

16 FEBRUARY 2021, TUESDAY



NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Dredging of Marikina River starts this week

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:33 AM February 16, 2021



[Dredging of Marikina River starts this week](#)

newsinfo.inquirer.net

6:37 AM

The dredging of Marikina River will begin this week, the Task Force Build Back Better said following reports that illegally reclaimed portions of the river had decreased its capacity to carry excess water during typhoons and heavy rainfall. Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said the pilot dredging would take place in the portion of the river near Marcos Highway in Barangay Kalumpang on Wednesday. “The widening of Marikina River to its original width is but the start of the series of activities the task force has identified to address the perennial problem of flooding within the Marikina River Basin,” he said. —*Jhesset O. Enano*

Read more: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1396167/dredging-of-marikina-river-starts-this-week#ixzz6maDG7x6I>

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[NATION](#)

Task Force to begin dredging along Marikina River on Feb.

17

February 16, 2021 2:45 AM by [DZRH News Online](#)



Photo from the Philippine Coast Guard

Task Force Build Back Better will start dredging activities along Marikina River on Wednesday, February 17.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Sec. Roy Cimatu, chairperson of the task force, said that a number of structures have been found occupying easement areas, in violation of Presidential Decree 1067 or Philippine Water Code.

“Using official land records dating back as far as 1914 and 1961, historical maps, and satellite photos from the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority as basis, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)-National Capital Region conducted aerial and ground verification surveys that confirm encroachments made not only in the river itself but in the designated legal easements as well,” Cimatu said in a press release.

The task force will dredge a portion of the river near Marcos Highway in Barangay Kalumpang while conducting a bamboo planting activity on the banks of Barangay Industrial Valley Complex.

“The widening of Marikina River to its original width is but the start of the series of activities the Task Force has identified to address the perennial problem of flooding within the Marikina River Basin,” Cimatu said.

Cimatu explained that the bamboo will help prevent riverbank erosion and siltation.

“We will have to show our political will here and sustain our efforts to rehabilitate Marikina River and other waterways. This is just a prelude to the bigger one,” the DENR chief said.

Last December, President Rodrigo Duterte approved flood mitigation and management plans for Marikina City after typhoons caused floods in the area.



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Illegal structure, sanhi ng pagkipot ng ilog sa Marikina River – DENR

5,292 views • 15 Feb 2021

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Uumpisahan na ang dredging at widening ng Marikina River ngayong linggo. Ayon ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources, ilang imprastruktura ang dahilan ng pagkipot ng ilog.

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Source: <https://www.facebook.com/187059061319515/posts/5831600810198617/?app=fbl>



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**ELLA SIBAK SA W
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PAGINA 12

**OBIENA LUMUNDAG NG
BAGONG PHILIPPINE RECOR**



Ganito Kasi 'Yan

ni ANDY VERDE

E-mail Address: andres5421@yahoo.com

MAGANDANG balita po sa mga residente na sisimulan na nila ang dredging activities sa Marikina River bunga ng pagbaha na nagpalubog sa Marikina City at iba pang lungsod sa Kamaynilaan ayon sa unang Task Force Build Back Better (TFBBB).

Ipinahayag ni Environment Secretary at TFBBB chair Roy A. Cimatu matapos makitanggap ng utat na may bahagi ng ilog ang naging dahilan upong mabawasan ang nakakarag nitong tubig sa panahon ng bagyo.

Ayon pa kay Cimatu, may mga istraktura din na nakitang nakatayo sa easement areas na isang paglabag sa Presidential Decree (PD) 1067 o ang Philippine Water Code.

"Using official land records dating back as far as 1914 and 1961, historical maps, and satellite photos from the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority as basis, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) National Capital Region conducted aerial and ground verification surveys that confirm

INAASAHANG MALULUNASAN.. BAHA SA METRO MANILA

encroachments made not only in the river itself but in the designated legal easements as well", saad ni Cimatu.

Base sa nakasaad sa Article 51 ng PD 1067, ipinagbabawal ang pagtatayo ng kahit na anong permanenteng istraktura sa kababasan ng tatlong metro sa paligid ng ilog, batis o sa pampang ng dagat at lawa sa urban areas katulad ng Metro Manila dahil ang lugar na ito ay nakareserba para sa publiko.

Ayon pa sa kasalukuyang land records, 25 lot parcels na may kabuuang 271,625 square meters (27 hectares) ang iligal na tinambakan ng walang kaakulong permiso sa paligid ng Marikina River.

Walo sa parcels na no no may kabuuang 12,039

square meters ay inilagay sa Category 1 o ang "land found to be reclaimed but with no titles nor claimants."

Samantala, nailagay naman sa Category 2 ang lumang titled lots na bahagyang nakatasakop sa ilog na may kabuuang 10,418 square meters.

Naitala naman sa Category 3 ang 16 titled properties na may sukat na 22,467 square meters na misingong nasa ilog.

Ang pilot dredging ay gagawin sa bahagi ng ilog malapit sa Marcos Highway sa Barangay Kahumpan habang magkakaroon din ng bamboo planting activities sa gilid ng ilog sa Barangay Industrial Valley Complex na kapwa matatagpuan sa Marikina City.

Ayon pa sa DENR chief, tataniman din ang gilid ng ilog ng kawayan upang mabawasan ang pagkakaroon ng riverbank erosion at siltation na isa sa ginamit na istratehiya ng TFBBB na ginawa sa Cagayan River.

"We will have to show our political will here and sustain our efforts to rehabilitate Marikina River and other waterways. This is just a prelude to the bigger one," saad ni Cimatu na tumutukoy sa mas mabigat na trabaho na naghuhintay sa TFBBB sa ibang bahagi ng ilog partikular na sa Pasig area kung saan ang riverbank ay mas makitid dahil narin sa ginawang reklamasyon at pagkakaroon ng illegal permanent structures.

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Surveillance sa mga Illegal Loggers sa Rehiyon Dos, Pinaigting ng DENR

By [geronimo dig](#)
-Feb. 15, 2021 at 9:48pm



Cauayan City, Isabela- Mas lalong pinaigting ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources ang kanilang surveillance sa ilang lugar sa Cagayan Valley upang mapigil ang ilang indibidwal o grupo sa iligal na pamumutol ng kahoy na isa sa sanhi ng malawakang pagbaha tuwing nakakaranas ng kalamidad.

Sa panayam ng iFM Cauayan kay Regional Executive Director Gwendolyn Balbalan, isang timber pushing nalang ang nangyayari sa ngayon kung ikukumpara noong unang panahon na mas malala ang ginagawang pagkakalbo sa mga kagubatan.

Aniya, mandato ni DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu kung maaari ay walang mapuputol na kahoy sa kabila ng may mga nahuhuling lumalabag sa illegal logging.

Ipinunto rin nito ang hirap at tagal sa pagpapatubo ng punong-kahoy kaya't hinikayat nito ang publiko na magtulungan para maiwasan ang iligal na gawain at mapanatili na ligtas sa banta ng sakuna.

Bukod dito, kinakampanya rin ng ahensya ang ilang indigenous native species dahil ito aniya ang nararapat para sa buong rehiyon at kanila rin na pinatataas ang seedling propagation maliban sa punong-kahoy na Mahogany at Gmelina.

Pinahihintulutan din ang pagtanim ng Mahogany at Gmelina para sa 'private plantation' na gustong mag-invest sa wood industry.

Source: <https://rmn.ph/surveillance-sa-mga-illegal-loggers-sa-rehiyon-dos-pinaigting-ng-denr/>



DENR, Aurora fishermen in tug-of-war over logs

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:40 AM February 16, 2021



HUGE FINDS Fishermen recover over 100 logs off the coastlines of Aurora province between Feb. 12 and Feb. 14. Authorities say the logs could have originated from Papua New Guinea based on the stickers. —PHOTO COURTESY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES-AURORA

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Several fishermen in Aurora province have asked the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to give them the 175 big logs they found floating in the Pacific Ocean.

