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DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR keeps watch on Angat water level



by [Rio N. Araja](#)

[April 8, 2022, 10:00 pm](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Board on Friday disclosed that it is closely monitoring the water level of Angat Dam in Bulacan amidst the prevailing hot season.

DENR Secretary Jim Sampulna said members of the agency's National Water Resources Board's (NWRB) technical working group involved in the management of water supply from Angat Dam are "keeping a close eye on the dam's water elevation to avert a looming water crisis with the dry season underway."

"Through the NWRB, we have already laid down preventive measures such as cloud seeding so that the public, especially those in Metro Manila, is assured of a steady water supply with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic," he said. As of April 7, the water elevation in the reservoir slightly rose to 194.15 meters from the lowest elevation of the year at 190.63 meters last April 4.

Sampulna credited the increase to the shear line or tail-end of a cold front and a low-pressure area in the Mindanao. The widespread rain shower, which was experienced in the majority of Luzon region, is expected to further raise the water level in Angat Dam caused by inflows from runoff water, he noted.

Based on the latest rainfall forecast and Angat Dam's water level simulation, the lowest water level would reach 183.98 meters in June, but might not breach the minimum operating water level of 180 meters.

The NWRB has approved a water allocation of 50 cubic meters per second (CMS) to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System from April 1 to 15, and five CMS to the National Irrigation Administration from April 1 to April 30.

Although the increase in water elevation slightly improved the current and projected level of the dam, the water level in the dam is still not secured, Sampulna said.



[DENR asks all LGUs to copy SSTP of Palawan](#)

APR 8, 2022, 12:58 PM



Santiago Celario
Writer

DENR Secretary Jim Sampulna lauds the establishment of sewage and solid waste treatment plant in El Nido in Palawan.

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Jim Sampulna urged all local governments in the country to replicate what Palawan, particularly the municipality of El Nido did in putting up sewage and solid waste treatment plant (SSTP) to lessen water pollution.

"I am calling all the governors around the Philippines to replicate what the Palawan and El Nido local governments have done here to improve the water quality and protect our coastal bodies," Sampulna said during a site visit to the SSTP last April 2.

DENR said the SSTP in Barangay Villa Libertad was designed and built to address water pollution from untreated sewage discharge and garbage waste disposal.

It has been benefitting the residential and commercial establishments from at least 18 barangays in the municipality of El Nido.



[DENR asks all LGUs to copy SSTP of Palawan](#)

The DENR said the facility has a capacity to generate about 2,400 cubic meters of wastewater per day, which makes it more efficient than any other STPs in Palawan.

It could also process biodegradable solid waste and sludge through anaerobic digestion, thus generating electricity from biogas production.

The state-of-the-art facility is a P490-million joint project of the provincial government of Palawan and the municipality of El Nido.

Palawan Water, a water utility infrastructure by the provincial government, generated savings of P170 million because of the office's pro bono technical service.



Sampulna forms team to conduct study on Boracay's recurring algal bloom

[April 8, 2022](#) min read

By Rjhay E Laurea



Photo courtesy of Philstar.com

MANILA — Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna has formed a team of experts to create additional studies on the event of algal blooms in the coastal waters of Boracay Island.

“I am forming a team. I want the study conducted by the UP (University of the Philippines) Marine Science Institute (MSI) and the DENR. We will work together to make the report credible,” Sampulna said.

UP-MSI has been one of the DENR's long-time allies in creating studies to protect the country's marine ecology and biodiversity.

DENR acted its study of Boracay Island in 2017 before the government released its rehabilitation in 2018.

Study by the DENR-Region 6 (Western Visayas), where Sampulna served as regional executive director, found that untreated wastewater was causing algal blooms in Boracay.

Soaps and detergents being emitted to the sea have also been marked as one of the reasons behind the recurrence of green algae in the country's top tourist destination.

The DENR chief is hoping to start a new study with the help of UP-MSI to better understand the recurrence of algal blooms in Boracay's waters despite lower coliform levels brought by the ongoing rehabilitation of the island.



Sampulna forms team to conduct study on Boracay's recurring algal bloom

Sampulna assured that the water in Boracay is neat, and he is focused on completing the rehabilitation of the island, among other priority programs, before his term ends in June.

As of February 2022, the level of coliform in the island's front beach was measured at 11 most probable number per 100 milliliters (mpn/100mL).

This shows that the island's waters meet the water quality standard good for swimming, skin diving, and other recreational activities.

The Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force and Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation and Management Group remains watching the water quality in Boracay, and strictly enforcing environmental laws to protect the world-class island resort. (ai/mtvn)

DENR-FMB Welcomes New Director

Friday, April 8, 2022 Journal Online



Department of Environment and Natural Resources Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna (middle) watches as newly-designated Forest Management Bureau (FMB) Director Tirso P. Parian, Jr. (right) receives the FMB flag during the turnover ceremony of the FMB Directorship held on April 4, 2022 at the FMB conference room. Parian served as Regional Executive Director of DENR-Eastern Visayas prior to his new assignment. FMB outgoing director and [DENR](#) Assistant Secretary Marcial C. Amaro, Jr. (left) assumes his post as Assistant Secretary for Policy, Planning, and Foreign and Special-Assisted Projects. The FMB is a staff bureau of the [DENR](#) responsible for the effective protection, development, conservation of the country's forestlands and watersheds.



DENR Donates Office Equipment to PENRO, Rizal

Friday, April 8, 2022 [Journal Online](#)



Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna (2nd from left, front) hands over to Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO)-Rizal officer-in-charge **Ramil R. Limpiada** (2nd from right) the list of office equipment donated by the [DENR](#) Central Office to PENRO Rizal to help its operations and services through the use of technology. The equipment includes 13 desktop computers, four printers, two scanners, one laptop and LCD projector. With Limpiada is PENRO Rizal Management Services Division Chief **John P. Reburiano** (right). Also present during the turnover on April 4 at the [DENR](#) Central Office were Undersecretary for Field Operations Luzon, Visayas and Environment Atty. **Juan Miguel T. Cuna** (left), and Administrative Service Director **Rolando R. Castro** and Property and Supply Management Division Chief **Engr. Gilbert C. Mondroy** (1st and 2nd from left, 2nd row).



El Nido, famed for its beaches, puts up waste treatment plant to keep them clean

[Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) - Philstar.com

April 4, 2022 | 10:21am



This April 2, 2022 photo shows the El Nido Sewage and Solid Waste Treatment Plant.

[Philstar.com/Gaea Katreena Cabico](#)

EL NIDO, Palawan — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources over the weekend said local government units should try to replicate El Nido's state-of-the-art sewage and solid waste treatment plant, which aims to address the water pollution and waste disposal issues of the top tourist destination.

Located in Barangay Villa Libertad, the facility is the first sewage and solid waste treatment plant (STP) in the Philippines, the DENR said. It is designed to treat wastewater, septage and biodegradable waste and covers most of the town's 18 barangays.

The treatment plant runs on solar power and biogas. It processes biodegradable solid waste and sludge through anaerobic digestion, or through bacteria that break down organic matter in the absence of oxygen.

In a ceremony Saturday, the DENR lauded the town's sewage and STP facility, which was inaugurated in September 2021.

Environment Undersecretary Juan Miguel Cuna said the facility "sets the tone" for how LGUs can help implement the Clean Water Act of 2004 and the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.



El Nido, famed for its beaches, puts up waste treatment plant to keep them clean

"What is marvelous about this is that it's funded locally... That is because the governor and the mayor are working together. I hope all LGUs replicate Palawan," Acting Environment Secretary Jim Sampulna also said.

The P490-million facility is a joint project of the provincial government of Palawan and the municipality of El Nido. Palawan Water, an office created by Gov. Jose Alvarez, provided technical services pro bono, which meant savings of P170 million.

"We want to retain the [recognition of being] the best and friendliest island in the world. That's the main reason why we invested in this," Alvarez said, adding that protecting the environment generates jobs for the town.

Treating sewage

El Nido, located on the northernmost tip of mainland Palawan, has been recognized as having among the world's best beaches. It is known for its white sand beaches and limestone formations.

Improper discharge of sewage from commercial establishments and houses, however, has lowered water quality and has degraded coastal resources.

In 2018, the DENR ordered a six-month rehabilitation of the tourist destination, which focused on improving the town's water quality, and enforcing coastal easement and carrying capacity policies. Unlike Boracay, tourism in El Nido was allowed to continue during rehabilitation.

Part of that rehabilitation and of efforts to keep El Nido as clean as possible is the town's sewage and STP facility, which can collect 2,400 cubic meters of wastewater per day.

The plant collects sewage from business and households through a network of underground pipelines. Sewage in the cluster collector tanks is transported to the treatment plant through an off-grid solar power system. It will then undergo a treatment process.

The facility also has a laboratory equipped with analyzers to determine the priority wastewater effluent parameters such as biological oxygen demand, nitrate, phosphate and fecal coliform.

So far, only 10 establishments are connected to the plant. Engineer Michelle Cardena, Palawan Water program director, said around 1,000 establishments will be connected to the system by yearend.

