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The woman behind the decorated general

By: [Jonathan Vicente](#) [INQUIRER.net](#) / 08:30 PM February 25, 2021



Mrs. Fe Aguillon-Cimatu with the former military general, Environment Sec. Roy A. Cimatu. File photo courtesy of Mrs. Fe's colleagues in the AFP Generals' Wives organization

MANILA, Philippines — As the old saying “behind every successful man is a supportive woman” proves to be true, what more if she’s a strong-willed wife out to support her husband 100 percent?

Mrs. Fe Aguillon-Cimatu, a supportive woman, was not always a shadow to her husband Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, a former general and chief-of-staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Fe would always be a woman who proved she can make a difference; she can make change.

Fe, affectionately known as Ma’am Fe, was not just an ordinary housewife. She was the good woman of the house she built all through the years with her better half.

Fe, a native of San Jose, Antique, passed away peacefully on February 20, 2021, leaving a big hole in the heart of the former general.

Born on April 22, 1948, Fe was a very responsible and caring individual especially to her own family. She brought this wonderful trait to her marriage with Cimatu.

Hands-on as she was known, Fe even took charge of their wedding. She was her own wedding planner.

The then-general groom-to-be was still in Marawi for a military operation four days before their wedding date. Fe laid out everything for him, assuring the groom that every detail in their dream wedding was in place. She would remember telling Cimatu “*ikaw na lang ang kulang.*”

Having a military husband was not an easy task. Those long, arduous out-of-town assignments—most of the time dangerous—placed on the general’s shoulders did not become a stumbling block in her married life.

During several combat operations of Cimatu, the loving wife would often visit him. There were times when the husband rushed back to the barracks to see the wife he sorely missed. He would sometime find her in the nearest public market, picking up the freshest vegetables for their evening meal, over which they shared stories.

A confidante and ‘cheerleader’

The responsible and caring wife from then on was always by the general’s side, not just witnessing his journey but also serving as cheerleader as he took charge of several sensitive posts.

The reserved housewife, who did not often go out of their house, devoted most of her time to her better half. She opted to stay at home, to make sure that the house was cleaned up, to read books, and to take care of the plants in their mini garden.



Mrs. Fe Aguillon-Cimatu. File photo courtesy of Mrs. Fe's colleagues in the AFP Generals' Wives organization

Fe was so dedicated to stand as a house keeper of the family, that instead of employing household help, she personally attended to the needs of her man. She wanted to make sure that whatever he needed was already "prepared even before he asked for it."

Fe was also a businesswoman, but one whose priority was a good and healthy married life. She had to sacrifice a lot during her husband's military days, during those times when they could not be together.

There were some occasions when Fe joined her husband during his out-of-the-country assignments. First was in Libya, when Cimatu was appointed as special envoy for a delicate assignment; she personally attended to his needs.

The other was when he was posted in Poland for another special assignment. On both occasions, Fe insisted on joining him, knowing fully well the danger he was facing.

From General Cimatu to Secretary Roy, from being a wife of a general to becoming a wife of a Philippine government civilian official, Fe was there every step of the way. She was not always visible, but she was always felt, especially by her better half.

As the country welcomes National Women's Month in March, it is a fitting moment to recognize every woman's humble sacrifices since they, like Fe, also the contributors to the successes of their man's dreams and visions. INQ



The woman behind the decorated general

Published 11 hours ago on February 25, 2021 07:32 PM

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



Behind every successful man is a supportive woman – or a strong woman. A supportive woman is not always a shadow – she is a woman; she can make a difference. She can make change.

The late Fe Aguillon-Cimatu, affectionately known as Ma'am Fe, was not an ordinary housewife. She was the good woman of the house of Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, a former general and chief-of-staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Hands-on as she was known, Ma'am Fe even took charge of their wedding. She was her own wedding planner. The then-general groom-to-be was still in Marawi for a military operation, four days before their wedding. Ma'am Fe assured him that everything was in place and said "ikaw na lang ang kulang."

Having a military husband was not an easy task, but Ma'am Fe did not see it as a stumbling block in her married life.

During several combat operations of Gen. Roy, the loving wife visited him. There were times when the husband rushed back to the barracks to see the wife he sorely missed. He would find her in the nearest public market, picking up the freshest vegetables for their evening meal, over which they shared stories.

The responsible and caring wife from then on was always by his side, not just witnessing his journey but also serving as a cheerleader as he took charge of several high posts.

The reserved housewife, who did not often go out of their house, devoted most of her time to her better half. She opted to stay at home, to make sure that the house was cleaned up, to read books, and to take care of the plants in their mini garden.

Ma'am Fe was so dedicated a housekeeper, that instead of employing household help, she personally attended to the needs of her man. She wanted to make sure that whatever he needed was already prepared even before he asked for it.

Ma'am Fe was also a businesswoman, but one whose priority was a good and healthy married life. She had to sacrifice a lot during her husband's military days, during those times when they could not be together.

There were two times when Ma'am Fe joined her husband during his out-of-the-country assignments. First was in Libya, when he was appointed as special envoy for a delicate assignment; she personally attended to his needs. The other was when he was posted in Poland for another special assignment. On both occasions, Ma'am Fe insisted on joining him, knowing fully well the danger he was facing.



From General Roy to Secretary Roy, from being a wife of a general to becoming a wife of a Philippine government civilian official, Ma'am Fe was there every step of the way. She was not always visible, but she was always felt.

This is the perfect time to talk about the sacrifices and the hardships that women, like Ma'am Fe, have to endure as good partners of great men. As the country welcomes National Women's Month, we take this opportunity to honor women who have contributed to the successes of men.

Women make change. Ma'am Fe made change.



The Woman behind the Decorated General

BY [VILLAGE.CONNECT](#) ON FEBRUARY 25, 2021

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Strong woman: Cimatu's late wife given sweet tribute by DENR

Published February 25, 2021, 7:10 PM

by [Ellson Quismorio](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) gave sweet tribute Thursday, Feb.25 to the late Fe Aguillon-Cimatu, calling her the “woman behind the decorated general”.

That decorated general is of course DENR Sec. Roy A. Cimatu, a former chief-of-staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

A statement released by the agency early Thursday evening described in detail just how supportive and strong “Ma’am Fe” was, especially for her beloved Roy.

“Hands-on as she was known, Ma’am Fe even took charge of their wedding. She was her own wedding planner. The then-general groom-to-be was still in Marawi for a military operation, four days before their wedding. Ma’am Fe assured him that everything was in place and said ‘Ikaw na lang ang kulang (You’re the only one that’s missing),’” it read.

The agency said Ma’am Fe would make it a point to visit then-Gen. Roy during his combat operations so she may still perform her role as wife.

“There were times when the husband rushed back to the barracks to see the wife he sorely missed. He would find her in the nearest public market, picking up the freshest vegetables for their evening meal, over which they shared stories,” it said.

“The reserved housewife, who did not often go out of their house, devoted most of her time to her better half. She opted to stay at home, to make sure that the house was cleaned up, to read books, and to take care of the plants in their mini garden,” the statement further read.

Ma’am Fe, who is also a businesswoman, did all these domestic chores by herself as she refused house help.

After Roy’s time in the military, his spouse embraced the role of “cheerleader” as he took on several high posts in government.

“There were two times when Ma’am Fe joined her husband during his out-of-the-country assignments. First was in Libya, when he was appointed as special envoy for a delicate assignment; she personally attended to his needs. The other was when he was posted in Poland for another special assignment. On both occasions, Ma’am Fe insisted on joining him, knowing fully well the danger he was facing,” the DENR said.

