

18 MARCH 2022, FRIDAY



DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR Continues Community panTREE

Thursday, March 17, 2022 Journal Online



Department of Environment and Natural Resources (**DENR**) Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna (2nd from left) and Undersecretary for Finance, Information Systems and Climate Change Atty. Analiza Rebuelta-Teh (right) show support to DENR-National Capital Region (NCR) Executive Director Jacqueline A. Caancan (left) for the DENR Community panTREE project set up by the region in Bgy. Sta. Elena, Marikina City on March 9, 2022. DENR-NCR spearheaded the community panTREE which gave out free seedlings of vegetables and fruit-bearing trees (inset) at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. It plans to resume the activity this April. Also in photo is **DENR**-NCR OIC Assistant Regional Director for Technical Services Engr. Ignacio R. Almira, Jr.



Source: <https://journal.com.ph/denr-continues-community-pantree/>



DENR exec pushes for legally-binding accord on plastic waste disposal

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA MARCH 17, 2022

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is pushing for a legally binding global agreement on plastic wastes.

Albert Magalang, DENR's Climate Change Service chief of Climate Change Information and Technical Support Division said the government should address plastic pollution on a global scale.

Magalang first made the DENR's position on the issue during the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 5.2) held from February 28 to March 2.

The agreement, he said, should reduce plastic waste discharge into the environment by covering all stages of its life cycle, and by adopting a circular economy approach related to its design—production, use and disposal.

Magalang, who also led the Philippine delegation in the negotiations on the plastic treaty at the UNEA 5.2, stressed that the “global agreement should consider national capabilities and circumstances” and tackle plastic pollution from preventive measures in the upstream part of the lifecycle, to the downstream addressing waste management to prevent plastic pollution in the marine and other environments.

In the form of a new resolution, he believes this would also support the goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people.

Hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNEA is the global authority for the environment with programs focusing on climate, nature, pollution, and sustainable development.

In addition to UNEA 5.2, UNEP is also celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, which is considered a historic milestone for the global environmental community.

In celebration of the anniversary of UNEP, DENR Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna underscored the importance of immediacy in promulgating policies and forging agreements for the environment.

“We realize how fast time flies and fast disappearing are the opportunities for doing the maximum good for this planet and our very existence as species. The environmental repercussions we are experiencing are all traceable to us humans such as climate change that intensifies hazards creating disasters worldwide,” Sampulna said.

The new DENR chief noted that environmental repercussions could be solved through the delivery of means of implementation to developing countries like the Philippines in areas such as finance, technology, and capacity building.

According to Sampulna, these environmental repercussions include the “massive disappearance of our support system like natural resources and their biodiversity, the massive choking of our oceans because of plastics, the rise of zoonotic diseases like Covid-19, and the deterioration of our health from chemicals and wastes.”

The DENR chief is advocating the prevention and reduction of residual impacts to become the unifying standard of the collective work of member-states.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2022/03/17/denr-exec-pushes-for-legally-binding-accord-on-plastic-waste-disposal/>



GO Bulacan

11h · 🌐

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Sa Calumpit, nakaipon ng mahigit 1.2 milyong kilo ng basura at higit pa ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at Pamahalaang Panlalawigan ng Bulacan matapos isagawa ang isang river rehabilitation initiative sa Calumpit River.

Naitanggal na ang basura at water hyacinths sa Calumpit River matapos ang clean up at patuloy na pagpatrol ng DENR at Pamahalaang Panlalawigan sa Calumpit River.

Ayon kay DENR Regional Executive Director Paquito Moreno Jr., sinimulan ang proyekto noong Disyembre 2021 na kung saan umabot sa 1.2 milyong kilo ng basura ang nakuha ng DENR.

“Desilting and grubbing activities were also done to fast track the hauling of submerged garbage that clogged waterways and caused flooding incidence during rainy season,” saad nito.

Sa first phase ng proyekto, nilinis ang 1.5 kilometrong haba ng Calumpit River abot barangay Sapang Bayan, Gatbuca, Frances, at Poblacion.

Matagumpay ang proyekto dahil napagbuti nito ang kalagayan ng ilog at naklaro ito mula sa basura at water hyacinths.

Source: PIA Bulacan

📷: PIA Bulacan

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CALUMPIT RIVER, WALA NG BASURA MATAPOS ANG CLEAN UP DRIVE NG DENR

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HIGIT 2 MILYONG HALAGA NG AGARWOOD, NAKUMPISKA NG SORSOGON PNP; 1 LALAKI, ARESTADO

Arestado ang isang lalaki matapos makumpiska sa kaniyang minamanehong sasakyan ang limang sako na naglalaman ng humigit-kumulang 136 kilo ng Agarwood chunks na tinatayang may market value na Php 2,730,000 milyon nitong Marso 15, 2022.

Ayon sa Sorsogon Police Provincial Office (PPO), nakatanggap ng ulat ang kanilang Provincial Intelligence Unit tungkol sa isang itim na Nissan Almera na may karga umanong Agarwood na kung tawagin ay "Lapnisan". Agad naman itong nagsagawa ng checkpoint katuwang ang Gubat Municipal Police Station (MPS) upang mahuli ang suspek.

Bandang alas-5:30 ng hapon nitong Martes, matagumpay na naharang ng mga otoridad ang nasabing sasakyan sa Brgy. Buenavista, Gubat, Sorsogon at nasamsam ang Lapnisan na tinaguriang "wood of the Gods" na isa sa mga pinakamahal na uri ng punong kahoy sa buong mundo. Kabilang ito sa listahan ng Endangered/threatened Philippine plants ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) kaya mahigpit na pinagbabawal ang pagbebenta nito.

