, Cebu, Davao and other urban hubs.

"We're not just talking about the ubiquitous maya, which were introduced to the Philippines by our Spanish colonizers, or feral pigeons cooing around our parks and towns. We have incredibly colorful blue kingfishers, yellow orioles, green parrots, red munias and rainbow-hued sunbirds, most

of which go unnoticed because they're pretty good at hiding. The usual indication that they're around is if you can hear their birdcalls, which differ per species," he said.

### Unnatural habitat

INTERNATIONAL biodiversity expert Theresa Mundita Lim, executive director of the Asean Centre for Biodiversity, in an interview with the BUSINESSMIRROR on March 7 said it is not natural for birds to dwell in cities, but some are able to adapt and become part of the human "ecosystem."

"The cities are 'unnatural,' so the birds are just around areas where their natural habitats or wintering grounds [for migratory birds] used to be," Lim said via Messenger.

"Some birds are more resilient than others, so they can thrive in the remaining greeneries and replanted areas [e.g. yellow-vented bulbuls, and munias, the migratory brown shrike], or even on garbage dumps [crows]. Other birds were introduced [the Eurasian tree sparrow], and have adapted to city-living, nesting in house ceilings," she explained.

### Institutional support

TO make Metro Manila an ideal birding site like Singapore, Lim said the remaining green spaces should be managed and maintained as such or better, provide a policy environment that is friendly to urban biodiversity.

"A local ordinance or any form of a policy can be issued to ensure that an area is to be used primarily as 'green space,' maybe to designate it as a city botanical garden, a tree park, etc., critical habitats, or what can be considered other effective area-based conservation measures, and that this will not be developed for hard infrastructure," she said.

Local government units can further identify other vacant public areas as green spaces or wetlands, and restore them using native species, as far as practicable, she added.

"If there is not enough vacant public land to use for ecosystem restoration, innovative means can also be adopted, such as vertical gardening, greening rooftops, ecological bridges for wildlife, or constructed wetlands," she pointed out.



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INITIATIVES  
SERVICE

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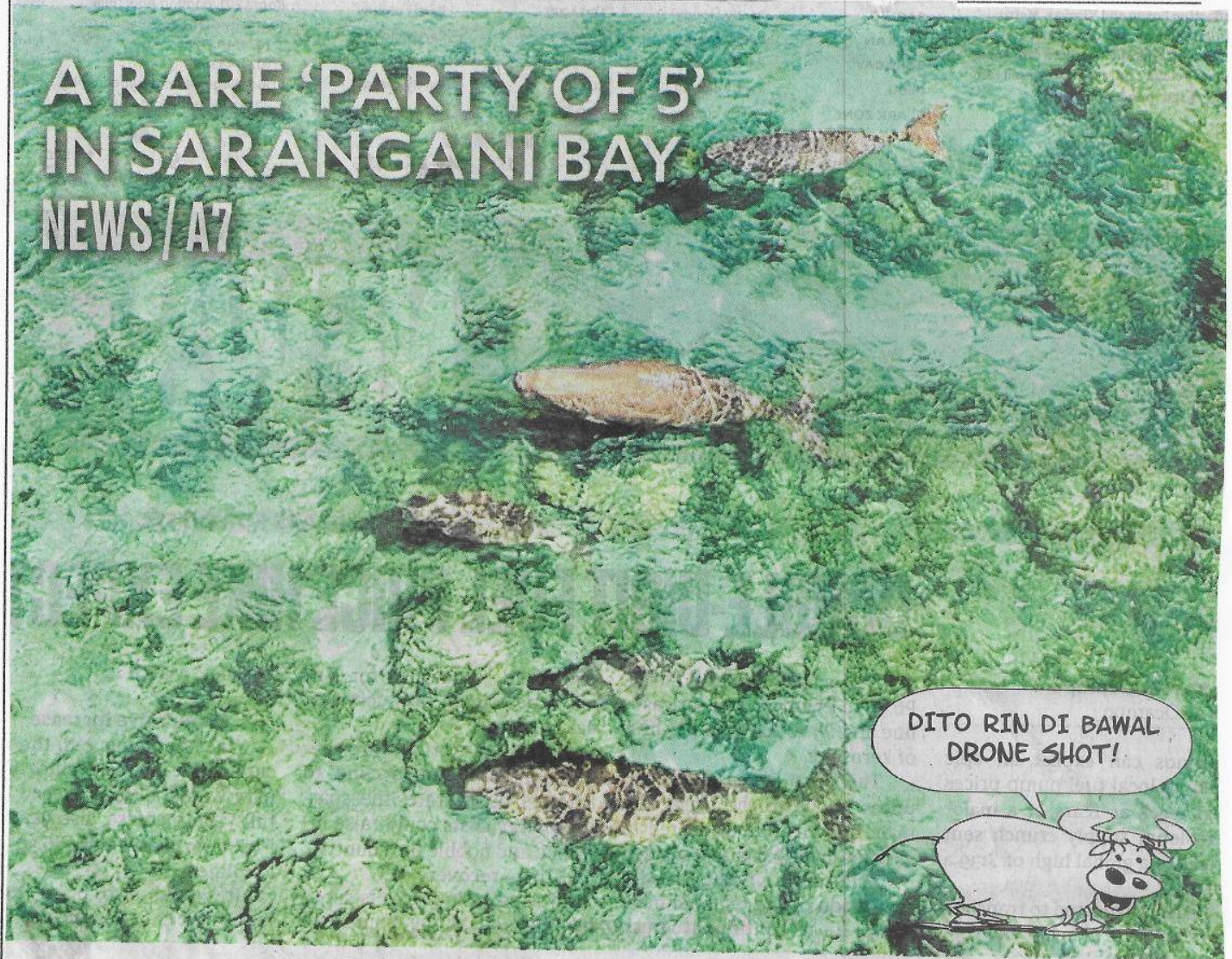
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# A RARE 'PARTY OF 5' IN SARANGANI BAY

