

19 AUGUST 2022, FRIDAY



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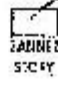
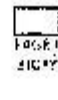
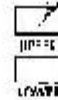
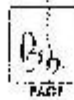
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How we can solve the plastic crisis and pursue a circular economy

Plastic pollution has been a problem since the 1960s when scientists discovered that plastic products have been accumulating in natural environments, especially in the oceans. Confronting the problem has been a challenge for government leaders, businesses, and scientists.

To successfully end the toxic relationship with plastics, there is a need to fundamentally change the way we depend on them, and the way we create, use, and dispose of them.

As of 2021, according to a report published by the World Bank, 2.7 million tons of plastic waste are generated yearly in the Philippines and 20 percent is leaked into the oceans.

Unsustainable methods of production and consumption, as well as limited recycling infrastructure in the country, contribute to the perpetual plastic pollution crisis.

While low-cost sachet products are made accessible for and available to the masses, the adverse impacts of the sachet economy currently outweigh efforts by private organizations and local agencies to curb the pressing issue of plastics, particularly single-use plastics.

There are discussions about transitioning the country into a circular economy to keep resources intact and conserve the overall integrity of the environment. However, according to

an interview published in February of this year with Gregorie Bueta, an environmental, climate, and sustainability lawyer and Ateneo de Manila School of Law Faculty member, there is no integrated circular economy strategy or policy framework that exists in the Philippines.

Furthermore, a 2022 report of Ciculo, a pioneering initiative that fosters circular economy in the Philippines, said that "the Southeast Asian region is still far from achieving a circular economy due to financial and information barriers, which need to be broken down for this economic model to prosper."

The US also faces problems with plastic pollution. As a current resident here, I am no stranger to the problem of plastics that this country struggles with. All sorts of plastic products are used in various establishments — utensils, straws, food packaging, and shopping bags. Only a few establishments have resolved to avoid plastics.

'Plastics remain and persist in environments and are difficult to eliminate unless we develop a more sustainable and firm resolution to keep them in use with improved technologies and recycling facilities.'

Despite an organized trash collection system, wastes are leaked into waterways and lands, harming the environment in its entirety.

According to concerned advocates in Chicago, other US states have taken "greater strides" in curbing plastic pollution, but the city has failed to address the problem accordingly.

Among the action plans in Illinois include banning some types of single



Author: Ma. Advienne Mella Lasam is a Climate Reality Leader and the Lead Initiator of Upcycle Philippines, an online community fostering awareness on upcycling as a system for environmental servation.



continued how can we solve the plastic crisis

use plastics, like polystyrene foam, the worst form of plastic pollution, which started last March 2021, and efforts are currently ongoing.

I realized that the plastic pollution problem is universal and encompassing. No matter which country we are in, the pressure to cut an unhealthy relationship with plastics is immensely felt. Plastics are ubiquitous. The production, distribution, and disposal of plastics continue to seriously threaten the environment.

While mitigating initiatives are taking place, creating alternatives is required, which entails redesigning the systems and products that were once linear and wasteful.

The government has a huge role to play because they will be all-hands-on-deck in creating regulations and policies. But with so many regulations in place, these reflect how we want to power our world.

On one hand, regulations are there to protect the best interests of the

common good. On the other hand, inspired by the words of Michael Braungart and William McDonough, authors of *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*, "regulation is a signal of design failure." They added that regulations are what the authors would like to call a "license to harm" or a "permit issued by a government to an industry so that it may dispense sickness, destruction, and death at an 'acceptable' rate."

The point is that regulations are not required at all with well-designed products inspired by how nature operates.

The quest for a better environment should be inclusive. With the hopes of redesigning a model or a system which zeroes in on material health, safe material recycling and recovery, maximization of renewable energy resources, and keeping water systems healthy and intact, we could only wish that we can reverse the effects of our mistakes in our lifetime.



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BusinessMirror

Amman, Jordan



19 AUG 2022

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editorial

Goodbye old plastics; hello bioplastics!

BELGIAN chemist Leo Baekeland developed the first synthetic plastic in 1907, which sparked a consumer boom in affordable yet highly desirable products that could be easily mass-produced. Since then, plastic has been used for an incredible variety of products around the world.

But the widespread adoption of plastics has not been without adverse consequences to people's health and the environment. Plastics pollute our cities, oceans and even the air we breathe. Millions of animals are killed by plastics every year, from birds to fish to other marine organisms.

World Bank Managing Director for Operations Axel van Trotsenburg and Asean Secretary General Lim Jock Hoi said in a Blog that Asean members lose as much as \$20 billion to \$120 billion a year due to the failure to recycle plastics. This represented 95 percent of the packaging value of plastic products in the region. (Read, "Asean states loss \$60B-\$120B yearly due to plastic waste," in the **BUSINESSMIRROR**, July 25, 2022).

Southeast Asia has emerged as a hotspot for plastic pollution, with its rapid urbanization, rising middle class and inadequate infrastructure for waste management. Half of the top 10 countries contributing to plastic leakage to rivers and seas are located here, they said, adding that "Covid-19 has been a pandemic of plastic, triggering huge increases in the consumption of masks, sanitizer bottles, online delivery packaging and other single-use items."

In a recent study by US-based luggage storage company Bounce, plastic waste has damaged coral reefs and wildlife, which are the main attraction of the world's top snorkeling destinations. Bounce said the volume of plastics in oceans has steadily grown at 5.14 percent annually. As of 2020, it said the total volume of plastic in oceans stood at 1.73 billion tons.

From the Associated Press: "In a world increasingly troubled by the persistent harm that plastic—manufactured in petrochemical plants—has had on the environment, companies are investing billions of dollars to ramp up production of plastics made from natural, renewable materials that can be safely composted or can biodegrade under the right conditions. Bioplastics have long been used in medical applications. The stitches you got after cutting your hand slicing onions were likely made of a bioplastic thread that harmlessly dissolved into your body."

Companies and investors see opportunities, the AP reported. Data from i3 Connect show investment in bioplastic manufacturing reached \$500 million in the first three months of 2022, exceeding the previous high of \$350 million in the last quarter of 2021. The money is coming in from both corporations and venture capitalists. Zion Market Research estimates the bioplastics market will surge from \$36.5 billion in 2021 to some \$29 billion in 2028.

