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NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR Performance Review



Department of Environment and Natural Resources Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna (right) instructs [Internal Audit Service](#) (IAS) Director Al O. Orolfo (in white polo shirt) and IAS personnel to examine the current duties and responsibilities of [DENR](#) employees nationwide if these are in line with their actual terms of reference. Sampulna wants them to go out of their workplaces, be aware of the situation on the ground and solve these. Orolfo assumed office on March 24.



BFP adopts NGP reforestation areas in two Bulacan towns

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) has formally adopted two National Greening Program (NGP) sites, one each in the towns of Norzagaray and Doña Remedios Trinidad in the Province of Bulacan.

The move came after the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) outlining the partnership for the National Greening Program (NGP).

Under the agreement, the parties will plant bamboo and other forest and fruit-bearing species on the 25-hectare reforestation area at Barangay San Lorenzo in Norzagaray and, a 25-hectare reforestation area at Barangay Kalawakan in Doña Remedios Trinidad.

The DENR will provide a tree plantation plan and technical assistance, while the DILG-BFP will spearhead the plantation, rehabilitation, maintenance, protection, conservation, and other related activities of the adopted plantation sites to sustain the growth and survival of the planted seedlings for five years.

DENR-Central Luzon Regional Executive Director Paquito T. Moreno Jr. and DILG-BFP chief Director Louie S. Puracan led the MOA signing.

In his keynote message read by DENR-Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service (SCIS) Director Khalil Sergio Bayam, Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna acknowledged the initial partnership of the two agencies.

“We take this as a noble act on the part of the DILG-BFP because we at the DENR could certainly look forward to more successful and sustained forest rehabilitation efforts in these areas,” Sampulna said.

Meanwhile, Puracan said the DILG-BFP initiated the partnership not only for environmental protection but also to empower and provide a livelihood to the local community and indigenous peoples living around the sites as well as for their own BFP firefighters given its “limitless potentials.”

He estimated that around 40,000 BFP personnel would plant at least 10 bamboo seedlings, equating to 400,000 bamboo seedlings.

Moreover, Moreno also highlighted the timeliness of the partnership, as the BFP will experience firsthand how to protect these sites during the dry season when forest fires are rampant in the country.

“Forest fire is the biggest issue in terms of forest protection or established plantation protection. I hope that this MOA will spur a sustainable, broader partnership among our partners on forest protection and establishment,” said Moreno.

The MOA also allows the DILG-BFP to engage the services of the concerned community in implementing seedling production, planting, maintenance, and protection activities.

For these adopted areas, the DILG-BFP will also establish a forest fire station where basic firefighting equipment, supplies or vehicles are available for immediate response to forest fires.

DILG-BFP is also responsible for the establishment of fire lookout towers and the provision of manpower.



In 2020, forest fires destroyed 7,830 hectares of NGP forestland areas that cost about P120 million. Of the total damaged area, 2,169 hectares were in Central Luzon.

In time with Fire Prevention Month, the MOA signing was conducted in collaboration with the DENR Tayo Ang Kalikasan and SCIS. The Philippine Bamboo Industry Development Council also supports it.

Bamboo planting in various sites in Central Luzon and National Capital Region and coastal cleanup in Region 4A, in collaboration with the BFP, was also held in March.



DENR, DILG team up on Bulacan bamboo plantation effort

By Rjhay E Laurea



MANILA — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has teamed up with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) the building of bamboo farm in Bulacan as part of the National Greening Program (NGP).

Held with an official bamboo farming at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center on March 25, the signing of a memorandum of agreement (MOA) meant the union of DENR and the DILG Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) for the adoption of two NGP revegetation areas in the towns of Norzagaray and Doña Remedios Trinidad.

The deal will enact the planting of bamboo and other forest and fruit-bearing species in the 25-hectare reforestation area at Barangay Kalawakan in Doña Remedios Trinidad.

Also, the DENR will give a tree plantation plan and technical assistance, while the DILG-BFP will lead the plantation, rehabilitation, maintenance, protection, conservation, and other related activities of the embraced plantation sites to keep the growth and survival of the planted seedlings for five years.

The MOA signing was led by DENR-Central Luzon Regional Executive Director Paquito T. Moreno Jr. and DILG-BFP Chief Director Louie S. Puracan.

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“We take this as a noble act on the part of the DILG-BFP because we, at the DENR, could certainly look forward to more successful and sustained forest rehabilitation efforts in these areas,” Sampulna said.

For now, Puracan said the DILG-BFP began the alliance not only for environmental protection but also to empower and give income to the local community and indigenous peoples living around the sites, as well as, for their own BFP firefighters given its “limitless potentials.”

He rated around 40,000 BFP personnel will plant at least 10 bamboo seedlings, equating to 400,000 bamboo seedlings.

Also, Moreno has emphasized the punctuality of the alliance, as the BFP will face directly how to protect these sites during summer when forest fires are rich in the country.



“Forest fire is the biggest issue in terms of forest protection or established plantation protection. I hope that this MOA will spur a sustainable, broader partnership among our partners on forest protection and establishment,” said Moreno.

The MOA also allows the DILG-BFP to mesh the services of the worried community in applying seedling production, planting, maintenance, and protection activities.

For these assumed areas, the DILG-BFP will also build a forest fire station where basic firefighting tools, supplies, or vehicles are available for fast response to forest fires.

DILG-BFP is also accountable for the buildings of fire lookout towers and the provision of manpower.

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Bamboo planting in many sites in Central Luzon and National Capital Region and coastal cleanup in Region 4A, in collaboration with the BFP, was also held in March.(ai/mtvn)



DENR employees get huge boost

TACLOBAN CITY – Almost eight years since typhoon “Yolanda” hit Eastern Visayas region, employees of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) regional office finally received the financial aid that was intended to rebuild their damaged houses.

A total of 164 employees whose houses were totally damaged during the typhoon received P100,000 each, while 594 others whose houses were partially damaged were given

P30,000 each of financial aid from the Office of the President.

“Finally, I have in my hands this longed-for financial aid. I will use this money to pay for my loans during the reconstruction of our house that was totally damaged by ‘Yolanda,’” said Thelma Calibo, an engineering aide of the agency.

DENR acting Secretary Jim Sampulna handed over the check amounting to P34.2 million to former regional director Tirso Parian Jr. last

21 March for the financial aid, adding that the assistance is a testimony of how DENR values its commitment to push for the welfare and benefits of its workforce.

DENR-8’s assistant regional director for Management Services Arturo Salazar led the distribution of financial assistance. Among the beneficiaries include those who are no longer attached to the agency but were employees during the typhoon and the deceased, through their family.

ELMER RECUERDO



NWRB assures no water supply cut in NCR

By Lade Jean Kabagani



MANILA – While it assures there will be no water supply cut in Metro Manila, the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) on Monday (April 4) urged the public to conserve water as the Angat Dam’s water level is now at 190.75 meters.

NWRB Director Seville David Jr. said the current water level in Angat Dam is 10 meters lower than the previous years.

“Bago pa nga ho pumasok iyong taon at bago magsimula itong January po ay nag-abiso na po tayo sa mga kababayan po natin na magtipid [ng tubig] kasi nga po medyo mababa po sa inaasahan natin ang level po ng Angat Dam,” he said in an interview at a Laging Handa public briefing.

David said they are projecting that the supply of 190 meters can be at least stretched until May before it will go down to 180 meters, which is the minimum operating level of the dam.

“Sa ganoong punto po ay mabibigyan po natin ng priority ang supply ng tubig po para sa mga Metro Manila areas,” he said.

He said the farmers in Bulacan and Pampanga are nearing their harvesting schedules. Thus, prioritizing urban areas for water supply once the Angat Dam will meet its minimum operating level.

For the month of April, the Angat Dam saves at least five cubic meters from 15 cubic meters per second since the supply for irrigation is being reduced during harvest time

Meanwhile, he said the water supply in Metro Manila will remain at 48 cubic meters per second with the ongoing threat of the COVID-19 pandemic and because of the hot weather.

“Kaya po minabuti po ng NWRB na i-maintain po iyong kasalukuyang alokasyon at wala pong pagbabawas na mangyayari po,” David said.

On the other hand, David said the cloud seeding operations seem to be getting positive results as the water level in Angat Dam slightly increased.

The NWRB continues the cloud seeding along with the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).



“Umaasa po tayo na sa mga susunod na araw ay parehas po ang magiging resulta, at sa tingin po naman natin ay malaki ang naitutulong po nitong cloud seeding operations para po mapanatili sa mas magandang level po ang kasalukuyang level po ng Angat Dam,” David said.

As its short-term solution for possible water supply shortages, NWRB allows MWSS and other concessionaires to prepare deep wells.

The treatment facilities in Laguna Lake and Marikina River are also on standby.

Major projects are also slated as their medium and long-term solutions.

David said the government, through the National Economic and Development Authority, has already launched the Philippine Water Supply and Sanitation Master Plan, not only making enough water supplies, but also seeking good sanitation.

The NWRB is also crafting a water security roadmap to make sure there is enough supply, not only in Metro Manila, but also nationwide. **(PNA)-ngs**

Cebu City WTE deal a 'risk' to health, environment, say experts



Cebu City WTE deal a 'risk' to health, environment, say experts. (File photo)

THE proposed waste-to-energy (WTE) project that the Cebu City Government plans to undertake could become detrimental not just to the environment but also to the health of the city's population.

This was what environmental experts said during the 2022 CSO Waste Summit, a multisectoral forum organized by the Philippine Earth Justice Center and other pro-environment groups in the city at the University of Cebu Main campus on Tuesday, April 5, 2022.

The forum aimed to tackle the effects of the proposed WTE deal set to be signed by the Cebu City Government and New Sky Energy Philippines Inc.

Dr. Jorge Emmanuel, an adjunct professor of environmental science and engineering at the Silliman University in Negros Oriental and former chief technical adviser on global environment projects of the United Nations Development Program, said should the city government push through with putting up a WTE facility, it could pose a threat to the environment and the people.

Emmanuel said WTE incinerators emit extremely toxic chemicals called dioxins and furans. Inhalation of dioxins and furans causes an increased risk of tumors, cancer, asthma and other fatal diseases, Emmanuel added.

Emmanuel said these incinerator by-products don't easily dissipate as they remain in the environment for a very long time.

Dioxins and furans could stay in the environment for roughly 500 years and could affect 10 to 40 generations, he added.

Emmanuel added that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, particularly its Environmental Management Bureau, is incapable of conducting monitoring of dioxins, furans and other toxins that is essential to protecting public health and the environment.

"You cannot test for dioxins through ambient sampling. The only way to test dioxins is through stack sampling, and yet DOST (Department of Science and Technology) approved this one technology. I would definitely like to see the details of the ETV (environmental technology



verification) for the New Sky,” he added.

On a legal standpoint, the proposed WTE project is also not allowed under the country’s laws.

Lawyer Nikka Oquias of the Philippine Earth Justice Center, a pro-environmental law advocate based in Cebu, said the construction of an incineration facility to be used for a WTE facility is prohibited under Republic Act 8749 or the Clean Air Act of 1999.

Oquias also questioned the accuracy and update of the data on the quantity and quality of waste composition in Cebu City and the lack of public hearing for the project.

Cebu City councilors Nestor Archival and Alvin Dizon, who were among those who opposed the project, were there to reiterate their opposition to the proposed WTE deal.

On their end, representatives of Cebu City Mayor Michael Rama at the forum assured that the project is environmentally sound.

Rama, who was represented by Cebu City public information officer Cerwin Eviota, said the project had undergone enough feasibility study, including studying its possible impact on the city’s environment and health.

Last month, the Cebu City Council voted to give Rama the authority to enter into a joint venture agreement with New Sky Energy Philippines Inc. for the establishment of a WTE facility in the city.

Rama said the WTE facility will be built at no cost to the city.

P432,000 hot lumber seized in Northern Samar



(Photo from Northern Samar Police Provincial Office)

ANTI-ILLEGAL logging operatives seized P432,000 worth of undocumented lumber in Allen, Northern Samar over the weekend.

The 288 pieces of illegal cut lumber were loaded in a wing van truck when intercepted by the Philippine Coast Guard and Northern Samar Provincial Police Office (NSPPO) personnel at the Balwharteco Port in Allen town on Sunday, April 3, 2022.

The authorities said the truck driver, along with his two companions, failed to present the documents necessary to transport the product.

“I encourage the public to help the authorities in our campaign not only against illegal logging but also in all illegal activities,” said Police Colonel Alfredo Tadeffa, NSPPO director.

According to Tadeffa, the campaign against illegal logging under his watch will remain firm.

The police official also urged the public to continue to provide information that could help the authorities on its law enforcement efforts.

The arrested persons will face charges in violation of Presidential Decree 705 or the Anti-illegal Logging Law. **(SunStar Philippines)**



Hataw D'yaryo ng Bayan
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Taguig LGU, residents,
CENRO nagkaisa
sa clean-up drive

NAGTULONG-TULONG ang mga residente at ang City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO), sa Taguig City na magsagawa ng clean-up drive bilang suporta sa mga pagsisikap ng lungsod na pangalagaan ang kapaligiran.

Ang nasabing aktibidad ay magpapatuloy kahit sa panahon ng tag-init bilang paghahanda sa darating na tag-ulan upang maiwasan ang mga pagbaha sa lungsod.