NEWS / A7



## Rare 'Party of 5' sea cows spotted in Sarangani Bay

By Edwin O. Fernandez  
@InqNational

KORONADAL CITY—Environmentalists have reported the sighting of five sea cows, commonly known as dugong, off Sarangani Bay looking for food.

The sea mammals were spotted by the drone camera used by the Sarangani Bay Protected Seascape (SBPS) Protected Area Management Office, as they were foraging off the coast of Glan town in Sarangani on Friday.

Ma. Elvira Lumayag, the provincial environment and natural resources officer, said it was the first time in recent memory that "a herd of five" dugong was sighted in the bay. Normally, she said, only a solitary sea cow or a pair could be seen.

### 'Efforts paying off'

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) conducts a monthly monitoring of marine mammal activity in the bay in line with conservation and protection efforts.



**GENTLE GIANT** Five sea cows or dugong were sighted by environmentalists off Sarangani Bay foraging for food in this photo taken on March 11. —PHOTO COURTESY OF DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES REGION 12

"This sighting is a manifestation of how we are taking care of our protected seascape. Our efforts are paying off," Lumayag said.

Known for being shy and mainly subsisting on seagrass, the dugong are considered the flagship species of Sarangani Bay.

"We're glad that we still have this number of dugong [here]," SBPS superintendent Joy Oloquin said. "We thought we were losing this species because we were considered a hot spot [for these animals]. We are delighted to see them."

The DENR office in Region 12 cited reports of dwindling dugong population in other countries due to habitat loss and industrialization, as monitored by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the World Wildlife Fund.

### DENR needs help

For DENR-12 director Felix Alicer, the recent dugong sighting in Sarangani showed that the SBPS require continued protection, not only by the DENR but by other stakeholders.

"The DENR alone cannot carry out its functions effectively without the support

of the citizenry and the local government units. We must all work together to protect and preserve the biodiversity in the SBPS," said Alicer, who also chairs the SBPS Protected Area Management Board.

### Protected area

According to marine biologist Roy Operario Mejordada of the Environmental Conservation and Protection Center-Sarangani Province, the sea cows showed up just as the SBPS was marking its 26th anniversary.

"Not just one dugong, but five! The herd was foraging on the seagrass meadows and mothers were observed nursing the calves. This sighting is just one of the many reasons why we protect our bay," Mejordada wrote on social media.

The SBPS was established in 1996 through Proclamation No. 756 signed by then President Fidel Ramos.

The protected area comprises the entire Sarangani Bay and a portion of the municipal waters of Maitum, Kiamba and Maasin towns. [no](http://no)



# Beautiful beach

## World-renowned Palaui Island reopens after two years

**T**he world-famous Palaui Island in Cagayan province is now open again to tourists after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic.

At the height of the health crisis in 2020, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) provided ₱1 million to fund the emergency employment of about 160 families on the island.

