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DENR

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR Conducts Assessment of Boracay Activities

Friday, March 18, 2022 [Journal Online](#)



Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary for Legal, Administration, Human Resources and Legislative Affairs Atty. Ernesto D. Adobo, Jr. (standing) presides over the DENR Assessment of the Remaining Boracay Rehabilitation Activities in preparation for the end of term of the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) in June 2022. Pursuant to Executive Order 147, the BIATF will be deemed dissolved on June 30, 2022, “unless extended or sooner terminated by the President.” The DENR is chair of the Task Force by virtue of Executive Order No. 53 “Creating a Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force Providing for its Powers and Functions and those of the member-agencies thereof, and other measures to reverse the degradation of Boracay Island.” [DENR](#) officials reported on the status of their rehabilitation activities during the assessment-workshop.



Health protocols to be observed in Dolomite beach reopening —DENR

By SUNDY MAE LOCUS, GMA News

Published March 18, 2022 3:33pm

Minimum public health standards will be strictly implemented once the Manila Dolomite Beach reopens to the public, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said Friday.

At the Laging Handa press briefing, DENR officer-in-charge Jim Sampulna said the agency will follow the guidelines issued by the country's pandemic task force to ensure public health safety in the man-made beach.

This will include wearing of face masks, social distancing, and limiting of visitors allowed at a certain period.

"We refer to the IATF guidelines. Social distancing, maglalagay ng (wearing of) face mask," Sampulna said.

"Wag natin masyadong punuin 'yun. Kasi minsan na-compromise ang social distancing pag hindi natin na-control ang mga pumapasok. Tingnan natin ang capacity ng area na hindi naman nagkukumpulan ang mga tao," he said.

(We will not allow it to be filled to its full capacity. Social distancing will be compromised if we will not be able to control the entry of people. Let's study the capacity of the area to prevent that.)

The environment agency previously ordered the [closing of the Dolomite beach](#) to give way for its rehabilitation. It is set to reopen after the Holy Week.

Earlier in the day, Sampulna personally visited the area to check on the progress of the rehabilitation work .

The DENR wants to make the white sand beach "[swimmable](#)" [before the end of the Duterte administration](#) — a scenario only possible if its water quality standard reaches 100 most probable number (mpn) per 100 milliliters (mL).

Latest data from the Manila Bay Coordinating Office (MBCO) showed that the coliform level in the Baywalk area notably decreased from an average of 21,100 mpn per 100 ml at the third quarter of 2021 from 5.75 million mpn per 100 mL in 2019.

Sampulna said DENR is "near" the target stressing its continuous rehabilitation efforts including the inspection of nearby establishments to check for water waste management compliance.

"Ang ating mpn from billions ay malapit-lapit na tayo sa target na pamantayan. Itong 100 (mpn)," he said.

(We are near our target. From billions, we are near the standard of 100 mpn per 100 ml.)

Sampulna said the DENR eyes to finish the expansion of the man-made beach by April.—AOL, GMA News



Dolomite beach reopening, mahigpit na health protocols, ipatutupad — DENR

ni [Lolet Abania](#) | March 18, 2022



Mahigpit na ipapatupad ang minimum public health standards kapag muling binuksan ang Manila Dolomite Beach sa publiko, ayon sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Sa Laging Handa press briefing ngayong Biyernes, sinabi ni DENR officer-in-charge Jim Sampulna na susunod ang ahensiya sa mga guidelines na inisyu ng pandemic task force ng bansa para tiyakin na ipinatutupad ang public health safety sa man-made beach.

Kabilang dito ang pagsusuot ng face masks, social distancing, at paglimita sa mga papayagang bumisita sa partikular na oras.

“We refer to the IATF guidelines. Social distancing, maglalagay ng (wearing of) face mask,” sabi ni Sampulna.

“Wag natin masyadong punuin ‘yun. Kasi minsan na-compromise ang social distancing ‘pag hindi natin na-control ang mga pumapasok. Tingnan natin ang capacity ng area na hindi naman nagkukumpulan ang mga tao,” saad ng opisyal.



Dolomite beach reopening, mahigpit na health protocols, ipatutupad — DENR

Una nang iniutos ng DENR na isara ang Dolomite beach para magbigay-daan sa rehabilitasyon nito. Nakatakda namang muli itong buksan matapos ang Holy Week.

Personal na ring binisita ni Sampulna ngayong umaga ang lugar para i-check ang ginagawang rehabilitasyon nito.

Nais naman ng DENR na gawin ang white sand beach na “swimmable” bago magtapos ang Duterte administration, kung saan isang scenario na posible lamang kung ang kanilang water quality standard ay umabot sa 100 most probable number (mpn) kada 100 milliliters (mL).

Sa latest data mula sa Manila Bay Coordinating Office (MBCO) na ipinakita, ang coliform level sa Baywalk area ay kapansin-pansing nabawasan mula sa average ng 21,100 mpn kada 100 ml sa ikatlong quarter ng 2021 mula 5.75 million mpn kada 100 mL noong 2019.

Ayon kay Sampulna, ang DENR ay “malapit” na sa target dahil aniya, sa patuloy na rehabilitation efforts na isinasagawa kabilang na ang inspeksyon sa kalapit na mga establisimyento para alamin kung sumusunod ang mga ito sa water waste management compliance.

“Ang ating mpn from billions ay malapit-lapit na tayo sa target na pamantayan. Itong 100 (mpn),” ani Sampulna.

Aniya pa, target mh DENR na tapusin ang expansion ng man-made beach sa Abril.



Health protocols Dolomite beach reopening, siniguro



March 18, 2022 @ 5:00 PM 13 hours ago

MANILA, Philippines- Mahigpit na ipatutupad ang minimum public health standards sa muling pagbubukas ng Manila Dolomite Beach sa publiko, ayon sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) nitong Biyernes.

Sa Laging Handa press briefing, sinabi ni DENR officer-in-charge Jim Sampulnana susunod ang ahensya sa mga alituntunin na ipinalabas ng pandemic task force upang siguruhin ang public health safety sa man-made beach.

Kabilang dito ang pagsusuot ng face masks, social distancing, at paglilimita sa mga papapasuking bisita.

“We refer to the IATF guidelines. Social distancing, maglalagay ng (wearing of) face mask,” ani Sampulna.

“Wag natin masyadong punuin ‘yun. Kasi minsan na-compromise ang social distancing pag hindi natin na-control ang mga pumapasok. Tingnan natin ang capacity ng area na hindi naman nagkukumpalan ang mga tao,”dagdag pa niya.

Matatandaang kamakailan ay ipinasara ng ahensya ang Dolomite beach upang bigyang-daan ang rehabilitasyon nito. Muli itong magbubuka sa publiko pagkatapos ng Mahal na Araw. **RNT/SA**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/health-protocols-dolomite-beach-reopening-siniguro/>



Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/100064206931542/posts/337931895023706/?app=fbl>



Ginalugad ng DENR: Manila Bay nangangamoy pa!

By [Abante News](#) Last updated Mar 19, 2022



Nagbanta ang bagong kalihim ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na ipasasara ang mga establisimiyentong patuloy na nagtatapon ng maruming tubig direktso sa Manila Bay.

Inihayag ito ni DENR acting Secretary Jim Sampulna matapos ang ginawang pag-inspeksiyon sa Manila Bay kung saan nalanghap pa rin umano niya ang mabahong amoy dito.

“When I visited the area, may naamoy ako, masangang pa rin na hindi masyadong kanais-nais. Sabi ko let’s look into this, tingnan natin para ma-perfect natin iyong ginagawa natin ditto,” ani Sampulna.

May ginagawa na aniya silang saturation drive sa mga establisimiyento malapit sa Manila Bay matapos na magpadala ng tig-apat na kinatawan ang 16 regional office ng DENR para tumulong sa National Capital Region sa paglilinis sa nasabing lugar.

Sinabi ng kalihim na nakatakdang magsumite ng report sa loob ng linggong ito at ang sinomang mapapatunayang pasaway na establisimiyento ay sasampahan agad ng kaso.

“Kung sino ang nagtatapon ng madumi pa sa dagat natin, kung mapapatunayan natin ang isang establisimiyento ay nagtatapon ng marumi sa ating karagatan ay pa-file-an po namin ng kaso, ipapasara na namin kaagad,” babala pa ni Sampulna.

Matatandaang ipinasara ni dating DENR secretary Roy Cimatu ang isang restaurant sa harap ng Manila Bay matapos matuklasan na dumidiretso sa dagat ang kanilang maruming tubig. (Aileen Taliping)

Source: <https://www.abante.com.ph/ginalugad-ng-denr-manila-bay-nangangamoy-pa/>



DENR calls for responsible mining in Cagayan Valley



By [Leander C. Domingo](#)

March 19, 2022

SANTIAGO CITY: The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has ordered key environment officials of Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) to ensure the cleanliness of water bodies and compliance with the standards of mining operators.

Environment Undersecretary for Field Operations Juan Miguel Cuna told officials in this mining region "to give importance to the cleanliness of all waterways [and] let us take this seriously."

Cuna was in Santiago in Isabela to join the three-day regional management conference from March 15 to 17, 2022. Region 2 hosts at least four large-scale mining companies.

"This is a mining region. With the lifting of the moratorium on mining permits, there is a corresponding responsibility for us to ensure that the mining is done properly. We make sure that these mining companies are compliant," Cuna said, reminding the agency's obligation to ensure responsible mining.

Nueva Vizcaya province hosts the British mine firm FCF Minerals Corp. that operates the Runruno Gold-Molybdenum Project in Quezon town and the Australian OceanaGold that operates the Didipio Gold and Copper Project in Kasibu town.

Isabela province also hosts Dinapigue Mining Corp. while Cagayan province hosts JDVC Resources Corp. that operates the Offshore Magnetite Mining Project.

In April 2021, Executive Order (EO) 130 was signed by President Rodrigo Duterte lifting the nine-year ban on mineral agreements to boost the country's economy.

Malacañang said the industry will increase employment opportunities in remote rural areas.

While directing the DENR to strictly implement mines safety and environmental policies, EO 130 also aims to ensure strict implementation of and compliance with the recommended measures of the Mining Industry Coordinating Council involving all mining operations, including other pertinent laws, rules and regulations, and the terms and conditions of mineral extraction agreements.

"The government's efforts in the rehabilitation of the famous Boracay Island and Manila Bay should be replicated in restoring other water bodies in the country," he said.

Cuna also cited the accomplishments of the DENR-led Build Back Better Regional Task Force to restore the Cagayan River and directed field officials to ensure that no structure should be established in no-build zones or within the easement areas.

Assure clean waters



DENR calls for responsible mining in Cagayan Valley

Meanwhile, the status of the Forestry Master Plan, Philippine Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan and Lands Strategic Plan were presented during the regional management conference. The importance of strategic and geospatial planning was also discussed.

Regional executive director Gwendolyn Bambalan noted that revisiting master plans and knowing the baselines and universal data are necessary for developing good plans.

"We don't just implement. We implement programs toward addressing particular DENR concerns. That is why we have to have good plans," she said.