Ang CENRO at mga residente mula sa apat na magkakaibang barangay ay nagtulungan para mapanatili ang kalinisan at luntiang kapaligiran.

Hinihikayat ng local government unit (LGU) ang mga mamamayan na lumahok sa ganitong uri ng aktibidad upang makapag-ambag sa pangangalaga ng kapaligiran sa pamamagitan paglilinis at pagtanim ng mga puno. (GINA GARCIA)

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Pag-asa Pawikan Conservation and Protection Center receives support from BPI



from left are Edna Fajardo, head and volunteer of Pag-asa Pawikan Conservation and Protection Center; John Harry Carreon, village captain of Barangay Pag-asa; Sheila Tan, president and chief executive officer of BPI Asset and Management Trust Corp. (AMTC); and Yvette Mari de Peralta, head of Client Segment Division at BPI AMTC. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

[BANK of the Philippine Islands](#) (BPI) adopted 280 pawikan (sea turtle) nests in [Bataan](#) on March 27, 2022 to support the Pag-Asa Pawikan Conservation and Protection Center and commemorate the launch of the BPI Invest Sustainable Fund Suite by BPI's wealth management arm, BPI Asset and [Management Trust Corp.](#)

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2022/04/06/public-square/pag-asa-pawikan-conservation-and-protection-center-receives-support-from-bpi/1838943>



Bird flu threatens Philippine Eagles



Photo from Philippine Eagle Foundation

THE Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) said the detection of Avian Influenza or bird flu in Davao Region is a major threat to the critically endangered Philippine Eagle.

PEF said in a statement that the Type A H5N1 avian influenza is highly contagious and lethal to birds, including the said Philippine Eagle.

PEF said the bird flu could wipe out the eagle's species.

"This is of grave concern to the PEF whose mandate is to protect and preserve the already critically endangered Philippine eagle, its population in the wild... The PEF has responded to the threat and initiated stricter precautionary measures," the statement read.

The Philippine Eagle Center will have to suspend operations and conduct lockdown and quarantine once the bird flu hits Davao City in order to protect the eagles.

With regards to this, the PEF's Conservation Breeding Program will also be moved to another location outside of the Philippine Eagle Center (PEC), as well as to intensify their isolation, sanitation, and waste disposal protocols.

PEF has also mapped an Outbreak Management Plan to strengthen the center's biosafety protocols and avoid grave incidents.

The bird flu was recently detected in Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat, which is approximately 110 kilometers from the PEC.

The Davao City Veterinary Office said that although the bird flu has not yet been detected in the city, the office is already intensifying screening the entry of poultries from affected provinces in Luzon and Sultan Kudarat.

The PEF calls for the cooperation of concerned authorities and communities to protect the national icon.

"With the threat of the disease already at our doorstep, wildlife, human lives, and means of livelihood for many communities are at risk. In turn, the economy and the environment are in jeopardy," it said.

On Monday, April 4, 2022, the municipality of Magsaysay, Davao del Sur announced that it has detected its first bird flu case in Barangay San Isidro. This is the first case of bird flu in the region.

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1925607/davao/local-news/bird-flu-threatens-philippine-eagles>



Cops lead mangrove reforestation, coral restoration in Albay

By Connie Calipay



PROTECTING MARINE RESOURCES. Maj. Michael Lorilla, police chief of Bacacay, Albay, is shown during the coral restoration and mangrove reforestation project in Barangay Uson on Sunday (April 3, 2022). Three Coral Nursery Units (CNU) were installed in the town's seawaters that will be monitored for three to six months. *(Photo courtesy of JCI Legazpi)*

LEGAZPI CITY – In a bid to protect and secure the environment as well as the marine resources, the Bacacay Municipal Police Station in Albay has conducted a coral restoration and mangrove reforestation project in Barangay Uson.

In an interview on Tuesday, Maj. Michael Lorilla, Bacacay police chief, said the activity themed "Kaligkasan sa Karagatan" was held on Sunday and participated in by almost a hundred people coming from government agencies, stakeholders, and members of advocacy support groups.

"Through this project, the coastal villagers in Bacacay will have an awareness of how to protect and cultivate the coral reefs," Lorilla said.

During the event, three Coral Nursery Units (CNU) were installed in Bacacay's seawaters that will be monitored for three to six months to be replanted later in much deeper areas that need to be restored.

Lorilla said before the activity, a series of lectures to raise awareness on corals and mangroves was conducted to villagers and volunteers by professionals and experts.

"For mangrove reforestation, we were able to go to the areas that needed to be rehabilitated like the sanctuaries in Barangay Cagbulacao and also the different barangays in Cagraray Island," he said.

Citing the success of the coral restoration project, Lorilla said they are planning to create more CNU in other coastal barangays in the area.

"So, kung makikita ng mga tao sa barangay kung gaano kahirap magtanim ng corals magkakaroon sila ng idea na tumulong sila kung pano ito protektahan (If the villagers witness how difficult it is to plant corals, they will also learn to protect it)," Lorilla said. **(With a report from Bernadine Carretas/PNA-OJT)**



Loren Legarda bats to double protected areas

SENATORIAL candidate Loren Legarda had promised to increase the number of protected areas in the country if she is given a chance to return to the Senate.

In an interview with SunStar Pampanga on Monday night's (April 4) rally in Mexico town, Legarda said she will double not just the number of protected areas but also of the protection accorded to such areas.

"God willing when we return to the Senate, we will double (the protected areas) and more protection. There are a lot of important places we need to protect. It's not just protection for protection's sake. We derive our food and resources from many of these places," Legarda said.

Legarda, a former three-term senator, has authored ten environment laws, including the most important Ecological Solid Waste Management Law, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Renewable Energy Law and the Climate Change Act.

The lawmaker is also the principal author and co-sponsor of the Enipas Law. Since the passage of Republic Act 7586, or the National Integrated Protected Areas System (Nipas) Act of 1992, and its amendments under Republic Act 11038, or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (Enipas) Act of 2018, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) successfully set aside 244 protected areas, including the 107 legislated and 13 proclaimed protected areas, all over the country primarily to sustain ecosystem services, among other non-extractive economic activities such as eco-tourism.

Legarda, who also supports micro and small enterprises, was in Pampanga for a local rally arranged for members of the UniTeam Slate of presidential aspirant Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. and Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio.

Legarda arrived at the venue wearing her signature look. She wore a patadyong woven by women from Antique.

Legarda, who supports micro and small enterprises, and author of the law, has been providing support to the Bagtason Loom Weavers Association.

She stressed the need to further provide support for micro and small industries like sisig vendors and Pinatubo ash craft makers in Pampanga to better assist them with much needed capital, skills and marketing support.



Nais ni Deputy Speaker at senatorial candidate [Loren Legarda](#) na bigyan pa ng sapat na suporta ang mga batang siyentipiko, youth leaders at environmentalists upang malabanan ang climate change.

[#DailyTribune](#)





Laguna de Bay

[DEMAND AND SUPPLY](#) - [Boo Chanco](#) - The Philippine Star

April 6, 2022 | 12:00am

Last week, an official of PAGASA was reported to have warned that the water level at Angat Dam may further drop to anywhere from 173 to 175 meters by May if the hot weather persists. At this low level, the official warned, water rationing could be expected and water supply for irrigation would be halted to prioritize the need for potable water.

The weather bureau and the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) have started cloud seeding operations over the Angat watershed in Bulacan to induce rain. It is hoped that cloud seeding will help increase the dam's water level and alleviate a looming water shortage.

PAGASA said the Angat watershed may return to normal by July when the probability of rainfall is higher because of the wet season. Until then, 20 million people depending on it will have to suffer, as they always do at this time of the year.

It was totally irresponsible for a series of administrations to have done nothing about Mega Manila's almost total dependence on Angat Dam for water supply. What we have now are measures undertaken by Manila Water and Maynilad that merely alleviates the problem by tapping the dirty water of Laguna de Bay.

Strictly speaking, Laguna de Bay cannot be a source of water for purification, experts say, since its average depth is 2.5 meters, below the global standard of a minimum of 2.8 meters depth for harvesting water for purification. Manila Water and Maynilad are tapping it anyway, but the process of cleaning up the water is rather expensive.

Before the pandemic, the matter of tapping Laguna de Bay had been raised because the same dreadful situation happens every year. The Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) even took the initiative of drafting an executive order to get the ball rolling in the development of Laguna de Bay as our water source to augment Angat Dam.

Indeed, before we can really tap the water of our country's largest lake, we need to protect and enhance the potability of Laguna de Bay's waters. For this purpose, we need to deal with the sources of pollution, whether organic or inorganic from households, farms, fisheries, and industries.

Before we can start to clean up the lake's waters, we have to prevent residents and industrial concerns along the lakeshore from adding new pollutants. All we have done through the decades towards this goal is to set up an agency, the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), which turned out to have been totally useless.

The draft EO prepared by the MAP sought to declare that the primary use of the lake's water is to provide potable water for Mega Manila. Other purposes may be allowed, but not to the extent of jeopardizing the primary use.

The draft EO sought to build public awareness by publishing daily water quality readings taken in strategic locations of the lake. This requires a massive information campaign among those in the lake watershed to enlist their help in protecting the lake and its waters. The lakeshore communities must be made to realize why all these are for their benefit too.

The MAP also called for a massive reforestation program for the Laguna Lake watershed, implementation of zoning regulations around the lake area, as well as the strict implementation of all environmental laws to address water quality concerns.



The draft EO was sent to the Office of the President. But nothing was heard about it after it was submitted. Hopefully, they can resurrect it from some bureaucrat's drawer so Duterte can sign it and claim it as another achievement before he bows out on June 30.

The draft EO really said nothing new, but was required as a basis for action. It calls for the concerned national agencies to strictly enforce existing laws, specially provisions in the law creating the LLDA. The draft EO also declares Laguna Lake as a dependable proximately-located water source for Metro Manila.

MAP's proposal for a "Save Laguna Lake Movement" has been overtaken by the pandemic. However, as we get back to normal, we should revive efforts to improve the Laguna Lake water quality so we can have another major water source for Metro Manila.

In hindsight, maybe PNoy erred in stopping the project to dredge the lake. The Arroyo administration signed a deal with a Belgian company for the project to make the lake available as a potable water source, among other objectives.

Sayang, because PNoy eventually lost the case when the Belgian company brought it up for international arbitration. The International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) ordered the Philippine government to pay P800 million to Baggerwerken Decloedt En Zoon (BDC) for scrapping the P18.7-billion Laguna Lake Rehabilitation Project (LLRP) in 2011.

ICSID issued the award on Jan. 23, 2017, six years after PNoy junked the deal that was twice declared by then-Justice Secretary Leila M. de Lima as "legal and binding".

The BDC project was originally crafted to dredge the 94,900-hectare Laguna de Bay and deepen its average depth of 2.5 meters, and called for the creation of navigational channels in the waterway, which has Class C water quality deemed inappropriate for human consumption.

The Belgian company, BDC, had designed the project under the official development assistance (ODA) scheme of Brussels and was supported by then-Belgian King Albert. Unfortunately, PNoy rejected the plea of the Belgian king to salvage the project. PNoy said the project would only transfer the silt from one part of the lake to another.

BDC also secured 37.4 percent of the funding from a Belgian export agency to enable it to be covered by ODA and also secured additional financing from BNP Paribas.

Our toxic local politics scuttled a project for which no alternative was undertaken, leaving us still in need to do something major to assure water supply for Mega Manila. The Kaliwa dam project is also a no-starter due to problems with indigenous tribes in the area.

Oh well... No water during our dry spells should be a primary concern of the next administration. This administration failed to do anything in that area too.



Decade of Action: Green Education for Greener Life



NEGROS. Replenishing cut-trees with new ones will help mitigate the effects of climate change. (Contributed photo)

THE climate is ever changing but why can't the people change their bad habits for the environment?

Many don't care to plant and instead produce more wastes that eventually lead to polluting the environment and worst of all its destruction.

At its worsening condition, the climate crisis warrants emergency resuscitation and this calls for global action especially for big countries to take the lead since they are into carbon-producing elements as evidenced by the mushrooming of their industries.

Such projects are a global threat not only to the environment, but to the health and the peoples' lives.

Carbon emissions, for example, contribute a lot to global warming; and science contends that there's a need to halt carbon wastes by controlling its production and for countries to resort to green technology to achieve global warming below 1.5 degrees.

Climate related disasters like typhoons, floods, storm surge, droughts, heat waves, health crisis, food scarcity, fish kills and aquatic related problems, erratic rainfall patterns, are ill-effects of climate change that global and local leaders especially the people should realize and cognizant of.

Poor countries, and people living and working in poverty and informal economy, the marginalized groups, women, and the young generation carry the brunt of a frenzied climate.

The loss of habitats, soil erosion and desertification, all of which affects food security and incomes as devastating impacts of climate change that obviously affect the wellbeing of humanity.

Yes, the world is in a critical state amidst the climate emergency as per report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) thus, stressed the need for world leaders to massively scale up the implementation of national climate mitigation and adaptation measures in consonance with the objectives of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda.



The 2030 Agenda dubbed as Decade of Action is aimed at ending poverty in all its forms. Launched in New York on September 25-27, 2015 by the United Nation, the Agenda envisages "a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination."

The 2030 Agenda empowers all states to adopt and implement national climate plans to remove the link between Gross Domestic Product growth and environmental degradation. In the case of the Philippines, agriculture, forestry, and fishing posted a contraction of -0.3 percent, according to the Fourth Quarter 2021 report of the Philippine Statistics Authority.