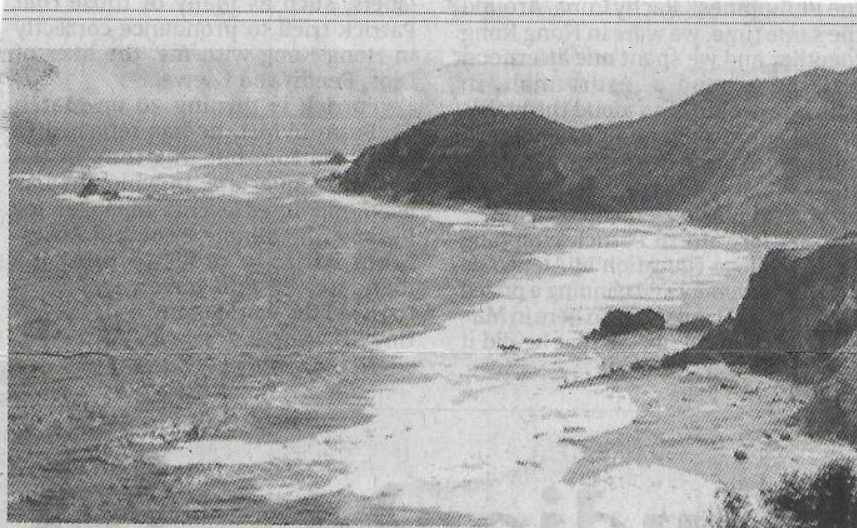
Officials of the DENR, Department of Tourism, Cagayan Economic Zone Authority, the local government, and other members of the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) led the ribbon-cutting ceremony recently to signal the reopening of the 8,048-hectare Palaui Island Protected Landscape and Seascape (PIPLS) at Barangay San

Vicente in Santa Ana, according to a Facebook post.

The PAMB is the decision-making body of the PIPLS, a protected area legislated by virtue of Republic Act 11038, or the expanded protected areas system law.

According to Gwendolyn Bambalan, DENR Region 2 executive director, the reopening of the PIPLS will boost the economy and help the country recover from the effects of the public health emergency.

"Last year, our department initiated the improvement of facilities in PIPLS with a budget of ₱4.7 million," she says. "With the influx of tourists, there should be an office dedicated to managing our environment and natural resources here."



PROTECTED LANDSCAPE AND SEASCAPE Palaui Island, Santa Ana, Cagayan is on CNN's list of top 10 most beautiful beaches of the world (DENR-Region 2)

The island covers 8,048 hectares with 1,008 hectares of coral reefs, 472-hectares of sea grass, and 102 hectares of mangrove.

Two accredited boat operators' associations, the San Vicente Motor Banca Association and Palaui San Vicente Motor Banca Association, have been ferrying tourists.

The island covers 8,048 hectares with 1,008 hectares of coral reefs, 472-hectares of sea grass, and 102 hectares of mangrove.

It became famous for hosting two seasons of the reality show *Survivor USA* and for being included on the list of the top 10 most beautiful beaches of the world drawn up by CNN.

In 2019, the marine protected area (MPA) was awarded outstanding National Integrated Protected Area System-Marine Protected Area by the Para El Mar: MPA Awards and Recognition, a biennial event that showcases the country's best performing MPAs.

As required by the PAMB, a vaccination card must be presented upon registration while only trained and accredited guides will be allowed.

The PIPLS is within the jurisdiction of the community environment and natural resources office of Aparri, led by forester Joselito Razon. (PNA)



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B1/B2  
PAGE

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PAGE 1  
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BANNER  
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EDITORIAL

CARTOON

09-11-22

TITLE:

PAGE

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## Japan aids Phl in waste management

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

The Japanese government has collaborated with the Philippines to promote proper waste disposal as threats to public health and the environment continue to worsen.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan's bilateral aid agency, and the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) are working to establish guidelines for the accurate characterization of wastes for the use of local government units.

A Waste Analysis and Characterization Study (WACS) manual was developed by the Ministry

of Environment of Japan.

The manual sets technical standards in analyzing waste characteristics to guide LGUs in making and implementing waste reduction and management programs.

JICA Philippines senior representative Yo Ebisawa said implementing solid waste management programs requires serious policy investments.

"But, when you think about their impact on promoting a circular economy and effectively managing solid waste, such investments on solid waste management are definitely worth it," he said.

Data from the government showed that biodegradable wastes make up 52 percent of the country's total wastes generated.

The average per capita waste generation rate is around 0.40-kilograms per day.

Considering the increasing Philippine population, JICA said the total amount of waste in the country is expected to increase further which means that improper solid waste management can lead to serious health and environment consequences.

The Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) earlier said the Philippines was facing a waste

Turn to B2

### Japan... From B1

crisis, perhaps of an "unimaginable scale."