The logs were discovered near the coastlines of the towns of Baler, San Luis, Dinalungan, Casiguran, Dilasag and Dingalan from Feb. 12 to Feb. 14, according to Police Brig. Gen Valeriano de Leon, Central Luzon police chief.

Various lengths

The logs were in various lengths, the longest being 19.8 meters (65 feet), and bore stickers with the marking, “Papua New Guinea Forest Authority.”

The fishermen who retrieved the logs were invoking the principle of “finders keepers,” said Alfredo Collado, provincial chief of the DENR in Aurora.

“But the DENR advised them (fishermen) that they cannot process the said logs into lumber until and unless the government says so,” Collado said in a Feb. 13 report to Paquito Moreno, executive director of the DENR in Central Luzon.

Collado said in case the DENR keeps the logs, the fishermen wanted to be paid for the cost of hauling, towing and lost days of fishing.

Moreno said the true owner of the logs was being traced, adding that these could have been unloaded at sea to save the vessel from rough waves.



DENR, Aurora fishermen in tug-of-war over logs

No sea accidents

But the Philippine Navy and Philippine Coast Guard said there were no recent maritime accidents in the area.

Collado said the logs had been secured, listed and placed in the custody of the villages where they were found, and closely watched by the local police.

He said the logs were not locally cut because the tree species, such as the *Terminalia brassii* and *Pometia* spp, are native to Papua New Guinea.

Oysters and algae were found on the logs, indicating these have been in the waters for some time, Collado said.

He said retrieval operations would continue to prevent the floating logs from obstructing fishing activities, damaging small boats and endangering the lives of fishermen especially at night. —

TONETTE OREJAS INQ

Read more: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1396154/denr-aurora-fishermen-in-tug-of-war-over-logs#ixzz6maCVPRjt>

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Quarry and crushing plants in Rizal cleared to operate

Published February 15, 2021, 5:00 PM

by [Madelaine B. Miraflor](#)

Mining operations within the Marikina River Basin should not be blamed for the massive flooding that engulfed some parts of Marikina and Rizal province during the onslaught of Typhoon Ulysses, the deadliest and most destructive typhoon to hit the country in 2020.

This was indicated in the recent decision released by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), which lifted the temporary suspension of several quarries and crushing plants in Rizal province.



“With or without mining operations, flooding, erosion, and siltation will occur within the Marikina River Basin,” MGB said.

“The quarrying operations in Rizal are just a fraction of the land disturbance. The contribution of these operations to the flooding and siltation of the Marikina River is only minimal,” it added.

Furthermore, MGB said other factors including rapid urbanization, natural erosion, deforestation of portions of the Sierra Madre Mountain Range, and other disturbances have greater contributions to the siltation of the Marikina River and subsequent flooding along the floodplains.

To be specific, MGB Regional Office No. IV CALABARZON recently lifted the temporary suspension orders imposed on seven Mineral Production Sharing Agreements (MPSAs) and six Mineral Processing Permits (MPPs) in Rizal.

Holders of these MPSAs are San Rafael Development Corp.; Montalban Millex Aggregates Corp.; Hardrock Aggregates, Inc.; Rapid City Realty and Development Corp.; and Asensio-Pinzon Aggregates Corp.

Companies holding the MPPs cleared to operate, on the other hand, are Rodrock and Aggregate Corp., previously owned by Oxford Mines, Inc., Viba Aggregates & Marketing; Amiterra Aggregates Corp.; Dream Rock Resources Phils., Inc.; Superior Aggregates, Inc.; and ATN Holdings, Inc.

The said MPSAs and MPPs were suspended pursuant to Memorandum Order No. 1, Series of 2020, which ordered the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Composite Team to investigate certain quarry and crushing plant operations in the Rizal Province within the coverage of the Marikina River Basin.



Quarry and crushing plants in Rizal cleared to operate

The investigation was prompted by the flooding caused by Typhoon Ulysses on November 12, 2020, that submerged low lying areas in Marikina City and the municipalities of San Mateo and Rodriguez, Rizal especially those adjacent Marikina-Wawa River.

At the time, Governor Rebecca Ynares had specifically asked the DENR to suspend the mining permits of quarry operators in the province pending the conduct of a comprehensive probe as to whether quarrying contributed to the flooding in the province.

Three months later, the DENR Composite Team concluded among other things that the flooding on November 12, 2020 in Marikina City and other vicinity was primarily caused by the massive amount of rainfall generated by Typhoon Ulysses.

“The Sierra Madre Mountains, which is one of the sources of run-off from the headwater of Wawa Dam, was already oversaturated because of Typhoons Quinta, Rolly, Siony, and Tonyo, which all occurred right before Typhoon Ulysses,” MGB said in its decision.

“This oversaturation greatly contributed to the swelling of the Marikina River, which tends to backflow from its channel towards the confluence of its tributaries causing the rise of riverine floodwater and consequent flooding in adjacent areas,” it added.

It also said that the flooding within the low-lying areas of the Marikina River Basin is a natural hazard due to its geomorphologic setting.

For Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development (CEED) Executive Director Gerry Arances, MGB’s decision is unacceptable and that the “government cannot act as if no lessons were learned from the devastation brought by Typhoon Ulysses and the five other storms that came with it in a span of just five weeks”.

“The DENR should in fact ban all mining and quarrying in Rizal and the whole of Sierra Madre, and allow itself to focus first on rehabilitation efforts to rejuvenate the mountain range and map out all areas in need of disaster risk reduction,” Arances told Business Bulletin.

“Until then, no talk of any and all forms of extractive operations is acceptable, as the benefits of such are minuscule when compared to the suffering experienced by climate-vulnerable communities. Last year’s series of typhoons will unfortunately not be the last, as the climate crisis continues to worsen today. We must not forget that,” he added.

For its part, the DENR Composite Team said that it asked the aforementioned companies to comply with certain conditions first before they can operate again, including the construction of drainage systems with appropriate multiple silt traps/sumps and gradients to ensure the effectivity of the drainage system to be put in place.

DENR also told the companies to construct a settling pond or catchment basin and de-silt the creek/tributary affected by the siltation caused by its entire operation.

MGB said that it was only after the compliance with these conditions when the suspensions of quarrying and mineral processing operations were lifted.



MGB vows to ensure responsible black sand mining in Leyte

By Sarwell Meniano and Lizbeth Ann Abella February 15, 2021, 1:13 pm



MINE REHAB. A backfilled mine site in Maya village in MacArthur, Leyte in this Jan. 28, 2021 photo. The Mines and Geoscience Bureau (MGB) has assured the residents of Leyte province it will make sure that MacArthur Iron Sand Project Corp. (MIPC) will keep their commitment to fully rehabilitate areas covered by their mining operations. *(Photo courtesy of MIPC)*

TACLOBAN CITY – The Mines and Geoscience Bureau (MGB) has assured the residents of Leyte province it will make sure that MacArthur Iron Sand Project Corp. (MIPC) will keep their commitment to fully rehabilitate areas covered by their mining operations.

Responding to concerns raised by some groups on the potential destruction of mining in MacArthur, Leyte, MGB Eastern Visayas regional director Leo Van Juguan said on Monday they will closely monitor the existing mining operations.

Juguan said the current extraction of mines in the rice field will not really downsize rice production in the town since progressive rehabilitation is done immediately.

He estimated that only about eight to 10 hectares of rice farms will become unproductive during peak mining operations, or a loss of 48 tons of husked rice based on its current local output.

“For as long as the land is brought back again to its productive state, we are on a responsible mining move. That is (what) the government wants everyone would like to be doing,” he told reporters.

On Feb. 11, MacArthur parish priest Amadeo Alvero called anew for the stoppage of mining operations, saying the activity is a big setback to farming in a town that is still suffering from the impacts of irresponsible mining in the past.



