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**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**





## Healthcare Wastes Ending Up in PH Oceans

by  **Village Connect** about 12 hours ago

### Healthcare Wastes Ending Up in PH Oceans



Following the recent discovery of single-use face masks entangled in the coral reefs of Anilao, Batangas, Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said the increasing amount of improperly discarded household healthcare wastes during the pandemic has become a serious cause for concern.

Cimatu said “the recent discovery of disposable face masks, plastic face shields, and other household healthcare wastes in our reefs is alarming. These wastes will harm both marine life and divers.”

He stressed that while it is vital to follow minimum public health protocols to curb the spread of coronavirus, it is as important to be aware of each person’s responsibilities to the environment.

As remedial measures, Environment Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units (LGUs) Concerns Benny D. Antiporda said, “We have coordinated with the Philippine Coast Guard to ensure that all international and inter-island vessels, and even fishing vessels, have placed yellow bins for the proper disposal and storage of generated COVID-19 related healthcare waste such as used face masks, gloves, cottons, tissue papers, and testing kits”.

In this way, Antiporda added that solid waste ending up in our waterways especially the oceans will be avoided.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is also working closely with the Department of the Interior and Local Government that has a directive to LGUs on handling household healthcare wastes, cleaning of *Esteros*, and reminding those living near waterways to not throw wastes directly in the bodies of water.

Antiporda expressed that the DENR, together with its partner agencies, will further discuss effective solutions to address the “global problem” of household healthcare wastes ending up in oceans and other water bodies.

He acknowledged that handling used face masks and gloves from households is more difficult than those collected from hospitals and quarantine facilities.

“These (quarantine and medical) facilities are required to put up a treatment facility and get a hauling permit, so monitoring medical wastes come easy with these sectors,” he said.



However, he emphasized that strict compliance with waste segregation at the source is still the best way to manage solid waste.

“Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, we already expected that more household healthcare wastes will be generated. Hence, the DENR through the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC), has issued reminders on the proper disposal of these wastes,” said Antiporda who is also the alternate chair of the NSWMC.

He echoed Cimatú’s reminder to the LGUs to prioritize the handling of pandemic-related wastes by imposing strict segregation of wastes in households, implementing an effective collection system, and providing yellow bins for potentially infectious wastes or personal protective equipment.

The DENR has already distributed yellow bins to the city government of Manila in November 2020, and is set to distribute in other LGUs in the coming months.

## DENR alarmed over amount of healthcare waste ending up in PH seas

Aileen Cerrudo • March 17, 2021



**MANILA, Philippines**—The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has expressed alarm over the amount of household healthcare waste, including face masks, that are ending up in Philippine seas. DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu said they have received reports that single-use face masks were found entangled in coral reefs of Anilao, Batangas.

The department official reiterated the hazards that disposable face masks, plastic face shields, and other household healthcare wastes pose on marine life.

He maintained that following health and safety protocols are vital in fighting the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), but it is equally important to be aware of each person's responsibilities to the environment.

In view of this, Environment Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units (LGUs) Concerns Benny D. Antiporda said the DENR is already preparing remedial measures to resolve the issue.

"We have coordinated with the Philippine Coast Guard to ensure that all international and inter-island vessels, and even fishing vessels, have placed yellow bins for the proper disposal and storage of generated COVID-19 related healthcare waste such as, used face masks, gloves, cottons, tissue papers, and testing kits," he said.

DENR is also working closely with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) in handling household healthcare wastes, cleaning of esteros, and reminding those living near waterways not to throw wastes directly in bodies of water. **AAC**



## Fisherfolk tapped in water lily cleanup

Published 4 hours ago on March 18, 2021 02:30 AM

By [TDT](#) [@tribunephil](#)



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is considering to tap fisherfolk in controlling the growth of water hyacinths, or water lilies, in major waterways, particularly in Pasig River and Laguna de Bay.

The proliferation of water hyacinths was among the issues tackled by DENR Underscretary Benny Antiporda when he met with members of the Manila Bay Anti-Pollution Task Force (APTF) last 11 March to discuss the ongoing rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

We want to make a drastic change in the quality of water in Manila Bay.

Water lilies are known to obstruct the smooth flow of vessels along waterways.

Antiporda, who is the head of the Manila Bay APTF, directed its members to prioritize the removal of the water hyacinths in Pasig River and Laguna de Bay.

A sub-committee on water hyacinth was created to control and minimize the plants' growth, while the Manila Bay APTF will look into the possibility of employing the services of local fisherfolk to harvest the water lilies.

"We want to make a drastic change in the quality of water in Manila Bay," Antiporda said, as he stressed the task force is meant to complement the actions of DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu as chair of the Manila Bay Task Force.

"To see is to believe, to smell is to believe, and to test is to believe," the DENR official said, as he reminded the task force's members of these three main goals, which are also the parameters to declare the battle for Manila Bay has been won.

He pointed out one of the task force's target is to ensure that no floating debris will be seen on Manila Bay and its tributaries.

"With the improvement of the water quality, there should also be no foul odor coming from the bay," Antiporda said. "Most important is the drastic change of the water quality in Manila Bay."

The Manila Bay task force members were also tasked to establish an effective monitoring system that has "complete standard operating procedure with corresponding timeline" to ensure the compliance of "environmental polluters."

"We need to double up our effort in running after them. We will deal with them head-on," Antiporda stressed.

Source: [https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2021/03/18/fisherfolk-tapped-in-water-lily-cleanup/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=fisherfolk-tapped-in-water-lily-cleanup](https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2021/03/18/fisherfolk-tapped-in-water-lily-cleanup/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=fisherfolk-tapped-in-water-lily-cleanup)



# DENR to prioritize clearing of water lilies in Pasig River, Laguna de Bay

By: [Katrina Hallare](#) - Reporter / [@KHallareINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 06:04 PM March 17, 2021

MANILA, Philippines – The Department of Natural Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Wednesday said it is eyeing to tap fisher folks to control the growth of water lilies in Pasig River and Laguna de Bay.

In a statement, the DENR said that the problem of the proliferation of water lilies was tackled during the meeting on the ongoing rehabilitation of Manila Bay last March 11.

DENR Usec. Benny Antiporda, the concurrent head of the Manila Bay Anti-Pollution Task Force (APTF), directed the members of the task force to prioritize the removal of the water hyacinth in Pasig River and Laguna de Bay as the rapid increase of the water lilies is causing a major obstruction to smooth flow of navigation along waterways.

“With the improvement of the water quality, there should also be no foul odor coming from the bay,” he said.

He stressed that he wanted to make a “drastic change” in the quality of the water in Manila Bay.

He also instructed the Manila Bay APTF members to establish an effective monitoring system that has “complete standard operating procedure with corresponding timeline” to ensure the compliance of “environmental polluters.”

“We need to double up our effort in running after them. We will deal with them head-on,” Antiporda stressed.

A sub-committee in charge of the clearing of water lilies was created “to control and minimize” the growth of the water plant, while the Manila Bay APTF will also look into the possibility of employing the services of local fisherfolk to harvest water lilies.

“To see is to believe, to smell is to believe, and to test is to believe,” he said, reminding its members of the task force’s three main goals. –**Liezelle Soriano Roy, trainee**  
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# DENR to tap small fishers to clear Pasig River, Laguna de Bay of water hyacinth

By [JONATHAN L. MAYUGA](#)

MARCH 18, 2021



A bicycle rider pedals his bike across Santa Cruz Bridge in Manila over the Pasig River strewn with floating water hyacinth, an aquatic plant native to the Amazon basin. The proliferation of water hyacinth into Pasig River might as well be an indication that the water level in Laguna de Bay is higher in terms of elevation than Manila Bay's mean sea level, an expected occurrence since the Pasig River is a tidal estuary, which means that the flow of its direction depends on the water level difference between Manila Bay and Laguna de Bay. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has recently bared plans to tap the services of small fishermen to clear both bodies of water from water hyacinth proliferation.

TO control the massive proliferation of water hyacinth in major water bodies, particularly Laguna de Bay and Pasig River, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) may soon tap small fishermen to do the job.

Considered as an invasive alien species in the Philippines, the water hyacinth is an aquatic plant native to tropical and sub-tropical South America. The water thrives fast and rise by as much as a meter above the surface of the water.

Water hyacinth is known to cover vast portions of the Laguna de Bay and the growth of this invasive plant species is known to proliferate in the Pasig River.