The report indicates that the government must take action to address the effect of GDP to the downtrend pattern in the country's three major sources for food security.

This necessitates a synergy among government agencies and private organizations. Through public and private partnerships and strong people's support, the climate crisis can be addressed in due time.

In this manner, the role of academic institutions plays a pivotal role in educating the young people through integration of climate change, perhaps as a separate discipline in the curriculum.

For the higher education institution, climate change should be introduced as another branch of environmental science to give impetus to achieving a safe, secured, and sustainable environment.

Therefore, education must be transformed to support the fight against climate change.

Education leaders should invest in capacitating school workers to prepare the students for the world of work in a green economy for greener life and the future.

It is so critical for educators to educate and train students especially on honing their skills and attitudes which are necessary to sustain the world for future generations that is sustainable and life that is resilient.

Supporting quality journalism is also critical to providing adequate information to people on the climate emergency and to the fight against misinformation around climate change denial.



Duterte hopes new Taal evacuation centers will be 'template' for next admin

By RICHA NORIEGA, GMA News

President Rodrigo Duterte on Tuesday said that he hopes the next administration will continue to build evacuation centers like the new ones built for residents near Taal Volcano.

In his Talk to the People briefing on Tuesday, Duterte said he visited the situation in Batangas and provided relief to the affected residents.

"Yung last na binigyan ko ng importansya sa trabaho ko ay 'yung sitwasyon sa Taal Volcano. Pagdating ko doon, wala man pero maraming evacuees. Itong sa Taal, we continue with the monitoring hanggang sa mabalik sa normal," he said.

Duterte said he had ordered Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) Secretary Eduardo Del Rosario to create a housing structure to serve as an evacuation center for the affected residents.

He recounted his visit on Monday to the Mataasnakahoy Evacuation Center, one of [three evacuation centers built outside the volcano's danger zone that were inaugurated this week](#).

"...[I]sang model na evacuation center ginawa niya merong gym, may ano kwarto-kwarto, may conjugal rooms," Duterte said.

"Lahat ang nasunod, yung ano ko I think it has about 10 comfort rooms for women and another 10 for men. 'Yun ang gusto ko na ginawa nila nasunod nila yung paningin kong anong tama, may mga kitchen and everything I would like the housing the remaining months to replicate the—at saka yun na ang parang template for the next administration. Hopefully they would build just like the structure I inaugurate in Batangas," he added.

The centers can could accommodate 150 families with four or five members each, and could be fitted with modular tents for the evacuees' privacy.

They also offer amenities including separate male and female comfort rooms, shower rooms, a prayer room, a kitchen, a mess hall, a clinic, and a storage room for supplies.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) [reported 17 volcanic earthquakes at Taal Volcano on Sunday](#).

PHIVOLCS said Alert Level 3 remains hoisted over Taal Volcano.

It warned lakeshore communities around the volcano to be vigilant, take the necessary precautions against possible airborne ash and vog, and prepare for evacuation if unrest intensifies.

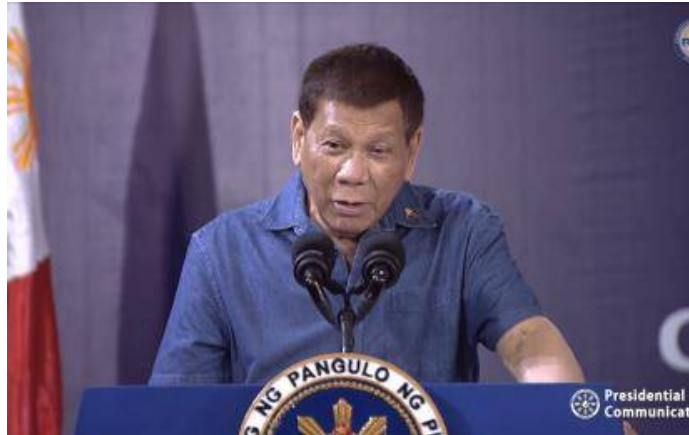
It also advised against flying over Taal Volcano as doing so may be hazardous to aircraft.

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/827508/duterte-hopes-new-taal-evacuation-centers-will-be-template-for-next-admin/story/?fbclid=IwAR3IVHC-iXjuy93G6Q9CYMUUoRTUiwsMgmiATLvIAD4touMmSpaIII8v1nI>



No PH-China tiff, sea row can be talked over: PRRD

By Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos



NO PH-CHINA QUARREL. President Rodrigo Duterte says there is no squabble between the Philippines and China during the inauguration of the Binondo-Intramuros Bridge in Manila on Tuesday (April 5, 2022). Duterte expresses confidence that the ongoing maritime disputes between the two nations can be talked over. *(Screengrab from Radio Television Malacañang)*

MANILA – Despite the Philippines’ long-standing sea disputes with China, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte on Tuesday reaffirmed the two nations’ good relations, stressing that the unresolved maritime claims could be settled through diplomatic negotiations.

Duterte made the remarks, as he thanked the Chinese government for being a “partner” of the Philippines in its ambitious “Build, Build, Build” infrastructure program.

Acknowledging China’s support for his infrastructure program, Duterte said Manila has no rift with Beijing.

“I also thank and with gratitude the People’s Republic of China for the confidence and for being a partner in enhancing key infrastructure projects in our country,” Duterte said during the inauguration of Binondo-Intramuros Bridge in Intramuros, the City of Manila which was also attended by Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines Huang Xilian.

Addressing the Chinese envoy, Duterte added: “Ambassador Huang, the Philippines and China, we don’t have any quarrel.”

Duterte also said the Philippines and China can also discuss their territorial disputes and the Filipinos’ fishing rights within the contested waters.

“We can talk about the Spratly Islands and probably the fishing rights of my countrymen, plain talk, nothing else. In doing so, our people are given the chance to experience economic growth and enhance productivity,” he said.

Duterte’s statement came amid China’s expansive maritime claims in the hotly contested South China Sea and reported incursions into the Philippine waters.

On March 14, the Department of Foreign Affairs summoned Huang after a People’s Liberation Army - Navy vessel was caught in “illegal incursions” into the Sulu Sea in January and February this year.

Duterte is scheduled to hold a virtual meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping on April 8.



Xi sought a dialogue with Duterte in light of a possible spillover of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine to Asia, including the Philippines and China.

Malacañang, however, was not privy to the issues that Duterte might discuss with Xi. **(PNA)**



China to Philippines: Remove 'disturbances' in relations

[Pia Lee-Brago](#)



This March 22, 2021 aerial photo shows Chinese vessels still present in the Julian Felipe Reef in the West Philippine Sea, well within the Philippine exclusive economic zone and continental shelf.

MANILA, Philippines — China yesterday urged the Philippines to place maritime issues in context and “remove disturbances” in the relations between the two countries amid dangerous Chinese activities in the West Philippine Sea.

The Chinese embassy in Manila said Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. held talks in Tunxi, Eastern Anhui province on Sunday.

“The two sides exchanged views on the South China Sea issue and held that maritime issues should be placed in an appropriate position in bilateral relations,” the embassy said in a statement.

Wang said China always considers the Philippines a priority in its neighborhood diplomacy, and such good-neighborly and friendly policy has continued to foster stability.

“The two sides should remove disturbances, calmly and properly manage differences and not let them affect the overall situation of China-Philippines relations,” Wang said.

He promised that China is ready to speed up construction of key infrastructure projects with the Philippines and continue to provide COVID-19 vaccine assistance and enhance public health cooperation according to the need of the Philippines.

Quoting Locsin, the embassy said the Philippines’ top diplomat gave assurance that “Philippines-China relations have become increasingly mature and bilateral practical cooperation has achieved historic results, bringing lasting benefits to both sides.”

“As a responsible major country, China is committed to independence and peaceful development, setting a new example in a turbulent world, Locsin said, adding that China has long promoted the development of other countries in the region through its own development and played an irreplaceable role in global economic growth,” the embassy said.

Wang met with three foreign ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and exchanged views on China-ASEAN friendly relationship, regional and international topics including the Ukraine issue.



Chinese experts said the foreign ministers' visit to China is a continuation of longstanding China-ASEAN relations and the tradition of negotiation and coordination over flashpoint issues, such as the neutrality stance over the Ukraine crisis.

A maritime law expert last week said the Chinese Coast Guard's activities in the West Philippine Sea, particularly in Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal, are "contrary to international law."

Lawyer Jay Batongbacal, director of the UP Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, cited the "close distance maneuvering" of the Chinese Coast Guard ships in the face of Philippine Coast Guard vessels patrolling Panatag Shoal or Bajo de Masinloc as an activity outlawed by The Hague ruling on the South China Sea in 2016.

He blamed the government for China's incursion in Philippine waters and the CCG's dangerous maneuvering, saying it allowed Beijing to operate in the disputed areas for almost six years under the Duterte presidency.



More maritime patrols in PH-Malaysia-Indonesia border eyed

By Priam Nepomuceno



Department of National Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana (right), Indonesian Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto (left) and Malaysian Defense Minister Hishammudin Hussein (center) (Photo courtesy of Secretary Delfin Lorenzana Facebook page)

MANILA – Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Delfin Lorenzana on Tuesday said plans are now afoot to increase maritime patrols in the tri-border areas of Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

Lorenzana made this statement when asked for details of his meeting with other members of the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement (TCA) last March 28.

Speaking on the sidelines of the rites for this year's Philippine Veterans Week at the Libingan ng mga Bayani, Lorenzana said they are looking to deploy more fast ships and reconnaissance aircraft to patrol the tri-boundary areas as the strategy is working against terrorist and criminal groups operating in the area.

"It has been more than two years already at there is not much kidnapping and it is very good, (this means) our tactic or strategy is working, so *ngayon ang gusto, paiging pa namin yan* (so what we want is to intensify further)," the DND chief said during the sidelines of the rites for this year's Philippine Veterans Week at the Libingan ng Mga Bayani.

Lorenzana said that they are looking at the possibility of 24-hour patrols to ensure that the terrorist groups or religious extremists operating in the tri-boundary area of Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines will not be able to move or carry out their attacks.

Lorenzana, Malaysian Defense Minister Hishammuddin Hussein and Indonesian Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto held a ministerial meeting on the TCA in Kuala Lumpur.

"To further strengthen the security of Sulu and Sulawesi Seas, we agreed to develop the TCA beyond the current security landscape through multiagency combination and enhance intelligence in surveillance operations," he said in a previous Facebook post.

Lorenzana said all parties have agreed to institutionalize TCA yearly, increase monitoring of seas, and explore the possibility of joint training on land.

"Since the signing of the TCA in 2017, the conduct of joint patrols and sharing of intelligence resulted in zero incidences of kidnapping for ransom which used to be very rampant in the Sulu and Sulawesi Seas," he added. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1171469>



Philippines may have nuclear projects in 3 years, if next gov't prioritizes it — DOE

[Angelica Y. Yang](#)



This December 19, 2011 photo from Wikimedia Commons shows Bataan Nuclear Power Plant.

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines might be able to deploy nuclear projects in three years' time if the next administration prioritizes the inclusion of nuclear in the power mix, among others, according to two officials from the Department of Energy (DOE).

This comes around a month after the Palace announced that President Rodrigo Duterte inked Executive Order (EO) 164 which [commits the Philippines to developing a nuclear power program](#).

It is [too late for the current administration to accomplish something](#) that will turn Duterte's nuclear ambitions into reality since he only has one month left before he steps down. It is up to Duterte's successor to adopt nuclear or reverse the policy.

"If the next administration would want to go into this, the fastest that we can deploy nuclear is about three years' time," Patrick Aquino, Director of the DOE's Energy Utilization Management Bureau, said during a virtual event on Tuesday.

"We need to pass the enabling legislation and most importantly, public acceptance is being sought at a national level and at a local level for the site-specific location of the nuclear power plant," he said.

In an online exchange on Tuesday, DOE Undersecretary Gerardo Erguiza, told **Philstar.com** that the three-year period which Aquino mentioned is 'doable, but tight.'

He explained that the country can reach the timeline if:

- the next administration will pursue a nuclear energy program and implement the inclusion of nuclear in the energy mix;
- the government opts for small modular reactors instead of the conventional plants which take seven or more years to install
- Congress passes the legal and regulatory framework required in building a nuclear power program.
- The nuclear projects get the acceptance of public and stakeholders.



"The Philippine Energy Plan, our long term program on energy, envisions nuclear energy to come in in 2030, may come in as early as 2027, as projected 2 to 3 years ago," he said.

Last month, Erguiza addressed the media's questions about the EO 164 which recognizes nuclear as a viable alternative which will address the projected decline of coal-fired power plants in the country, and help lessen carbon emissions.

The EO orders the Nuclear Energy Program Inter-Agency Committee to conduct more studies on the possible use of the mothballed \$2.3-billion Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, which was completed in 1984 but never fueled.

The policy also mandates the task force to look at establishing other facilities which generate power from nuclear.

Environment group Greenpeace Philippines has long criticized the government's nuclear plans, believing that the energy source will only "burden Filipino consumers economically and expose the country to health hazards, contamination and disaster risks."

Meanwhile, Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi has been vocal for his support for nuclear, claiming that it is "really safe" and that it will help the Philippines achieve energy security.