MGB vows to ensure responsible black sand mining in Leyte

“The people of MacArthur are tired of the same promises of responsible mining. Our experience with mining is irresponsible mining,” Alvero said during the session of the Leyte provincial board.

Juguan appealed to give MIPC the chance to fulfill their commitment in rehabilitating mined areas since they are just starting with their operations.

“That is part of their commitment and part of our requirements to them. The local government is our partner in ensuring that. We have to bear in mind that mining is just temporary land use. The challenge is to put our feet where our motives are,” he said.

The MGB is bound to check the mining site every 15 days for regular monitoring. This is on top of the quarterly visit being facilitated by the MGB and other agencies and the civil society groups, he added.

Meanwhile, Alvero also demanded MIPC to rehabilitate mined areas abandoned by other companies in the past decade.

Januar Ong, MIPC community relations officer, said it is not their responsibility to rehabilitate previously mined areas.

“We are not in the position to answer for them and we don’t have the financial capability to do that,” he said in a separate interview.

Leyte Vice Governor Carlo Loreto said they will pass a resolution compelling past mining firms to rehabilitate their abandoned site.

He also asked MGB to check the availability of funds contributed by these companies for rehabilitation purposes.

Recently, MIPC announced its rehabilitation plans after making the first shipment of 39,000 metric tons of iron sand to China from Jan. 17 to 26. These sands were extracted from a four-hectare pilot site in Maya village.

The MGB reported that the MIPC is one of the priority mining projects tapped by the government to help the economy adversely affected by the health crisis.

The firm is reportedly investing PHP500 million and has already hired nearly 300 workers in MacArthur town this year.

The MGB granted the MIPC mining claims of 2,300 hectares last September 2020, covering the towns of MacArthur, Javier, and Abuyog.

In MacArthur alone, the MIPC has mining claims of about 300 hectares for three years. *(PNA)*

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1130639>



Littering, vandalism, observed in DENR officials' ascent to Mt. Apo

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Feb 16 2021 12:11 AM

DAVAO CITY — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Davao Region has strongly reminded the public to trek responsibly, after the agency's officials, monitoring and assessment team members, as well as protected area conservationists observed man-made activities affecting Mount Apo.

DENR XI director Bagani Fidel Evasco, together with participants from other sectors and groups, trekked the Philippines' highest mountain over the weekend to conduct assessment of trail conditions and situations in campsites to strengthen preservation and conservation mechanisms.

They observed many trekkers ascended to Mount Apo, unbothered by rains and strenuous trails. However, they were dismayed when they found out that littering and vandalism were present along the trail, campsite, and in its environment.

"Trails and campsites were not just left with traces of footprints - so were empty soda and water bottles, face masks, and all other kinds of trash. Disappointingly, liquors and traces of drug substances were also observed in the area," DENR XI said in their [Facebook](#) post.

"Boulders were not just imprinted with footsteps and handgrips - it's also engraved with vandalism," they added.



Photo courtesy of DENR XI

DENR XI urged trekkers to be responsible and follow the guidelines and policies set the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) as they will impose measures against those who will violate rules.

"It is all our duty to protect the 'King of Philippine Mountains' from exploitation as it is also a royalty when it comes to mitigating the threats of climate change," it said.



Littering, vandalism, observed in DENR officials' ascent to Mt. Apo

In November 2020, some trails going to Mount Apo's peak reopened after months of closure due to the pandemic.

Wildfires also affected hectares of Mount Apo's land, burning rare plants and century old trees on March 2016. - **report from Hernel Tocmo**



600 turtle hatchlings return to sea in Bataan



TURTLE HATCHLING. An olive ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) hatchling is set for release at the shores of Pag-asa village in Bagac town in Bataan to begin the journey back to its natural home. (DENR-Central Luzon)

IAN OCAMPO FLORA

February 15, 2021

MORE than 600 hatchlings of olive ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) successfully made their way back to sea through the conservation efforts of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and their conservation partners.

The 600 hatchlings simultaneously crawled toward the shores of Pag-asa village in Bagac town to begin their journey back to their natural home.

According to Merliza Torre, head of DENR office in Bagac, the releasing of marine turtles was organized by Eco Warriors, a non-government organization advocating for environmental conservation, and the DENR. It is a regular activity done to sustain turtle's population and uphold its ecological importance to marine ecosystem.

Famed for its marine wealth, Torre added that the coasts of Bagac and Morong towns are well-known nesting grounds of hawksbill, olive ridley and green sea turtles.

To date, 2,000 marine turtles have been released by the Eco Warriors, along with the DENR office in Bagac and partner local government units in Bataan.

In the coming weeks, 6,000 more hatchlings of marine turtles will be released in the coasts of Bagac and Morong towns.

The DENR continues to encourage local communities to conserve marine resources and report any illegal activities, which may threaten marine turtle population and its nesting grounds.

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1885998>



News5

8h · 🌐

Mahigit 10,000 waterbirds ang nakita sa iba't ibang lugar sa Camarines Sur, Masbate, Sorsogon, at Camarines Norte noong isagawa ang Annual Asian Waterbird Census.

📷: DENR Bicol



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/163550757135020/posts/2417360938420646/>



News5

11h · 🌐

Tatlong eastern grass owls ang na-rescue sa isang taniman sa Polomolok, South Cotabato.

Kasalukuyang nasa pangangalaga ang mga ito ng General Santos City Quick Response Team para sa assessment at rehabilitation.

📷: CENRO GSC/DENR Soccsksargen





NWRB MAS PINALAWIG ANG VALIDITY NG CPC HABANG NASA PANAHOON NG GCQ



February 16, 2021 @ 12:20 AM 4 hours ago

IPINAGBIBIGAY-alam ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB) sa pamumuno ni executive director Seville David, Jr. na ang ahensya ay nagsagawa ng amendment na magbibigay ng extension sa validity ng Provisional Authority para sa nagre-request ng Certificate of Public Convenience at iba pang may kaugnayan sa kanilang aplikasyon habang nasa panahon ng State of Public Health Emergency.

Inaprubahan ng Board of Directors ang Resolutin No. 07-0320 sa isang pagpupulong, na ginanap sa NWRB conference room na nagbibigay ng bisa at validity para sa Provisional Authority, kung saan pinalawig ng anim (6) na buwan mula sa petsa kung kailan naisyu o naapruba, maliban lang kung kinansela o na-revoke o binawi dahil sa anomang makatwiran o justifiable grounds sa panahon ng pagsisimula ng pampublikong emergency.

Ang opisina ng NWRB ay matatagpuan sa 8th floor, National Irrigation Authority Building, NIA Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

Pero para sa mga urgent concern ng ating mga kliyente, maaari kayong magpadala ng inyong mensahe sa mga sumusunod na email address –

nwrphil@gmail.com para sa general NWRB concerns and queries;

wrd@nwr.gov.ph para sa issuance of conditional water permit, resolution of cases, resolution of petitions, issuance of permit to drill for observatory monitoring wells, registration of water use for domestic, at issuance of NWRB indorsement as requirement for registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

wud@nwr.gov.ph para sa issuance of provotional authority for Certificate of Public Convenience and other related applications and petitioners;



NWRB MAS PINALAWIG ANG VALIDITY NG CPC HABANG NASA PANAHON NG GCQ

ppd@nwrb.gov.ph para sa Certificate of Water Availability at issuance of NWRB certification to the Philippine Export Zone Authority (PEZA);

med@nwrb.gov.ph, billing@nwrb.gov.ph at afd@nwrb.gov.ph para sa application or renewal of registration of well driller, issuance of groundwater table depth for proposed memorial park, calibration of water meter, issuance of Statement of Accounts, at other administrative concerns; at

foi@nwrb.gov.ph at 8888@nwrb.gov.ph para sa Freedom of Information (FOI) at complaints.

