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DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR orders review of forest fire prevention measures

[Elizabeth Marcelo](#) - The Philippine Star April 4, 2022 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has ordered its field offices to review their existing forest fire prevention measures in anticipation of the increase in man-made forest fire incidents amid the dry season and the easing of quarantine restrictions.

“Forest fires are mostly fueled by human activities, making it imperative for us to recalibrate our response readiness and forest fire prediction alertness to pre-pandemic levels. This calls for a tighter coordination with people’s organizations and family beneficiaries of the National Greening Program (NGP),” acting Environment Secretary Jim Sampulna said in a statement issued recently.

Sampulna said that forest fires are usually set off by kaingin or the slash-and-burn method of farming, smoking of honeycombs to gather honey, cigarette butts and other forms of activities that involve fire.

He said the easing of restrictions on people’s movement due to the decrease in the number of COVID cases may contribute to an increase in forest fires.

The move to recalibrate the fire prevention measures is part of DENR’s partnership with the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), which has been conducting training for the agency’s field personnel and implementers on the various aspects, technicalities and principles of forest fire prevention.

BFP-trained DENR field personnel recently conducted forest fire preparedness and response training with upland communities, particularly those covered by the expanded NGP.

Records showed that forest fire incidents went down to 429 in 2020 from 1,282 in 2019.

The DENR attributed the decrease to strict lockdown measures imposed during the pandemic.



DENR inks deal for Marikina River rehab

[Elizabeth Marcelo](#) - The Philippine Star April 4, 2022 | 12:00am



Joggers and cyclists enjoy the open air as they exercise along the riverbanks in Marikina City on Friday morning, Oct. 22, 2021.

The STAR / Miguel de Guzman

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has signed a five-year agreement with the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and three private firms for the rehabilitation of the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape (UMRBPL).

The project will be undertaken under the government's Expanded National Greening Program (ENGP).

Under the memorandum of agreement signed on March 28, the GSIS, D.M. Consunji Inc. (DMCI), Toyota-Oben Group of Dealers (TOGD) and Meralco Industrial Engineering Services Corp. (MIESCOR) will be partners of the DENR Calabarzon office in rehabilitating 70 hectares of the UMRBPL.

Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer for Rizal Ramil Limpiada said the ENGP-graduated areas "need assistance from government institutions and private sector partners."

"These areas were turned over to the DENR by the people's organizations and local government units after fulfilling their three-year site development contracts to raise tree plantations," Limpiada said.

The four sites covered by the agreement are located in Sitio San Ysiro, Barangay San Jose in Antipolo City, which the DENR previously set aside for the "Adopt-a-Site" program under a public-private-partnership scheme.

Launched in 2011 through Executive Order 26, the six-year National Greening Program aims to reforest 1.5 million hectares of denuded forestland. It was extended until 2028 under EO 193 – now known as the ENGP – for the continuation of reforestation efforts in the country's remaining degraded forestland.

The GSIS committed to provide funding for the maintenance and protection of 56 hectares within a 1,000-hectare NGP tree plantation while MIESCOR will adopt a one-hectare area within a 1,000-hectare ENGP plantation site.

DMCI and TOGD adopted 10 and three hectares, respectively, within a 250-hectare NGP graduated site.

The DENR partners committed to initially shell out P3.1 million, of which P2.01 million will come from the GSIS.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2022/04/04/2172011/denr-inks-deal-marikina-river-rehab>



DENR to fast-track processing of EICs

April 3, 2022 [Cory Martinez](#)

DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna has ordered the fasttracking of the processing of environmental compliance certificates (ECCs) in order to meet the 20 working days required under Republic Act (RA) 11032 or the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act.

In Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) Memorandum Circular (MC) 2022-001 issued by Sampulna, the directive aims to speed up the approval or denial of the ECC by streamlining the procedures and requirements.

“We realized the challenges of the current pandemic, thus, this directive will enable us to meet the waiting period for ECC applications and help expedite business transactions in government,” Sampulna said.

EMB Director William P. Cuñado, on the other hand, explained that the order covers projects requiring Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) checklist for its application for an ECC or for projects with minimal adverse effects, and those with an IEE threshold as listed in Annex A of MC 2014-005.

It covers new and single projects filed through the online system, as well as existing single projects to be expanded, modified, or rehabilitated.

Cuñado pointed out that the EMB regional office may deny or approve the an ECC application within 20 working days from its receipt, depending on the adequacy of the submitted documents.

“The issued ECC can be printed online. If there will be no action from the EMB Regional Office, the Online System will automatically issue the ECC within 20 working days from the acceptance of the application,” Cunado said.

The EMB may deny any ECC application in the online system if there is a misrepresentation of submitted documents, and if there is an invalid proof of payment, among others.

Interested proponents may visit www.emb.gov.ph and register for an ECC online account or visit the EMB website for more information.



123 olive ridley turtle hatchlings freed



ZAMBOANGA. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) officials release 123 Olive Ridley turtle hatchlings, the specie which is listed as 'vulnerable,' back to its natural habitat on Thursday, March 31, at the shore of Dohinob village, Roxas, Zamboanga del Norte. A photo handout shows Zamboanga del Norte Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office Julsadjiri Cidur (2nd from right) leading the DENR officials in releasing the turtle hatchlings. (SunStar Zamboanga)

April 03, 2022

DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) officials have released 123 olive ridley turtle hatchlings, the specie which is listed as “vulnerable,” back to their natural habitat in Zamboanga del Norte.

The turtle hatchlings were released Thursday, March 31, on the shore of Dohinob village, Roxas, Zamboanga del Norte.

Themistocles Yaco, hatchery technician of the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro)-Manukan discovered the marine turtle hatchlings while he was on regular patrol along the coastline of Dohinob village in the morning of Thursday, March 31.

Yaco said he noticed that the hatchlings were trapped in coconut husks.

The hatchlings were placed temporarily in a container with wet sand due to unfavorable weather condition when it was rescued.

“They were released back to the ocean in the late afternoon of the same day (Thursday, March 31),” Yaco said.

The DENR said the olive ridley is considered to be one of the three species of marine turtles that are common nesters in the coastal areas within the jurisdiction of Cenro-Manukan in Zamboanga del Norte.

The olive ridley turtle is listed as “vulnerable,” according to the International Union of the Conservation of Nature.



DENR Assistant Regional Director for Technical Services Ronald Gadot, Zamboanga del Norte Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer Cidur Julsadjiri, Cenro-Manukan Chief Officer George Laolao, Conservation and Development Section Chief Eugene Celi and technical personnel of the Cenro-Manukan witnessed the release of the turtle hatchlings back to its natural habitat.

The DENR regional office is encouraging the public to report any wildlife concerns to the nearest field offices for proper handling, rescue and retrieval operations.



Palasyo: Cimatú nag-resign sa DENR dahil sa health condition, hind isa korapsiyon

Ni [Jasmin Joy Evangelista](#) | April 3, 2022



Photo: DENR

Iginiit ng Malacañang na nag-resign si dating Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu dahil sa kadahilanang pangkalusugan at hindi dahil sa mga alegasyon ng korapsiyon.

Ayon kay acting presidential spokesman Martin Andanar, naglabas ng statement ang Malacañang na hangad ang mabuting kalusugan ng ex-environment chief.

Pinuri rin ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte si Cimatu dahil sa “successful transformation and clean-up of Boracay and Manila Bay,” dagdag niya.

“There is therefore no truth to the insinuation and /or rumor of his involvement in corruption,” pahayag pa ni Andanar sa isang statement.

Binanggit din ng pangulo si Acting Secretary Jim Sampulna, ang kahalili ni Cimatu, bago nito ihayag na tinanggal niya ang anim na Cabinet members dahil sa umano’y korapsiyon.

“When I became President, I heard reports of corruption. So si [Acting Environment] Secretary [Jim] Sampulna is new because I fired them all. I won’t name anybody because it’s painful for them for this to have happened. But you know, whether you helped me during the elections or contributed something good, I am very thankful,” pahayag niya sa Cebuano.



Metro Manila water projects pass hurdle

By **Jed Macapagal** -April 4, 2022

Prime Infrastructure Holdings Inc. (Prime Infra) hit a milestone for its projects meant to ensure water supply in Metro Manila after it has secured the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) process from the Dumagat and Remontado indigenous peoples of Antipolo and Montalban for the Wawa bulk water supply project phase 2 and the upper Wawa dam.

Prime Infra said the approval of the fourth and final memorandum of agreement in the FPIC process will pave the way for the implementation of projects that will address the looming water shortage in Metro Manila and mitigate flooding in the lower areas of Rizal Province, Marikina city and Pasig City while also providing job opportunities in host communities in Rizal province.

Melvin John Tan, WawaJVCo president, said the Upper Wawa dam project aims to provide at least 518 million liters per day to over 500,000 households within Metro Manila and Rizal.

Meanwhile, Manila Water Co. Inc. said it continues to work with the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) in developing new water sources even as the agencies have approved the implementation of the much-needed interim additional sources especially as the summer peaks.