Citing the marching order of Environment Secretary Jim Sampulna, Bambalan reminded assistant regional directors, bureau regional directors, provincial and community environment and natural resources officers, and division chiefs regionwide to strictly observe and implement environmental laws and applicable guidelines in exercising their duties and responsibilities.

"We were also directed to remain vigilant in the protection, conservation and management of the environment and natural resources; and to avoid any form of nefarious activities and corruption," she added.



Partnership for Urban Biodiversity and Green Spaces

Friday, March 18, 2022 Journal Online



The **Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)** in partnership with the local government of Quezon City and Metro Pacific Investments Corporation (MPIC) will soon create a model biodiversity-friendly space in Quezon City to promote public appreciation of urban biodiversity and green spaces in the city. DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau OIC Director Natividad Bernardino, **DENR**-National Capital Region Executive Director Jacqueline Caanca, Quezon City Administrator Michael Victor Alimurung, and MPIC Executive Director and Chief Finance, Risk, and Sustainability Officer Chaye Cabal-Revilla (from left to right) sign a memorandum of agreement on March 15, 2022 at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center in Quezon City for the undertaking. The parties commit to jointly lead the development and management of Gabay Kalikasan Park, formerly Madison Park in New Manila, Quezon City from 2022 to 2024. The country's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2028 envisions the increase of green spaces in the cities of Quezon, Caloocan, Manila, Cebu, and Davao.



'Wildlife smuggling' napigilan ng Customs



March 18, 2022 @ 11:21 AM 19 hours ago

MANILA, Philippines – Naharang ng mga tauhan ng Bureau of Customs (BOC) ang tangkang pag-ismagel sa walong Gecko Lizards, 40 Spiderlings at 5 Tarantula na idineklara bilang mga “cosmetics” at “commercial samples” na ipapadala sana sa Dubai, UAE.

Nabatid sa BOC, ang unang parcel na nagmula sa Krongsamwatawantok-Bangkok, Thailand ay idineklara na naglalaman ng “Commercial Sample” ngunit nabuking sa isinagawang inspeksyon naglalaman ito ng walong buhay na gecko Lizards na nakapaloob sa transparent containers.

Sumunod naman na nadiskubre sa isang padala na patungo sanang Dubai na idineklara na naglalaman umano ng “Facial Skin Set/Quick Fix Mattefier” ay ang nasa 40 Spiderlings at 5 Tarantula.

Matapos ang pagkakadiskubre sa mga nasabing “wildlife species”, agad itong iturn-over sa pangangalaga ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) para sa monitoring at safekeeping nito.

“The said illegal shipments constitutes a violation under Section 1113 in relation to Section 117 and 1401 of RA 10863 or “Customs Modernization and Tariff Act” and Section 27 of RA 9147 or “Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.” saad ng BOC. **Jay Reyes**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/wildlife-smuggling-napigilan-ng-customs/>



Tarantula, tuko bumulaga sa NAIA

By [Abante News](#) Last updated Mar 18, 2022



PHOTO COURTESY OF FACEBOOK.COM/BUREAUOFCUSTOMSPH

Napigil ng Bureau of Customs (BOC) ang pagpuslit ng mga tarantula, tuko, butiki at spiderling sa Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) na idineklara bilang ‘cosmetics product’.

Natuklasan ng Customs ang tangkang wildlife smuggling sa iba’t ibang bodega kung saan nasamsam ang walong gecko lizard, 40 spiderling at limang tarantula nakapangalan sa isang residente ng Parañaque City,

Ang iba pang padala ay ipapadala na sana patungong Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Ayon sa ulat, ang parcel ay nanggaling sa Bangkok, Thailand ay idineklara bilang ‘commercial sample’ kung saan natagpuan ang walong tuko na nakatago sa mga nakabalot na transparent na lalagyan.

Isa pang shipment na patungo sa Dubai ang naharang din mula sa isang shipper mula sa Pasay City.

Ang naturang package ay idineklara naman bilang ‘facial skin set/quick fix mattefier’, ngunit nang buksan ay tumambad ang 40 spiderling at limang tarantula.

Ang mga nasamsam na wildlife ay agad na ibinigay sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) para sa safekeeping ng mga hayop. (Otto Osorio)



FPRDI to develop incense from forest product residues

By Ma. Cristina Arayata March 18, 2022, 8:13 pm



FOREST PRODUCTS. This undated photo shows barks, leaves, and resins of forest species after oil extraction that will be used by the Forest Products Research and Development Institute (FPRDI) in developing incense products using hydrosols and solid residues in Laguna. The FPRDI will also study the incense products' ability to repel insects. *(Photo courtesy of FPRDI director Romulo Aggangan)*

MANILA - The Forest Products Research and Development Institute (FPRDI) is currently developing incense products using residues from extracted and processed forest materials, its chief announced Friday.

"We are targeting to develop incense cones and incense sticks, using hydrosols and solid residues from barks, leaves and resins of raw materials or forest species after oil extraction," FPRDI director Romulo Aggangan told the Philippine News Agency in an interview.

Aside from being fragrant, the incense products will be assessed to determine their ability to repel insects such as mosquitoes, flies, and ants.

"Once the prototype products are developed and optimized, their ability to repel insects will be tested. After filing for IP (intellectual property) protection, (product) piloting and technology adoption will follow," he said.

Aggangan pointed out that these products are both fragrant and may also be used as an insect repellent. Hydrosols will be used as a liquid ingredient instead of plain water, thus making it aromatic.

He added that the product's ability to repel insects is likely since the raw materials to be used are known to have that capability.

The FPRDI has allocated PHP612,000 this year for this study, which started in January 2022 and will run until December 2023.



FPRDI to develop incense from forest product residues

This study is part of the FPRDI's Flavors and Fragrances from the Forest Technology Program (F3TP) that seeks to explore and utilize non-timber and timber forest products, by conducting and producing research and development (R&D) innovations and products.

Through the F3TP, the FPRDI has been exploring healthcare and aromatherapy products such as essential oils, salves, bar, and liquid hand soaps, spray mist, massage oils, foot deodorants, and lotions using extracted cinnamon oils and hydrosol.

Aggangan said trial production of soaps, lotions, massage oils, and foot deodorants is ongoing. By the second quarter of this year, the FPRDI will start the sensory testing for these products.

In a taped report aired on Friday, Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Secretary Fortunato de la Peña said that through the F3TP, the FPRDI will be developing by-products that will not only lessen waste accumulation but also become a potential source of income for local communities and industries.

"The anticipated volume of process residues is greater at the commercial scale, thus the need to explore other possible uses for these wastes. If not managed properly, the accumulated wastes can pose possible environmental problems," De la Peña said. *(PNA)*



Newly-opened nursery, eco-learning center aim to protect La Mesa watershed

By [Stanley Buenafe Gajete, CNN Philippines](#)

Published Mar 18, 2022 6:40:47 PM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, March 18)— The Million Trees Foundation Inc. (MTFI) opened on Friday its Nursery and Eco-Learning Center at the La Mesa Watershed in Quezon City to protect and ensure reforestation in the area.

The center is the maiden project for the five-hectare area leased to MTFI by the Philippine government. It aims to provide optimum conditions for the trees that will be planted in different reforestation projects.

It was also set up to ensure the sustainability of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System's annual Million Tree Challenge.

"It's a miracle in itself how we transform this place in four or five months," said Melandrew Velasco, President and Executive Director of MTFI.

"*Hindi lang sapat 'yung pagtatanim, kailangan matuto tayong mag-alaga, at isa rin yun sa mga natutunan namin in this period. Importante rin na mabuhay 'yung mga itinanim so nag-invest din tayo doon sa pag-aalaga sa mga naitanim,*" Maynilad Chief Operating Officer Randy Estrellado said.

[Translation: Planting is not enough. We need to learn how to take care of them, and this is also a lesson for us in this period. It's important for them to survive so we should also invest in taking care of the plants.]



Newly-opened nursery, eco-learning center aim to protect La Mesa watershed

The project targets to produce 500,000 trees including Narra, Ylang-ylang, and Bamboo.

San Miguel Corporation President and Chief Executive Officer Ramon S. Ang, one of the partners of MTFI, was also present during the inauguration and opening of facilities.

The center will also serve as a learning hub for environment protection and venue for seminars and trainings.

The MTFI has planted 5.2 million trees in five years, and eyes 10 million more until 2030.



GCash users plant milestone 1 million virtual trees in GForest

By [Richmond Mercurio](#)(The Philippine Star)
- March 19, 2022 - 12:00am



Mobile wallet GCash said it has virtually planted one million trees through GForest.
Interaksyon / File

MANILA, Philippines — The environmental sustainability feature on the GCash app has hit a new milestone, as more users are helping contribute in the fight against climate change.

Mobile wallet GCash said it has virtually planted one million trees through GForest.

The virtual trees are planted by GCash users via the GForest on the app, and GCash in turn plants the real trees on their behalf.

“With the impacts of climate change, GCash capitalizes on technology in contributing and raising awareness to environmental conservation and sustainability,” GCash president and CEO Martha Sazon said.

GForest was launched in 2019 and now has nine million users.

Users can earn green energy points by using the various cashless services of GCash, such as send money, pay bills, or bank transfer on the app.

GCash said these digital financial services also lessen their carbon footprint, in addition to planting trees.

GForest users can also collect green energy every time they walk if they enable GCash to access their health app or fitness tracker.



GCash users plant milestone 1 million virtual trees in GForest

These green energy points can be used to plant virtual trees.

As of November 2021, GCash said more than 133 million digital and paperless transactions have been made in GCash to earn green energy points for GForest users.

It said this is in line with the company's mission to support environmental sustainability by keeping individual carbon footprint low and helping fight climate change.

"We hope that through GForest, we are able to empower more Filipinos to help in protecting the environment," Sazon said.

GCash said it is the only fintech company in the country to have a sustainability feature integrated within its app, and has been recognized by global sustainability organizations.

"The GForest program proves that marrying new technologies with creative sustainability solutions are something organizations can achieve," GCash vice president for communications and public affairs officer Chito Maniago said.

Aside from GForest, GCash's various digital products and services enable users to go cashless for various transactions, which helps keep their carbon footprint low and fight climate change.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/business/2022/03/19/2168266/gcash-users-plant-milestone-1-million-virtual-trees-gforest/amp/>



2 Barmm lawmakers file water quality management bill

March 18, 2022

TWO lawmakers in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (Barmm) have filed a bill designed to improve water quality management in the region.

The measure, Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) Bill 176, also known as "An Act promoting clean water in the Bangsamoro, including safe drinking water, through effective water quality management, appropriating funds therefor, and for other purposes," was authored by Barmm Parliament Members Amir Mawallil and Baintan Ampatuan.

Mawallil said the BTA Bill 176, which they filed on Tuesday, March 15, seeks to address the persistent lack of potable water in Barmm.

BTA Bill 176, once approved into a law, will give Barmm the mandate to develop an effective system of water quality management that will help protect human health, prevent drinking water health hazards, and protect, preserve, and revive the quality of fresh, brackish, and marine waters in the region.