The problem revolving around the proliferation of water hyacinth was among the issues tackled when Environment Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units (LGUs) Concerns Benny D. Antiporda met with members of the Manila Bay Anti-Pollution Task Force (APTF) last March 11 to discuss the ongoing rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

The proliferation of the invasive water species is known to cause major obstruction to the smooth flow of navigation along waterways.

Antiporda, also head of the Manila Bay APTF, directed members of the task force to prioritize the removal of water hyacinth in Pasig River and Laguna de Bay.

A sub-committee on water hyacinth was then created to control and minimize the growth of the water plant while the Manila Bay APTF will also look into the possibility of employing the services of local fisherfolk to do the cleaning and harvesting.

"We want to make a drastic change in the quality of water in Manila Bay," Antiporda said as he stressed the objective of the task force, which is to complement the actions of Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu as chairman of the Manila Bay Task Force.

"To see is to believe, to smell is to believe and to test is to believe," he said, reminding its members of the task force's three main goals, which are also the parameters in saying that the Battle for Manila Bay has been won.



Antiporda pointed out that one of the task force's target is to ensure that no floating debris will be seen along Manila Bay and its tributaries.

"With the improvement of the water quality, there should also be no foul odor coming from the bay," Antiporda said.

"Most important is the drastic change of the water quality in Manila Bay," he emphasized.

He also instructed the Manila Bay APTF members to establish an effective monitoring system that has "complete standard operating procedure with the corresponding timeline" to ensure the compliance of "environmental polluters."

"We need to double up our effort in running after them. We will deal with them head-on," Antiporda stressed.

Image credits: [Roy Domingo](#)





# Grupo ng mga mangingisda, ipakakalat ng Task Force ng DENR para tanggalin ang water hyacinths sa Pasig River at Laguna Lake

By [RadyoMaN Manila](#)

-Mar. 17, 2021 at 10:15am



Kukunin ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang serbisyo ng fisherfolk upang mapigilan ang pagdami ng water hyacinths o water lilies sa major waterways partikular na sa Pasig River at Laguna de Bay.

Ang problema sa pagdami ng water hyacinths ang isa sa napag-usapang isyu sa pakikipagpulong ni Environment Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny Antiporda sa mga miyembro ng Manila Bay Anti-Pollution Task Force bilang bahagi ng isinasagawang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay.

Ang pagkalat ng “invasive water species” ay isa sa nakikitang dahilan kung bakit nahahadlangan ang maayos na pagdaloy ng tubig sa mga waterways.

Bumuo rin ng isang Sub-committee on Water Hyacinths upang makontrol at mabawasan ang pagdami ng water plant habang ang Manila Bay APTF ay tinitingnan ang posibilidad na kunin ang serbisyo ng local fisherfolk para tanggalin ang mga water lilies.

Sinabi pa ni Antiporda na ang isa sa target ng task force ay tiyaking walang makikitang floating debris sa Manila Bay at tributaries nito.

Source: <https://rmn.ph/grupo-ng-mga-mangingisda-ipakakalat-ng-task-force-ng-denr-para-tanggalin-ang-water-hyacinths-sa-pasig-river-at-laguna-lake/>



# Landfill closure no effect on Dagupan's waste disposal

By Liwayway Yparraguirre March 17, 2021, 3:53 pm



**WASTE MANAGEMENT.** Waste Management Division (WMD) chief Bernard Cabison shows the two-decades-old rotating composting drums and the new machines which can accommodate bigger volume of garbage and process at a shorter time compared to the old machines. The local government of Dagupan City has acquired two new rotating drums for WMD composting of biodegradable garbage coming from the public markets and from the barangays. (Photo by Liwayway Yparraguirre)

**DAGUPAN CITY** – Mayor Marc Brian Lim said private garbage haulers will have access to the Clark sanitary landfill for the disposal of wastes from local government units, including this city, that have existing contracts with the Urdaneta City sanitary landfill.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) recently closed the Urdaneta City sanitary landfill due to several violations.

“No interruption of services of private haulers and there will be no additional obligation on the city. We were given assurance by DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda when we had a meeting with him,” Lim said in an interview on Wednesday.

Antiporda called for a meeting of all the private haulers of garbage from different localities which have a contract with Urdaneta City, he said.

Meanwhile, 80 percent of the old garbage in Dagupan City’s dumpsite has already been removed.

In a separate interview, Waste Management Division chief Bernard Cabison said four trucks regularly haul garbage from the dumpsite.

The city has partnered with a private hauling company which had an agreement with Urdaneta City landfill for the task.

The DENR-EMB issued a cease and desist order on March 5 for the closure of the sanitary landfill here due to several violations.

In a recent interview, EMB Ilocos regional director Dorica Hipe said the landfill has violated the Clean Water Act upon the recommendation of the Pollution Adjudication Board, as well as the Presidential Decree 1586 or the Philippine Environmental Impact Statement, and the Republic Act (RA) 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

“The violation under RA 9003 is the operation of an open dumpsite. Although it is a sanitary landfill, what happened is that they just dumped the wastes and it was no longer being managed. It is no longer based on the operation of a sanitary landfill that it has become an open dumpsite,” she said.

Hipe said it has also violated the Clean Water Act as the analysis on its water sample exceeded the effluent standard and the water pollution violation. (PNA)





## KABABAIHAN MAHALAGA SA CLIMATE CHANGE

**T**AMA po lamang ng para matugunan ang lumalalang problema sa climate change at kasalukuyang pandemya ay dapat pagtuunan ng pansin ng bawat isang Pinoy ang aktibong partisipasyon ng kababaihan sa mga polisiya at programa ng gobierno.

"Ang ating mga kababaihan, lalo na ang ating mga kababaihan na nagmumula sa ating mga low-income communities, ay kabilang sa mga pinaka-apektado ng climate change at COVID-19, dahil sila ay mayroong mas kaunting resources at impormasyon na magagamit upang labanan ang epekto ng mga ito," ayon kay DENR Undersecretary for Finance, Information Systems and Climate Change Analiza Rebutla-Teh.

Sa 2020 report ng international climate research organization Project Drawdown, ang pagpapalakas sa mga kababaihan sa developing countries tulad ng Pilipinas ay pumapangalawa sa 76 solutions para sa "curbing global warming to 2 degrees Celsius". "Ang mga kababaihan rin ay may likas na kagalingan sa pag-adapt sa climate change. Ang pagbibigay edukasyon sa ating mga kababaihan at batang babae ay nakakatulong din upang itaas ang kanilang resilience mula sa mga kalamidad," sabi ni Teh na bumabase sa naturang ulat.

Sa National Women's Month celebration ngayong taon, binigyang diin ng report ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang kahalagahan ng kababaihan upang magkaroon ng pagbabago tungkol sa problema sa climate crisis at COVID-19.

Ang month-long event ay nakatutok sa patas at aktibong partisipasyon ng kababaihan sa mga isyu patungkol sa environment, partikular na ang climate change, disaster risk reduction at health crisis.

"For women's month this year, we highlight on expanding and upscaling transformative actions of individuals, women, men, groups and communities, that is why we are taking centerstage a climate and disaster resiliency recognition awards scheme, dubbed as, 'Mga Kwentong KLIMALikasan Tungo sa Katatagan' (Stories on climate-environment towards stability)," saad ni Teh.

Layunin ng DENR sa pamamagitan ng Gender and Development Office and Climate Change Service (CCS) na mabigyan ng halaga ang kuwento ng mga indibidwal at grupo kung ano ang epekto ng climate change sa kanilang komunidad at paano nila ito nilalabanan sa pamamagitan ng mga programa sa environmental protection and conservation, climate change at disaster risk reduction.

### WASTE SEGREGATION DAPAT IPATUPAD NG LGU'S

ISANG ordinansa na nag-aatas sa mga barangay na ipatupad ang waste segregation ang iminungkahing ipasa ng Department of

Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa local government units (LGUs).

Sinabi ni DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and LGUs Concerns Benny D. Antiporda, dapat na tutukan ng mga lungsod at munisipalidad sa buong bansa ang waste segregation mula sa pinanggalingan nito o waste segregation at source para maging epektibo ang pagkolekta at pagtapon sa mga basura.

Muling nanawagan si Antiporda na maging epektibo ang pangangasiwa sa solid waste sa ginanap na dialogue sa Cavite provincial, city, at municipal environment officers na inorganisa ng grupong EcoWaste Coalition noong Marso 3. "Propose to your local council to create an ordinance that will act on those who do not practice segregation in their barangays," sabi ni Antiporda.