Jocot De Dios, Manila Water president and chief executive officer, said these projects include the maximization of the 100 million-liter-per-day (MLD) capacity of the Cardona water treatment plant which draws water from Laguna Lake; operation of deep wells that can provide additional 115 MLD; and the operation of the 20-MLD Marikina portable water treatment plant, which can treat water from the Marikina River.

De Dios added the MWSS and the NWRB allowed the company to harness groundwater through deep wells as part of their contingency and augmentation measures while waiting for long-term water sources.

Manila Water was also allowed to implement operational adjustments such as backwash recovery or re-treating the wastewater byproduct of the water treatment process while ensuring the efficiency of its network distribution, maximizing its distribution reservoirs and operating line boosters so that water supply continues to reach elevated and far-flung areas of the concession.

Harnessing additional inflows to the La Mesa Reservoir from the nearby Alat Dam is also being eyed by the water concessionaire.



Nayong Pilipino kicks off tree planting drive

April 4, 2022



From left are Dr. Jovertlee Pudan, Nayong Pilipino Foundation (NPF) deputy executive director for Operations; Atty. Judy Lardizabal, NPF board of trustee; Gertie Duran-Batocabe, NPF executive director; Maj. Wilfredo Ponceja of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)-RJT National Capital Region (NCR); Joyce Ann Caigas, NPF deputy executive director; and Sgt. Rafael Pagulayan of AFP-RJT NCR. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

TO create an urban green space within Entertainment City in Parañaque City, the Nayong Pilipino Foundation (NPF) organized a tree planting activity on Friday, March 25, on the occasion of National Women's Month.

In her speech, NPF Executive Director Gertie Duran-Batocabe emphasized that creating more green spaces should be part of the new normal.

"As you all know, the Covid-19 pandemic has triggered important conversations about the importance of urban green spaces and how those should be designed to benefit the health and well-being of the populace," Duran-Batocabe said.

In 2021, NPF opened its doors to host the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases quarantine facility and a mega vaccination facility to support the national government's Covid-19 pandemic response.

"While we are more than happy to contribute to the pandemic response, it is our dream to transform this 9.5-hectare property into a cultural park and creative hub, nestled within an urban forest, incorporating the 30-percent built space and 70-percent green space design scheme," Duran-Batocabe added.

Under "Project Sambayanihan," a series of activation projects for the physical development of the said property would commence throughout the year, including a series of planting activities that aimed to plant 446 trees.

During the activity, seedlings of flowering trees, namely Palawan Cherry and Bolong Eta, were planted to honor women.

"Trees provide a foundation for life to flourish. They're [life-givers] and sustainers. In the same way, we women provide a foundation for our families and communities with our innate ability to nurture and protect," Duran-Batocabe continued.

With these efforts, the NPF executive director felt confident that in no time, with each and everyone's hard work, Nayong Pilipino would be open to the public again.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2022/04/04/public-square/nayong-pilipino-kicks-off-tree-planting-drive/1838707>



Cebu City waste-to-energy deal up for Swiss challenge



Cebu City waste-to-energy deal up for Swiss challenge. (File photo)

IVAN REY R. TAN April 03, 2022

THE controversial waste-to-energy (WTE) deal is now up for a Swiss challenge after the City Council has passed a resolution allowing Mayor Michael “Mike” Rama to sign the Joint Venture Agreement (JVA) for the said project, City Councilor Raymond Alvin Garcia said on Saturday, April 2, 2022.

Garcia said an interested third party company can submit a proposal to challenge the original proponent for the WTE project, New Sky Energy Philippines Inc.

According to the Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB), a Swiss challenge is “initiated by an unsolicited proposal or when the original proponent makes an offer to the government without any formal or informal request from the former.”

Allowing third parties to participate in the Swiss challenge would ensure that the original proponent’s scheme is superior, according to the GPPB.

Garcia said the City has set a 30-day deadline to allow other parties to submit their challenge and proposal.

In the absence of any submission, Garcia said the City will then proceed to the original proponent for the project.

However, if a challenge is raised, the GPPB said the original party will get the right to “counter-match any superior offers given by the third party.”

The City Council approved the resolution allowing the mayor to sign the JVA last March 2.

However, no actions were taken by Rama, 10 days after receiving the resolution last March 16, making it deemed approved by inaction.

In a separate interview, Rama said he will wait for the outcome of the Swiss challenge before signing the JVA of the WTE project.

Various groups have criticized the project, saying that incinerating garbage to produce energy is harmful to the environment.



The proponent has proposed to occupy six hectares of land in the city and require the City to deliver 800 tons of garbage for 40 years.

The latest to criticize the project are two political candidates who are vying for national positions this coming May 2022 election. Vice presidential aspirant Walden Bello and senatorial candidate Luke Espiritu said the project is not good for the environment because it would release pollutants to the air.

Tayud residents, fisherfolk grateful for ‘temporary victory’ vs Seafront City reclamation project

By: Doris C. Bongcac April 03, 2022 - 12:25 PM



A fisherman prepares his net just outside a shipyard in Sitio Bagacay, Barangay Tayud, Consolacion town, Cebu. The area is part of the 235.8 hectares that the municipal government wants to reclaim in partnership with a private consortium. | Contributed photo

MANDAUE CITY, Cebu — Residents and fisherfolk in Barangay Tayud in Consolacion town are happy that President Rodrigo Duterte heard their plea for the suspension of the proposed Seafront City Reclamation Project.

But Anabella Pomento, president of the Tayud Fisherfolk Association, said they were also well aware that what they now enjoy was just a temporary victory.

Still, she and the rest of her neighbors remain hopeful that the next administration would continue the suspension of the processing of the application of all pending reclamation projects in the country, especially the one in Barangay Tayud.

“Kun kinsa man ang sunod nga molingkod, manghinaot ko nga dili na lang gyud intawn ipadayon,” she said in a phone interview.

(Whoever will sit as the next president, I hope that he/she will no longer authorize the implementation of reclamation projects.)

Duterte said in a meeting with top government officials on Thursday, March 31, that he had ordered a stop to the processing of applications for reclamation projects in the country due to reports of corruption.

These include reclamation project applications in Cebu and Mindanao.



Residents gather shells at the shorelines of Sitio Bacagay in Barangay Tayud, Consolacion during low tide. | Contributed photo



“Happy kaayo mi nga nakadunog mis tingog sa president. Pasalamat mi nga gidungog sa Ginoo ang among mga pag-ampo. Nagpasalamat pud mi sa presidente nga wala gyud mi pasagdai, kami nga mga namuyo diri nga pulos gyud intawn pobre,” Pomento said.

(We were very happy when we heard about what the president said. We are grateful that God heard our prayers. We are grateful that the president did not forsake us, we who reside in this place and who are poor.)

Pomento clarified that they would not oppose the implementation of the 235.8-hectare Seafront City Reclamation Project. They just wanted assurance that they would be taken cared of by the municipal government.

“Ang among gipangita lang gyud ang among seguridad. Kun asa mi ibutang? Ang among panginabuhian?” she said.

(We just wanted to be certain of our security. Where will they relocate us? Our source of livelihood?)

Pomento said residents of Barangay Tayud have suffered more than enough. They have been struggling as a result of the pandemic which prevented most of them from going out of their homes to work.

Super typhoon Odette which hit Cebu on December 16, 2021 worsened their sufferings after the typhoon also damaged most of their fishing boats.

In fact, most of them have become dependent on aids that they had been getting from private donors and from the Cebu Provincial government through its Dasig Sugbo program.

As per her experience, Pomento said, she only received two relief packs, each consisting of five kilos of rice, coffee and sardines, since the pandemic started two years back.

Source: <https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/433479/tayud-residents-fisherfolk-grateful-for-temporary-victory-vs-seafront-city-reclamation-project?fbclid=IwAR2GABpVpAQTSsXkjBepjv88LLZjz8dueFJbPwlc71wIjVIkdF6sDC4gvxU#ixzz7PMn0wA7X>



LGUs with mining sites to get tax income share

[Delon Porcalla](#) - The Philippine Star April 4, 2022 | 12:00am



“The amount represents the 40-percent share of local government units (LGUs) in the gross earnings derived by the National Treasury from mining activities,” Surigao del Sur Rep. Johnny Pimentel said.

KJ Rosales

MANILA, Philippines — A senior administration lawmaker from Mindanao yesterday revealed that provinces, cities, municipalities and barangays that host mining operations would get an extra P5.6 billion in fresh development funding from the national government this year.

“The amount represents the 40-percent share of local government units (LGUs) in the gross earnings derived by the National Treasury from mining activities,” Surigao del Sur Rep. Johnny Pimentel said.

The P5.6 billion is provided for in the 2022 National Expenditure Program and is on top of the internal revenue allotment share of the host LGUs, according to Pimentel, whose home province hosts nickel mining operations.

“We expect the national government as well as host LGUs to generate more income from mining activities in the years ahead, in light of the lifting of the ban on the issuance of new mining permits,” he said.

In April 2020, President Duterte issued an executive order revoking the nine-year freeze on the grant of new mineral production sharing agreements, in a bid to boost government income, stimulate employment and accelerate the country’s economic recovery.

The suspension was imposed by then president Benigno Aquino III in 2012, also through an executive order.