The measure also seeks to create the Bangsamoro Water Resources Board (BWRB), which will be composed of the Minister of Environment, Natural Resources, and Energy as chairperson; and the Minister of Health as vice-chairperson; with members as follows: Minister of Public Works, Minister of Interior and Local Government, Minister of Indigenous People's Affairs, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Agrarian Reform, Ministry of Science and Technology, Minister of Finance, Budget and Management, and BWRB Secretariat Director-General.

Mawallil said that under the measure, a Regional Water Quality Management Fund will be established for the following purposes: containment and clean-up operations of the government in water pollution cases; restoration of ecosystems and rehabilitation of affected areas; research, enforcement and monitoring activities; technical assistance to the implementing agencies; rewards and incentives; information and educational campaign; and such other disbursements made solely for the prevention, control or abatement of water pollution and management and administration of the management areas in the amounts authorized by the Board.

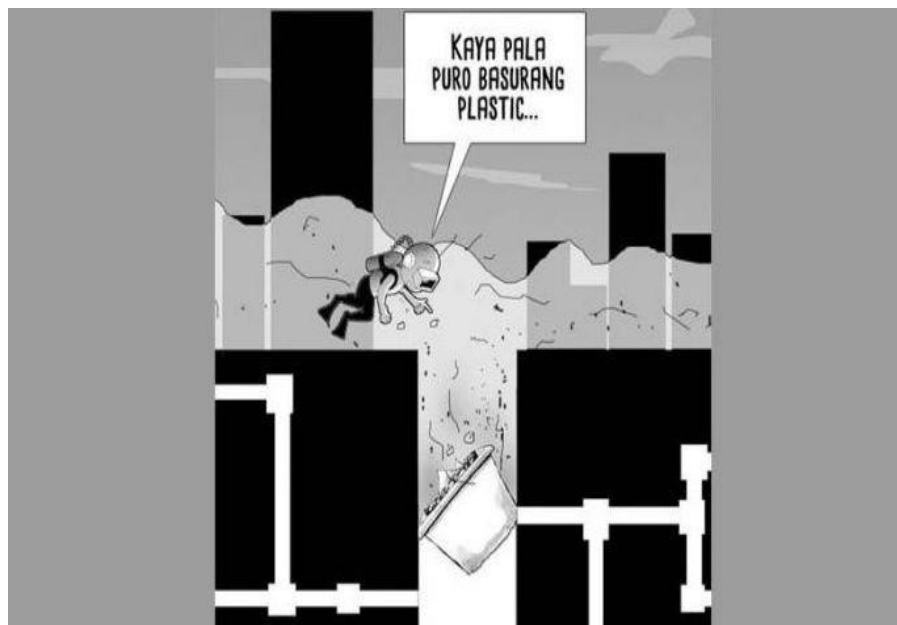
Under this bill, Mawallil said the BWRB will develop an incentive scheme to encourage local government units, water districts, enterprises, private entities, and individuals to develop effective water quality management, as well as actively participate in any programs geared toward the promotion of the same, as provided for in the measure. (**SunStar Zamboanga**)



EDITORIAL - Perwisyong baha dahil sa plastic na basura

(Pang-Masa)

- March 19, 2022 - 12:00am



KAUNTING ulan lang at baha agad sa España Boulevard, Rizal at Taft Avenues sa Maynila. Ganito ang nangyari noong nakaraang linggo. Umulan nang malakas na tumagal nang wala pang kalahating oras pero nagdulot agad ng baha sa España kaya maraming sasakyan ang hindi makaraan. Ganundin ang nangyari sa Taft Avenue. Maraming pasahero ang na-stranded. Ang iba, naglakad na lamang sa hanggang tuhod na baha. Isang kakaibang tanawin sa panahon ng tag-araw.

Basura ang dahilan kaya laging bumabaha sa Metro Manila particular na sa Maynila. Ilang dekada na ang problemang ito subalit hanggang ngayon, problema pa rin at mas malala dahil kaunting ulan, baha agad.

Inamin na noon ng Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) na mga basura ang dahilan nang pagbaha na karamihan ay pawang plastic. Hindi raw kaya ng pumping stations na pabilisin ang pagliit ng baha dahil sa mga nakabarang plastic na basura.

Gumastos ang pamahalaan ng bilyong piso para sa flood control program noong 2010 pero balewala rin sapagkat bumabaha pa rin dahil sa mga nakabarang basura. Hindi lang pangkaraniwang basura ang nakabara kundi mga plastic na hindi nabubulok. Karaniwang plastic sando bags, sache ng shampoo, 3-in-1 coffee, cup ng instant noodles, plastic shopping bags at ngayong may pandemya, nadagdag ang mga ginamit na face masks at face shields. Humantong na sa pusod ng dagat ang mga face mask.

Maraming estero ang hindi na gumagalaw ang tubig dahil sa dami ng basura. Kadalasang informal settlers na nakatira sa pampang ng estero ang nagtatapon ng mga basurang plastic. Naging basurahan nila sa mahabang panahon ang mga estero.



EDITORIAL - Perwisyong baha dahil sa plastic na basura

Noong nakaraang Marso 2, lumagda ang Pilipinas at iba pang bansa sa UN resolution para wakasan ang plastic pollution. Naganap ang historic resolution sa UN Environmental Assembly sa Nairobi, Kenya. Sa resolution, ipinaliwanag ang full life cycle ng plastic products — mula sa produksiyon at design disposal ng mga ito. Inaasahan na ang resolution ang magwawakas sa problema sa plastic pollution sa buong mundo.

Ipagpatuloy naman ng MMDA ang regular declogging sa drainages at maging sa mga estero. Maraming nakabara at dapat maalis ang mga iyon. Ipag-utos naman ng Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) sa mga kapitan ng barangay na paigtingin ang pagbabantay sa mga magtatapon ng basura sa mga kanal, estero, sapa at imburnal. Kastiguhin sila sa pag-apaw ng mga basurang plastic.



90% waste reduction eyed

March 18, 2022

OFFICIALS of the Cebu City Government expressed optimism that the daily collection of 600 tons of garbage in the city would be reduced by 90 percent once the recently approved construction of a P4.8 billion waste-to-energy (WTE) facility begins to operate.

The City also expects to get a share of the income from the WTE facility that will be built by New Sky Energy (Philippines) Inc. The WTE facility is expected to generate 18 megawatts of electric power from trash.

Councilor Joel Garganera, chairman of the committee on environment, said the WTE would also eliminate groundwater, air and soil pollution and reduce pathogens.

Garganera said the WTE would reduce the amount of garbage since only wastes that could not be recycled or those that are household hazardous wastes will be disposed at the landfill.

The project would create 400 jobs during the construction phase and another 100 jobs when the firm starts to operate, he said.

The Cebu City Government will also get a three percent share of the tipping fee for every ton of garbage that would be processed at the WTE facility and another five percent for those coming from other local government units.

Currently, the city pays a P700 tipping fee for every truck that drops garbage in a landfill area in the mountain barangay of Binaliw.

Based on records from the Department of Public Services (DPS), the City has spent a total of P2.1 billion for its garbage collection activities from 2017 to mid-March of 2022.

DPS head Jigo Dacua said the total amount represents the spending figures in 2017 (P348 million), 2018 (P361.6 million), 2019 (P366.2 million), 2020 (P381 million), 2021 (P404 million), and P300 million from January to mid-March 2022.

The City has already spent more than P1.8 billion for its garbage collection activities in the past five years from 2017 to 2022. Garganera said through the WTE, the City Government could save around P360 million in five years.

On the issue of incineration, Garganera cited some provisions involving the case of MMDA vs. Jancom (G. R. No. 147465).

“Section 20 does not absolutely prohibit incineration as a mode of waste disposal. Rather, only those burning processes which emit poisonous and toxic fumes are banned,” the councilor said. (PAC / TPT)

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1924038/cebu/local-news/90-waste-reduction-eyed>



EXPLAINER: Would Mayor Mike OK ordinance on incinerator when it is 'illegal under existing law'? Bill allowing waste-to-energy facilities is still pending in Senate.



Photos from www.no-burn.org and Cebu City News and Information Facebook page

[PACHICO A. SEARES](#)

March 16, 2022

THE SITUATION: [1] The Cebu City Council last March 9 passed the ordinance approving the joint venture agreement (JVA) between New Sky Energy Philippines Inc. and the City Government to build and operate a waste-to-energy facility on a six-hectare lot in the city.

The move has been opposed by environmental groups and "concerned citizens" since two years ago when the plan was first publicized. A picket in front of the legislative building on December 9, 2020 protested against the JVA which was then being negotiated. A review that then city administrator Floro Casas Jr. promised the public ended with the Sanggunian approval the other week, reviving opposers' demand for the City to scrap the plan.

[2] An Explainer inquiry with Congress Tuesday, March 15, on the status of Senate Bill #1789 showed that the proposal to allow WTE is still "pending second reading." Progress has been clearly slow since legislative action paused last September 21, 2020 and hasn't moved since then despite the "special order" category the bill got. The pandemic must be largely the cause since building a trash-burner doesn't compete well with other health concerns.



EXPLAINER: Would Mayor Mike OK ordinance on incinerator when it is 'illegal under existing law'? Bill allowing waste-to-energy facilities is still pending in Senate.

THE PROBLEM: It's not hard to see the problem. The Sanggunian approved the building of a WTE facility that existing laws still prohibit, at least as of today and the next two months or so. Congress still has to reconvene after the elections and may not take it up soon enough.

BOPK Councilor Alvin Dizon argued -- before the minority was outvoted (9 for, 5 against, 2 abstained) -- that the country prohibits incineration under Republic Act #8749 or the Philippine Clean Air Act. Dizon has repeatedly condemned incineration as a toxic method but he may not have pushed strongly enough this point: the City Council cannot allow what an existing law disallows, as it is "ultra vires" or outside its authority. An ordinance shall not "contravene the Constitution or any statute" or it will be invalid.

PRO-WTE ARGUMENTS. Barug Councilors Joel Garganera and Phillip Zafra, among others who voted for the ordinance, echo the pitch of Senator Sherwin Gatchalian, SB #1789's principal sponsor, "that contrary to the arguments that the operation of a WTE plant poses a threat to public health and the environment, such facility will require air pollution control systems to ensure emissions are within the standards of Philippine Clean Air Act."

The House of Representatives already approved on third and final reading House Bill #7829. Speaker Lord Allan Velasco, who led the bill's approval in the House, said "we must now look for a cleaner and more sustainable method to treat and dispose of solid waste, such as WTE."

AMENDATORY MOVES. Both the House version, titled "Waste Treatment Technology Act," and the Senate version, titled "Waste to Energy Act," share the same goal to "establish a national energy policy and regulatory framework for facilities using waste-to-energy policies."

The bills seek to amend the existing law, the Clean Air Act, and enable a local government to build and operate, a prohibited act. The amendments aim to set rules for local governments and other entities even as they remove legal obstacle for them to run WTE facilities.

'INCINERATOR IN DISGUISE.' Opposers such as the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) Asia Pacific said the facilities to be allowed under the proposed amendments are "effectively incinerators, fueled by municipal waste, that release toxic chemicals into their immediate surroundings."

WTE is "simply incinerator in disguise," GAIA said in November last year. It burns "tons of municipal wasters to emit a small amount of energy while emitting massive amounts of toxic pollutants."