Danimer Scientific is one company making a big bet on bioplastic with a recent expansion of its plant in Winchester, Kentucky. The Georgia-based firm makes a bioplastic called PHA using microorganisms that ferment with canola oil. The result is plastic pellets that manufacturers can use to mold products in the same way they use petrochemical plastic. Danimer CEO Stephen Crookrey said in an interview. Straws and plastic drink stirrers made from Danimer's PHA are being used in Starbucks and Dunkin' Donuts and large venues like SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California, Crookrey said.



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BusinessMirror

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Bioplastics!

The other primary bioplastic sold today is PLA—polylactic acid—usually produced by fermenting sugar from corn and sugar cane. One producer is Minneapolis-based NatureWorks, a joint venture by Cargill, one of the world's largest privately held corporations, and Thailand-based PTT Global Chemical. It is the largest PLA company in the world, capable of producing 150,000 metric tons of bioplastic pellets annually at a plant in Blair, Nebraska. NatureWorks is building a \$600 million plant in Thailand that will increase its production capacity by 50 percent, said Josh Ford, the company's global marketing communications manager, in an AP interview.

The company's "biggest visibility market," Ford said, is compostable food service items such as plastic cutlery, clear cups, wrappers and containers that, along with restaurant food waste, can be converted into a dark organic material to enrich soil in gardens and on farms. That's important because food waste clogs recycling machinery and contaminates recyclable petroleum plastics, the AP report said.

As the AP reported, the nascent bioplastics industry envisions a far bigger role for materials made from corn, sugar, vegetable oils and other renewable materials in the hope of grabbing a larger share of a nearly \$600 billion global plastic market.

Bioplastics are easier to biodegrade than petrochemical plastic, which can take centuries to disintegrate. This gives us hope that soon enough we can say goodbye to the old plastic material that does not rot.



PBBM, Cabinet tackle food security, energy, housing plans

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and his Cabinet discussed yesterday the proposals to ensure food security, boost the energy sector, and improve the national government's housing program.

The Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Energy (DOE), and the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) presented their plans during the Cabinet meeting convened by Marcos at Malacañan Palace in Manila on Thursday morning, Press Secretary Trixie Cruz-Angeles said. The suggestions are still being finalized, Cruz-Angeles said, adding that more details would be made public "at the convenience of the departments involved."

"Hindi pa po kami nagdi-

release ng mga detalye na ito sa pakikita kanina po ay pagkakatapos para i-discuss yung mga proposals rito. So, may mga revisions at saka refinements po," she said.

Cruz-Angeles said the DA, currently headed by Marcos, presented initiatives to boost food production in the country. The President, in his first State of the Nation Address delivered on July 25, vowed to modernize Philippine agriculture by relying on research and technology.

The DA is heading for an immediate tweaking of the value-chain system in the country to address pressing concerns, such as rising agricultural commodity and farm input prices. Cruz-Angeles said Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla, during the Cabinet meeting, discussed

ways to have "secure, accessible and affordable energy."

On August 9, Lotilla said the country's regulatory framework in the energy sector is being ironed out to provide clear policies for investors.

Cruz-Angeles, in a Facebook post, said the DOE is coordinating with its attached agencies to make the energy sector more attractive to investors.

"Estatista Pangulo ng Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. na makipagukayal pangmamaring investments ang sektor ng enerhiya. Bilang pag-unod dito, inihahanda na ng Department of Energy Philippines at mga mamababalas ang pagpapantipid ng mga polisiya upang maparamit pa ang mga investor," she said.

Meanwhile, Cruz-Angeles said the proposed Pambansang Pabalatay para sa Filipino program of the DHSUD was also tackled during the Cabinet meeting.

During a meeting with the Senate Committee on Human Development, Housing, and Resettlement on Wednesday, the DHSUD unveiled its plan to address the present housing backlog of more than six million units.

DHSUD Secretary Jose Rizalino Acuzar said the department's priority programs aim to address the growing housing gap in the country and would benefit informal settler families and those living in danger zones.

To date, the DHSUD pegged the housing backlog at more than 6.5 million units. PWA



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Nuclear energy regulation

Last Tuesday, Aug. 16, 2022, I filed my bill on 'The Philippine Nuclear Regulation Act of 2022.

It aims to regulate and promote the nuclear energy industry in the Philippines by providing for a regulatory framework on its control, use, and application. This piece of legislation will maximize the benefits of nuclear energy while ensuring compliance with nuclear security standards in order to safeguard public health and safety and protect the environment.

Considering the rising prices of commodities, which includes the price of electricity, the passage of this bill is very timely. The need to identify a new source of energy is critical for the country's plan to provide for additional power generation. Nuclear energy, being a safer and cleaner alternative to fossil fuel, would address the alarming climate change issues of today, as well as ease the rising prices of commodities.

Nuclear energy is the source that can make it all work — it brings forth electricity production, job creation, economic revitalization, and decarbonization.

According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's (UNECE), nuclear power is an important source of low-carbon electricity and heat that contributes to attaining carbon neutrality. The UNECE's Technology Brief states that decarbonizing energy is a significant undertaking that requires the use of all available low-carbon technologies. Analyses indicate that the world's climate objectives will not be met if nuclear technologies are excluded.

Nuclear energy further protects air quality, in compliance with our very own Republic Act No. 8749, otherwise known as the "Philippine Clean Air Act," as a form of zero-emission clean energy. This is attributable to nuclear fissions' generation of electricity without the harmful byproducts released by coal, oil, and natural gas emissions, which are major pollutants causing stroke, heart disease, neurological disease, lung cancer and respiratory diseases, including

asthma. Nuclear power also continues to evolve with the birth of

new and better technologies, including small modular reactors (SMRs). Among others, SMRs could provide electricity for small grids or remote locations and will improve the integration of variable renewable energy sources.

Notably, countries like the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Finland, France, and Russia, among others, have explicitly stated from their studies that nuclear power will play an important role in reducing their national emissions in the future.



TOL VIEWS
SENATOR FRANCIS M. TOLENTINO

The need to identify a new source of energy is critical for the country's plan to provide for additional power generation.