Sasagutin at paglingkuran ang mga inquiry ng Office of the Executive Director, Water Right Division, Water Utilities Division, Policy and Program Division, Monitoring and Enforcement Division, Administrative and Financial Division.



Maynilad plants 13k tree saplings, mangroves in 2020

By ...

-February 16, 2021



West Zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services Inc. (Maynilad) planted around 13,000 tree saplings and mangrove propagules at the Ipo watershed and the coastal areas of Cavite in 2020, as part of its watershed management program that aims to prevent soil erosion and flooding.

Under its “Plant for Life” program, Maynilad planted 1,500 mangrove propagules along the Manila Bay coastline of Kawit, Cavite, with the help of local community volunteers. Mangroves can help protect the shore from floods, as well improve the quality of water in Manila Bay.

Maynilad and several partner organizations planted around 11,500 trees over 28.5 hectares of the Ipo and La Mesa Watershed last year. Some 15 million people in Metro Manila and adjoining provinces rely on the Ipo Dam, as well as the Angat and La Mesa watersheds, for their daily supply of potable water. Reforestation of the denuded Ipo watershed will help to prevent the soil erosion that causes high turbidity levels in the raw water supply.

Since the inception of “Plant for Life” in 2007, Maynilad has planted almost 600,000 indigenous trees (like narra, acacia, amisan and cupang) in the Ipo Watershed. The water company has also planted 208,000 mangrove propagules along Cavite coastal areas since 2013.

For 2021, Maynilad aims to plant 8,000 more tree saplings and mangroves in these vital watersheds to cover an additional land area of approximately 20 hectares.

“Reforestation is an important part of watershed management initiatives that keep our water resources sustainable. We thank all like-minded organizations who send volunteers to help us in this endeavor,” said Maynilad President and CEO Ramoncito S. Fernandez.

“Plant for Life” is done with the support of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), local government units (LGU), and some private organizations.

Source: https://malaya.com.ph/index.php/news_special_feature/maynilad-plants-13k-tree-saplings-mangroves-in-2020/



Date with nature: Coast Guard joins planting activities in Valentine’s Day celebration

Published February 15, 2021, 4:00 PM
by [Richa Noriega](#)

As a Valentine’s Day celebration with the environment, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) has joined in the mangrove planting activities in Agusan del Sur.



Philippine Coast Guard ✓
17 hours ago



A DATE WITH MOTHER NATURE 🌱

Personnel of the [Philippine Coast Guard](#) (PCG) Station in Agusan del Norte joined two mangrove planting activities in the municipality of Buenavista on 13 February 2021, as an advanced Valentine's Day celebration with Mother Nature.

Said activities were also supported by various government agencies and the local government unit of Agusan del Norte to encourage residents and other key stakeholders to care for the environment through the realization [查看更多](#)





Date with nature: Coast Guard joins planting activities in Valentine's Day celebration

The two mangrove planting activities were held in Buenavista town on Saturday, Feb. 13.

The PCG said the activities were made “to encourage residents and other key stakeholders to care for the environment through the realization of its significance in making the province a better place for everyone.”

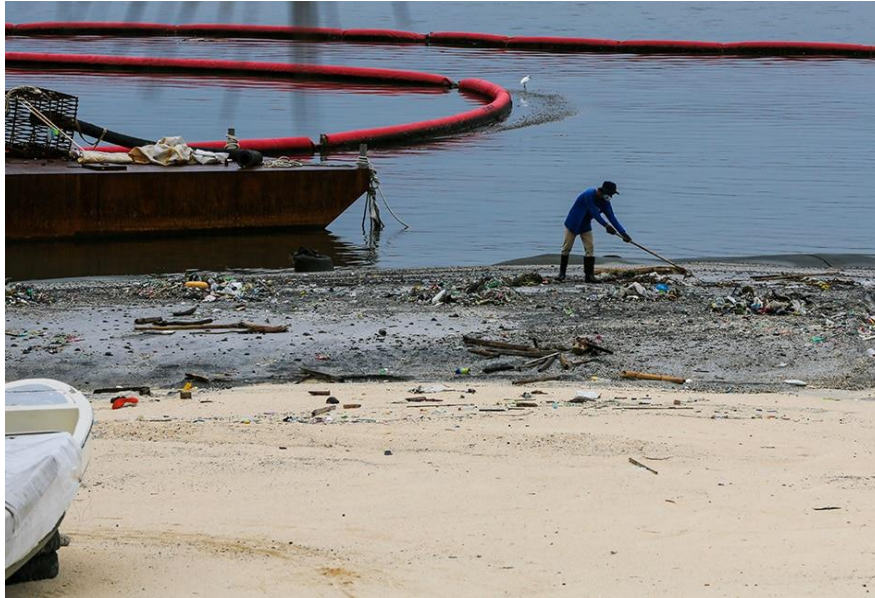
The government agencies and local government units also supported the mangrove planting activities.



Atienza says Manila Bay waters ‘several times filthier’ since 1999

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Feb 15 2021 05:36 PM



Maintenance workers clean up debris washed up at the “white sand” area of the Manila Bay rehabilitation project as Typhoon Quinta moves westward across Southern Luzon on October 26, 2020. *Jonathan Cellona, ABS-CBN News*

MANILA — Buhay party-list representative Lito Atienza on Sunday said that the waters of Manila Bay are now “several times filthier” compared to 22 years ago, when concerned residents first launched a civil action that eventually led to a Supreme Court order forcing 13 agencies to clean up the inlet.

“In contrast, based on the most recent water samples taken from major outfalls along Roxas Boulevard, fecal coliform counts now range anywhere from 11 million to 54 million MPN per ml,” Atienza said in a statement.

“We checked court records. Water samples taken from Manila Bay way back in 1999 showed fecal coliform counts of 50,000 to 80,000 most probable number (MPN) per milliliter (ml),” he added.

Atienza said that a very high fecal coliform count suggests the heavy presence of bacteria or viruses in the water that may cause diseases such as typhoid fever, viral and bacterial gastroenteritis and hepatitis A.

“This is really not surprising because up to now, of the 16.3 million water-served population in Metro Manila, only 15 percent or 2.4 million are connected to a sewerage system. Clearly, the bulk of Metro Manila’s household toilet waste continues to drain into waterways, including the Pasig River, that all empty out into the bay every day,” the lawmaker, who was also Manila City’s mayor, said.

“This proves our point that we have stop the uncontrolled outflow of human sewage if we truly want to decontaminate Manila Bay,” he added.



Atienza says Manila Bay waters 'several times filthier' since 1999

- ['70 porsiyento ng dumi sa Manila Bay galing sa kabahayan'](#)

Atienza is citing the court records of the 1999 lawsuit filed by residents who claimed that the Metro Manila Development Authority and 12 other agencies neglected to protect and clean up the waters of Manila Bay.

The case reached the Supreme Court, which ruled in favor of the residents in 2008 and issued a continuing mandamus that required the agencies to rehabilitate the waters of the bay, he said.

“In a separate case, the Supreme Court in 2019 penalized Metro Manila’s two private water concessionaires and the Metropolitan Waterworks Sewerage System with P1.84 billion in combined fines due to their failure to connect households to a sewerage system and their lack of wastewater treatment facilities,” he said.

“Until they fully comply with the provisions of Clean Water Act, the three parties will have to pay a daily fine of P322,102 that escalates by 10 percent in two years, plus legal interest of six percent per annum.”

Atienza noted that the tribunal upheld the penalty imposed by him when he was secretary of environment and natural Resources in 2009.

The University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute earlier said that the rehabilitation of Manila Bay is an "arduous task" and effort should be exerted by both residents, people using the area, and the government.



SM, PCEx promote responsible plastic waste



By [The Manila Times](#)
February 16, 2021

SM Supermalls, through its corporate social responsibility arm SM Cares, has partnered with Philippine-based, non-profit organization Plastic Credit Exchange (PCEx) for a plastic waste collection initiative known as the Plastic Waste Collection Program. The initiative aims to help communities dispose of their plastic waste more responsibly and inspire the public to adopt more sustainable practices when it comes to plastic use.

