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NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR suspends three mining agreements in Masungi Georeserve

By: [Zacarian Sarao](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)
[INQUIRER.net](#) / 10:00 PM May 25, 2022



FILE PHOTO: Conservationists have been raising the alarm over the continuous illegal encroachment in huge portions of the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape in Rizal province. — PHOTO COURTESY OF MASUNGI GEORESERVE FOUNDATION

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Wednesday ordered the suspension of Mineral Production Sharing Agreements (MPSAs) granted to three mining companies in Masungi Georeserve in Baras town, Rizal province.

In separate orders, DENR acting Secretary Jim Sampula suspended the MPSAs given to Rapid City Realty and Development Corp., Quimson Limestone, Inc., and Quarry Rock Group, Inc., which were all non-operational since 2004.

"I am suspending the operation of those three MPSAs, and remove the companies' authority to operate in order to remove the public's speculation and ease their worries," Sampulna said in a statement.

"I am also calling all those support groups and environmentalists to be active in helping us, by reporting such illegal activities for us to take action immediately," he added.

DENR-Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Director Wilfredo Moncano in the same statement then assured that the MGB-Calabarzon has already been ordered to conduct investigations on other alleged illegal quarrying activities within the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape (UMRBPL).



DENR suspends three mining agreements in Masungi Georeserve

“We will be ordering an investigation if there are any ongoing illegal quarrying operations, despite the suspensions,” Moncano said.

The UMRBPL was declared a protected area in 2018 under the Expanded National Integrated Protected Area Systems Act or ENIPAS Act.

Meanwhile, it was in 2017 when former DENR Secretary Gina Lopez and Masungi Georeserve Foundation Inc. (MGFI) signed a memorandum of agreement covering the 2,798 hectares of land situated inside the UMRBPL for conservation efforts.

Read more: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/?p=1602591#ixzz7ULQ6IxVW>

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DENR suspends quarry companies' mineral agreements in Masungi Georeserve area

By [Carolyn Bonquin, CNN Philippines](#)

Published May 25, 2022 6:55:43 PM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, May 25) – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Monday suspended the mineral agreements of three companies operating in Masungi Georeserve area in Baras, Rizal, following mounting calls from civil society organizations.

Acting Environment Secretary Jim Sampulna issued the suspension order of the Mineral Production Sharing Agreements (MPSA) of three quarry companies operating at the protected area.

The MPSA allow companies to extract minerals, particularly limestone, in the area.

Sampulna said their MPSAs are supposed to expire in 2023, but these companies are actually no longer operating since 2004. Despite this, their MPSA's had been suspended due to opposition from the community.

"We want to avert further speculation. Ito kasing mga tao pinapalabas na may operation sa area. Para walang speculation sila, alisin ang authority nila to operate para wala nang isipin ang mga tao," Sampulna said.

[Translation: We want to avert further speculation. Some people are making it appear there is an operation in the area. Thus, to make sure there's no more speculation, their authority to operate should be removed.]

Officials are also investigating other reported illegal quarrying and mining operations in Masungi Georeserve.



DENR suspends quarry companies' mineral agreements in Masungi Georeserve area

"We've given instruction (to the) regional office to conduct operation because they said the quarrying activities continue to operate. Our personnel today has go to the area to check whether there are ongoing operations, other than the three mineral production sharing agreements not operating," said Mines and Geosciences Bureau Director Wilfredo Moncano.

Moncano added, "Baka may illegal quarrying operations doon na hindi itong tatlong nabanggit. Kung meron man (If there are other illegal quarrying operations aside from the three companies), appropriate sanctions will be imposed."

DENR has also issued cease and desist orders to the other illegal structures in the protected area.

"Kung talagang wala silang (If they did not obtain any) permit from us, we will be forced to demolish their infrastructure dahil wala silang karapatan dun (because they don't have any rights there) but of course this will be subject to due process," Environment Undersecretary Jonas Leones said.

In a statement to CNN Philippines, Masungi Georeserve Foundation advocacy officer Billie Dumaliang said experts, communities, and leaders asked for the cancellation, and not suspension, of mining agreements.

"This is because of both breaches in their contracts that are grounds for cancellation and their location inside a critical watershed and protected area, where quarrying is prohibited by law," Dumaliang said. "Ordinary citizens and conservationists cannot take comfort that the quarries can renew their contracts and still harbor interest in this area."

Dumaliang added that cancellation of existing mining tenements signifies long-term commitment to conserve the protected area.

"As the recent National Museum report on Masungi said, major land and hydrologic disturbances in and around the karst ecosystem can have expensive consequences. We hope the DENR can reconsider its position to reassure the public of its commitment to the conservation of Masungi and the watershed," she appealed.

Dumaliang added, "additionally, the quarries were given 'due process', very generous due process and an abundance of accommodation, in fact. We believe they miserably failed to justify the breaches to their contracts just the same. The logical next step is to cancel the errant MPSAs."



DENR chief suspends 3 inactive quarrying agreements in Masungi Georeserve

May 25, 2022 | 7:30 pm



DENR.GOV.PH

THE HEAD of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) announced on Wednesday that he is suspending quarrying agreements at the Masungi Georeserve with three companies, which have been inactive for 18 years.

"These three entities have been non-operational since 2004. So far, they have no violations because they are not operational," DENR Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna said in a press briefing.

The three firms are Quimson Limestone, Inc., Rapid City Realty and Development Corp., and Quarry Rock Group, Inc.

Mr. Sampulna said he is issuing the suspension order on the Mineral Production Sharing Agreements (MPSAs) despite being inactive to prevent any misapprehension.

"This issue has been enveloping our office and since then I have made some investigation. I am suspending the MPSAs and that area in Baras. To avert further speculation, I am having it suspended effective today. We will be sending the suspension order as soon as the meeting is over," he said.

The Masungi Georeserve in Rizal province, located east of Metro Manila, is a conservation area and park. The reforestation project in the area is also positioned to protect the Upper Marikina Watershed, which is critical to protecting the capital region from flooding.

In April, a group of civil society organizations, including environmental groups and academic institutions, appealed to the department to cancel all quarrying permits and stop illegal construction activities in the conservation area.

"The DENR is doing everything to protect and conserve the environment, all over the Philippines. I am also calling the support groups and environmentalists to be active in helping us," Mr. Sampulna said. — Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson

Source: <https://www.bworldonline.com/the-nation/2022/05/25/450885/denr-chief-suspends-3-inactive-quarrying-agreements-in-masungi-georeserve/>



DENR, DOT, DILG Launch Info Campaign on Protected Areas

[Wednesday, May 25, 2022 Journal Online](#)



The campaign for the Year of the Protected Areas (YoPA) commences with the signing of the Joint Declaration to support the promotion and conservation of the country's national parks by (seated, from left to right) Department of Environment and Natural Resources ([DENR](#)) Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna, Department of Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, and Department of the Interior and Local Development Secretary Eduardo M. Año during the campaign launch on May 23 in Mandaluyong City. The YoPA coincides with the 90th anniversary of the establishment of protected areas in the country by virtue of Republic Act 3915 of 1932 or An Act providing for the establishment of national parks, declaring such parks as game refuges, and for other purposes. The [DENR](#) has proposed a Presidential Proclamation to declare 2022 as the National Year of the Protected Areas and June of each year as the Month of the Protected Areas. The event was organized by the Biodiversity Finance Project (BIOFIN) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the Philippines.