Ma’am Fe, a native of San Jose, Antique, passed away on Saturday, Feb.20. The couple had one son.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/02/25/strong-woman-cimatus-late-wife-given-sweet-tribute-by-denr/>



DENR honors Secretary Cimatú's late wife

By Aric John Sy Cua

February 25, 2021

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) paid tribute to the late wife of Secretary Roy Cimatú.

In a statement on Thursday, the DENR said Antique businesswoman Fe Aguillon-Cimatú was a “woman of change”.

“The late Fe Aguillon-Cimatú, affectionately known as Ma’am Fe, was not an ordinary housewife,” the statement wrote. “She was the good woman of the house of Department of Environment and Natural Resources Roy A. Cimatú, a former general and chief-of-staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.”

The DENR later said Mrs. Cimatú “was always felt”, even if she was not always visible.

“From General Roy to Secretary Roy, from being a wife of a general to becoming a wife of a Philippine government civilian official, Ma’am Fe was there every step of the way,” the environment department wrote. “This is the perfect time to talk about the sacrifices and the hardships that women, like Ma’am Fe, have to endure as good partners of great men. As the country welcomes National Women’s Month, we take this opportunity to honor women who have contributed to the successes of men.”

Cimatú’s wife passed away over the weekend, with environment undersecretary Benny Antiporda posting the news on his Facebook page.

“Our sincerest condolences and deepest sympathies to Environment Secretary Roy Cimatú over the passing of his beloved spouse, Mrs. Fe Aguillon-Cimatú,” Antiporda wrote on Saturday.

“Your whole DENR family, and my family as well, are deeply saddened. Our love, thoughts and prayers are with you during this time of grief.”

The remains of Cimatú’s wife are currently at their home in San Jose, Antique, according to the provincial government.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/02/25/news/latest-stories/denr-honors-secretary-cimatus-late-wife/845404/?fbclid=IwAR2J-x7EdhPpsmZYFIHvIcuCl2m38iLCLzEGM7wZDo-6QdsTq7G-z6nIbsI>



Feb 25, 2021 @ 22:14

By IS

DENR nagbigay tribute sa namatay na misis ni Cimatu

Hinandugan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ng tribute nitong Huwebes ang pumanaw na si Fe Aguillon-Cimatu.

Sa pahayag na inilabas ng DENR, idinetalye nito kung gaano ka-supportive at nagpakatatag si “Ma’am Fe” para sa kanyang pinakamamahal na mister na si DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu, dating Armed Forces of the Philippines chief-of-staff.

“Hands-on as she was known, Ma’am Fe even took charge of their wedding. She was her own wedding planner. The then-general groom-to-be was still in Marawi for a military operation, four days before their wedding. Ma’am Fe assured him that everything was in place and said ‘Ikaw na lang ang kulang,’” sabi ng DENR.

Binibisita rin daw ni “Ma’am Fe” noon si Cimatu sa combat operations nito upang magampanan ang pagiging asawa niya rito.

“There were times when the husband rushed back to the barracks to see the wife he sorely missed. He would find her in the nearest public market, picking up the freshest vegetables for their evening meal, over which they shared stories,” dagdag ng DENR.

Noong weekend pumanaw ang misis ni Cimatu, na inanunsyo ni Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda sa kanyang Facebook page.



Yumaong asawa ni DENR Sec. Cimat, kinilala



February 25, 2021 @ 7:39 PM 10 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – The Woman behind the Decorated General

Ang nasa likod ng tagumpay ng isang lalaki ay ang suporta ng isang babae- o ang malakas na babae. Ang suporta ng isang babae ay laging nasa anino nito ay isang babae na lagi siyang naiiba at laging gumagawa ng pagbabago.

Ang yumaong si Fe Aguillon-Cimatu na isang mapagmahal na mas kilala sa tawag na Ma'am Fe, ay hindi lamang isang ordinaryong maybahay. Siya rin ay isang mabuting maybahay ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu isang dating Heneral at chief-of staff ng Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Sa aktuwal mas kilala siya bilang Ma'am Fe kahit na noong ikinasal siya. Siya ay may sariling wedding planner. At ang the-general groom-to-be was ay nasa Marawi dahil sa military operatioin apat na araw bago ang kanilang kasal. Tiniyak ni Ma'am Fe na ang lahat ay maaayos at sinabing "ikaw nalang ang kulang."

Bilang isang military husband hindi ito isang madaling Gawain, subalit hindi ito nagging balakid kay Ma'am Fe para sa kanyang buhay may asawa.

Sa panahon ng combat operation ni Gen. Roy, ang nagmamahal na asawa ay binisita siya. At may mga pagkakataon na kailangan bumalik ni Gen. Roy sa kanyan g barracks para Makita lamang ang kanyang asawa na labis niyang nasasabik. At nagkikita sila sa kalapit na public market para lamang makabili ng sariwang gulay para sa kanilang hapunan na kabilang sa kanilang bahagi ng stories.

Ang responsable at mapagmahal na asawa ay laging nasa tabi ng kanyang asawang Heneral hindi lamang para ma-witness ang paglalabay nito kundi mapagsilbihan hanggang sa tahakin nito ang iba't ibang matataas na puwesto.

Ang nakalaang may bahay na hindi madalas lumabas ng bahay ay laging nakatuon ang kanyang oras at piniling manatili sa bahay para lamang matiyak na malinis ang kanilang bahay, nagbabasa ng libro at nag-aalaga ng halaman at mini garden sa kanilang tahanan.

Itinuturing na si Ma'am Fe ay nakatuon sa pag-aalaga ng kanilang bahay, sa halip na magtrabaho ay pinili nya ang pagtulong sa pag-aalaga ng kanilang bahay at pagtuon ng pansin ang pangangailangan ng kanyang asawa. At tinitiyak niya na ang ano man ang kailangan ay laging nakahanda.



Hindi negosyante si Ma'am Fe subalit ang kanyang prioridad ay ang kagandahan at kalusugan ng buhay may asawa. Isinakripisyo nito ang lahat sa panahon ng pagiging may bahay ng isang military sa panahon na hindi sila magkasama.

May mga panahon rin na dalawang beses si Ma'am Fe ay sumama sa kanyang asawa sa panahon ng out-of-the-country assignments. Ang Una ay sa bansang Libya nang itagala ito bilang special envoy for a delicate assignment. Siya ay personal na tumayo sa pangangailangan ng kanyang asawa. At ang isa ay ang ng maitagala ito Poland bilang special assignment sa kapwa okasyon si Ma'am Fe ay piniling sumama sa kanyang asawa sa kabila na panganib na maaaring kaharapin nito.

From General Roy to Secretary Roy, mula sa pagiging asawa ng Heneral at may bahay nito ng Philippine government civilian official. Si Ma'am Fe ay laging nakasuporta at nasa likod ng kanyang asawa.

Ito ang tamang oras para pag-usapan ang sakripisyo at pagtatrabaho ng isang babae na tulad ni Ma'am Fe, bilang isang mabuting kapareha ng mapagmahal na lalaki. Bilang isang bansa ngayong nalalapit ang National Women's Month nais naming kunin ang pagkakataon para bigyang parangal ang isang babae na nagbigay ng kontribusyon sa tagumpay ng isang lalaki.

Women make change. Ma'am Fe made change. **Santi Celario**



Task force vows to renew crackdown against Candaba Swamp bird hunters

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)
February 26, 2021



White egrets at the Candaba Swamp

Bird hunters targeting migratory birds in one of the country's largest wetlands in the Province of Pampanga are now the objects of a manhunt by wildlife law enforcers for blatantly defying the law against hunting wild animals.

The Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (Penro) of Pampanga has launched surveillance operations against a group of bird hunters who were recently spotted while conducting bird-hunting activities along the North Luzon Expressway in Apalit, Pampanga.

The latest report of bird-hunting activities came just weeks after the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Ramsar Convention declared on February 2, 2021, World Wetlands Day, the Sasmuan Pampanga Coastal Wetlands as a wetland of international importance.

The first in Pampanga and the entire Central Luzon Region, the Sasmuan Pampanga Coastal Wetland became the 8th Ramsar Site in the Philippines.

Its designation as a wetland of international importance highlights the province's commitment to protect and conserve its coastal and inland wetlands as a staging ground of endangered migratory birds and habitat to native bird species that thrive in the area.

"Pampanga Penro [Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer] Laudimir Salac has already sent a team to the area to conduct surveillance operation," Don Guevarra, Regional Public Affairs Office chief of DENR Central Luzon told the BusinessMirror in a telephone interview.

"It just happened that because of Covid-19, our team's movement is limited," he said.

The "hunt" for Pampanga's bird hunters came in response to reports of illegal activities documented and posted on social media by bird enthusiasts recently.

Sought for reaction, Rogelio Demelletes Jr. of the DENR's Philippine Operations Group on Ivory and Illegal Wildlife Trade, or Task Force POGI, said it is unfortunate that bird-hunting activities have again resumed in the area. Apparently, he said, the bird hunters are taking advantage of the restricted movement of wildlife law enforcers because of the pandemic.

"We know who they are. We can track them down. These hunters are not from Pampanga. Some of them are from nearby provinces congregating in the Candaba Swamp to show off their weapons and try it on these poor birds," said Demelletes.

"Some of them need to show off to demonstrate the firepower of their upgraded rifles. The only way they can do it there is to hunt birds," lamented Demelletes.



He said Task Force PPGI, which includes the National Bureau of Investigation and the Philippine National Police, would not let the illegal activity pass.

“Somehow, we will get to them. Maybe not today, but later on, we’ll get them. I know them. We can track them and pin them down,” he said in Filipino.

Bird enthusiasts who happen to be in the area when the incident happened documented the bird-hunting activity.

Diuvs de Jesus, a bird enthusiast, posted on his Facebook account photos of the bird hunters using assorted rifles. One photograph shows one of the hunters carrying a net bag with several birds, their unsuspecting victims for the day.

Hunting birds are prohibited under several laws, particularly Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

Image credits: [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)



Call to close Mt. Apo put on hold

Published February 25, 2021, 11:54 AM

by [Ivy Tejano](#)

DAVAO CITY – The appeal to close all entry points to Mt. Apo, following the several violations committed by mountaineers which was earlier observed by concerned local government units in Davao, has been put on hold.



WIKIPEDIA/ MANILA BULLETIN

Department of Environment and Natural Resources 11 (DENR-11) executive director Bagani Fidel Evasco, who is also the chairman of the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB), is pushing for the temporary closure of the Mt. Apo Natural Park due to the unappealing findings from their recent trail and camp assessment in Davao del Sur entry points.

The PAMB, however, adopted the deferment of the agendum for the closure of Mt. Apo during its emergency EnBanc Meeting on Tuesday, February 23, 2021. The decision to hold the closure was made after 25 of the members, both from Region 11 and 12, voted in favor of the motion to defer while eight others are not in favor of the decision.

Evasco pushed for the immediate rehabilitation by having the highest peak temporarily closed. He said that despite the plan being deferred, the department is firm in pursuing its strategic plans to improve the condition of Mount Apo with efforts to intensify information drive, hasten the rehabilitation and improve the management of the trails and camping facilities.

The DENR is also up for the retooling of the trekking mechanisms and policies at the Mount Apo Natural Park and for setting up of standard facilities, such as comfort rooms, as well as wayfinding signages and intensifying patrolling activities in the mountain. They also urged mountaineers to abide with the mechanisms and policies.

“We aim for the improvement of condition and sustainability of Mt. Apo. We must do what it takes to safeguard the country’s highest peak, to protect it as a key biodiversity area and one of our immense natural resources,” Evasco said, adding that despite the deferment, the PAMB will support the DENR’s plan to rehabilitate Mt. Apo.

The DENR, along with other sectors and groups, observed several violations of the mountaineers during their trail and camp assessment earlier this month. These are non-observance of the IATF guidelines on health protocols, occurrence of littering and vandalism, traces of drug substances and alarming soil cultivation within its “strict protection zone (SPZ)”.



PAMB defers Mount Apo closure



DEFERRED. The Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) deferred the closure of Mount Apo Natural Park to trekkers, saying that it can be rehabilitated without the closure. Earlier, Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Davao Region Executive Director Bagani Fidel Evasco said they were looking at the possibility of closing the trails “due to the unappealing findings from the team’s recent conduct of trail and camp assessment.” (Photo by DENR-Davao)

[RALPH LAWRENCE G. LLEMIT](#)

February 25, 2021

THE Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) has deferred the closure of Mount Apo from trekkers.

In a press statement, PAMB adopted the deferment of the agenda for the closure of Mount Apo Natural Park (MANP) during its emergency en banc meeting on Tuesday, February 23.

During the meeting, 25 PAMB members, both in Davao Region and Soccsksargen, voted in favor of the motion to defer the proposed closure, while eight were against it.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Davao Region (DENR-Davao) Executive Director Bagani Fidel Evasco, who is also the PAMB chairman, previously said they are eyeing for the temporary closure of Mount Apo to trekkers “due to the unappealing findings from the team’s recent conduct of trail and camp assessment.”

Evasco, together with selected officials and personnel from Davao Oriental and Davao del Sur, recently conducted a trail and camp assessment from February 11 to 14, passing Sitio Paradise Digos trail to Camp Gudi-Gudi then to the summit.

Following the activity, multiple observations were publicly released such as trekkers’ non-observance of the IATF guidelines on health protocols, occurrence of littering and vandalism, traces of drug substances, and alarming soil cultivation within its Strict Protection Zone (SPZ).

The director then pushed for its immediate rehabilitation by having it temporarily closed.

“We aim for the improvement of condition and sustainability of Mount Apo. We must do what it takes to safeguard the country’s highest peak -- to protect it as a key biodiversity area and one of our immense natural resources,” Evasco said during the meeting.

DENR-Davao Regional Public Affairs Office (RPAO) chief Jayvee Agas told SunStar Davao in a phone interview on Thursday, February 25, that majority of those who favor the deferment of its closure deemed that the rehabilitation of MANP can be done even without closing it to trekkers.

“Ang stand naman po nila is that pwede namang i-pursue ang rehabilitation plan (Their stand is that the rehabilitation plan can still be pursued) even without closing Mount Apo. But they assured the DENR that they will still support our rehabilitation plan,” Agas said.



The DENR official said Mount Apo trails were opened to the public sometime in November 2020 after months of being closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Since kaka-open lang (the mountain was just recently opened to the public), well maybe that's one of their reasons din na gi-defer na (why they deferred it)," she said.

Despite the plan being deferred, she said DENR will still pursue its strategic plans to improve the condition of Mount Apo.

"One of our aims is to have a standardization of unified trekking and camping policies. Mag-set siguro og (Maybe to set) higher standards, or stricter policies which should be followed by the trekkers and mountaineers," Agas said.

The official also said they are already crafting its action plan to intensify information drive, accelerate the rehabilitation and improve the management of MANP trails and camping facilities.