"It is already stated in RA (Republic Act) 9003 (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000), but let us strengthen it with the help of your council," dagdag pa nito.

Inirekomenda rin ni Antiporda na siya ring alternate chair ng National Solid Waste Management Commission, na bumuo ng inter-barangay enforcement group o magtalaga ng "environmental marshals" sa bawat barangay ng lungsod at munisipalidad upang mag-monitor sa solid waste management practices ng katating barangay.

Hinikayat din nito ang Cavite LGU representatives na talakayin sa kanilang local chief executives na maglaan ng pondo upang mabigyan ng solusyon ang problema sa paghakat ng biodegradable at residual waste.

"Kindly tell your mayors to allocate funds for biodegradable and residual wastes," saad pa ni Antiporda. Batay sa data ng Provincial Government – Environment and Natural Resources Office ng Cavite, 58.78% ng mga nakukuhang basura sa probinsiya ay biodegradable habang ang 28.19% naman ay residual wastes.

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### KALAGAYAN NG QUARANTINE SA BANSA PATULOY NA MINOMONITOR

PATULOY na minomonitor po ng gobierno ang mga kaso ngayong buong Marso upang siyang maging basehan ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte para sa gagawing rekomendasyon ng quarantine status sa buwan ng Abril.

Sa matuling sabi ay nakasalalay sa pagtaas ng kaso ng COVID-19 ang magiging quarantine status sa Abril kung kaya't patuloy ang kanilang pagmomonitor sa mga nangyayari ngayon sa pagtaas ng bilang sa Pasay City at iba pang areas ng Metro Manila.

Sinabi ni Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles na ang genome



sequencing ang kailangan ngayon lalo na sa Kamaynilaan para ma-detect ang South African at UK variants at ang sinasabi pang dalawang worrisome na variants.

Magugunita na nitong nakalipas na mga araw ay nakapagtala ang Department of Health ng mahigit na 3,000 na kaso ng COVID-19, dahil dito kaya pinulong na rin umano ng kagawaran ang mga ospital sa Metro Manila para talakayin ang pagtaas ng kaso.

Sang-ayon naman ang nakakarami nating kababayan sa naging desisyon ng Metro Manila Mayors na ipagpaliban ang pagbubukas ng mga sinehan at arcades sa National Capital Region (NCR) sa gitna ng patuloy na pagtaas ng coronavirus sa bansa.

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SAMANTALA nakararanas daw ngayong ng "red flag" ang mga ospital dahil sa pagsirit ng mga kaso sa maigsing panahon na inamin nitong si Philippine General Hospital spokesperson Jonas del Rosario.

Hindi isinantabi ng health expert ang posibleng kagawaran ng mga natuklasang bagong variant ang pagtaas ng mga kaso.

Na base sa data ng OCTA Research Group, higit na mataas ang pagtaas ng kaso ng COVID-19 sa Metro Manila ngayong kumpara noong Hulyo-Agosto 2020 na nakapag-rekord daw ng average 1,025 bagong kaso sa NCR mula Pebrero 28 hanggang Marso 6. Tumaas ito ng 42 porsyento kumpara sa datos ng sinundang linggo at tumaas ng 130 porsyento kumpara sa nakalipas na dalawang linggo nito.

Sinasabi na aminado daw ang OCTA Group na maaaring dulot nga ito ng bagong strain ng virus tulad ng South African, United Kingdom at iba pang mutations na higit na nakakahawa kumpara sa orihinal na variant na tumaas din ang reproduction rate ng NCR sa 1.66 na huling naitala noong Hulyo 2020.





# Villar bats against biodiversity loss and pushes for wildlife protection

By [BMPLUS](#)

MARCH 16, 2021



Sen. Cynthia Villar (PNA file photo by Avito C. Dalan)

STRESSING that the Philippines is biodiversity-rich, but also among the world's biodiversity hotspots or those areas experiencing high rates of habitat loss, Sen. Cynthia Villar urged the public to be more vigilant against biodiversity loss, wildlife protection and conservation of their habitats.

"What makes the issue even more important to our country is the fact that the Philippines is one of the world's 17 megadiverse or biodiversity-rich countries, which hosts two-thirds of the Earth's biodiversity," said Villar in her privilege speech in observance of the World Wildlife Day celebration last March 8.

The biodiversity-rich countries, Villar said, contain about 70 to 80 percent of the world's plant and animal species.

Due to this, the Senate chairperson of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, underscored the need to create awareness on biological diversity and take action about its protection.

She warned that any damage or loss will cost too much for our country. More here chronic disease transmission. She said researches indicated that the constant exploitation of wild fauna and their habitats had raised the risk of zoonotic disease transmission (or the transmission of disease from animal to human).

Furthermore, she said the need to protect our wildlife resources finds critical relevance now as we continue to battle the ill-effects of the COVID-19 virus.

As a legislator and environmentalist, Villar said she has been pursuing various programs and legislations to conserve and protect places like rivers and wetlands.

She pushed for the amendment of Republic Act (RA) 7586 or the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act which was passed into law in 1992. The Act provides the legal framework for the establishment and management of protected areas in the country.

She also strongly opposed the planned reclamation of a critical habitat in her home city of Las Pinas—LPPCHEA or the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area, also known as Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park.

"We share the habitat of wildlife, thus we are both sustained by them, too. Destruction of those habitats translate to loss of livelihood and economic opportunities for people," said Villar as she noted that was one of the points she insisted in objecting to the planned reclamation.



She said the reclamation would disrupt the livelihood of thousands fisherfolks and urban poor who depend on the wetland for their daily sustenance.

Just last week, Villar said she filed Senate Bill No. 2078 or the “Revised Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2021,” amending the 20-year-old RA No. 9147.

The bill seeks to strengthen the wildlife conservation and protection mechanism in our country as the incidence of wildlife crimes has evolved and grown, violators have become more equipped, organized, and syndicated or with international connections.

# RIVER REHAB PROJECT DISPLACES INFORMAL SETTLERS

By **Panay News** -Wednesday, March 17, 2021



Antique's Gov. Rhodora Cadio (second from left) leads the distribution of financial assistance to informal settlers affected by the construction of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources office. PHOTO COURTESY OF ANTIQUE PIOSAN JOSE, Antique – A total of 18 informal settlers each received P10,000 financial assistance from the provincial government for their relocation.

These informal settlers were affected by the ongoing P50-million Malandog River Rehabilitation and Development Project (MRRDP), particularly the construction of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) office.

"Gov. Rhodora Cadio led the distribution of the assistance to the beneficiaries who would be relocating from the reclaimed area in Barangay Maybato North to Barangay Mapatag resettlement site (in San Jose)," said Eby Butiong, provincial government housing board secretary.

They were given financial assistance so they would have some money to use as they transfer to the resettlement site provided them by the provincial government.

However, of the 18 informal settlers, eight signified interest to temporarily live with relatives until the provincial government provides them with another resettlement site that is near their former residence.

"They found the resettlement site quite far," Butiong said.

The eight who rejected the offer to resettle in Barangay Mapatag were also given the same cash assistance so they would have money for their sustenance.

The DENR is opening an office in Barangay Maybato North so it could closely monitor the coastal area and the MRRDP.

"The informal settlers are expected to relocate from Barangay Maybato North on or before March 22 when the construction of the DENR office starts," Butiong said. (PNA/PN)

Source: <https://www.panaynews.net/river-rehab-project-displaces-informal-settlers/>





# Laguna village chair, 4 others nabbed for illegal quarrying

By Benjamin Pulta March 17, 2021, 5:40 pm



(Photo courtesy of NBI)

MANILA – Authorities arrested a village chief and four others for illegal quarrying at the Balanac River in Magdalena, Laguna, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) said on Wednesday.

NBI officer-in-charge (OIC) director Eric Distor said the suspects, Barangay Balanac chairperson Dennis Olipano, Michael Abad, Randy delos Reyes, Danilo Noriel, and Abner Davac were arrested in a sting operation by the agency's Environmental Crime Division (EnCD) on March 11.

The operation stemmed from information on the alleged quarry operations in the area as operatives were able to transact with Olipano who agreed to sell four truckloads of boulders at PHP17,000 per truck.

A joint team composed of members of the NBI-EnCD, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Philippine Army 1st Infantry Battalion conducted the operation.

Seized from the suspects were four trucks with a total estimated value of PHP6 million and 30 cubic meters of boulders and fabricated screens with an estimated value of PHP43,000.