Source: <https://journal.com.ph/denr-dot-dilg-launch-info-campaign-on-protected-areas/>



PH unveils year of protected areas, vows protection of national parks

May 25, 2022, 5:48 pm



JOINT DECLARATION. Department of Environment and Natural Resources Acting Secretary Jim Sampulna (2nd from left), Department of Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat (4th from left) and Department of the Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año (2nd from right) sign a joint declaration in celebration of the Year of the Protected Areas on Monday (May 23, 2022). They are joined on stage by Senator-elect Loren Legarda-Leviste (3rd from left), United Nations Development Program Philippines Resident Representative Dr. Selva Ramachandran (extreme left) and Climate Change Commission Secretary Robert Borje. *(Photo by DOT)*

MANILA – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Department of Tourism (DOT), and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) have signed a joint declaration to support the celebration of the Year of the Protected Areas or the YoPA Campaign, which promotes Philippine national parks.

DENR Acting Secretary Jim Sampulna, DOT Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, and DILG Secretary Eduardo Año led the signing ceremony last Monday at the launch of the YoPA Campaign marking the 90th anniversary of establishing national parks in the country.

The campaign launch is also part of the wider celebration for the 2022 International Day of Biological Diversity (IDBD).

The joint declaration states that the DENR, through its Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) and the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) of the United Nations Development Programme Philippines, will lead the campaign implementation with DOT and DILG as partners.



PH unveils year of protected areas, vows protection of national parks

These agencies will work to promote protected areas (PAs) under the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) and coordinate with other agencies at the national and local levels to ensure effective conservation and sustainable management for national parks nationwide.

Endangered biodiversity

According to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Philippines is one of the world's 18 mega-biodiverse countries, containing two-thirds of the Earth's biodiversity and between 70 and 80 percent of the world's plant and animal species.

The Philippines ranks fifth in the number of plant species and maintains 5 percent of the world's flora.

Over half of the country's 53,000 described species can be found nowhere else in the world.

Sadly, the Philippines is also a biodiversity critical hotspot with at least 700 species being in danger of becoming extinct. Around 93 percent of the Philippines' original forest cover has been lost since the 1990s, with 53 percent of its remaining coral reefs in poor condition.

Conserving PAs

Currently, there are 246 PAs under the NIPAS, 112 of which have been legislated, 13 have been proclaimed by the President, and 121 remain as initial components of the System.

The NIPAS was established by virtue of Republic Act 7586 or the NIPAS Act of 1992 as amended by RA 11038 or the Expanded NIPAS (ENIPAS) Act of 2018.

The NIPAS Act, as amended, strengthens the protection of natural, biological and physical diversities of the environment needed for the conservation of biodiversity and the integrity of ecosystems, culture and indigenous practices by recognizing conservation areas and the management regimes being implemented by local government units (LGUs), local communities, and indigenous peoples (IPs).

It also ensures regular budget allocation for the conservation and sustainable management of each PA.

NIPAS is the classification and administration of all designated PAs to maintain essential ecological processes to preserve genetic diversity, to ensure the sustainable use of resources found therein, and to maintain their natural conditions to the greatest extent possible.



PH unveils year of protected areas, vows protection of national parks

The year 2022 is an opportune time for the YoPA Campaign to commence as it coincides with the 90th anniversary of PA establishment in the country.

On February 1, 1932, RA 3915 was passed into law, which is An Act Providing for the Establishment of National Parks, Declaring Such Parks as Game Refuges, and for other Purposes.

Following the passing of this law, Mount Arayat became the first national park in the Philippines established on June 27, 1933.

Institutionalization of such efforts is important to ensure continued financing and conservation for the country's national parks.

Part of the campaign's sustainability strategy is to push for the approval of a proposed presidential proclamation to declare 2022 as the National Year of the Protected Areas and June of each year as Month of the PAs.

This proclamation will empower DENR through the Biodiversity Management Bureau as the lead agency, with DOT and DILG as partners. This will also encourage other agencies and organizations to take part in efforts to conserve and protect PAs.

The proposed presidential proclamation is currently awaiting the signature of the President.

Kabahagi

A prequel event on May 20, 2022 was held by the DENR-BMB dubbed as Kabahagi: An IDBD 2022 Capture Quest, the DENR-BMB's first ever one-day simultaneous shoot photo contest featuring the DENR Regional, Field and Protected Area Management Offices staff as participants.

Each regional team showcased their chosen protected area in their respective regions as well as their photographic talent and ingenuity.

Canon Philippines, Gerry Roxas Foundation along with USAID-Sustainable Interventions for Biodiversity, Oceans and Landscapes (SIBOL) project and UNDP- Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) and Biodiversity Corridor (BD Cor) projects take pride as DENR-BMB's partners for its first-ever Kabahagi: IDBD 2022 Capture Quest photo contest which also takes inspiration from Canon's PhotoMarathon contest.

Protected areas campaign

With the theme Protected Areas for a Protected Future, the campaign aims to launch a massive information campaign on the urgent need to conserve PAs, while also encouraging people to visit these breathtaking ecotourism destinations.



PH unveils year of protected areas, vows protection of natl parks

The rollout of the YoPA campaign hopes to generate additional revenues from tourist visits to ensure the continuity of conservation programs within PAs. This objective stays true to the 2022 IDBD theme of building a shared future for all life.

This year's campaign kicks off by featuring six PAs in different regions: Bongsanglay Natural Park in Masbate, Apo Reef Natural Park in Occidental Mindoro, Samar Island Natural Park in the provinces of Samar, Eastern Samar and Northern Samar, Balinsasayao Twin Lakes Natural Park in Negros Oriental, Mt. Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary in Davao Oriental, and Mts. Timpoong Hibok-Hibok Natural Monument in Camiguin.

Aside from educating people on the importance of conserving biodiversity and managing PAs, the campaign highlights the critical need to increase the number of visits and to allow travelers to contribute to conservation efforts.

The revenues earned by the PAs will be used for programs and activities such as habitat protection and monitoring, wildlife protection and enforcement, resources assessment and monitoring, ecotourism development, conservation interventions, and communication, education and public awareness, among others. *(PR)*



DENR, DOT and DILG unveil Year of Protected Areas Campaign



Published 16 hours ago
on May 25, 2022 01:18 PM
By [TDT](#) [@tribuneph](#)



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The Philippines' endangered biodiversity

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80% of the world's plant and animal species. The Philippines ranks fifth in the number of plant species and maintains 5% of the world's flora.