Nasampahan na ang suspek ng kaukulang kaso dahil sa paglabag sa Presidential Decree No. 705 o "Revised Forestry Code" na inamyendahan ng PD NO. 1559, Executive Order No. 277 at ng Republic Act No. 7161.

Walang inirekomendang piyansa para sa pansamantalang kalayaan ng suspek at kapag napatunayang siya ay nagkasala, mahaharap ito sa anim hanggang 12 taon na pagkabilanggo at multang Php 100,000.00 hanggang Php1,000,000.00.

Sa ngayon, nasa kustodiya na ng DENR ang nakumpiskang Agarwood para sa kaukulang disposisyon.

👤: Sorsogon PPO

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MAGTIPIID SA PAGGAMIT NG TUBIG AT KURYENTIPID TIPS SA PANAHON NG TAG-INIT



March 17, 2022 @ 8:20 PM 10 hours ago

BAGAMA'T hindi pa opisyal na nagdedeklara ng panahon ng tag-init o summer ang Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) ay damang-dama na natin ang init at alinsangan. Sasabay pa ngayon ang pagtaas ng presyo ng gasolina at diesel. Isa sa epekto nito ay pagtaas ng presyo ng kuryente.

Noong nakaraang linggo, hinikayat ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB) ang publiko na maging matalino at responsible sa paggamit ng tubig upang maiwasan na masayang ito. Kinakailangan magtipid sa paggamit ng tubig habang nagtutulungan ang pamahalaan at ang konsesyunaryo upang makapagbigay ng tuloy-tuloy na supply ng tubig sa panahon ng tag-init.

Base sa ulat ng PAGASA, ang antas ng tubig sa Angat Dam ay nasa 194.02 metro sa araw ng Marso 16, 2022, (6:00am). Sa Ipo Dam nasa 98.75 mtrs at sa La Mesa Dam nasa 78.43.

Sa panahon ng tag-init, siguradong tataas din ang konsumo ng kuryente. Kaya naman, para makatulong sa mga Ginang ng Tahanan sa kanilang pagbaba-budget, ibabahagi ko ang mga “kuryentipid” tips mula sa EcoWaste Coaliton:

1. I-off ang mga ilaw at bunutin ang mga appliances o mga devices kapag hindi na ginagamit o matapos gamitin.
2. Huwag hayaan na naka-plug in sa magdamag ang mobile phones, at bunutin na rin ang charger kapag fully charged na ang inyong telepono.
3. Gumamit lamang ng energy-efficient at mercury- free-light-emitting diode lights.
4. Gumamit lamang ng low-wattage lights sa mga lugar sa bahay na hindi masyadong kailangan ang liwanag.
5. Palagiang linisan ang mga ilaw para mapanatili ang “illumination” nito.
6. Gamitin ang liwanag ng sikat ng araw, buksan ang mga bintana.
7. Gumamit ng pamaypay o electric fan kaysa air-conditioners.
8. Bawasan ang paggamit ng air-condition. Kung gagamit naman, ilagay lamang sa 25 degrees Celsius. Palagian ding linisin ang dust filters at condenser coils.



16. Ilagay ang tirang pagkain sa bagong saing na bigas para ito kaysa gumamit ng stove, toaster o microwave.
17. Palagiang linisan ang inyong mga refrigerator at ilagay lamang sa katamtamang temperatura at huwag i-overload ang refrigerator.
18. Iwasan ang bukas at sara sa refrigerator.
19. I-organisa ang paglilinis, pagluluto, pamamalantsa, paglalaba at iba pang mga gawain.
20. Hintaying mapuno ang washing machine ng mga labahin bago simulant itong paandarin.
21. Gumamit ng init ng araw sa pagpapatuyo ng mga sinampay.
22. Mag-plantsa ng maramihan at hindi ng patingi-tingi.

Palagiang tandan ang mga kuryentipids at maging responsible sa paggamit ng tubig, siguradong makatipid sa mga gastusin sa bahay.



BARMM to provide clean water

By [Julmunir Jannaral](#) March 17, 2022

COTABATO CITY: A Bangsamoro lawmaker filed a bill aimed at promoting clean water, including safe drinking water, and preserving and restoring water resources through an effective water quality management system.

Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) Bill 176, also known as the "Safe Drinking Water Act of 2022," principally authored by Member of the Parliament Amilbahar Mawallil, is intended to protect human health, prevent drinking water health hazards, and protect, preserve, and revive the quality of fresh, brackish and marine waters in the region.

"Decades of armed conflict and government neglect have made access to clean water in the region a luxury," said Mawallil.

He added that the establishment of Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) presents an opportunity to correct the decades of the inaction of the government to address this perennial problem, and lauded the Bangsamoro government's distribution of desalination machines in the island provinces, which convert marine water to freshwater.

Under the proposed bill, the Bangsamoro Water Resources Board (BWRB) will be created to formulate policies and plans, coordinate planning, monitoring and evaluation of programs, and regulate the utilization and allocation of water resources in the region.

"It is imperative that we, as members of the BTA, institutionalize mechanisms to ensure that our water resources are not only preserved but are restored as we pursue economic development for our region," said Mawallil.

In the proposed measure, a comprehensive Bangsamoro Water Quality Management System will be developed to guide the BWRB in managing the designated water quality management areas.

The Ministry of Public Works will also be tasked to coordinate with the board and the local government units to prepare regional and local programs on sewerage and septage management.