She also said they are planning for the retooling of trekking mechanisms and policies, for setting up of standard facilities such as comfort rooms, as well as wayfinding signages, and for intensifying patrolling activities.



FDC Misamis Power Corp.'s forest management and reforestation program

DENR lauds FDC Misamis Power's carbon capture program

Published February 25, 2021 3:36pm

By TED CORDERO, GMA News

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau in Region 10 (DENR-EMB 10) has lauded FDC Misamis Power Corp.'s forest management and reforestation programs to capture carbon emissions and maintain air quality in the province of Misamis Oriental.

In a statement on Thursday, FDC Misamis said it established the Carbon Sink Management Program (CSMP) in 2018 in partnership with DENR-EMB 10 and Barangay Sambulawan in El Salvador City. The program covers 140 hectares of forest lands.

FDC Misamis said that, so far, over 80 hectares have been planted with indigenous tree species such as An-an, Tipolo, Maribojoc, Bangkal, Acacia, Alim (Alum), Magtangali, Rattan, and Kalikoy, among others.

An additional 40 hectares were populated with Mangium and Bagras species, it added. The DENR-EMB 10 lauded the program as "a show window of a successful carbon sink for coal-fired power plants in the Region."

The company said that with the carbon sink project, it was able to establish a man-made forest that helps sequester carbon emissions to maintain air quality in the province.

"It is encouraging to know that DENR-EMB 10 sees our efforts, which is more than for compliance purposes. This project, along with many other social development programs, is our way of giving back to Mindanao. It is consistent with Filinvest's desire to make a difference in the lives of Filipinos," said FDC Misamis president and CEO Juan Eugenio Roxas.

"The disruption brought by the COVID-19 pandemic may have given the planet some breathing space, temporarily improving air quality worldwide. But as we move forward in the post-COVID era, environmental stewardship must be prioritized to truly mitigate greenhouse gas emissions," he added.

FDC Misamis is a subsidiary of FDC Utilities Inc., the Gotianun-led Filinvest Development Corp.'s utilities and power arm.



It operates a 3x135-megawatt circulating fluidized bed coal thermal plant in Villanueva town, Misamis Oriental.

Since its commercial operations in 2016, the facility has been supplying stable and cost-effective power.—**AOL, GMA News**



Ganito Kasi 'Yan

ni **ANDY VERDE** DZRH anchorman

E-mail Address: andres5421@yahoo.com

ITINALAGA ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources ang 4,422.8-hectares forest sa Mangatarem, Pangasinan bilang bahagi ng "national efforts" upang maprotektahan ang mga nanganganib at endemic na wild animals at halaman sa bansa.

Base sa DENR Administrative Order na nilagdaan ni Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, ang fo-

rest area ay tatawaging Mangatarem Critical Habitat. Ito ay matatagpuan sa mga barangay ng Cacaoiten, Cabaluyan II, Calomboyan Sur, Lawak Langka, Catarataran, Pacalat at Malabobo.

"In doing this, we at the DENR can save habitats which are critical for the survival of threatened species or species at risk of extinction, including other associated wildlife, and at the same time pro-

vide this land area a legal framework to protect it from destructive uses," saad ni Cimatu.

Ang Mangatarem Critical Habitat ay may sukat na 4,422.80-hectares na kagubatan na nagsisilbing tirahan ng mga nanganganib at endemic na fauna species tulad ng Philippine deer (*Rusa marianna*), Philippine warty pig (*Sus philippensis*), Philippine duck (*Anas luzonica*), Flame-breasted fruit dove (*Ptilinopus marchei*), Philippine eagle owl (*Bubo philippensis*), Luzon scops owl (*Otus longicornis*), at Rufous horn-

bill (*Buceros hydrocorax*).

Kabilang naman sa flora species na matatagpuan sa naturang kagubatan ay ang oi-oi (*Diospyros philippinensis*), kalingag (*Cinnamomum mercadoi*), malabayabas (*Tristania decorticata*) at iba pang endemic species.

Ipinaliwanag ni Cimatu na sa pamamagitan ng DAO ay magkakatulungan ang DENR, local government, komunidad at iba pang stakeholders na kasama sa "locally-driven ecosystems management approach."

Sa ilalim ng DAO, ang pangangasiwa ng Manga-

tarem Critical Habitat ay hahawakan ng DENR-Region 1 (Ilocos Region) katuwang ang lokal na pamahalaan ng Mangatarem at stakeholders.

Mahigpit ding ipagbawal ang mga sumusunod: Dumping of waste products detrimental to wildlife; squatting and/or occupying any portion of the critical habitat; mineral exploration and/or extraction; burning; logging; and quarrying, ito ay base na rin sa nakasaad sa Republic Act 9147 o ang Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001.

PROTEKSYON SA ENDEMIC WILD ANIMALS SA PANGASINAN



"PEOPLE POWER FOR (OUR) FORESTS"

Ibinahagi ng Masungi Georeserve na higit 60,000 na puno na ang kanilang naitanim sa kanilang reforestation project na nagsimula pa noong 2017. Ka-partner nila rito ang DENR, 200 na eskuwelahan at ilang mga grupong naka-focus sa conservation.

📍: Masungi Georeserve/Kyle Venturillo



👍❤️😄 447

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Manila Water breaks ground for 42nd STP

By Jonathan L. Mayuga
February 26, 2021



Manila Water, the concessionaire for the East Zone of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) said on Thursday that it recently held the groundbreaking ceremony for the Aglipay Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) in Mandaluyong City.

The said STP is the company's 42nd facility. It will have a treatment capacity of 60 million liter per day (MLD) of wastewater to be collected from 2,115 hectares fo catchment area spanning across Mandaluyong, San Juan, and Quezon cities.

The facility's capacity is expandable up to 120 MLD after the complementing network of 53 kilometers of sewer lines is completed. The Mandaluyong West Sewerage System is designed to serve a population of up to 652,000.

In a statement, Abelardo P. Basilio, Manila Water Operation's Chief Operating Officer said the project is a vital compolnent of the company's wastewater masterplan which aims to provide 100 percent sewer and sanitation coverage to the entire East Zone by 2037.

"This masterplan will help ensure the sustained care for our waterways through short term interventions and long-term technical solutions," Basilio further said.

The P4.164-billion Aglipay STP is the first wastewater treatment facility of Manila Water that will use the Moving Bed Biofilm Reactor (MBBR) process with Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) technology, which will promote treatment efficiency and improve effluent quality.

Construction of the STP is expected to be completed by 2024 and the sewer network by 2025.

Mandaluyong City Mayor Carmelita Abalos and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chairman Benhur Abalos, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System-Regulatory Office (MWSS-RO) Chief Regulator Patrick Ty along with representatives from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), headed by the Director Jacob Meimban, Jr., of the Manila Bay Coordinating Office, took part in the groundbreaking ceremony.

In her speech, Abalos expressed her gratitude and continued support for Manila Water of her constituency in Mandaluyong.

MMDA Chairman Abalos, meanwhile, commended Manila Water for its part in addressing what he called Metro Manila's "urban decay" underscoring the importance of the soon-to-be-built wastewater facility in helping alleviate the current concerns on environmental protection plaguing the country.

Meimban shared DENR's appreciation of the company's contribution towards the clean-up of Manila Bay. "Since Sec. Cimatú organized the Manila Bay Task Force and launched the 'Battle for Manila Bay', Manila Water has been aggressive in its efforts to help clean the tributaries that empty into Manila Bay, helping us move closer to our goal of bringing Manila Bay back to its old glory."