She added that the plant is not yet charging the establishments for treating their wastewater although rates may be finalized by June or July.

Once fully operational, the facility can also provide communities in El Nido electricity generated from biogas production.

On Saturday, officials from the environment department, and the local governments of El Nido and Palawan also signed a pledge to protect and preserve the water resources of the town.

"In everything that we do and in every program that we initiate will speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with every aspect of the environment," the pledge read.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/climate-and-environment/2022/04/04/2172148/el-nido-famed-its-beaches-puts-waste-treatment-plant-keep-them-clean>



Antique caves eyed as potential tourist attractions

By Annabel Consuelo Petinglay April 8, 2022, 6:39 pm



CAVE MONTH. The Kagang River Cave in the Municipality of Libertad is one of around 50 caves in the province of Antique. Antique launched on Friday (April 8, 2022) the Cave Month Celebration to bring awareness to the importance of conservation and protection of caves in the province. *(Photo courtesy John Michael)*

SAN JOSE DE BUENAVISTA, Antique – The province of Antique has called for the protection and preservation of caves as it highlights their potential to become tourist attractions.

The provincial government launched the Cave Month celebration in Barangay Tinindugan, Libertad as mandated under Provincial Ordinance 2020-219 or the Provincial Caves and Cave Resources Management, Protection and Conservation Ordinance authored by Antique provincial Board Member Jessielito Pio Sumande on Friday.

“I authored the ordinance to strengthen the cooperation and exchange of information between governmental authorities and people who utilize caves and cave resources,” Sumande said in an interview.

While no mapping was conducted to determine their exact number, Sumande said that there are around 50 caves in the province.

“The Igbaclag Cave in San Remigio is now being frequented by tourists being accessible and the area developed by the local government unit ,” he said.

The Kagang Cave in Barangay Tinindugan is noted for its underground water.

Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) Broderick Train, who discussed the importance of caves to the environment and rules on caving, urged the local folks in Barangay Tinindugan to initiate the conservation and protection of their cave.

“They should regulate the number of people who comes inside the cave and make sure that the endangered flora and fauna are not disturbed,” he said.

He added that there are irresponsible visitors who tend to remove the stalactites and stalagmites as souvenirs, which must be prevented. *(PNA)*

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1171825>



Philippine Eaglet dies from snake bite

By [Edith Regalado](#) (The Philippine Star)
- April 9, 2022 - 12:00am

DAVAO CITY, Philippines — A juvenile Philippine eaglet was found dead on Tuesday at the Philippine Eagle Center (PEC) in Barangay Malagos, Calinan District in this city.

Dennis Salvador, PEC executive director, said the remains of the eaglet, the latest to be bred in captivity, was found on the floor of its enclosure.

Footage of a closed-circuit television camera showed a python attacking the bird shortly after midnight on the same day.

Salvador said steps are being taken to capture the snake. He said the walls of enclosures at the PEC have been snake-proofed with a layer of wire mesh added to the original cyclone wire.



The world is gasping for clean air

April 8, 2022

THE air you are inhaling right now may not be good for your health. At least that's what the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) is warning in its latest study on global air quality.

"Almost the entire global population (99 percent) breathes air that exceeds WHO air quality limits and threatens their health," according to the agency.

What is alarming is that just four years ago, it was 90 percent.

Covid lockdowns and travel restrictions provided pockets of improving air quality, but they had little overall cleansing effect. Air pollution has in fact grown into "a major public health issue," one WHO official said.

"After surviving a pandemic, it is unacceptable to still have 7 million preventable deaths and countless preventable lost years of good health due to air pollution," the official added.

Data from the study, drawn from 6,000 cities in 117 countries, also reveals a disturbing trend: the air is dirtiest in the eastern [Mediterranean](#), [Southeast Asia](#) and [Africa](#), the world's poorest regions.

The study measured particulates in the air with high concentrations of toxins like sulfate and black carbon which could damage the lungs or cardiovascular system. It also looked at concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), an urban pollutant associated with asthma.

The WHO found that less than 1 percent of the cities in low- and middle-income countries passed its air-quality standards.

The risks from air pollution are not confined outdoors. Close to 4 million people die from household smoke produced by dirty stoves and fuels, the agency said.

Last year, the [Philippines](#) was number 64 among 118 countries in terms of air pollution in the list of IQAir, a Swiss air-quality technology company, with a "moderate" index of 58. [Bangladesh](#) and Chad topped the list with an index of 161.

Locally, the air is cleanest in Balanga in [Bataan](#) and most polluted in [Cavite City](#).

Early this year, the Center for Research on Energy and Clean Air and the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities published a report on the health and economic impacts of air pollution in the Philippines.

The report noted that air pollution is costing the country P4.5 trillion each year and causing 66,000 deaths from noncommunicable diseases and lung infections.

The main culprit

The WHO points to the unabated use of fossil fuels as the main culprit that is dirtying up the planet's air. In the [United States](#) alone, coal-fired power plants discharge 42 percent of the total dangerous mercury emissions, and two-thirds of sulfur dioxide emissions and other harmful particulates.



The world is gasping for clean air

Not far behind are the emissions belched out by millions of cars running on gasoline and diesel.

Climate summits have produced a raft of targets for phasing out fossil fuels and hastening the switch to cleaner and renewable energy, but the pace of change is almost glacial. The favorite excuse of fossil-fuel advocates is that the cost of making the transition would be monumental. They refuse to acknowledge that in the long run, everyone will pay a higher price if the world is not weaned from fossil fuels.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus is confident that soaring oil prices could be the catalyst that will help propel a much-awaited change.

"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," Ghebreyesus said.

"Air quality is not an abstract issue," the Philippine report on air quality pointed out. "Neglecting air pollution comes with a heavy bill in the form of increased health care and welfare costs as well as loss of labor and economic productivity."

Improved air quality "would save millions of lives and trillions of pesos," it continued. If the country steps up efforts to meet WHO standards, "the economic cost of ambient air pollution would decrease by 30 percent."

Those are figures that are hard to ignore. It is deplorable that the world's economic giants, many of whom are also the leading polluters, continue to do so.



Microplastics Have Now Been Found in The Deepest Part of The Human Lungs

[CARLY CASSELLA](#)

7 APRIL 2022

The term 'microplastic' was [coined just 18 years ago](#), but already they seem to be just about everywhere.

Each year, the average human consumes an [estimated 74,000 particles of plastic](#) with [unknown health effects](#). In March of this year, scientists announced they'd found microplastics [flowing through our very veins](#).

Turns out, they're also circulating at low levels deep in our lungs.

The most robust study of its kind has discovered 39 microplastic particles (each at least three micrometers in size) in 11 out of 13 lung tissue samples from living humans.

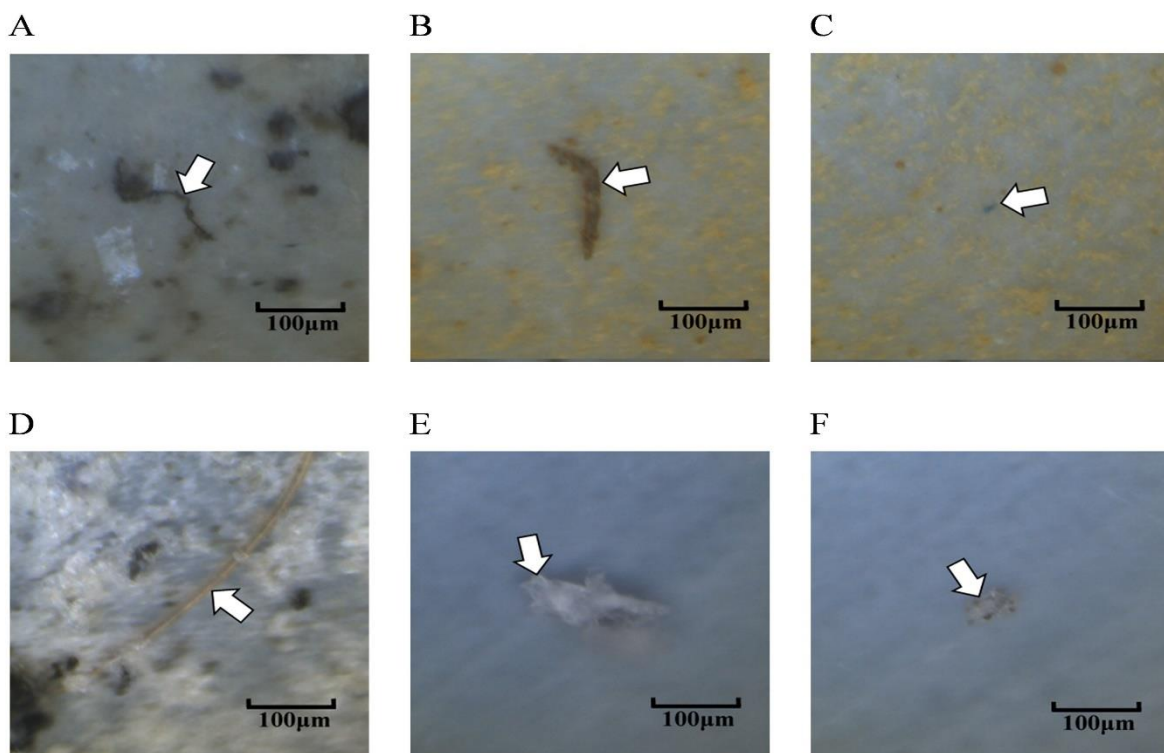
Previous studies on cadavers and lung [cancer](#) samples have uncovered tiny fibers and flakes of plastics before, but none analyzed the makeup of the synthetic polymers.