Over half of the country's 53,000 described species can be found nowhere else in the world. Sadly, the Philippines is also a biodiversity critical hotspot with at least 700 species being in danger of becoming extinct. Around 93% of the Philippines' original forest cover has been lost since the 1990s, with 53% of its remaining coral reefs in poor condition.

Government efforts to conserve Philippine PAs

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Aside from educating people on the importance of conserving biodiversity and managing PAs, the campaign highlights the critical need to increase the number of visits and to allow travelers to contribute to conservation efforts. The revenues earned by the PAs will be used for programs and activities such as, habitat protection and monitoring, wildlife protection and enforcement, resources assessment and monitoring, ecotourism development, conservation interventions, and communication, education and public awareness, among others.



DENR cancels ECC of Coron reclamation project

ABS-CBN News

Posted at May 25 2022 03:30 PM

MANILA — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has canceled the environmental compliance certificate of the 51-hectare reclamation project in Coron, Palawan, which advocates say has brought negative impact on the town's marine ecosystem.

According to Environment Undersecretary Jonas Leones, all reclamation-related activities of the Coron Bay Development Project has been immediately suspended.

The first ECC was issued to the provincial government of Palawan, who is the proponent of CBDP, in 2007 for a 3-hectare coastal reclamation in Coron.

The provincial government was granted another ECC in 2009 for an additional reclamation of 48 hectares in the renowned tourist destination.

Based on DENR's investigation, the project lacked necessary permits such as an area clearance, Leones said. It also didn't operate for 5 years after the ECCs were released.

In a DENR order dated May 12, the provincial government has been slapped with a P50,000 fine for failing to submit a compliance monitoring report from 2012 to 2018.

"Makita natin medyo negative 'yung impact sa environment kaya kinancel natin 'yung ECC diyan," Leones told TeleRadyo Wednesday.

"As a department tasked to protect the environment, we will always be siding for the protection and conservation of our natural resources," he added.

DENR cancels ECC of Coron reclamation project

Lawyer Christian Cojamco, provincial information officer of Palawan, disclosed that the provincial government halted all reclamation-related activities in 2021 after they found it lacked necessary permits.

He reiterated that the project was started by the previous provincial administration. The project was put on hold in 2012 "due to lack of funds" and restarted in 2018 under a new provincial administration.

"The sad part here is this project was started by the previous administration and there has been no proper transfer [of documents]. This is not part of our priority projects," he told ANC's "Rundown".

Cojamco also dismissed allegations there was no public consultation when the project began.

While he said "it may be true" that the project has brought adverse effects on the environment, he said it is "a lesser evil than to destroy the mountains of Coron."

"The land area [there] for commercial use, residential use is very limited. So what's available only for the provincial government is to reclaim because we don't want to destroy forest lands, the mountains of Coron," he said.

Cojamco said the provincial government would continue the project should DENR reinstate its ECC.



DENR cancels ECC of Coron reclamation project

"We will only file a motion for reconsideration on the cancellation. As to the imposed fine, we are very much willing to pay the fine," he said.

A group of environment advocates has urged President Rodrigo Duterte to sign an executive order for the rehabilitation of Coron Bay.

A biophysical study conducted by marine biologist, Dr. Filipina Sotto, showed 27 percent of corals in impacted area are now dead while others are slowly dying from continuous sedimentation. Mangroves are also in danger of dying after being cut off from access to regular water supply, the study revealed.

Sagip Coron is blaming the provincial government for the project. They alleged the government had various violations including the absence of mitigating measures to avoid the destruction of mountains, mangroves and the marine ecosystem.



Inter-agency task force para linisin ang Coron iminumungkahi

ABS-CBN News

Posted at May 25 2022 08:12 PM

Inter-agency task force para linisin ang Coron iminumungkahi



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Ikinatuwa ng ilang environmental advocate at residente ng Coron, Palawan ang pagpapatigil ng reclamation project sa Coron Bay. Pero dahil malaki na anila ang pinsala sa lugar dahil sa quarrying, inapela nila ngayon na bumuo ang pangulo ng inter-agency task force para ibalik sa dati ang ganda ng lugar. Nagpa-Patrol, Mike Navallo. TV Patrol, Miyerkoles, 25 Mayo 2022

Bisitahin ang [Patrol.PH](#) para sa iba pang mga balita.

Source: <https://fb.watch/de4wBPae7/>



DENR-EMB Data Center

[Wednesday, May 25, 2022 Journal Online](#)



Department of Environment and Natural Resources ([DENR](#)) Acting Secretary Jim Sampulna (left) checks on the shifts in air and water quality levels displayed on one of the 28 video walls of the DENR Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) Data Center during its launch last May 18.

The P10-million facility, which is operated from the EMB central office in Quezon City, updates every five minutes real-time data collected from EMB regional offices to efficiently monitor the compliance of various industries and establishments to environmental laws. Also available in the Data Center's system are current statuses of sanitary landfills, Online Permitting System from the 16 EMB regional offices, and location and testing capabilities of EMB's 22 operational laboratories.

Others in photo are (2nd from left to right) [DENR](#) Undersecretary for Field Operations-Luzon, Visayas and Environment Juan Miguel Cuna, Assistant Secretary for Field Operations-Luzon and Visayas Gilbert Gonzales, EMB Director William Cuñado and EMB OIC Asst. Director Vizminda Osorio.

Source: <https://journal.com.ph/denr-emb-data-center/>



DENR nakapagtala ng 100% rating sa energy efficiency audit ng DOE



May 25, 2022 @ 6:49 PM 14 hours ago

MANILA, Philippines – Nakapagtala ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Central Office ng 100 percent rating, ang pinakamataas na score at performance grade mula sa Department of Energy's (DOE) audit results para sa mandatory implementation ng Energy Efficiency Conservation Program para sa national government agencies noong April 22, 2022.

Ayon kay DENR Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna, ang tagumpay na ito ay nagpapatunay na ang ahensiya “continues to walk the talk in keeping up with the mandate of the department to mobilize our citizenry in protecting, conserving, and managing the environment and natural resources for the present and future generations.”

“Electricity consumption is one of the means by which the people can save electricity and reduce carbon footprint. It is, therefore, essential to show that the DENR has achieved this milestone to inspire Filipinos in doing the same,” saad ni Sampulna.

Ang Energy Efficiency Conservation Program ng DOE ay kasama sa: “collective strategy, which includes energy conservation to ensure sufficient supply of petroleum products amid the uncertainty brought about by the Russian-Ukraine conflict.”

Sa press release batay sa Energy Efficiency and Conservation (EEC) checklist, naabot ng DENR CO ang lahat ng criteria kabilang na dito ang institutionalization of EEC, fuel-saving measures, at electricity-saving measures, sa ginawang random spot checks ng DOE.