Manila Water President and CEO Jose Rene Almendras expressed his appreciation to the different stakeholders particularly the local government of Mandaluyong for hosting the site of the STP.

“Once completed, Mandaluyong City can boast of a truly world-class sewage treatment facility that will redound to urban growth and greatly help in environmental protection,” Almendras added.



Manila Water starts building 42nd sewage treatment plant

February 26, 2021 | 12:04 am



MANILA WATER
CARE IN EVERY DROP

EAST ZONE water concessionaire Manila Water Co., Inc. has broken ground for its P4.16-billion Aglipay sewage treatment plant in Mandaluyong City that can treat 60 million liters per day.

In a statement on Thursday, Manila Water said the plant is the company's 42nd sewage treatment facility in its franchise area and will treat wastewater coming from 2,115 hectares of catchment area covering Mandaluyong, San Juan, and Quezon City.

The facility's capacity can be increased up to 120 million liters of wastewater daily once the construction of a complementing network of 53 kilometers of sewer lines is finished, the company said.

The construction of the Aglipay sewage treatment plant is projected to be done by 2024, and the sewer network by 2025.

The ground-breaking ceremony at the site marked the start of Manila Water's Mandaluyong West Sewerage System, which is designed to serve a population of up to 652,000.

"Aglipay Sewage Treatment Plant is the first wastewater treatment facility of Manila Water that will utilize the Moving Bed Biofilm Reactor process with Biological Nutrient Removal technology, which will promote treatment efficiency and improve effluent quality," the water provider said.

Manila Water Operations Chief Operating Officer Abelardo P. Basilio said the project is part of the company's wastewater masterplan to provide the entire east zone with 100% sewer and sanitation coverage by 2037.

"This masterplan will help ensure the sustained care for our waterways through short-term interventions and long-term technical solutions," he said.

Manila Water President and Chief Executive Officer Jose Rene Gregory D. Almendras has called for the collaboration among stakeholders for the smooth implementation of the project in order to avoid inconvenience to the public during construction.

"Once completed, Mandaluyong City can boast of a truly world-class sewage treatment facility that will redound to urban growth and greatly help in environmental protection," he said.

Manila Water also announced that it would implement technical interventions along Buayang Bato and Buhangin Creeks in Mandaluyong City as part of an initiative to clean Metro Manila's three-river system and their tributaries.



“These interventions include the application of Biomix, a Manila Water Laboratory Services patented cultured bacteria, to Buayang Bato Creek to reduce foul odor and coliform count. Likewise, for Buhangin Creek, artificial turbulence will be applied to help promote movement of water even during dry season,” the company said.

Manila Water provides water and wastewater services in the eastern part of Metro Manila, which includes Marikina, Pasig, Taguig, Makati, San Juan, Mandaluyong, and portions of Quezon City and Manila, and Rizal province. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**



Sewage plant

posted February 25, 2021 at 09:26 pm



Manila Water Company Inc. holds a ceremonial groundbreaking to mark the commencement of Mandaluyong West Sewerage System Project at the Aglipay Sewage Treatment Plant in Barangay Old Zaniga, Mandaluyong City. Attending the ceremony are (from left) Megawide Construction Corp. president and chief executive Edgar Saavedra, Manila Water president and chief executive Jose Rene Almendras, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System co-deputy administrator for innovation and technology Ronald Abrigo, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chairman Benhur Abalos, Mandaluyong Mayor Carmelita Abalos, Manila Bay Coordinating Office deputy executive director Jacob Meimban, MWSS-Regulatory Office chief regulator Patrick Ty, Barangay Old Zaniga chairman Alex Lacson and Suez International authorized managing officer Christian Javier.



Phividec orders stop to quarrying on its 3,000-hectare estate in Misamis Oriental

By: [Igger J. Jerusalem](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Inquirer Mindanao](#) / 08:14 PM February 25, 2021

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—The Phividec Industrial Authority (PIA) has ordered a stop to illegal quarrying within its 3,000-hectare industrial estate in Misamis Oriental province.

Jose Gabriel La Viña, PIA administrator and chief executive officer, said Phividec started serving cease and desist orders to at least five quarry operators on Phividec property at the village of Sta. Ana in Tagoloan town.

La Viña, who assumed office only on Sept. 16, 2020, said the operators were given five days starting on Monday (Feb. 22) to remove their equipment and structures from the quarry site and leave the area.

Established in 1974 by Presidential Decree No. 538, the Philippine Veterans Investment Development Corporation (Phividec) Industrial Authority is a government-owned and controlled corporation (GOCC) that manages the 3,000-hectare property spanning 13 villages in two towns—Tagoloan and Villanueva.

La Viña said PIA never granted quarry permits to any operator but it had lost some 70 hectares of land due to extensive quarrying in the area.

“The sand along the banks of the river within the estate has been depleted due to band erosion,” La Viña said.

If the quarrying operation was allowed to continue, it would cause environmental disaster that would ruin communities and bring losses to companies inside and near the PIA estate, he said.

Lawyer Princess Ayoma, of PIA’s legal services division, said the operators were given permits to quarry by the Misamis Oriental provincial government but under PD 538, the PIA had sole authority and police power over the estate.

La Viña said the provincial government also failed to obtain a Certificate of No Objection from PIA before issuing permits.

But even if the permits were valid, operators also violated the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) policy against quarrying beyond a one-meter depth limit from the river bed.

“It did not happen overnight,” he said, referring to the violations. “It started in the 90s but was not acted upon,” he added.

He said that it took him months to act on the violations as his office had to gather facts and study these before taking any legal action.

Dozens of companies and industries, including power plants and steel factories, have established their businesses inside PIA’s economic zone.

TSB

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1400193/phividec-orders-stop-to-quarrying-on-its-3000-hectare-estate-in-misamis-oriental>



Duterte: PH in ‘serious trouble’ due to climate change

By Catherine S. Valente, TMT

February 25, 2021

THE Philippines is in “serious trouble” as worsening problems of climate change and global warming have contributed to the severe impact of the recent typhoons that have hit the country, President Rodrigo Duterte said on Wednesday.

Duterte made the statement as he admitted that the country was “not prepared” in the event of severe weather conditions caused by climate change.

“*Noong una, yung climate change ano pa ako noon, parang ayaw ko maniwala but ngayon sobra talaga ang tubig galing sa langit because umiinit ang planeta* (At first, I did not believe climate change but now the rains coming from the heavens are heavy due to the warming of the planet),” Duterte said in his weekly public address.

“Even by a certain degree higher, we are in serious trouble *kasi yung dagat mabilis na rin yung singaw ng tubig. The biggest..mas marami pa sa land mass ang tubig kaya kung bumagsak ‘yan talagang todong-todo. and we are not prepared for that* (due to the fast evaporation of water in the ocean. Water is bigger than the land mass so when it falls, the impact is severe),” he added.

Duterte also said that climate change has disrupted the weather patterns, saying typhoons could now hit the country anytime of the year.

“*Noon* (In the past) we have the typhoons and the hot weather and cold weather, usually in December *pero ngayon wala na panahon sa bagyo. The bagyo can come anytime. Nagwawala nga ang tubig sa dagat,*” he said.

Duterte himself addressed the issue of climate change in the 37th Association of Southeast Asian Nations Summit in November last year, noting that developed countries must consider leading drastic cuts in carbon emissions and demand climate justice from “those who are most responsible for this existential challenge we face today.”

He also told the international body in online sessions that consecutive typhoons that hit the Philippines reflected a “setback” for the government’s development agenda, especially in affected regions.

The Philippines is among nations most vulnerable to climate change. It constantly deals with heavy monsoon rains and is battered by an average of 20 typhoons per year.