Of the types of microplastic detected in this latest study, a dozen polymer types showed up the most. These included polyethylene, which is found in plastic bags and packaging, resin from paints, roads, and tires, and nylon from clothing.

While these microplastics were only found in small amounts, they were present throughout the lungs, and the lower the lung tissue, the more contamination there generally was.

This deep in the lungs, the plastic particles were unexpectedly large.

"This is surprising as the airways are smaller in the lower parts of the lungs, and we would have expected particles of these sizes to be filtered out or trapped before getting this deep into the lungs," [explains](#) respiratory specialist Laura Sadofsky from Hull York Medical School in the UK.



(Jenner et al., Science of the Total Environment, 2022)
Above: Images of microplastics found in human lung tissue.



Microplastics Have Now Been Found in The Deepest Part of The Human Lungs

For decades it's been thought that only particles with a physical diameter below 3 μm can enter the alveolar region of the lung. Today, in the scientific literature, the alveolar duct is said to have a diameter of about 540 μm and a length of 1,410 μm .

But the current study found particles ranging up to 2,475 μm in length and up to 88 μm in width, which they [note](#) is "too large to be present, yet present nonetheless".

The findings suggest that inhalation is a regular route of microplastic exposure for humans, and that we may be breathing larger particles than experts assumed.

Apart from that, we know very little. It's unclear, for instance, what low levels of microplastics in our lungs are actually doing to human health, if anything at all.

"This data provides an important advance in the field of air pollution, microplastics and human health," [says](#) Sadofsky.

"The characterization of types and levels of microplastics we have found can now inform realistic conditions for laboratory exposure experiments with the aim of determining health impacts."

The study was published in [Science of the Total Environment](#).



Catanduanes



By [Ma. Isabel Ongpin](#)

April 8, 2022

SEEING Catanduanes from the air this week, I felt like Magellan seeing the [Philippines](#) for the first time — green, hilly, forested, with only the coastal areas showing signs of settlement.

Yes, it was the first time for me to set foot on Catanduanes, the first island to be buffeted by typhoons headed for [Luzon](#). The last one that mauled Catanduanes was "Rolly" in 2020 (followed by "Ulysses," only slightly less strong), both super typhoons. They were also the reason why we came to Catanduanes to check on the abaca weavers that we partnered with in our textile advocacy work (disclosure: I belong to HABI, the [Philippine Textile Council Inc.](#)). Their weaving center and its looms were blown off the map, setting back income and work. Everyone had to scramble to fix their houses while the abaca trees that furnished the weaving material were wiped out. We helped as much as we could from a distance due to pandemic restrictions on air travel and other impediments. But now that we are on Alert Level 1, it was time to see for ourselves and get better and more permanent help.

Catanduanes is the 12th largest island in the Philippine archipelago. It is situated off the coast of Bicol and faces the [Pacific Ocean](#). It is the first line of defense for typhoons heading for Luzon (usually July-November). You may say it is the easternmost fringe of Luzon. On the west, it is separated from the Bicol peninsula by the [Maqueda Channel](#), on the south is the [Lagonoy Gulf](#), and in the north and east is the Philippine Sea which is the Pacific Ocean, at times calm, but often inclined to be temperamentally stormy. There are great surfing beaches in Catanduanes, an island of about 1,500 square kilometers with a population of 250,000. It has 11 municipalities, 10 of which are coastal settlements. The only landlocked municipality, San Miguel, is said to have [NPA](#) guerrillas.

Catanduanes is the top abaca producer in the country, and the abaca trees can be seen all over the landscape growing wild, not in plantations. They look like banana trees but while banana tree leaves are rounded, abaca tree leaves are pointed. Two years after the typhoons hit, they have recovered and are growing well. Not so the coconut trees that now have leaves but not yet coconuts. Catanduanes is named after a native beetle called "tandoc" and a native tree called "sambong" which the Spaniards turned into Catanduanes following their own pronunciation. The island is rugged and hilly with mountain ranges in the central part. On them are old growth forests; no hill except close to the coast is bare of trees. And even if treeless, it is green with foliage and abaca trees. The rivers are pristine. One of them, the [Bato River](#), much wider than the [Pasig River](#), is a sight to see. Everyone has narra furniture, apparently from the forests and allowed by special permit from the DENR for local use. Our bed and breakfast had elegant narra tables and chairs and a lovely narra staircase with a carved handrail.



Catanduanes

Catanduanes is also the second oldest ammonite site in the Philippines which would interest geologists and scholars of the prehistoric eras. Ammonites are fossils, usually a specific genus that existed at some specific geological time and became extinct at the end of the Cretaceous Period (more or less along the time the dinosaurs became extinct). They were animals (tiny ones), traces of which were buried in sediments that eventually solidified into rock and became fossils. The other island in the Philippines with ammonites in larger quantities is Mindoro. Ammonites usually have a spiral shape and for some people are symbols of change and positive motion because they supposedly draw in negative energy and filter it through their chambers and release it as fresh and positive energy. This may interest some people to travel to Catanduanes though I did not come across any ammonites on my trip. There is a provincial museum with abaca products, political history and a photo of the first Filipino Dominican priest, Benito Vargas, who was from Catanduanes. Maybe I missed the ammonites if they had them.

The Spaniards first called the island Isla de Cobos upon discovering it in 1573, for the thatched huts ("cobos") that the tribes there lived in. The first settlers are said to have been Bornean datu and their people coming to Catanduanes via Panay. The population today is native to Catanduanes with 1 percent being Chinese descendants. They all came through the centuries as traders and seafarers for the barter trade. This is the migration pattern that resulted in settlements.

Juan de Salcedo arrived in 1573 in pursuit of pirates. Within 20 years of his arrival, evangelization through Franciscan friars began replacing the pre-Christian religions of native deities. Though indigenous beliefs in rituals like agriculture and other life chapters still exist. Catanduanes was a target of Moro pirate raids for most of its history, which is mostly little known or written about. Speaking to the provincial tourism officer, [Carmel Garcia](#), she said that most of the historical information about Catanduanes was in the Ex Libris Canonicus, which was lost or destroyed in one of the incursions of Moro pirates.

In modern times, Catanduanes participated in the 19th century struggle for Philippine independence which was abruptly shut down by the American Occupation. But in Catanduanes, by 1934 with the coming of the Commonwealth, the American military left. Meanwhile, from the 19th century till the middle of the 20th century, Catanduanes was a subprovince of Ambos Camarines and later on Albay. Only in 1945 with a bill passed by lawmaker [Francisco Perfecto](#) did it become an independent province. The first senator from Catanduanes was [Jose Vera](#), the grandfather of the Vera-Perez family. He was from Pandan in the north of Catanduanes.

Now Catanduanes continues as a top abaca producer and a surfing and trekking destination for tourists. As with most small provinces, they have been under political dynasties for some time. These dynasties are very entrepreneurial, building malls, owning the shipping and controlling the abaca business. There is too an NPA presence that brings about occasional, few and far between armed clashes with the police or military. But all in all, Catanduanes continues to exist with its political dynasties and its rebels in some kind of peaceful interregnum. What the future will hold, only time will tell. Meanwhile it is a beautiful island in the Pacific.



Catanduanes

Its beaches have golden sand and engaging surf as well as foliage and rocks and stones of impressive shapes and colors. There are rice and corn fields aside from abaca and coconuts. And colorful flowers are seen in gardens and the roadsides which are bereft of traffic. The culture of abaca is ingrained with all kinds of abaca products, from rugs, textiles, household items like slippers, baskets, handbags, twine, mats, etc. Being produced.

The abaca weavers are at work in homes or re-constructed sheds after the typhoons but more help is needed. They need safe space. Here is where government in whatever form should come in, whether to put up weaving centers, help increase abaca production by curbing abaca diseases by providing healthy plants and in general, focusing on what can help the abaca industry on which Catanduanes largely depends. It could also promote and provide a mechanical stripper, for instance, that is not too expensive for stripping the fiber with minimum waste and loss of energy. This stripper could be sold on credit through cooperatives. Mechanization in the industry is now needed to keep up with competing abaca-producing countries. Government could also help with new designs and uses for abaca which has a range of possibilities now including cellphones, cars and erosion barriers. The [Philippine Textile Research Institute](#) could work on making abaca fiber softer for greater use in garments without discomfort. Some clothes already use a percentage of abaca; with better softening treatment, the percentage could go higher. It is heartrending to see abaca weavers toiling and not getting a more comfortable life from what they earn and the market that they could have. Just one typhoon can send them down to even lower poverty levels. There should be some kind of insurance for this calamity or any other calamity.