Lastly, nuclear energy is a very reliable energy source with a high power output. According to the International Energy Forum, the world's largest international organization of ministers from 71 countries including the Philippines, "the high reliability of nuclear energy means that in terms of production, one nuclear plant could have an equivalent output to two coal power stations — or three to four renewable plants, which are able to generate the same amount of power (1 GW) but in a less consistent way."

Nuclear power has already benefited several countries for several years and it is time for our country to provide regulation to promote its commercial use. In addition, this will for sure greatly contribute to the country's energy security.



Philippine
Reclamation
Authority
1001
Makati City
Manila



19 AUG 2022

Court nullifies Waterfront's Manila Bay reclamation

Asserco said its right to reclaim the area is still protected by the PEA's notice of award dated 21 March 1991

A Makati City Regional Trial Court nullified the P34.37-billion reclamation joint venture between Waterfront Manila Premier Corp. of businessman William Gatchalian, the city government of Manila, and the Philippine Reclamation Authority.

The court voided the contract to reclaim 318 hectares in Manila Bay for allegedly not undergoing a competitive bidding process and National Economic and Development Authority board evaluation and approval and for encroaching in areas covered by another reclamation contract.

Through the property unit Philippine Estates Corp., Gatchalian teamed up with Chinese companies China First Highway Corp., China Development Bank, and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China to undertake the reclamation project.

In a 225-page decision, Makati RTC Branch 139 presiding judge Benjamin Pozon granted the petition for certiorari and prohibition filed by the Asean Seas Resources & Construction Development Corporation or Asserco, which sought the nullification of the reclamation project for infringing on its contract awarded by PRA predecessor Public Estates Authority in 1991.

Asserco said its right to reclaim the area is still protected by the PEA's notice

of award dated 21 March 1991.

"Wherefore, in the light of the foregoing, the petition for certiorari and prohibition of petitioner Asean Seas Resources & Construction Development Corp., formerly Asian Seas Resources & Realty Corporation, filed against respondents Philippine Reclamation Authority, formerly Public Estates Authority, Waterfront Manila Premier Development Corporation (Waterfront Manila), and the City of Manila, is hereby granted finding the same meritorious," the court said.

In the dispositive part of the ruling issued on 25 April 2022, the court declared void PRA Board Resolution 5086 dated 16 October 2019, for violation of the petitioner's right to administrative due process and grave abuse of discretion on the part of respondent PRA.

It also asked the PRA and the City of Manila to cease and desist from acting on any application submitted by any groups taking on any action that is detrimental to ASSERCO, which received a notice of award from PEA on 21 March 1991, to reclaim 140 hectares in Manila Bay.

The court also declared void the joint venture agreement, the memorandum of understanding, and the memorandum of agreement among the PRA, the City of Manila, and Waterfront Manila for "being violative of EO 146, EO 543, as well as other related Executive Orders because the City of Manila and Waterfront failed to secure the required NEDA Board approval and because the Manila Waterfront City Reclamation Project did not undergo public bidding."



Cebu City's riverside settlers must leave

As floods worsen, local officials mount massive clearing of structures along seven waterways, affecting 14,000 households

CEBU CITY—Informal settlers staying on and along the seven major rivers in this city will have to go.

The Cebu City government has decided to remove structures that encroached into the 3-meter easement zones of its rivers—Guadalupe, Kinalumasan, Mahiga, Lahug, Estero de Parian, Bulacao and Butuanon—to address severe flooding that have affected the city's downtown villages, including major business districts, during heavy downpour.

Mayor Michael Rama said displaced households would be placed in temporary shelters first before they would be given units at the city-owned medium-rise buildings (MRBs) that would rise at South Road Properties (SRP).

6 MRBs

The city government plans to build at least six MRBs where displaced households will be transferred, Rama said.

So far, only one MRB was completed. The building was built by Cebu Landmasters Inc. in Barangay Lorega-San Miguel through a public-private partnership. The city's first MRB costs P115 million.

While waiting for the project's completion, families displaced by the clearing operations would be housed in container vans, which would be purchased by the city government and placed at SRP.

"We [will] see to it that



THIGH-HIGH A man wades through thigh-high flood waters in Barangay Labangon, Cebu City, following a heavy downpour on Wednesday afternoon. —PHOTO COURTESY OF BARANGAY LABANGON FACEBOOK



DEBRIS A pile of debris is left along the Kinalumasan River in Cebu City after the demolition of structures in the area on Aug. 8. —PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CEBU CITY PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

the medium-rise buildings are built. That is where we are leading to," he said.

On Wednesday, a heavy downpour that started around 4 p.m. flooded several areas in the city—some in waist-deep water—and left many people stranded. It was the second time in just two weeks that the city experienced severe floods following heavy rains.

No exception

Rama, at the start of this month, announced the need to immediately start the clearing operations and enforce the 3-meter easement in the city's rivers.

The mayor said commercial establishments that violated the easement zones would not be exempted.

At least 14,000 households would be affected by the clearing operations meant to not only mitigate the flood problem but also to beautify the riverbanks by transforming them into an esplanade or a promenade.

Councilor Jerry Guardo, chair of the Cebu City council's committee on infrastructure, said the affected families who would voluntarily dismantle their houses built on the riverbanks would each receive P35,000 from City Hall.

Road collapse

"The city has long given the settlers notices to remove their houses and I think it's high time for them to voluntarily evacuate," he said.

In Bohol, a portion of a highway in Antequera town

collapsed on Wednesday due to nonstop rains.

Melencia Galleno, 66, a resident of Purok 4 in Barangay Tabuan, said they earlier noticed small cracks in the area.

The rains, she said, caused the soil to rupture and eventually disintegrated at least 4 meters of national highway. Some cemented barriers fell into a cliff at least 5 meters deep.

A team from the first engineering district of the Department of Public Works and Highways has inspected the portion of the highway.

Caution tape and traffic cones have been temporarily placed on that area with a warning sign that motorists could only use one lane of the road. —REPORTS FROM NESTLE SEMILLA AND LEO UDTOHAN INQ



Singson urges HOR to stop using bottled water

ROCOS SUR Representative Ronald Singson has urged the House of Representatives (HOR) to foster sustainable and environment-friendly practices and scale back their consumption of bottled water.

Singson, a long-time advocate for the environment himself, emphasized that the House of Representatives must be more conscious of the devastating impacts of using plastic bottles on the environment and refrain from using them.