Auring, the first tropical storm to enter the country this year, hit parts of Visayas and Mindanao a few days ago, triggering floods and forcing thousands of families to evacuate their houses.

During his visit to the storm-hit Surigao del Sur, the President asked government officials to assist victims, help the province’s agriculture sector, and repair damaged infrastructure within one week.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/02/25/news/latest-stories/duterte-ph-in-serious-trouble-due-to-climate-change/845229/>



Panawagang wakasan ang paggamit ng produktong papel, plastik inilunsad sa Batangas



February 25, 2021 @ 7:48 PM 10 hours ago

Batangas City, Philippines – Isinusulong at nanawagan ni Andrea Loise Macaraig sa epektibong paraan upang wakasan ang pag-gamit ng mga produktong papel at plastic.

Isinusulong nito ang pagbabago sa paraan at sistema ng paggawa ng mga disposable product na kasalukuyang sinasabing nakasasama sa ating kapaligiran.

Binigyang diin ni Macaraig na ang paggamit ng mga produktong mga ito ay may “negatibong mga epekto sa kapaligiran na hindi kayang bayaran ng sangkatauhan at mga mapagkukunan ng mundo.”

Malapit na ang napipintong pagbabawal sa Pilipinas ng pag-gamit ng mga plastic straw, at stirrer.

Sa pakikiisa sa Sense Global Waste Index 2019, sinabi ng mga grupo na ang mga produktong plastic ay isang pangunahing kontribyutor sa dalawang bilyong toneladang basura na mula sa tao taun-taon.

Dagdag din niya na ang paggawa at pagtatapon ng mga disposable ay nakasasama sa mga katutubong komunidad at ang mga sektor ng mga bahay na madalas na nakatayo malapit sa mga planta ng produksyon o mga basurang lugar ng mga industriya na pinagtatapanan ng mga ito.

Samantala, kabilang na sa mga plastic item na dapat isama sa listahan ng NEAP ay mga labo bag, cutleries, bote, tasa at plato , styro o mga lagayan ng ng pagkain na polystyrene. **RNT/ELM**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/panawagang-wakasan-ang-paggamit-ng-produktong-papel-plastik-inilunsad-sa-batangas/>



Mondelez Philippines, Plastic Flamingo to recycle 40 tons of plastic for building disaster relief shelters

Wednesday, February 24, 2021 People's Tonight

THERE have been discussions in the news lately about banning of certain types of plastic. This is an issue which Mondelez Philippines is more than willing to engage in.

“One of our global goals is to help minimize our climate change impact by addressing the collection and recycling of plastic packaging. This means investing in waste management,” said Joseph Fabul, Mondelez Philippines Country Manager for Corporate and Government Affairs, The company has invested in a partnership with The Plastic Flamingo, a social company based in Manila that aims to tackle marine plastic pollution. It collects and recycles plastic waste before it reaches the oceans.

Started in 2020, the partnership between the two organizations has expanded from a previous one metric ton collection agreement to a new commitment of collecting and recycling 40 metric tons of post-consumer plastic packaging. This translates to some 40,000 kg of waste to be collected from designated pick-up points and processed into recycled eco-lumber. The eco-lumber will be used to create disaster relief shelters or huts for use during typhoons and the like.

“Plastic is a highly efficient material for food packaging that provides the right levels of safety, quality, product protection, and preservation. Simply put, there are no available replacements for food plastic packaging yet to ensure the contents remain safe, high quality and affordable,” adds Fabul. *“However, we do support eliminating unnecessary plastic, or items which have viable replacements that do not harm the environment.”*

Fabul also highlights that at the core of this much-debated issue is proper waste management. He ends, *“Inconsistent collection and not enough recycling facilities means that plastic as well as other waste often end up in landfills, communities, or oceans – whether they are recyclable or not.”* Through this partnership with The Plastic Flamingo, the Company aims to promote proper waste segregation and recycling, goals which anyone can contribute to.

“The Plastic Flamingo commends Mondelez Philippines’ continuing commitment to ensuring that proper collection and recycling of plastic happens in the country,” shares Francois Lesage, CEO of The Plastic Flamingo. *“We believe that a world without oceanic waste is possible with collective effort from different members of the community. We encourage everyone to segregate waste in their homes, and to find recycling centers in their communities so that waste is properly disposed of depending on its kind. For plastic waste, the simple step is to ensure it ends in the trash rather than disposing it just anywhere. These are things we all can do. And for those who can, we encourage investing in collection and recycling activities to make a greater impact together.”*

Source: <https://journal.com.ph/editorial/miscellaneous/mondelez-philippines-plastic-flamingo-to-recycle-40-tons-of-plastic-for-building-disaster-relief-shelters/>



TINGNAN: Mala-enchanted na Bantang River, agaw-atensyon sa Antique

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Feb 25 2021 03:21 PM



Tila picture perfect ang Bantang River na bubungad sa mga paakyat ng Mt. Madjaas sa Culasi sa Antique. *Larawan mula kay Ompz Felicio*

Agaw-atensyon ngayon sa mga hiker at mountaineer ang napakagandang ilog na makikita patungong Mt. Madjaas sa Culasi sa Antique.

Ang ilog na ito ay ang Bantang River na picture perfect ang dating dahil sa mala-enchanted na itsura.



Tila picture perfect ang Bantang River na bubungad sa mga paakyat ng Mt. Madjaas sa Culasi sa Antique. *Larawan mula kay Ompz Felicio*

Ayon sa mga mountaineer at hiker, napakalamig at napakalinis ng tubig sa ilog.

Isa ito sa mga inaasam na makita ng mga umaakyat ng bundok dahil sa kagandahan nito.

- **Ulat ni Rolen Escaniel**

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/life/02/25/21/tingnan-mala-enchanted-na-bantang-river-agaw-atensyon-sa-antique?fbclid=IwAR22XqIlMw-VyqxwrjaE3svdIZWqxQVWiCjISV15egfC7xMEedcTq7lpcMc>



Valuing our environment is valuing our economy

By Gab Meija

February 26, 2021

ONE of the greatest paradoxes of our time may well be in realizing that an endless linear economic growth means the benefit and welfare of the majority of society. It may seem intuitive that the more natural resources that we have and use, the greater number of products and economic gains we can realize. The more products we sell, the more money we have. And the more money we have, the more we can spend on selling more. A flawless and ideal plan until we run out of these precious natural resources or we come face to face with a global environmental crisis that threatens our very existence — where today, we actually are facing both. Why did it take more than five decades since the economic expansion post-World War 2, for us to realize that indeed, we may actually run out of such natural resources?

According to the 2020 report on the State of the World's Forests, we have lost an estimated 420 million hectares of forested lands since the 1990s. That is the equivalent of almost half the total area of China, gone in just 30 years. Countries in East Africa are being threatened with major agricultural loss due to prolonged droughts and giant swarms of locust infestation. Our seas are running out of fish that provides sustenance and food to hundreds of millions of people where according to a report by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, 90 percent of commercial fish stocks are being exploited. Ancestral lands in Brazil, Colombia, Canada and the Philippines are being destroyed and mined out for oil, metal or ore. And according to the Global Wetland Outlook report of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, we have lost approximately 35 percent of the world's wetlands just from 1970 until 2015. Are these facts and evidence not enough to show the amount of destruction we have caused on our environment, all in the name and glory of economic growth? The same environment that provided us with wood for our houses to stand, water for us to drink and lands for us to farm. The same environment that provides us the biological advancements for vaccines and medicine to be made.