Under the Local Government Code of 1991, LGUs are entitled to 40 percent of the gross earnings from “mining taxes, royalties from mineral reservations, forestry charges, and fees and revenues collected from energy resources” in their areas.

Pimentel, a member of the House of Representatives’ ways and means committee, said the 40 percent cut of host LGUs amounted to P6.2 billion in 2021, P5.6 billion in 2020, P3.2 billion in 2019 and P4 billion in 2018.

Under the law, the LGU share shall be distributed as follows: 20 percent to the host province, 45 percent to the host component city or host municipality and 35 percent to the host barangay.

In cases where the host is a highly urbanized or independent component city, 65 percent shall go to the city and 35 percent to the barangay.



Under the law, once LGUs receive their shares, they must appropriate the funds to finance local development and livelihood projects.

In the case of LGUs that obtain their shares from the extraction of hydrothermal, geothermal and other energy assets, however, they must spend at least 80 percent of the money solely to reduce the cost of electricity in the areas that supplied the resources.



How will presidential candidates address issues brought by climate change

Josiah Antonio, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 04 2022 01:57 AM



Presidential candidates pose for a group photo moments before the start of COMELEC's official debates held at the Sofitel Tent in Pasay City on March 19, 2022. *George Calvelo, ABS-CBN News.*

MANILA — Presidential candidates, except the late dictator's son Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos, discussed Sunday how they plan to address the climate crisis during the second Commission on Elections-sponsored debate.

In the fourth segment of the debate, aspirants laid down their platforms on how they will ensure enough supplies of food, water, and energy while helping the environment recover.

Partido Lakas ng Masa bet Leody de Guzman said that the national government should have the "political will" to implement the Renewable Energy Act of 2008 and let go of coal and fossil fuels.

"Dapat ay magkaroon na ng matibay na desisyon upang bitawan na natin 'yung coal plant dahil ito ang pinakamaruming source of energy at itong fossil fuel ay alisin na natin then paspasin na natin 'yung paglipat sa renewable energy," de Guzman said.

(We must have a firm decision to let go of coal plants because these are the dirtiest source of energy, we will stop using fossil fuels and speed up the transition to renewable energy.)

"Ganoon ang ating gawin dahil tayo naman, ang ating bansa ay pinagpala dahil napakarami nating source ng renewable energy," he added.

(That is what we will do because we, our country is blessed because we have so many sources of renewable energy.)

Vice President Leni Robredo added that there should be a roadmap to attain COP26's goal to be carbon neutral by 2050.

"Unang-una nating dapat gawin, ayusin 'yung roadmap, ano ba 'yung target na milestones natin every few years para 'yung target natin papunta roon at talagang klaro sa'tin na papunta na tayo sa pagiging carbon neutral. So dapat pinaghahandaan na natin papaano ba tayo magta-transition sa isang fossil fuel dependent na source ng electricity hanggang sa pagiging carbon neutral," Robredo said.

(First of all, we have to do, fix the roadmap, what are our target milestones every few years, our target to get there, and it is really clear to us that we are going to be carbon neutral. So we have to prepare how to transition from a fossil fuel-dependent source of electricity to being carbon neutral.)

"Gaya ng sinabi ni Ka Leody, mayroon nang batas para rito so kailangan i-implement natin 'yung batas para maabot natin 'yung ating pagiging carbon neutral by 2050," she added.

(As Ka Leody said, there is already a law for this so we need to implement the law so that we can be carbon neutral by 2050.)

Ernesto Abella focused on proposing programs that would instill the importance of the environment to the youth while Jose Montemayor Jr. said he wants to hold big countries like the United States and China accountable for the problems brought on by climate change.

Meanwhile, Manila Mayor Isko Moreno proposed an "agrivoltaic system" wherein you produce food and clean renewable energy.

"This thing is existing in the boundary of Netherlands and Germany and this is adaptable in our geography because we are a tropical country, we have so much sun and we can harness the power of the sun to produce energy," Moreno said.

'WE NEED WATER'

To have enough sources of clean potable water for households and irrigation, Moreno proposed to encourage water companies to invest in strengthening their watersheds.

"I'm sad to say it's existing and I guarantee you, I will look into it and invest in it for our farmers and for the household of every Filipino family," he added.

Norberto Gonzales said that the national government should have proper national planning while Sen. Ping Lacson reiterated the importance of investing in research and development projects.

"Bakit hindi tayo mag-invest ng mas malaking halaga sa ating national budget para sa research and development nang sa ganoon ating ipunin 'yung mga nasasayang na tubig na galing sa ulan at pakinabangan ng ating mga kababayan, hindi lamang sa irigasyon ng ating agrikultura kundi sa pang-araw-araw na pangangailangan ng ating mga kababayan, Lacson added.

(Why don't we invest more of our national budget into research and development so that we can collect water from the rain to benefit our countrymen, not only for irrigation of agriculture but also FOR the daily needs of our countrymen.)

Robredo echoed Lacson's sentiments saying: "Mayroon isang existing study na ina-identify niya na 'yung mga malalaking rivers natin na dun pwedeng mag-source ng tubig, kailangan na lang talagang pondohan kaya po ito po magiging priority po natin ito."

(There is an existing study that identifies large rivers that can be a water source, we just really need to fund it so this will be our priority.)

Meanwhile, Sen. Manny Pacquiao proposed to have a Department of Water Management.

[LACSON] "Kasi nakaimbestiga ako niyan, tulakan nang tulakan eh kung sinong in charge sa pag-manage ng tubig kaya kailangan natin ng Department of Water. Importante po 'yan para ma-manage nang husto 'yung tubig natin," he said.

(I was able to investigate that, there's some push and pull of who is in charge of water management so we need the Department of Water. That is important to properly manage our water.)

FOOD SECURITY

Jose Montemayor Jr. said he wanted to bring back agriculture, fisheries, and forestry as "core competencies" of the Philippines.



"We will be aggressive to prepare the country in the future problems of food shortage. Tandaan natin, we cannot forever rely on other countries," Montemayor said.

He also slammed the Rice Tariffication Law, which he said made life more difficult for local farmers.

Pacquiao added that the country should not be dependent on imports, and support local farmers and fisherfolk.

Faisal Mangondato and Moreno echoed their rivals' sentiments with the latter noting that there should be tax cuts for local farmers and fisherfolk; subsidies on oil, energy, fertilizer; a 3-year moratorium on land-use conversion.



Asian banks still have no plans for zero emission goal

[Danessa Rivera](#) - The Philippine Star April 4, 2022 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Asian banks, including the top three Philippine banks, have yet to lay down clear commitments and plans to help reach the net zero emissions goal and meet the 1.5 degrees Celsius global warming threshold under the Paris Agreement, based on latest findings of independent ESG risk and strategy consulting firm Asia Research and Engagement (ARE).

ARE assessed 32 leading banks in nine major Asian markets in a report titled “Banking Asia’s Future: How to Align with National Climate Plans,” and found none of the banks are taking sufficient action to meet the Paris Agreement objectives.

In the report, BDO Unibank Inc. and Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) were given a grade of D, meaning the banks acknowledge climate risks, but risk management processes and financing policies are weak.

Meanwhile, Metropolitan Bank & Trust got a grade of NS, or the bank has barely started its journey and may not fully acknowledge climate-related risks.

The research showed Philippine banks do not have board committees with climate oversight, do not reflect climate risks in the risk register, do not have commitments to align their financing with Paris goals, do not have clear restrictions on coal or carbon-intensive sectors. They also have not yet set sustainable finance targets.

Among the three banks, only BDO has set a restriction policy, specifically on forestry, and provides a breakdown on green finance provisions per product type.

So far, the Philippines has committed to reduce emissions by 75 percent below business as usual (BAU) by 2030 under its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

ARE said Asian banks are critical to supporting this transition toward low carbon economies, but they have not kept pace with changing expectations of tighter carbon regulation, disruption from cleaner technologies, and the impacts of the changing climate.

“Asia’s banks are mispricing exposure to carbon-intensive assets that are increasingly difficult to re-finance or transfer. Without urgent course correction, widespread misallocation of capital will continue, leaving the region vulnerable to correction. A proactive approach can avoid risks and position for multi-trillion-dollar opportunities in mitigating and adapting to climate change,” it said.

The consultancy firm said Asian banks should act with urgency as climate change is seen to impact Asia the most, with the region losing nearly 26.5 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) in a severe scenario, based on stress tests undertaken by the Swiss Re Institute.

While Asian banks are still early in their journey, ARE said this presents exciting and pivotal time for the financial institutions, especially with the higher level of support for action following the Conference of Parties in Glasgow in November last year.

“This has led to a new sense of urgency and commitment across nations and the financial sector, particularly in the Asian region,” it said.

The research showed many green growth markets where Asian firms are leading the way.



“They should focus on playing their role in aligning to and supporting national policies and objectives in their home markets to achieve net-zero. This would truly represent a banking industry providing for Asia’s future,” ARE said.

The report also said both the banking and asset management industries are building capacity to address climate change.

“While there are still relatively few banks that have climate targets or scenario analysis, the number is increasing. But the pace of change needs to accelerate to meet the scale of the climate challenge,” ARE said.