The suspects will be charged with the violation of Section 103 of Republic Act (RA) 7942 or the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and Section 3 of RA 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act. (PNA)



# Barangay chairman, 4 others arrested for illegal quarrying

Published March 17, 2021, 5:11 PM

by [Jeffrey Damicog](#)

A barangay chairman and four other persons have been arrested by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) BI for alleged illegal quarrying activities in Balanac River in Laguna.

NBI Officer-In-Charge Director Eric B. Distor on Wednesday, March 17, identified those arrested last March 11 as Barangay Balanac Chairman Dennis Olipano, Michael Abad, Randy delos Reyes, Danilo Noriel and Abner Davac.

Distor said they were arrested by the agents of the NBI's Environmental Crime Division (NBI-EnCD).

“Subjects were arrested for disposing and extracting boulders and minerals from Balanac River, Laguna without necessary permits from DENR-MGB (Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Mines and Geosciences Bureau) or the PMRB-Laguna (Provincial Mining Regulatory Board),” the NBI said in a statement.

During the operation, the NBI said Olipano was caught transacting with operatives “to sell four (4) truck loads of boulders for a price of P17,000 per truck.” The NBI also seized four trucks with a total estimated value of P6 million and 30 cubic meters of boulders and fabricated screens with an estimated value of P43,000.

Those arrested were presented for inquest proceedings before the Department of Justice (DOJ) in Manila for violation of Section 103 of Republic Act 7942, the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, and Section 3 (e) of RA 3019, the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/03/17/barangay-chairman-4-others-arrested-for-illegal-quarrying/>



# PNP Northern Samar scores anew on campaign vs illegal logging

By Ailene N. DiazPublished on March 17, 2021

CATARMAN, Northern Samar, March 17 (PIA) -- The Police Provincial Office in Northern Samar scores anew on its efforts against illegal logging.

In a report from the NSPPO, some P117,000 worth of hot lumber was confiscated and nabbed three suspects during an operation in San Isidro town on March 13, 2021.

Led by Police Lieutenant Lyndon Dagalea, Officer-In-Charge of San Isidro Police Station, the team was able to seize 105 good lumber, 12 boat keels of assorted sizes while in the act of loading the products onto a balsa ready to be transported along the Seven Hills River, report said.

As he commended the efforts and accomplishment of San Isidro Municipal Police Station, PNP Provincial Director PCol. Arnel Apud said, the arrest of the three offenders should serve as a stern warning to all illegal loggers in the province.

"We will ensure that illegally-gathered forest products will be confiscated and those responsible will be charged with accordingly," Apud stressed.

With the enforcement of PD 705, violators will face charges and confiscated lumber will be turned over to proper authorities. (Idl/ADlaz/PIA-N. Samar)





# CCC: Panahon na para ipagbawal ang non-essential plastics nang mabawasan ang GHG emissions, na syang makatutulong magpanalo ng laban natin sa climate change

By Climate Change Commission Published on March 17, 2021



Photo from pexels.com

MAYNILA, Marso 17 -- Nananawagan ang Climate Change Commission (CCC) para sa tuwirang pagbabawal ng mga non-essential at single-use plastics bilang bahagi ng pagpa-patupad ng ating ambisyosong mga layunin na mabawasan ang greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions mula sa lahat ng mga sektor.

Sinabi ng Commission na ang problema natin sa mga plastics ay hindi lamang usapin ng waste or pollution, kundi usapin din ito ng climate. Ang plastics ay naging isa sa napaka-halagang bahagi ng ating mga produkto sa usapin ng packaging dahil sa mga katangiang mayroon ito tulad ng durability, ang pagiging lightweight, at low cost. Sa kabila ng marami nitong mga kapakinabangan, ang plastics ay nagmumula sa fossil fuels na syang nag-e emit ng GHGs na syang nagpa-palala ng kundisyon ng ating klima.

Ayon sa ulat/pagaaral na "Plastic & Climate: The Hidden Costs of a Plastic Planet" na inilathala Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), ang GHGs ay na e-emit sa bawat stage ng plastic lifecycle: 1) pagta-tanggal at pagta-transport ng fossil fuel, 2) plastic refining at manufacturing, 3) pamamahala sa mga basurang plastic, at 4) ang patuloy na pinsalang dulot ng plastics kapag humantong na ito sa ating mga karagatan, mga daluyang-tubig, at ang kabuuang kalagayan ng lugar.

Ang extraction at transport ng mga fossil fuels para lamang makagawa ng plastic ay syang nagpo-produce ng GHG sa pamamagitan ng methane leakage at flaring, fuel combustion at energy consumption sa proseso ng paghuhukay natin para sa oil o gas, at sa pamamagitan ng land disturbance kapag ang mga kagubatan at mga kapatagan ay nililinis at pinapatag para lamang makagawa tayo ng well pads at pipelines. Kahit na ang plastic refining ay nakagagawa rin ng mapag-pinsalang mga emissions.

Ang mga plastic na napupunta sa mga landfill, at nare-recycle, o di kaya'y sinusunog ay nakapag-produde din ng emissions. Habang nasa proseso tayo ng landfilling ng plastic, nakapag-dudulot din ito ng iba pang napaka-hahalagang mga panganib, tulad ng sa kalusugan at sa kapaligiran. Ang recycling ang syang nakapag-dudulot lamang ng bahagyang mga emissions. Habang ang pagsusunog ay syang pangunahing dahilan ng mapinsalang mga emissions mula sa pamamahala ng mga basurang plastic.



Ang mga plastics na palutang-lutang nalang sa ibabaw ng karagatan, mga baybayin, mga pampang, at tanawin ay patuloy na bumubuga o nagpapakawala ng methane at iba pang mga GHGs, at ang mga emissions na ito ay nadaragdagan habang ang mga plastic ay patuloy na nabubulok.

Ang mga microplastics na nakakalat sa ating mga karagatan ay nakagagambala din sa kakayahan nitong maka-absorb at maka-sequester ng carbon dioxide. Ang microscopic na mga hayop at halaman ay gumaganap ng isang napaka-halagang papel sa loob ng biological carbon pump na syang humuhuli sa carbon na lumulutang sa ibabaw ng karagatan at dinadala nya ito sa kailaliman ng mga karagatan, ito rin ang pumipigil sa muling pagpasok nito sa ating atmosphere. Sa buong mundo ang mga plankton na ito ay nagiging contaminated na nang mga microplastics na nakakalat at naka tambak lang. Nakakabawas sa kakayahan ng mga phytoplankton na ayusin ang carbon sa pamamagitan ng photosynthesis ang plastic pollution. Nakakabawas din ito sa metabolic rates, reproductive success, at survival ng mga zooplankton na maglipat ng carbon sa kailaliman ng karagatan.

Ipinahiwatig din sa ulat na ang mga industriya ng plastic ay nag abala na palawakin pa ang kanilang produksyon na sya ring nagbabantang makapag-palala pa ng masasamang mga epekto ng plastics sa klima at kung saan maaaring gawing imposible ang layunin nating mapigilan ang pagtaas ng global temperature rise bago pa ito umabot ng 1.5°C.

“Kung ang produksyon, pagtatapon, at pagsusunog ng plastics ay hahayaan na lamang nating mavpatuloy sa kaslukuyan nitong growth trajectory, pagdating ng taong 2030, ang mga global emissions na ito ay maaaring umabot na sa 1.34 gigatons kada taon—maaaring umabot sa mahigit kumulang na to 295 five-hundred-megawatt coal plants. Pag-abot natin ng taong 2050, ang produksyon ng plastics at pag susunog nito ay maaaring maka- emit 2.8 gigatons ng CO2 kada taon, na naka pag-papawala ng mahigit kumulang na 615 five-hundred-megawatt na bulto at lawak ng emissions na mula sa mga "coal plants", ayon sa naka saad sa ulat.

Para lamang maiwasan ang pag- overshoot natin sa 1.5°C target, iminungkahi ng ulat na pagsama-samahin natin ang nai-ipong global greenhouse emissions sa loob ng natitirang (quickly declining) at mabilis nang nauubos na carbon budget na 420–570 gigatons.