Yet the glaring question for us to even answer, is if indeed this flawless and ideal plan of such an endless economic growth has turned out so well for the majority of human society. Indigenous people are still being displaced. More than 1.89 billion or 36 percent of the world's population still lives in extreme poverty, where millions of families earn less than \$1 a day. The middle class of the economic superpower, the United States, are living chained to thousands of dollars in student loans and debts. Where the same story goes for the once colonized countries having to borrow millions of dollars from the global north for us to “develop” after our people and resources have been exploited for hundreds of years. Development for whom you might say? Now asking ourselves if we as people that are a part of the environment, have been truly part of this concept of growth in the economy? Or are we just mere stones for the rest of the minority of the so-called 1 percent to step on.

The economy isn't the one that needs to recover — it is the environment, and then comes our people. Only when we get to value the importance of the environment in providing food, water, shelter and livelihood for all of humanity; in how sustainable tourism have contributed to the gross domestic product of countries such as the Philippines, Maldives, Thailand, Cambodia and many other countries to thrive; in how investing in renewable resources and energy can provide greater benefits in saving our existence from a global environmental and climatic collapse — that is the day we can say we have truly grown.

Email: jgbmeija@gmail.com

<https://www.instagram.com/gabmeija/>

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/02/26/opinion/columnists/valuing-our-environment-is-valuing-our-economy/845419/>



Bulacan airport project deserves full government support

By [Val A. Villanueva](#) February 25, 2021



“A controversial project...” I can only shake my head when some media entities describe San Miguel Corp’s P1.5-trillion Bulacan Airport Project as controversial, without a clear and unequivocal explanation as to what makes it so.

My gutfeels tells me that some business groups with devious motives want to cast aspersion on the ongoing project, either out of spite or envy, by throwing all sorts of issues to derail the biggest investment the country has ever had coming from a single company. Some of our media friends are being over-accommodating in mouthing this nonsensical refrain.

The truth is that San Miguel is taking a huge risk in undertaking this project. While many businesses are explicably holding back, the company is pursuing big-ticket infrastructure projects, which will fuel economic activity despite the global financial contraction brought on by the pandemic.

One of the issues being thrown at the airport project is the decision of both houses of Congress to pass a bill granting it tax exemptions. This is not new. Since my early foray in business writing, the Philippines, through the Board of Investments (BOI), has already been offering tax incentives—tax holidays, import duty restrictions, among others—to attract foreign and local investments. I find it even weirder to see some former officials of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda)—who themselves crafted many of the tax-incentive provisions that are in effect to this day—putting in a bad light giving tax incentives to the airport project.

Let’s do the math. Granting tax incentives to San Miguel will be more than justified. For one, the project is an unsolicited proposal, and the humongous amount of money to be poured into it may not yield the returns envisioned by its proponents. Remember that the pandemic has led to the bankruptcies of global airlines amid slow air traffic and cargo movement. Meanwhile, employment generation, through the sheer size of the investment alone, should be a welcome relief. In this time of pandemic, the country is suffering from a debilitating economic shrinkage, performing at its financial worst since World War II.

Economists see over a million direct and indirect jobs that would be generated by the project during the construction phase, and as many as 30 million jobs once the airport runs at full capacity. More importantly, the government will not be spending a single centavo for the project: no equity, no properties given, and no government loans to be availed of. San Miguel says that airport development alone is pegged at P740 billion. This will involve development of raw land and construction of facilities, (including expressways and a railway system) to make the airport easily accessible by all.

Based on my reading of Republic Act (RA) 11506, which grants the tax incentives, it is clear that the government will not bail out San Miguel for any future losses. The company assumes all financial risks and losses, without any government subsidies or guarantees.

Take note that guarantees and subsidies are different from incentives. The tax incentives to be given to the project are also for a limited time and just commensurate—as the government has determined—to the massive and unprecedented investment of San Miguel. In return, the company builds the project, generating millions of direct and indirect jobs; decongesting air and land traffic that have cost the country billions in lost opportunities; making air travel better, more efficient, more equitable, and safer for Filipinos and tourists, and ultimately, helping unlock the true economic potential of the Philippines. All these at no cost, no effort, and no risk to the government.



The naysayers argue: by not collecting taxes and duties, isn't the government essentially giving away those amounts to the corporation?

Let's not overlook the fact that, if San Miguel does not put up the money to build the airport, there wouldn't be foregone taxes to begin with—generated from a project that government invested nothing in. And clearly, there will still be no solution to our airport congestion woes since no additional runway—much less, a new terminal—will be built at NAIA and Clark any time soon, and both airports are still too far away from Metro Manila.

On the other hand, letting San Miguel build the airport—in these difficult times—and incentivizing it for doing so, would propel the growth of businesses and tourism nationwide. It will raise property values in Bulacan and even in nearby provinces. This means higher corporate income taxes and real-property taxes. Government also gets to collect income taxes from the millions of direct and indirect jobs that the airport will create. To top it all, the government gets a hefty share in the development's income for the next 50 years. It would have none of these if the company did not invest in the construction of the airport in the first place. The development itself becomes government property at the end of the concession.

When will the tax exemptions end, and is there an “unknown competent authority” which has been tasked to declare when the company would have recovered its investments? According to the same RA 11506, it is only the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) that can establish whether the initial investment has already been recovered, thus, ending all direct and indirect tax exemptions.

Another issue some critics have been harping on against the project is subsidence—or the sinking or settling of the ground surface—and rising tides that would allegedly make the airport a “white elephant” in 50 years.

The company's engineers have put in place a long-term solution to address land subsidence caused by groundwater extraction by communities that use water pumps due to the decades-long absence of clean potable water. Geologists concede that excessive extraction of groundwater causes subsidence, primarily in the form of deep well construction and operation. In Bulacan, water sourced from deep wells would soon be a thing of the past. According to San Miguel, it has already started investing majority of the P35 billion Bulacan Bulk Water project for the construction of various infrastructure, facilities, and equipment to steadily supply 3,800 million liters per day (MLD) of clean potable water through direct connection to all the water districts in the province.

San Miguel would supply bulk water to the water districts at a cheap selling price of less than P10 per cubic meter. This affords consumers lower water bill, which will eliminate the need for deep wells. Since the Bulacan Bulk Water project sources its water from Angat Dam, the steady supply will discourage the use of pumps which will result in reduced groundwater extraction. This will definitely address the long-term subsidence issue in the province.

Environmental concerns in Bulacan are not just about groundwater. To resolve the issue about polluted upstream rivers leading to Manila Bay, San Miguel has already committed to cleaning the rivers that are part of the Marilao-Meycauayan-Obando River System (MMORS). The plan is to dredge, widen, and deepen these tributaries to address the risk of upstream flooding, and remove trash and silt that restrict the flow of water and harm the marine ecosystem.

For comments and suggestions, e-mail me at mvala.v@gmail.com

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/02/25/bulacan-airport-project-deserves-full-government-support/>



PH Covid-19 recovery tally rises by 738 to 524,042

By Ma. Teresa Montemayor February 25, 2021, 5:08 pm



MANILA – At least 738 more patients have recovered from the coronavirus disease, pushing the country's overall Covid-19 recoveries to 524,042 on Thursday.

In its daily case bulletin, the Department of Health (DOH) said the figures represent 92.2 percent of those who tested positive for the virus who have so far beaten the illness.

The agency also reported 2,269 new confirmed cases and 72 new deaths.

These figures brought the overall tally of active cases to 32,437 and the death toll to 12,201.