Plastic waste collection will start with SM Megamall (Located at RDU Supermarket, Bldg. B), beginning February 10 onwards, and will soon be rolled out in stages across other SM Malls nationwide. Mall shoppers, communities, and offices within the area are encouraged to bring their empty, cleaned, and dried plastic waste every day, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. only.

The project promotes responsible plastic waste disposal by encouraging individuals to clean and dry all kinds of plastic waste they generate at home, including plastic bottles, food containers, plastic utensils, and sachets.

Acceptable types of plastics include PET (soda bottles, furniture), HDPE (bottles, grocery bags, pouches), LDPE (grocery bags, containers, dispensing bottles), PP (car parts, food containers, dishware), and PS (cafeteria trays, plastic utensils, toys), as well as all other plastic types except for PVC.



SM, PCEx promote responsible plastic waste

“Our partnership with SM Supermalls and SM Cares will provide a more extensive opportunity for Filipinos to dispose of their plastic waste responsibly. The PCEx Team remains committed to furthering programs and channels to help save the environment. We all have the collective responsibility to do our part for the planet, and this plastic waste collection program is just one of the many initiatives lined up,” said Richard de Guzman, PCEx Sustainable Community Development manager.

“Through the Plastic Waste Collection Program, we are hoping to help instill an eco-conscious mindset among Filipinos when it comes to their use and disposal of plastic. This will be a good community-based initiative on responsible solid waste management, and we are grateful for the partnership with Plastic Credit Exchange,” said SM Cares Program Director on Environment Engr. Liza Silerio.

SM’s other initiatives for the Environment include the Trash to Cash recycling market every first Friday and Saturday of the month, across all SM Malls; Electronic Waste Collection program; Water recycling across all of its malls; the use of solar energy; the annual Green Film Festival; and the AweSMSeas campaign on marine plastic pollution, in partnership with USAID and PRRCFI, to name a few.

SM Cares is Supermalls corporate social responsibility arm, responsible for initiatives focusing on supporting communities and care for the environment. In addition to its programs on the environment, SM Cares’ advocacies include programs on women and breastfeeding mothers, persons with disabilities, senior citizens, children and youth, and bike-friendly initiatives.

For more information, visit www.smsupermalls.com/smcares and www.plasticcreditexchange.com.



EDC partners with French firm for plastic waste solution

By [Jed Macapagal](#)

-February 15, 2021



Energy Development Corp. (EDC) has partnered with Plastic Flamingo (PLAF) for a plastic-to-shelter project aimed to help eliminate plastic waste materials.

PLAF is a French social enterprise with a pilot project in the Philippines that aims to develop a solution to fight marine plastic pollution in emerging countries.

The Philippines was ranked as the world's third biggest polluter with 2.7 million metric tons of plastic wastes generated annually, according to the report released last year by McKinsey Center for Business and Environment.

Under the agreement, plastic waste materials of EDC employees who are based in Manila and adjacent areas will be collected once a month and will be turned over to PLAF for proper waste recycling, upcycling and disposal.

Part of PLAF's program is segregating the collected plastics according to its classifications and then transforming them into Eco-Planks used in producing emergency shelter for populations hit by disaster.

Regina Victoria Pascual, EDC corporate support functions head and assistant vice president, said the partnership is an addition to its earlier environmental efforts including the release of sustainability reports since 2010, information campaigns among employees on proper waste materials disposal and donation of eco-bricks to sister firm, First Balfour.

"Still, we knew that there's always a way to do more, to have less waste, to have better environmental impact—which led to our desire to have zero waste in EDC. Our bigger hurdle came last year when we started working from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic and realized that all those food and grocery deliveries and items ordered online that came in layers of bubble wrap have resulted in accumulation of plastic waste in our employees' respective houses.



EDC partners with French firm for plastic waste solution

This led to our search for a partner that can help us manage our personal plastic waste and convert them into sustainable products,” Pascual added.

At present, EDC has a portfolio of over 1,499 megawatts (MW) equivalent to 20 percent of the country’s total installed renewable energy capacity while its 1,204.67 MW geothermal portfolio accounts for 62 percent of the country’s total installed geothermal capacity.



EDITORIAL - Plastic free na ang Quezon City

(Pilipino Star Ngayon) - February 15, 2021 - 12:00am



Mahigpit nang ipagbabawal ang paggamit ng plastic bags at single-use plastics sa Quezon City simula Marso 1 ng taong ito. Ito ang nakasaad sa City Ordinance 2868-2019. Ang mga lalabag sa ordinansa ay pagmumultahin.

Una nang pinagbawal ang paggamit ng plastic bags at single-use plastics noong Enero 2020 subalit itinigil ang implementasyo noong Mayo dahil sa ipinatupad na modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ).

Maging sa mga hotel at restaurants ay ipagbabawal na rin ang plastics. Ang mga establisimentong lalabag ay may kaparusahan.

Sabi ni Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte, nararapat nang maisakatuparan ang matagal nang hina-hangad ng lungsod na mabawasan ang mga basurang plastic. Ito rin ang sagot ng lungsod sa malawakang kampanya sa buong mundo para mabawasan ang greenhouse gas emissions. Ayon pa sa mayor, sa muling pagpapatupad ng plastic bag ban, naniniwala siyang magtatagumpay ito at magiging kaugalian na sa lungsod ang 'di-paggamit ng plastic.

Nag-isyu rin ng memo si Belmonte na nag-uutos sa shopping malls, supermarkets, fast food chains, drug stores at iba pang retailers na ihinto ang pamamahagi ng plastic bags sa kanilang customers. "We will not allow the retailers to use plastic bags anymore at the check out counters. Kailangan nang magdala ng mamimili ng sarili nilang reusable bags," sabi ni Belmonte.

Napakaganda ng hakbang na ito ng Quezon City. Sa pagbabawal sa plastic bags at single-use plastic, hindi lamang ang pagkasira ng kapaligiran ang maisasalba kundi pati na rin ang malawakang pagbaha sa lungsod. Napatunayan na ang mga single-use plastic na gaya ng sachet ng 3-in-1 coffee, shampoo, toothpaste, catsup, sando plastic bags at iba pa ang bumabara sa mga drainage. Dahil hindi nabubulok, nananatili ito sa matagal na panahon kaya hindi masolusyunan ang baha. Sa mga estero sa Metro Manila, pawang single-use plastic at plastic bags ang makikita.



EDITORIAL - Plastic free na ang Quezon City

Gayahin din sana ng ibang Metro mayors ang ginawa ng QC na pagbabawal sa plastic. Huwag nang hintaying mangyari ang sinabi ng mga environmentalist na malulunod sa basurang plastic ang taga-MM kapag hindi napigilan ang paggamit nito.



P55M worth of ‘taclobo’ seized



By [Eugene Y. Adiong](#)
February 16, 2021

BACOLOD CITY: Giant clams, locally known as taclobo, worth P55 million were seized by authorities during an entrapment in Barangay Pagatban, Bayawan City, Negros Oriental on February 12. A belated report by the Negros Oriental Provincial Police Office said the seized giant clams have an international market value of P918 million. A team of law enforcers from the Philippine National Police’s Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), Negros Oriental Police Provincial Office and Bayawan City Police Station arrested suspect Ricardo de la Cruz Jr. The suspect was caught selling 1,000 kilos of the endangered giant clams for P5 million to a police poseur-buyer. Police and BFAR recovered a total 10,000 kilos of giant clams, including the 1,000 kilos bought by the undercover agent with a market value of P50 million and a Colt .45 pistol with a magazine containing seven live ammunition rounds. Police said it identified the owner of the clams as Yan Hu Liang alias Sunny, who is still at large. De la Cruz and Sunny face charges for violating Republic Act 8550 or the amended “Fisheries Code of the Philippines” in relation to Fisheries Administrative Order 208 on “Conservation of rare, threatened and endangered fishery species.”