“Pero kung ang paglago ng plastic production at pag susunog natin ay mag papatuloy na tulad ng ating inaakala, ang pinag-patong patong na greenhouse gas emissions, ito ngayon ay aabot ng mahigit pa sa 56 gigatons CO2e pag dating ng taon 2050, o mahigit kumulang na 10–13 percent ng kabuuang natitirang carbon budget pag dating ng taon 2100, ang sobrang labis na konserbatibong mga pala-palagay ay mag bubunga ulit ng pinag-patong patong na carbon emissions mula sa plastics na halos umabot na sa 260 gigatons, o lagpas pa sa kalahati sa carbon budget,” dagdag pa ng ulat.

Gamit ang data na ito, ang Climate Change Commission (CCC) ay lubos na nag aalala ukol sa mga problema natin sa plastics, lalong lalo na sa pang-lokal na antas. Sinabi ng climate body na ang pinaka epektibong paraan upang matugunan ang plastic crisis ay ang biglaan at lubusang pag babawas sa produksyon ng mga di kinakailangang o unnecessary plastics, kung saan kinakailangan nating magsimula sa national hanggang umabot tayo sa global bans ng halos lahat ng single-use at disposable plastics. (CCC)

Source: <https://pia.gov.ph/press-releases/releases/1069762>



# Anti-flood mission: DPWH goes full blast with Kalaklan River dredging

Published March 17, 2021, 5:56 PM

by [Bethena Unite](#)

The dredging works in Kalaklan River in Olongapo City, Zambales have started to bring the river back to its old form, thus turning it into an effective deterrent against floods.



(Photo via DPWH)

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) said Wednesday, March 17 that it is aiming to remove over 270,000 cubic meters of sand and silt from the river to allow unrestricted passage of runoff water toward Subic Bay.

“We are targeting to remove approximately 273,991 cubic meters of sand and silt that has been deposited from the mountains and residential areas in Zambales and try to restore the waterway to its original depth, maintain accessibility of the channel for boats, and minimize flooding in the city,” Public Works and Highways Secretary Mark Villar said.

According to DPWH Region 3 Director Roseller Tolentino, a cutter suction dredger has been deployed in the river.

The dredging operations will be implemented in two phases.

The first phase involves the clearing of the waterway of garbage, drifted lumber, coconut, and other large debris that could obstruct the operation of the Wastemaster Classic V dredger while the second part of the project entails the dredging of the river to a depth of three meters with a slope of 45 degrees using a suction pump.

“This 11-month project will be monitored through bathymetric surveys that measure the progress of the depth of the water body, while water will be tracked through water sampling in various locations,” Tolentino said.

Meanwhile, 21 dredging equipment have also been deployed to various areas like Pampanga, Bulacan, and Zambales to improve the water network and prevent flooding in Central Luzon.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/03/17/anti-flood-mission-dpwh-goes-full-blast-with-kalaklan-river-dredging/>



# Earth Hour 2021: How Pinoys may take part and speak up for climate action

**ABS-CBN News**

Posted at Mar 17 2021 02:27 PM

With evidence pointing towards a close link between nature's destruction and rising incidences of infectious disease outbreaks like COVID-19, Earth Hour 2021 aims to unite people online in speaking up for nature by virtually bringing together millions of people, businesses and leaders from around the world on March 27 at 8:30 p.m.

This global event comes ahead of key moments when world leaders take critical decisions on nature, climate change and sustainable development.

The occurrence of several catastrophic incidents last year including extreme weather events, devastating wildfires, and the COVID-19 outbreak highlighted that preventing nature loss is crucial for safeguarding the future.

A [global assessment of biodiversity targets](#) showed that the world failed to meet the 2020 deadline for achieving the targets set for preventing nature loss a decade ago.

WWF International Director General Marco Lambertini said 2021 is "a crucial year for humanity" in recovering from the pandemic.

"As the world tries to turn the tide and recover from the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic and rebuild itself, we need to put nature at the center of our recovery efforts to future-proof our economies and societies," Lambertini said.

## Decade of action

A recent draft of the Philippines' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), launched Feb. 5 2021, includes plans to reduce carbon emissions by 75 percent by the year 2030.

This is a sharp increase compared to the less ambitious goal of 30 percent emission reduction by the year 2040, which had been included in a draft that was presented at the end of 2020.

While the country's carbon emission reduction goal is set at 75 percent, only 2 percent is marked as unconditional. Approximately 73 percent, meanwhile, is conditional - which means external support will be needed in order for the Philippines to meet its new, more ambitious climate commitments.

## Earth Hour Philippines 2021

Similar to last year, Earth Hour Philippines 2021 will be mostly digital, with several online events held throughout the month of March.

Earth Hour 2021 is asking people to speak up for nature in as many diverse and creative ways as possible.

People from across the globe can share their stories of why nature matters, and come together safely for the switch-off at 8:30 p.m. on March 27.

"Each year, we hear about all the ways in which people try to make this difference for the sake of our home and our planet - and of course, this year is no different," said WWF-Philippines Ambassador Robi Domingo.

Additionally, WWF-Philippines is asking the Filipino public to lend their voices to the movement by sharing their hopes and dreams for the future online, through the [#SpeakUpForNature](#) hashtag.

Visit [www.earthhour.org](http://www.earthhour.org) to find out more about events happening this Earth Hour around the world, or check WWF-Philippines on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

*This material is being published as part of ABS-CBN News' partnership with WWF Philippines for Earth Hour 2021.*

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/life/03/17/21/earth-hour-2021-how-pinoys-may-take-part>





File photo from Earth Hour 2020

## CBCP, nanawagan ng pakikiisa sa Earth Hour 2021

Marso 17, 2021 3:07pm GMT+08:00

Nanawagan ang Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines ng pakikiisa para sa nakatakdang Earth Hour sa ika-27 ng Marso, 2021.

Ayon kay CBCP Vice President, Kalookan Bishop Pablo Virgilio David, napakaganda ng layunin ng taunang Earth Hour na pagkaisahin ang lahat upang bigyang halaga ang sanilikha na biyaya ng Panginoon sa sangkatauhan.

Paliwanag ng obispo, ang pakikibahagi sa Earth Hour ay isa ring makahulugang pagpapamalas ng pakikiisa at pagmamalaskit sa kalikasan sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay ng sandaling pagkakataon upang makapagpahinga.

"Please let us cooperate kasi napakagandang adhikain nito at ang Earth Hour ay pinasimulan yan ng World Wildlife Fund at naging isa sa pinakamalaking parang confederation of all ecological movements in the world.

"Symbolic yung Earth Hour, ang pakikiisa mo ay simbolo na meron kang malasakit para sa ating kalikasan," ang bahagi ng pahayag ni Kalookan Bishop Pablo Virgilio David sa kanyang pastoral visit on-air sa Radio Veritas.

Giit ng Obispo, nag-iisa lamang ang daigdig kaya't marapat lamang na pangalagaan ito ng bawat isa para na rin sa kinabukasan ng susunod pang henerasyon.

Pagbabahagi ni Bishop David, "Walang Planet B, isa lang yung planeta so far na nakitain natin ng buhay tapos sisirain pa natin, para bang now we are realizing, napakadali para sa tao na wasakin ang kanyang tahanan at kapag winasak natin itong nag-iisang tahanan natin, anong winawasak natin, sarili natin kinabukasan natin. Gusto ba natin ang mga future generation they will back and blame us na dahil sa kapabayaang natin at kawalan natin ng malasakit ay winasak natin ang ating tahanan."

Nakatakda sa ika-27 ng Marso, 2021 ang Earth Hour ngayon taon kung saan inaanyayahan ang lahat na makibahagi sa makahulugang pagpapatay ng mga ilaw sa loob ng isang oras mula alas-otso y medya ng gabi.

"Ano yung gagawin, yun lang at 8:30 in the evening of this coming Saturday, March 27 patayin yung mga pwedeng patayin na mga kuryente, na gumagamit ng kuryente lalong lalo na ang mga ilaw isang oras lang naman. Parang yung 1 hour na yun makikipagbonding ka with rest of the people around the world who would like to do this symbolically as an expression nung ating malasakit para sa ating kalikasan." paanyaya ni Bishop David.



Samantalah, hinihikayat din ni Bishop Broderick Pabillo, administrator ng Archdiocese of Manila, ang lahat na pahalagahan ang mundo na kaisa-isang tahananang ibinigay ng Diyos sa sangnilikha.

“Ito po’y celebration natin upang bigyang halaga ang ating inang kalikasan, ang ating mundo, ang kaisa-isang tahanan na ibinigay sa atin ng Diyos,” mensahe ni Bishop Pabillo sa Radio Veritas.