In House Resolution (HR) No. 772, which Singson filed on Monday, he stated that in the House of Representatives, concessionaires still serve water in

plastic bottles, especially in the South Lounge, where House members and guests are only served bottled water.

"Sadly, the Earth is dying faster than we could catch our breath. And it pains me to see that the institution I am a part of is actively, but probably unconsciously, contributing to the growing mountain of plastic waste," said Singson.

He stressed that should the Lower Chamber move to stop the use of plastic bottles - this will "signal" the beginning of policy reform.

However, Singson further stated that this must be followed with other sustainable solutions that will

effectively reduce the ecological footprint of the House as a whole.

Just recently, Senator Pia Cayetano called on her colleagues in the Senate to adopt environmentally sustainable practices and distributed tumblers to all the senators present, which they can use instead of plastic bottles.

"We want the Senate to know that the House is one with them in this endeavor. As representatives of our people, we must commit ourselves to healing Mother Earth by instituting a 'green' government office, and serve as a role model for other government institutions to emulate," he added.

Ryan Ponce Pacapan



Bring your plastic waste to the mall

From left: Erica Reyes, The Plastic Flamingo COO; Atty. Joseph Fabul, Mondelez Int'l country manager for Corporate and Government Affairs; Aleli Arcilla, Mondelez Int'l, VP and managing director; and Denisse Malong, GM for Eastwood City.



Snacks company Mondelez International in the Philippines is continuing its partnership with social enterprise The Plastic Flamingo (PLAF) for plastic waste collection and recycling.

Started in 2020, the growth of the partnership shows the potential of the recycling industry in the Philippines and how it can support waste management to avoid marine litter.

This 2022, Mondelez International and PLAF are working with Megaworld Corporation for plastic collection initiatives in five of its malls to provide avenues for communities to practice proper waste collection and disposal.

Not many people know what happens to plastic waste after it is thrown in the waste bin. Ideally, when you throw it in the bin, plastic waste should end up in the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) of your barangay for segregation – if not already segregated at home or by your waste collectors.

After segregation, the plastic is recycled depending on its type, whether it is a bottle or sachet. In the Philippines, plastic recycling companies and organizations

already exist and are growing; providing ways for waste to be reused. However, not all waste follows this journey. The unfortunate reality is that waste ends up as litter when it is not disposed of properly in bins, or if they are collected but illegally dumped in open land or in bodies of water.

"We want to become part of the solution, and not the pollution," shares PLAF COO Erica Reyes. "Our work at PLAF consists of collecting, segregating, transforming and designing plastic for reuse. We make practical construction materials out of plastic, like eco-lumber and eco-boards."

"We support circular economy organizations like the PLAF," explains Mondelez International Country Manager for Corporate and Government Affairs, Atty. Joseph Fabul. "The Circular Economy is one where plastic remains in the economy by being reused and recycled; and stays out of the environment. Our goal is to make snacks with better packaging, to make it easier to recycle; to use less packaging by optimizing our pack sizes. We call this focus sustainable snacking, where people and planet thrive."



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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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CITO BELTRAN

HMPH: Hands-on management in Phl



The DTI, or Department of Trade and Industry recently approved price increases for certain consumer goods such as canned meat products, etc. But what caught my attention was bottled water. No one gives much thought to the product, but it is often asked by foreign visitors and foreign friends online why Filipinos have to spend so much money on "bottled water." Even the two local water utilities have said time and again that their water is safe to drink. So why do we spend millions of pesos annually?

The usual answer is that people don't trust the water quality in their area, others are afraid of possible contaminants that might be in the system due to leaks, breaks or people stealing water and causing contamination. Others simply follow the herd mentality "better to be safe than sorry." Others say that P40 for 15 gallons is not a big deal. Manila Water and Maynilad and MWSS need to launch an awareness campaign on this.

When you focus on single use 500-ml to 1-liter bottles that sell for so much more and is one of the biggest causes of plastic pollution in our canals, rivers and oceans, the combined value is excessive. One liter of bottled water I am told is still more expensive than gasoline or diesel, some say even of beer. Friends from the utilities tell me that in many cases the bottled water we buy and drink at stores and restaurants probably all comes from tap water or MWSS water, filtered and bottle and sold as "fresh and new."

Filipinos could be saving so much money if companies, restaurants and food outlets were simply mandated to install "in house" water filters instead of selling bottled water and generating plastic garbage. Lifting 15-gallon bottles is not helping my back and carrying a water bottle is a small sacrifice to reduce plastic pollution while saving money that after a year is a lot.



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13 AUG 2022

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DoE boosts utilization of electric vehicles

BY EIREENE JAIREE GOMEZ

THE Department of Energy (DoE) is conducting a series of public consultations to formulate a comprehensive and coordinated policy direction among national agencies to accelerate the development, commercialization and utilization of electric vehicles (EVs) in the country.

This initiative is aligned with the government's policy to enhance energy security through fuel diversification.

The enactment of Republic Act 11692, also known as the "Electric Vehicle Industry Development Act" (EVIDA), provides

a national policy framework to develop the electric vehicle industry in the Philippines.

Under Section 39 of the EVIDA, the DoE, together with the Department of Transportation and other relevant national government agencies, are mandated

to develop the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the said act.

The Energy department said the series of public consultations on the development of the EVIDA-IRR are scheduled to be conducted starting today, August 19, until the end of the month.

EVIDA seeks to incentivize the adoption of electric vehicles and charging stations in the country. It mandates a 5-percent EV share in corporate and government fleets, provision of dedicated parking slots, installation of charging stations in parking lots and gasoline stations, green routes and provision of fiscal and non-fiscal incentives for EV

manufacturing, and importation of charging stations.

"As we transition to a sustainable low carbon future, this is the right time to sit down together and gather our thoughts and ideas to help the transportation sector reduce its dependence on imported oil, especially amid the volatility of fuel prices," said Energy Utilization Management Bureau Director Patrick Aquino.

"It is also expected that with the mass adoption of EVs, a new industry will blossom, high value jobs will be generated and more investments will come in," Aquino added.

The EVIDA-IRR is targeted to be promulgated on Sept. 8, 2022.



Pinay Architect in Singapore: Building a Sustainable Future

Born in Ormoc City, Leyte, Singapore-based Sheila Maria A. Conejos knew the importance of sustainability in architecture and construction.