EXPLAINER: Would Mayor Mike OK ordinance on incinerator when it is 'illegal under existing law'? Bill allowing waste-to-energy facilities is still pending in Senate.

Those who object to the congressional move may also point out that government agencies and LGUs have poor record in regulating sensitive undertakings and enterprises.

MORE ON BENEFIT, LESS ON HARM. Debate on the WTE JVA in the March 9 Sanggunian session dwelt less on the public-health issue than on the benefit it would give the City. BOPK Councilor Eugenio Gabuya Jr. worried over the increase in the cost of hauling and disposing of the garbage and how much the City would earn from the enterprise. Thus, he pressed for the disclosure of the site, which New Sky Energy still had to pick.

Minority Floor Leader Nestor Archival Sr. pressed for the "right procedure" in approving the JVA, not really opposing the proposal, just complaining the councilors were not getting enough information.

PUBLIC HEALTH IS CORE. Core issue in the disagreement between government and environmentalists is public health. Incineration poisons the air people breathe, contend those against WTE.

Those who're for incineration, like Senator Gatchalian, warn that "if we do not act now, the garbage crisis is poised to do irreparable damage to the environment and people's health." Bottom line for each: the health of the people.

That aspect wasn't what caused the long discussion at the city Sanggunian.

'ONLY IF FEASIBLE.' Even if Congress would pass the WTE bill and the president, whoever succeeds President Rodrigo Duterte, would sign it into law, local governments may note what Gatchalian said in his 2020 sponsorship speech, namely, that the law wouldn't be "a mandate" for LGUs to put up WTE plants against their will.

"No one will stop LGUs from continuing with MRFs and sanitary landfills as their facilities of choice." It merely empowers LGUs to adopt WTE "if and only if it is feasible."

IN MIKE'S HANDS, OR NOT. There was no clash of arguments over the legality of the joint venture at this time, when the existing law still prohibits it. Dizon didn't push further to question the basis of the committee on laws -- or possibly the City Legal Office too -- in not finding legal obstacle to the building and operation of an incinerator in the city.



EXPLAINER: Would Mayor Mike OK ordinance on incinerator when it is 'illegal under existing law'? Bill allowing waste-to-energy facilities is still pending in Senate.

It is now in the hands of Mayor Michael Rama, who was not the mayor when the proposal was negotiated but is the mayor at the time the JVA is up for signing. Mayor Mike may approve the ordinance (a) by signing it or (2) by not communicating in 10 days his veto to the City Council, in which case it shall be deemed approved as if he had signed it.

An avowed upholder of the rule of law, Rama is seen as highly likely to "sit" on the project and wait for the WTE bill in Congress to become law. He may not sign the ordinance or he may allow it to lapse into effectivity -- and yet not move to implement the JVA.

Or the results of the election might take the decision-making from his hands, a possibility that, Mayor Mike told broadcaster Andi Pateña in an interview, he never entertains.



A global plastic treaty towards a circular economy



BY

MARCH 18, 2022



Recently, 175 member states of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) agreed to initiate a global legally binding instrument addressing the full life cycle of plastic, which, hopefully, could get approved by 2024. The mandate is titled “End Plastic Pollution: Towards an International Legally Binding Instrument,” and is expected to be developed and finalized over the next two years.

It is a victorious moment for longtime environmental activists and campaigners who, as early as 2017, have seen the importance of a legally binding treaty that will address the full life cycle of plastic pollution. Environmental groups belonging to the #breakfreefromplastic movement have long been pushing for a full-life-cycle approach of plastic that looks into extraction, production, distribution, and disposal of plastic.

At UNEA 1 in 2014, the discussion was centered on plastic pollution as a marine litter problem and end-of-life solutions (such as plastic waste management). At UNEA 2, member states elevated the issue as a global one requiring a global response. At UNEA 3, they were able to establish an expert group to further look into the issue. Later on, they were able to see the need to focus on prevention and consider the full life cycle of plastics. In UNEA 4 in March 2019, the assembly was successful in extending the mandate of the expert group and laying the groundwork in considering response options in the next UNEA.

Looking into the entire lifecycle of plastics is an important achievement in UNEA because the industry has long been blaming consumers for the plastic pollution crisis that their continued use of plastic packaging has caused. According to the Center for International Environmental Law, if plastic production and use continue to grow at its current rate, its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 could be equivalent to the emissions of more than 295 new 500-megawatt coal-fired power plants. At this rate, emissions throughout the plastics life cycle threatens any possibility of meeting global climate targets. Thus, plastic pollutes at each stage of its life cycle—99 percent of plastic is made from fossil fuels, both natural gas and crude oil. Toxic plastic particles contaminate water, air, and



A global plastic treaty towards a circular economy

the food chain, ultimately harming human health. Plastic pollution, therefore, is a transboundary issue affecting everyone.

In a press release issued right after UNEA 5, members of the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives #breakfreefromplastic across Asia Pacific reiterated the call for a Global Plastics Treaty that “addresses the full life cycle of plastics and its impacts; integrates the voices and experiences of waste pickers; provides accessible and transparent data on plastic production, enforces strong Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) with clear upstream targets and has clear language against false solutions such as incineration, chemical recycling, among others.”

Since the early 2000s, Philippines-based environmental groups have been ensuring that Zero Waste systems and laws are properly implemented. Ratified in 2001, RA 9003 (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of the Philippines) has long been hailed as the gold standard in waste management at the national level. There were challenges in its implementation, but with further mainstreaming of the transitioning to a zero-waste management system, local government units acting as frontliners in implementing RA 9003 can hopefully turn the tide. They have also been pushing for a nationwide ban on single-use plastics and an EPR bill that will further strengthen RA 9003. These proposals should be cleared from any waste-to-energy incineration, quick tech fixes, offsetting schemes, and greenwashing that only address plastic pollution downstream.

In two years, the global plastic treaty can, hopefully, steer the discussion towards the mainstreaming of a circular economy which augurs a shift from the “take-make-dispose” of the current predisposition of a linear economy. The Ellen McArthur Foundation has defined circular economy as “better use of resources, closing loops of resource flows by recovering as much as possible, and preventing waste and pollution through better design. The emphasis is placed on shifting the way we extract, make, use, and repurpose the material in our products to ensure emissions are reduced and resources are efficiently used and kept in circulation as long as possible.”

Take the case of Australia. Its National Waste Report (2018) reveals that, of the 54 total megatons of waste produced in 2016-2017, 21.7 megatons were sent to landfills. That is about 40 percent of all waste materials being disposed of in landfills. Through a zero-waste management system mindset and circular economy, these can be further reduced through proper recycling and limiting wastes that can neither be recycled nor composted.

With the global plastic treaty mandate and encouraging multi-stakeholder actions, UN member states can lead countries in solving the plastic pollution crisis.

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The Philippines' plastic lawsuit highlights limitations of UN pollution pact

Ahead of its coming court case against the government for failing to tackle the country's plastic litter problem, marine conservation group Oceana Philippines does not think the UN-backed treaty will trigger more cases.



Protesters use a barge carrying tonnes of plastic waste through Manila Bay, to highlight the systemic waste problem that produces massive amounts of plastic pollution in the Philippines. Image: [Greenpeace / Arnaud Vittet](#)

By [Hannah Alcoseba Fernandez](#)
4 minute read March 17, 2022

Even before world leaders agreed to draw up the [first international treaty](#) to control global plastics waste last month, the Philippines had already adopted environmental laws that recognise citizen suits against plastic pollution.

But such lawsuits remain uncommon in the country, sounding the alarm that a global pact will not be any use if it is not properly enforced, said Gloria Estenzo Ramos, vice president of marine conservation group Oceana Philippines.

“Our country is always eager to sign international conventions but the political will from national and local authorities in implementing national laws, some of which stem from international commitments, is key to addressing issues that impact our rights to health and a healthy environment,” Ramos told Eco-Business.

Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/the-philippines-plastic-lawsuit-highlights-limitations-of-un-pollution-pact/>

Climate-positive, high-tech metals are polluting Earth, but there are solutions

Green energy technology growth is crucial if the world is to meet Paris climate agreement goals. But these green solutions rely on technology-critical elements, whose production and disposal can be environmentally harmful.



An array of solar panels on Srinakarin Lake in Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand. Image: [Uwe Schwarzbach, Flickr](#)

By Claire Asher, [Mongabay.com](#)
13 minute read March 17, 2022

The rapid development of renewable energy technologies — including wind, solar and hydropower, and the commercial success of hybrid and fully electric vehicles — are helping put the world on track to achieve a net-zero carbon economy and meet Paris climate agreement targets.

Yet these positive advances rely on a small number of “technology-critical elements,” or TCEs, rare materials whose mining, production and disposal are linked to myriad environmental problems, ranging from large-scale energy and water consumption, to serious soil, water and air pollution.

These 30 to 35 TCEs are essential to computers, consumer electronics, solar cells, wind turbines, electric cars, plus military and medical applications.

They include the platinum family of precious metals, rare-earth elements such as neodymium and scandium, and other metals such as cobalt, lithium and tungsten. What this diverse grouping has in common isn't some shared chemistry, but rather its technological necessity and geopolitical scarcity. They especially share indispensable characteristics — the ability to store energy or form permanent magnets, for example — that make them essential for technologies that could help meet the Paris goal of limiting global warming to 2° Celsius (3.6° Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels.

Climate-positive, high-tech metals are polluting Earth, but there are solutions

But the reliance on TCEs to make high-tech green products puts these elements at risk of contributing to the breach of the nine planetary boundaries that demarcate habitable conditions on Earth.

Mineral extraction consumes gigantic quantities of fresh water and can pollute soil, water and air, while vast open-pit mines drive large-scale land-use change, cause deforestation and threaten biodiversity. Mining, processing and transporting minerals also uses enormous amounts of energy, generating greenhouse gas emissions. In the end, the TCEs themselves may become pollutants when released back into the environment as emissions or waste.

In the urgent rush to curb climate change, the risks posed by TCEs are being little addressed at present. But making their production truly green, and recycling them via a circular economy, is vital to Earth's sustainable future.

Defining the TCE problem

Although most aren't rare, TCEs are seldom found in large deposits, so they're largely inaccessible to most living organisms. By extracting, using and discarding them widely, we are introducing them into new environments, with unknown consequences. That's one reason TCEs are of emerging concern to scientists as novel chemical entities and potentially harmful pollutants.

Global production and release of all novel chemical entities — each posing different potential environmental threats — already [exceeds the global capacity for safe assessment and monitoring](#), putting us outside the safe Earth operating zone for this poorly understood planetary boundary.

But even so, to meet the Paris targets, green technology implementation needs to ramp up substantially. By 2050, the [global electric vehicle fleet](#) must expand from around 1.2 million cars today to more than 950 million. Solar energy generating capacity needs to increase from 220 gigawatts (GW) to more than 7,000 GW. Total rechargeable battery capacity — needed for solar installations and electric cars — must increase from 0.5 gigawatt-hours (GWh) to more than 12,000 GWh.