Also in the proposed measure is implementing a wastewater charge system through collection of a fee based on a payment for discharging wastewater into the water bodies, including Lake Lanao.

Rewards, monetary or otherwise, will also be provided to individuals, private organizations and entities that have undertaken outstanding and innovative projects, technologies, processes and techniques or activities in water quality management.



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Earth Hour, itinakda sa March 26

103 views • Mar 17, 2022



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Inaanyayahan ng WWF-Philippines ang mga Pilipino na makiisa sa Earth Hour 2022 sa pamamagitan ng pagpatay ng kanilang ilaw sa darating na March 26, 8:30 ng gabi. Ang taunang pagdiriwang na ito ay simbolo ng malawakang pagtatalaga sa pangangalaga sa

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Source:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Earth+Hour%2C+itinakda+sa+March+26

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By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

[@jonlmayuga](#)

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SHORING UP TUBBATAHA: Metro Pacific Investments Foundation Inc., represented by its chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan (top row, center) and its president Melody del Rosario (top row, left), signed the memorandum of agreement with the Tubbataha Protected Area Management Board, represented by Palawan Gov. Jose Alvarez (bottom row right) and DENR MIMAROPA Region OIC, Lormelyn Claudio (bottom row, center). Witnesses to the event were MPIF trustee and MPIC chief finance, risk, and sustainability officer Chaye Cabal-Revilla (top row, right) and Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park Protected Area superintendent Angelique Songco (bottom row, left).



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Are you occupying an agricultural land?



By HENRY L. YAP,
UAP, FPIEP

Are you an occupant of unregistered public agricultural lands who failed to formalize your ownership by filing an Agricultural Free Patent application last December 31, 2020?

The good news is that Republic Act (RA) No. 11573, An Act Improving the Confirmation Process for Imperfect Land Titles and its implementing rules and regulations (IRR) are now in effect. This allows property owners to confirm an imperfect title.

BACKGROUND

It is estimated that two million to 4.8 million parcels of untitled lands exist in the country today, according to the Foundation for Economic

Freedom (FEF).

The confirmation of imperfect and incomplete titles may be done either by administrative or judicial means.

Subject to the following requirements, Free Patents may be applied by:

1. A natural-born Filipino citizen who does not own more than 12 hectares of agricultural land, has continuously occupied and cultivated such land by himself or his predecessors-in-interest for at least 30 years prior to April 15, 1990, and paid property tax on such land, among others; or

2. Any Filipino citizen who is in actual occupation and cultivation of land zoned for residential areas, has continuously occupied it by himself or his predecessors-in-interest for at least ten years, provided he may not own more than 200 sqm, 500 sqm, 750 sqm and 1,000 sqm in highly urbanized cities, first and second class municipalities, and other cities, respectively.

However, RA 9176 enacted in 2002, set the deadline for the filing of applications for administrative legislation (Free Patent) and confirmation of imperfect and incomplete

titles to Alienable and Disposable agricultural lands until December 31, 2020 only.

With the passage of RA 11573, similar or related provisions of land laws were harmonized to remove ambiguity. Agricultural Free Patent applications with simplified requirements can again be accepted, and issuance of land classification certification for judicial titling.

PUBLIC FORUM

In an online forum

organized by the FEF in partnership with the Land Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR-LMB) last March 2, 2020, the provisions of the new law and IRR were explained.

Lawyer Erwin Tiamson explained key features of the law such as:

The removal of deadlines for free patent applications which previous laws

prescribed; the adoption of a simplified agricultural free patent application process similar to that of residential free patent, with 120-day processing and five-day approval/disapproval time; the shortening to 20 years the required possession period for judicial (from 75 years) and administrative (from 30 years) confirmation of imperfect titles; and the sufficiency of a duly designated



DENR geodetic engineer's certification, instead of the DENR Secretary's certification approval, that the land is alienable and disposable.

On the other hand, Engr. Henry Pacis, chief of the DENR-LMB's Land Policy & Planning Division, expounded on the simplification of the applicant qualifications, documentary requirements, and the updated application's process flow.

REFORMS UNDERWAY

DENR-LMB is currently digitizing its public land titling systems and procedures, including the online processing of public land applications and possible issuance of electronic patents, Pacis also said.

References:

Republic Act No. 11573 and IRR (DENR Administrative Order No. 2021-38).

FEF, LMB hold forum on enforcement of new land titling law. FEF Press release, March 4, 2021.

Real Property: Ownership and Registration. Atty. Victorino Mamalateo (+) and Atty. Mary Joy Mamalateo-Jusay, 2021.

Henry L. Yap is an architect, environmental planner, real estate practitioner and former professorial lecturer.