Even before super typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) made Leyte a household name again (*it figures prominently in World War II history as the site where US forces landed*), the province had been in the path of almost every typhoon that visited the Philippines.

It was natural – if not inevitable – for this woman to develop a passion for sustainability and environmental conservation and preservation. Her post-graduate degree from Australia's Bond University, where she had a Dean's Scholarship and held an International Postgraduate Research Scholarship, is Doctor of Philosophy in Sustainable Development and Architecture. Her doctoral dissertation was "Designing for Future Building Adaptive Reuse."

As the first Filipino to join the faculty of the Singapore University of Social Science (SUSS), one of six government-funded institutions of higher learning in the city-state, Sheila has consistently espoused the concept of "adapt + maintain + sustain + circulate" for the built environment for a sustainable and resilient future.

At the university, she exhibited a stellar work ethic. Impressed by her work and dedication, university officials named her Head of Program of the Bachelor of Science in Facilities and Events Management and, later, Head of Program of the Bachelor of Science in Facilities Management. She is responsible for the smooth running of both programs to ensure academic quality and industry-centric learning for future graduates.

Sheila started with a bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of San Carlos in Cebu. After graduation, her services were engaged by notable firms, like Cebu Holdings Incorporated, and AS Enriquez Engineering Consultancy and was responsible for projects like Ayala Center Cebu and the Master Plan of Talisay and Maasin cities.

A Royal Government of Netherlands Scholarship Award enabled her to get a Master of Science in Urban Development Planning and Environmental Management from the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Thailand. She also received two certificates from the University of United Nations in Japan - on Environment and Sustainable Development and International Cooperation and Development.

She completed AIT's Professional Training Program on the Development of Urban Environmental Management Project Proposals before going into Bond University's post-graduate program.

In addition to formal degree programs, she completed the intensive

Sheila has 25 years of multi-disciplinary professional and academic experience. She is a licensed architect, urban and regional planner, forensic architect, heritage manager, and sustainable development specialist in tropical Asia.

two-week design program Glenn Murcutt Master Class in Architecture under 2002 Pritzker Architecture Award winner Glenn Murcutt. The Pritzker Architecture Prize is an annual award that honors "a living architect or architects whose built work demonstrates a combination of those qualities of talent, vision, and commitment, which has produced consistent and significant contributions to humanity and the built environment through the art of architecture."

Through her work and her writings, she has consistently affirmed her commitment to sustainability and care for the built environment. She dedicates a significant amount of her time and effort to research, contributing to the growing body of literature in architecture, urban planning, and sustainability.

While at Bond, she tried to develop and test a new multi-criteria decision-making model for evaluating the adaptability of a new design, "adaptSTAR", which would ensure that new designs were optimized for future "adaptivity" before construction for better social value and sustainability.

The research received the Chartered Institute of Buildings (CIOB) Research Excellence Award upon her graduation.

The CIOB International Innovation & Research Award celebrates achievement across the built environment, from academic research to industry innovation.

From her Ph.D. thesis, she published six journal articles and one conference paper. She also attended international conferences.

After graduation, Sheila became a Post-doctoral Fellow and Research Associate for the Department of Building and Real Estate at Hong Kong Polytechnic University and worked on two research projects: "Social Considerations in Planning Public Open Space to Integrate Elderly People in Urban Renewal" and "An Exploratory Study of Embodied Carbon and Construction Cost of Heritage Conservation Projects".

She became a Research Fellow at the Centre for Integrated Building Energy and Sustainability in the Tropics, Department of Building, School of Design and Environment, National University of Singapore. She assisted in securing a \$1.6 million project grant from the National



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With the Pandemic, we're looking at a new world

Research Foundation (NRF) on the use of AI drones for facade inspection. She is now helping in trying to get research grants for two more projects: \$1.2M for the service life of facade materials in response to climate change; and \$2.9M for the City of Tomorrow - the use of robots

for facade inspection.

Sheila has 25 years of multi-disciplinary professional and academic experience. She is a licensed architect, urban and regional planner, forensic architect, heritage manager, and sustainable development specialist in Tropical Asia.

In conferring the Pamana ng Pilipino Award to Sheila Marie A. Conejos, the President recognizes her academic and research achievements, which provided critical knowledge and advancements in the field of architecture and environmental sustainability.



PBBM hailed for extending PH's state of nat'l health emergency

By Jester Manalastas

HOUSE Majority Leader Jose "Manny" Dalipe lauded President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr.'s move to extend the state of national health emergency over the country due to the threat of COVID-19 pandemic.

Dalipe said this is something to be considered when Congress starts the deliberation of the proposed 2023 national budget.

Every week, the Department of Budget and Management will submit to the House of Representatives the National Expenditure Program (NEP), which is P5.265 trillion.

We are thankful that President Marcos acted swiftly to extend the state of national health emergency previously declared by President Duterte through proclamation 922," Dalipe said.

According to Dalipe, although the Covid cases have declined dramatically, the emergence of new variants still require extraordinary measures to protect the health of our citizens.

"The House leadership will take this into account as we begin deliberations on the government's National Expenditure Program," he added.

Earlier, the House of Representatives under the leadership of Speaker Martin Romualdez assured that the 2023 national budget will be approved on time.