‘Artist’ AG Saño extends environmental mural in Makati

posted February 15, 2021 at 09:55 pm
by [Manila Standard Lifestyle](#)

Multi-awarded environmental “artist” (a portmanteau of “art” and “activist”) AG Saño returned with his paint and paintbrush to widen the PLDT-Smart Gabay Kalikasan street mural in Makati in a bid to further raise climate change awareness.



Environmental ‘artist’ AG Saño paints the extension of his mural in Makati.

Saño’s initial artwork in December 2019 featured more than 3,000 square feet of Philippine flora and fauna throughout the telco headquarters’ Legazpi Street frontage and Dela Rosa Street walkway. The street mural’s second phase, completed in March 2020, is a 120-foot tall vertical piece at its Gallardo back entrance, said to be the tallest environmental mural in Southeast Asia.

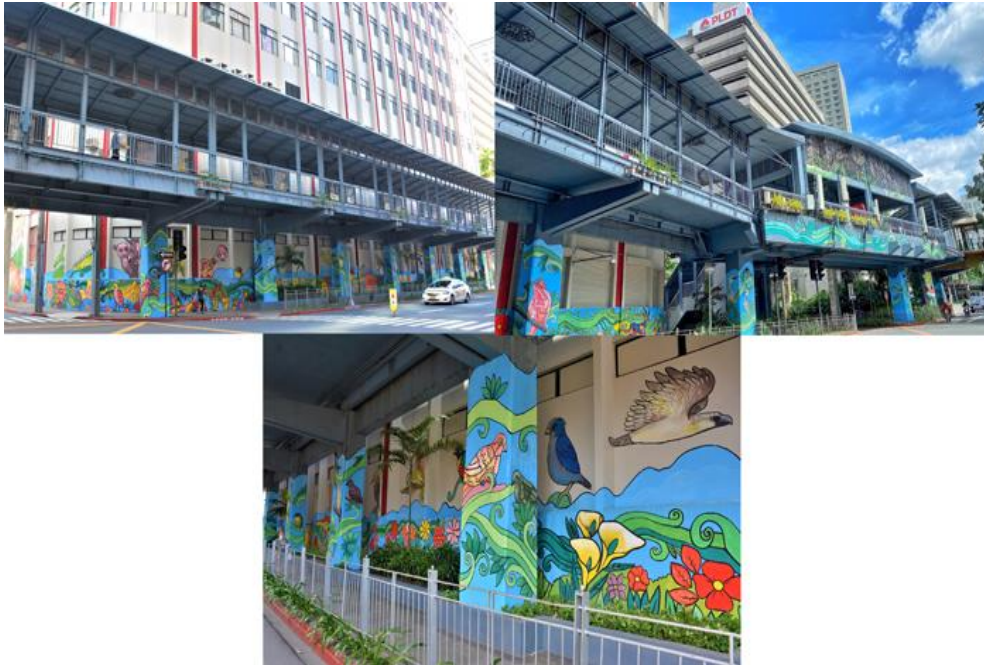
A joint project between PLDT-Smart and the Makati Commercial Estate Association (MaCEA), the mural extension, completed before the end of January this year, was painted on the Legazpi - Dela Rosa elevated walkway. It continues the existing mural theme around the telco building which featured local bird species clad in armor.

“The general state of the environment did not improve in 2020. Wildlife population is still diminishing. As environmental street artists, we want to keep on creating images of nature to keep nature’s beauty in the consciousness of the daily urban pedestrian,” said Saño.

With the mural, MaCEA says it aims to make the central business district pedestrian-friendly and well connected, celebrate its distinct neighborhood, transform it into an art center, and help redevelop it further into a vibrant CBD.



'Artist' AG Saño extends environmental mural in Makati



The environmental mural, featuring Philippine flora and fauna, stretches from PLDT headquarters' Legazpi Street frontage and Dela Rosa walkway to Legazpi-Dela Rosa elevated walkway.

PLDT, meanwhile, ensures that it uses energy responsibly. As greenhouse gas emissions arise from energy consumed by its network in operation—in the establishments they run and emissions from transport—the telco aims to protect the planet through technology-based carbon footprint offsetting programs. The programs include initiatives in reforestation, marine protection, mangroves preservation, and peatlands conservation that leverage on digital innovations and PLDT-Smart's network.



Presd'l aide isolates self after testing positive for Covid-19

By John Rey Saavedra February 15, 2021, 2:05 pm



IN ISOLATION. Presidential Assistant for the Visayas Secretary Michael Lloyd Dino (left) and IATF-EID chief implementer Sec. Roy Cimatu in one of the meetings with the business community in Cebu at the height of the pandemic in 2020. Dino on Monday (Feb. 15, 2021) said he is in isolation after testing positive for Covid-19. *(Photo courtesy of OPAV)*

CEBU CITY – Presidential Assistant for the Visayas Secretary Michael Lloyd Dino has contracted coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19).

In a statement released on Monday, Dino said he was exposed to an individual who earlier tested positive for coronavirus.

“I am currently under isolation after testing positive on Feb. 14, Sunday for SARS-CoV-2 (severe acute respiratory syndrome-coronavirus-2),” he said.

Dino said there might be a possibility that those who met him recently also have contracted the virus.

“I am urging those who have come in close contact with me recently to have themselves tested for probable infection with Covid-19,” he said.

The presidential assistant who is holding office both in Malacañang and in this city has been actively working with other national and regional government agencies and local government units in crafting interventions to address the spike in coronavirus disease in Cebu.

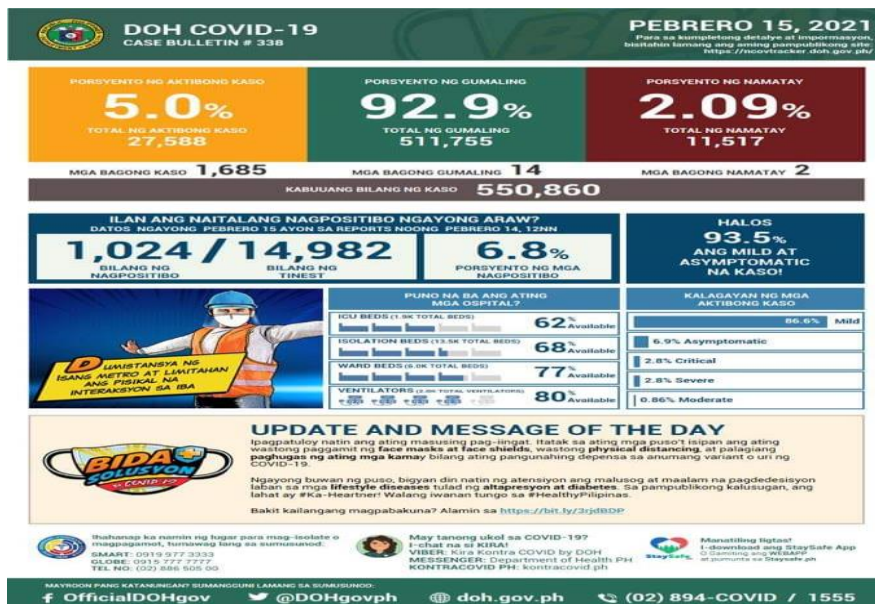
He sought the help of President Rodrigo Duterte in June 2020 after this city and other neighboring LGUs experienced a spike in Covid-19 cases, prompting the national government to send the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF EID) headed by Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu. *(PNA)*

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1130634>



BREAKING: Mga kaso ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas, lagpas 550,000 na

By Angellic Jordan February 15, 2021 - 04:10 PM



Halos 2,000 ang panibagong kaso ng Coronavirus Disease o COVID-19 sa Pilipinas.

Sa huling datos ng Department of Health (DOH) bandang araw ng Lunes (February 15), umabot na sa 550,860 confirmed cases ng nakakahawang sakit sa bansa.