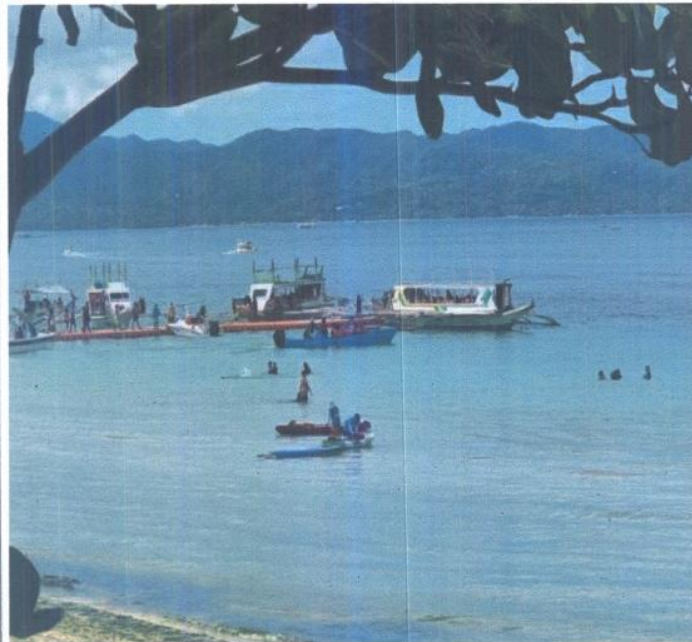


DOT chief warns Boracay stakeholder's vs slipping back into old bad habits

BY MA. STELLA F. ARNALDO

MARCH 17, 2022

An ugly orange pontoon which allows tourists to clamber aboard pumpboats to take them on trips around Boracay now juts from the white beach to the water, destroying the line of sight of guests onshore. (Photo by Stella Araldo)



BACK to old bad habits again?

Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo Puyat reiterated that fire dancing on Boracay Island is still strictly prohibited unless the dancers use LED lights. "Bawal pa 'yan (That's still banned).

It's against the environment," she told the BusinessMirror via Messenger, after receiving videos of fire dancers doing a show at Wave bar on the island.

The video showed the dancers waving their kerosene-lighted lamps called poi closely around the faces and bodies of the bar's guests, who appeared delighted despite the danger the action posed to the person.

The Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF), which oversaw the rehabilitation of the island, prohibited fire dancing on the island starting October 26, 2018, or six months after it reopened to tourism.

Aside from fire dancing, other major attractions on Boracay that had been prohibited were the wild parties on the beachfront that used to happen during Labor Day, the building of sandcastles, and wedding receptions on the beach.

The BIATF also strictly implemented easement regulations, such that 25+5 meters of the white beach should be kept free of obstructions like chairs, tables, and lounge beds.

Pontoon within easement

However, an orange pontoon between stations 1 and 2 now juts across the white beach and into the water, destroying the line of sight of tourists. Instead of having a clear sight of the beach and its clean waters, visitors see hordes of people clambering onboard pump boats that are to take the latter on trips around the island.

Malay councilor Nenette Graf explained, "It's a pontoon for watersports being used during amihan (northwest monsoon)." According to Department of Tourism (DOT) Regional Director for Western Visayas Cristine Mansinares, however, the pontoon was approved by the BIATF, but so far, no documentation has been seen showing such approval.



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DOT chief warns Boracay stakeholders vs slipping back into old bad habits

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The BIATF was chaired by former Environment Secretary Roy A. Cima and cochaired by Romulo Puyat and Interior Secretary Eduardo M. Año.

Also, hawkers of boat trips and other water sports activities freely roam on the island once more, unlike prior to the pandemic lockdown, when there was a centralized station located between stations 1 and 2, where said activities could

be booked by tourists.

Data from DOT-Region 6 showed 179,920 tourist arrivals on Boracay from January to March 12, 2022, a three-fold increase from the same period in 2021. From March 1-12 alone, there were 56,239 arrivals, of which 609 were foreigners, 462 were overseas Filipinos, while the bulk of domestic tourists at 22,170 came from the National Capital Region.



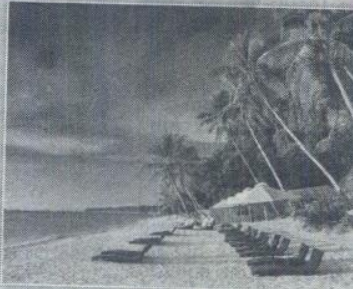
Boracay, Bohol dadagsain ng turista

Patuloy ang pagbangon ng turismo sa Pilipinas ngayong pababa na ang kaso ng COVID-19 sa bansa.

Ayon kay Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, ilang travel operator na ang nagkakasa ng charter flight para makabisita sa Bohol at Boracay.

Ito'y kasunod sa pagluluwag ng restriction sa pagbiyaha sa susunod na buwan.

"Some of the ones that we've talked to, marami na silang charter flights that are going to come. I think meron na silang chartered flights to go to Bohol, and some are already planning to go to Boracay," wika ni Puyat.



"Of course, pareho pa rin, fully vaccinated, 48 hours ang negative RT-PCR before departure, at dinagdag natin 'yong 24 hours 'yong lab-based antigen before departure," wika ni Puyat sa mga requirement sa pagbisita sa Pilipinas. **(Ray Mark Patriarca)**

Lahad ni Puyat, mula Pebrero hanggang kalagitnaan ng Marso ay umabot na sa halos 100,000 ang turistang nagtungo sa mga tourist spot sa bansa.

Sa Abril ay inaasahan pang dumami ito dahil pwede nang pumasok sa Pilipinas ang mga turista sa lahat ng bansa.





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UNMASKING RESPONSIBLE MINING

“RESPONSIBLE mining” is an umbrella term under which questionable features take shelter.

For example, the term accommodates the open-pit mining method, which, no matter how responsibly it is carried out, alters an ecosystem irreversibly; this is elementary science. In fact, built into the DNA of mining is the risk of a host of potential impacts, according to the World Resources Institute: habitat loss/fragmentation, disturbance to wildlife, chemical contamination of surface and groundwater, declining species populations, toxicity impacts to organisms, loss of original vegetation/biodiversity, among others. While mining companies can try to mitigate these scenarios, we must calculate if they are worth the trouble.