Kaugnay nito ayon kay Administrative Service Director Rolando Castro, makikita ang energy efficient measures ng Central Office sa International Organization for Standardization o ISO re-certification nito noong nakalipas na Marso 2, 2022 para sa ISO 14001:2015 o Environment Management System o EMS. Santi Celario

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/denr-nakapagtala-ng-100-rating-sa-energy-efficiency-audit-ng-doe/>



'Mine site not in protected areas'

By [Ruth Palo](#) May 26, 2022



Davao Oriental's Pujada Bay seascape is claimed to be far from the mining area. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

THE Mati City Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro) clarified on Monday, May 23, that the mining site of the Austral-Asia Link Mining Corp. and Hallmark Mining Corp. in Barangay Macambol, Mati City, Davao Oriental is outside protected areas.

The Mati Cenro said the site comprising a total area of 17,215.49 hectares is four kilometers away from the boundary of the Pujada Bay Seascape, which is a protected area.

Mati City Information Office in its report said that Mati Cenro made the assurance after photos of the said mining site surfaced recently causing concerns among residents about its effects on the environment.

It is also outside the Mt. Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary, a Unesco-heritage site.

The Mati Cenro also clarified that the mining operation has been issued a Mineral Production Sharing Agreement by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in 2004 and has been in operation since then.

The mining company halted its operation after the Duterte administration imposed a nationwide ban on open-pit mining in 2017.

Other mining companies jointly operated by Hallmark Mining were also given the environmental compliance certificate by the national government, which certifies that "the development, construction and operation of the mine/quarry will not bring about unacceptable environmental impacts."

The DENR has also issued a "special tree cutting permit" to the mining company.

A multi-partite monitoring team (MMT) was also created to monitor the strict enforcement and compliance with the several environmental safeguards put in place to ensure the protection of the environment.

The MMT is headed by the DENR-MGB director with the City of Mati local government unit (LGU) as member. The LGU is represented by the Mati Cenro and the Mati City Health Office.

The MMT is also composed of DENR-11, DENR Cenro, Provincial ENRO, IP Davao Oriental, the tribal chieftain of Barangay Macambol, the village chief of Macambol, community and government relations manager of the mining companies, as well as the resident mine manager.



The Mati Cenro said that they are constantly monitoring the operation of the mining company from 2004 until the present. Mitigating measures such as collector sumps, siltation ponds, geotextile, and quarterly water sampling are also in place and complied with by the said mining company.

It can be recalled that the national government lifted the mining ban sometime in December 2021.

Hallmark Mining Corp. is now preparing the necessary documents required for it to resume its operations.



IPs join call to stop quarries and resorts in Masungi

May 26, 2022



Susong Dalaga mountain CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

AN indigenous Dumagat-Remontado community joined mounting calls to cancel the Mineral Production Sharing Agreements (MPSAs) inside the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape and the Masungi Geopark Project (MGP).

Some 100 leaders and members of the Dumagat-Remontado of Antipolo released a petition on May 19, 2022 asking President Rodrigo Duterte, Department of Environment and Natural Resources OIC Secretary Jim Sampulna and Rizal Gov. Rebecca Ynares to save the Susong Dalaga mountain from quarrying. They said the Susong Dalaga mountain is sacred to their community and is part of their heritage. It is also included in their ancestral domain.

Based on the areas covered by the two MPSAs, the quarries would level down about 1,000 hectares of mountains within the protected area, including the Susong Dalaga shrine sacred to the Indigenous Peoples (IPs). A deep scar, 400 meters (m) high, 1,200 m wide and 5,000 m long, on the mountains immediately fronting Marcos Highway, would be created.

The tribe also expressed worry about the floods and landslides that would destroy their homes and farms, and impact even those living in downstream areas.

The floods and landslides that ravaged San Mateo, Rodriguez, Marikina, Cainta, Pasig, and other towns and cities during typhoons "Ondoy," "Rolly" and "Ulysses" started from these mountains.

Thus, the group urged government officials and the relevant quarry companies to withdraw their plans to quarry Susong Dalaga. They also asked that resorts and other destructive activities be similarly stopped and removed from the MGP and the protected area.

The same tribe earlier expressed its desire to conserve the area together with partners such as the award-winning Masungi Georeserve Foundation.



'Halos umiiyak': Marinduque residents hail decision vs Marcopper for 1993 mine disaster

Benise Balaoing, ABS-CBN News

Posted at May 25 2022 01:45 PM | Updated as of May 25 2022 03:43 PM



A boy plays on a dry riverbed in Mogpog, Marinduque, 20 years after the Marcopper mining disaster on March 22, 2016. Several river systems in the province were left heavily silted and severely poisoned when the Marcopper mine tailings dam leaked mercury-contaminated discharge, impacting the province's water and food supply. *Jonathan Cellona, ABS-CBN News/File*

MANILA — Marinduque residents on Wednesday welcomed a local court decision that ordered Marcopper Mining Corp. to pay them damages for a deadly mining spill nearly 3 decades ago.

In 1993, the company's Maguila-guila siltation dam burst, flooding the town of Mogpog, where 2 children drowned in the mine waste.

In a decision dated May 16 and only made available to media on Tuesday, Judge Emmanuel Recalde of the Marinduque Regional Trial Court Branch 38 ordered Marcopper to pay each of the plaintiffs P200,000 in temperate damages and P100,000 in moral damages.

Recalde also ordered Marcopper to pay the plaintiffs collectively P1 million in exemplary damages, media reports said.

"Actually halos umiiyak po 'yung amin pong mga petitioners sa napakagandang decision ng court na pinaboran po yung prayers nila na mabayaran ng compensation," said Marinduque Council for Environmental Concerns (MACEC) executive director Elizabeth Manggol.

(Our petitioners almost wept with this decision of the court that favored their prayers to receive compensation.)



'Halos umiiyak': Marinduque residents hail decision vs Marcopper for 1993 mine disaster

'Halos umiiyak': Marinduque residents hail decision vs Marcopper for 1993 mine disaster

The case was filed in 2001. Manggol noted there were originally 61 plaintiffs, but only 30 are left.

Manggol also acknowledged that there is still a long road ahead for the plaintiffs—aside from the possibility that the Regional Trial Court's decision may be appealed, 2 other cases are pending against Marcopper.

"Meron po 'yung pagkatambak ng tailings sa Calancan Bay nung 1975-1991, at iba pa po yung nangyari na disaster nung March 24, 1996 na nag-spill po ang tailings ng Marcopper sa Boac River," she told ABS-CBN's TeleRadyo.

(Tailings were dumped on Calancan Bay from 1975 to 1991, and this is separate from the disaster on March 24, 1996, when the tailings of Marcopper spilled into the Boac River.)

She also noted that the RTC's decision did not grant the prayer for the complete rehabilitation of the Mogpog River, which is now considered biologically dead after it was heavily silted with mine tailings.

"Kaya po, sana po yung iba pong kaso ay mag-proceed para po magka-meron talaga ng total and genuine rehabilitation. Alam po namin na meron pang mahabang proseso na kasunod," she said.