Consequentially, demand for TCEs like cobalt, lithium, neodymium and dysprosium will soar; currently the market for these substances is growing by 5 per cent annually. By 2050, [demand for lithium and cobalt](#) could increase as much as 500 per cent, requiring 3 billion tonnes of minerals extracted. Rare-earth elements needed for wind turbines could see demand increase by a factor of 26.

Mining activities must surge to keep up with this need, with major impacts on the natural world. Extracting TCEs often involves clearing forest, removing mass quantities of soil and rock, and using water-polluting acids to isolate valuable elements. Devastating effects are multiplied when ores are located in highly biodiverse tropical regions, as is happening in the [Venezuelan Amazon](#), or the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where [coltan mining by armed militias](#) has put the critically endangered Grauer's gorilla (*Gorilla beringei graueri*) at high risk.

Climate-positive, high-tech metals are polluting Earth, but there are solutions

Perhaps the best-studied example of TCE mining impacts is in the Bayan'obo district of Inner Mongolia, an autonomous region of China that supplies half the world's rare-earth elements. For decades, the Bayan'obo open-pit iron mine has also extracted niobium, lanthanum and neodymium for smartphones, electric cars and wind turbines, with local communities and ecosystems paying a heavy price.

Each metric ton of rare-earth element mined there necessitates clearing [300 square meters \(3,230 square feet\) of vegetation and topsoil](#), and releases 1,000 metric tonnes of contaminated wastewater and 2,000 metric tonnes of solid or liquid waste tailings.

Emerging contaminants

Today, elevated levels of rare-earth elements are being detected in wastewater, rivers and groundwater near mining and processing plants. Alarming, they've also been detected in [urine samples of people living in Bayan'obo](#).

Many TCEs have well-documented toxic effects at high concentrations, putting the workers mining, processing and recycling these minerals at risk. These risks are compounded because many TCE mines are in less-industrialized nations with weak environmental and health regulations. Globally, hundreds of thousands of laborers are exposed to rare-earth elements, with occupational exposure associated with numerous possible health impacts.

In fact, the huge environmental and human health cost of mining TCEs is one factor making them geopolitically scarce. "The developed world has basically outsourced its raw materials to the developing world. It's cheaper to produce them there and that is fundamentally because regulations are generally more lax," explained Murray Hitzman, director of the Irish Centre for Research in Applied Geosciences (iCRAG) and an expert on mineral extraction.

A prime example of TCE-related human rights issues: cobalt mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Cobalt is economically important for the DRC: 10 million to 12 million people depend directly or indirectly on its mining for their livelihoods. But cobalt miners there are exposed to dangerous and noxious conditions in mines and build up [elevated levels of toxic metals in their bodies](#). A [2016 Amnesty International report](#) found that 15 per cent of cobalt in the DRC comes from hand-dug, artisanal mines, where conditions are often even more hazardous and child labor common.

How dangerous are TCEs? 'More questions than answers'

While we know some things about TCEs and their production risks, we know little about what happens to them after manufacture and disposal. This is partly because their meteoric rise to global importance has left scientists and policymakers playing catch-up, and partly because of the "ultra-trace" concentrations in which they're used, making tracking challenging.

One exception: the platinum-group elements (PGEs), widely used since the 1970s to reduce vehicle exhaust emissions. PGEs are essential to catalytic converters, which have been required for new motor vehicles in the US, Canada, the EU and Australia for decades. These PGEs, which include palladium, platinum and rhodium, react with and remove toxic gases like carbon monoxide and

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nitrogen oxide from exhausts. But modern gasoline-powered cars now emit PGEs as a byproduct. These fine particulates disperse and can travel large distances in the atmosphere before settling to earth, where they can be washed away by rainwater, entering rivers, estuaries and oceans.

Platinum-group particles are now found at elevated levels in urban air, road dust, roadside soil and vegetation, and even in remote sites far from human activity. One study detected a rise in PGE levels on the Greenland ice sheet after 1990, and estimated that [PGEs were being deposited there](#) at 600 times the background rate.

Most other TCEs have not yet become as ubiquitous as the platinum family, with their environmental pathways likely quite different. Take consumer electronics, for example, which contain tiny quantities of cobalt, lithium, neodymium, indium, niobium and other TCEs, embedded with other materials like silicon and plastic. These TCEs may be released as aerosol particulates when waste is crushed or burned, or leach from landfills into soil and groundwater; but we simply don't know for sure as the research hasn't been done.

Research led by Brian Berkowitz and Ishai Dror at Israel's Weizmann Institute of Science suggests [rare-earth elements trapped inside e-waste are relatively immobile](#), and if they make their way into soil, they're likely to stay put. In lab experiments on soil, rare-earth elements "are not very mobile — you have to work really hard to get them to move," Berkowitz said, adding, "the good news is that they really don't pollute the groundwater, the bad news is they're in the soil forever."

Some industries will be bigger sources of rare-earth element pollution than others. Along Germany's heavily industrialised Rhine River, for example, potentially toxic levels of gadolinium, lanthanum and samarium were detected [downstream of an industrial effluent pipe](#), although the exact source remains unclear. A 2019 study found [elevated levels of rare-earth elements](#), including praseodymium, neodymium, dysprosium and holmium in the Pearl River Estuary in China — partly attributable to upstream e-waste recycling facilities.

Whether it's coming from industry, from e-waste, or another source, rare-earth elements have now been detected at trace levels in a broad range of environments, in human [drinking water](#) and [food](#).

The word trace is key here: Away from mines and recycling facilities, rare-earth elements are released at extremely low concentrations — so low that scientists are still figuring out how to accurately measure them and determine impacts. Most are not currently environmentally monitored or included in regulations, and Dror says he has yet to find "a smoking gun of huge contaminants from the [domestic] use of TCEs." At these low levels, TCEs aren't likely to cause acute effects on plants and animals, but long-term exposure could bring chronic effects.

Those impacts may not be known any time soon: "There is a lack of incentive at the moment and a lack of funding," to study the chronic effects of TCE pollution, said Sebastien Rauch, professor of urban environments and systems at Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden. Important research into long-term toxicity simply isn't being done.

That doesn't mean there isn't risk. For example, in their natural forms, platinum elements are inert, and so their use in catalytic converters had long been assumed not to be hazardous. However, tiny particles of PGEs found in road dust can be transformed into their active, toxic forms if dissolved in

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rainwater. “We know, for instance, that platinum binds to DNA [but] is that important, if it’s at a low concentration? We don’t know,” said Rauch.

At very low concentrations, some rare-earth elements can even be beneficial to plant growth. In China, this discovery prompted the additions of [rare-earth mixtures to fertilizers](#). But evidence also shows that [platinum-group](#) and [rare-earth elements](#) can bioaccumulate in the tissues of living organisms, and so could reach potentially toxic levels with long exposure. They may also build up in the food chain, where bioaccumulation could pose a risk to humans or top predators.

Perhaps most crucially, we know nothing yet about how TCEs interact with each other, or with other pollutants, to produce synergistic effects. “I think there are more questions than answers, at the moment,” Rauch said.

Making green tech supply chains sustainable

Finding new sources of TCEs is a national security priority for the US and EU as they seek to protect their global supply chains against natural, socioeconomic and political disruptions. But that search is also an opportunity to improve environmental outcomes. Finding TCE sources in less-industrialised nations could, for example, be a first step toward bringing more stringent regulation to green tech industries and addressing environmental justice issues, while also reducing the global transport footprint.

“DRC is without a doubt the best endowed place for cobalt on the planet that we know of; I’ve been looking for 24 years for another place and haven’t found it yet,” said Hitzman. “But is there cobalt elsewhere? Yes, absolutely. And are there amounts that could be minable? Absolutely!”

The US Geological Survey, in collaboration with Geoscience Australia and the Geological Survey of Canada, recently launched a [mapping initiative to locate new deposits](#) of TCEs, including cobalt. A recent British Geological Survey study identified [more than 500 cobalt-bearing sites](#) in Europe.

The ocean could also provide a potential source of critical elements. The [International Seabed Authority](#) is currently drawing up [regulations to govern oceanic mineral extraction](#), but scientists are fiercely divided on whether breaching this new frontier will bring about a new mining panacea, or spell environmental disaster. The Clarion-Clipperton Zone of the Pacific Ocean is covered in [polymetallic nodules rich in cobalt and other valuable metals](#), but is also home to extraordinarily rare deep-sea creatures and ecosystems we’ve barely begun to understand.

Replace, reuse, recycle

One potential TCE solution: For some high-tech applications, TCEs could be replaced with more readily available materials, mined in a more environmentally friendly way. For instance, a promising replacement for lithium-ion batteries — found today in everything from smartphones to electric vehicles — could be sodium-ion batteries; sodium is an abundant mineral extractable from rock salt.

For TCEs that can’t be switched out with abundant eco-friendly alternatives, there are two main avenues to improved sustainability: Diminish mining impacts, while also reducing the demand for mining by recovering TCEs from waste. Remarkably, the richest potential source for TCEs may be

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mine waste itself, and techniques for extracting these elements from tailings are under development.

“Greater vigilance of waste management from mining sites, particularly tailings produced by mineral processing,” is needed for a smooth transition to a low-carbon circular economy, said Saleem Ali, professor of energy and the environment at the University of Delaware in the United States.

When it comes to recycling, platinum-group elements lead the way: One-quarter of the [world’s supply of PGEs now comes from recycled catalytic converters](#) — but that’s quite low-hanging fruit. Catalytic converters contain relatively large amounts of platinum, palladium and rhodium, and are found on all modern gasoline-powered autos, making dedicated recycling operations financially viable.

Lithium batteries may also be suitable for dedicated recycling, though the technology doesn’t yet exist. Future demand for lithium-ion batteries is predicted to outpace global production, even as the first generation of fully electric vehicles reaches the end of their battery lifespan. Pressure is mounting, therefore, to “mine” those dead batteries rather than send them to landfills. In 2017, NGOs and private companies formed the [Global Battery Alliance](#), aiming for a sustainable battery value chain by 2030. Major EU grants are currently focused on developing lithium-ion recycling technologies.

By contrast, recycling trace amounts of rare-earth elements found in old smartphones and computers poses a fundamentally different, and formidable, challenge. Presently, “we don’t have that technology,” said Hitzman. “The market is not demanding that we build appliances, devices [and other] things we can take apart. In fact, it’s quite the opposite: We design things that are easy to throw away.”

In future, urban mining — extracting raw materials like TCEs from mixed urban landfills — may be possible. That’s “a brilliant idea, but it’s killed by an ugly fact,” said Berkowitz: the quantities are generally too low and too dispersed to be economically viable. “We took containers of ground-up motherboards and subjected them to all kinds of acids ... and you extract extremely low concentrations.”

However, two types of biological solutions could provide an answer and are attracting attention. Bioleaching uses microbes to extract valuable minerals, while phytomining relies on plants capable of accumulating metals in their tissues to extract metals from waste or contaminated land. Both methods could one day remove valuable TCEs from waste, using little energy and without corrosive chemicals. In one case, for example, growing the fern *Dicranopteris linearis* on mine tailings extracted [74 per cent of the rare-earth elements](#). Such techniques offer a tantalizing glimpse of a hopeful future for TCE recycling.