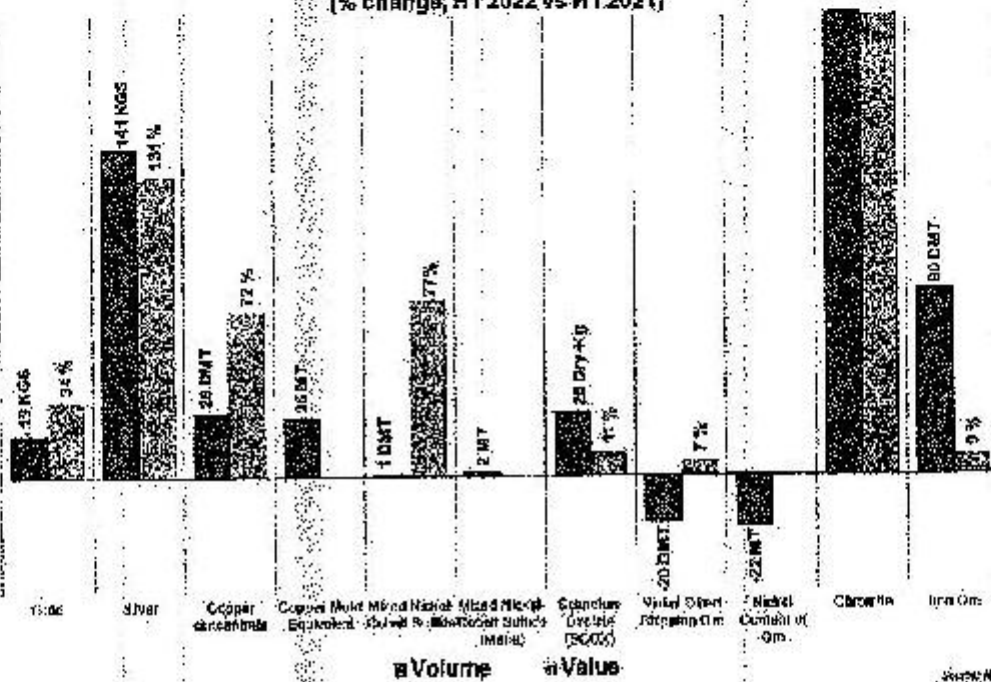
Dalipe said the budget must be approved in the Lower Chamber before the October recess.



Higher prices lift value of mineral output to P113B

PH metallic production

(% change, H1 2022 vs H1 2021)



BY JED MACAPAGAL

THE value of metallic mineral production jumped 59.42 percent in the first half of 2022 to P112.66 billion from P70.81 billion in the same period in 2021, driven by higher metal prices and increased production of gold, copper and nickel.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) in a report said nickel ore and its byproducts such as mixed nickel-cobalt sulfide and scandium oxide contributed the most to production value at P51.33 billion or 45.55 percent.

Gold followed with P16.04 billion or 14.22 percent and cop-

per with P12.84 billion or 11.39 percent.

The combined mine value of silver, chromite and iron ore accounted for about 1.83 percent or P2.07 billion.

In terms of production for the period, these metals showed im-

See HIGHER > Page A2

provement: gold by 19 percent to 14,813 kilograms (kg) from 12,431 kg; silver, 141 percent to 26,893 kg from 11,112 kg; copper, 28 percent to 125,852 dry metric tons (dmt) from 98,495 dmt; chromite 1,000 percent to 94,026 dmt from 8,429 dmt; and iron ore, 80 percent to 47,797 dmt from 26,524 dmt.

Only silver shipping ore nickel posted a decline production of 10.82 million dmt from 13.57 million dmt, a 20 percent drop.

The average prices of these metals also increased: nickel by 63 percent to P28,584 per metric ton (MT) from P17,490 per MT;

gold, 3 percent to \$1,874.47 per troy ounce from \$1,808.59 per troy ounce; and copper, 7 percent to \$9,756.17 per MT from \$9,094.61 per MT.

The average price of silver dropped 12 percent to \$23.30 per troy ounce from \$26.49 per troy ounce.

MGB said the outlook for the local minerals industry remains optimistic.

As of the first half of the year, only about 2.54 percent or 763,378 hectares of the Philippines' total land area of 30 million hectares is covered by mining tenements.



PHL metallic minerals output value rises sharply to P112.66B in first half

THE VALUE of the metallic minerals industry's output in the first half rose 39.42% to P112.66 billion, driven by strong prices of gold, copper and nickel, according to the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB).

Nickel ore and other nickel products accounted for P51.52 billion of the total, the MGB said. Gold accounted for P46.44 billion, copper P12.84 billion, and the combined output of silver, chromite, and iron ore P2.07 billion.

"It is significant to note that production of chromite and iron has been expanding recently primarily because of the contribution of Tagamit HPAI Nickel Corp. for chromite and Ore Asia Mining & Development Corp. for iron ore," the MGB said.

"Of the current 55 operating metallic mines listed, only 39 mines reported production, the remaining 16 or 29% reported zero production and/or (were placed in) care and maintenance status," it added.

In terms of volume, nickel direct shipping ore output fell 30% to 10.82 million dry metric tons (DMT), it said.

"Factors seen to have caused lower mine output would be the wet weather conditions

together with lower demand from our major trading partner China due to their prolonged lockdowns," the MGB said.

Surigao del Norte accounted for almost a quarter of nickel ore output at 2.66 million DMT.

This was followed by Palawan with 2.52 million DMT, Zambales with 1.71 million DMT, Surigao del Sur with 1.49 million DMT, and Agusan del Norte with 1.13 million DMT.

The MGB said that there are 32 listed operating nickel mines in the Philippines and more nickel mine projects are in the pipeline.

"Although their projected mine output is yet to be disclosed, suffice to say that these projects will significantly beef up nickel ore production in the country. With electric vehicles very much in the offing, we see demand for nickel growing," the agency said.

"When it comes to minerals endowment, the Philippines is among the fortunate countries abundantly endowed with nickel, gold, copper, and other significant and important minerals," it added. — Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jorson



PH, Japan bolster ties to push infra projects

BY WILLIAM B. DEPASUPIL

THE Japanese government has assured President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. it will give its full support to his administration's push for more and better vital infrastructure to provide more jobs and help speed up the country's economic recovery.

Ambassador Kazuhiko Koshikawa gave the assurance during a meeting with Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Secretary Manuel Bonoan and other top public works officials on Wednesday.

The two leaders talked about coordinating bilaterally and pushing

toward the fruition of more infrastructure projects, among others.

According to Bonoan, Japan's commitment was in addition to ongoing pipeline projects also being funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), adding that he appreciates the kind gesture

of the Japanese ambassador.

Talking about all exciting new plans, I truly value the kind visit and grateful for the time spent despite the busy schedule of the Japanese ambassador," Bonoan said.

Japan has been, and continues to be, the largest donor of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the Philippines, with grants, loans and technical assistance given since 1969.

Senior Undersecretary Emil Sadain said the Japanese government through JICA currently supports 13 big-ticket infrastructure projects.