Sa nasabing bilang, 27,588 o 5.0 porsyento ang aktibong kaso.

Sinabi ng kagawaran na 1,685 ang bagong napaulat na kaso ng COVID-19 sa bansa.

86.6 porsyento sa active COVID-19 cases ang mild; 6.9 porsyento ang asymptomatic; 0.86 porsyento ang moderate; 2.8 porsyento ang severe habang 2.8 porsyento ang nasa kritikal na kondisyon.

Nasa dalawa naman ang napaulat na nasawi.

Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 11,517 o 2.09 porsyento ang COVID-19 related deaths sa bansa.

Ayon pa sa DOH, 14 naman ang gumaling pa sa COVID-19.

Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 511,755 o 92.9 porsyento ang total recoveries ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas.

Read more: <https://radyo.inquirer.net/284960/breaking-mga-kaso-ng-covid-19-sa-pilipinas-lagpas-550000-na#ixzz6mZjD1cvg>

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Mga aktibidad sa Taal Volcano bahagyang tumaas, Alert Level 1 nakataas

By Jan Escosio February 15, 2021 - 08:20 PM



Inanunsiyo ng Phivolcs na nagkaroon ng bahagyang pagtaas ng mga aktibidades sa Bulkang Taal.

Kaninang ala-5 ng umaga hanggang alas-3 ng hapon, nakapagtala ang Phivolcs ng 50 mahihinang tremor episodes.

Bukod pa dito ang naitalang 68 shallow tremor episodes sa Taal Volcano Island simula noong Sabado.

Nagkaroon din ng pagtaas ng temperature at 'increase in acidity' sa Main Crater Lake.

"The public is reminded that Alert Level 1 (Abnormal) prevails over Taal Volcano. There are increased possibilities of sudden steam-driven or phreatic explosions, hazardous volcanic gas, and minor ashfall from the Main Crater Lake that can occur and threaten areas within TVI," ang abiso ng Phivolcs.

Paglilinao naman ng ahensiya na wala pang mga palatandaan sa napipintong pagsabog muli ng bulkan.

"DOST-PHIVOLCS strongly recommends that entry into TVI, Taal's Permanent Danger Zone or PDZ, especially the vicinities of the Main Crater Lake and the Daang Kastila fissure, must remain strictly prohibited," dagdag paalala pa ng ahensiya.

Huling sumabog ang bulkan Enero 20 ng nakaraang taon.

Read more: <https://radyo.inquirer.net/285002/mga-aktibidad-sa-taal-volcano-bahagyang-tumaas-alert-level-1-nakataas#ixzz6mZjuTfWx>

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Replacing Guerrero now is ‘political suicide’

[Monday, February 15, 2021](#) [Paul M. Gutierrez](#)

BEFORE proceeding, here’s greeting first today’s ‘Birthday Boy,’ my kumpare, kaibigan, brother, mentor, friend and personal bank account when necessity demands it, DENR Undersecretary and former National Press Club president, Benny Antiporda.

May God always bless you and always give you the wisdom of Solomon and the courage of David in braving all the challenges and problems that is common in any “*snake pit*” called, the government bureaucracy. Ingat ka palagi, brod!

And of course, advance happy birthday too, this coming February 18, to my dearest mother, who would be turning 76 but still healthy and beautiful. Maligayang kaarawan, Inay.

ON any regular day, when reporting to the office of Bureau of Customs Commissioner Rey Leonardo ‘Jagger’ Guerrero, for instruction or guidance, it has become a standard joke among his subordinates to “*confirm*” if they would (still) be reporting to him—or to the “*new*” commissioner of customs.

As among the most “*coveted*”—and intrigue-laden—government office, one of the annoying realities for any customs chief is to almost daily get the “*news*” or the “*rumor*” that he is about to be replaced, or has just been replaced by someone else.

Indeed, last week, when the BOC celebrated its 119th anniversary and the weeks and days and years before that, the persistent rumor is that Guerrero is “*on his way out.*”

The position of Customs commissioner, minus the competence and ability of the person, is a position mainly anchored on “*trust and confidence*” between the appointee and the appointing authority, the Philippine President. In short, despite the title and job description, the OCCOM (Office of the Commissioner of Customs) is a political office.

To be fair to Guerrero, he never lobbied for the post—his surprise was not fake when PDU30 appointed him as customs chief in October 2018.

But the very much competent man that he is—you never get to command our entire AFP if you don’t have the brains and the talents—Guerrero labored on, implementing projects and programs left and right that enabled the BOC to not only improve its image but also, surpass its assigned target by more than P33 billion last year. And 2020, everyone admits, is the “*worse year*” for the country since our “*liberation*” in 1945.

But here is my take on the matter of “*replacing*” Guerrero, which, many said is anchored on “*political necessity*” with the national elections now just around the corner.

Is the Palace willing to risk a “*political fallout*” from the decision? For removing Guerrero would need a very credible excuse, one that the opposition cannot exploit all the way to the polling places next year.

And right now, I cannot think of any plausible, digestible excuse.



Replacing Guerrero now is ‘political suicide’

And what would the international community, our foreign lenders mainly, say? Can we deliver on our debt payments that is dependent on the BOC and the BIR meeting their annual targets?

And our business community too, how would they react? Does the country really need a new customs chief at this time when economic recovery is everybody’s priority?

For in actual practice, any disruption in the BOC ‘chain of command’ always result to a ‘wait and see’ attitude among businessmen.

And who would be the replacement, by the way? Anyone from the retired and active generals from the Philippine National Police, so the rumor goes.

Wow, if the BOC is a “*dirty place*,” then without a doubt, the PNP is far, much worse.

Well, if Pres. Duterte is now ready to sink his popularity and credibility as the election season nears, that is entirely up to him.

Let us just remind the Palace that other than the economic repercussions, replacing Guerrero at this point and by somebody utterly lacking in standing and credibility, is not “*political necessity*” but, “*political suicide*.”

And you can bet your last dime in the bank on that.



Red Sea reefs ‘under threat’ from Israel-UAE oil deal

posted February 15, 2021 at 08:25 pm

by [AFP](#)

Israeli environmentalists are warning that a UAE-Israeli oil pipeline deal threatens unique Red Sea coral reefs and could lead to “the next ecological disaster”.

The agreement to bring Emirati crude oil by tanker to a pipeline in the Red Sea port of Eilat was signed after Israel normalised ties with the Gulf Arab nation late last year and should come into force within months.

With experts warning of possible leaks and spills at the ageing Eilat port, and the Israeli environmental protection ministry demanding “urgent” talks on the deal, activists mobilised last week.

They held a protest in a parking lot overlooking Eilat’s oil jetty against what they see as a disaster waiting to happen, chanting that profits will be made “at the expense of corals”.

“The coral reefs are 200 meters (yards) from where the oil will be unloaded,” said Shmulik Taggar, an Eilat resident and founding member of the Society for Conservation of the Red Sea Environment.

“They say the tankers are modern and there won’t be any problem,” he said, warning however that “there’s no way there won’t be a malfunction”.

He predicted that with the projected arrival of two to three tankers a week, traffic will be “back-to-back”.

This, he said, would also impact the aesthetic of a city promoting ecological tourism.

“You can’t sell green tourism when you have oil tankers by the dock,” he said.

Unique reefs

The Jewish state and the UAE established ties last year as part of the US-brokered “Abraham Accords”.

One of the deals that followed was a Memorandum of Understanding between Israel’s state-owned Europe-Asia Pipeline Company and a new entity called MED-RED Land Bridge Ltd -- a joint venture between Abu Dhabi’s National Holding company and several Israeli firms.

In October, EAPC announced a “binding MoU” with MED-RED to bring crude from UAE to Eilat and then transport it by pipeline to Israel’s Mediterranean city of Ashkelon for onward export to Europe.