(This is why we hope that the other cases will proceed, so that there will be total and genuine rehabilitation. We know that there is still a long process ahead.)

Marcopper had denied responsibility when the Maguila-guila dam burst in 1993. Mining officials blamed an unusual rainfall brought by a typhoon.

But a briefing paper from the office of Marinduque Rep. Lord Allan Jay Velasco earlier noted that when the dam was rebuilt, "an overflow was added for the first time, in an implicit acknowledgment of faulty engineering."

Velasco on Wednesday said that while the court decision was "very welcome and long overdue," the quest for justice for victims was "far from over."

"In fact, in 2020, authorities discovered about 100 barrels containing what they described as 'toxic substances' in Marcopper's old storage facility," the House Speaker said in a statement.

He added that the death of Boac River still hounded thousands of farmers and fisherfolk who are dependent on it. Some residents in the area also continued to experience health problems, said the lawmaker.

He lamented that his constituents continue to suffer the effects of the mining tragedy--as can be seen in their health problems--to this day.



'Halos umiiyak': Marinduque residents hail decision vs Marcopper for 1993 mine disaster

"We strongly believe that the government must continue to exact accountability from Marcopper for the consequences of its irresponsible mining practices that have caused irreparable damage to the environment and to the people of Marinduque," Velasco said.

For his part, Mogpog Mayor August Leo Livelo said he supports MACEC's quest for justice.

But in the meantime, he said he wishes for a dredging of the Mogpog River to prevent it from overflowing in case of strong rains.

"Ang sa amin po sana, sa pagkakaalam ko, may proposal po ata diyan, na kahit paano i-dredge man lang muna yung Mogpog River natin, see to it na hindi maapektuan masyado ng baha yung nasa low-lying areas," he said.

(From what I know, there is a proposal to dredge the Mogpog River in the meantime, see to it that those in low-lying areas would not be too badly affected by floods.)

— With a report from Nikko Dizon, VERA Files



The pros and cons of reclamation

May 25, 2022

IF one visits Dumaguete City, one is likely to notice campaign-style banners posted here and there among the leftovers from the recent elections bearing the terse message, "No to 174." The signs are evidence of a most remarkable public campaign, a well-organized, popular and evidently successful resistance to a proposed reclamation project that would bury 174 hectares of Dumaguete's waterfront under a P23-billion upscale "smart city" development.

The project was an unsolicited proposal to the city by the Quezon City-based construction firm E.M. Cuerpo Inc. in mid-2021, and was enthusiastically embraced by Dumaguete City Mayor Felipe Antonio Remollo. Remollo prevailed upon the city council to pass a resolution authorizing him to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the firm for development of the project.

The move set off a firestorm of protest among the public, business groups, environmental advocates and even some government agencies. By September, Mayor Remollo was under such pressure that he "suspended" the MoU, ostensibly to seek a fresh mandate for it in the election. While he was easily reelected for a third term, the endorsement he was hoping to receive to continue with the controversial development was withheld with a vengeance: seven city council seats, a clear majority, went to candidates who had organized themselves to run on a specific platform of preventing the "174." The project is now considered dead, at least for the foreseeable future, and as that was the clear wish of a majority of the citizens of Dumaguete, that is as it should be.

Reclamation, like mining, is fraught with controversy here in the Philippines. Like mining, discussions about reclamation often suffer from being subject to absolutes in points of view; that is, it is either considered completely bad and should never be allowed, or that not allowing it is wrong and unfairly retards economic growth.

It is exceedingly rare for either extreme in perspective to be completely correct, yet they are the two perspectives most often adopted, which makes disputes over proposed reclamation projects unproductive and unlikely to lead to rational and beneficial solutions. There are uses for reclamation, and areas where it can be done in such a way that environmental and social consequences can be avoided or adequately mitigated. And there are places where reclamation should be avoided. From our perspective, the New Manila International Airport project in Bulacan, despite resistance to the project from some quarters, is an example of the former; the aborted Dumaguete project is an example of the latter.

There should be three questions asked and decisively answered when any reclamation project is proposed. First, is there a compelling economic and social need for the project, or does it offer economic and social opportunities that are so compelling that they cannot be ignored? Second, is reclamation the best or only option for meeting that need or providing those opportunities? And finally, does the project have the clear support of the community or communities that will be directly affected by it?

If the answer to all of these questions is an unarguable yes, then reclamation is likely a good idea, provided of course that environmental impacts and the impact on any populations that may be displaced from their homes or livelihoods are thoroughly addressed from the outset. If any of those questions has a negative answer, then reclamation should be prohibited.



In the case of Dumaguete, for example, the proposed project would have extended into a marine protected area, and for this and other reasons it was overwhelmingly rejected by the community. In the case of the new airport, which is critically needed, placing it on reclaimed land is the most practical solution, and while there are some disruptions to the local environment and community, these have been appropriately addressed. Not everyone is happy with it, but the balance of public opinion clearly favors the project, so it should proceed. These examples both for and against reclamation should serve as guidance to planners and policymakers when new projects are presented for consideration.



Police launch manhunt vs mangrove poachers in Zamboanga City

Published May 25, 2022, 8:52 AM

by [Liza Abubakar-Jocson](#)

ZAMBOANGA CITY – The Zamboanga police have launched manhunt operations against mangrove poachers who mauled and hacked an environment protection personnel at the Zamboanga City mangrove conservation site last week.

Police stepped up their operations following a directive from Mayor Maria Isabelle Climaco-Salazar who visited the injured OCENR personnel at the hospital on Wednesday, May 23.

Climaco-Salazar also ordered the police to intensify security operations after her visit to the mangrove site in Barangay Talon Talon with Zamboanga City Police Acting Director P/Col. Alexander Lorenzo and OCENR chief Engr. Rey Gonzales.

Edison Faustino Delos Reyes, a job order employee at the Office of the City Environment and Natural Resources (OCENR), was guarding the area when he was mauled and hacked by unidentified poachers.

Delos Reyes ordered the poachers to leave the area after he caught the latter in the act of cutting mangrove trees (bakawan).

Climaco praised the courage of the injured personnel and his dedication to his work of protecting the environment against illegal poachers.



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Philippines takes first steps to plastic currency notes

An initial 10 million pieces were distributed by the central bank for the rollout, with another 490 million pieces due to be distributed next year.



The shift to the new polymer banknotes is mainly for better security as the new bills have intricate designs that make counterfeiting difficult. Image: [Roxanne Tamayo CC BY-SA 3.0](#), via [Flickr](#).

[SciDev Net](#)

3 minute read May 25, 2022

A month into the Philippines' pilot test use of polymer banknotes most Filipinos are yet to see one, mainly due to their limited release.

The [Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas \(BSP\)](#) began the phased issuance of the new Php1,000 (US\$19.50) polymer banknotes on 18 April. An initial 10 million pieces were distributed by the central bank for the rollout, with another 490 million pieces due to be distributed next year — a small fraction of the billions of the old banknotes in circulation.