The country is producing 2.7 million metric tons of plastic waste per year, out of which 17 percent of the collected plastic waste and 31 percent of the uncollected waste is leaked into the ocean.

Government projections showed that generated waste would reach 23.6 million MT by 2025 from 21.4 million MT

in 2020.

Aside from assistance in solid waste management, JICA has initiatives for environment conservation and management in the Philippines including cooperation in forestland management, coastal conservation, water improvement, septage management, and sharing of Japanese innovations in recycling technologies, among others.



# Candidates urged to be environment friendly

BY RUTH PALO

**T**HE Davao City-based environmental group Interfacing Development Interventions for Sustainability (IDIS) has urged all candidates in the May elections to be responsible for their waste and to spare the trees as posts for their campaign materials.

"With the ongoing national campaign, election materials are visible everywhere. There are already numerous tarpaulins and advertisement banners — not to mention the balloons and confetti at every political rally. More of these types of wastes will be added to our current waste issues at the start of the local campaign on March 25," IDIS said in a statement Friday.

The group expresses worries that these advertisement banners

installed every election made with plastic do not decay well when buried and release toxic materials into the air when burned.

"Like the illegally dumped wastes below the campaign materials, this type of waste is always left unattended," the statement said.

"The banners are generally made of not recyclable materials and do not break down easily. We have called their use a setback to environmental goals, but the problem has largely been ignored

when campaigning."

IDIS believed that the single-use plastic waste generated during the campaign causes choking of drainage, ingestion by stray animals, land and water pollution, thereby causing adverse impact on human health and the environment.

Mark Peñalver, IDIS executive director, said that this has been a recurring problem every election period.

"We can see tarpaulin banners everywhere, even if not in their designated area — worst, several campaign materials are nailed through a tree. And after the election period, these materials will be left unattended, adding to the pile of waste at our landfill site," he said.

He said these are also prohibited by the law.

Section 9 of the Fair Election Act of 2001 (Republic Act 9006) states that posting of campaign materials may only be allowed in common poster areas in public places such

as plazas, markets, barangay centers and the like.

Comelec Resolution 10730, dated Nov. 17, 2021, emphasized that "in no instance shall an election officer designate as common poster areas any trees, plants, shrubs in any public grounds."

IDIS has called on the poll body to make sure that candidates will strictly comply with its policies, considering the problems already plaguing the city due to plastic pollution, climate change and Covid-19.

"We also urge government agencies to champion much-needed policies and practices that will protect our environment from further degradation due to the political activities leading to the 2022 elections."

They also called on all candidates to clean up, win or lose, the wastes they produced during the campaign period.



## New aromatic flower *Ridsdaleaphilippinensis* discovered in El Nido

By SHARLEEN GABRIEL

A new species of the *Ridsdalea* flowering plant was discovered at a karst forest in El Nido, Palawan.

"We came across it while resting on the summit of Taraw Cliff during one of our hikes to document the different karst flora of El Nido," said Rene Alfred Anton Bustamante, the main author of the paper "A new Philippine species of *Ridsdalea* (Rubiaceae, Ixoroideae) from karst vegetation in Palawan." The paper has already been accepted for publication in *Blumea*, an international journal devoted to the biodiversity, evolution, and biogeography of plants, as of January 17, 2022.

"The strong perfume of the blooms drew our attention to the species" Bustamante added. ▶8

NEW AROMATIC FLOWER – The *Ridsdaleaphilippinensis* was recently discovered in El Nido, Palawan.

### New aromatic flower... 1◀

In the report, Bustamante of the Philippine Taxonomic Initiative (PTI), and Dr. Pieter B. Pelser of the University of Canterbury named the new *Ridsdalea* species, *Ridsdaleaphilippinensis* which endemic to El Nido and the Philippines' seventh known *Ridsdalea* species. *R. philippinensis* is the only Malesian *Ridsdalea* species with a corolla with a distinctly inflated apex, a feature shared by *R. sootopensis* and *R. thailandica* from Laos and Thailand, respectively. Among other characteristics, *R. philippinensis* differs from both of these species as its flowers are smaller and its anthers do not emerge from the corolla tube.

According to studies, karst landscapes account for 11.7 percent of the country's total land area. Karst landscapes, which emerge from the dissolving of soluble rocks, mostly consisting of calcium carbonate, are regarded as some of the most stunning, picturesque places. Additionally, Palawan's karst areas are home to numerous endemic flora and fauna. However, despite their status as biodiversity hotspots, karst ecosystems have received very little attention in terms of research.