Catanduanes is a part of the Philippines that has been too overlooked. It is time to pay it attention. The roads are good, the seafood is abundant and the Catandugons are friendly and cultured, particularly attuned to music and dance. [Pablo Tariman](#) can tell you all about their sophisticated artistic inclinations, particularly music. The night before we left, the town plaza had a Zumba session with an enthusiastic team of about 30 young people going at it. Yes, Catanduanes is worth a trip and more.



Asean environmental diplomacy: A hit and a miss



By [Amado Tolentino Jr.](#)

April 9, 2022

THERE are trivia concerning the [Association of Southeast Asian Nations](#) (Asean). Established in 1967 by the Bangkok Declaration, its founding members are Indonesia, Malaysia, the [Philippines](#), Singapore and Thailand. Brunei Darussalam joined in 1984, Vietnam in 1995, Laos and Myanmar in 1997, and Cambodia in 1999.

As originally conceived, Asean is an economic union which promotes cooperation and facilitates economic, political and socio-cultural integration between members and other states in Asia. Understandably, no mention was made of cooperation on environmental concerns. Be that as it may, world events in the field of environment culminating with the 1972 UN Stockholm Declaration which called for regional cooperation on the environment, led to Asean's sub-regional environment program in 1978.

In 2003, an Asean Charter gave legal personality to the bloc which for the past 42 years operated as a coalition of states born out of the Bangkok Declaration. To realize the purposes of the Charter, Asean leaders adopted a road map for an [Asean Community](#) by 2015 consisting of three community blueprints — political security, socio-cultural and economic pillars.

The following is "a hit and a miss" in the history of Asean environmental diplomacy.

Committee on the environment

Formal environmental diplomacy was rather late in coming into the structure of Asean. In the absence of a formally set up committee, environmental issues were handled by a sub-regional arrangement as mentioned above under the aegis of the Asean committee on science and technology with an Asean Environment Program backed up by the UN Environment Program (UNEP) and other international organizations.

By coincidence, a [Ministry of Human Settlements](#) was created under the 1973 Philippine Constitution which adopted a hybrid parliamentary system of government. The human settlements minister was a member of the Asean Ministerial Meeting on the Environment group and worked closely with the Asean Senior Officials on the Environment. As such the minister had a hand in convening the first Ministerial Meeting on the Environment held in [Manila](#) in 1981. That Asean meeting produced the Manila Declaration on the Environment which formally established an Asean committee on the environment with priority areas as follows: environmental management, including environmental impact assessment; nature conservation and terrestrial ecosystems; marine environment; industry and environment; environmental education and training and environmental information.

At the time, Asean had only five members. During the last day of the meeting and prior to the actual signing of the Manila Declaration, representatives from two Asean countries manifested that they did not carry their respective governments' authority to sign any legal instrument which meant the meeting would not have the desired Manila Declaration even as a soft law instrument.



Asean environmental diplomacy: A hit and a miss

The session was suspended, and the Philippine human settlements minister conferred privately with the two delegates separately. As expected, the two acceded to the minister's persuasive arguments even if it meant losing their jobs when they got back home, or so they said.

Anyway, the two senior officials did not lose their jobs. The Manila Declaration became the starting point of the formal conduct of Asean environmental diplomacy and active cooperation on environmental matters which led to the very successful Asean Heritage Parks program, among others, and the choice of the Philippines to host the [Asean Center](#) for Biodiversity (with EU financial support) at the UP Los Baños campus.

Agreement on nature conservation

During the late 1970s the original five Asean countries began exploring conservation issues from a regional perspective. For this purpose, a communication was sent to the [International Union](#) for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) through its Commission on Environmental Law (CEL) on the possibility of assistance in the preparation of a working draft of a nature conservation agreement for the region.

Those were the years when conservation was being recast in the context of global human development about which the World Conservation Strategy was launched by IUCN, WWF and UNEP. The request from the Asean region was the first opportunity for the IUCN Law Program to translate new concepts, e.g., maintaining essential ecological processes and life support systems, preserving biodiversity, and ensuring sustainability of species and ecosystems, etc., into international law.

By May 1981, the [IUCN Environmental Law Center](#), with the CEL, had conducted a workshop of legal and technical experts to consider and amend the draft as needed. The draft was well received at the workshop and adopted in 1983 by the Asean Senior Officials on the Environment. A final text was concluded at the Asean Environment Ministers Meeting in 1984 and signed by the [Asean Foreign Ministers Conference](#) in 1985.

The IUCN considered the text the most advanced regional conservation treaty in existence and a major achievement in the field of policy and law. Be that as it may, problems with the Agreement's entry into force surfaced because of the insufficient ratification of six states, including Brunei Darussalam which joined the Asean in 1984.

Only three states signed the Agreement which required six ratifications to enter into force. Simply explained, consensus is the normal decision-making practice of Asean states. While it was accepted by both the Asean environment and foreign affairs ministers, there was resistance from some countries and signatures did not follow.

In 1998, a member country was noted to have expressed the view that "...the Asean Agreement was not the Asean Way."

Today, there are 10 member states but signatures/ratifications are still insufficient.



Asean environmental diplomacy: A hit and a miss

Ecosystems approach

The Asean Agreement was the first treaty instrument to incorporate an ecosystem approach and to translate the objectives of the World Conservation Strategy into a framework of duties and rights in environmental law. It became part of a special class of regional agreements (along with the [Bern Convention](#) of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, and after the African Convention) that represented "the most progressive policies in applying environmental law for regional needs." The IUCN Law Program considered the treaty as an example that might be emulated in other regions.

In fact, it contained articles taken directly from the World Conservation Strategy — conservation of species and ecosystems and the conservation of ecological processes. It required the Contracting Parties to take action to maintain genetic diversity and ensure sustainable use of harvested species, listing endangered species in an appendix and noting the Parties' special responsibility to protect endemic species. It included pollution control provisions, measures for land use planning, protected areas, environmental impact assessment as well as national level scientific research, training and administration.

While the Agreement never formally entered into force, it remains an important international law instrument in the history of modern environmental law for its conceptual advances and positive impact on the region. Many of the agreement's forward-looking principles were incorporated into the region's activities and, importantly, member states began working individually to implement the agreement's concepts at national level. By 2000, the Philippines, the Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah, and Indonesia had adopted or were in the process of incorporating conservation principles in their legislation concerning natural resources use and conservation.

Indeed, the Agreement was seen as the first effort to make a comprehensive treaty for sustainable development which, for the 1990s, was revolutionary and far-reaching. "It is considered as a forerunner, at the regional level, of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which later incorporated many of the Asean Agreement's concepts," remarked Dr. Francoise Burhenne-Guilmin, the internationally renowned environmental law expert and former director of the IUCN Environmental Law Center in Bonn (Germany).



Making Metro Manila safe, livable and beautiful



By [Mauro Gia Samonte](#)

April 9, 2022



Public Works and Highways Secretary [Roger 'Oging' Mercado](#) inspects the ongoing China-donated Binondo-Intramuros Bridge project. PHOTO FROM DPWH WEBSITE

AS the [Duterte](#) administration is about to bow out, this column stumbles upon a video account on social media enumerating the gigantic strides it has made in its Build, Build, Build program: 200 ports, 2,709 bridges, 9,845 kilometers of concrete roads, to name only the major ones.

All of a sudden, I find myself asking: Isn't Public Works and Highways Secretary Roger "Oging" G. Mercado up against a challenge? These public works accomplishments surely are outstanding ones and they cannot but set a benchmark for his own performance. In short, he must prove his mettle at doing these achievements one better during the short time left of the Duterte administration.

Tall order, we should say.

At any rate, it would be interesting to note how he has fared.

The [Department of Public Works and Highways](#) (DPWH) has a presence in all 16 regions of the country, and each one, headed by a regional director, with a full staff of assistant regional directors and district engineers, are trying to outdo each other in terms of accomplishments and project relevance to the general population.

In this endeavor, they all look up to Secretary Mercado for policy direction, supervision and inspiration. A long-time provincial governor and congressman, aside from being chairman of the House public works committee, Mercado was very much prepared when he accepted from President



Making Metro Manila safe, livable and beautiful

Duterte the new assignment of Public Works and Highways acting secretary last October, replacing the equally workaholic [Mark Villar](#) who opted to run for a Senate seat.

When a foreign tourist lands in [Manila](#), the first place he/she sees is the [Ninoy Aquino International Airport](#). For some, it is the [Manila South Harbor](#). Either way, the first impressions a foreigner will have about the Philippines will be engendered by Metro Manila or the National Capital Region.

It is for this simple but practical reason that Mercado and department senior undersecretary [Rafael C. Yabut](#) must be putting extra effort in supervising public works, flood control and roads/bridges maintenance in the [NCR](#). On the ground, the operations are well taken care of by the competent regional director of the DPWH National Capital Region, Nomer Abel P. Canlas.

Canlas just looks indefatigable in performing his task of on-the-ground construction operations. His traffic intervention projects now include the widening project in [Lawton Avenue](#) in Taguig near the Philippine Marines headquarters inside [Fort Bonifacio](#).