Another reason for the scarce sighting of the new currency is because ordinary Filipinos rarely carry such large denomination notes. There is also reluctance among vendors to accept the notes since they are unsure of its validity, with misinformation spreading in social media.

In fact, the notes are so rare that people are known to stash them away as keepsakes, leading to even fewer bills in public circulation.

When no longer useable due to wear and tear, polymer banknotes can be recycled into various products, such as building components and plumbing fittings.

Philippines takes first steps to plastic currency notes

Benjamin Diokno, governor, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

According to BSP governor Benjamin Diokno the shift to the new polymer banknotes is mainly for better security as the new bills have intricate designs that make counterfeiting difficult.

Polymer banknotes are also [environment](#)-friendly, having a lower carbon footprint as they are far more durable than paper money. Polymer notes can be recycled while soiled paper notes are required by law to be collected and burned for disposal, Tony Lambino, BSP managing director, tells *SciDev.Net*.

Plastic notes are also considered hygienic as they can be disinfected or washed, unlike paper banknotes — an important consideration following the [Covid-19](#) pandemic.

The switch to polymer comes three decades after Australia became the first country to issue polymer banknotes in 1992. There are currently over 50 countries using polymer banknotes, including Canada, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, UK and Vietnam.

Initial opposition to plastic currency came from the growers of abaca, or Manila hemp, which is used to strengthen the existing paper banknotes. However, the impact to growers' livelihoods and the abaca industry is minuscule and alternate uses are being found for the natural material with the help of the BSP, says Lambino.

Abaca is versatile and can be made for other uses such as in the making of brown envelopes known the world over as 'Manila envelopes'. Demand for abaca — a species of the banana plant native to the Philippines — could increase if pulp from the fibres are used to make specialty paper for valuable official documents such as land titles and birth certificates.

Others have criticised the decision to replace the images of three World War II heroes on the notes with a depiction of the Philippine eagle in the new polymer banknotes. Lambino justifies use of the image of the Philippine eagle as a reminder of the country's rich [biodiversity](#) and its commitment to a sustainable future.

In any case, says Lambino, the switch to polymer is part of overall modernisation plans. The current designs date back to 2010 and an update is due anyway, he says.

This article was originally published on [SciDev.Net](#). Read the [original article](#).

Asia Pulp & Paper eyes 2060 net-zero emissions target

The paper giant is aiming to rein in its massive carbon footprint in line with the Indonesian government's own net-zero target. Environmentalists fret that the company's aim to triple production and its continued operation on carbon-rich peatlands contradict its decarbonisation goals.



A log yard next to Asia Pulp and Paper's Indah Kiat Perawang Mill in Riau province, Sumatra. It has a production capacity of about [1.9 million tonnes](#) of pulp per year. APP's PT OKI Mill in South Sumatra has a capacity of [2.8 million tonnes](#) of pulp, with a plan to increase this capacity to 7 million tonnes a year. Image: Eco-Business

By [Robin Hicks](#)
4 minute read May 25, 2022

Indonesian pulpwood giant Asia Pulp and Paper (APP) has said that it intends to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero in support of climate action, and can do so while expanding its operations.

In an interview with Eco-Business, APP said that it aimed to achieve net-zero emissions by 2060, in line with the Indonesian government's own carbon reduction target, [set in August last year](#).

The Jakarta-headquartered company is planning for a 30 per cent reduction in carbon emissions by 2030, just ahead of the Indonesian government's commitment to reduce emissions by 29 per cent by the the same deadline.

Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/asia-pulp-paper-eyes-2060-net-zero-emissions-target/>

Sea sponges and coastal communities feel the squeeze of rising sea temperatures

This May, New Zealand witnessed its first ever widespread sea sponge bleaching event. What could climate threats to these unique marine creatures mean for science, biodiversity and local communities?



A healthy unbleached native sea sponge (left) and a bleached sea sponge (right). Image: Victoria University of Wellington / Dr Valerio Micaroni and Francesca Strano.

By [Choy Myn](#)

4 minute read May 25, 2022

New Zealand's Fiordland National Park is nestled within Te W hipounamu, a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) whose beauty, biodiversity and importance to scientific research is globally recognised. But while visitors may marvel at the park's snow-capped mountains, lush forests, and fiords like the world-famous Milford Sound, scientists have recently uncovered a troubling development off the coast.

Earlier this month, [mass sea sponge bleaching was observed in New Zealand for the first time](#). Since November last year, the country has been dealing with its strongest marine heatwave in 40 years, with Fiordland reporting ocean temperatures five degrees Celsius warmer than the average. This sudden temperature gain has caused up to 95 per cent of the Breaksea and Doubtful Sound's usually healthy brown sponges to lose their photosynthetic symbionts, turning them a chalky white. According to Victoria University of Wellington's Professor of Marine Biology James Bell, the depth of damage was extensive, occurring 8 to 40 or possibly 50 metres below the surface.

Although bleached sea sponges may bounce back, marine ecosystems have much to lose should these creatures fail to revive.

Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/sea-sponges-and-coastal-communities-feel-the-squeeze-of-rising-sea-temperatures/>

The global hunger crisis is here

Conflict, Covid, the climate crisis, and rising costs have pushed 44 million people in 38 countries to the edge of famine. To address the food security crisis, the world must look beyond country-level solutions, argues Seta Tutundjian.



Covid-19 exposed the fragility and dysfunctionality of the world's food systems. Now, the war in Ukraine is compounding these challenges, because both sides are major exporters of food, fuel, and fertiliser.

Image: [eatwell.in/Flickr](https://www.flickr.com/photos/eatwell/)

By Seta Tutundjian
4 minute read May 24, 2022

Global food prices are soaring. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's [Food Price Index](#) – which covers a basket of basic food commodities (cereals, meat, dairy, vegetable oils, and sugar) – reached an all-time high of 159.7 in March, up from 141.1 the previous month. While it declined slightly in April, to 158.5, ongoing developments – not least Russia's war in Ukraine – are set to keep driving prices to new highs, with devastating implications for [global hunger](#).

The Covid-19 pandemic [exposed](#) the fragility and dysfunctionality of the world's food systems, with movement restrictions and supply-chain disruptions driving up prices, damaging rural livelihoods, and exacerbating food insecurity, especially for the poor. Now, the war in Ukraine is compounding these challenges, because both sides are major [exporters](#) of food, fuel, and fertiliser.

Moreover, climate change poses an even larger threat to global food security. Already, extreme weather like heatwaves, floods, and prolonged droughts has triggered shocks to agricultural production and food availability. As temperatures rise, these shocks will become increasingly

The global hunger crisis is here

frequent and powerful. If global warming crosses the 1.5° Celsius threshold (relative to Earth's pre-industrial temperature), they are likely to become catastrophic.

As the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [report](#) shows, avoiding the threshold will require immediate and drastic action. But mitigation is only part of the challenge. Large-scale investments in adaptation will also be needed to protect vulnerable communities from the warming that is already locked in.