With the report, ARE said it hopes banks and senior executives can put in place processes that enable better decision-making and allow them to address the pressures of climate change.

The consultancy firm reviewed 32 banks, or the three to five largest banks by market capitalization, across China/Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

These institutions represent combined total assets of \$33.5 trillion and combined total gross loans of \$18.6 trillion.



Clean energy

[DEMAND AND SUPPLY](#) - [Boo Chanco](#) - The Philippine Star April 4, 2022 | 12:00am

There are two reasons why a country will want to increase the share of clean or renewable energy in its energy mix.

First is the obvious need to make sure Planet Earth remains habitable for future generations. We are likely passing the point of no return, and soon our planet will be too warm to sustain life as we know it.

The other reason is energy security. The problem with traditional fossil fuels like oil and coal is that only a few countries have a surplus of deposits. That makes us dangerously dependent on politically volatile regions like the Middle East and now, Russia.

There are those who think nuclear energy can be considered clean energy because it doesn't emit the carbon gasses that heat up our atmosphere. But there is the problem of safely storing used nuclear fuel rods.

A country's political leader has the responsibility of weighing the pros and cons. For example, Germany's Angela Merkel made the surprising decision to phase out nuclear energy, the principal power source of this highly industrialized country.

It was surprising because Merkel is a scientist and would have known nuclear power can be managed well by a technologically savvy country like Germany. But the green lobby was too strong to ignore, and politics dictated her decision.

In hindsight, this decision to dump nuclear energy made Germany more vulnerable to a Russian blackmail on the supply of natural gas. But Germany showed how renewable energy can be harnessed on a large scale basis.

In July 2019, figures published by the Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems (ISE) report that renewable energy is for the first time providing more electricity than coal and nuclear power combined in Germany. Solar, wind, biomass and hydroelectric power generates nearly half of the country's output.

One big reason why Germany's Merkel was able to make the decision to phase out nuclear power is because it had a good back up.

Germany is part of the European grid and can depend on nuclear energy that France continues to use.

By itself, renewable energy from wind and solar makes electricity grids less reliable. One reason is "intermittency". Long cloudy days limit solar power output and a battery back-up has its limits, while wind energy depends on weather patterns.

Those who manage power grids want the ability to control the power output of most power plants by changing the burning rate of fossil fuels, the reaction rate of nuclear reactors, or the water flow rate through hydro dams.

Still, for countries like ours, tapping renewable energy like solar, wind, geothermal, hydro, and tidal power makes us more insulated from the geopolitical realities of oil and coal. It was not easy to tap these resources in the past because technology wasn't there yet to make these sources reliable and economically competitive with oil and coal.

Now, it is different. Solar power has caught up with the economics and technology concerns of power grid operators. Leandro Leviste, the young solar energy entrepreneur, has been putting up large scale solar power installations that are able to competitively sell to utilities like cost-



conscious Meralco.

Convincing the big guys to go clean energy has not been easy. Yet, among the first to totally commit to clean energy is the Lopez Group.

Federico ‘Piki’ Lopez, chairman and CEO of First Philippine Holdings Corp (FPH) and First Gen, admitted that shutting the door on coal power in 2016 meant walking away from an opportunity to make a profit, and this was not easy to explain to shareholders and analysts.

But Piki said their decision to invest in green energy was solidified by the devastation they saw in the wake of Super Typhoon Yolanda in 2013, which he said is part of the ongoing climate crisis.

“Despite the doubters, let me say we never wavered and never once regretted the decision, most especially today,” said Lopez.

That brave decision, among other reasons, made the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) honor Piki with the Management Man of the Year award... “for passionately pushing for the country’s transition to a low-carbon economy through his various advocacies to proactively address the irreparable damage of climate change.”

Piki picked up from his father, Oscar M. Lopez, who had always been a strong advocate of doing more to avert the destructive effects of climate change in our communities.

The Oscar M. Lopez Center for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management Foundation is working with scientists from the University of the Philippines on climate change issues. OML funded the center in his belief that science and technology have a critical role to play in building climate resilience.

Now, another conglomerate in the energy sector is starting to explore the potential of renewable energy.

AboitizPower, which is a major operator of coal fired power plants, is now working with the World Bank’s IFC to study the viability of renewable energy as a source of base load power in the Philippines.

Renewable energy, other than hydro, has never been considered a viable provider of baseload power. But the Aboitizes had been playing around with the possibilities of non-fossil fuels for a while.

The Aboitiz Group has an ongoing experiment in Davao running buses on electricity. Well, Tesla’s been mainstream for a while, but here it is something new. I heard the experiment is going well.

IFC will conduct a joint study with AboitizPower to explore a mix of technologies that can potentially displace fossil fuel-based power sources and reduce CO2 emissions in the Philippines. This supports the nation’s climate goals—35 percent share of renewable energy in the country’s overall generation mix by 2030, and 50 percent by 2040.

Among other things, they will evaluate hybrid solar photovoltaic and energy storage solutions, and the technical and economic viability of generating power from a combination of different renewable sources within the context of the Philippines’ power needs and supply-demand patterns.



Good to see the private sector doing more to harness cleaner and natural resources. This will enable us to diversify our energy mix and improve energy security while also tackling the impact of climate change.

Boo Chanco's email address is bchanco@gmail.com. Follow him on Twitter [@boochanco](https://twitter.com/boochanco).



Canberra bares recycling plant

By Xinhua News Agency

April 4, 2022

CANBERRA: A large-scale organics recycling facility will be opened in Australia's capital city to strengthen its circular economy.

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) government announced funding for a new food organics and garden organics (FOGO) facility to process Canberra's waste.

It comes after a successful trial of a FOGO collection pilot servicing 5,000 households in the city's northern suburbs.

The service diverts food waste from landfill and reduces harmful greenhouse gases by turning food scraps and garden waste into compost for the soil.

"We are investing in new waste infrastructure that will support Canberrans to take everyday action on climate change and reduce our city's future emissions," Chris Steel, ACT's minister for transport and city services, said in a media release recently.

"Food and garden waste can be transformed into nutrient-rich compost and removing these items from our landfill will help cut waste emissions by up to 30 percent."

The trial program achieved a contamination rate lower than 0.1 percent in the first three months.

Steel said the government would build a large-scale FOGO processing facility as an essential step toward rolling out a Canberra-wide collection service.

The government has identified a site near the existing Materials Recovery Facility south of Canberra for the new facility. When built, it will be capable of processing up to 50,000 tons of FOGO material every year, with the capacity to expand to 70,000 tons to meet future demand.

The ACT, where roughly one-third of the household rubbish bin is food, currently sends approximately 26,000 tons of food waste to landfill every year.

"FOGO is a key part of our plans for Canberra's circular economy — turning things currently considered waste into valuable products like compost, which can be used in agriculture, viticulture and the parks and gardens of our whole region," Steel said.



Let us save the biodiversity of the planet

By [Fr. Shay Cullen](#)

April 3, 2022

THE planet as we know it today will never be the same tomorrow or in the months and years yet to come. Life on earth is diminishing with the massive loss of biodiversity to environmental effects of logging, deforestation, invasive species, mass chemical-based agricultural production, climate change and many other reasons.

The COP25 (Conference of Parties) attended by all nations in Geneva is trying to agree on ways to protect every form of life on Earth and stop the extinction of thousands of species of plants and living creatures. To succeed, wise people and moral leaders with love of nature have to be elected. The wise must educate and convince the human species that its survival is not to be found in excessive consumption and exploitation of the natural world by polluting the environment but in its protection and conservation.

Many species are becoming extinct 100 times faster because of us humans. We are the most deadly, most destructive force ever to evolve. We are the T-Rex dinosaur of our time. Our bigger brains have evolved to be able to eliminate all other living creatures, and they are busy doing that.

What drives human destructive lifestyle is the uncontrolled desire to possess, exploit, consume and dominate nature. What the complacent, unthinking human population, living in a fossil fuel-dependent world does not understand is that life on Earth depends on a healthy balanced relationship among all species in the natural world and to live and let live in a sustainable climate; that this respectful relationship with nature is the only way to preserve healthy food sources and sustain all life. Our global warming activity is destroying that balance.

As a result of human activity, populations of wild animals have more than halved since 1970 while the human population has doubled. Never before in our planet's history have so many species and so much biodiversity been lost as quickly as at this time. The fifth extinction event was when the dinosaurs were wiped out. Now is the sixth mass extinction of creatures on earth and it is taking place before our eyes. The loss of biodiversity today is "biological annihilation."

People living in cities are unaware of this great loss to the planet although Indigenous people in remote communities see it happening all too quickly. While many of the delegates at COP25 struggle to get agreements to preserve the biodiversity of the planet, there are hidden forces working against them.

Lobbyists for business interests are doing their best to prevent COP25 passing strong resolutions that would, for example, limit the use of pesticides that destroy the biodiversity of the land and rivers and pollute the sea. They hopefully might advise greater reduction in the use of palm oil in industry to save biodiversity.