Among them are the widening of the 23-kilometer Arterial Road (Pinaridel) Bypass Project Phase 3 in Bulacan; improvement and maintenance of 1.184-kilometer of arterial national

roads under the Road Upgrading and Preservation Project (RUPP); 104-kilometer Central Luzon Link Expressway (CLLEX) Project from the connection of Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEX) and Tarlac-Pangasinan-La Union Expressway (IPILEX) in Balingcanaway, Tarlac City and ends at the Daang Maharlika Highway in Cabanatuan City; and construction of a four-lane, 45.5 kilometer Davao City Bypass Construction Project.

Moreover, the Islamic City of Marawi has benefited from a P970-million grant for the design and construction of the 13.97-kilometer Marawi Transcentral Road Phase 1.

In support of the government's peace-building initiatives, JICA is also financing the Road Network

Development Project in Conflict-affected Areas in Mindanao involving the development, construction and improvement of 174.50-kilometer access roads connecting Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and other regions in Mindanao, including another 18.78-kilometer Marawi Transcentral Road Phase 3.

Japan has also committed to supporting the construction of the Cebu Mactan Bridge (4th Bridge) and Coastal Road Construction Project, which is now under the detailed engineering design stage.

To protect flood-prone areas and strengthen the resilience to climate change, four sub-projects were completed under the Flood Risk Management Project for Cagayan River, Tagoloan River and Imus River (Frmpp-CT) financed by JICA.

The government of Japan also extended financing support for the construction of interchanges on a major intersection in Quezon City under the Metro Manila Interchange Construction Project, Phase 6 (MMICP 6) and the Metro

Manila Priority Bridges Seismic Improvement Project to strengthen the resiliency of the transport network in Metro Manila by improving the durability and safety of Guadalupe and Laminghan Bridges against large scale earthquake.

Technical assistance has also improved DPWH's capacity in preparing feasibility studies and detailed engineering design of project proposals submitted for NEDA Board approval.

The pipeline projects with feasibility studies and ongoing under the JICA grant include the Paranaque Spillway/Tunnel Project, Daluhog Pass East Alignment Road Project (East Daluhog Bypass Project), Central Mindanao Highway Project (Cagayan De Oro-Malaybalay Section); and Davao City Flood Control and Drainage Project. The proposal to conduct Feasibility Studies for Iloilo Bridge and Sultan Bridge to comprise Phase 2 of the Urgent Bridges Construction Program for Rural Development (UBCPRD 2) has also been submitted for JICA's consideration.



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P5.2T budget magpapabilis sa e-governance - DBM

QAGAWAN ang panukalang P5.268-trillion national budget para sa 2023 para sa transformation at digitalization ng government processes, records, at databases sa pamamagitan ng e-governance.

Sinabi ni Budget Secretary Amrenah Pangandaman na kabilang ang mga ito sa "top priorities" sa ilalim ng administrasyong Marcos.

"Through digital transformation, our bureaucracy can improve the ease of doing business, limit human discretion, and enhance transparency in government transactions," ayon sa kahiram sa isang video message sa isinagawang economic forum na hinost ng Economic Journalists Association of the Philippines at San Miguel Corp.

Ang panukalang 2023 national budget ay makatutulong sa departamento "to build on past gains such as Executive Order No. 170 (s.2022) which was signed during the Duterte administration." Ang Executive Order 170 na nilagdaan ng dating Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte noong Mayo 12, 2022, nakasaad na nakita ang mga benepisyo ng digital payment services sa balibing sektor sa kasagsagan ng COMDT 19.

Nakasaad pa rin sa EO na naging mabilis, convenient, secure at transparent ang paggamit ng digital payment services.

Alam ng EO, lahat ng departamento, ahensya, at instrumentalities ng gobyerno kabilang ang mga state universities at colleges, government-owned or controlled corporations, at maging ang mga local government units ay pasasag na gamitin ang digital payments para sa mga disbursements at collections.

KRIS DOSE



ES Rodriguez nagbanta laban sa mga nagtatago ng asukal **PALASYO NAGSAMPOL VS SUGAR HOARDERS!**

DALAWANG warehouse sa San Jose Del Monte City, Bulacan at San Fernando City, Pampanga ang magkasunod na sinalakay ng Bureau of Customs (BOC) nitong Miyerkules at Huwebes matapos ipag-ayos ni Executive Secretary Atty. Victor Rodriguez na tiyaking may sapat na suplay ng asukal sa bansa, batay sa direktiba ni Pangulong Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos, Jr.

Sa inilabas na pahayag ng Palasyo nitong Huwebes, inatasan ni Rodriguez ang BOC na gumitin ang "visitorial power" nito laban sa mga trader na iligal na nag-iimbak (hoarding) ng mga produktong agrikultura partikular na ang asukal upang manati-

ling mataas ang presyo nito sa pamilihan.

Gamit ang 'LOA' (letter of authority) na pirmado ni Customs Commissioner Yogr Filemon Ruiz, unang binisita nitong Miyerkules ng BOC Intelligence at Enforcement Group (IG/EG) sa pangunguna ni IG

officer in charge, Dir. Josefrey Tacio, ang isang warehouse sa Bgy. Kaypian, San Jose Del Monte, kung saan naboto sa 30,000 sako ng asukal ang napatnan ng mga operatiba.

Sumuncod na araw, daanduan ding sako ng asukal mula sa Thailand ang

nakita ng BOC sa isa pang warehouse sa Bgy. Del Pilar, San Fernando City, kasama ang iba pang hinilinalang 'smuggled imported goods.'

Ayon pa sa Palasyo, aabot sa higit P200 milyon ang halaga ng mga nakumpiskahin asukal.

Sa ilal ni Tacio kay Ruiz, bibigyan ng sapat na pananong ang mga may-ari ng asukal upang patunayan na hindi pinatunang mga ito mula sa labas ng bansa o iligal na iniimbak na isang paglabag sa batas, bago kumpiskahin pabor sa gobyerno.

Ani Rodriguez, dapat maging babala sa traders at negosyante na nagtatago ng asukal at iba pang produktong pang-agrikultura ang mga nasabing operasyon na seryoso si PBBM na buwagin ang mga sindikalong nagtatago ng suplay ng mga produkto upang manatiling mataas ang presyo ng mga ito sa merkado at magbigyang katwiran ang pag-aangkat, partikular na ang asukal.