During the National Research Council of the Philippines (NRCP) Biological Sciences Division's Scientific Session, wildlife specialist and multi-award-winning scientist Arvin C. Diesmos stated that "quite a large portion of [karst landscapes] is still unknown to science." He also mentioned that, due to the low emphasis and restricted funding allocated to this field of study, only a small

number of biologists are trained or interested in exploring karst fauna.

Restificar et al. (2006) estimate that the land area covered by karst formations is approximately 12 percent. However, the inaccessibility of the karst terrains makes it difficult to conduct field study on these areas. For this reason, Clements et al. (2006) and Tang et al. (2011) believe the species diversity of karst landscapes is likely to be underestimated. Thus, a number of research expeditions across Palawan, including the karst forest where the *Ridsdalea* was discovered, had been conducted by the PTI. One of the organization's initiatives is to conduct larger and more comprehensive in-

vestigations of karst biodiversity, as numerous novel species await discovery.

"The discovery of this new species shows how special, but poorly known the karst ecosystems of the Philippines are and, therefore, how important it is to protect them," Pelser said.

*Ridsdalea* is a genus of plants in the Rubiaceae family native to Asia; it was named in honor of Dr. Colin Ridsdalea. The unintentional finding of *Ridsdaleaphilippinensis* resulted in the discovery of the island's second *Ridsdalea* species. The first author, J. T. Pereira & K. M. Wong, discovered the first undocumented species of *Ridsdalea* near the peak of Taraw Cliff in Barangay Buena Suerte.



ENDEMIC TO PALAWAN – The *Ridsdaleaphilippinensis* was discovered at the summit of Taraw Cliff during one of the hikes of Rene Alfred Anton Bustamante of the Philippine Taxonomic Initiative. 'The strong perfume of the blooms drew our attention to the species.'



03-11-22

TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

## ACROSS THE COUNTRY

### Whale shark caught in net in La Union freed

BAGUIO CITY – Fishermen, beachgoers and environmentalists helped release a whale shark locally known as *butanding*, which was trapped in a fishing net in San Juan, La Union on Friday.

Carlos Tamayo, head of the sea turtle conservation group CURMA, said fishermen failed to free the whale shark in the sea so they brought it to the shore and sought the help of beachgoers.

Quick response teams from the municipal environment office, policemen and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources also came to assist and supervise the release of the whale shark.

"The *butanding*, an endangered specie, eventually got to swim back into its ocean, its home,"



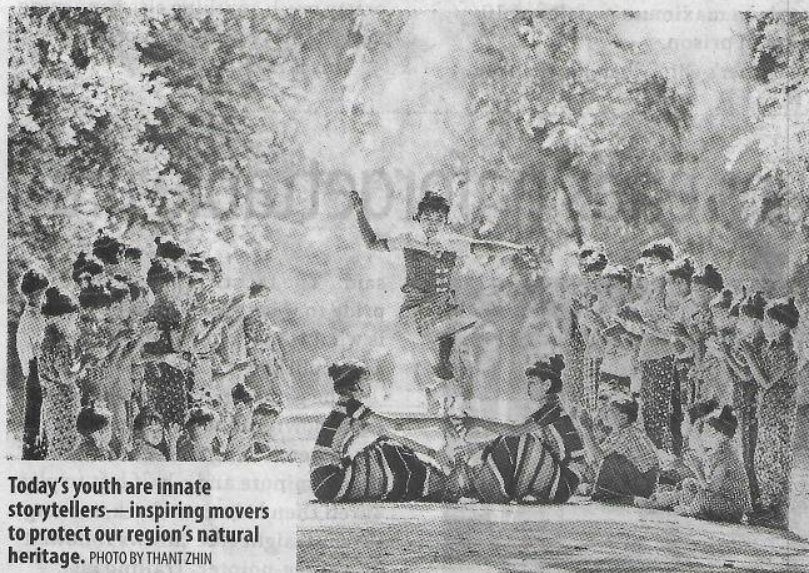
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## Asean agency kicks off program for youth biodiversity storytellers



**Today's youth are innate storytellers—inspiring movers to protect our region's natural heritage.** PHOTO BY THANT ZHIN

**T**HE Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) is tapping into the power of the youth to tell stories about biodiversity, its values, and the many ways to safeguard it.

Through its newest program, the Young Asean Storytellers (YAS), the ACB is calling all Asean youth to showcase their skills and talents in storytelling as an essential part of the bid to highlight what life in harmony with nature would look like.