Even under the most optimistic mitigation scenario, global warming is expected to hit the 1.5°C threshold in a decade, before receding. This will result in shifts in climatic zones, rising sea levels, and disruptions to the water cycle that increase the frequency and intensity of extreme weather. Beyond raising economic and health risks, the resulting disruptions to food and water supplies are likely to drive [social](#) and political upheaval, fueling a vicious cycle of poverty, hunger, instability, and even conflict, accompanied by sharp rise in migration.

A more resilient, sustainable, and equitable food system must be a pillar of any climate mitigation or adaptation agenda. But the barriers to building such a system should not be underestimated, especially for countries and regions where soil is poor, land has little agricultural value, other natural resources, such as water, are limited or degraded, and socioeconomic conditions are difficult.

Given the low productivity of their agricultural land, such marginal environments are unable to support the sustainable production of sufficient food to meet local people's nutritional needs. In fact, while marginal environments are [home](#) to less than 25 per cent of the global population – an estimated 1.7 billion people – they account for 70 per cent of the world's poor and most of its malnourished.

Poverty and hunger can lead farmers to overuse fragile environmental resources in order to ensure their short-term survival, even at the cost of long-term depletion of their lands and impoverishment of their households and communities. Those living in remote areas with minimal infrastructure, few alternative economic opportunities, and limited market access are particularly likely to make such choices.

Given this, countries with significant marginal lands rely on food imports – in some cases for more than 80 per cent of their needs. But pandemic- and war-related disruptions, together with the price increases they have fueled, have shown just how vulnerable such countries are. According to the FAO's *State of Food and Agriculture 2021* report, an additional [161 million people](#) were affected by hunger in 2020, compared with 2019. And the World Food Program is now cautioning that the combination of conflict, Covid, the climate crisis, and rising costs has pushed [44 million people](#) in 38 countries to the edge of famine.

With countries struggling to secure enough food to meet their populations' nutritional needs, many are now re-evaluating their food dependencies and seeking to expand local production. But unless sustainability is taken into account, efforts to increase short-term resilience by shortening supply chains could undermine medium- and long-term resilience by further depleting agricultural resources like soil and water.



The global hunger crisis is here

Sustainability isn't cheap. Efficient production amid biophysical and climate constraints requires investment in costly technologies. But poor governance structures, limited growth prospects, and high debts pose major challenges for many countries. The pandemic has placed massive strain on public budgets, and debt crises loom for many governments, as loans taken out to address the pandemic come due.

Poor and vulnerable countries cannot be expected to address the myriad [interconnected challenges](#) they face, from pollution and biodiversity loss to hunger and poverty, without help. To bolster long-term food and nutritional security, we must look beyond country-level solutions to regional and international ones that consider the needs of communities living in marginal environments. Otherwise, there will be no escaping destabilising cycles of hunger, migration, and violence.

Seta Tutundjian, founder and CEO of Thriving Solutions, is a member of the High-Level Expert Group to assess the need for the International Platform for Food Systems Science and a co-leader of the global Food is Never Waste initiative.



De Lima kinastigo operasyon mining sa South Cotabato

[NEWS](#)

By [Abante News](#) Last updated May 25, 2022



Binatikos ni Senadora Leila de Lima ang pag-alis ng provincial ban sa open-pit mining sa South Cotabato na siyang makakaapekto umano sa kalikasan at sa mga tao sa komunidad.

Hinimok naman niya si South Cotabato Governor Reynaldo Tamayo Jr. na i-veto ang pag-amiyenda ng Provincial Board sa local environment code, partikular ang pagtanggap ng probisyon sa open-pit mining.

Noong Mayo 16, nagdesisyon ang mga mambabatas sa South Cotabato na baligtarin ang 12 taong provincial ban sa open-pit mining.

Sabi ni De Lima, maari naman baligtarin ang desisyon ng provincial board sa pamamagitan ng pag-veto dito. Kung hindi ito maaksiyunan sa loob ng 15 araw, maipapasa ito bilang isang batas. (Dindo Matining)

Source: <https://www.abante.com.ph/de-lima-kinastigo-operasyon-mining-sa-south-cotabato/>



Duterte, asang bubuhayin ni BBM ang Bataan nuclear energy

By [Malou Escudero](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon)
- May 25, 2022 - 12:00am



This photo taken on April 5, 2022 shows a general view of the control room at the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant in the town of Morong in Bataan province, north of Manila.

AFP/Ted Aljibe

MANILA, Philippines — Umaasa si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na itutuloy ni presumptive president Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ang planong paggamit ng nuclear energy na sinimulan ni dating Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos pero hindi natuloy.

Ayon sa Pangulo, si Marcos naman ang nagpagawa ng nuclear power plant sa Bataan kaya dapat tingnan nang susunod na administrasyon ang paggamit nito.

Ipinunto ni Duterte na mauubos ang langis sa hinaharap kaya dapat pag-isipan ang paggamit ng nuclear energy.

“Kaya we are not yet di to sa nuclear level but I hope that the next administration would at least explore now the possibility of itong nuclear... Tatal ang nag-umpisa naman nito si Marcos noon. Nagpagawa siya ng nuclear plant but ano... You know oil is not infinite, may katapusan ‘yan. Someday it will dry up,” sabi ni Duterte.

Binanggit ni Duterte na “forever” ang nuclear energy bagaman at delikado katulad nang nangyari sa Chernobyl ng Ukraine na nagkaroon ng leak na sanhi ng radiation.

Ayon pa sa Pangulo, patuloy ang pagmahal ng presyo ng langis dahil wala nito sa Pilipinas at kailangan pang mag-import sa ibang bansa.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2022/05/25/2183500/duterte-asang-bubuhayin-ni-bbm-ang-bataan-nuclear-energy/amp/>

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DENR chief suspends 3 inactive quarrying agreements in Masungi Georeserve

THE HEAD of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) announced on Wednesday that he is suspending quarrying agreements at the Masungi Georeserve with three companies, which have been inactive for 18 years.

"These three entities have been non-operational since 2004. So far, they have no violations because they are not operational," DENR Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna said in a press briefing.

The three firms are Guimson Limestone, Inc., Rapid City Realty and Development Corp., and Quarry Rock Group, Inc.

Mr. Sampulna said he is issuing the suspension order on the Mineral Production Sharing Agreements (MPSAs) despite being inactive to prevent any misapprehension.

"This issue has been enveloping our office and since then I have made some investigation. I am suspending the MPSAs and that area in Baras. To

avert further speculation, I am having it suspended effective today. We will be sending the suspension order as soon as the meeting is over," he said.

The Masungi Georeserve in Rizal province, located east of Metro Manila, is a conservation area and park. The reforestation project in the area is also positioned to protect the Upper Marikina Watershed, which is critical to protecting the capital region from flooding.

In April, a group of civil society organizations, including environmental groups and academic institutions, appealed to the department to cancel all quarrying permits and stop illegal construction activities in the conservation area.