In an earlier interview with **Philstar.com**, Manila-based climate and energy policy group Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities Executive Director Red Constantino said the government's nuclear push is not consistent with its goals of modernizing the power sector-which must instead rely on flexible and distribution generation, with the help of renewable energy projects.

06 APRIL 2022, WEDNESDAY



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DENR employees get huge boost

TACLOBAN CITY — Almost eight years since typhoon "Yolanda" hit Eastern Visayas region, employees of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) regional office finally received the financial aid that was intended to rebuild their damaged houses.

A total of 164 employees whose houses were totally damaged during the typhoon received P100,000 each, while 594 others whose houses were partially damaged were given

P30,000 each of financial aid from the Office of the President.

"Finally, I have in my hands this longed-for financial aid. I will use this money to pay for my loans during the reconstruction of our house that was totally damaged by 'Yolanda,'" said Thelma Calibo, an engineering aide of the agency.

DENR acting Secretary Jim Sampulna handed over the check amounting to P34.2 million to former regional director Tirso Parian Jr. last

21 March for the financial aid, adding that the assistance is a testimony of how DENR values its commitment to push for the welfare and benefits of its workforce.

DENR-8's assistant regional director for Management Services Arturo Salazar led the distribution of financial assistance. Among the beneficiaries include those who are no longer attached to the agency but were employees during the typhoon and the deceased, through their family.

ELMER RECUERDO



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Biak-na-Bato national park conservation eyed

BY JONAS REYES

SAN MIGUEL, Bulacan — In an effort to conserve the cultural heritage of Biak-Na-Bato National Park (BNBNP) here, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Bulacan State University (BULSU) are set to conduct research and rehabilitation of the park.

DENR regional executive director Paquito Moreno Jr. disclosed that the two institutions signed a memorandum of agreement that will preserve both the historical and environmental value of the BNBNP.

He said that the two aim to conduct archaeological excavations, research and rehabilitate components that convert the national park's pavilion into an exhibit area.

"By staging the heritage and ecotourism value of this more than 2,000-hectare protected area, we are establishing a channel to educate the public on the critical role it plays to our

biodiversity and wildlife, thus, encouraging them to help us in our protection and conservation efforts," Moreno said.

The exhibit is part of the Sustainable Heritage Imbibing Nationalism through Education Bulacan Project that aims to increase awareness and nationalism by promoting sustainable heritage through educational tourism and community engagement.

Moreno said that any material culture retrieved from archaeological excavations and researches in Bulacan, particularly in the BNBNP, will be displayed in the exhibit, which is part of BULSU's three-year research program, "Bulacan Landscape Reconstruction: Identifying Anthropogenic and Natural Indicators in Changing Environment."

Moreno said that during an archaeological excavation in 2020, a team of archeologists led by Dr. Armand Salvador Mijares recovered archaeological materials like earthenware

pots, modified bones, and even faunal remains inside BNBNP's Tanggapan Cave.

"Such discoveries have added a new dimension to the ecological and archaeological relevance of the national park with evidence of Neolithic and Late Paleolithic periods present within the cave," Moreno said.

Meantime, BULSU president Cecilia Gascon expressed her gratitude towards the ratification of the agreement, noting that this would further collaborative efforts to safeguard Bulacan's cultural heritage and rich natural resources.

Under the deal, the Protected Area Management Board of the BNBNP will be responsible for the protection and maintenance of the exhibit, as well as the provision of technical support to the BULSU's research program.



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The Manila Times



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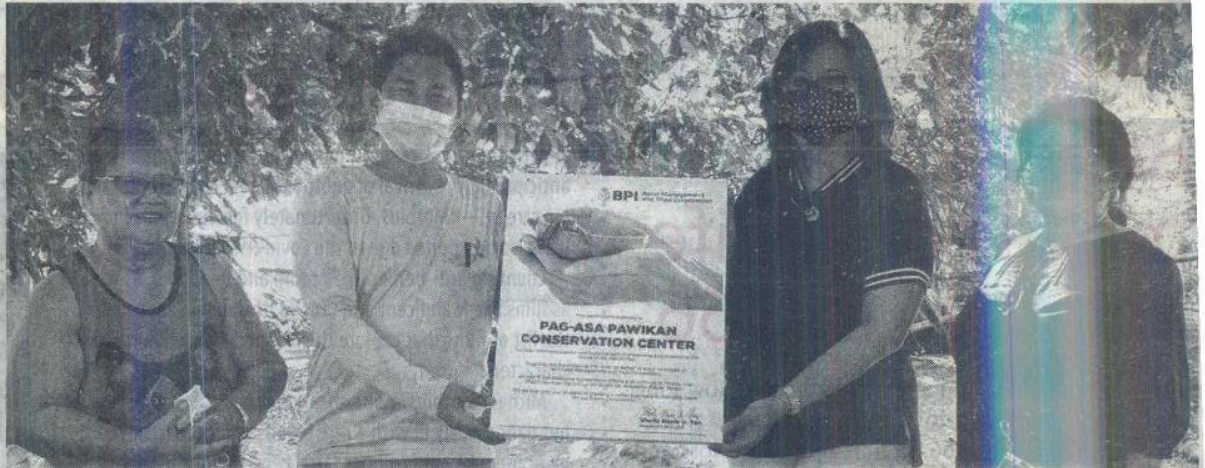
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Pag-asa Pawikan Conservation and Protection Center receives support from BPI

BANK of the Philippine Islands (BPI) adopted 280 pawikan (sea turtle) nests in Bataan on March 27, 2022 to support the Pag-Asa Pawikan Conservation and Protection Center and commemorate the launch of the BPI Invest Sustainable Fund Suite by BPI's wealth management arm, BPI Asset and Management Trust Corp.



■ From left are Edna Fajardo, head and volunteer of Pag-asa Pawikan Conservation and Protection Center; John Harry Carreon, village captain of Barangay Pag-asa; Sheila Tan, president and chief executive officer of BPI Asset and Management Trust Corp. (AMTC); and Yvette Mari de Peralta, head of Client Segment Division at BPI AMTC. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



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Regional Updates



Nesting season

AUTHORITIES called on communities and visitors along the Sarangani Bay protected seascape to be conscious about not disturbing marine sea turtles as they come onshore for the nesting season, which peaks between March to May.

DENR-REGION 12



Laguna de Bay

Last week, an official of PAGASA was reported to have warned that the water level at Angat Dam may further drop to anywhere from 173 to 175 meters by May if the hot weather persists. At this low level, the official warned, water rationing could be expected and water supply for irrigation would be halted to prioritize the need for potable water.

The weather bureau and the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) have started cloud seeding operations over the Angat watershed in Bulacan to induce rain. It is

DEMAND AND SUPPLY

hoped that cloud seeding will help increase the dam's water level and alleviate a looming water shortage.

PAGASA said the Angat watershed may return to normal by July when the probability of rainfall is higher because of the wet season. Until then, 20 million people depending on it will have to suffer, as they always do at this time of the year.



BOO CHANCO

It was totally irresponsible for a series of administrations to have done nothing about Mega Manila's almost total dependence on Angat

Dam for water supply. What we have now are measures undertaken by Manila Water and Maynilad that merely alleviates the problem by tapping the dirty water of Laguna de Bay.

Strictly speaking, Laguna de Bay cannot be a source of water for purification, experts say, since its average depth is 2.5 meters, below the global standard of a minimum of 2.8 meters depth for harvesting water for purification. Manila Water and Maynilad are tapping it anyway, but the process of cleaning up the water is rather expensive.

Before the pandemic, the matter of tapping Laguna de Bay had been raised because the same dreadful situation happens every year. The Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) even took the initiative of drafting an executive order to get the ball rolling in the development of Laguna de Bay as our water source to augment Angat Dam.

Indeed, before we can really tap the water of our country's largest lake, we need to protect and enhance the potability of Laguna de Bay's waters. For this purpose, we need to deal with the sources of pollution, whether organic or inorganic from households, farms, fisheries, and industries.

Before we can start to clean up the lake's waters, we have to prevent residents and industrial concerns along the lakeshore from adding new pollutants. All we have done through the decades towards this goal is to set up an agency, the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), which turned out to have been totally useless.

The draft EO prepared by the MAP sought to declare that the primary use of the lake's water is to provide potable water for Mega Manila. Other purposes may be allowed, but not to the extent of jeopardizing the primary use.

The draft EO sought to build public awareness by publishing daily water quality readings taken in strategic locations of the lake. This requires a massive information campaign among those in the lake watershed to enlist their help in protecting the lake and its waters. The lakeshore communities must be made to realize why all these are for their benefit too.



The MAP also called for a massive reforestation program for the Laguna Lake watershed, implementation of zoning regulations around the lake area, as well as the strict implementation of all environmental laws to address water quality concerns.

The draft EO was sent to the Office of the President. But nothing was heard about it after it was submitted. Hopefully, they can resurrect it from some bureaucrat's drawer so Duterte can sign it and claim it as another achievement before he bows out on June 30.

The draft EO really said nothing new, but was required as a basis for action. It calls for the concerned national agencies to strictly enforce existing laws, specially provisions in the law creating the LLDA. The draft EO also declares Laguna Lake as a dependable proximately-located water source for Metro Manila.

MAP's proposal for a "Save Laguna Lake Movement" has been overtaken by the pandemic. However, as we get back to normal, we should revive efforts to improve the Laguna Lake water quality so we can have another major water source for Metro Manila.

In hindsight, maybe PNoy erred in stopping the project to dredge the lake. The Arroyo administration signed a deal with a Belgian company for the project to make the lake available as a potable water source, among other objectives.

Sayang, because PNoy eventually lost the case, when the Belgian company brought it up for international arbitration. The International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) ordered the Philippine government to pay P800 million to Baggerwerken Decloedt En Zoon (BDC) for scrapping the P18.7-billion Laguna Lake Rehabilitation Project (LLRP) in 2011.

ICSID issued the award on Jan. 23, 2017, six years after PNoy junked the deal that was twice declared by then-Justice Secretary Leila M. de Lima as "legal and binding".

The BDC project was originally crafted to dredge the 94,900-hectare Laguna de Bay and deepen its average depth of 2.5 meters, and called for the creation of navigational channels in the waterway, which has Class C water quality deemed inappropriate for human consumption.

The Belgian company, BDC, had designed the project under the official development assistance (ODA) scheme of Brussels and was supported by then-Belgian King Albert. Unfortunately, PNoy rejected the plea of the Belgian king to salvage the project. PNoy said the project would only transfer the silt from one part of the lake to another.

BDC also secured 37.4 percent of the funding from a Belgian export agency to enable it to be covered by ODA and also secured additional financing from BNP Paribas.

Our toxic local politics scuttled a project for which no alternative was undertaken, leaving us still in need to do something major to assure water supply for Mega Manila. The Kaliwa dam project is also a no-starter due to problems with indigenous tribes in the area.

Oh well... No water during our dry spells should be a primary concern of the next administration. This administration failed to do anything in that area too.

Boo Chanco's email address is bchanco@gmail.com. Follow him on Twitter @boochanco



ni: Imee R. Marcos

MGA DAM, KAILANGAN NANG I-REHAB

SOBRANG init! 'Yan ang daing ng marami nating mga kababayan lalo na't summer time na talaga ngayon. At siguradong sa sobrang init ng panahon, mas mabilis na bababa ang lebel ng tubig sa mga dam at 'di malayong magdulot ito ng tag-tuyot sa mga palayan at mga taniman!

At sa usaping dam, kung sa ngayon eh 191 meters ang level ng tubig sa Angat dam, abah eh bago pa magsimula ang susunod na administrasyon ay siguradong aabot sa critical level na 180 metro kung walang ulan.

Eh ang Angat dam pa naman ang pinagkukunan ng supply ng tubig ng nasa 12 milyong mga taga-Metro Manila at irigasyon sa mga magsasaka sa Pampanga at Bulacan. Paano na lang yan?!

Mukhang kinakailangan na nating magsagawa ng 'rain dance' tulad ng mga ginagawa ng ating mga katutubo, hmmm. Nakakapag-alala kasi nga eh talagang

dapat sana eh may mga pag-ulan dahil sa pagtaya ng PAGASA na may mahabang La Niña, di bah?

Kaya ngayon eh nagkukumahog ang ating mga awtoridad sa cloud seeding at nakakasa na rin ang mga pagrasyon ng tubig at posibleng hindi na lang sa gabi pagrasyon ng tubig kundi aabot pa ito sa araw! Hay apo, mahabaging Diyos!

'Yang cloud seeding at pagrasyon ng tubig, pansamantalang pansalo ang mga 'yan. IMEESolusyon natin sa nagbabadyang mga tag-tuyot eh 'yung ating susunod na administrasyon na kahit nahaharap sa kakapusan ng badyet, kinakailangang palakasin ang pamumuhunan sa mga maliliit na 'water impounding system' na mag-iimbak ng mga tubig-ulan sa panahon ng tag-ulan.

Ang mga ito ay mga dam na hindi lalampas sa 30 metro ang taas at may kakayanang mag-imbak ng nasa 50 milyong metro-kubikong tubig. Eh kahit ang mga nagsasaka sa mataas na lugar ay makikinabang dito.

Take note, ayon sa PAGASA, mas mababa lang sa 10% ang naiimbak nating tubig-ulan dahil karamihan sa mga ito eh dumadaloy papuntang karagatan. Kaya need din natin talagang magkaroon ng pasilidad para sa 'rainwater harvesting.'