Expansion of the massive palm oil industry in Southeast Asia is a root cause of the damage to biodiversity. Political corruption destroys biodiversity on a huge scale. Corrupt politicians abuse their power and give their relatives and cronies in industry so called "rights," claims and permits to exploit the lands of poor farmers and the ancestral land of Indigenous people. They work in cooperation with local and multinational mining and agri-corporations. They allow them to deforest and plant palm oil trees. The mining corporations cut the forests for destructive open pit-mining. This is happening on a large scale in the African and Amazonian rain forests and in the Philippines, too.



The government reports that the Philippines is losing approximately 47,000 hectares of forest cover every year. In 2003, the country's forests comprised 7.2 million hectares, but in 2010 it went down to about 6.8 million hectares, which is about 4.6 percent decline. The country is down to less than 24 percent of the original forest cover in the 1900s.

Mass poverty is the result of the greed of the ruling political dynasty of the area and their cronies in the multinational corporations. The people, deprived of land, go hungry and migrate to the city slums of Manila to eke out a precarious survival. There, they huddle together in the shadow of the giant towers of condos of the one percent that make up the super rich. Corrupt officials are allowing it to happen.

These corrupt political and economic forces that cause poverty and provide a great pool of low-cost labor for the rich to exploit should be held accountable. These same forces are damaging the environment around the globe and in Southeast Asia, including the Philippines. All nations are suffering a loss of their biodiversity.

Once the natural habitat is damaged, the animals, birds, reptiles and insects die out. The spraying of pesticides further advances the destruction of life on earth. Kill the insects and the food of millions of birds is diminished and some will soon be extinct.

Allow an invasive species into a nation and disaster to natural wildlife follows. In the Philippines, the golden snail caused the extinction of native apple snails. They poisoned fishponds with their toxicity, killing the fish fingerlings and they attacked rice fields destroying the crops. It is a real environmental disaster.

A government report from the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2002), says, "The Philippines is considered as one of the world's "biodiversity hotspots" with at least 700 threatened species thus making it one of the top global conservation areas. Based on reports of the number of illegal wildlife trade, the country's ports have been a hub for illegal wildlife trading. The Philippines also has the highest number of threatened species per unit area in the world."

We can change things around by demanding accountability from the government bureaus in charge of the natural resources, the Department of Agriculture and forest management. The people can demand that they preserve, not destroy. We can show children videos like the "Blue Planet" by David Attenborough. Teach the children to love nature.

We can plant trees, create a fenced-off area in our gardens and farms to allow wildlife to thrive. We can support environmental NGOs saving the damaged environment. We can be good stewards and protectors of biodiversity and the natural world.

www.preda.org.

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DENR orders review of forest fire prevention measures

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has ordered its field offices to review their existing forest fire prevention measures in anticipation of the increase in man-made forest fire incidents amid the dry season and the easing of quarantine restrictions.

"Forest fires are mostly fueled by human activities, making it imperative for us to recalibrate our response readiness and forest fire prediction alertness to pre-pandemic levels. This calls for a tighter coordination with people's organizations and family beneficiaries of the National Greening Program (NGP)," acting Environment Secretary Jim Sampulna said in a statement issued recently.

Sampulna said that forest fires are usually set off by *kaingin* or the slash-and-burn method of farming, smoking of honeycombs to gather honey, cigarette butts and other forms of activities that involve fire.

He said the easing of restrictions on people's movement due to the decrease in the number of COVID cases may contribute to an increase in forest fires.

The move to recalibrate the fire prevention measures is part of DENR's partnership with the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), which has been conducting training for the agency's field personnel and implementers on the various aspects, technicalities and principles of forest fire prevention.

BFP-trained DENR field personnel recently conducted forest fire preparedness and response training with upland communities, particularly those covered by the expanded NGP.

Records showed that forest fire incidents went down to 429 in 2020 from 1,282 in 2019.

The DENR attributed the decrease to strict lockdown measures imposed during the pandemic.

- Elizabeth Marcelo



DENR inks deal for Marikina River rehab

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has signed a five-year agreement with the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and three private firms for the rehabilitation of the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape (UMRBPL).

The project will be undertaken under the government's Expanded National Greening Program (ENGP).

Under the memorandum of agreement signed on March 28, the GSIS, D.M. Consunji Inc. (DMCI), Toyota-Oben Group of Dealers (TOGD) and Meralco Industrial Engineering Services Corp. (MIESCOR) will be partners of the DENR Calabarzon office in rehabilitating 70 hectares of the UMRBPL.

Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer for Rizal Ramil Limpiada said the ENGP-graduated areas "need assistance from government institutions and private sector partners."

"These areas were turned over to the DENR by the people's organizations and local government units after fulfilling their three-year site development contracts to raise tree plantations," Limpiada said.

The four sites covered by the agreement are located in Sitio San Ysiro, Barangay San Jose in Antipolo City, which the DENR previously set aside for the "Adopt-a-Site" program under a public-private-partnership scheme.

Launched in 2011 through Executive Order 26, the six-year National Greening Program aims to reforest 1.5 million hectares of denuded forestland. It was extended until 2028 under EO 193 - now known as the ENGP - for the continuation of reforestation efforts in the country's remaining degraded forestland.

The GSIS committed to provide funding for the maintenance and protection of 56 hectares within a 1,000-hectare NGP tree plantation while MIESCOR will adopt a one-hectare area within a 1,000-hectare ENGP plantation site.

DMCI and TOGD adopted 10 and three hectares, respectively, within a 250-hectare NGP graduated site.

The DENR partners committed to initially shell out P3.1 million, of which P2.01 million will come from the GSIS.

- Elizabeth Marcelo



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DENR to fast-track processing of EICs

By **CORY MARTINEZ**

DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna has ordered the fasttracking of the processing of environmental compliance certificates (ECCs) in order to meet the 20 working days required under Republic Act (RA) 11032 or the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act.

In Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) Memorandum

Circular (MC) 2022-001 issued by Sampulna, the directive aims to speed up the approval or denial of the ECC by streamlining the procedures and requirements.

"We realized the challenges of the current pandemic, thus, this directive will enable us to meet the waiting period for ECC applications and help expedite business transactions in government," Sampulna said.

EMB Director William P. Cuñado, on the other hand, explained that the order covers projects requiring Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) check-

list for its application for an ECC or for projects with minimal adverse effects, and those with an IEE threshold as listed in Annex A of MC 2014-005.

It covers new and single projects filed through the online system, as well as existing single projects to be expanded, modified, or rehabilitated.

Cuñado pointed out that the EMB regional office may deny or approve the an ECC application within 20 working days from its receipt, depending on the adequacy of the submitted documents.

"The issued ECC can be printed online. If there will be no action from the EMB Regional Office, the Online System will automatically issue the ECC within 20 working days from the acceptance of the application," Cunado said.

The EMB may deny any ECC application in the online system if there is a misrepresentation of submitted documents, and if there is an invalid proof of payment, among others.

Interested proponents may visit www.emb.gov.ph and register for an ECC online account or visit the EMB website for more information.



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SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT Use reusable water bottle instead of plastic

AS summer continues to sizzle, an environmental health group advised the public, especially those taking part in caravans, motorcades, rallies and other poll campaign activities, to make it a habit to bring water in reusable non-plastic containers to keep hydrated.

"Bringing water in a reusable container every time you go out will cut your consumption of bottled water and help in reducing fossil fuel use and the resulting pollution that is warming and toxifying the planet," said Jove Benosa, Zero Waste Campaigner, EcoWaste Coalition.

According to the research conducted by Euromonitor, the global consumption of plastic bottles continues to rise. From 300 billion in 2004, plastic bottles sold in 2016 rose to 480 billion, and was estimated to have

reached 583.3 billion in 2021. Around the world, one million plastic bottles are reportedly sold every minute.

"If you're going out to work, pay bills, shop, worship, or engage in fun outdoor or election related campaign activities, please bring with you water in reusable containers," he emphasized.

"Poll candidates and their supporters who brave the sweltering heat should carry a refillable water bottle, preferably a non-plastic container, and stay hydrated all day long."

"With proper maintenance, a good quality stainless steel reusable water bottle can last for a very long time," he suggested.

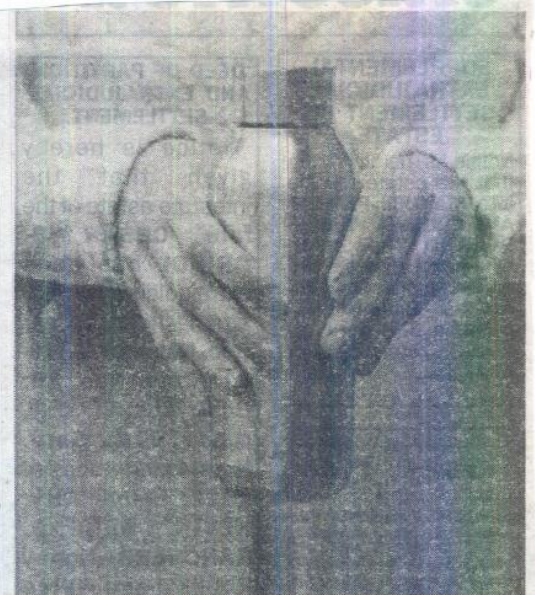
While food-grade stainless steel water bottles are preferred, the EcoWaste Coalition advised the public to choose the

unpainted bottles especially if there is no assurance that the surface coating is safe from lead.