Twenty budding content creators and storytellers from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam will get first-hand experience in impactful storytelling for biodiversity conservation.

"We at the ACB believe that this generation is the torchbearer of our region's future. We see that the youth of today are more driven to contribute to saving our planet, most especially in conserving the region's rich natural and cultural heritage, and we are proud to be amplifying their voices through this programme," said ACB Executive Director Theresa Mundita Lim.

Lim also underscored the importance of the youth's role in connecting with others, given their knack for using innovative online platforms and their wide reach. These platforms and tools can cross boundaries and connect communities across the region to find solutions to the multiple environmental challenges

we collectively face.

Asean youth aged 18 to 35, who are eager to explore, passionate about nature and are good storytellers are encouraged to be part of YAS.

Stories created through photography, writing, art, filmmaking, or other forms of creative storytelling and conveying ideas are welcome.

Exciting opportunities await the young aspirants. Besides the grant that they will be receiving to produce their stories, they will undergo a series of learning sessions with biodiversity and storytelling experts, as they embark on an immersive trip to the region's "cream of the crop" protected areas—the Asean Heritage Parks.

The YAS will create compelling biodiversity stories that will be shared across media platforms.

Applications are open until March 31, and the results will be released in May.

The YAS program is supported by the European Union, through the Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in Asean Project; and the Asean-Germany Cooperation in Biodiversity through the Second Phase of the Institutional Strengthening of the Biodiversity Sector in the Asean Project and the Small Grants Programme.

Interested parties may visit the web site: Young ASEAN Storytellers (YAS) | AYBP ([aseanbiodiversity.org](http://aseanbiodiversity.org)).





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PAGE

DATE



Manila hospital reaps rewards of green tech At Mary Johnston Hospital in Manila, the management and staff have reason to celebrate along with green technology advocates. A P9.4-million reason, to be exact.

SUNDAY / MARCH 13, 2022 WWW.INQUIRER.NET

NEWS

A3

Tondo hospital reaps rewards of adopting clean, green tech

By Tina G. Santos @santostina19Q

The 115-year-old Mary Johnston Hospital (MJH) in Tondo, Manila, shows the way in lessening not only its electricity expenses but also its carbon footprint.

In four years, it managed to save around P9.2 million in its power bill by retrofitting with LED lighting technology and, at the same time, make progressive strides in the worldwide effort to cut carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions and phase out the use of mercury.

"We have saved P192,330.90 per month on our electricity bill—or P9.2 million in four years—equivalent to approximately 883,783 tons of CO2 emissions which were prevented from being released to the environment," Dr. Glenn Roy Paraso, MJH executive director, told the Inquirer.

"Lighting is 20 percent of our total electricity expenses. We have shifted 80 percent of our lights to LED," he said.

According to Paraso, since 2018 the hospital has replaced some 1,400 of its fluorescent bulbs with LED bulbs that are said to last two to three times longer and, more importantly,

do not contain toxic mercury.

It has also gotten rid of other mercury-containing devices, like sphygmomanometers (blood pressure monitors) and thermometers, he said.

MJH partnered with Healthcare Without Harm (HCWH) and the Clean Lighting Coalition to eliminate the use of mercury by transitioning to 100-percent LED lighting.

It pledged to do the lighting retrofit in response to a call to end the use of toxic mercury lighting for a safe and healthy environment in the mother-baby-friendly facility.

"We've been changing them slowly and now, this partnership will help us replace all of the hospital's fluorescent lights with LEDs," Paraso said.

Minamata Convention

The initiative is part of the global call to amend fluorescent-bulb exemptions in the Minamata Convention on Mercury to be negotiated at the fourth Conference of Parties (COP4) this month in Bali, Indonesia.

Delegates from more than a hundred countries are expected to discuss, among others, a possible global ban on fluorescent lighting



REDUCING CARBON FOOTPRINT Dr. Glenn Roy Paraso, CEO and executive director of Mary Johnston Hospital, leads the symbolic switching of LED lights. —CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Minamata Convention is the first legally binding treaty on the phaseout of mercury, a highly toxic substance that poses threats to human health and the environment.

There are proposals seeking to discuss its fluorescent-bulb exemptions, per the European Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy.

The treaty came into force in August 2017. The Philippines is among the 128 countries that signed it in 2013, and the 123rd

country to ratify it on July 8, 2020.

Mercury is listed by the World Health Organization among the top chemicals of major health concern. Exposure to it may cause harmful and possibly fatal effects on the nervous, digestive and immune systems.

Apart from hospital devices, other primary sources of human exposure to mercury are dental amalgams and gold mining activities.