The DOH said about 88.5 percent of the active cases are mild, 6.1 percent are asymptomatic, 2.3 percent are severe, 0.78 percent are moderate, and 2.4 percent are in critical condition.

"There were eight duplicates removed from the total case count as these were five recovered cases. Moreover, 12 cases previously tagged as recovered were reclassified as deaths after final validation," it added.

According to DOH data on Thursday, about 1,664 or 6.1 percent of 27,404 who were tested turned out positive for Covid-19.

Currently, there is a 21,400-bed capacity dedicated to patients with Covid-19.

Available are 60 percent of 1,900 intensive care unit beds, 67 percent of 13,500 isolation beds, and 78 percent of 6,000 ward beds.

About 79 percent of 2,100 ventilators are available for Covid-19 patients' use.

The agency also urged the public to continue observing the minimum health standards, especially when going outdoors -- the proper wearing of face masks and face shields, avoiding cramped places where physical distancing is impossible, and avoiding staying outside for a long period. (PNA)



Sinovac vaccines to arrive in PH Feb. 28: Palace

By Azer Parrocha and Joyce Ann L. Rocamora February 25, 2021, 3:03 pm



Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque. (Screengrab from RTVM)

MANILA – The first batch of China’s Sinovac Biotech vaccines will arrive in the Philippines on Sunday (Feb. 28), Malacañang said on Thursday.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said a total of 600,000 vaccine doses donated by the Chinese government to the country will be delivered on Sunday.

“Tatlong tulog nalang po parating na po ang bakuna. Inaasahan na darating sa araw ng Linggo ang Sinovac, kaya excited po na tayong lahat (Just three more nights until the vaccine arrives. We expect Sinovac to arrive this Sunday that’s why we’re all excited),” he said in a press briefing from Pamplona, Negros Oriental.

Roque said government officials will personally witness the arrival of the China-made vaccines.

“Inaasahan po, at least, ang pinapalano natin, ay sasalubungin ng mga opisyal ang pagdating ng mga bakuna. Maraming salamat muli sa Sinovac at Tsina dahil sa parating na paunang bakuna para sa mga Pilipino (We expect or plan to have officials welcome the arrival of vaccines. Thank you again Sinovac and China for sending us Filipinos the first batch of vaccines),” he said.

He said the immunization drive can start on March 1 should the China-made vaccines arrive as scheduled.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently cleared the Sinovac vaccine for emergency use. However, Sinovac is not recommended for healthcare workers and senior citizens due to its 50 percent efficacy rate.

Sinovac is the third vaccine brand to receive emergency use authorization (EUA) after Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines.

Priority list

Frontline healthcare workers, particularly employees from the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital (UP-PGH), are supposed to be the first in line to be inoculated with vaccines.

However, since the FDA has not recommended its use for medical front-liners, Roque said he would still have to coordinate with officials of the UP-PGH, one of the Covid-19 referral hospitals in Metro Manila.

UP-PGH Director Dr. Gerardo Legaspi, for his part, reiterated that 94 percent of healthcare workers and non-medical personnel have signed up to be inoculated but with a Pfizer vaccine.

He said the initial survey conducted by UP-PGH last January showed a 75 percent acceptance rate for receiving vaccines regardless of brand.

“We are trying to manage the understanding of the EUA given for Sinovac. Over the next few days, kailangan natin i-thresh out ang ibig sabihin ng statement ng FDA na mas magiging very useful for our healthcare workers to make their decision (we need to thresh out the meaning of FDA’s statement that it will be useful for healthcare workers to make their decision),” he said.



Earlier, Legaspi said that UP-PGH spokesperson and Covid-19 survivor Dr. Jonas del Rosario will be among the first medical front-liners to be inoculated once a vaccine arrives in the country.

Roque also assured that medical front-liners will not be forced into receiving jabs from Sinovac and still have the option to wait for the vaccine brand they prefer.

"Wala pong pilitan. Yung gusto mag-antay nga po ng ibang brand siguro, ang concession na maibigay sa kanila is puwede sila humindi at puwede sila mag-antay without losing their priority *kasi 'yan naman ang nakasulat sa EUA*. Pero masusunod naman po yung order of priority (We won't force them. For those who want to wait for another brand, the concession we can give them is they can decline and can wait for a brand they prefer without losing their priority because that's written in the EUA. But we will still follow our order of priority)," he added.

Meanwhile, Chinese Ambassador to Manila Huang Xilian said both the Chinese and Philippine governments are "working round the clock" to facilitate an on-time delivery on Sunday.

"It is a fine tradition between China and the Philippines to help each other in trying times. A friend in need is a friend indeed," he said.

He said this serves as a testament to the "solidarity as well as profound friendship and partnership" between the two nations.

"I want to thank all those who have worked so hard in order to make this happen! I hope the vaccines will help kick off the Philippines' mass inoculation campaign to curb the pandemic and allow Filipinos' life to return to normal at the earliest," he said.

"Our friendship and partnership amid this pandemic will continue to grow and prosper as we fight against the pandemic hand in hand," he added.

The donation is part of the commitment made by Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi to support Manila's pandemic response when he visited the country in January 2020.

The Department of Foreign Affairs earlier assured that Manila's vaccine transactions with China and other foreign partners are not



More than 200,000 affected by Auring

[Catherine Talavera](#), [Romina Cabrera](#) (The Philippine Star) - February 26, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Severe Tropical Storm Auring has affected 56,636 families or more than 200,000 people.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said 64,972 people remain in 159 evacuation centers in 509 barangays in Bicol, Eastern Visayas, Northern Mindanao, Davao and Caraga.

The NDRRMC had earlier reported that the storm left one person dead, two injured and four missing in Caraga.

Auring, the first tropical cyclone to enter the country this year, caused damage to agriculture and infrastructure amounting to P85 million.

Twelve roads, two bridges and 1,025 houses were damaged.

The Department of Agriculture (DA)-Disaster and Risk Reduction Management operation center said damage to agriculture was placed at P79.38 million. At least 1,451 farmers and fisherfolk and 4,787 hectares of agricultural land were affected.

Rice fields accounted for 94 percent of the affected areas, with damage placed at P75.04 million.

Damage to livestock and poultry was estimated at P3.43 million.

Agriculture Secretary William Dar said the DA allocated P230 million in agricultural interventions to farmers and fisherfolk in Surigao del Sur.

An additional P5.44 million is available from the Caraga regional field office.

The DA said other forms of assistance are available through its Quick Response Fund, the survival and recovery loan program of the Agricultural Credit Policy Council and funds from the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp.



Phivolcs said the quakes lasted for one to 61 minutes each.

AFP/Ed Jones

Taal Volcano: 69 quakes in 24 hours

[Romina Cabrera](#) (The Philippine Star) - February 26, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — At least 69 volcanic tremors were recorded around Taal Volcano in the past 24 hours, according to the Philippine Institute for Volcanology and Seismology.

Phivolcs said the quakes lasted for one to 61 minutes each.

Weak steam-laden plumes were observed at the vents of the main crater during these volcanic quakes.

The highest number of tremors recorded in a day since the volcano showed signs of activity again was on Feb. 18 at 91.

Taal Volcano remains under Alert Level 1, which means sudden steam-driven or phreatic explosions, volcanic earthquakes, minor ashfall and expulsion of volcanic gas could occur and threaten areas within Taal Volcano Island.

Entry to the island, which is a permanent danger zone, is strictly prohibited.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council advised local government units to continuously assess the preparedness of residents of barangays around Taal Lake.

Phivolcs Director Renato Solidum said there is an increasing likelihood of a phreatic eruption but it would be limited to Volcano Island.

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