Inaanyayahan din ni Bishop Pabillo ang lahat na makiisa sa Special Programming ng Radio Veritas na “Ang Banal na Oras para sa Kalikasan” mula alas-8 hanggang alas-10 ng gabi, bilang pakikiisa ng himpilan sa pakikiisa sa Earth Hour.

Tampok sa “Banal na Oras para sa Kalikasan” ang mga pagninilay ng mga lider ng simbahan at isang oras na pagrososaryo na pangungunahan ng Association of Major Religious Superior in the Philippines o AMRSP.

Kaugnay nito, nanawagan din si Living Laudato Si-Philippines executive director Rodne Galicha sa mamamayan na palaging isaalang-alang ang pangangalaga sa ating nag-iisang tahanan.

“In every action that we do, in every word that we say and in every plan that we do, dapat naandyan lagi ang pangangalaga sa kalikasan,” bahagi ng mensahe ni Galicha sa panayam ng Radio Veritas.

Ipinaliwanag nito na hindi lamang sa loob ng isang oras dapat bigyan ng pahinga ang mundo kundi dapat ito ay gawin oras-oras bilang pagpapakita ng patuloy na pakikipag-ugnayan at pagmamalasakit sa ating nag-iisang tahanan.

“Earth Hour is not only for 1 hour. It should be every second and every breath that we take,” ayon kay Galicha.

Tema ng Earth Hour 2021 ang "Speak Up For Nature" na hinihikayat ang mamamayan na ipahayag at ipagtanggol ang karapatan ng kalikasan upang ipabatid sa bawat pinuno ng mga bansa ang pangangalaga at pagpapahalaga na matagal nang hinaing ng ating nag-iisang tahanan. —**LBG, GMA News**



# Gov't relentless to achieve 'steady supply' of vaccines

March 17, 2021, 9:25 am



**HOPE IN A DOSE.** President Rodrigo Duterte holds a vial of CoronaVac upon welcoming the arrival of the vaccines on February 28, 2021. The government is working aggressively to ensure that the country gets a stable supply of vaccines starting April or May. (Presidential Photo)

MANILA – The government is working aggressively to ensure that the country gets a stable supply of vaccines starting April or May to stamp out the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) and achieve sustainable health security, National Task Force Against Covid-19 chief implementer and vaccine czar Carlito Galvez Jr. has said.

“We are ensuring the public that your government is aggressively negotiating and working for us to stabilize the delivery of vaccines starting this second quarter because in the first part of this year, 80 percent of global vaccine supplies have already been cornered by rich countries,” Galvez said in a news release on Monday.

He said the country expects to receive a total of 2,379,200 vaccine doses by March, 1.4 million of which are Sinovac vaccines.

The 400,000 doses donated by the Chinese government will be delivered on March 24, while the one million doses procured by the government will arrive on March 28.

The government is also expecting 979,200 doses of AstraZeneca vaccines through the COVAX facility by the end of March or early April.

Two million doses from Sinovac and another two million doses from Gamaleya and the COVAX facility are expected to arrive by April.

Galvez said the government would explore the possibility of securing five million to 10 million doses of Sputnik V.

Negotiations will commence once the vaccine’s emergency use authorization (EUA) has been granted by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

In the global context, developed countries, such as the United States, will start to fully inoculate their citizens in the middle of the year and consequently ease the global demand for vaccines.

“In this first quarter, it is the diplomatic capital of President Rodrigo Duterte that helped our country in securing the initial doses of the vaccines from China,” Galvez said.

He said the government is looking at gradual deliveries of vaccines of eight million doses in May, 10 million doses in June, 15 million doses in July, and 20 million doses every month until December.

Galvez said this is to realize the government’s plan to inoculate 70 million adult Filipinos.

These vaccines are all part of the vaccine portfolio that the government is negotiating. The initial brands include AstraZeneca, Sinovac, Novovax, Sputnik V, Johnson & Johnson, Moderna, and Pfizer.



## Long-term goal to achieve health security

Along with this effort, Galvez said the government is also working closely with international vaccine manufacturers, such as the Serum Institute of India Pvt. Ltd. (SII), to establish long-term cooperation and study the possibility for the country to produce its vaccine.

He noted that the Philippines had that capability in 1938.

The Philippine government, which signed a supply agreement with SII for the procurement of 30 million doses of its Novavax vaccine, is working closely with the Indian vaccine company as part of the country's health and security strategy to eliminate Covid-19.

*"Maganda ang kinalabasan ng pagpunta natin sa India dahil na-secure natin ang 30 million doses ng Novavax. At mayroon po tayong possible continuing program with SII (The results of our trip to India are good as we were able to secure 30 million doses of Novavax. And we have a possible continuing program with SII),"* said Galvez who went to India last week.

He said part of the Duterte administration's goal is for the country to bring back its capacity to develop its vaccines.

"Before, we were the ones who were producing our vaccines and even donating it to other countries, such as China. President Duterte is more inclined in his earlier statements to reactivate and revive that capability," Galvez said.

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) earlier reported its plan to reactivate the pharmaceutical development unit of the DOST - Industrial Technology Development Institute and establish a virology institute.

He said members of the Vaccine Expert Panel would conduct exploratory talks with SII on health security, particularly on the development of a portfolio of vaccines that would eliminate Covid-19.

"The deal we are now exploring with SII is a fulfillment of a shared vision in 'Bridging the Valley of Death' by providing cost-efficient vaccines for the developing world," Galvez said.

Developing the country's vaccine technology through its partnership with SII would allow the country to become self-sufficient in terms of vaccine production, and provide affordable vaccines, as well as other medicines to its people, he said.

Over the years, the Philippines has been exploring possible areas of cooperation with the Indian government, particularly in the fields of health and pharmaceuticals, which cover alternative and traditional medicine, as well as vaccine development.

## Pace of vaccine rollout

Given the country's limited vaccine supply, Galvez emphasized that the ongoing inoculation program is only a "mini rollout" intended for medical front-liners and health care workers.

This complies with the priority framework recommended by the National Immunization Technical Advisory Group (NITAG) and the priority groups identified by the World Health Organization (WHO) for vaccine allocation.

*"Ang ating vaccine rollout ay para lang sa medical front-liners. Kailangang well-calibrated at by batches ang pagbabakuna dahil minsan ay nagkakaroon ng adverse effects at para ang manning sa mga ospital ay hindi ma-disrupt (Our vaccine rollout is only for medical front-liners. The vaccination has to be well-calibrated and done by batches because sometimes there are adverse reactions, and so that manning at hospitals won't get disrupted),"* Galvez said.

As of 11 a.m. on March 16, a total of 215,997 health care workers have been inoculated across the country.

Meanwhile, 1,125,600 doses have been deployed nationwide, including the northern tip of Luzon in Batanes and the southernmost island provinces of Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi.





He said the government aims to complete the inoculation of the country's 1.7 million health care workers by mid-April.

The immunization of senior citizens, the indigent population, and other vulnerable sectors will begin by the end of April or May.

With the arrival of more volumes, the massive vaccination of the general public will start by May or June once the inoculation of the priority sectors identified by NITAG has been completed.

"We can increase our target (vaccinees) this April with one million per week, then by May, it'll be two million per week. By June, we will have three to five million per week. With this, we can substantially say that by the end of the year, we can inoculate 70 million Filipinos," he added.

#### Containing the spread

In the meantime, Galvez said the national government would implement a series of measures in response to the spike in Covid-19 cases nationwide over the past several weeks.

He said these interventions include the imposition of an "inbound cap" that would only allow the entry of 1,500 international inbound passengers a day.

The government is also temporarily suspending the arrival of foreign nationals and returning overseas Filipinos (ROFs) who are non-overseas Filipino workers (non-OFWs).

"These are among the measures that were agreed upon during the emergency meeting of the Task Force's vaccine and response clusters. We shall be implementing these as soon as possible to contain local transmissions," he said.

Galvez said the government has also ramped up the distribution of face masks based on the directive of President Rodrigo Duterte to ensure the health and safety of all citizens, especially the vulnerable sectors.

"We shall be distributing millions of face masks nationwide concentrating on vulnerable affected areas. These masks are our first line of defense against the disease and must be worn at all times when outdoors," he said.

Galvez noted that the government would be strictly enforcing minimum health standards, which include the tightening of security in Covid-19 designated quarantine hotels and ensuring the stringent observance of health protocols in business establishments.