Green mining

There are many new technological advances making mining less environmentally destructive. Some mines, for example, are now fueled partly by renewable energy, reducing climate impacts, while new extraction techniques are available that use less water and fewer harmful chemicals.

Climate-positive, high-tech metals are polluting Earth, but there are solutions

Mining will “never have zero impact, because you disturb ground to mine [but] we do have much better and safer technologies. And if you spend the money you can do mining with very little impact,” explained Hitzman. The catch: green mining can be expensive and is presently only economically viable for the highest-quality mineral deposits.

Some EU countries have implemented e-waste recycling schemes to prevent electronic devices ending up in landfills. German retailers, for instance, are obliged to take back old devices when a customer buys a new one. Product lifespan policies like this, which extend the responsibility of proper disposal to the producer, can also create incentives to improve product design to allow for easier recycling.

Sunday Leonard, program management officer for the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel to the Global Environment Facility, believes policymakers should agree on common goals for the global use and recycling of TCEs. International agreements do “play a significant role” in environmental protection, Leonard added, but “apart from [the Montreal Protocol](#), which has moved forward in helping the ozone layer heal, the rest are yet” to achieve improvements.

In 2019, the World Bank launched its [Climate-Smart Mining Initiative](#), which aims to help resource-rich developing countries benefit from demand for their valuable natural resources, while ensuring the mining sector is regulated to minimize its environmental footprint.

To achieve such comprehensive goals, Leonard says the international community will need to bring together TCE stakeholders across the life cycle to map environmental impacts, assess capacity development needs, and explore alternative livelihoods. For example, “We need to create social safety nets for [artisanal miners] so that they can find alternative livelihoods,” he advised.

A cradle-to-grave systems approach

TCEs are already so diversified in their uses and widespread — having many divergent environmental, economic and social impacts due to extraction, processing and waste disposal — that experts argue that a “systems-thinking” approach is the single best way to achieve workable solutions.

“If you have a good mapping of all of the impacts, then you can think of the best leverage points on how you design your product,” said Leonard. “Of course, there’s going to be trade-offs, but [the aim is] to minimize negative impacts and enhance positive impacts.”

A circular economy, cradle-to-grave, systems approach most certainly requires an end to planned obsolescence — particularly for consumer electronics.

At present, manufacturers make it extremely difficult for users to open and repair devices, with consumers prompted to replace smartphones and computers long before the end of their life spans. The answer: Product redesign to facilitate a circular economy, focused on making products more durable, easier to repair, and easier to break down into recyclable components. “Right to repair” policies, requiring manufacturers to make repairable products, are already gaining traction in the US and Europe. But the application of a circular economy must go further with TCEs.



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“We have not produced half of the electric cars that we need to produce in the future. We have not designed half of the wind turbines that we need, the defense systems, and so on,” said Leonard. With that in mind “we have the opportunity to come together and redesign.”

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Clean technology

[FULL DISCLOSURE](#) - [Fidel O. Abalos](#) - The Freeman

March 19, 2022 | 12:00am

Two years ago, Covid 19 invaded the world. Almost a month ago, Russia invaded Ukraine. While the threat of Covid 19 remains, Russia's invasion on Ukraine is presenting a different concern. Yes, similarly, both are indiscriminate. The big difference is, Covid 19 is not one of us (human beings), Putin is. Yet, he is downright cruel. Yes, while both have taken lives indiscriminately, the global interest on this latest carnage is unparalleled. It is understandable though as any lapse in judgement may lead to World War III.

However, there are some people (no matter how serious the situation is) who have this knack of easing difficult situations. Elon Musk is one them as he challenged Putin to a one-on-one combat. We surely know that this is pure entertainment intended to mock or distract Putin. However, if this should happen, it will be the wealthiest fight of all time. That's between the world's wealthiest individual in Musk and the wealthiest politician in Putin.

Yes, with the deafening uproar the invasion generated, it is so serious to be just set aside. But let us not be myopic. There is something of global concern too that no war can disrupt, no vaccine can prevent and no medical treatment can cure. That's climate change.

According to credible scientists, climate change does not only refer to rising temperature. Global warming is just one aspect of it. It talks about extreme weather that is caused largely by carbon dioxide emissions out of the production of fossil fuel and the use of it.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates that in 2019, "global emissions of energy-related carbon dioxide totaled 33.1 billion metric tons." That's how huge and dangerous global CO2 emission is. No. 1 among the top ten emitters (in billion metric ton) is China with 10.06, followed by (2) United States-5.41, (3) India-2.65, (4) Russian Federation-1.71, (5) Japan-1.1, (6) Germany-0.75, (7) Islamic Republic of Iran-0.72, (8) South Korea-0.65, (9) Saudi Arabia-0.62, and 10) Indonesia 0.61. Clearly, these countries are either fossil fuel producers or highly industrialized (therefore, major users of fossil fuel) or both.

One may say, we don't produce much fossil fuel, so, we aren't guilty of it. The International Energy Agency (which estimates CO2 emissions) said, however, that apart from combustion of fossil fuels, indiscriminate disposals of industrial waste and non-renewable municipal waste are contributors too. Apparently, therefore, we are contributors too.

Yes, we, the global citizens, are all guilty of it. There are just so many of them to enumerate. However, in the interest of space, we only have to mention what we use every day, plastic shopping bags. Just in case you missed it in your science class, plastic bags come from fossil fuel. And if in case you further missed it, according to the United Nations Environment Program, we produce about 300 million tons (almost the weight of the entire human population) of plastic wastes annually.



Clean technology

Clearly, therefore, the solution is to get rid of fossil fuel or, at the very least, minimize it. Some start-ups and venture capitalists attempted to solve this malady more than a decade ago (2006-2011) by pushing the “clean-tech” initiatives (referred to as Clean-Tech 1.0). Sadly though, it never took off and venture capitalists lost billions in investments. Yes, the technology was there but it was still too expensive.

Last year, however, Clean-Tech 2.0 created a stir. Apart from Elon Musk (who is a prime mover of clean tech by manufacturing electric vehicles), huge and influential investors like Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos and Richard Branson are either joining or bolstering their investment in clean technology. On the other hand, we may have a lot of issues against China, but it is a fact that 8 of the 10 biggest manufacturers of solar equipment (panels, batteries, etc.) are Chinese. This is one of the reasons that clean technology is getting cheaper.

Today, as fossil fuel producers remain adamant in augmenting production, the quest for clean technology is at fever pitch. Among others, Singapore-based DiviGas is developing a new approach in hydrogen production. Fresno-based Yosemite Clean Energy “produces greener hydrogen and natural gas from farm and forest wood waste.”

We may say, these are wealthy countries and that should be easy for them. Wait, a Kenya-based BasiGo is “helping the East African country transition to an all-renewable transportation fleet and is expected to deliver one thousand mass transit electric buses over the next five years.” If Kenya can, we can do it.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/the-freeman/cebu-business/2022/03/19/2168306/clean-technology->

19 MARCH 2022, Saturday



DENR

NEWS ALERTS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



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(Jonas Sulit)

MANILA BAY NANGANGAMOY PA!

NAGBANTA ang bagong kalihim ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na ipasasara ang mga establisimiyentong patuloy na nagtatapon ng maruming tubig direktso sa Manila Bay.

Inihayag ito ni DENR acting Secretary Jim Sampulna matapos ang ginawang pag-inspeksiyon sa Manila Bay kung saan nalalanhap pa rin umano niya ang mabahong amoy dito.

"When I visited the area, may naamoy ako, masangang pa rin na hindi masyadong kanais-

nais. Sabi ko let's look into this, tingnan natin para ma-perfect natin iyong ginagawa natin dito," ani Sampulna.

May ginagawa na aniya silang saturation drive sa mga establisimiyento malapit sa Manila Bay matapos na magpadala ng tig-apat na kinatawan ang 16 regional office ng DENR para tumulong sa National Capital Region sa paglilinis sa nasabing lugar.

Sinabi ng kalihim na nakatakdang magsumite ng report sa loob ng linggong ito at ang sinomang mapapatunayang pasaway

na establisimiyento ay sa-sampahan agad ng kaso.

"Kung sino ang nagtatapon ng madumi pa sa dagat natin, kung mapapatunayan natin ang isang establisimiyento ay nagtatapon ng marumi sa ating karagatan ay pa-file-an po namin ng kaso, ipapasara na namin kaagad," babala pa ni Sampulna.

Matatandaang ipinasara ni dating DENR secretary Roy Cimatu ang isang restaurant sa harap ng Manila Bay matapos matuklasan na dumidiretso sa dagat ang kanilang maruming tubig. (Aileen Taliping)



DENR calls for responsible mining in Cagayan Valley

BY LEANDER C. DOMINGO

SANTIAGO CITY: The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has ordered key environment officials of Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) to ensure the cleanliness of water bodies and compliance with the standards of mining operators.

Environment Undersecretary for Field Operations Juan Miguel Cuna told officials in this mining region "to give importance to the cleanliness of all waterways [and] let us take this seriously."

Cuna was in Santiago in Isabela to join the three-day regional management conference from March 15 to 17, 2022. Region 2 hosts at least four large-scale mining companies.

"This is a mining region. With the lifting of the moratorium on mining permits, there is a corresponding responsibility for us to ensure that the mining is done properly. We make sure that these mining companies are compliant," Cuna said, reminding the agency's obligation to ensure responsible mining.

Nueva Vizcaya province hosts the British mine firm FCF Minerals Corp. that operates the Runruno Gold-Molybdenum Project in Quezon town and the Australian OceanaGold that operates the Didipio Gold and Copper Project in Kasibu town.

Isabela province also hosts Dinapigue Mining Corp. while Cagayan province hosts JDVC Resources Corp. that operates the Offshore Magnetite Mining Project.

In April 2021, Executive Order (EO) 130 was signed by President Rodrigo Duterte lifting the nine-year ban on mineral agreements to boost the country's economy.

Malacañang said the industry will increase employment opportunities in remote rural areas.

While directing the DENR to strictly implement mines safety and environmental policies, EO 130 also aims to ensure strict implementation of and compliance with the recommended measures of the Mining Industry Coordinating Council involving all mining operations, including other pertinent laws, rules and regulations, and the terms and conditions of mineral extraction agreements.

"The government's efforts in the rehabilitation of the famous Boracay Island and Manila Bay should be replicated in restoring other water bodies in the country," he said.

Cuna also cited the accomplishments of the DENR-led Build Back Better Regional Task Force to restore the Cagayan River and directed field officials to ensure that no structure should be established in no-build zones or within the easement areas.

Assure clean waters

Meanwhile, the status of the Forestry Master Plan, Philippine Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan and Lands Strategic Plan were presented during the regional

management conference. The importance of strategic and geospatial planning was also discussed.

Regional executive director Gwendolyn Bambalan noted that revisiting master plans and knowing the baselines and universal data are necessary for developing good plans.

"We don't just implement. We implement programs toward addressing particular DENR concerns. That is why we have to have good plans," she said.