The term also covers mining primarily for export. Data from the Mines and Geoscience Bureau finds that almost all of the minerals extracted in the Philippines are exported, thereby using national patrimony to benefit not the Philippines but foreign nations.

Mining also does not preclude social impacts. Mining in environmental areas affects ecosystem services—potable water, protection from storms, food—on which communities depend.

All this falls under the narrative arc of re-

sponsible mining, and all sanctioned by law, through the Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

Thus, while we recognize the role of mining in modern life, we can't rely on responsible mining to administer such an invasive undertaking. Alternative minerals management (AMM), which views mining from a whole-of-life approach, is a proposed framework for mining governance in the Philippines. AMM is encapsulated in a proposed bill filed in the 18th Congress by Senators Risa Hontiveros and Grace Poe and Rep. Lawrence Fortun.

In AMM, only so-called strategic minerals, or minerals needed for national development, including national industrialization, shall be marshaled. Mining that does not serve this goal shall be disallowed. Strategic minerals shall also be processed domestically, so they rise in value, bolstering the GDP.

Crucially, AMM fills the void left by the 1995 Mining Act in protecting the environment. In AMM, the open-pit method is prohibited, and mining in key biodiversity areas, critical watersheds, critical habitats, and other such areas is forbidden. AMM is also anchored in the climate discourse. A mining project which is powered by a coal plant flies in the face of the proposed moratorium on coal by the Department of Energy. Mining

must not slow down the Philippines' shift to a low-carbon development pathway.

Some believe mining is atavistic; a post-extractive future is gaining traction in light of the oncoming climate catastrophe. Its proponents argue: How can mining be endorsed when every effort must be made to conserve the environment and not destroy it?

A just minerals transition must thus be conceived to interrogate the role of mining in the shift to renewable energy (for the production of solar panels, for example). Every care must be taken not to inadvertently allow renewable energy to destroy the environment it avows to conserve in the first place.

AMM then is a compromise. It's a solution that allows mining but only under stringent conditions, which the environment, as the source of our nourishment, must deserve. Responsible mining, which rolls off the tongue, is admittedly popular. However, in alternative minerals management, the language for the primacy of the planet and people over profit is clearly articulated where in responsible mining, it has been lost in translation.

MAYA QUIRINO,
advocacy coordinator,
Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center



Anti-quarrying stand eyed in slay try on Infanta mayor

By AARON RECUENCO

Police investigators are looking into the strong stand of Infanta, Quezon Mayor Filipina America against quarrying as the strong motive behind the failed assassination attempt on her last month.

Gen. Dionardo Carlos, chief of the Philippine National Police (PNP), said local investigators have already obtained

testimonies of at least four witnesses that are crucial in the CCTV footages which are now on the hands of the local police.

America was attacked on Feb. 27 in Barangay Poblacion 1, Infanta, Quezon after attending church service.

The local official is known to have an unwavering stand against quarrying in the town. Initial investigation reveals that she admitted received death threats which are either job or election-related.

"The Philippine National Police (PNP) has identified four persons of interest as the Special Investigation Task Group (SITG) 'America' continues to look deeper into the shooting incident involving Infanta Mayor Filipina America," said Carlos.

"We are still in the process of determining how much of politics can really be involved in this slay try. Our coordination with the Commission on Elections regarding this incident is constant so as to identify the climate of violence that may persist in the area," he added.

Police investigators collected vital evidence such as the closed-circuit television (CCTV) footages showing the possible suspects within the vicinity of the crime scene. The Regional Forensic Unit 4A has already conducted cross matching examination on the recovered pieces of evidence.

America, who is a re-electionist, is asking an ample time so she can give her full testimony on the case at hand.



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Manila Water spends record P13.7 B in 2021

By CATHERINE TALAVERA

Manila Water Co. Inc. said its capital expenditures in 2021 hit a record P13.7 billion from P10.7 billion a year ago.

In a statement, Manila Water said major components of the investment were the construction of new facilities and networks to expand service coverage, rehabilitation and improvement on existing assets and facilities for both water and wastewater, compliance projects relating to biological nutrient removal (BNR) for wastewater facilities, and the implementation of interim water source projects.

"These intervening water sources are critical to ensuring water availability in the coming peak demand months during summer, while major new water sources are still being built by the government," Manila Water said.

Completed sources include deep wells with a total capacity of over 100 million liters per day (MLD).

Major water system projects were also covered by the capex.

These include the East Bay Water Supply System Project, which will utilize Laguna Lake as source, the Calawis Water

Supply System Project which will treat and distribute water from the Upper Marikina Watershed, the Marikina Portable Water Treatment Plant, which will utilize Marikina River as a water source, and the landmark Novaliches-Balara Aqueduct 4 (NBAQ4) project which entails the construction of a fourth aqueduct from the La Mesa Dam to the Balara Treatment Plants (BTPs).

"It is imperative for us to focus our capital spending to meet both our water supply and sewerage service obligations. Despite the challenges, we continue to serve more than seven million people in the East Zone with safe and reliable water supply, covering over 1.3 million households and with more than 5,000 kilometers of network pipelines," Manila Water president and CEO JV Emmanuel de Dios said.

Manila Water said it has been compliant with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' standards on environment protection through its BNR on wastewater projects. These include BNR Retrofitting in East Avenue, Quezon City, BNR Granular Adsorption Media in FTI Taguig, and BNR Operational Adjustment in Olandes Marikina.



We can make PH bike-friendly

In February 2019, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) led by then Secretary Mark Villar opened a separate 5.58-kilometer bicycle lane facility along the stretch of Laguna Lake Highway in Taguig City.