Easing traffic flow

Lawton Avenue is that important and busy artery connecting [Bonifacio Global City](#) and the Villamor-NAIA complex and the Makati Business District via [Chino Roces Avenue Extension](#). With the increased volume of traffic coming from Mandaluyong to Makati via the China-donated Estrella-Pantaleon Bridge all the way to the airport, the widening of Lawton Avenue has become imperative. Secretary Mercado wanted the project finished before the elections in May, for the project to be part of the achievements of the DPWH under the Duterte administration and with Canlas on top of the project, it will be as good as done.

Last week, Canlas announced that the southbound portion of [Roxas Boulevard](#) near the Libertad Pumping Station in [Pasay City](#) is already accessible to motorists after it was partially closed to vehicular traffic for rehabilitation work. Canlas said vehicles with the exception of trucks are now allowed to pass on the southbound direction of Roxas Boulevard from V. Sotto to EDSA after completing works for the 54.9 linear meter replacement of damaged old Libertad box culvert or drainage main structure and dilapidated road pavement.

The improved road pavement of Roxas Boulevard southbound direction will facilitate safer and smoother movement of people, goods and services.

Meanwhile, the new drainage main box culvert will allow a more efficient water flow to the Libertad Pumping Station, thus alleviating the flooding occurrences in Pasay City and nearby areas of [Makati City](#).

Similar rehabilitation work will be undertaken by the [DPWH South Manila District Engineering Office](#) on the northbound direction of Roxas Boulevard, initially doing the repair works on the first two lanes. Round-the-clock work will be observed to expedite project completion.

Cleanup drive in NCR

The DPWH in the National Capital Region has teamed up with the DENR in the Adopt-an-estero program, participating in a simultaneous cleanup drive on March 19 and 26, 2022.



Making Metro Manila safe, livable and beautiful

The DPWH NCR regional office, together with its District Engineering Offices, has declogged and cleared the following waterways in the cities of Malabon, Navotas, Caloocan, San Juan, Quezon, Taguig, Makati, and Pasay — portions of Makati Diversion channel, Manila Bay, [Navotas Marine Tree Park](#), [San Juan River](#), [Spinal Creek](#)/Estero de Lapu-Lapu Creek, [Maytunas Creek](#) and [Congo Creek](#).

The yearly cleanup drive aims to address the perennial flooding problem that is widely experienced in the metropolis, caused by discarded wastes and heavy silt clogging the esteros and creeks, the major river systems, then carrying into Manila Bay, said Canlas.

The cleanup efforts in Metro Manila also extends to purchasing several mechanized street sweepers. This particular sweeper model not only sweeps the road but also releases water mists to complete the beautification process. This is on top of planting thousands of trees in center islands and other green spaces along the big roads, which adds to the aesthetics of the roadways and more importantly, lessens the country's carbon footprint.

No more overhead cables

Can you imagine residential areas in Manila or Quezon City free of the utility cables and power lines overhead? The DPWH is pushing the idea for consideration by Congress.

Capping Canlas' efforts to make the NCR safe and pleasant to the eye is the move to place underground all the utility cables and pipes that make the environs messy and endanger the lives of people, especially during floods and other natural disasters.

This initiative is practical as it is challenging so that the idea enjoys support from Secretary Mercado and Undersecretary Yabut.

Canlas said the DPWH NCR requested some P200 million for this project in the 2023 national budget, to be used for both the feasibility study and infrastructure that will contain the underground cables. As the telecoms and electricity service providers might be averse to shouldering the additional costs, Canlas said the government may initially subsidize the transfer cost and bill the firms later for the use of the facilities.

The feasibility studies will be conducted along Epifanio de los [Santos Avenue](#) (EDSA), [Katipunan Avenue](#) Extension, and [Radial Road](#) 10 or R10.

Apart from being beautiful and orderly, underground cabling minimizes accidents from electrocution as well as damage to utility poles during typhoons. Utility companies stand to benefit, too, because they do not need to pay huge amounts for the acquisition of road right of way for the construction of their posts.

All told, Secretary [Oging Mercado](#) has had a lot to do not only in terms of quantity but also, and more so, in quality of innovation and vision in public works. Imagine if he had one full six-year term to implement those innovations and vision.

Too bad that he's got too little time to do too much.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2022/04/09/opinion/columns/making-metro-manila-safe-livable-and-beautiful/1839397>



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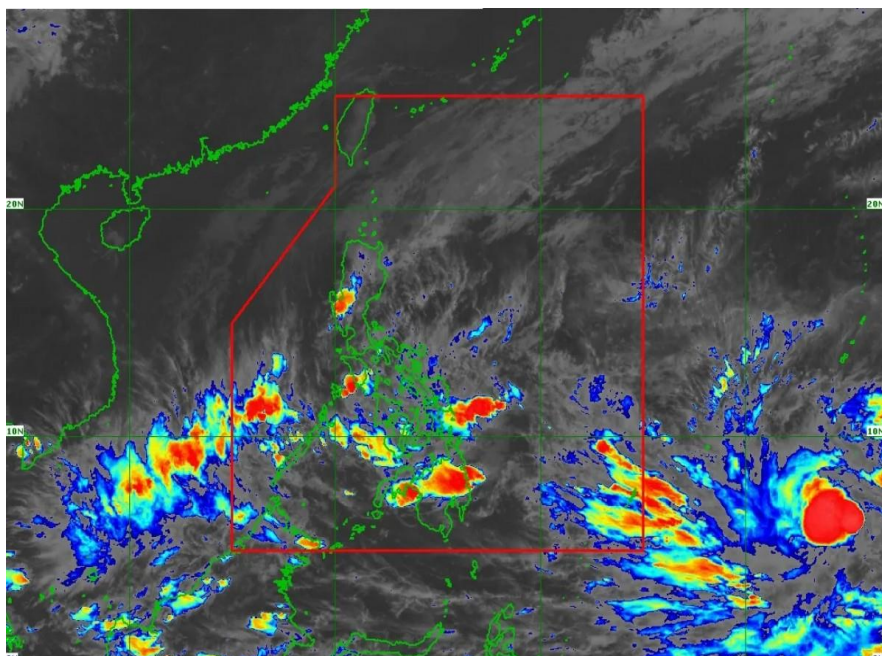
<https://www.facebook.com/tribunephil/videos/4923393937730249/>



NDRRMC, nagbabala sa publiko na mag-ingat sa epekto ng dalawang sama ng panahon

Published on: April 08, 2022

By NDRRMC



QUEZON CITY -- Pinaalalahanan ng National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) ang publiko na magsagawa ng mga paghahanda at ibayong pag-iingat laban sa mga pagbaha at landslide na posibleng idulot ng malalakas na pag-ulan bunsod ng dalawang binabantayang sama ng panahon sa loob at labas ng Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR).

Sa ulat ng Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), namataan ang isang Low Pressure Area sa loob ng PAR sa layong 185 kilometro silangan hilagang silangan ng Surigao City habang namataan naman sa layong 2,215 km sa silangan ng Mindanao ang tropical storm sa labas ng PAR, kaninang alas-4 nang hapon.

Inaasahang makararanas ang Caraga, Eastern Visayas at southern portion ng Bicol region ng katamtaman hanggang malakas na pag-ulan habang maulap na panahon na may kalat-kalat na pag-ulan at thunderstorms naman sa natitirang bahagi ng Visayas at Mindanao, bukas hanggang Martes ng umaga, ayon sa PAGASA.

Sa pagpupulong na isinagawa ng NDRRMC ngayong araw, kasama ang iba't ibang ahensya ng pamahalaan, at regional DRRMCs, pinag-usapan ang mga paghahanda sa mga apektadong lugar. Pinaalala na rin sa mga regional DRRMCs ang mga karampatang paghahanda at mga aksyon kabilang ang pagsasagawa ng evacuation, pag-preposition ng family food packs, pagpapadala ng abiso sa apektadong lugar, at iba pa.

Pinag-iingat ang mga residente na nakatira sa mga mababang lugar, tabi ng ilog at mga kabundukan sa posibleng pagbaha at pagguho ng lupa dulot ng mga pag-ulan. Makipag-ugnayan at sundin ang mga awtoridad at palaging subaybayan ang mga abiso at balita tungkol sa panahon at mga babala. (NDRRMC)

Source: <https://pia.gov.ph/press-releases/2022/04/08/ndrrmc-nagbabala-sa-publiko-na-mag-ingat-sa-epekto-ng-dalawang-sama-ng-panahon>

09 APRIL 2022, Saturday



DENR

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DENR keeps watch on Angat water level

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Board on Friday disclosed that it is closely monitoring the water level of Angat Dam in Bulacan amidst the prevailing hot season.

DENR Secretary Jim Sampulna said members of the agency's National Water Resources Board's (NWRB) technical working group involved in the management of water supply from Angat Dam are "keeping a close eye on the dam's water elevation to avert a looming water crisis with the dry season underway."

"Through the NWRB, we have already laid down preventive measures such as cloud seeding so that the public, especially those in Metro Manila, is assured of a steady water supply with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic," he said.