Taggar argued that deals benefitting the fossil fuel industry at the expense of the environment are “not in the spirit of our times”.

“It might have been appropriate in the 1960s and 1970s, before we were a developed state,” he said.

Activists argue the deal evaded tough regulatory scrutiny because of EAPC’s status as a state-owned firm working in the sensitive energy sector.



Red Sea reefs ‘under threat’ from Israel-UAE oil deal

While coral populations around the world are under threat from bleaching caused by climate change, the reefs in Eilat have remained stable due to their unique heat resistance.

Eilat’s coral beach reserve extends some 1.2 kilometres (almost a mile) off the city’s coast, protecting reefs that are home to a rich variety of marine life.

But their proximity to the EAPC port puts them at grave risk, Nadav Shashar, head of marine biology and biotechnology at Eilat’s Interuniversity Institute for Marine Science, told AFP.

The infrastructure is not set up to prevent accidents and only designed “to treat pollution once it’s already in the water,” he said.

Shashar, one of 230 experts who petitioned Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu against the deal, argued that with the increase of shipments, “the result will be a constant leak of oil pollution”.

‘Get in the way’

After the agreement was struck in October, EAPC said it could increase oil flow through Eilat by “tens of millions of tonnes per year”.

Contacted by AFP, the company declined to discuss the deal’s specifics but stressed that its equipment was “state of the art” and up to international standards.

The environmental protection ministry said it had fulfilled its oversight role but also called for an “urgent discussion of all relevant governmental bodies” to review the deal.

The talks, a statement said, “would examine all angles -- including the environmental ones -- of increasing the volume of crude oil being transported”.

Shashar said the goal was not to close down EAPC but to “limit the extent of its use to something that can be handled”.

Some activists have voiced more militant views, including Michael Raphael of the international Extinction Rebellion movement.

Raphael, who came to the recent rally armed with a bullhorn, said he was aiming to set up an Extinction Rebellion chapter in Eilat to resist the UAE deal.

“If the problem isn’t solved, we’ll have to get in the way of things,” he said. “We don’t just demonstrate ... we disrupt the work of those who pollute.”

Source: <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/347093>

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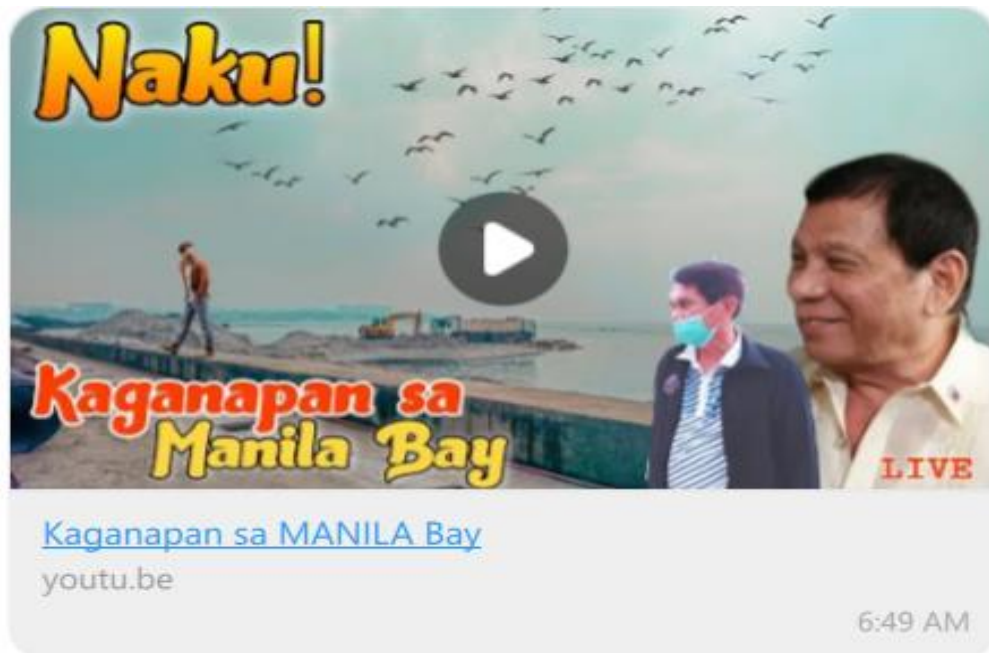


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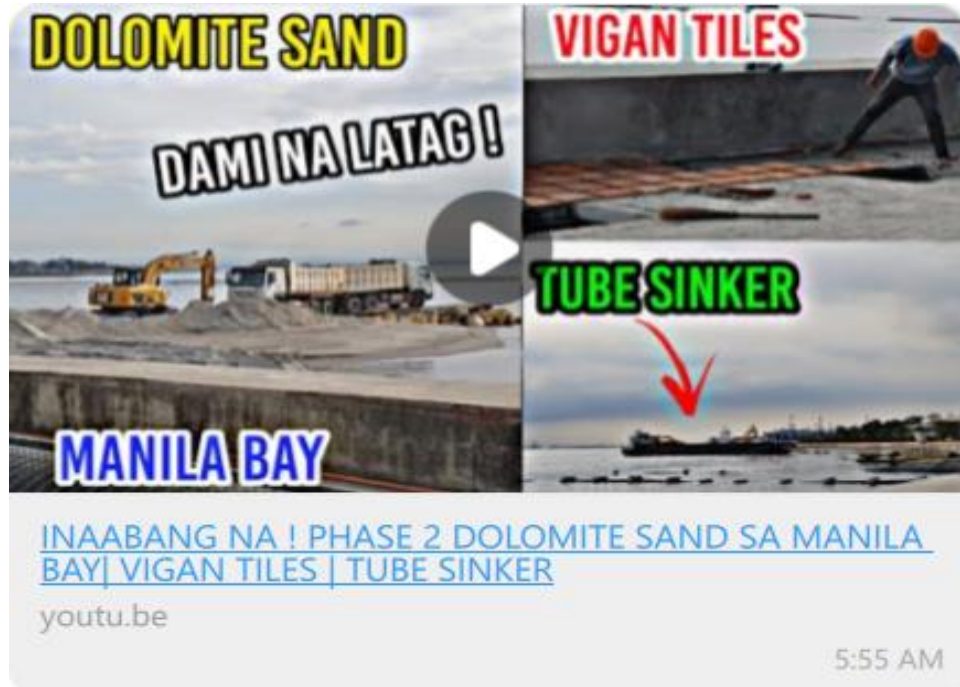
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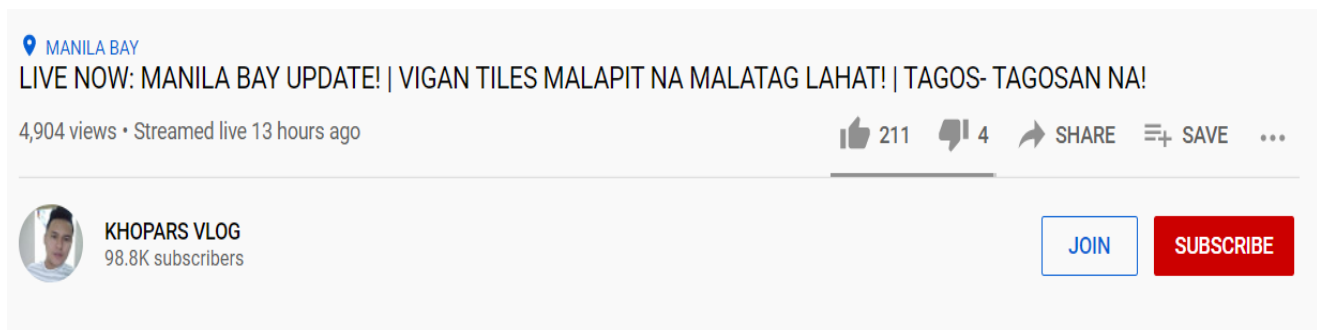
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