Reminder hindi lang pang-irigasyon sa mga palayan, mga palaisdaan o sanitasyon ng kalunsuran

mga taong nasa likod nito.

Kapag panahon ng eleksyon, hindi nawawala ang usaping vote buying, dayaan at maging ang pagkalat ng mga maling impormasyon. Bagay na nagiging dahilan kaya't nawawalan ng tiwala ang taumbayan sa kredibilidad ng halalan.

o mga paglilinis ng mga kotse at iba pa magagamit ang mga naimbak na tubig sa 'rain harvesting facilities' kundi makababawas din 'yan sa pagbaha sa panahon naman ng tag-ulan, di bah?!

IMEESolusyon din natin na maawa naman tayo sa ating mga lumang dam na tulad ng Angat, Pantabangan, at Magat, plis isailalim din natin ang mga 'yan sa rehabilitasyon para mapakinabangan pa nang husto ng mga susunod na henerasyon.

Abah eh ni kahit isang rehab 'di nakatikim ang mga nasabing dam gayong noon pang 1967 hanggang 1983 pa yan binuksan. Susmaryosep! Masyado tayong naging kampante.

IMEESolusyon natin sa krisis sa tubig, matuto rin tayong magtipid o iwasang mag-Asyong Aksaya! Di bah! I-recycle natin ang mga tubig. 'Yung mga pambanlaw na tubig sa paglalaba, puwede rin nating gamitin na pang-mop ng sahig o ipandilig o ibuhos sa banyo! Para-paraan lang 'yan! Agree?!



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LUMALALANG KALAGAYAN NG "GROUND WATER" SA PILIPINAS

NOONG March 22, 2022, ang Pilipinas ay nakliisa sa paggunita ng "World Water Day" na ang tema ngayong taon ay "Groundwater: Making the invisible visible" o pagbibigay pansin sa lumalalang pang-aabuso sa pangangailangan sa malinis na tubig.

Kung hindi mabibigyang pansin ang masamang kalagayan ng mga "ground water" sa maraming panig ng mundo, naniniwala ang United Nations Development Program na ito ang magiging mitsa ng isang matinding dig-

maan – pag-aaway dahil sa pangangailangan sa malinis na tubig inumin.

Hindi dahil archipelagic country ang Pilipinas ay ligtas na tayo sa matinding pagka-uhaw. Dulot na rin ng polusyon at kapabayaang, manipis na ang reserbang tubig malinis sa ilalim ng ating kalupaan.

Ngayong araw na ito, bigyang halaga ang tubig. Madali nating itapon sa gayon, pero lubhang mahalaga sa hinaharap.

Nagwagi bilang Miss Eco International 2022 si Kathleen Paton nito lamang March 17 sa Cairo, Egypt.

Dinaig niya ang 40 iba



pang mga kalahok dahil sa kanyang kagandahan at katalinuhan.

Itinanghal na mga runner-up sina Misses Belgium, first runner-up; USA, second runner-up; Spain, third runner-up; at Malaysia, fourth runner-up.

Tinalakay ng Pinay beauty queen ang usapin ng water pollution kung saan ay matinding pagkauhaw ang nararanasan ng mga mataas na lugar lalo na ngayong damang-dama na ang epekto ng climate change and global warming.

Napapanahon ang mensahe ni Kathleen na pangalagaan natin ang bawat pinag-

mumulan ng malinis na tubig katulad ng mga ground waters, ilog, sapa at mga dams.

Akma sa katatapos pa lamang na paggunita nitong Martes bilang "World Water Day".

Ito na ang ikalawang Miss Eco International crown na naiwi ng bansa, una noong 2018, si Thalia Thomalla at naging first runner-up naman sina Maureen Montagne at Kelley Day noong 2019 at 2021.

Mula sa inyong Agarang Serbisyo Lady at sa ating programa, ang aming pagbati ng "congratulations" kay Kathleen Paton.



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Environment-conscious show tackles role of women as agents of change

PASKO naman, anak, a sustainable eco-theatrical virtual performance, aims to shed light on the role of women beyond the home, is slated to be streamed beginning Saturday, April 9.

Written primarily in Filipino and Kapampangan, the 45-minute production follows Thelma, a former waste picker, her daughters, Leah and Tessa, and their hardships in keeping their family afloat. It unravels the conflict between the matriarchal family and Leah's son during Noche Buena. A nostalgic narrative that hits close to home, *Pasko naman, anak* brings the essence of Christmas in the summertime – togetherness and reconnection despite differences.



Ria-Quintos Ortega as Thelma

An empowering performance, it looks at women not just as mothers, daughters, and sisters, but as advocates of inclusion, sustainability, and eco-waste management.

The budding artists likewise incorporated principles of ecology to create recyclable, biodegradable, restorative, and regenerative performance spaces to capture and draw attention to the concerns surrounding the community and environment.

Pasko naman, anak was written and produced by THEATER, a production house founded by young student-artists from the Theater Arts and Production Design Programs of the De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde. The show was in collaboration with the Benilde Service Learning Unit as well as EcoWaste Coalition, a network that partners with various communities to address crucial environmental issues such as waste and climate change.

Pasko naman, anak will stream until April 12, April 14 to April 16 every 6:00 p.m. It will also be streaming on April 13 at 2:00 p.m.

Tickets are available for P150. For reservations, visit <https://ticket2me.net>.



Bong Go: Proactive approach vs kalamidad, panahon na

BINIGYANG-DIIN ni Senator Christopher "Bong" Go ang napapanahon o pangangailangang magsagawa ng mas maagap na diskarte sa pagharap sa mga natural na kalamidad sa bansa.

Ginawa ni Go ang pahayag matapos niyang samahan si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa pag-inspeksyon sa evacuation center sa Mataasnakahoy, Batangas noong Lunes, Abril 4.

Ang evacuation center sa Mataasnakahoy ay isa sa tatlong evacuation center na estratehikong matatagpuan sa tatlong munisipalidad sa loob ng lalawigan ng Batangas, pero sa labas ng danger zone ng Taal Volcano.

Ang dalawa pa ay matatagpuan sa mga bayan ng Sta. Teresita at Alitagtag. Ang lahat ng center ay itinurn-over sa kanilang mga munisipal na pamahalaan ng Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development noong Marso 30.

Dumalo rin sa inspeksyon sina Mataasnakahoy Mayor Janet Ilagan at DHSUD Secretary Eduardo del Rosario, gayundin ang iba pang opisyal at kawani ng DHSUD at ng munisipal na pamahalaan ng Mataasnakahoy.

Itinayo ang evacuation center, ayon sa specifications and requirements na inaprubahan ng Pangulo. Kasama sa mga pasilidad ang administrative office,

clinic, kusina at mess hall, magkahiwalay na female at male comfort room, prayer room, conjugal room, children's section at storage room, bukod sa iba pa.

Itinatag ang mga ito bilang bahagi ng patuloy na pagsisikap ng pamahalaan na mapabuti ang kahanandaan ng bansa sa mga natural na kalamidad at ibang kalamidad.

Si Go, na madalas maglibot sa bansa para tumulong sa mga biktima ng natural at gawa ng tao na mga sakuna, ay nagpahayag ng kalungkutan na ang mga biktima ay karaniwang pansamantalang naninirahan sa mga barangay center, paaralan, plaza, gymnasium, o basketball court

na hindi angkop bilang pansamantalang tirahan.

"Kailangang magpatayo tayo ng mga safe, permanent and dedicated evacuation centers na merong sapat na mga emergency packs, katulad ng blankets, tubig, gamot, flashlight at ready na relief goods," ani Go.

"Obligasyon ng gobyerno na palaging magiging handa na tumulong sa oras ng sakuna," idiniin niya.

Kaya naman muling umapela si Go para sa pagpapasa ng isang batas para sa mandatoryong paglikha ng ligtas at maayos na mga gamit, evacuation center sa bawat munisipalidad, lungsod at lalawigan sa buong Pilipinas.

Binigyang-diin niya ang



kagyat na pangangailangang kumilos sa disaster resilience measures gaya ng isang Senate Bill No. 1228 o ang "Mandatory Evacuation Center Act" na kanyang inihain noong 2019 upang matiyak na ang mga biktima ng mga sakuna ay magkakaroon ng mga pansamantalang tirahan na maggagarantiya sa kanilang kaligtasan.

"When disaster strikes, the Filipinos, especially 'yung mga underprivi-

leged, suffer. In most instances, this disaster renders their homes unlivable, leaving the victims without roofs. Ibig sabihin nasisira ang mga bahay, marami pong apektado," ani Go.

"Minsan po, 'di nagagamit ang mga paaralan kapag ginagamit ang mga eskwelahan (bilang evacuation centers)... Kaya panahon na po magkaroon tayo ng evacuation center sa bawat bayan," giit niya.

Kasalukuyang nakabinbin ang SBN 1228 sa Senate Committee on National Defense and Security, Peace, Unification and Reconciliation, kasama ang SBN 205, na inihain din ni Go noong 2019 para sa paglikha ng Department of Disaster Resilience.



Dahil sa kahinaan ng bansa sa mga natural na sakuna, sinabi ni Go na mas kritikal ang pagpapasa ng mga panukalang batas sa lalong madaling panahon, dahil dapat maging maagap ang gobyerno sa pagtugon sa mga ganitong kalamidad.

"Talagang napapanahon na. Yun po ang aking isinusulong na dapat mapasa na po ito. At huwag na natin hintayin ang panibagong sakuna," ayon sa senador.



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Revenge travel can be 'green'

A few days ago, a friend sent me a video of a crowd at the airport. Almost all the counters were filled up with lines snaking up to the entrance. Though there was some physical distancing implemented, the airport hasn't seen such a crowd in a long time. Included in his video were the words: "Revenge travel is real."

After two years of lockdowns, travel restrictions, and delivered food, it's time to travel (even technically, we are still in a pandemic). I was so surprised to see friends who were so cautious during the pandemic suddenly appearing in Singapore, Bangkok, some European city, and New York. There's no one traveling to Hong Kong yet but I'm sure that once Covid cases there go down, the number of Pinoy travelers will rise, filling up this popular tourist destination to the brim.

It's the same situation next week during Lent. I've received multiple inquiries from friends asking for tips and leads on the best beaches, resorts, adventure camps, etc. A lot of them have booked flights to Boracay, Cebu, Bohol, Davao, while others are preparing their vehicles to reach Vigan, Baguio, Baler, Sariaya, or San Pablo. Whether these are short trips or long drives, these

are indeed welcome news as local travel must first be prioritized to help Filipinos in the provinces who earn a living via tourism.

Amid the explosion of this so-called "revenge travel" is the climate impact of such activities. There is a carbon footprint when

'Are we supporting an eco-friendly tourism business?'
'Are we not leaving any waste behind on the destinations we visit?'
'Does this activity disturb the natural ecosystem?'

planes fly or when vehicles move from one location to another. Studies on the tourism sector's contributions to emissions paint a worrisome picture for post-pandemic operations.

In an article contributed by The

Climate Reality Project Philippines, the group acknowledged the huge challenge in making the tourism industry "green" in light of climate change. "The challenges in charting paths for all tourism establishments in the Philippines may seem daunting. However, there are best practices, guidelines, and roadmaps published over the years that can help tourism establishments in the Philippines not just in becoming climate and environmental stewards, but also in delivering better economic benefits and local community development."

One of the roadmaps for a green tourism sector was developed in 2017 by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNEP-Technical University of Denmark (DTU) Partnership, Department of Tourism (DOT), and the Philippine Center for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development, Inc. (PCEPSDI). The roadmap called for a 30 percent reduction of greenhouse gas (GHGs) for all hotels



**EDITORS
DESK**

JOHANNES L. CHUA



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and event venues by 2030.

"This includes a 30-percent reduction of traditional sources of energy, and a 50-percent reduction of food waste for the said establishments."

Solutions related to sustainable food value chains, sustainable events, zero pollution, and sustainable energy measures are proposed, and measures to achieve these solutions are presented on the roadmap. "The targets will be achieved through monitoring and reporting tools, as well as indirect emissions due to electricity, food wastes, food purchases, and specific types of waste. The tool also supports the monitoring of plastic purchases," said the group.

Globally, tourism establishments may refer to a published net-zero roadmap for the tourism sector by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), UNEP, and Accenture in 2021, which calls for establishments to properly set GHG emissions baselines and set emissions targets for 2030 and 2050, in line with the 1.5-degree Celsius scenario outlined by the 2016 Paris Climate Agreement. "The net-zero roadmap also includes measures for monitoring and reporting the progress to reduce emissions, increase awareness and collaboration with other tourism businesses, and pursue climate investments in tourism."

Lastly, the Climate Real-

ity Project Philippines encourages tourism establishments to look into supporting the "Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism," launched on the sidelines of the UN Climate Change Conference last year. "Similar to the net-zero roadmap, the declaration calls for the reduction of carbon emissions in tourism establishments by half in 2030 and the achievement of net zero by the sector before 2050."

The declaration also calls for five pathways for businesses to follow — "Measure, Decarbonize, Regenerate, Collaborate, and Finance" to speed up and spread the word on climate action in tourism.

As revenge travel will not fade soon and may last until next year's summer season, it may be wise and practical to think about the environment when we travel. Ask some of these questions: "Are we staying at a green hotel?" "Are we supporting an eco-friendly tourism business?" "Are we not leaving any waste behind on the destinations we visit?" "Does this activity disturb the natural ecosystem?"