Lead, a potent neurotoxin, is no longer allowed in paint manufacturing as per DENR Administrative Order 2013-24, or the Chemical Control Order for Lead and Lead Compound, the group said.

According to the group's periodic market investigation, some stainless steel water bottles, including vacuum flasks and insulated water bottles and tumblers, may be decorated with paints with lead content surpassing the regulatory limit of 90 parts per million (ppm). Some samples may even contain dangerously high amounts of lead exceeding 10,000 to over 100,000 ppm, the group said.

"This is deeply concerning as the surface



coating on the exterior of a metal water bottle will chip over time with frequent use and accidental dropping on the floor. If lead paint was used, the lead on the paint may end up being ingested by the user, especially by a child who is unaware of the health risk," the group said, noting that "lead is toxic if ingested and can cause adverse health problems, especially for

vulnerable populations like children and pregnant women."

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "lead is toxic and is harmful to everyone." Long term risks include high blood pressure and kidney damage. Exposure of pregnant women to high levels of lead can cause miscarriage, stillbirth, premature birth and low birth weight.



STOP PROCESSING ALL
RECLAMATION PROJECTS

EDITORIAL

Reclamation projects

THE good news is that outgoing President Rodrigo R. Duterte has ordered a stop to the processing of all reclamation projects in the country due to reports of corruption.

The tough-talking Duterte issued the order, described by even critics as "a welcome development," three months before June 30, when his six-year administration ends.

The Chief Executive from Davao City told government officials from the Visayas Thursday that he had dismissed five or six members of his Cabinet because of corruption.

However, the long-time city mayor, a lawyer by profession, did not identify the erring Cabinet officials.

Admirers of Duterte, the first Mindanaoan president, said the dismissal of the Cabinet officials "is ample proof that there are no sacred cows" in the current administration.

When he assumed the top political post of the land on June 30, 2016, Duterte vowed to go after corrupt men and women in state uniform and eradicate the drug menace.

Likewise, Mr. Duterte vowed to hit hard at criminals and address the perennial problems of unemployment, homelessness, hunger, poverty and rising prices of commodities.

Environmentalists said that reclamation projects damage marine biodiversity in the area, adding that they harm the poor most, notably the fishers and their families.

Thus, the incoming administration will be under heavy pressure to ensure that the ecosystems affected by reclamation are protected and made resilient to climate impacts.

Dapat lang!



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Editorial

Address water shortage before it becomes a crisis

AUTHORITIES have begun sounding the alarm about the possibility of water shortages within the next few weeks, something which has become an almost annual occurrence in April and May. The warnings should be taken seriously and serve as a reminder to the government, water suppliers and consumers to take steps now to conserve water to avoid a repeat of past crises.

As of Thursday, March 31, the level of the Angat Reservoir, the primary source of water for Metro Manila, was at 190.94 meters (m), down from 192.75 m a week earlier and 15.36 m lower than the same time a year ago.

The minimum operating level at Angat is 180 m; if the water level falls below that, customers in Metro Manila can expect service interruptions.

To address the low water level, the agencies concerned have already taken aggressive steps, for which they ought to be commended.

The Manila Waterworks and Sewerage System and the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration have been carrying out cloud-seeding operations over the Angat watershed since last week. Cloud-seeding is a method of triggering rainfall by spraying fine particles of silver iodide in cloud formations

using aircraft. As fantastic as it sounds, the method does work, but its effectiveness is limited by the amount of moisture in the atmosphere.

The National Irrigation Administration, on the other hand, has preemptively cut water allocations for crop irrigation in Bulacan and parts of Pampanga supplied by the Bustos Reservoir, which is fed by Angat. The total water allocation of 40 cubic meters (m³) per second (the flow rate of water through the Bustos Dam into the irrigation distribution system) at the beginning of the dry cropping season has been cut to just 14 m³ per second. Although there are no reports yet that crop production has been adversely affected, the cut in water allocation will result in that if the situation persists for more than a short period of time.

Lacking godlike abilities to cause heavy rainfall for an extended period, these measures are about the limit of what the responsible agencies can do. Water users can do their part by practicing their own conservation measures. Examples of these are avoiding unnecessary water use for things like washing cars or sidewalks, setting aside water supplies in case there is a

The creation of new water supplies is one important measure that should be taken to ensure water security in the long term. And key to this is the resolution of disputes that have delayed the Kaliwa Dam project.

cars or sidewalks, setting aside water supplies in case there is a service interruption and reducing the flow from supply valves

The latter step is often overlooked, but can have a significant effect. By closing the supply valve — either the main valve at the water meter or individual valves that supply water to sink and toilet fixtures — by just a slight amount, a typical house can save a cubic meter or more of water without noticeable effect on water pressure

All of the above, however, are only short-term measures. In order to ensure water security for the long term, broader steps must be taken. Foremost among these, of course, is the creation of new water supplies and key to this is the resolution of disputes that have delayed the Kaliwa Dam project.

Beyond that, greater efforts to preserve existing water supplies should be pursued. Taking better care of lakes and rivers is not only critical for flood control and general environmental health but can also provide more potential sources of water supplies. Laguna de Bay, for example, could provide a great deal more than it does, if it were not for pollution of the lake, much of which is carried into it by the streams that feed it.

Reforestation is also an important part of water management. Forested slopes, besides serving as carbon sinks to alleviate harmful emissions, prevent erosion that can clog water supplies. Customers whose supplies are distributed by the Li Mesa Dam can certainly relate to this; heavy rainstorms over the watershed ironically often result in water service being interrupted due to turbidity or high levels of silt in the water washed down from bare slopes higher up. Care should be taken, however, to avoid monoculture reforestation, which can have other unintended effects on the ecosystem.



IP give blessing to Wawa dam plan

The memorandum of agreement signing is a milestone of the FPIC Process

BY MARIA ROMERO
@tribunephil_mbr

Razon-led Wawa JVCo Inc., a subsidiary of Prime Infrastructure Holdings Inc., has officially received the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) by the Dumagat/Remontado Indigenous Peoples (IP) of Antipolo and Montalban for its Upper Wawa Dam last month. It is the second phase of the Wawa Bulk Water Supply Project.

"The MoA (memorandum of agreement) signing is a milestone of the FPIC Process that we are undertaking," said Melvin

John Tan, WawaJVCo's President.

"It shows the full support from the community for the Upper Wawa Dam Project and will allow us to proceed with working to provide reliable water supply to Metro Manila's East Zone residents while also helping support the growth and sustainable development of the IP in Antipolo City and Rodriguez, Rizal."

Amba Ernesto Doroteo or "Chairman Enok," from the Antipolo IP, and Adolfo Gallanosa from the Montalban IP expressed their appreciation for the inclusiveness of the MoA.

MoA sealed

The negotiations and eventual signing of the MoA were held last 17 and 23 March at the Kaysakat National High School in Barangay San Jose, Antipolo City, and

Phase 1B Gymnasium, Kasiglahan Village, Rodriguez, respectively.

The event was supervised by the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent Team and attended by representatives of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples offices.

It shows the full support from the community for the Upper Wawa Dam Project and will allow us to proceed with working to provide reliable water supply to Metro Manila's East Zone residents.

The MoA Signing is a manifestation of the IP's support for nation-building as we address the growing concern of water scarcity in Metro Manila and the nearby province of Rizal.



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WAWA CONSENT. After months of navigating the free, prior and informed consent process, the Razon-led Wawa Bulk Water Supply Project Phase II, Upper Wawa Dam, receives consent from the Dumagat/Remontado Indigenous Peoples of Antipolo and Montalban. Attending the signing of the memorandum of agreement on March 17, 2022 are (by row, from left) members of the IP community Francisco Doroteo, Felizardo Doroteo, Marina Villarama, Rosalina Fernando, Pecina Ferrer, Rogelio Cruz, Alfredo Vertudez Sr. and Renato Cruz; lawyer Jeric Jucaban (consultant), Regie Batião of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, IP members Modesto Sta. Ana and Marcial Vertudez, NCIP-FPIC team leader Angelo Saldao, Aprille Adis of WawaJVCo Inc., IP members Ernesto Doroteo and Nicanor Del Rey, and Raquel Bernardo and Wilma Serafines of NCIP.



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'BEGONIA FRANCISABUIDII'

NEW PLANT SPECIES IN ALBAY NAMED AFTER LATE BIOLOGIST

By Ma. April Mier-Manjares
@MaAprilMierINQ

LEGAZPI CITY—An endemic plant species was discovered in Albay province and was named after the late Francis Gregor Abuid, a conservation biologist, for his efforts in protecting the rich biodiversity of the Bicol region.

The new species was named *Begonia francisabuidii* after the 25-year-old high school biology teacher who died in a vehicular accident in 2021.

The new begonia species is similar to *Begonia madulidii* but it is distinguished by shorter and puberulent rhizomes, densely hirsute stipules, reddish and pubescent petiole, smaller leaves, puberulous panicle, smaller bracts and four-tepaled pistillate flower, according to a research published by Taiwan International Journal of Biodiversity on March 28.