Aimed to open up transportation, recreation, and health opportunities, the three-meter-wide bike lane component—which is protected by a planting strip to make cycling safe and comfortable for everyone—was added to the 6.94-kilometer Laguna Lake Highway, which was constructed to serve as an alternative route to EDSA and C-5.

Secretary Mark said that the inclusion of protected bike lanes and sidewalk spaces in DPWH's new projects is aimed at building safe roads and bridges that will also cater to bikers and pedestrians.

Biking as alternative transport

During the lockdown, public transportation operations were suspended, and even with the easing of quarantine restrictions, public vehicles had to impose physical distancing—thus, cycling became a major mode of transportation.

Data from the Bureau of Customs showed that bicycle imports soared 112 percent to 2.1 million units in 2020. Moreover, SWS research between May 4, 2020 and May 2, 2021 revealed that an estimated 24 percent of Filipino households used bicycles, 19 percent of which were owned, while the rest used borrowed bicycles. One out of five used bicycles are used for essential activities.

With the soaring prices of gasoline, it's likely that more people will continue to use bicycles as a mode of transportation.

The UniTeam of presidential Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. and vice presidential candidate Davao City Mayor Inday Sara Duterte vowed that, should they win in the elections,

protected bike lanes will be included in the planning and design of roads.

They committed to complete the Manila Bike Lane Network, and will aim to roll-out a similar plan for other urban centers in the country. They said they will ensure that these bike lanes are safe and in compliance with international standards, which will increase the people's confidence to use bicycles as their preferred mode of transportation.

Last year, a 313-kilometer Metropolitan Area Bike Lane Network that covers 67 roads in Metro Manila was completed. The 29-kilometer Metro Cebu Bike Lanes and 54.7-kilometer Metro Davao Bike Lanes were also

Making communities walkable and bike-friendly has been a trend for many progressive cities around the world.

launched in Central Visayas and Southern Mindanao that will be able to improve safety and promote fair division of road space and active transportation.

In collaboration with the Department of Transportation (DoTr), the DPWH installed reflectorized thermoplastic pavement markings, road signages, and bike lane separators along key roads in Metro Manila, Metro Cebu and Metro Davao to ease accessibility for cyclists.

Mandatory bicycle lanes in PH
Since 2016, the DPWH has been working on incorporating pedes-

trian infrastructure on public roads in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

But in 2020, Secretary Mark aimed to institutionalize this through Department Order 88, which mandates that all projects that involve new road and bridge construction will include in their design the provision of bicycle facilities, if feasible.

Secretary Mark, who is running for senator under the UniTeam, said that bike-friendly infrastructure promotes road safety to all and encourages the public to consider biking as a safe mode of transportation beneficial not only to their physical health, but also to the environment through reduced greenhouse gas emissions and noise pollution, to traffic, and to public roads that render less wear and tear.

Under DO 88, bicycle facilities will be classified into three classes depending on the prevailing road and traffic conditions: Class 1 or the Shared Use Bike Path, Class 2 or the Separated Bike Lane, and Class 3 is the Shared Roadway.

In Class 1, a designated path, completely separated from the roadway, will be identified for the exclusive use of bicycles or shared with pedestrians. In Class 2, a portion of roadway, which is designated for exclusive use, will be distinguished by a paint strip, curb, or barrier. In Class 3, where limited carriageway width poses a problem, a part of the roadway that has been officially designated and marked as bicycle route may also be used by motor vehicles.

Making communities walkable and bike-friendly has been a trend for many progressive cities around the world. If the next leaders of our nation will make this part of their programs, then soon, the Philippines will also be a champion of sustainable and inclusive mobility.



NIGHT OWL

ANNA MAE YU LAMENTILLO

Secretary



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A global plastic treaty towards a circular economy



Joseph Edward B. Alegado
EAGLE WATCH

RECENTLY, 175 member states of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) agreed to initiate a global legally binding instrument addressing the full life cycle of plastic, which, hopefully, could get approved by 2024. The mandate is titled "End Plastic Pollution: Towards an International Legally Binding Instrument," and is expected to be developed and finalized over the next two years.

It is a victorious moment for long-time environmental activists and campaigners who, as early as 2017, have seen the importance of a legally binding treaty that will address the full life cycle of plastic pollution. Environmental groups belonging to the #breakfreefromplastic movement have long been pushing for a full-life-cycle approach of plastic that looks into extraction, production,

distribution, and disposal of plastic.

At UNEA 1 in 2014, the discussion was centered on plastic pollution as a marine litter problem and end-of-life solutions (such as plastic waste management). At UNEA 2, member states elevated the issue as a global one requiring a global response. At UNEA 3, they were able to establish an expert group to further look into the issue. Later on, they were able to

see the need to focus on prevention and consider the full life cycle of plastics. In UNEA 4 in March 2019, the assembly was successful in extending the mandate of the expert group and laying the groundwork in considering response options in the next UNEA.

Looking into the entire lifecycle of plastics is an important achievement in UNEA because the industry has long been blaming consumers for the plastic pollution crisis that their continued use of plastic packaging has caused. According to the Center for International Environmental Law, if plastic production and use continue to grow at its current rate, its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 could be equivalent to the emissions of more than 295 new 500-megawatt coal-fired power plants. At this rate, emissions throughout the plastics life cycle threatens any possibility of meeting global climate targets. Thus, plastic pollutes at each stage of its life cycle—99 percent of plastic is made from fossil fuels, both natural gas and crude oil. Toxic plastic particles

contaminate water, air, and the food chain, ultimately harming human health. Plastic pollution, therefore, is a transboundary issue affecting everyone.