Citing the marching order of Environment Secretary Jim Sam-pulna, Bambalan reminded assistant regional directors, bureau regional directors, provincial and community environment and natural resources officers, and division chiefs regionwide to strictly observe and implement environmental laws and applicable guidelines in exercising their duties and responsibilities.

"We were also directed to remain vigilant in the protection, conservation and management of the environment and natural resources; and to avoid any form of nefarious activities and corruption," she added.



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BOC-NAIA foils wildlife smuggle try

THE Bureau of Customs - Port of Ninoy Aquino International Airport (BOC-NAIA) foiled attempts of wildlife smuggling in various warehouses after successfully seizing eight Gecko Lizards, 40 spiderlign and 5 tarantula consigned to a claimant in Paranaque, Manila while the latter was about to be exported to Dubai, UAE, authority reported.

The parcel which was shipped from Kongsamwatawank-Bangkok, Thailand was declared as "Commercial Sample" but

found to contain 8 gecko Lizards concealed in packaged transparent containers.

Another shipment bound for Dubai was also intercepted coming from a sender in Pasay City.

The package was declared as Facial Skin Set/Quick Fix Mattefier and was found to contain 40 Spiderlings and 5 Tarantulas.

After the discovery, the lizards and spiders were turned over immediately to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for monitoring, safekeeping and identification of species.

The said illegal shipments constitutes a violation under Section 1113 in relation to Section 117 and 1401 of RA 10863 or "Customs Modernization and Tariff Act" and Section 27 of RA 9147 or "Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act."

Recently, the Port of NAIA was able to seize exotic aquatic wildlife species with an estimated commercial value of P3.5 Million in PAL/PSI in Pasay City. Furthermore, the port was also recognized by the TRAFFIC Southeast Asia for its efforts against wild-

By JUN I.
LEGASPI



Part of the recovered wildlife declared as cosmetics. Photo courtesy of Bureau of Customs

life trafficking over the years. Port of NAIA headed by District Collector Carmelita M. Talusan fully supports Commissioner Rey Leonardo B. Guerrero's directive on intensified border protection and is in close coordination with DENR on wildlife protection and its conservation.



MWSI boosts P'que anti-pollution drive

By **CORY MARTINEZ**

EFFORTS to reduce pollution in the Estero de Tripa de Gallina in Paranaque City will be further boosted with the renewed commitment of water concessionaire Maynilad Water Services Inc. (MWSI) to help the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in said endeavor.

DENR Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna expressed his gratitude to the MWSI and the city government of Paranaque upon learning of their heightened coordination with the DENR through its Metropolitan Environmental Office in southern Metro Manila (MEO-South), which has jurisdiction over the cities of Paranaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa and Taguig, and the municipality of Pateros.

"Their readiness to cooperate with our endeavors signals their willingness to be our partners in the rehabilitation of Manila Bay and improve the well-being of residents and the environment in general," he stated.

DENR Assistant Secretary Gilbert Gonzales, on the other hand, said that personnel from the MEO-South, the MWSI, and the

Paranaque City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) have searched for areas along the Estero de Tripa de Gallina where wastewater from the sewer or drainage systems could be intercepted and treated before flowing into the Paranaque River, a major river system that drains into Manila Bay.

The MWSI and CENRO are also considering the establishment of a communal septic tank in identified areas, including regularly desludging these and septic tanks in surrounding households to prevent overflows particularly during heavy rains.

Gonzales, who is also the supervising assistant secretary for MEOs, said that while these plans usually take time to implement, coordinative activities are being escalated to ensure that the necessary data, logistics, and acceptance from the community will be available at the soonest possible time.

Other mandamus agencies may also be tapped later to provide assistance to the project. Once fully implemented, the setup could be replicated in other areas of the National Capital Region as part of ongoing Manila Bay rehabilitation efforts.

Meanwhile, the DENR continues to enjoin the public to practice the principles of

ecological solid waste management, and report establishments illegally dumping their waste, whether solid or liquid, in waterways.

Communities are also encouraged to keep waterways in their areas clean, since waterways filled with waste often hamper the flow of water, especially during the rainy season, causing floods.

They are also possible

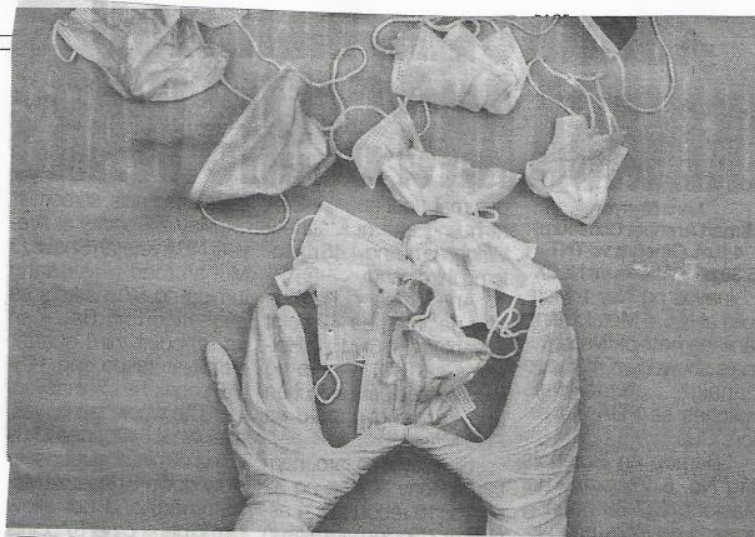
breeding grounds for pests such as rats and mosquitoes that could be carriers or spreaders of disease.

A portion of the Estero de Tripa de Gallina runs the adjacent city of Pasay, which falls under the jurisdiction of the MEO-West.

At present, estero rangers hired by the MEOs South and West conduct cleanups to help rid the waterway of garbage.



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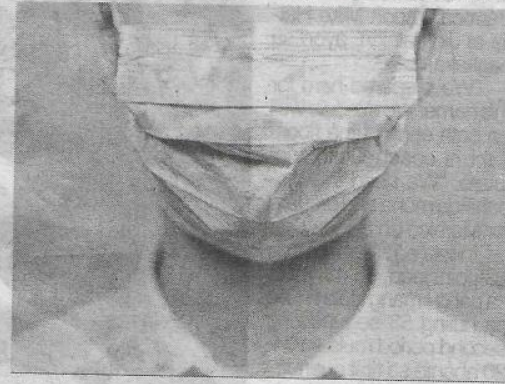


Used face mask ire-recycle

Gagamitin sa paggawa ng mga kalsada

Dahil sa rami ng gumagamit ng face mask, lubhang dumami rin ang mga nadi-dispose kada araw, sa iba't ibang bahagi ng mundo. Isa sa mga nakitang solusyon ay i-recycle ang mga ito at gamitin sa paggawa ng mga kalsada.

Ito ang iminumungkahi ng isang bagong pag-aaral na isinagawa ng mga Australian researchers ng RMIT, makaraang makapag-develop ng road-making material kung saan pagsasamahin ang shredded single-used masks at process building rubble o mga tipak ng mga bato,



na sa paggamit ng nabanggit na material ay makakagawa ng 1km two-lane road at gagamit ng 3m masks.

Sa naturang proseso, sinasabing

na face mask sa mga parke, mga kalsada at iba pang lugar aniya ang nagbigay sa kanila ng ideya para hanapan ng solusyon at mabawasan ang pandemic-generated waste.

Naniniwala rin sila sa pangangailangan na magkaroon ng flexible roads, na pwede aniyang matugunan ng flexible property ng face mask o plastic.

Samantala, nagpahayag naman ng concern ang iba pang mga expert kung ang paggamit ng mask sa paraang nabanggit ang best strategy para gawing road base.

Dapat anila na suriin muna ng mabuti ang composition ng mask para matiyak na hindi ito hahanatong sa environmental problems, gaya ng microplastic pollution.

Sa hiwalay na pag-aaral, natuklasan na ang mask ay potential source ng harmful microplastic fibres, na magdudulot ng mga problema kapag hina-lo sa lupa at daluyan ng tubig. —JCR—



brick, concrete mula sa ginibang building.

Anila, parehong matatamo rito ang civil engineering safety standards at ang solusyon para sa lubhang pagdami ng mga basura galing sa covid protective equipment.

Tinukoy sa pag-aaral na nailathala sa journal Science of the Total Environment,

maiwasan ang pagkakaroon ng nasa 93 toneladang basura.

Si Dr. Mohammad Saberian, ang lead author ng research ay nagsabing lumalabas sa pag-aaral na sa pinagsamang recycled concrete at face masks ay makakagawa ng mas matibay at flexible road.

Ang mga nagkalat



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Editorial

Perwisyong baha dahil sa plastic na basura

KAUNTING ulan lang at baha agad sa España Boulevard, Rizal at Taft Avenues sa Maynila. Ganito ang nangyari noong nakaraang linggo. Umulan nang malakas na tumagal nang wala pang kalahating oras pero nagdulot agad ng baha sa España kaya maraming sasakyan ang hindi makaraan. Ganundin ang nangyari sa Taft Avenue. Maraming pasahero ang na-stranded. Ang iba, naglakad na lamang sa hanggang tuhod na baha. Isang kakaibang tanawin sa panahon ng tag-araw.

Basura ang dahilan kaya laging bumabaha sa Metro Manila particular na sa Maynila. Ilang dekada na ang problemang ito subalit hanggang ngayon, problema pa rin at mas malala dahil kaunting ulan, baha agad.

Inamin na noon ng Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) na mga basura ang dahilan nang pagbaha na karamihan ay pawang plastic. Hindi raw kaya ng pumping stations na pabilisin ang pagliit ng baha dahil sa mga nakabarang plastic na basura.



Gumastos ang pamahalaan ng bilyong piso para sa flood control program noong 2010 pero balewala rin sa pagkat bumabaha pa rin dahil sa mga nakabarang basura. Hindi lang pangkaraniwang basura ang nakabara kundi mga plastic na hindi nabubulok. Karaniwang plastic sando bags, sache ng shampoo, 3-in-1 coffee, cup ng instant noodles, plastic shopping bags at ngayong may pandemya, nadagdag ang mga ginamit na face masks at face shields. Humantong na sa pusod ng dagat ang mga face mask.

Maraming estero ang hindi na gumagalaw ang tubig dahil sa dami ng basura. Kadalasang informal settlers na nakatira sa pampang ng estero ang nagtatapon ng mga basurang plastic. Naging basurahan nila sa mahabang panahon ang mga estero.

Noong nakaraang Marso 2, lumagda ang Pilipinas at iba pang bansa sa UN resolution para wakasan ang plastic pollution. Naganap ang historic resolution sa UN Environmental Assembly sa Nairobi, Kenya. Sa resolution, ipinaliwanag ang full life cycle ng plastic products — mula sa produksiyon at design disposal ng mga ito. Inaasahan na ang resolution ang magwawakas sa problema sa plastic pollution sa buong mundo.

Ipagpatuloy naman ng MMDA ang regular declogging sa drainages at maging sa mga estero. Maraming nakabara at dapat maalis ang mga iyon. Ipag-utos naman ng Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) sa mga kapitan ng barangay na paigtingin ang pagbabantay sa mga magtatapon ng basura sa mga kanal, estero, sapa at imburnal. Kastiguhin sila sa pag-apaw ng mga basurang plastic.