"The AFP, the Philippine Coast Guard, and the Philippine National Police will also be ramping up the conduct of security visibility patrols to make sure that everyone complies with our health guidelines," he said. (PR)



## MAGPABAKUNA NA, 'WAG MAGPASUNDO SA AMBULANSYA NG OSPITAL O PUNERARYA



March 17, 2021 @ 10:14 AM 20 hours ago

TULOY-tuloy nating subaybayan ang mga bakuna at pagbabakuna laban sa coronavirus disease o COVID-19 at ating ilalathala sa ating Remate Online ang makakalap nating balita bilang tulong sa lahat na magpasya at magpabakuna.

Kailangan nating magpabakuna para maagapan natin ang lumalalang pag-atake ng COVID-19 na nagbubunga na ng matinding kahirapan at krisis sa iba't ibang larangan hindi lang sa mamamayan kundi pati na rin sa pamahalaan.

Tandaan natin, nitong nakaraang mga buwan, naglalaro lang sa pagitan ng 1,000-2,000 araw-araw ang tinatamaan ng pandemya sa mahal kong Pinas.

Subalit pagdating ng Marso, nagsimula na itong dumami at napakabilis pa at naglalaro na ito sa 4,000-5,000 bawat araw.

May paniniwala pang maaaring aabot sa 11,000 kada araw sa katapusan ng Marso ang magkakasakit kung hindi ito maagapan, ayon sa OCTA.

Ang isang dahilan: Napatunayan nang umaatake ang mga variant o bagong anyo ng COVID-19 na mas mabilis magpakalat ng virus ng nasa 50 porsyento kumpara sa lumang virus at nagpapasok sa katawan ng tao ng 10 virus kumpara sa 1 lang sa luma.

Malaking dahilan din ang hindi pagsunod ng maraming mamamayan sa mga umiiral na patakaran gaya ng pagsusuot ng face mask, face shield, social distancing, paghuhugas ng kamay at iba pa.

### LUMALALA NA NGA, PAGBABAKUNA MABAGAL PA

Sa ngayon, nasa 200,000 pa lang ang nababakunahan mula sa mahigit 1.2 milyong bakuna na ipinakalat na ng pamahalaan sa buong bansa.

Malaking dahilan dito ang patakarang boluntaryo ang pagpapabakuna.

'Yun bang === malaya kang magpasya kung magpabakuna ka o hindi.

Isang dahilan din ang pagtanggap na tumanggap ng brand o tatak ng bakuna na available o nasa kamay na natin gaya ng AstraZeneca at Sinovac.

Halimbawa sa health workers na dapat mauna sa mabakunahan, higit na gusto ng nakararami ang AstraZeneca kaysa Sinovac.

May nangyari pa nga sa ilang ospital na umatras sa pagpapabakuna ang mga health worker nang malaman nilang Sinovac ang nadeliber sa kanila at hinintay ang pagdating ng AstraZeneca.



Naganap ito nang unang dumating ang Sinovac noong Marso 1, 2021 at idineliber agad sa mga ospital at dumating naman ang AstraZeneca ilang araw makaraan.

Ngayon, hindi makumple-kumpleto ang pagbabakuna mismo sa hanay ng health workers dahil sa mga patakarang boluntaryo at karapatang mamili ng mga ito at sinabayan pa ng kulang na suplay ng bakuna.

May mahigit sa 1.7 milyong health worker sa Pinas ngunit nariryan ang rekord na maliit na bilang ng mga nagpapabakuna, kahit pa sa hanay ng mga health worker sa Philippine National Police.

Ngayon naninindig na ang balahibo ng mga ito sa pag-uulat na may mga ospital na silang punuan na ng mga may COVID-19 sa pag-atake nang sabay ng luma o orig na virus at mga variant nito.

At ngayon lang naiisipan ng ilang health worker na magbabakuna na rin at hindi mamimili ng tatak ng bakuna upang hindi sila masama sa listahan ng mga nagkakasakit at namamatay.

### **PAGSUSPINDE SA ASTRAZENECA**

Sinuspinde ng 16 bansa sa Europa nitong nakaraang Lunes ang paggamit ng AstraZeneca makaraang may mga namatay matapos mabakunahan nito at lumahok din ang Venezuela at Indonesia.

Kabilang sa mga nagsuspinde ang Sweden, Romania, Slovenia, Portugal, Latvia, Spain, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Bulgaria, Germany, France, Italy, Democratic Republic of Congo at Venezuela.

Matagal na ring inayawan ito ng ilang bansa, lalo na ang South Africa na nagsabing hindi ito epektibo laban sa South African variant.

Ang United States naman, hanggang ngayon hindi pa rin kinikilala at pinapayagan ang AstraZeneca na magamit sa mga Kano.

May walong namatay sa Italy, 3 sa Germany at 1 sa Denmark, 1 sa Estonia, 1 sa Austria habang naospital ang iba pa sa pagkakaroon ng blood clot o pagbabara ng ugat at pagdurugo sa utak at iba pang kalamnan.

Kasabay nito ang pagkamatay rin umano ng nasa 71 katao sa India na higit na gumagamit ng AstraZeneca o Covishield kaysa sarili nilang imbentong bakuna na Covaxin.

Sa kabila nito, naninindigan pa rin ang World Health Organization at AstraZeneca/Orford, may gawa ng nasabing bakuna at mismong European Medicines Agency na ligtas at mabisa laban sa COVID-19 ang nasabing bakuna.

Sinasabi ng mga ito na wala pa ring matibay na ebidensya na direktang resulta ng bakunang AstraZeneca ang mga kamatayan at seryosong pagkakaospital ng iba pa.

Katwiran pa ng tatlo, mas maraming benepisyo sa AstraZeneca kaysa perwisyong dulot nito lalo na kung iisipin umanong milyon-milyon na ang naturukan samantalang kakaunti lang ang natamaan ng adverse effect.

Ito rin ang pinaiiral ng India na kasabay ng WHO, kompanyang AstraZeneca, EMA sa pag-pag-iimbestiga.

### **ISIP NAGBAGO AT WALANG HALO SA WHO**

Noong una, kasama ang Thailand sa nagsuspinde sa paggamit ng AstraZeneca ngunit kahapon, nagbabakuna na rin mismo si Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha at mga miyembro ng gabinete nito.



Thailand ang isang bansa na gagawa ng AstraZeneca at makakasama nito ang India at Australia na gumagawa na rin ng nasabing bakuna.

Bukod dito, sinasabi rin ng WHO na malinis ang hawak nitong AstraZeneca at walang nahalong bulto o batch nito na gaya ng nadeliber sa Europa na kinukuwestiyon dahil sa mga kamatayan at pagkakaospital ng ilan doon.

At dahil sa pagsandig sa mga pahayag ng WHO at mismong karanasan ng milyon-milyong katao, kasama ng 60 porsyento ng nabakunahan na sa Europa ng AstraZeneca, maraming bansa ang patuloy na nagbabakuna gamit ang kontrobersyal na bakuna.

Kasama ang Pilipinas sa maraming bansa na pumayag na gumamit ng AstraZeneca at sa katunayan, ginagamit na ito.

Kung magpapatuloy naman na magduda ang ilan sa Sinovac, mungkahi ngayon ng pamahalaan na turukan sila ng AstraZeneca at suspendihin naman ang paggamit ng Sinovac sa kanila.

Matatandaang naglabas ng pondo hindi lang ang pambansang pamahalaan kundi maging ang mga local government unit at pribadong kompanya para pambili ng bakuna at higit na pabor ang nakararaming LGU at kompanya sa AstraZeneca.

Malapit nang dumating ang karagdagang Sinovac sa bansa at maaaring makasabay o susunod dito ang AstraZeneca na manggagaling pa rin sa WHO.

Nasa mga pinapayagang mauna o priority list, lalo na ang health worker, ang pagpapasya kung alin ang gusto nilang maiturok sa kanila.

### **HERD IMMUNITY AT PAG-AGAP SA PANDEMYA**

Sa kabila ng mga pagdududa sa mga bakuna, layon ng pamahalaan na mabilis at malawak itong makapagbakuna para makamit na natin ang herd immunity kung tawagin.

Kung matuturuan ng bakuna ang nasa 60-70 milyong kwalipikado, makakamit natin ang herd immunity o sapat na bilang ng mga mamamayan na may panlaban sa COVID-19 at hindi na magaganap ang mga maramihan at mabilis na hawaan sa sakit.

Kaya naman, magpabakuna na tayo kung nariryan na sa ating harapan ang bakuna.