Una nang ibinisto ni

Rodriguez kay PBBM ang tungkang pagpapalisot ng mga opisyal ng Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) sa 'Sugar Order No. 2' na inilabas ng SRA board nitong Agosto 9, na nagpapahintulot sa pag-aangkat ng 300,000 toneladang asukal.

Ang SO-4 ay "iligal" dahil wala itong pahintulot ni PBBM, ayon na rin kay Press Secretary Trixie Cruz-Angeles, at napigilan dahil sa mga pagiging alerto ni Rodriguez.

Ayon parin sa pahayag ni Rodriguez, "manibong" ng ilang traders ang SO-4 upang mailabas sa merkado ang kanilang mga imbak na suplay ng asukal na hindi magpapabagsak sa presyo nito.

Aniya pa, iniinhestigahan din ng kanyang tanggapan, sa utos ni PBBM, ang impormasyon na aabot sa P300 milyon ang kikitain ng mga traders na nasa likod ng SO-4 kung saan bahagi nito ay inilaan bilang "loopholes" ('lobby money') para sa ilang opisyal ng gobyerno.



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Maraming bodega sasalakayin - Palasyo

MGA ASUKAL HOARDER BISTADO

ASUKALING mga mahanti pang mga bodega ng asukal ay inapeksyuhin ng Bureau of Customs (BOC) sa mga sinundan sa araw.

Itu nang inihayag ni Press Secretary Tuzile Cruz Angeles sa Kanlungan ng Inland Press Briefing kasama ng pagpapakay ng mga tahanan ng BOC sa dalawang warehouse sa San Fernando, City, Pangasinana nilong Alwebes ng Oranga, at Bigy, Kaypitan, San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan.

Sinabi ng kalinan na luluwagite ng aniyang bisitorial poyebis ng BOC malapit sa isang ni Executive Secretary Victor Rodriguez ang alon sa walistrahan ang paglulundin sa mga pinaglimbak na mga asukal. Hindi sa hinarap nang mutasa na presyo ng produkto sa mga pamilihan.

"This is a series of raids, yes, but we can confirm that there is another warehouse in the vicinity of Buscaynila. We are confirming that, and we are sure kung tapos na, you are inspecting the BOC but we can confirm that there is another one today and possibly more in the coming days," said

Angelic. Kasabay nito at wind angun ng Malacañang at sa mga komisyonero nang papatay ng supply ng asukal para mapataas ang presyo nito sa pamilihan at laruhan ang kanlungan kila.

Sinabi ni Rodriguez na inihayag sa isang in Pangulong Nazimad, Bongbong, Marcos Jr. para alalahan ang BOC na gamitin ang victorial poyebis sa lahat ng customs bonded warehouses para higit sa ang unang agricultural products na natumbak sa mga bodega at para matukoy kung mayroon ng mga hoard na supply ng asukal.

Gamit ang LOA (Letter of authority) ng puna ng Customs Commissioner Yogi Piliton (Rizal) ang mga bisitorial ng Myrales ng BOC Intelligence and Enforcement Group (IG/EG) sa panganguna ni G. Olivera Jr. at mga Di. Joefrey Tacu, ang lahat warehouse sa Bigy, Kaypitan, San Jose Del Monte kung saan sa BOC sa may 30,000 sako ng asukal ang itataman ng mga operatibo. Sumunod na araw, daan-daan

ang mga sako ng asukal muna sa Inland, ang mga ng BOC sa sa pang warehouse sa Bigy, City, Pili, San Fernando, City kasama ang iba pang hinihinalang "imported goods."

Ayon na sa Palasyo, kabal sa higit P200 milyon ang halaga ng mga natatampok na asukal.

Binigyan ng 15 araw ng GIS ang may aring warehouse na magpakita ng mga dokumentong legal ang pag-ahukal sa mga produksiyong natatampok sa warehouse.

Kilala ang mga ito bilang legal ang pagpapakay ng asukal sa bansa at mahaharap sa kasing pangkalahat ang mga ito ng mga natatampok na produkto.

Una nang direktor ni Rodriguez kay PABM ang tangkang pagpapalitan ng mga mayari ng Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) sa Sugar Order No. 4 na inilabas ng SRA board niunong Agosto 9 na nagpapalitan ng lahat pag-ahukal ng 300,000 tonelada ng asukal. (Allison Mallapang)



LGUs pinanindigan NCAP, PBBM aprub sa digitalization

NI EDD REYES

NAGKAISA ang mga pinuno ng mga Lokal na Pamahalaan sa Metro Manila na manindigan sa implementasyon ng No Contact Apprehension Program (NCAP) sa kani kanilang nasasakupang lungsod sa kabila ng mga reklamo.

Sa inilabas na nagka-kaisang paliyag ng mga local government units (LGUs) sinabi ng mga ito na itutuloy nila ang pagpapatupad ng NCAP upang matiruang sumunod sa batas-trapiko ang mga

motorista at maging ligtas ang mga maranakay.

Kabilang sa mga pinuno ng mga lokal na pamahalaan na nanindigan sa pagpapatupad ng NCAP ang mga lungsod ng Maynila, Valenzuela, Paranaque, Quezon at San Juan.

Bidgyan din ng LGUs na ang pagpapatupad ng NCAP ay dumaan at inaprubahan ng kani-kanilang Sangguniang Panlungsod sa layuning mabawasan ang human intervention sa traffic enforcement, madisiplina ang mga motorista at matiyak ang kaligtasan ng motorista at publiko.

Mismong ang Pangu-

long Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos, Jr. anila ang nagsabi na dapat nang maging digitize ang gobyerno upang maging accessible sa publiko at maayos na pag-seserbisyo.

Kaugnay rito, kinikilala at firerespeto rin ng Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) ang desisyon ng mga LGUs kaugnay ng pagpapatupad ng NCAP.

Iti'y alitunod naman sa pagkakaroon ng local autonomy ng mga LGUs na nakasaad sa Local Government Code of 1991 (Republic Act No. 7160).

"LGUs shall enjoy gen-

uine and meaningful local autonomy to enable them to attain their fullest development as self-reliant communities and make them more effective partners in the attainment of national goals". Further, the law also provides that any provision on a power of a local government unit shall be liberally interpreted in its favor" and any fair and reasonable doubt as to the existence of the power "shall be interpreted in favor of the local government unit concerned", nakasaad sa Local Government Code.