"Exposure to mercury—even small amounts—may cause se-

rious health problems and is a threat to the development of the child in utero and early in life. Women, pregnant women, are the most at risk of exposure to mercury," Paraso said.

He explained: "When a fluorescent lamp breaks, it releases elemental mercury which contaminates the atmosphere, land, and water. When inhaled as a vapor, mercury can be absorbed by the lungs, migrate to the brain and damage the central nervous system."

Coal and other fossil fuels on which most health facilities and energy sources are dependent are a major pathway of mercury into the environment, he added

their facilities and decarbonize their operations."

"The health-care sector, in eliminating risks to the environment to protect human health, conveys a deeper commitment to its mission to 'do no harm,'" she said.

Carbon emissions

HCWH Southeast Asia director Ramon San Pascual said switching to LEDs and eliminating exemptions for fluorescents in the Minamata Convention would remove 232 tons of mercury pollution from the environment, both from the lamps themselves and from avoiding coal burning in power plants.

"It will also save 3.5 gigatons of CO2 emissions. This journey we take with Mary Johnston Hospital and the Clean Lighting Coalition means taking real action to decarbonize operations and transform the health-care sector to become safer, healthier and more equitable for women and for all," San Pascual said in a statement.

HCWH earlier urged the public and private actors in the health-care industry to work toward lowering the sector's carbon footprint, stressing the link between the cli-

TONDO HOSPITAL REAPS REWARDS OF ADOPTING CLEAN, GREEN TECH

FROM A3

mate crisis and human health.

In an earlier report, the international organization said Southeast Asia's health-care sector was contributing over 63 million metric tons to global carbon emissions every year.

HCWH analyzed the carbon emissions of health-care sectors in 68 countries to determine their shares of global emissions, using latest available data from 2014 and 2015. In Southeast Asia, it looked at Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam

and the Philippines.

Per its report, the Philippines' health-care system emitted some 5.22 million metric tons of CO2, ranking 36th among 68 countries in terms of gross emissions.

Greener health care

Fossil fuel combustion was the dominant source of emissions, comprising 84 percent across facility operations, supply chain and the broader economy. It includes the use of coal, gas and oil to power hospitals, travel related to health care, and the manufacture and transport of health-care products.

Apart from shifting to LEDs, MJH, a member of the GGHH Network, has also taken steps toward greener and more equitable health care by installing a solar panel system and reducing nonessential single-use plastics in the facility.

Paraso said savings from shifting to LED lighting and solar energy would help the hospital meet the health needs of its indigent patients.

In a post on its Facebook page, MJH said: "The solar panel system is expected to produce 10,217,659 kWh (kilowatt hours) of solar-generated electricity in 25 years. The total value or cost

of the electricity that will be produced is P14 million. This is the amount that the hospital will be saving. Without the system, MJH will have to pay a total of P288 million in electricity for 25 years."

"Over the same period," it said, "the solar panel system is expected to prevent the production of 596 metric tons of sulfur dioxide which is the leading cause of acid rain, and 24 metric tons of nitrous oxide which is the main cause of smog. In the meantime, the oxygen that the system will be protected will be equivalent to the production of 89,750 hectares of forests." 190



STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
AND  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE

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**INQUIRER**

*46*  
PAGE

UPPER  
 LOWER

PAGE 1  
STORY

BANNER  
STORY

EDITORIAL

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PAGE \_\_\_\_\_

03-13-22

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**NEWS BRIEFS**

**Angat Dam still  
below normal level**

The water level at Angat Dam in Norzagaray, Bulacan, which supplies the water requirements of Metro Manila and nearby provinces, slid further to 194.19 meters above sea level (masl) on Saturday. This was slightly less from Friday's 194.41 masl, still below the normal water level of 212 masl, according to the daily dam water level update released by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa). Pagasa hydrologist Elmer Caringal said the current measurement was lower compared to the same period from the previous years, considering that the dry season has not officially started. —FRANCES MANGOSING

13 MARCH 2022, SUNDAY



# NEWS ALERTS

# COVID-19 NEWS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



# DOH intensifies strategy vs Deltacron variant

By Lade Jean Kabagani **March 12, 2022, 8:13 pm**



**SAFE DISTANCE.** Workers queue for Covid-19 vaccines at the Teleperformance Center Ayala in Makati City on March 8, 2022. The event preceded the fourth national vaccination days on March 10 to 12 and underscored the government's drive to provide protection to front-liners and hasten the country's economic recovery. (PNA photo by Jess M. Escaros Jr.)