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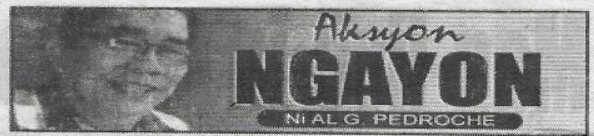
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Bike-a-van para sa Inang Kalikasan

NOONG dekada 70, may nasabi ang bantog na TV host na si Ariel Ureta sa kanyang TV show: "Sa ikauunlad ng bayan, bisikleta ang kailangan." Nagalit si President Ferdinand Marcos Sr. Mistulang inalipusta ni Ariel ang national slogan ng martial law na "Sa ikauunlad ng bayan, disiplina ang kailangan". Pinagbisikleta si Ariel maghapon sa Camp Crame.

Pero kung tutuusin, kailangan na talaga tayong matutong magbisikleta. Malapit nang pumalo sa P100 kada litro ang diesel! Halos P80 na nga ito sa mga big players. Kaya pagsamahin natin ang disiplina at bisikleta.

Speaking of bisikleta, isang kakaibang caravan ang idinaos ng may 2,100 na mga siklista. Pagsuporta ito sa eco-friendly election campaign ni dating speaker na ngayo'y nagbabalik-senado na si Alan Peter Cayetano. Sabay-sabay itong lumarga sa Marikina at Maynila, at marami



pang lungsod sa Luzon, Visayas at Mindanao.

Marami kasi ang humanga sa eco-friendly election campaign trail ni Cayetano na ang gamit lamang ay ang cyber space. Walang campaign posters na nakarurumi at walang basurang ikinakalat sa paligid.

Anang isang volunteer cyclist, dininig nila ang apela ni Cayetano na suportahan ang kanyang digital campaign dahil hindi na siya nagpaimprenta ng posters, flyers at iba pang traditional campaign methods.

Ayon nga kay Barotac Nuevo Councilor Simon Fernando, dapat magpatuloy ang eco-friendly campaign ni Cayetano sapagkat nakatutulong ito sa kalikasan.

Binigyang diin naman ni Albay Board Member at

(Sundan sa pahina 5)

AKSYON NGAYON...

Mula pahina 4

Association of Barangay Councils (ABC) Albay Chapter President Joseph Philip "JP" Lee na dapat suportahan ang naturang bike caravans at ang adbokasiya ni Cayetano para sa eco-friendly na pangangampanya ngayong halalan.



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Roni SRSIAGA
SKP
MANILA BULLETIN
MARCH 19, 2022

Bike to basics in the fight against climate change



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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TITLE: BIKE TO BATTLE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

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There are situations in life when the most complicated matter can be addressed with the simplest of solutions. This is, perhaps, the same mindset when it comes to addressing the dire effects of climate change — find a simple solution first, which could easily be followed by everyone and implemented without risks.

What's a simple and basic solution to combat climate change? Bicycles. Yes, a bicycle is now a "tool to protect the environment," with a United Nations (UN) resolution backing it up. Early this week, the 193-member UN General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution proposed by Turkmenistan, which calls on member states to "integrate the bicycle into public transportation, in urban and rural settings."

Even at the start of the pandemic, the UN has called on nations to look into bicycles as "driver of post-Covid-19 green recovery." In a statement, the UN said, "During the lockdown, city dwellers enjoyed clear blue skies thanks to cleaner air and began to hear birds sing as noise decreased. Pollution levels in Barcelona dropped by an estimated 62 percent, and similar situations have been observed in other big European cities such as Milan, London, and Paris. Public transport usage has fallen significantly as an increasing number of people choose to walk or ride bicycles to avoid crowded mass transits and follow health authorities' advice for physical distancing. To respond to these trends, Milan, Geneva, Brussels, and London have decided to invest in flexible bike lanes."

This is also the same circumstance in our country as major cities in the National Capital Region and the provinces have started to look into bike lanes not only as a path for bikers going to work but also as

an alternative from the usual gas-guzzling vehicles (which now becomes more impractical to use with the exorbitant gas prices). In fact, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) inaugurated last July 2021 the Metro Manila Bike Lane Network, the country's longest lane of its kind to date.

The 313-kilometer bike lane network traverses through 12 cities in NCR, including Quezon City, Manila, San Juan, Pasay, Pasig, etc. The lanes measure between 1.5 to three meters in width depending on the road's configuration. This project was dubbed a "game-changer" at that time, with the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) highlighting that the bike lane will "change everything, even the mindset of commuters" who will now notice that it would be more practical—healthier even—to take the bike to and from work because there is already a safe space for them on the road.

With this news comes critics who say that the UN bicycle resolution may belittle the tremendous efforts done by organizations and individuals to save the environment from further degradation. But this is not a time for disagreements as the fight for climate needs all hands on deck. Every little effort to address climate concerns at this moment of volatility in the world's affairs is welcome. And having all UN member states agree on something for the planet's sake is already a victory in itself.

The UN resolution concluded that the promotion of bike-riding will help "achieve sustainable development, including the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions." May these goals be achieved in our country at the soonest time, and may all of us find our healthy path — biking our way to our body's fitness and to the planet's wellness.



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Bike to basics in the fight against climate change

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ILO, Japan launch five new water systems in Mindanao

THE International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Government of Japan recently launched five new water systems that will provide safe and clean water to more than 3,000 households in Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao and a Bangsamoro Special Geographic Area in Cotabato.

Under the ILO-Japan Water and Sanitation Project, community members, indigenous peoples and former combatants built the water systems in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) where access to safe water is lower than the national average in the Philippines.

"The project has contributed to building peace, promoting decent work, and reducing poverty. Communities, including former combatants, indigenous peoples, and vulnerable groups have gained access to decent work and livelihoods with better working conditions and social protection benefits. These are integral to sustainable development and a human-centred recovery from COVID-19," said Khalid Hassan, Director of the ILO Country Office for the Philippines.

The ILO and the Government of Japan handed over the water systems on March 9, 10 and 15, 2022 in Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao and a Bangsamoro Special Geographic Area in Cotabato. The partnership, which started in 2019 provided decent jobs and promoted peace through improved water supply and sanitation services in BARMM.

"Food, water, shelter, and livelihoods are among the prerequisites to attaining personal security. By ensuring better access to these basic necessities, we empower the people to realize their own potential, and eventually, to contribute to the development of their own society. This is the principle of Human Security that Japan is strongly advocating for," said Ambassador Koshikawa Kazuhiko of the Embassy of Japan in the Philippines.

In Balabagan, Lanao del Sur, three new water systems built by

269 workers will benefit over 2,000 households in five barangays. A melting pot of various cultures, Balabagan is home to the Maranaos, settlers, and indigenous peoples who used to buy drinking water for \$2 per 200-litre drum.

Meanwhile, more than a thousand households and a school with 292 enrolled children in a Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) community in Barangay Nanga-an, Kabacan, Cotabato have also gained access to safe and clean water. About 57 local workers built the water system, the majority of them former combatants. The Level II water system has 22 tap stands where safe and clean water will flow.

In Datu Piang, 82 locals from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) community of the historical Barangay Reina Regente, Datu Piang, Maguindanao hurdled challenges of access and security to build a water system benefitting 95 households. About 34 per cent of local workers engaged by the project were women, while 32 percent were former combatants.

With support from ILO's Implementing Partner, A Single Drop for Safe Water Inc., workers were trained in skills development and water construction. They received the minimum wage and social protection benefits. The project further ensured safety and health through the observance of occupational safety and health protocols that are also Covid-19 responsive. Issues were resolved through social dialogue, as the project also promoted equal opportunity, and involved communities in every step of the implementation.

BARMM officials such as Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) parliament member Romeo Sema, Ministry of Labor and Employment (MOLE) Minister and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) Chairperson Muslimin Sema and other key local government officials witnessed the handover of the five new water systems in Cotabato, Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao.

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DOH continues to keep track of daily Covid-19 cases

By Ma. Teresa Montemayor March 18, 2022, 7:30 pm



(PNA file photo)

MANILA – A health official on Friday said the government continues to track the number of daily Covid-19 cases despite the absence of daily case bulletin.

"Di nawala ang paggabay ng gobyerno sa mga tao nang alisin ang daily case bulletin... nagbigay ito ng shift of mindset para makapag-focus sa mas importante na kailangan ng pansin, ang mga naglulubha at namamatay (When the daily case bulletin was removed, the government did not withdraw its guidance from the public... we gave a shift of mindset to focus on what's important, the severe [cases] and deaths)," Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said during an online media forum.

Vergeire clarified the daily number of cases is still being recorded in the Department of Health's (DOH) Covid-19 tracker.

"If ever, any firm or any academic institution doing, or anybody at all can still access the tracker and get the numbers there," she said.

Earlier, a health reform advocate said the DOH must be held accountable if there will be Covid-19 case surges because it removed the daily reporting of cases.

Vergeire assured the public the government will immediately provide information in case an upsurge of infections happens.

She added the Alert Level System and Covid-19 response will be activated should there be an uptick in cases.



DOH continues to keep track of daily Covid-19 cases

"Whatever the numbers are, ang ating ginagawa ay pareho pa rin, kailangan natin mag-ingat, magpabakuna, sumunod sa (we're doing the same, we need to stay safe, be vaccinated, observed the) minimum public health standards

In the same forum, infectious diseases expert and DOH-Technical Advisory Group member Edsel Salvana explained the weekly case report focuses on the healthcare system utilization and vaccination coverage which are important.

"Keeping track of the positivity rate, which to me, I guess, is the best indication that our testing is okay, *kahit kumonti* (even if it's less) as long as the positivity rate remains below 5 percent then we're still keeping good track of the virus in our community," Salvana said.

Change of mindset

Vergeire emphasized the change of case bulletin from weekly to daily and the changes in its elements aim to provide a change of mindset among Filipinos since "Covid-19 or the virus will never go away".

She said the people must learn how to live with the virus.

"*Kailangan alam natin there will be mild and asymptomatic cases pero ang importante satin wala magkaron ng severe cases, walang ma-ospital, walang mamatay* (We must know there will be mild and asymptomatic cases but what's important is there'll be no severe cases, no will be hospitalized or will die) that's why we're vaccinating)," she added.

Meanwhile, Salvana cited Sweden which does not track its Covid-19 cases at all. It only tests individuals with severe diseases.

He said it is more important to think of the mindset than the case numbers -- focusing on the severe and critical cases which impact the healthcare system.

"Because of vaccine, we are starting to go towards a virus that is no longer the same in terms of deadliness and impact to society as it was two years ago," he said.

This, he added, comes with appropriate policy shifts and attitude changes.

Lockdowns are no longer implemented because of their heavy impact on the economy.

Vaccination allowed the country's economy to open without overwhelming the healthcare system.

"So, this is a natural evolution, the same way the virus evolves *ang ating response nag-eevolve dahil marami na tayong tools kasama dyan ang bakuna, mga gamot at patuloy na paggamit ng mask* (our response also evolves because we now have a lot of tools including vaccine, medicines and continued use of masks), so we can live with this virus," Salvana said. (PNA)

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