Sinasabi ngayon ng ating mga opisyal ng pamahalaan, mga health worker na nabakunahan na at hindi namamatayan hanggang ngayon at maging ng mga obispong kasapi ng Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines na “the best vaccine is the available vaccine.”

Huwag tayong maghintay ng mga bakuna na wala pa o kaya’y darating pa lang sa mga susunod na buwan o taon.

Mabilis na kumakalat ang COVID-19 at mga variant o bagong anyo nito na nakamamatay at nakaoospital.

Dapat tulong-tulong tayong labanan ito sa pagiging maagap sa pagpapabakuna.

Huwag nating hintaying dadapo ang pandemya sa atin bago tayo kumilos o magpabakuna o kung tayo itatakbo na sa ospital o sinusunog na sa mga punerarya.

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/magpabakuna-na-wag-magpasundo-sa-ambulansya-ng-ospital-o-punerarya/>





## Lethal pollution high in 2020 despite lockdowns

posted March 17, 2021 at 11:30 am

by [AFP and Marlowe Hood](#)

Deadly small particle pollution in dozens of nations exceeded World Health Organization recommendations last year despite Covid lockdowns, according to a report released Tuesday.

The partial or complete shutdown of transport and industry for months at a time in 2020 reduced average levels of so-called PM2.5 pollution across the world, including in major cities, the IQAir quality report found.

Concentrations of the life-shortening particles -- cast off by traffic pollution and burning fossil fuels -- dropped 11 percent in Beijing, 13 percent in Chicago, 15 percent in New Delhi, 16 percent in London, and 16 percent in Seoul.

At least 60 percent of India's cities were more breathable last year than in 2019, and all of them had cleaner air than in 2018.

"Many parts of the world experienced unprecedented -- but short-lived -- improvements in air quality in 2020," said Lauri Myllyvirta, lead analyst at the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) and co-author of the report.

"This meant tens of thousands of avoided deaths from air pollution."

But only 24 of 106 countries monitored met WHO safety guidelines, said the report, based on the world's largest database of ground-level air pollution measurements.

China and many South Asian nations experienced PM2.5 pollution several times greater than WHO recommended thresholds, and in some regions the concentration was six to eight times higher.

Twenty-two of the world's more polluted cities are in India.

Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Mongolia and Afghanistan topped the 2020 ranking, with average annual PM2.5 concentrations between 77 and 47 microgrammes per cubic metre (mcg/m<sup>3</sup>) of air.

Deep into the lungs

The UN says PM2.5 density should not top 25 mcg/m<sup>3</sup> in any 24-hour period, or 10 mcg/m<sup>3</sup> averaged across an entire year.

The most polluted capital cities in the world last year were New Delhi (84 mcg/m<sup>3</sup>) and Dhaka (77), with Jakarta, Kathmandu, Islamabad, Hanoi and Beijing all in the top 20.

About half of all European cities exceed WHO's suggested limits.

Air pollution levels were made worse in 2020 -- tied for the hottest year on record -- by climate change, the report noted.

Wildfires fuelled by scorching heatwaves led to extremely high pollution levels in California, South America and Australia.

Data from the first few months show PM2.5 pollution returning to pre-pandemic levels.

The European Space Agency (ESA) reported Monday that concentrations of another health-damaging air pollutant that dipped in 2020, nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), has also rebounded and, in some parts of the world, is on the rise.

After dropping, for example, about 40 percent last February in Chinese megacities Beijing and Chongqing, NO<sub>2</sub> levels shot back up last month to 2019 in Beijing, and nearly double from 2019 levels in Chongqing.

"We expected air pollution to rebound as lockdowns are lifted across the globe," Claus Zehner, ESA's mission manager for the Copernicus Sentinel-5P Earth monitoring satellite, said in a statement.

"In the coming weeks and months, we expect increases of nitrogen dioxide concentrations also over Europe."

Air pollution shortens lives worldwide by nearly three years on average, and causes more than eight million premature deaths annually, earlier studies have found.

The WHO calculates 4.2 million deaths from outdoor air pollution, but has underestimated the impact on cardiovascular disease, recent research has shown.



Average lifespan is cut 4.1 years in China, 3.9 years in India, and 3.8 years in Pakistan.

In Europe, life expectancy is shortened by eight months.

PM2.5 particles penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream. In 2013, the WHO classified it as a cancer-causing agent.

Compared to other causes of premature death, air pollution worldwide kills 19 times more people each year than malaria, nine times more than HIV/AIDS, and three times more than alcohol.



# The myth of plastic recycling

By: [Marcy Trent Long](#), [Von Hernandez](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:03 AM March 17, 2021

Tomorrow, March 18, is Global Recycling Day, a time supposedly to celebrate the role recycling plays in our greener future.

This is also the time to put cold water on the myth of disposable plastic recycling. Although some urban centers in Asia can afford waste management and recycling systems that tackle the onset of single use packaging, most of Asia's island nations and rural communities don't have that capability. This plastic waste deluge over the last few decades has put such countries in the global spotlight of blame for the eight million tons of plastic going into the ocean every year. And yet, is this ocean plastic crisis really their fault?

With global plastic recycling rates hovering at less than 10 percent and many places challenged by the logistics of recycling, the claim that plastic recycling works needs to be debunked more forcefully. The truth is fewer than 1 out of every 10 products made with plastic packaging have been recycled since the advent of plastics production in the 1950s. In most places in Asia, the plastic has instead ended up in open dumpsites or incinerators and contaminated rivers and oceans. The 70-year track record of plastic recycling failure does not inspire confidence in the promises many companies continue to make to improve recycling.

It's time to really look at who is responsible for producing, shipping, and dispensing disposable plastic to Asian countries where the waste collection infrastructure is not fit to manage this problem in an environmentally safe manner. Even the most industrialized countries with advanced waste management systems have failed to properly collect and recycle disposable plastics, which is why they ship their waste to Asia for the material to be sorted, cleaned, and then counted as "recycled waste."

In Hong Kong in 2020, nine out of 10 plastic recyclers closed shop because so much of the collected disposable plastic waste was contaminated by food waste, and the recyclers couldn't compete with virgin plastic prices. Still, despite the collapse of the recycling sector in many parts of the world due in part to plastics overproduction, the plastics industry is intent on expanding production while promoting the mantra of recycling as the solution to plastic pollution. According to Statista, the cumulative plastic production estimate in 2050 will be 34 billion metric tons, up from 8.3 billion in 2017.

The only plastic recycling that is happening in Asia at scale is PET/HDPE recycling in major urban areas—commonly referred to as "rPET." That's the plastic packaging used for most beverage bottles and consumer care products like hand soap. Many consumer brand companies have chosen PET as their packaging of choice because it is lightweight and with low transportation costs, can be easily modified for consumer marketing purposes, and is cheap as chips.

In the last three years, Break Free From Plastic has completed a brand audit of the top global plastic polluters. Seven of the audit's top polluters—the Coca-Cola Company, PepsiCo, Nestlé, Unilever, Mondelez International, Mars, Inc., and Colgate-Palmolive—have joined the Ellen MacArthur Foundation New Plastics Economy Global Commitment, establishing the goal that all plastic packaging will contain 50 percent recycled content by 2030. But according to a recent Ellen MacArthur Foundation report, the signatories to this commitment have reduced their use of virgin plastic by only 0.1 percent from 2018 to 2019.



These companies are making investments in the rPET infrastructure to make recycling happen. New PET/HDPE recycling plants are being built in Hong Kong and in the Philippines by Swire Coca-Cola, and P&G recently signed long term off-take agreements with plastic recycling giant Indorama in Thailand.

But will all this be worth it? According to a new McKinsey & Company report (“Sustainability in Packaging in Asia”), more than 65 percent of surveyed consumers in Indonesia, India, and China are willing to pay more for sustainable packaging. And in India, respondents indicated they perceive paper and glass packaging as more sustainable. Chinese consumers perceive either compostable or recyclable plastics as more sustainable, but here is the hitch: In China, rPET is not allowed to be used in food grade packaging. So if a water bottle is recycled, it must be “downcycled” into asphalt or other lower grade materials.

On Global Recycling Day, what’s really there to celebrate in plastic recycling?

\* \* \*

*Von Hernandez is the global coordinator of Break Free From Plastic. Marcy Trent Long is the host and producer of Sustainable Asia Podcasts.*



18 MARCH 2021, THURSDAY



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