Our country is so unique and rich in history, nature, and beauty. Let it stay that way for future generations. Revenge travel or normal travel, let "green" be our permanent practice when we travel.

(Johannes L. Chua is the editor of the Environment and Sustainability section.)



99% of world population breathing polluted air

A FULL 99 percent of people on Earth breathe air containing too many pollutants, the World Health Organization (WHO) said Monday (Tuesday in Manila), blaming poor air quality for millions of deaths each year.

Fresh data from the United Nations health agency showed that every corner of the globe is dealing with air pollution, although the problem is much worse in poorer countries.

"Almost 100 percent of the global

population is still breathing air that exceeds the standards recommended by the World Health Organization," the agency's environment, climate change and health director Maria Neira told reporters.

"This is a major public health issue."

In its previous report four years ago, WHO had already found that over 90 percent of the global population was affected, but it has since tightened its limits, it said.

"The evidence base for the harm caused

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99% of world population

by air pollution has been growing rapidly and points to significant harm caused by even low levels of many air pollutants," WHO said.

While UN data last year indicated that pandemic lockdowns and travel restrictions caused short-lived improvements in air quality, WHO said air pollution remains a towering problem.

"After surviving a pandemic, it is unacceptable to still have seven million preventable deaths and countless preventable lost years of good health due to air pollution," Neira said.

'Healthier energy systems'

WHO's study provides air quality data from more than 6,000 cities and other settlements across 117 countries — representing around 80 percent of urban settings.

In addition, Neira said WHO used satellite data and mathematical models to determine that air quality is falling short basically everywhere.

The poorest air quality was found in the eastern Mediterranean and Southeast Asia regions, and Africa, she said.

The findings were alarming, the organization said, and highlighted the importance of rapidly curbing fossil fuel use.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus stressed that worries over soaring energy prices, due in part to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, should help propel change.

"Current energy concerns highlight the importance of speeding up the transition to cleaner, healthier energy systems," he said in a statement.

"High fossil fuel prices, energy security,

and the urgency of addressing the twin health challenges of air pollution and climate change, underscore the pressing need to move faster towards a world that is much less dependent on fossil fuels."

Worse in poorer countries

The report provides data on concentrations of dangerous particulate matter with a diameter of between 2.5 and 10 micrometers (PM10), and particles with a diameter of less than 2.5 micrometers (PM2.5).

PM2.5 includes toxins like sulfate and black carbon, which pose the greatest health risks since they can penetrate deep into the lungs or cardiovascular system.

And for the first time, the report also provides ground measurements of annual mean concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO2), a common urban pollutant, which is associated with respiratory diseases, particularly asthma.

The report found problems related to particulate pollution were far worse in poorer countries, but that most cities had trouble with nitrogen dioxide.

While the air in 17 percent of cities in high-income countries fell below WHO's air quality guidelines for PM2.5 or PM10, less than one percent of cities in low and middle-income countries complied with the recommended thresholds, the report said.

Out of the around 4,000 cities across 74 countries that collected NO2 data, measurements meanwhile showed only 23 percent of people breathed annual average concentrations of the gas that met levels in WHO's recently updated guidelines.

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UN warns Earth 'firmly on track toward an unlivable world'

By FRANK JORDANS & SETH BORENSTEIN | *The Associated Press*

BERLIN—Temperatures on Earth will shoot past a key danger point unless greenhouse gas emissions fall faster than countries have committed, the world's top body of climate scientists said Monday, warning of the consequences of inaction but also noting hopeful signs of progress.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change revealed "a litany of broken climate promises" by governments and corporations, accusing them of stoking global warming by clinging to harmful fossil fuels.

"It is a file of shame, cataloguing the empty pledges that put us firmly on track toward an unlivable world," he said.

Governments agreed in the 2015 Paris accord to keep global warming well below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) this century, ideally no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit). Yet temperatures have already increased by over 1.1C (2F) since pre-industrial times, resulting in measurable increases in disasters such as flash floods, extreme heat, more intense hurricanes and longer-burning wildfires, putting human lives in danger and costing governments hundreds of billions of dollars to confront.

"Projected global emissions from (national pledges) place limiting global warming to 1.5C beyond reach and make it harder after 2030 to limit warming to 2C," the panel said.

In other words, the report's co-chair, James Skea of Imperial College London, told The Associated Press: "If we continue acting as we are now, we're not even going to limit warming to 2 degrees, never mind 1.5 degrees."

Ongoing investments in fossil fuel infrastructure and clearing large

swaths of forest for agriculture undermine the massive curbs in emissions needed to meet the Paris goal, the report found. Emissions in 2019 were about 12 percent higher than they were in 2010 and 54 percent higher than in 1990, said Skea.

The rate of growth has slowed from 2.1 percent per year in the early part of this century to 1.3 percent per year between 2010 and 2019, the report's authors said. But they voiced "high confidence" that unless countries step up their efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions, the planet will on average be 2.4C to 3.5C (4.3 to 6.3F) warmer by the end of the century—a level experts say is sure to cause severe impacts for much of the world's population.

"Limiting warming to 1.5C requires global greenhouse gas emissions to peak before 2025 at the latest and be reduced by 43 percent by 2030," he said.

Such cuts would be hard to achieve without drastic, economy-wide measures, the panel acknowledged. It's more likely that the world will pass 1.5C and efforts will then need to be made to bring temperatures back down again, including by removing vast amounts of carbon dioxide—the main greenhouse gas—from the atmosphere.

Many experts say this is unfeasible with current technologies, and even if it could be done it would be far costlier than preventing the emissions in



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the first place.

The report, numbering thousands of pages, doesn't single out individual countries for blame. But the figures show much of the carbon dioxide already in the atmosphere was released by rich countries that were the first to burn coal, oil and gas beginning with the industrial revolution.

The UN panel said 40 percent of emissions since then came from Europe and North America. Just over 12 percent can be attributed to East Asia, which includes China. But China took over the position as world's top emissions polluter from the United States in the mid-2000s.

Many countries and companies have used recent climate meetings to paint rosy pictures of their emissions-cutting efforts, while continuing to invest in fossil fuels and other polluting activities, Guterres charged.

"Some government and business leaders are saying one thing but doing another," he said. "Simply put, they are lying. And the results will be catastrophic." The report isn't without some hope, however.

Its authors highlight myriad ways in which the world can be brought back on track to 2C or even, with great effort, return to 1.5C after that threshold has been passed. This could require measures such as the removal of CO2 from the atmosphere with natural or artificial means, but also potentially risky technologies such as pumping aerosols into the sky to reflect sunlight.

Among the solutions recommended are a rapid shift away from fossil fuels toward renewable energy such as increasingly cheap solar and wind power, the electrification of transport, less meat consumption, more efficient use of resources and massive financial support for poor coun-

tries unable to pay for such measures without help.

The situation is as if humanity has "gone to the doctor in a very unhealthy condition," and the doctor is saying "you need to change, it's a radical change. If you don't you're in trouble," said report co-author Pete Smith, a professor of soils and global change at the University Aberdeen.

"It's not like a diet," Smith said. "It is a fundamental lifestyle change. It's changing what you eat, how much you eat and get on a more active lifestyle."

One move often described as "low-hanging fruit" by scientists is to plug methane leaks from mines, wells and landfills that release the potent but short-lived greenhouse gas into the atmosphere. A pact forged between the United States and China at last year's UN climate conference in Glasgow aims to do just that.

"The big message we've got (is that) human activities got us into this problem and human agency can actually get us out of it again," said Skea, the panel's co-chair.

The panel's reports have become increasingly blunt since the first one was published in 1990, and the latest maybe the last before the planet passes 1.5C of warming, Skea told the AP.

Last August, it said climate change caused by humans was "an established fact" and warned that some effects of global warming are already inevitable. In late February, the panel published a report that outlined how further temperature increases will multiply the risk of floods, storms, drought and heat waves worldwide.

Still, the British government's former chief science adviser David King, who wasn't involved in writing the report, said there are too optimistic assumptions about how much CO2 the world can afford to emit.



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climate change impacts is critical to sustainable development. Some climate solutions can absorb and store carbon and, at the same time, help communities limit the impacts associated with climate change.

Reacting to the latest IPCC mitigation report, Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC) associate for policy advocacy Denise Fontanilla said:

"The latest installment of the IPCC report reinforces the challenge to the next administration to reframe climate resilience as economic resilience. To act on the climate crisis is also to act on food, water, and energy security.

"For too long, governments including ours have equated climate change impacts with mere disaster response strategies or reducing carbon footprints. This new report confirms what our own experts have been calling for. Adaptation must remain the country's climate response anchor, because the pursuit of resilience objectives will establish if not accelerate the country's decarbonization agenda. Addressing the demand for reliable, secure and affordable power, or efficient and safe urban mobility, or coastal risk reduction and food security will do far more for global efforts than diffuse measures to reduce emissions. In fact, the demand

for reliable, secure and affordable power remains largely unmet and realizing this aim offers far more synergies than trade-offs as we pursue economic growth and decarbonization.

"Shifting to renewables, investing in battery and storage, improving mobility, restoring our ecosystems—while all these contribute to decarbonization and the Paris Agreement goals, these same actions will likewise help stabilize food and energy prices, and improve access to energy and mobility while decreasing pollution.

"In the international arena, the country's next leaders must continue to demand developed nations to make deep and immediate cuts in their emissions reductions, if the world is to have a fighting chance to survive and thrive in the face of worsening climate impacts, as detailed in the last IPCC adaptation report. The Global North must also scale up its commitments to deploy finance and technology to the Global South in order to protect and empower women, children, and other vulnerable communities at the frontlines of climate change."

The Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities is a Manila-based climate and energy policy group advancing climate resilience and low carbon development.



The UN's 10,000-page red alert on climate change

By AMÉLIE BOTTOLLIER-DEPOIS

PARIS, France (AFP) — Accelerating global warming is driving a rising tide of impacts that could cause profound human misery and ecological disaster, and there is only one way to avoid catastrophe: drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Spread across 10,000 pages, these are the main takeaways from a trio of UN reports on climate change published in August 2021, February 2022 and on Monday. The three times — each with its own roster of hundreds of authors — focus on physical science, impacts and the need to adapt, and finally how to slash carbon pollution.

This will be the sixth such trilogy since the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) delivered its first report in 1990 and positioned itself as the final word on the science behind global warming.

Here are five key findings from the three reports:

Beyond a doubt

Whatever climate skeptics might say, scientific evidence has removed any lingering doubt that human activity is "unequivocally" responsible for global warming, which has seen the planet heat up an average of 1.1 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

The atmospheric concentration of CO₂ — the main driver of warming, emitted mainly by burning fossil fuels — rose at least 10 times faster between 1900 and 2019 than any time in the last 800,000 years, and is at its highest in two million years.

Bye bye 1.5C?

The 2015 Paris Agreement calls

for capping global warming "well below" 2C, and 1.5C if possible. A crescendo of deadly impacts already being felt and a slew of new science has led most countries to embrace the more ambitious aspirational goal.

But that ship may have sailed.

In every IPCC projection for a liveable future, Earth's average surface temperature increases by 1.5C or 1.6C by around 2030 — a decade earlier than estimates made only a few years ago.

Nearly half the world's population — between 3.3 and 3.6 billion — are 'very vulnerable' to global warming's deadly impacts, which are certain to get worse.

In theory, it will be possible to cap temperature increases to below the 1.5C threshold by the end of the century, but even a temporary "overshoot" could cause irreversible damage to fragile ecosystems at the poles, in the mountains, and in coastal areas.

If countries do not improve on the emissions reduction pledges running to 2030, made under the Paris treaty, even staying under 2C will be a serious challenge. Current national policies would see Earth

warm 3.2C by 2100.

Avalanche of suffering

Once a problem on the distant horizon, the devastating consequences of climate change have become a here-and-now reality. Nearly half the world's population — between 3.3 and 3.6 billion — are "very vulnerable" to global warming's deadly impacts, which are certain to get worse.

Heatwaves so extreme as to literally be unliveable; superstorms made more deadly by a waterlogged atmosphere and rising seas; drought, water shortages, more disease-carrying mosquitoes and ticks...

These and other impacts are set to become worse, and will disproportionately ravage Earth's most vulnerable populations, including indigenous peoples.

Hundreds of millions could eventually be forced from their homes by sea levels — pushed up mainly by melting ice sheets on Greenland and Antarctica — that will continue to rise across the next century no matter how quickly humanity draws down emissions.

Even if global heating is capped at 2C, oceans could gain half-a-meter by 2100 and two meters by 2300, double the IPCC's estimate from 2019.

Only option left

The IPCC insists that it does not provide recommendations, only background information and policy options so decision makers can make the right choices to ensure a "liveable future" for the planet and its inhabitants.