Research author Cyrus Job dela Cruz said the species resembled the personality of Abuid, as he always wanted to travel far to explore new places riding his bicycle.

"We discovered *B. francis-*



CONSERVATIONIST The late biology teacher and conservationist Francis Gregor Abuid, whom a newly discovered begonia species in Albay is named after, dedicated his young life to advocating the protection of biodiversity in the Bicol region and teaching young biologists. —PHOTO COURTESY OF CARL JOSEF ABUID



RARE BLOOM *Begonia francisabuidii*, named after Abuid, is a new plant species discovered in Ligao City, Albay province. —PHOTO-COURTESY OF CYRUS JOB DELA CRUZ

abuidii in a peaceful and far-flung area [in Albay]. It was so inspiring to name it after him because his level of determination to conquer every struggle was the same as when we were looking for *francisabuidii*," he said.

Dela Cruz said the white flowers that bloomed from the *B. francisabuidii* species were as "pure as [the] heart and dedication" of Abuid to "inspire young learners to guard and conserve the biodiversity" of the region.

"The white flower represents his kind heart for young researchers who asked help from him for school-related work. He used to accompany these students from sampling to writing research papers," he said.

Critically endangered

The research was a collaborative work of Dela Cruz and his coauthors Steven Concepcion from Bicol University and Yu Pin Ang from Philippine Taxo-

nomics Initiative Inc. Dela Cruz is a field biologist of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Bicol and is currently taking a Master of Science in Biodiversity and Environmental Management at Bicol University graduate school in Legazpi City.

The species was discovered near Nahulugang-Patok Falls in Barangay Oma-Oma, an upland village in Ligao City.

B. francisabuidii is litho-

phytic and assumed to be highly dependent on moisture. Its flowers bloom during the months of September and November.

Dela Cruz said they considered it critically endangered because of its short dispersal and that they remained isolated in far-flung areas.

"We searched the area for the presence of the population, they were observed growing only in moist shaded rocks near the waterfall. I also can't find the same in some other areas in Albay," he said.

The species' population is vulnerable and at risk of decline as the site is frequently visited by local tourists and there is an increase in anthropogenic activities, or environmental damage caused by human activity, added Dela Cruz.

He also cited that the area is not currently protected under the country's Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System by the DENR.

"We need to protect this species because it is very unique, it can be considered as a bioindicator. The exploitation of the area could destroy begonia, thus, the possibility of affecting the food chain or food web," he added.

The researcher hoped that the recent discovery would encourage the younger generations to study biodiversity and guard the natural environment.

Living memory

Carl Josef, brother of Abuid, said they were surprised and honored that one of the dreams of his brother was achieved through his genuine friends.

"Even though he is gone, it makes me feel like there's a piece of him on earth that lives among us and it gives us more reason to remember him and to celebrate the life he lived," he said.

He said his brother loved outdoor activities, researching about conservation of animals and plants, and dreamed of being featured in wildlife-related magazines and television programs.

The late biologist's mother, Francia, said she would want to grow the same species at her son's grave in Guinobatan town.

"He may be gone physically but his memory lives in the plants. We are thankful to his friends for naming it after him," she said. INQ



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Loren pushes reef protection

Destructive fishing practices and improper waste disposal contribute to the massive reef degradation that affects the abundance and health of marine life

Returning senatorial candidate Loren Legarda on Sunday stressed the importance of conserving and preserving the country's coral reefs to sustain the basic needs of Filipinos and to promote livelihood.

"Beyond aesthetics, the degradation of coral reefs directly affects our daily lives, specifically our health, food supply, and livelihood. Thus, we have to continuously educate our people about its vital role in the continuity of life in the sea," Legarda said.

"They protect coastlines from wave and storm erosion and function as nurseries and habitats for thousands of marine species. It is estimated that one square kilometer of healthy coral reef can support as much as 35 metric tons of live fish," she added.

The Philippines takes pride in having the second largest coral reef environment in Southeast Asia, which is home to a diverse number of species, she said.

According to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, the Philippines has 915 reef fish species and more than 400 scleractinian coral species, 12 of which are endemic.

However, destructive fishing practices and improper waste disposal contribute to the massive reef degradation that affects the abundance and health of marine life.

"Our country, an archipelago located within the coral triangle, is blessed with a very rich biodiversity characterized by extensive coral reefs, seagrass beds, and dense mangroves," she lamented.

"Unfortunately, our overdependence on our seas and on our natural environment, has greatly contributed to the worsening state of the country's marine ecosystems, which has not only led to the extinction of marine species, but has also been detrimental to the state of the environment, of the sources of our food supply, livelihood and even related industries such as tourism and trade," she added.

The veteran lawmaker pointed out that the waste management problem was even magnified by the need of Filipinos for take-out orders and online deliveries during the imposition of community quarantines, and the need to use disposable face masks and other personal protective equipment.

"With many Filipinos having to resort to take-out orders and deliveries that commonly use disposable plastic containers and utensils to prevent the spread of the virus, millions of single-use plastics are irresponsibly disposed of, adding up to the proliferation of plastic waste that could lead to an even greater environmental and public health crisis in the future," Legarda said.



LGUs with mining sites to get tax income share

By DELON PORCALLA

A senior administration lawmaker from Mindanao yesterday revealed that provinces, cities, municipalities and barangays that host mining operations would get an extra P5.6 billion in fresh development funding from the national government this year.

"The amount represents the 40-percent share of local government units (LGUs) in the gross earnings derived by the National Treasury from mining activities," Surigao del Sur Rep. Johnny Pimentel said.

The P5.6 billion is provided for in the 2022 National Expenditure Program and is on top of the internal revenue allotment share of the host LGUs, according to Pimentel, whose home province hosts nickel mining operations.

"We expect the national government as well as host LGUs to generate more income from mining activities in the years ahead, in light of the lifting of the ban on the issuance of new mining permits," he said.

In April 2020, President Duterte issued an executive

order revoking the nine-year freeze on the grant of new mineral production sharing agreements, in a bid to boost government income, stimulate employment and accelerate the country's economic recovery.

The suspension was imposed by then president Benigno Aquino III in 2012, also through an executive order.

Under the Local Government Code of 1991, LGUs are entitled to 40 percent of the gross earnings from "mining taxes, royalties from mineral reservations, forestry charges, and fees and revenues col-

lected from energy resources" in their areas.

Pimentel, a member of the House of Representatives' ways and means committee, said the 40 percent cut of host LGUs amounted to P6.2 billion in 2021, P5.6 billion in 2020, P3.2 billion in 2019 and P4 billion in 2018.

Under the law, the LGU share shall be distributed as follows: 20 percent to the host province, 45 percent to the host component city or host municipality and 35 percent to the host barangay.

In cases where the host is

a highly urbanized or independent component city, 65 percent shall go to the city and 35 percent to the barangay.

Under the law, once LGUs receive their shares, they must appropriate the funds to finance local development and livelihood projects.

In the case of LGUs that obtain their shares from the extraction of hydrothermal, geothermal and other energy assets, however, they must spend at least 80 percent of the money solely to reduce the cost of electricity in the areas that supplied the resources.



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Scientists risk arrest to sound climate alarm

By Marlowe Hood

A LOOSELY federated network of scientists in more than two dozen countries plan acts of civil disobedience starting this week to highlight the climate crisis, members of Scientist Rebellion told AFP.

Their non-violent actions are timed to the release Monday of a landmark report from the UN's climate science advisory panel laying out options for slashing carbon pollution and controversial schemes for extracting CO2 from the air, they said in interviews.

Scientist Rebellion targets universities, research institutes and major scientific journals, prodding them and their staff to speak out more forcefully on what they describe as the existential threat of global warming.

"Scientists are particularly powerful messengers, and we have a responsibility to show leadership," said Charlie Gardner, a conservation scientist at the University of Kent specialised in tropical biodiversity.

"We are failing in that responsibility. If we say it's an emergency, we have to act like it is."

“Scientist Rebellion targets universities, research institutes and major scientific journals.”

Starting Monday, the group hopes to see “high levels of disobedience” with more than 1,000 scientists worldwide taking part in direct non-violent action against government and academic institutions.

The world has seen a crescendo of deadly extreme weather amplified by rising temperatures — heatwaves, wildfires, flooding, storms engorged by rising seas — and a torrent of recent climate science projects worse to come.

Much of that research is distilled in periodic reports from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel On Climate Change (IPCC).

Scientist Rebellion was founded in 2020 by two physics PhD students at St Andrews College in Scotland, inspired in part by the more broadly

based Extinction Rebellion.

The group's first significant action with more than 100 scientists, in March 2021, targeted the British Royal Society and science publishing behemoth Springer Nature.

"We basically pasted enlarged copies of their journal articles calling for rapid transformative change onto their offices," said Kyle Topher, an environmental scientist from Australia and full-time activist for the group.

'It is survival'

Last year's COP26 climate summit in Glasgow saw a score of their members arrested.

"As far as we know this was the first mass arrest of scientists anywhere in the world since Carl Sagan protested nuclear weapons testing in the 1980s," said Gardner.