As of April 7, the water elevation in the reservoir slightly rose to 194.15 meters from the lowest elevation of the year at 190.63 meters last April 4.

Sampulna credited the increase to the shear line or tail-end of a cold front and a low-pressure area in the Mindanao.

The widespread rain shower, which was experienced in the majority of Luzon region, is expected to further raise the water level in Angat Dam caused by inflows from runoff water, he noted.

Based on the latest rainfall forecast and Angat Dam's water level simulation, the lowest water level would reach 183.98 meters in June, but might not breach the minimum operating water level of 180 meters.

The NWRB has approved a water allocation of 50 cubic meters per second (CMS) to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System from April 1 to 15, and five CMS to the National Irrigation Administration from April 1 to April 30. **Rio N. Araja**



DENR-NWRB: WALANG KRISIS SA TUBIG PAHINA 8 NGAYONG SUMMER

DENR-NWRB: Walang krisis sa tubig ngayong summer

Patuloy na binabantayan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa pamamagitan ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB) ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam pati

NI ANGIE DELA CRUZ

na rin ang operasyon nito sa gitna ng low-set water level ng dam.

Ayon kay Acting Environment Secretary Jim O. Sampulna ang mga miyembro ng NWRB Technical Working Group ay mahigpit na binabantayan ang water elevation ng Angat dam upang maiwasan ang isang water crisis lalo na sa panahon ng tag-init o summer season.

"Through the NWRB, we have already laid down preventive measures such as cloud seeding so that the pub-

lic, especially those in Metro Manila, is assured of a steady water supply with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic," ayon kay Sampulna.

Nitong ~~Abril 7, 2022~~, ang water elevation sa reservoir ay tumaas ng bahagya sa 194.15 meters mula sa pinakamababang elevation sa taon na 190.63 meters noong Abril 4, 2022.

Ang malawakang pagulan na naranasan sa malaking bahagi ng Luzon ay inaasahang magpapataas pa ng lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam.

Ayon sa latest rainfall forecast at Angat Dam water level simulation, ang pinakamababang lebel ng tubig sa dam ay aabot sa 183.98 meters sa Hunyo. Dahil dito, maaaring hindi aabot sa nakatakdang minimum operating water level na 180 meters.

Inaprubahan ng NWRB ang water allocation na 50 cubic meters per second (CMS) para sa Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System mula Abril 1 hanggang 15, at limang CMS naman sa National Irrigation Administration mula Abril 1 hanggang 30.



GCash to plant half a million mangrove trees in Cebu

GCASH, the leading digital mobile wallet in the country, together with the Ramon Aboitiz Foundation Inc. (RAFI), is planting 550,000 mangrove trees in Tañon Strait in Cebu to help the environment and mitigate the effects of natural disasters in the province. Cebu was one of the provinces to endure the brunt of Typhoon "Odette."

Mangroves help build more disaster-resilient communities as they protect coastlines by decreas-

ing the risk of flooding and erosion. Compared to planting upland trees, mangroves are capable of high carbon sequestration, also known as "blue carbon" which helps reduce the amount of carbon dioxide to minimize the effects of climate change.

Moreover, mangroves promote the conservation of fishing breeding areas and support the livelihood of farmers and mangrove-planting communities.

"We've seen the impact of natural calamities on the vulnerable communities in the country. At GCash, we continue to uphold our commitment to environmental conservation and sustainability together with our partners. We are grateful to have found a partner in the Ramon Aboitiz Foundation Inc. Together, we will work toward making our coastlines less vulnerable to extreme weather events and helping build more sustainable

and disaster-resilient communities in the future," said Martha Sazon, president and CEO of GCash.

The planting period of these mangroves will start in the second and third quarters of 2022. Maintenance activities will last until 2024 to ensure a high survival rate of the planted mangrove seedlings.

This initiative is a part of GCash's sustainability efforts under GForest, its environmental sustainability feature on the app.



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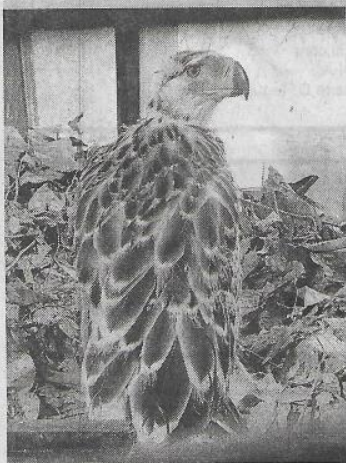
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REGIONS / A8
**EAGLET BRED
IN CAPTIVITY
KILLED BY
PYTHON**



DEATH OF 'CHICK #29'

EAGLET BRED IN CAPTIVITY KILLED IN SNAKE ATTACK



SHORT LIFE Eaglet "Chick #29" is 3 months old in this photo taken a month before a python entered its enclosure at the Philippine Eagle Center and killed it on Thursday.

—PHOTO COURTESY OF PHILIPPINE EAGLE CENTER

By Joselle R. Badilla
@InqNational

DAVAO CITY—A 4-month old Philippine eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*), which had only been given the number "Chick #29," was attacked by a python and was found lifeless on the floor of its enclosure on Tuesday morning at the Philippine Eagle Center (PEC) in Malagos, Baguio District of this city.

"We are deeply saddened by the loss of Chick #29 as so much work has been invested on him. It's an unfortunate incident involving a natural hazard at the center," Dennis Salvador, executive director of the Philippine

Eagle Foundation (PEF), told the Inquirer.

Footage from a closed-circuit television camera installed at the eaglet's enclosure reviewed by the PEC's animal keepers revealed that Chick #29 was attacked by a python at 12:13 a.m.

The snake could have entered through the PVC pipe feeding chute where food is dropped in the enclosure or through the screen ceiling, according to the center.

"The enclosure is also adjacent to an adult Philippine eagle from the wild that can easily catch a snake. But unfortunately for fledglings, they are still vulnerable to predation," the

statement from the PEF said.

Salvador said they would need to mitigate the threats posed by snakes, including pythons, cobras and vipers, that are found at the Malagos Watershed Protected Landscape.

"In the midst of this tragedy, we now have to contend with the looming danger of avian flu. It is a clear and present danger that could potentially wipe out our entire breeding stock," he added.

Snake proofing

The PEF said snake proofing was done on the enclosures of eaglets and other animals that a snake could prey on. They added a layer of half-inch wire

mesh on top of the original cyclone wire with hole size of 2 by 2 inches. Traps have been set up around the center and search parties mobilized at night to capture the problem snake.

According to the PEF, "reticulated pythons are natural resident species inside the [PEC] and the surrounding watershed area and are classified as hazards under the PEC's biosecurity measures."

The PEF operates the Malagos facility, undertaking captive breeding of the raptors as well as rehabilitating those victimized by human activities and rescued from communities.

The first captive bred eaglet

was Pag-asa, which was born on Jan. 23, 1992, and died of an infection on Jan. 6, 2021. Chick #29 was hatched on Dec. 4 last year.

Philippine eagles lay an egg only once every two years, making their conservation a daunting task.

Established in 1987, the PEF is dedicated to increasing the Philippine eagle's declining population and preserving its habitat through conservation breeding, research and education campaigns promoting their protection.

There are currently only 400 pairs of the species remaining in the wild across the country, the PEF said. **INQ**



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DATE

Philippine Eaglet dies from snake bite

DAVAO CITY – A juvenile Philippine eaglet was found dead on Tuesday at the Philippine Eagle Center (PEC) in Barangay Malagos, Calinan District in this city.

Dennis Salvador, PEC executive director, said the remains of the eaglet, the latest to be bred in captivity, was found on the floor of its enclosure.

Footage of a closed-circuit television camera showed a python attacking the bird shortly after midnight on the same day.

Salvador said steps are being taken to capture the snake. He said the walls of enclosures at the PEC have been snake-proofed with a layer of wire mesh added to the original cyclone wire.

–Edith Regalado



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PAGE

DATE

What you should know about green investments in the Philippines

THE effects of climate change are real. We experience them globally with more intense storms, heat waves, drought, rising sea levels, warming oceans and melting glaciers. The result? Loss of lives, properties, communities and livelihoods.

Sadly, the effects of climate change will only get worse and more devastating in the future, unless we start doing our part in supporting green companies and their green projects such as green investments.

What exactly are green investments, and why should we care? Keep reading to learn more about it.

What is green finance?

Green finance isn't a new term. In fact, its roots go back as far as the 1970s. The simplest definition of green finance is "any structured financial activity that's been created to ensure a better environmental outcome."

This can be financial services or products such as investments, loans or debt mechanisms, which encourage and support environment-friendly projects, or any financial activity that reduces the impact on the climate. It can even be a combination of both.

The goal of green finance is to promote green activities and eco-friendly projects that are also economically friendly. Furthermore, it seeks to ensure that green investments are given priority over regular investments, which only promote unsustainable growth patterns.



MONEY MAX

ROUSELLE ISLA

finance structure focuses on two things: green financial instruments and green facilities and solutions.

The Philippines is committed to reduce the risks and the impact of climate change on the country and on the economy while also increasing revenue generation. Moreover, the Philippine government is working on green facilities and solutions to finance various environment projects and natural resources management.