In a press release issued right after UNEA 5, members of the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives #breakfreefromplastic across Asia Pacific reiterated the call for a Global Plastics Treaty that "addresses the full life cycle of plastics and its impacts; integrates the voices and experiences of waste pickers; provides accessible and transparent data on plastic production; enforces strong Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) with clear upstream targets and has clear language against false solutions such as incineration, chemical recycling, among others."

Since the early 2000s, Philippines-based environmental groups have been ensuring that Zero Waste systems and laws are properly implemented. Ratified in 2001, RA 9003 (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2001) is the country's first comprehensive law on waste management. SEE "EAGLE WATCH," A13



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Eagle Watch...

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Act of the Philippines) has long been hailed as the gold standard in waste management at the national level. There were challenges in its implementation, but with further mainstreaming of the transitioning to a zero-waste management system, local government units acting as frontliners in implementing RA 9003 can hopefully turn the tide. They have also been pushing for a nationwide ban on single-use plastics and an

EPR bill that will further strengthen RA 9003. These proposals should be cleared from any waste-to-energy incineration, quick tech fixes, off-setting schemes, and greenwashing that only address plastic pollution downstream.

In two years, the global plastic treaty can, hopefully, steer the discussion towards the mainstreaming of a circular economy which augurs a shift from the "take-make-dispose" of the current predisposition of a linear economy. The Ellen McArthur Foundation has defined circular economy as "better use of resources,

closing loops of resource flows by recovering as much as possible, and preventing waste and pollution through better design. The emphasis is placed on shifting the way we extract, make, use, and repurpose the material in our products to ensure emissions are reduced and resources are efficiently used and kept in circulation as long as possible."

Take the case of Australia. Its National Waste Report (2018) reveals that, of the 54 total megatons of waste produced in 2016-2017, 21.7 megatons were sent to landfills. That is about 40 percent of all waste

materials being disposed of in landfills. Through a zero-waste management system mindset and circular economy, these can be further reduced through proper recycling and limiting wastes that can neither be recycled nor composted.

With the global plastic treaty mandate and encouraging multi-stakeholder actions, UN member states can lead countries in solving the plastic pollution crisis.

Mr. Joseph Edward B. Alegado is a part-time lecturer at the Department of Economics and School of Government of the Ateneo de Manila University.



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FIRING LINE

ROBERT B. ROQUE, JR.

Toxic campaign season plastics

Last week, I harped on the resolution adopted at the recent United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2) in Nairobi, which commits 175 countries to craft a legally-binding global treaty to end plastic pollution.

To illustrate how important a step it is to battle plastic pollution on an institutional level - here in the Philippines, the campaign season for the May 9 National and Local Elections has already resulted in a huge production of plastic pollutants in the form of campaign posters.

Yes, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) has put out its guidelines enjoining

candidates to avoid putting up campaign materials laden with hazardous substances. But the fact remains that there is no national policy regulating cadmium in plastics such as PVC-based tarpaulins - the standard choice for campaign posters.

A recent study commissioned by EcoWaste Coalition showed that, so far, campaign posters of six candidates for president have multicolored coatings that contain dangerous levels of cadmium - a substance tagged by the World Health Organization (WHO) as one of the "terrible chemicals of major public health concern."

While most volunteer groups produce and donate these campaign tarpaulins and posters, it is relevant to point this out to the specific applicants for the presidency. So, Firing Line shouts out to former senator Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., Vice President Ma. Leonor "Leni" Robredo, Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso, labor leader Leodegario "Ka Leody" de Guzman, and Senators Panfilo "Ping" Lacson and Manny Pacquiao that their faces appearing in these posters scattered nationwide are literally toxic.

SGS, which is the global testing company

commissioned by EcoWaste Coalition, reported that the campaign posters of our six presidential candidates "had cadmium ranging from 607 to 776 parts per million (ppm) while the white plastic sheet had cadmium between 384 to 546 ppm." These are levels dangerously above the European Union (EU) and WHO allowable limit of only 100 ppm.

Dreadfully, as the local campaign season sets in, we can expect the number of plastic posters with hazardous levels of cadmium to grow exponentially. And when the election is done by June, all these become trash. Environmental groups like EcoWaste have long warned that "burning PVC tarpaulin waste in dumps, cement kilns and incinerators trigger the formation and release of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) such as dioxins and furans, which are targeted for global reduction, if not elimination, under the

Stockholm Convention on POPs of which the Philippines is a signatory."

For this reason, Firing Line stands by the group in seeking urgent government action "to issue a supplemental directive phasing out cadmium use in plastics as colorant and/or stabilizer."

"A supplemental regulation phasing out cadmium in plastics will be in sync with the global consensus to address the full lifecycle of plastic, including its production, design, and disposal, to end plastic pollution," according to EcoWaste Plastic Solutions campaigner Coleen Salamat.

SHORT BURSTS. For comments or reactions, email firingline@ymail.com or tweet @SideView. Read current and past issues of this column at Tempo - The Nation's Fastest Growing Newspaper

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No lifting of mask mandate yet: Duque

By Ma. Teresa Montemayor **March 17, 2022, 2:16 pm**



(PNA photo by Joey O. Razon)

MANILA – The mask mandate remains even when coronavirus cases continue to drop, Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said Thursday.