But all roads leading to a 1.5C or even a 2C world "involve rapid and deep and in most cases immediate



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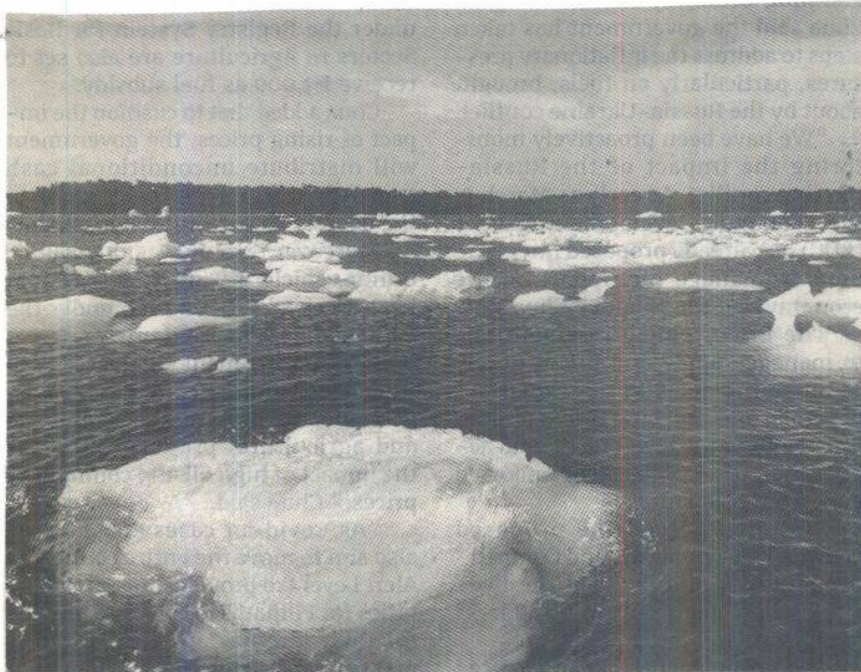
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SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE has removed any lingering doubt that human activity is 'unequivocally' responsible for global warming, says the IPCC. (AFP)

greenhouse gas emissions reductions in all sectors" — including industry, transportation, agriculture, energy and cities. Hitting those temperature goals will require a massive reduction in fossil fuel use, the IPCC says: 90 percent, 25 percent and 40 percent less coal, gas and oil respectively, by 2050, and 90 percent, 40 percent and 80 percent less by 2100.

The use of coal plants that do not deploy carbon capture technology to offset some of their pollution to generate power must decline by 70 to 90 percent within eight years.

Tipping points

The new trio of IPCC reports emphasize as never before the danger of "tipping points," temperature thresholds in the climate system that could, once crossed, result in catastrophic and irreversible change. The good news is that we

seem to have pulled back from emissions scenarios from human sources that could by themselves result in a 4C or 5C world. The bad news is that "low probability/high impact" tipping point scenarios in nature could lead us there all the same.

The disintegration of ice sheets that would lift ocean levels a dozen meters or more; the melting of permafrost containing vast stores of the same greenhouse gasses we are desperately trying to keep out of the atmosphere; the transformation of the Amazon basin from tropical forest to savannah — all could be triggered by additional global warming. Where are those triggers? Scientists are not sure, but they do know that the risk is much higher in a world that has warmed 2C above 19th-century levels than one that has warmed 1.5C.

Above 2.5C, the risk is "very high."



TITLE

PAGE

DATE



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION LAND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY PROFESSIONAL REGULATION COMMISSION PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE

JOINT MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 01 SERIES OF 2021

TO : ALL CONCERNED OFFICIALS AND PERSONNEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES, NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, LAND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY, PROFESSIONAL REGULATION COMMISSION, PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE, LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS, AND ALL OTHERS CONCERNED

SUBJECT : CREATION OF THE "ANTI-ILLEGAL REAL ESTATE PRACTICES INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE" AT THE NATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL LEVELS AND PROVIDING FOR MECHANISMS TO ADDRESS ILLEGAL REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS

Section 1. Background

The Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) continues to receive an alarming number of verified reports concerning real estate-related illegal transactions, specifically on housing, subdivision, and condominium projects, wherein unregistered developers and real estate brokers, agents, and salespersons are found to be selling units or lots to the public without the proper project certificates of registration and licenses to sell.

Against the regulations of the DHSUD, these unregistered, fly-by-night developers, brokers, agents, and salespersons present themselves as professionals as defined by Republic Act No. 9646, also known as the "Real Estate Service Act of the Philippines." As part of their ploy, they:

- 1.1 Show and lay down attractive deals on sham housing, subdivision and condominium projects, farm lots, and memorial park developments;
1.2 Aggressively offer units belonging to existing projects at prices lower than their market values, and then quickly become out of reach by their victims after payment has been received;
1.3 Sell a certain housing, subdivision and condominium project unit, or a farm or memorial park lot to two (2) or more persons without the issuance of the corresponding deeds of conveyance to them;
1.4 Sell a project unit that is either mortgaged in favor of a financial institution or not registered at all; and
1.5 Facilitate the sale or conveyance of a project unit by acting as an intermediary, agent, or broker without being duly authorized by either the developer, project/lot owner, or the buyer.

Consequently, the lifetime savings and hard-earned money of unwary buyers are unjustly taken away from them as they either fail to determine whether the persons they are dealing with are legitimate and/or registered brokers or salespersons or not, and/or fail to require said purported agents to show them copies of the certificates, permits and licenses required of all real estate projects.

These fraudulent acts, punishable under Presidential Decree No. 957 or "Regulating the Sale of Subdivision Lots and Condominiums, Providing Penalties for Violations Thereof", not only undermine the land and housing program of the government but also defeat the objective of enhancing the economic, social, and moral condition of the Filipino people.

With the mandate of DHSUD to protect the rights of buyers of subdivision houses and/or lots, condominium units, and memorial lots and given its regulatory powers under Republic Act No. 11201, it can take concrete steps to effectively curtail the commission of these fraudulent acts, such as engaging the assistance and services of concerned stakeholder-agencies in the drive against these illegal real estate practices.

This Joint Memorandum Circular ("Circular" for brevity) is mutually entered into by the herein agencies to pursue a nationally and locally implemented comprehensive program that sufficiently addresses corrupt real estate practices prevalent in the country.

Section 2. Legal Bases

- 2.1 Section 9, Article XIII of the 1987 Philippine Constitution;
2.2 Executive Order No. 292 or the "Administrative Code of 1987";
2.3 Presidential Decree No. 957 (Regulating the Sale of Subdivision Lots and Condominiums, Providing Penalties for Violations Thereof);
2.4 Republic Act No. 9675 or the "Department of the Interior and Local Government Act of 1990", as amended;
2.5 Republic Act No. 7160 or the "Local Government Code of 1991";
2.6 Republic Act No. 9646, also known as the "Real Estate Service Act of the Philippines"; and
2.7 Republic Act No. 11201, otherwise known as the "Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development Act".

Section 3. Purpose

This Circular aims to put an end to the illicit practices of unscrupulous developers, real estate brokers, agents, and salespersons engaged in the illegal selling of subdivision houses and/or lots, condominium units, and memorial lots. It shall provide the parameters for collaboration among the DHSUD, Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Land Registration Authority (LRA), Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and Philippine National Police (PNP), and other concerned stakeholders in the industry, to protect home and project unit buyers, especially overseas Filipino workers, from becoming victims of real estate-related illegal transactions.

Section 4. Creation of the Anti-Illegal Real Estate Practices Inter-Agency Task Force

An "Anti-Illegal Real Estate Practices Inter-Agency Task Force" (hereinafter referred to as the "Task Force" for brevity) which shall be organized at the national, regional, and local levels by the DHSUD, in collaboration with the DOJ, DENR, NBI, LRA, DILG, PRC and PNP is hereby created upon the effectivity of this Circular.

Section 5. Composition of the Task Forces

The Task Forces at the national, regional, and local levels shall be composed of the following:

5.1 National Task Force

- Chairperson : DHSUD
Co-Chairperson : DILG
Co-Chairperson : DOJ
Members : DENR, NBI, LRA, PNP, PRC

The members of the National Task Force shall be the heads of the Departments or agencies concerned who shall designate their permanent alternates, the ranks of whom must at least be an

Assistant Secretary in the case of a Department, or a third-ranking official in the case of an agency, bureau or commission.

5.2 Regional Task Force

- Chairperson : Regional Director - DHSUD
Co-Chairperson : Regional Director - DILG
Co-Chairperson : Regional State Prosecutor - DOJ
Members : Regional Director - DENR, Regional Director - NBI, Regional Director - PNP, Regional Register of Deeds - LRA, Regional Director - PRC

5.3 Local Task Force

- Chairperson : Assistant Regional Director - DHSUD
Co-Chairperson : Concerned City/Municipal Mayor
Co-Chairperson : DILG City Director / MLGOO
Members : City or Municipal ENRO, Chief of Police, City or Municipal Legal Officer. Such other officials as may be determined by the Local Task Force

The Chairpersons shall have the operational control and supervision of the Task Force, and the overall responsibility of ensuring that the objectives of this Circular are accomplished.

Section 6. Technical Working Groups

Each Task Force shall be supported by their respective Technical Working Groups (TWGs). The composite members of which shall be determined by the Task Force members in each level.

Whenever feasible, the TWG shall include private sector real estate professionals among its members.

Section 7. Secretariat

Each Task Force shall also be assisted by a Secretariat to be composed of employees from DHSUD Central or Regional Offices.

Section 8. Functions of the Task Forces

8.1 The National Task Force shall:

- 8.1.1 Oversee the overall implementation of this Circular and ensure the adoption of illegal real estate practices such as selling of project units without certificates of registration and licenses to sell, and other fraudulent real estate practices covered by Presidential Decree No. 957, Republic Act No. 9646, and other relevant laws, rules and regulations;
8.1.2 Promote public awareness campaigns on homebuyers' protection, as well as against acts of unscrupulous developers of housing, subdivision and condominium projects and other illegal real estate practitioners;
8.1.3 Set up and implement development capacity building action plan for members of both the National, Regional, and Local Task Forces to synchronize programs and align implementation;
8.1.4 Develop programs to provide legal, technical, and other forms of assistance to actual and potential victims of real estate-related illegal transactions under Presidential Decree No. 957 and other related laws;
8.1.5 Review and resolve issues and concerns relative to the implementation of this Circular, including policy recommendations of the Regional Task Forces;
8.1.6 Render technical and other necessary assistance to the local government units (LGUs) and other agencies upon request; and
8.1.7 Perform such other functions consistent with the provisions of this Circular or as may be directed by the President of the Philippines.

8.2 The Regional Task Force shall:

- 8.2.1 Ensure and monitor the implementation of plans, programs, and projects at the regional level;
8.2.2 Coordinate with the LGUs within its jurisdiction to ensure the effective implementation of this Circular;
8.2.3 Submit regular status reports on the progress of the implementation of the provisions of this Circular, as well as its policy recommendations, to the National Task Force;
8.2.4 Develop and install a hotline where the public can raise queries and report complaints on real estate malpractices or illegal activities;
8.2.5 Review and resolve issues and concerns relative to the implementation of this Circular, including policy recommendations of the Local Task Forces;
8.2.6 Conduct information, education, and communication activities to increase the awareness of the public on the modus operandi of real estate scammers and to increase the awareness of the public on the modus operandi of real estate scammers; and
8.2.7 Perform such other functions consistent with the provisions of this Circular or as may be directed/delegated by the National Task Force.

8.3 The Local Task Force shall:

- 8.3.1 Implement the plans, programs, and projects cascaded to it by the National and Regional Task Forces;
8.3.2 Coordinate and monitor the execution of the provisions of this Circular at the LGU level;
8.3.3 Coordinate closely with the Regional Task Force and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the latter to ensure the effective implementation of this Circular;
8.3.4 Submit regular status reports on the progress of the implementation of the provisions of this Circular, as well as its policy recommendations, to the Regional Task Force;
8.3.5 Conduct information, education, and communication activities to increase the awareness of the public on the modus operandi of real estate scammers;
8.3.6 Promptly file and prosecute cases concerning violations of Republic Act No. 9646, Republic Act No. 11201, Presidential Decree No. 957 and other related laws, provide legal assistance to law enforcers, and ensure the availability of public attorneys for the protection of individuals' rights;
8.3.7 Assist the LGUs in the formulation of programs, projects, or activities in relation to addressing and protecting the public from illegal real estate practices; and
8.3.8 Perform such other functions consistent with the provisions of this Circular or as may be directed/delegated by the National or Regional Task Force.

Section 9. Roles of the Member-Agencies

9.1 The DHSUD shall:

- 9.1.1 Be the lead agency and chairperson of the national, regional, and local task forces;
9.1.2 Convene the National, Regional, and Local Task Forces regularly and provide them with necessary secretariat support;
9.1.3 Coordinate with and seek the assistance of concerned government agencies whenever necessary;
9.1.4 Conduct information, education and communication activities, through community dialogues and webinars, to increase the awareness of the public on the modus operandi of real estate scammers;
9.1.5 Take the lead in identifying real estate scammers or persons involved in illegal real estate practices, monitor their illegal activities, and launch operations through the proper law enforcement agency or body, to curtail their activities; and
9.1.6 Perform such other functions as may be deemed necessary.

9.2 The DILG shall:

- 9.2.1 Be the co-chairperson of the National, Regional, and Local Task Forces;
9.2.2 Enjoin each LGU to designate its representative, preferably a Department Head, to sit as member of the Local Task Force;
9.2.3 Enjoin the LGUs to extend all forms of assistance to the National, Regional and Local Task Forces;
9.2.4 Circulate to its regional offices and to LGUs issuances from the National Task Force;
9.2.5 Assist in the conduct of information, education, and communication activities to increase the awareness of the public on the modus operandi of real estate scammers; and
9.2.6 Perform such other functions as may be deemed necessary.