What are the benefits of green investments?

Promoting green investments on a massive scale means that green projects and environment-friendly initiatives are the priority.

Moreover, focusing on green investments fosters transparency and promotes a regular flow of investments to various environmental objectives. As a result, more jobs will be created and more business opportunities will open up.

The most important benefit, of course, is achieving better living conditions for people without further destroying the planet. Just think — your money is helping save the environment!

What are some examples of green finance products?

There's a wide range of green finance products and services, and they're categorized into banking, investment and insurance products. But debt and equity are the most prominent financial instruments.

How do green investments work?

Green investing means investing in environmental companies or businesses that are environmentally friendly and getting a decent return for it.

For example, investing in eco-friendly companies that promote responsible waste management, or projects and initiatives that aim to reduce pollution or lower greenhouse gas emissions.

There are quite a lot, but some of the most common green finance projects include renewable energy efficiency, pollution prevention and control, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable use of land and natural resources.

Green investments can also mean green lending, which is providing funding to sustainability projects. It can be green equity investments as well, wherein you buy shares in companies that help preserve and protect the planet.

Green finance structure in the Philippines

In the Philippines, the green

What are the drawbacks of green investments?

This type of investment isn't without challenges. For one, a long-term green investment won't work if you're an investor looking at investments with a short-term horizon.

Also, green investments aren't always black and white. There will always be the issue of aligning a company's financial and environmental objectives. Some companies may also just be riding the trend, capitalizing on the social interest on climate change, and appearing green just to attract investors and keep customers.

So why do we need to support green investments?

Simply put, green investments are important because they can help create a better world. When investors put their money in projects or businesses that positively affect the environment and influence the society, then we're building a more sustainable future.

As a prospective green investor wanting to build your green portfolio, make sure to do your own research on green investments first. Check their prospectus to see if the companies fit the "green" definition.

And even if green investing won't stop climate change in its tracks, putting your money in organizations that build better and greener projects is already a big deal. Your investment, no matter how small, can really help change the world for the better.



Group urges stronger disaster-resilience policy under next admin

AN ADVOCACY group championing environmental stewardship is calling on the country's next set of leaders to adopt new policies and push legislation that would build resilience to disasters, both natural and man-made.

Felix Vitangcol, co-convenor of Philippine Business for Environmen-

tal Stewardship (PBEST), said the incoming administration should focus on the upgrade and modernization of infrastructure and services in the context of sustainable development.

"They have their work cut out for them," Vitangcol said. "They face the daunting job of dealing with the ef-

fects of climate change and pursuing measures to address it."

Modern grids, for instance, should address not only the short-term needs of providing power to communities and industries, but also people's need for a healthier and safer environment, he said.

Vitangcol, an engineer, also said "reforms in competition policy should help bring about energy transition faster."

"For example, PBEST supports proposals to make fixed-price bids, carve-out clauses and uniform force-majeure provisions mandatory in power purchase contracts," he added.



USAID helps women address ocean plastic crisis

In celebration of Women's Month and Earth Day, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines Inc. and the World Wide Fund for Nature Philippines (WWF-Philippines) to empower women in the waste sector.

Through the Women in Waste's Economic Empowerment Activity under the Clean Cities, Blue Ocean program, USAID will work with partners to transform their business ideas into startups, expanded enterprises or franchised operations through training, mentoring and funding.

"USAID believes that to save our planet, we need to invest in our planet," said USAID Philippines Mission Director Ryan Washburn. "USAID is pleased to find an ally in Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines and WWF-Philippines in uplifting the lives of Filipino women working in the informal waste sector and turning the tide in ocean plastic pollution."

Women play a critical role in the solid waste management and recycling sectors. The majority of them serve in informal positions as waste collectors, owners or employees of small recycling centers, junk shops and upcycling enterprises.

Despite their prevalence in the sector, women face gendered structural barriers that limit their earning power and constrain their access to opportunities for upward mobility. They are underpaid compared to their male colleagues, and their contribution in preventing plastic litter from reaching the ocean is undervalued.

"Our partnership with USAID and Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines will help us transform the lives of women who are our frontliners in protecting our environment," said WWF-Philippines executive director Katherine Custodio. "We look forward to working with women entrepreneurs in Metro Manila in crafting solutions to address plastic pollution problems."

USAID strongly believes that partnerships and collaborations designed according to local systems and environments are integral to successfully address gender inequality and ocean plastic pollution.

"Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines is pleased to partner with USAID and WWF-Philippines in helping women in waste establish successful businesses that will improve their lives," said Coca Cola Foundation Philippines president Ma. Cecilia Alcantara. "We are thrilled to support initiatives that will help establish effective community recycling and proper waste management solutions."

Women play a critical role in the solid waste management and recycling sectors. The majority of them serve in informal positions as waste collectors, owners or employees of small recycling centers, junk shops and upcycling enterprises.



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Daily Tribune

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PAGE

UPPER
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PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

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04-09-22
DATE

TITLE: USHD helps women address ocean plastic crisis

PAGE 2/2



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF US EMBASSY

SEATED: Katherine Custodio, WWF-Philippines executive director; Rene Acosta, USAID Clean Cities, Blue Ocean (CCBO) Program Asia regional director; and Cecilia Alcantara, Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines president sign the MOU that aims to help empower women in the waste sector. They are joined by Anna de Chavez, Women in Waste's Economic Empowerment activity manager; Jon Angin, USAID CCBO Program Chief of Party; Cloda Marie Urquico, WWF-Philippines Corporate Partnerships manager; and Atty. Cashmer Dirampaten, Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines trustee and vice president.



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A4
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

04-09-22

TITLE: Asean environmental diplomacy: A hit and a miss

PAGE 1/3

DATE

Asean environmental diplomacy: A hit and a miss

THERE are trivia concerning the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean). Established in 1967 by the Bangkok Declaration, its founding members are Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Brunei Darussalam joined in 1984, Vietnam in 1995, Laos and Myanmar in 1997, and Cambodia in 1999.

As originally conceived, Asean



AMBASSADORS'
CORNER

**AMADO S.
TOLENTINO JR.**

is an economic union which promotes cooperation and facilitates economic, political and socio-cultural integration between members and other states in Asia.

Understandably, no mention was made of cooperation on environmental concerns. Be that as it may, world events in the field of environment culminating with the 1972 UN Stockholm Declaration which called for regional cooperation on the environment, led to Asean's sub-regional environment program in 1978.

In 2003, an Asean Charter gave

legal personality to the bloc which for the past 42 years operated as a coalition of states born out of the Bangkok Declaration. To realize the purposes of the Charter, Asean leaders adopted a road map for an Asean Community by 2015 consisting of three community blueprints — political security, socio-cultural and economic pillars.

► **TolentinoA5**



■ **TOLENTINO FROM A4**

Asean environmental diplomacy: A hit and a miss

The following is "a hit and a miss" in the history of Asean environmental diplomacy.

Committee on the environment

Formal environmental diplomacy was rather late in coming into the structure of Asean. In the absence of a formally set up committee, environmental issues were handled by a sub-regional arrangement as mentioned above under the aegis of the Asean committee on science and technology with an Asean Environment Program backed up by the UN Environment Program (UNEP) and other international organizations.

By coincidence, a Ministry of Human Settlements was created under the 1973 Philippine Constitution which adopted a hybrid parliamentary system of government. The human settlements minister was a member of the Asean Ministerial Meeting on the Environment group and worked closely with the Asean Senior Officials on the Environment. As such the minister had a hand in convening the first Ministerial Meeting on the Environment held in Manila in 1981. That Asean meeting produced the Manila Declaration on the Environment which formally established an Asean committee on the environment with priority areas as follows: environmental management, including environmental impact assessment; nature conservation and terrestrial ecosystems; marine environment; industry and environment; environmental education and training and environmental information.

At the time, Asean had only five members. During the last day of the meeting and prior to the actual signing of the Manila Declaration, representatives from two Asean countries manifested that they did not carry their respective governments' authority to sign any legal instrument which meant the meeting would not have the desired Manila Declaration even as a soft law instrument.

The session was suspended, and the Philippine human settlements minister conferred privately with the two delegates separately. As expected, the two acceded to the minister's persuasive arguments even if it meant losing their jobs when they got back home, or so they said.

Anyway, the two senior officials did not lose their jobs. The Manila Declaration became the starting point of the formal conduct of Asean environmental diplomacy and active cooperation on environmental matters which led to the very successful Asean Heritage Parks program, among others, and the choice of the Philippines to host the Asean Center for Biodiversity (with EU financial support) at the UP Los Baños campus.

Agreement on nature conservation

During the late 1970s the original five Asean countries began exploring conservation issues from a regional perspective. For this purpose, a communication was sent to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) through its Commission on Environmental Law (CEL) on the possibility of assistance in the preparation of a working draft of a nature conservation agreement for the region.

Those were the years when conservation was being recast in the context of global human development about which the World Conservation Strategy was launched by IUCN, WWF and UNEP. The request from the Asean region was the first opportunity for the IUCN Law Program to translate new concepts, e.g., maintaining essential ecological processes and life support systems, preserving biodiversity, and ensuring sustainability of species and ecosystems, etc., into international law.