They also made headlines by leaking an early draft of Monday's IPCC report, which warned that carbon dioxide emissions need to peak within three years if the world is to keep the Paris Agreement targets for global warming in reach.

"As scientists, we tend to be risk averse — we don't want to risk our jobs, our reputations, and our time," said Rose Abramoff, a soil scientist at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Knoxville, Tennessee and a Scientist Rebellion member.

"But it is no longer sufficient to do our research and expect others to read it and understand the severity and urgency of the climate crisis."

The aim of the group is to "make this crisis impossible to ignore", she added.

Many of its members are in the Global South, where climate change protests up to now have been more muted, even if the impacts are more keenly felt.

"I am not sure this is our last chance, but time is definitely running out," said Jordan Cruz, an environmental engineer in Ecuador who studies the devastating impact of mining industries on human communities in the Andes.

"I am terrified," he said by email. "But it's the kind of fear that motivates action. It is survival."

More information about Scientist Rebellion can be found here: <https://scientistrebellion.com/take-action/>.

AFP



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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos 929-6626 to 29, 929-6633 to 35
926-7041 to 43, 929-6252, 929-1669

Website: <http://www.denr.gov.ph/> Email: web@denr.gov.ph

**DENR ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
NO. 2022-07**

MAR 23 2022

SUBJECT : AMENDING DENR ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2014-03 SERIES OF 2014 (MANUAL OF AUTHORITIES ON HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS) AND DENR ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2016-07 SERIES OF 2016 (DENR MANUAL OF AUTHORITIES ON TECHNICAL MATTERS)

In the interest of the service, and in order to rationalize the functions of several Undersecretaries, Regional Executive Directors, and PENR Officers pursuant to Republic Act No. 11032 (Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018), the following shall be the approving authorities:

DOCUMENT	APPROVING AUTHORITY
Disbursement Vouchers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOOE/CO (Central Office) - Above P15M • Transfer of Funds thru Funding Checks/Working Fund (Central Office) - Above P15M 	Undersecretary for Finance
<u>Checks/Authority to Debit Account (ADA)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOOE (Central Office) - Above P15M 	
<u>SAA/NTA/LAA</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer of funds thru SAA/ LAA from Central Office to Bureaus, Regions, PENROs • Issuance of NTA from Central Office to Bureaus and Regions - Above P15M 	
Clearance for the Issuance of the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) Director	Supervising Undersecretary for Environmental Management Bureau
Approval of Orders: Award and Lease Contracts covering foreshore areas	Supervising Undersecretary for Land Management Bureau
Issuance of Special Uses Agreement within Protected Areas (SAPA)	Supervising Undersecretary for Biodiversity Management Bureau
Approval of the appraisal/re-appraisal reports covering foreshore, SAPA, and patrimonial lands of the State	Regional Executive Director
Local Travel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Secretaries, Service Directors, Regional Executive Directors, and Bureau Directors 	Concerned Supervising Undersecretary
Travel (CENR Office) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division Chiefs and below 	PENR Officer

All other inconsistent orders and circulars are superseded.

This Order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation and upon acknowledgement of receipt of a copy thereof by the Office of the National Administrative Register (ONAR), UP Law Center.




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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT BUREAU - REGION VI
OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR
Region VI, Western Visayas
EMB Building, DENR Compound, Parola, Iloilo City
Tel. No. (0333) 336-6989 Email: emb6@emb.gov.ph



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given to all parties who wish to participate in the Public Hearing for the proposed Philippine Domestic Submarine Cable Network (PDSCN) Project Region VI - Segment 14 & Segment 7 on the following dates:

Date / Time / Venue	Location
18 April 2022 (Monday) / 9:00 AM	Barangay Yapak Covered Court
19 April 2022 (Tuesday) / 1:00 PM	Barangay Union Covered Court
21 April 2022 (Thursday) 9:00 AM	Barangay Ermita Covered Court
22 April 2022 (Friday) / 1:00 PM	Natures Village Hotel, Zone 15, National Highway, Talisay City /

Brief Description
Through the proposed Philippine Domestic Submarine Cable Network (PDSCN) Project, a consortium of telecommunication service providers namely, Globe Telecom, Inc., InfiniVAN Inc. (IVAN), and Eastern Telecommunications Philippines, Inc. (ETPI), plans to strengthen their network interconnectivity. This proposed submarine cable network is composed of twenty-four (24) segments connecting various islands, regions, and provinces in the Philippines. Five (5) segments will be established within Region VI- Western Visayas

Proposed Location
Brgy. Yapak, Boracay, Malay, Aklan / Brgy. Union, Nabas, Aklan / Brgy. Ermita, Dumangas, Iloilo / Brgy. Zone 3, Talisay City, Negros Occidental


Proponent
Globe Telecom, Inc./ InfiniVAN Inc. (IVAN) / Eastern Telecommunications Philippines, Inc. (ETPI)

Kindly note that Public Hearing will promptly start as scheduled and registration will start 30 minutes before the start of the program.

The public hearing aims to achieve efficient exchange of information and views between and among the project proponent, the EMB-DENR, relevant agencies, LGUs and other stakeholders on environmental impacts of the proposed project currently applying for Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC).

Full copies of Environmental Performance Report and Management Plan (EPRMP) and EIS Summary for the Public can be accessed thru EMB R6 website at <http://r6.emb.gov.ph/>.

For pre-registration and access of online meeting details or for more information, please contact the EIA Section of EMB R6 at mobile numbers 0999-6253-691/033-336-6989/ local number: 1965.


ATTY. RAMAR NIEL V. PASCUA
 Regional Director

R6-2022-010529

"Productivity with Environmental Protection is the best answer to poverty"

04 APRIL 2022, MONDAY



NEWS ALERTS

COVID-19 NEWS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Philippines logs 690 new COVID-19 cases; active tally at 35,967

By GISELLE OMBAY, GMA News

Published April 3, 2022 7:12pm

The Philippines on Sunday reported 690 new COVID-19 cases, bringing the nationwide tally to 3,679,629.

The country's active case count decreased to 35,967, according to data posted on the Department of Health's (DOH) website.

There were 37,115 active cases [recorded](#) on Saturday, with 373 new COVID-19 infections.

A total of 3,584,319 individuals have been counted as recoveries, while the death toll climbed to 59,343.

The regions with the most cases in the past two weeks were the NCR with 1,573 infections, Region 4-A with 588, and Region 6 with 442.

A total of 18,727 individuals were tested as of April 2, with 294 laboratories being able to submit data.

Latest data showed that 16% or 5,278 out of the 33,034 hospital beds nationwide were occupied.

Meanwhile, 15.51% or 502 out of the 3,219 total intensive care unit (ICU) beds for COVID-19 patients all over the country were in use.—LDF, GMA News

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/827284/philippines-logs-690-new-covid-19-cases-active-tally-at-35-967/story/?utm_source=GMANews&utm_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR1Tz8HSh32Y3F1Bid-4e6LQLHDt8uj38ZfbEqrXW17XiBRBi2EN_4FK8eU



All-time low na 151 aktibong kaso ng COVID-19, naitala sa Quezon City!

By [Mer Layson](#)(Pilipino Star Ngayon) - April 4, 2022 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Magandang balita para sa mga residente ng Quezon City dahil naitala na sa lungsod ang bago nitong ‘all-time low’ na 151 na aktibong kaso ng COVID-19.

Iniuulat kahapon ng Quezon City government na hanggang noong Huwebes, Marso 31, ay wala rin silang naitalang mga pasyente na namatay dahil sa virus.

Umaabot na lamang rin anila sa 16 ang average na naitatalang bagong kaso ng sakit kada araw sa lungsod.

“Good news, QCitizens! Noong Huwebes, March 31, 2022 naitala ng ating lungsod ang bago nitong all-time low na 151 na aktibong kaso ng COVID-19, walang bagong pagkamatay, at nasa 16 na lamang ang naitatalang average na bagong kaso kada araw,” ulat ng QC government sa kanilang Facebook accout.

Ipinagmalaki rin ng lokal na pamahalaan na mula sa 142 barangay sa lungsod, mayroon na ngayong 53 barangay o 37% ang walang aktibong kaso sa nakalipas na dalawang linggo.

“Ang mga kaso ng COVID-19 sa Quezon City ay patuloy na bumababa dahil sa walang patid na #QCProtekTODO Vaccination Program bilang proteksyon para sa mga residente at manggagawa, gayundin ang ibayong pag-iingat ng QCitizens,” anito pa.

Paalala naman ng lokal na pamahalaan sa mga residente, “Kahit nakapagtala ng pagbaba ng bilang ng kaso sa ating lungsod, huwag maging kampante! Patuloy na sumunod sa minimum health protocols.”

04 APRIL 2022, MONDAY



DENR

NEWS ALERTS

VLOGS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE







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Isang mapagpalang umaga sa lahat at muli na naman tayong magbibigay update dito sa manila bay. Napansin ko lng kung anong magiging itsura nitong dolomite beach lalo pa at may pagtatambak ng graysand sa may parte ng Faura outfall. Samahan ninyo akong muli at tingnan ang

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




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




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