9.3 The DOJ shall:

- 9.3.1 Be the co-chair of the National and Regional Task Forces;
9.3.2 Take the lead in the prosecution of identified real estate scammers or persons involved in illegal real estate practices;

9.3.3 Assist in the conduct of information, education, and communication activities to increase the awareness of the public on the modus operandi of real estate scammers; and

9.3.4 Perform such other functions as may be deemed necessary.

9.4 The NBI shall:

- 9.4.1 Investigate and prosecute identified real estate scammers or persons involved in illegal real estate practices;
9.4.2 Assist in the conduct of information, education, and communication activities to increase the awareness of the public on the modus operandi of real estate scammers; and
9.4.3 Perform such other functions as may be deemed necessary.

9.5 The PNP shall:

- 9.5.1 Receive and act on complaints from victims and conduct case conferences for the purpose of building up cases against suspected real estate scammers or persons involved in illegal real estate practices;
9.5.2 Conduct police operations against real estate scammers or persons involved in illegal real estate practices and effect their arrest where warranted;
9.5.3 Assist the complainants in the filing of criminal charges against alleged real estate scammers;
9.5.4 Actively participate, in coordination with the DHSUD, in the conduct of information, education and communication activities, through community dialogues and webinars, to increase the awareness of the public on the modus operandi of real estate scammers; and
9.5.5 Perform such other functions as may be deemed necessary.

9.6 The LRA shall:

- 9.6.1 Provide the Task Forces access to information from the database of LRA and its Registries of Deeds nationwide for the purpose of verifying and tracing back land titles used by purported real estate scammers in their illegal activities, at no cost to the requesting Task Force;
9.6.2 Actively participate, in coordination with the DHSUD, in the conduct of information, education and communication activities, through community dialogues and webinars, to increase the awareness of the public on the modus operandi of real estate scammers; and
9.6.3 Perform such other functions as may be deemed necessary.

9.7 The PRC shall:

- 9.7.1 Provide the Task Forces, at no cost, quick access to information that will help in their expeditious verification of the PRC registration of persons engaged in the practice of real estate service professions;
9.7.2 Investigate and, where evidence warrants, administratively charge, motu proprio or upon complaint, registered professionals of real estate service and other allied professions found to be engaged in activities violative of the code of conduct of professionals;
9.7.3 Whenever necessary, seek authority or deputization from the DOJ to file and prosecute criminal cases against licensed and unlicensed individuals;
9.7.4 Suspend or revoke, after summary proceedings, the licenses of professionals who are found to be engaged in illegal real estate practices; and
9.7.5 Perform such other functions as may be deemed necessary.

9.8 The DENR shall:

- 9.8.1 Provide the Task Forces information as to the status of the lands used by real estate scammers in their illegal activities;
9.8.2 Assist in the prosecution of individuals or groups selling lands of the public domain which are not classified as steerable and disposable;
9.8.3 Assist in the conduct of information, education, and communication activities to increase the awareness of the public on the modus operandi of real estate scammers; and
9.8.4 Perform such other functions as may be deemed necessary.

Section 10. Information-sharing

Every personal information shared by and among the member-agencies in pursuit of the objectives of this Circular shall be processed and treated with utmost confidentiality and shall in no way violate any of the provisions of Republic Act No. 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

Section 11. Funding

The member-agencies shall charge against their current appropriations such amounts as may be necessary for the implementation of this Circular, subject to the budgetary, accounting, and auditing rules and regulations.

Additional funds and possible sources as may be necessary for the implementation of this Circular and the strategic plan to be adopted pursuant thereto shall be identified and included by the DHSUD in its annual budget.

Section 12. Resolution Clause

The interpretation of ambiguous provisions of this Circular, if there be any, including those cases not covered herein, shall be referred to the National Task Force for its joint resolution, provided that nothing in this Circular shall be construed as precluding the Regional Task Force from issuing the necessary supplementary guidelines to implement its provisions.

Section 13. Separability

If any provision of this Circular is declared unconstitutional or void by any court of competent jurisdiction, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the constitutionality and validity of the remainder of this Circular shall not be affected thereby. To this end, the sections and provisions hereof are declared to be severable.

Section 14. Repealing Clause

All other circulars, rules or regulations issued by the member-agencies inconsistent with this Circular are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 15. Effectivity Clause

This Joint Memorandum Circular shall take effect immediately upon publication in a newspaper of general circulation or the Official Gazette. The Office of the National Administrative Registrar (ONAR) of the UP Law Center shall be provided three (3) certified copies hereof.

SIGNED AND AGREED UPON by the member-agencies this 2nd day of July 2021 in Quezon City, Metro Manila.

EDUARDO D. DEL ROSARIO Secretary, DHSUD Chair, National Task Force

EDUARDO B. RANO Co-Chair, National Task Force

MENARDOL GUEVARRA Co-Chair, National Task Force

ROY A. CIMASU Secretary, DENR Member, National Task Force

RENATO D. BERRIO Administrator, LRA Member, National Task Force

TEOFILO S. PLANDO, JR. Chairman, PRC Member, National Task Force

WIC B. BISTOR Officer-in-Charge, NBI Member, National Task Force

GUILLEMO LORENZO T. ELEAZAR Chair, PNP Member, National Task Force

06 APRIL 2022, WEDNESDAY



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COVID-19 NEWS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



PH Covid-19 cases average remain low at 366 per day

By Ma. Teresa Montemayor [April 5, 2022, 4:06 pm](#)



(File photo)

MANILA – The number of new coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) cases remain low nationwide, averaging 366 only per day in the past week, a health official said Tuesday.

Latest data from the Department of Health (DOH) showed that the country logged 2,568 new infections for the week of March 29 to April 4.

“Patunay ito na mababa na talaga ang ating case rates, nasa 1.8 percent na lamang po ang ating positivity rate mas mababa kumpara sa 2.1 percent noong nakaraang linggo (This is proof that case rates are truly low with 1.8 percent positivity rate which is lower than last week’s 2.1 percent),” Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said during an online media forum.

With the government’s continued effort, more than 66.2 million individuals are fully vaccinated against Covid-19 while 71.4 million have received their first dose of the life-saving jabs.

The number of individuals with comorbidities who are now fully vaccinated have reached 8.9 million or 93.2 percent of the target population while about 66 million or 75.9 percent of the elderly population have completed their primary series.

Meantime, there are more than one million children aged 5 to 11 and nine million adolescents who are fully inoculated.

As for the booster shots, about 12.2 million out of the 46.8 million eligible citizens have received them.

In her presentation, Vergeire said countries with higher rates of booster and vaccination have seen fewer deaths in recent surges of Covid-19 cases.

She cited that both Hong Kong and New Zealand saw a recent surge in infections due to new variants of coronavirus.

However, there were 38 times more deaths per one million people in Hong Kong which administered less vaccine boosters compared to New Zealand.

Vergeire noted that there are few senior citizens aged 80 years old and above who have been vaccinated in Hong Kong before the spread of the Omicron variant.



“Less than 25 percent *ito sa Hong Kong habang* more than 90 percent *naman ang bakunadong* senior citizens sa New Zealand (It is less than 25 percent in Hong Kong more than 90 percent senior citizens are vaccinated in New Zealand),” she said. “Based on studies of US CDC [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention], being boosted decreases the risk of hospitalization by 81 percent per data during the peak of Omicron variant attack.”

As over 13,000 public and private schools started face-to-face classes on Monday, the DOH reminded learners, parents, and teachers to continue adhering to the health protocols. **(PNA)**



No COVID wave seen this month

By **Gerard Naval** -April 6, 2022

THE Department of Health (DOH) yesterday said it does not see any surge in coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases until the end of April amid the relaxed mobility restrictions in most areas of the country.

In a virtual press briefing, Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said that based on the current trend, “we don’t see any significant increase in the number of cases.”

“The positivity rate is currently at 1.8 percent. This is lower compared to the 2.1 percent from the previous week,” said Vergeire.

She added that “the number of new COVID-19 cases remain low in all island groups.”

Vergeire, however, said the projection is “not cast in stone” as there are other factors to be considered, including the possible entry of the new variant Omicron XE.

“This isn’t cast in stone. This is not something that is permanent since it is merely a forecast. Anything can still happen,” said Vergeire.

Given the threat of the Omicron XE and other new variants, the DOH said border control protocols will continue to be strictly enforced.

“It does not mean that we have removed all our safeguards when we opened up our doors to tourists across the globe. It does not mean that all variants can now enter the country,” said Vergeire.

“Border control remains. We still have these safety nets,” she stressed.

The protocols, she said, include pre-departure COVID-19 testing, health screening upon arrival, and community monitoring.

Vergeire said closing the borders whenever a new COVID-19 variant emerges is not conducive to economic recovery.

“We cannot just always open and close our borders. We won’t be able to reach our goal of a new normal if we do that,” said Vergeire.

The Inter-Agency Task Force on the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) has allowed the entry of fully vaccinated foreign travelers in the Philippines last month as it placed the National Capital Region (NCR) and more than 50 areas under the least restrictive Alert Level 1 of quarantine.

The Bureau of Immigration said the number of foreign tourists has been gradually increasing since March and is expected to reach 12,000 per day during the summer season.

The tourism industry is one of the most affected industries at the height of the pandemic due to border closures.



Current Covid-19 jabs effective vs. Omicron XE

By Ma. Teresa Montemayor April 5, 2022, 6:14 pm



(Photo courtesy of PNP PIO)

MANILA – The coronavirus jabs administered in vaccination activities nationwide remain effective against recombinant variants of coronavirus such as Omicron XE, an infectious diseases expert said Tuesday.

Omicron XE is a combination of two Omicron sub-variants – BA.1 and BA.2.

In an online media forum, Department of Health – Technical Advisory Group member, Dr. Edsel Salvana, said current Covid-19 vaccines should be effective against XE “to the same level as BA.2.”

“It has 30 to 40 percent protection [against infection], but against the severe disease, it's still pretty high around 80 percent. *Kung mag-booster tayo* (if we receive a booster shot), better than that,” he added.

Salvana said there is always a possibility for Omicron XE to enter the country.

“But we don’t expect it to be more severe, and we don’t expect it to dodge vaccines any worse than BA.1 or BA.2,” he added.

In the same forum, Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire urged fully vaccinated individuals to receive booster shots for an added layer of protection against new variants of the coronavirus.

On Saturday, neighboring Thailand has recorded its first case of Omicron XE.

The World Health Organization estimates that it is 10 percent more transmissible than BA.2. However, its severity is still being investigated.

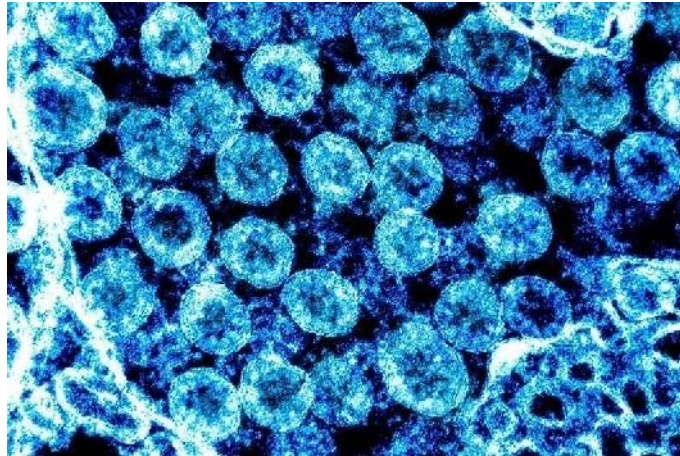
So far, about 12.2 million out of the 46.8 million eligible individuals have received their booster shots.

Meantime, more than 66.2 million individuals are already fully vaccinated against Covid-19 while 71.4 million have received at least a dose of the life-saving jabs. **(PNA)**



Omicron XE, 10% mas nakakahawa kaysa stealth Omicron

[Danilo Garcia](#) - Pang-masa April 6, 2022 | 12:00am



This undated National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, NIH handout photo obtained August 1, 2021, shows a transmission electron color-enhanced micrograph of SARS-CoV-2 virus particles, isolated from a patient.

Handout / National Institutes of Health / National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases / AFP

MANILA, Philippines — Mag-ingat sa bagong tuklas na 'Omicron XE variant' dahil sa 10 - porsyentong mas nakakahawa umano ito kaysa sa 'stealth Omicron sub-variant' base sa World Health Organization (WHO).

Ito ang paalala ni infectious disease expert na si Dr. Rontgene Solante, hepe ng Adult Infectious Diseases and Tropical Medicine Unit sa San Lazaro Hospital, na ang XE ay kumbinasyon ng orihinal na BA.1 Omicron variant at ng BA.2 o ang 'Stealth Omicron sub-variant'.

Unang naiulat ang Omicron XE sa United Kingdom at kumalat na sa ibang bansa kabilang sa mga kapitbahay ng Pilipinas tulad ng Thailand.

Kulang pa rin naman ang ibang impormasyon ukol sa Omicron XE tulad ng kung paano ito nakakaiwas sa proteksyon ng bakuna, magdudulot ba ito ng malubhang impeksyon at pagkakaospital.

Para naman kay Department of Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire, ito ang panahon para magpa-booster shot na ang mga kuwalipikadong Pilipino para makaiwas na mahawa ng nagsusulputang mga variants.

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