By May 1981, the IUCN Environmental Law Center, with the CEL, had conducted a workshop of legal

and technical experts to consider and amend the draft as needed. The draft was well received at the workshop and adopted in 1983 by the Asean Senior Officials on the Environment. A final text was concluded at the Asean Environment Ministers Meeting in 1984 and signed by the Asean Foreign Ministers Conference in 1985.

The IUCN considered the text the most advanced regional conservation treaty in existence and a major achievement in the field of policy and law. Be that as it may, problems with the Agreement's entry into force surfaced because of the insufficient ratification of six states, including Brunei Darussalam which joined the Asean in 1984.

Only three states signed the Agreement which required six ratifications to enter into force. Simply explained, consensus is the normal decision-making practice of Asean states. While it was accepted by both the Asean environment and foreign affairs ministers, there was resistance from some countries and signatures did not follow.

In 1998, a member country was noted to have expressed the view that "...the Asean Agreement was not the Asean Way."

Today, there are 10 member states but signatures/ratifications are still insufficient.

Ecosystems approach

The Asean Agreement was the first treaty instrument to incorporate an ecosystem approach and to translate the objectives of the World Conservation Strategy into a framework of duties and rights in environmental law. It became part of a special class of regional agreements (along with the Bern Convention of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, and after the African Convention) that represented "the most progressive policies in applying environmental law for regional needs." The IUCN Law Program considered the treaty as an example that might be emulated in other regions.

In fact, it contained articles taken directly from the World Conservation



Strategy — conservation of species and ecosystems and the conservation of ecological processes. It required the Contracting Parties to take action to maintain genetic diversity and ensure sustainable use of harvested species, listing endangered species in an appendix and noting the Parties' special responsibility to protect endemic species. It included pollution control provisions, measures for land use planning, protected areas, environmental impact assessment as well as national level scientific research, training and administration.

While the Agreement never formally entered into force, it remains an important international law instrument in the history of modern environmental law for its conceptual advances and positive impact on the region. Many of the agreement's forward-looking principles were incorporated into the region's activities and, importantly, member states began working individually to implement the agreement's concepts at national level. By 2000, the Philippines, the Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah, and Indonesia had adopted or were in the process of incorporating conservation principles in their legislation concerning natural resources use and conservation.

Indeed, the Agreement was seen as the first effort to make a comprehensive treaty for sustainable development which, for the 1990s, was revolutionary and far-reaching. "It is considered as a forerunner, at the regional level, of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which later incorporated many of the Asean Agreement's concepts," remarked Dr. Françoise Burhenne-Guilmin, the internationally renowned environmental law expert and former director of the IUCN Environmental Law Center in Bonn (Germany).

The author served as the first director of the Environmental Management Bureau (DENR) and was coordinator of the Asean Experts Group on the Environment (now known as the Asean Senior Officials on the Environment).

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Public must learn to cope with more Covid-19 variants

By Lade Jean Kabagani April 8, 2022, 9:03 pm



(PNA file photo)

MANILA – The emergence of different Covid-19 variants would always pose a threat and it is up to the people on how they will follow precautions and efforts to reduce transmissions.

Vaccine expert panel chair, Dr. Nina Gloriani, said Friday the world must have learned to live with the coronavirus disease 2019 by now.

“Nasa sa atin po iyan kung paano natin maiiwasan na dumami ulit yung kaso. Habang may mga kaso kahit sabihin nating bumaba iyan, meron at meron pa ring pag-uumpisahan iyang transmission ulit, iyong multiplication, 'yung mutation ng virus na iyan (It's up to us on how we could prevent the increase in cases. While there are still cases, even if they go down, the transmission has always point of beginnings, its multiplications, the mutations of the virus),” Gloriani said in a virtual public briefing.

Gloriani said the recombinant Omicron XE variant, reportedly detected in the United Kingdom, is about 10 percent more transmissible than its Omicron parent, BA.2, but its biological mutation activity and behavioral characteristics are still being studied.

“We don't really expect much difference kasi 'pag konti lang ang mutation, hindi rin ganoon kalaki ang magiging change sa kanyang (because if it has fewer mutation, there's no much change in its) behavioral characteristics. We do not know that yet so susundan na lang po natin iyan (we will follow it up),” she said.

Dr. Edsel Salvana, Department of Health–Technical Advisory Group member, earlier said there is always a possibility that the Omicron XE will enter the country.

In case it happens, Salvana said vaccines remain the most effective tools against the recombinant variant.



Public must learn to cope with more Covid-19 variants

The World Health Organization (WHO) earlier said it is monitoring recombinant Covid-19 variants, including the XE Omicron hybrid, XD lineage (a combination of the Delta and Omicron variants), and the XE hybrid of Omicron sub-lineages BA.1 and BA.2.

The WHO assessment includes severity, impact on vaccine performance, and risk of reinfection. **(PNA)**



Expert backs WHO warning on case surge post-election

By Lade Jean Kabagani April 8, 2022, 8:03 pm



CROWD SUPPORT. People fill Earnshaw Street in Sampaloc, Manila during the proclamation rally of mayoralty candidate, Vice Mayor Honey Lacuna, on March 27, 2022. Experts fear that gatherings during the Holy Week and campaign period may result in another Covid-19 case surge after the May 9 polls. (PNA photo by Avito Dalan)

MANILA – Vaccine expert panel chairperson, Dr. Nina Gloriani, on Friday backed the World Health Organization warning of possible Covid-19 surge in the country after the May 9 elections.

Gloriani also cautioned the public about conducting mass gatherings, especially during the Holy Week.

“Ito po iyong mga pagkakataon na nagtitipon-tipon ang mga tao. May mga ilan diyan na baka may dala-dala ng virus, so hindi natin alam iyon. So, importante po na patuloy natin iyong ating mga pag-adhere sa mga practice ng (This is the time when people get together. We may not know someone is carrying the virus. So it is important that we continue adhering to the practices of) minimum public health precautions,” she said in a virtual interview.

Health authorities also fear lower vaccination turnout amid the campaign and election period.

Thus, other means and strategies to inoculate more are being planned, including house-to-house vaccination, while inoculation in job sites, pharmacies, clinics, and even churches are being implemented.

The latest data showed that of the more than 66.2 million fully vaccinated Filipinos, only 12.2 million have booster doses.

As of April 6, the country has 32,463 active cases out of the total 3.6 million confirmed infections.



Expert backs WHO warning on case surge post-election

Gloriani said the government's priority is to continue encouraging the unvaccinated individuals to avail themselves of vaccines amid the election frenzy.

“Well, of course, *kapag isa lang ang dose, may kaunting proteksiyon. Kapag nakumpleto ninyo iyong pangalawa, mas mataas ang proteksiyon. After three months, at least, at puwede na kayo sa third dose, mas mataas pa iyong proteksiyon po at lalung-lalo na sa variants* (Well of course, if you get one dose, you have limited protections. When you complete the full doses, you will have higher protection. After three months, at least, you can now get third dose with much higher protection, especially against variants),” she added.

Gloriani reminded the public anew that the Covid-19 pandemic is not yet over and wearing of mask and physical distancing must be maintained. *(PNA)*



WHO lauds PH pandemic response

By Ma. Teresa Montemayor April 8, 2022, 4:32 pm



Health Secretary Francisco Duque III (PNA photo by Jess Escaros)

MANILA – The World Health Organization has commended the country's response to the coronavirus pandemic.

In an online media forum, Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said WHO Regional Director for Western Pacific, Dr. Takeshi Kasai, commended Health Secretary Francisco Duque III's "solid leadership" amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Gayundin, binati ng Covax ang ating naging agarang pag-angkat ng mga bakuna sa ating bansa. Lahat ng ito ay ginagawa ng ating pamahalaan at Kagawaran ng Kalusugan para sa proteksiyon ng bawat Pilipino (The Covax also commended our immediate purchase of Covid-19 vaccines. The government and Department of Health do all these for the protection of all Filipinos)," she said, referring to the global initiative for supporting fair vaccine allocation.

As of April 7, more than 66.5 million or 73.9 percent of our targeted population are already fully vaccinated against Covid-19.

Out of the 47.5 million eligible citizens, more than 12.3 million have received their booster shots.

About 1.1 million children and 9 million adolescents have been fully vaccinated against the disease.

Vergeire said coronavirus cases in the National Capital Region and all island groups are experiencing a plateau.

For the period of March 31 to April 6, the country logged 2,499 new infections which brought the total confirmed cases to 3,680,244 with only .88 percent of them active.



WHO lauds PH pandemic response

The low number of cases indicates low positivity rate from last week's 2 percent to 1.8 positivity rate for the recent week.

The average number of daily cases is 357 -- two percent lower compared to the previous week.

Vergeire noted that most of the Covid-19 admissions are mild and moderate cases.

As of April 5, data from the National Admissions by Health Status showed that 1,142 of the cases were asymptomatic; 2,158, mild; 2,194, moderate; 476, severe and 231, critical. (*PNA*)

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