In a televised public briefing, Duque cited as example European nations Austria, Denmark, France and Germany now experiencing a spike in coronavirus infections after dropping their mask mandates.

“Matuto tayo sa iba’t ibang karanasan ng mga bansa sa Europa na kung saan tinanggal nila ang mask mandates, naglipana na naman ang mga kaso (Let’s learn from the experience of other countries in Europe. They removed the mask mandates and they saw an increase in cases),” he said.

Duque assured the public that the country’s experts are studying the possible removal of face mask mandate and downgrading to a lower alert status of Covid-19 risk classification.

“Eh, gusto ba natin matulad sa kanila? Ayaw natin, so, dahan dahan tayo (Do we want to be like them? We don’t want that, let’s slow down) let us be prudent and let us be guided by data and science through our expert panel,” he said.

On Wednesday, Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said further easing movement restrictions would be discussed once the entire country is placed under Alert Level 1.

“Sa ngayon masyadong premature, masyado pang maaga, so, Alert Level 1 muna tayo, malamang hanggang sa katapusan ng termino ng ating Pangulong Duterte (At the moment, it’s premature, so, we’ll be under Alert Level 1, maybe until the end of President Duterte’s term,” Duque said. **(PNA)**



64.8M now fully vaxxed, 11M get booster shots vs. Covid-19

By Lade Jean Kabagani **March 17, 2022, 5:46 pm**



(PNA file photo)

MANILA – The Philippines has already administered a total of 139,454,246 doses of Covid-19 vaccine nationwide, with 64,838,213 Filipinos having completed their primary doses and 11,291,687 of them have received booster shots against the virus, as of Thursday.

Based on the latest data from the National Task Force (NTF) Against Covid-19, more than 10 million under the 5-11 age bracket got their first coronavirus shots, with 381,433 kids were fully vaccinated and more than 9.7 million under 12 to 17 age group, have completed their two primary series.

The NTF expects the number to increase in the coming days, following the approval of the country's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the use of Sinovac jabs to minors.

Pending the release of the final guidelines from the Department of Health and the Health Technology Assessment Council, the Sinovac can be administered to pediatric age groups 6 to 17 years old, according to the NTF.

NTF chief and vaccine czar, Secretary Carlito Galvez Jr., earlier said there is still a need to encourage fully vaccinated to avail of the Covid-19 booster shots "in order to build an additional layer of protection against the virus."

"We have to highly encourage our government workers and economic front-liners to get their booster shots. Second, mag-provide dapat tayo ng (we should provide) possible incentives for people with boosters," Galvez said in a news release late Wednesday.

Galvez added the government also recommends the administration of booster shots as the country is gearing towards total economic recovery.

He added some of the business sectors have suggested requiring booster shots in travels and entering establishments.

The National Vaccination Operations Center earlier noted that the low turnout of booster shots coverage is due to vaccine complacency of the public—thinking that the two primary doses are enough protection against the dreaded virus. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1170018>



Omicron sub-variant posibleng makapasok sa Pilipinas – DOH

By **Bombo Marlene Padiernos** - March 17, 2022 | 7:29 AM

Binabantayan ngayon ng Department of Health (DOH) ang panibagong Omicron sub-variant na kasalukuyang problema ngayon sa bansang Hong Kong.

Ito ay matapos na sabihin ni Health Secretary Francisco Duque III na posibleng makapasok sa Pilipinas ang nasabing virus.

Gayunpaman ay sinabi ng kalihim na hindi pa sigurado sa ngayon kung ito ba ay lubhang makakaapekto sa bansa tulad ng nangyaring surge sa Hong Kong.

Samantala, tiniyak naman ni Duque sa publiko na mas mataas ang vaccination rate ng Pilipinas kumapara sa Hong Kong, lalo na sa mga senior citizen.

Limang beses na rin aniyang nakaranas ng surge ang bansa kung kaya't mayroon na rin aniyang natural immunity at proteksyon mula sa bakuna ang karamihan sa ating mga kababayan laban sa nasabing sakit.

Duque: Alert Level 1 may be until end of Duterte's term

March 17, 2022



Cyclists cruise the bike lane along the banks of Marikina River Park in Marikina City on Thursday morning (March 17, 2022). People take advantage of the fair weather to ride their bikes. (PNA photo by Joey O. Razon)

By Pearl Gumapos

Department of Health (DOH) Secretary Francisco Duque III said Alert Level 1 implementation might be effective until the end of President Rodrigo Duterte's term amid talks to lift alert levels.

"Alert Level 1 muna tayo, malamang hanggang sa katapusan ng termino ng ating Pangulong Duterte," Duque said during the March 17 Laging Handa public briefing.

"Pero of course, hindi naman 'yan pinipigilan na pag-aralan na kung ano ba ang mga hakbangin sa hinaharap," he added.

The health official said the priority is to help areas under Alert Level 2 to transition to Alert Level 1. Currently, there are 57 areas under Alert Level 2 that have yet to strengthen their vaccination.

Duque said vaccination strategies are being strengthened to meet the government's target to fully vaccinate 90 million individuals.

"Pinalalawig natin iyong strategies natin. Iyong mga sinusuyod na mga komyunidad, lalo na doon sa mataas pa ang bilang ng mga senior citizens na hindi pa nababakunahan," he said.

Duque said they have yet to decide on the reported "Alert Level Zero," but stressed that it is too early for the country to lift policies on the mandatory use of face masks as protection against COVID-19. – **ag**

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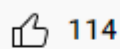


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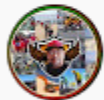
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