**MANILA** – The Department of Health (DOH) continues to strengthen its prevent-detect-isolate-treat-reintegrate (PDITR) strategies amid the warning on the possible spread of the recombinant virus of the Delta-Omicron (Deltacron) variants.

Among the measures is intensified genome sequencing to immediately determine whether the Deltacron variant of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) has already emerged in the country.

*“Walang namang kaba sa ginagawa nating public minimum health standards. Ang importante, kaya humingi kami ng tulong ng lahat sa bakunahan (There’s no issue in the implementation of our public minimum health standards What’s important, that’s why we are appealing to all, is vaccination). It’s really the game changer and will afford additional protection for our citizens,”* National Vaccination Operations Center chair and Health Undersecretary, Dr. Myna Cabotaje, said in an interview on Saturday.

She emphasized that inoculation is a vital key to fight the variant "considering that immunity is waning after a long time of being vaccinated".

Presidential Adviser on Covid-19 Response, Secretary Vince Dizon, earlier said the country will always be ready for the emergence of new variants.

He said the Deltacron variant is “not yet a dominant variant of concern” in the Philippines.

The World Health Organization said the Deltacron was first detected in France. **(PNA)**

# Pagdeklara ng Alert Level 0 sa NCR, pag-uusapan pa lamang ng Metro Manila mayors

By [RadyoMaN Manila](#) -Mar. 13, 2022 at 5:20am



Pag-uusapan pa lamang ng Metro Manila mayors ang panukalang ibaba sa Alert Level 0 ang National Capital Region (NCR).

Ito ang sinabi ni Metro Manila Council (MMC) Chairman at Parañaque City Mayor Edwin Olivarez kasunod ng mga posibilidad na pagdeklara ng Alert Level 0 sa kalakhang Maynila.

Ayon kay Olivarez, wala pa silang napag-uusapan dito at pinag-aaralan na rin nila ang bali-balitang Deltracon variant na pinagsamang Delta at Omicron variant.

Naniniwala naman ang alkalde na pinakamainam na panatilihin muna sa Alert Level 1 ang buong Metro Manila.

Samantala, pabor kay Olivarez na huling tanggalin ang face mask policy lalo na't ipinapatupad na muli ang full on-site work at face-to-face classes.

Mababatid na hati ang pananaw ng mga eksperto sa kahandaan ng NCR sa tinatawag na pandemic exit.



## EDITORIAL - And now, Deltacron

The Philippine Star March 13, 2022 | 12:00am



On March 11, as the international community marked the second year since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic, yet another worrisome variant was confirmed to have emerged.

WHO experts are still monitoring if the new mutation, which reportedly contains characteristics of both the virulent Delta and highly infectious Omicron, will become a variant of concern, and whether existing vaccines will be effective against it.

While scientific surveillance of the new variant, dubbed Deltacron, is being done as more cases are reported in Europe, its emergence should emphasize the importance of continued adherence to COVID health safety protocols even as pandemic restrictions are eased amid falling infections.

Continued vaccination must also be aggressively pursued. Scientists have said the presence of significant segments of unvaccinated people is one of the reasons for the emergence of variants, as viruses mutate for survival.

The world has had painful lessons in downplaying the threat posed by the COVID virus. On Jan. 30, 2020, as SARS-CoV-2 was spreading rapidly across China from Wuhan City and jumping to other countries, the WHO declared COVID-19 a “public health emergency of international concern.”

That long-winded description, which the WHO apparently considered to be a prudent way of preventing panic, has been blamed by some quarters for late responses and complacency in many countries about the serious threat posed by COVID. It would take another six weeks before the WHO finally called the threat a pandemic. In those six weeks, the Philippines continued to allow the entry of foreign travelers, including Chinese tourists from Wuhan, two of whom became the first COVID cases in the Philippines, with one becoming the first coronavirus death recorded outside China.



The difference this time, as the emergence of Deltacron threatens to scuttle economic reopening, is that millions of Filipinos including minors are now vaccinated, with many also boosted.

Still, with the behavior of Deltacron being monitored, it is in the interest of public safety to continue strict adherence to minimum health protocols, particularly masking and distancing. People are starting to behave as if the pandemic is over and ditching these two basic protections against infection.

Vaccination must also be stepped up to reach the holdouts and those who think boosters are no longer needed. Until the WHO declares that COVID has become endemic, no country can let down its guard.

13 MARCH 2022, SUNDAY



# NEWS ALERTS

# VLOGS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE






Please click this link:


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
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
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




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




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