"The DENR is doing everything to protect and conserve the environment, all over the Philippines. I am also calling the support groups and environmentalists to be active in helping us," Mr. Sampulna said.

— **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**



DENR STUDY: BAGUIO STILL HAS ROOM FOR TOURISTS BUT ...

By Vincent Cabreza
@InqNational

BAGUIO CITY—The summer capital has yet to breach its carrying capacity for tourists and may be able to accommodate 679,683 more visitors on top of the 1.53 million tourists it hosted in 2019, data from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) showed.

The figure was based on the DENR's Watershed and Water Resources Research Development and Extension Center (WRRDEC) computation of the city's tourism threshold of 2,215,141 guests each year.

But the city government should make trips to the city "more expensive" to trim down on tourist traffic without jeopardizing the income derived from this industry, because other resources like roads and water are no longer sufficient for the Baguio population, said WRRDEC head Helen Madumba at a briefing on Wednesday.

Carrying capacity refers to the quality of life of a given population when measured against a community's limited resources. The fewer resources become available, the poorer life becomes for individuals or families.

The DENR focused on Baguio tourism because of its "ripple effects" on the environment and the rest of the public sector, said Ralph Pablo, the DENR Cordillera director, when the study, which was completed in December last year, was presented at the same briefing.

For instance, most roads leading to 12 popular Baguio spots have "reached their maximum transport carrying capacity," Madumba said, matching the findings of the 2019 Baguio urban carrying capacity study commissioned by the National Economic and Development Authority.

Congestion

"For the projected population in 2021, there is already a deficit estimated at 325.73 kilometers [per individual], which means the inadequacy of roads will result in more traffic congestion [that would increase] air pollution," she said.

The DENR study computed the physical carrying capacity for Baguio houses at 57,063, but the

number of households had actually grown to 89,987 by 2015, which explains the growing demand for resources and government services for which visitors will compete.

Madumba said the study measured the population's irritation index, and concluded that "the loss of euphoria" and the growing antagonism against tourists may affect Baguio's decision to continue to pursue tourism as a primary industry.

The study has established that trees and plant populations, which need to be preserved, "are found in places less visited," and are therefore not subjected to harm or disturbances from tourists, she said.

A DENR inventory estimates that Baguio trees number about 2.5 million, counting the city's remaining 500,000 Benguet pine trees, which are clustered at Camp John Hay, Forbes Park and Fort del Pilar, the campus of the Philippine Military Academy.

Baguio environmental officer Rhenan Diwas said 9,000 saplings have been planted in local parks to improve the city's forest cover. But the agency also discovered that the city had put up too many tourism-oriented establishments.

Cap on hotels

The threshold for Baguio tourism facilities has been breached by 1,444 structures, Madumba said, but she did not reveal the total number of tourist accommodations operating in the city when the study was conducted.

She said regulating the construction of future Baguio tourism structures might be practical, because of a possibility that some of these would lie on sinkholes or would be vulnerable to landslides after storms.

But since February last year, the Baguio government has made policy decisions on construction projects based on the analysis of zoning, geohazard and calamity maps.

For example, the city government has determined that only 11.03 percent of the city's commercial properties are within unstable areas, and the city's only economic zone stands on land that is least affected by landslides and other natural disasters. *INQ*



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Mts. Imposim (left), Hibok-Hibok (center) and Pulag (right) as seen from Camiguin's famed White Island.

Ecotourism is picking up in Philippine national parks

"CLIENTS are the lifeblood of a mountain."

This was said by Lito Z. Babalson, a Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) forester based in Cagayan, in a press release. Luckily, after two particularly bad tourism years because of the ongoing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, things are finally looking up.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), together with the DENR and the Department of Tourism (DoT), collaborated on the Year of the Protected Areas (YoPA). Launched on May 23, the awareness-raising campaign aims to bring visitors back to the country's national parks.

The Philippines has 246 protected areas totalling three million hectares — the latest being Mt. Anay in Pampanga and Tiraod Pass in Ilocos Sur.

With the challenges brought about by the pandemic, government resources are thinly

stretched, according to DENR Biodiversity Management Bureau director Natividad Y. Bernardino.

"All the protected areas need funding... so part of the upkeep funds must come from the public via ecotourism," she said in a press statement.

Guides and porters at the Camiguin volcano Mt. Hibok-Hibok earn P1,500 and P800 per day, respectively. The forester, Mr. Babalson, said that since opening in December 2021, guides and porters in the island-province have been able to resume their livelihood.

Other national parks in the Philippines are starting to see an influx of visitors too.

Apo Reef in Occidental Mindoro, for one, welcomed 212 visitors since it reopened in April, generating revenues of about P250,000. Between March 2020 to March 2022, it only had 35 visitors.

Mt. Pulag in Luzon, for another, has been welcoming over 2,700 visitors since January,



PHOTO COURTESY OF GREGG H. YAN FOR INSPACPH

A DENR ranger explores the misty ridges of Mt. Hibok-Hibok in Camiguin. The volcano features well-marked trails traversing a wide variety of habitats.

resulting in about P500,000 in revenues. In 2021, it recorded a thousand visitors.

Because COVID-19 is still a reality, so is the use of face masks.

"Face masks should be worn especially at the jump-off point and when passing through com-

mealties," said UN consultant Gregg H. Yan, in an e-mail. "Local guides constantly but gently indicate the need to follow safety measures, even in the bush. Better safe than sorry, after all."

They are also empowered to advise visitors against knowingly

or unknowingly breaking the law.

"We have plantists [plant enthusiasts] who love to pluck orchids and other plants illegally," said Ronald G. Rabile, who comes from three generations of mountain guides in Camiguin. "Like the guardian in the lake, we protect this mountain too."

The Philippines is a consumer, source, and transit point for the illegal wildlife trade, per the Asian Development Bank. Possession of wild plants and animals can warrant a fine of P300,000 and a four-year jail term.

"Let's keep wildlife where they belong: safe in our forests, rivers, lakes, and coasts," Mr. Yan added.

The DoT launched the second phase of its sustainable tourism campaign on May 18. Activities under the "Keep the Fun Going" campaign include encouraging travelers to hike or bike more often; promoting volunteerism in community restoration efforts like planting; and motivating tourists to book eco-friendly accommodations.

Healthcare practitioners in countries such as the US and Canada have been prescribing "nature therapy" to patients. Also called ecotherapy, exposure to nature has been known to counter depression, improve blood pressure, and boost immune function.

— Patricia Mirasal

PHOTO COURTESY OF GREGG H. YAN FOR INSPACPH



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UNODC, US INL boost drive vs wildlife, forest crime

By **CRISTINA LEE-PISCO**

THE United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC)-Environment Team, with support from the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines' Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) formally launched on Monday the Interna-

tional Consortium on Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit in the Philippines.

Through this project, UNODC will objectively analyze the Philippines' criminal justice mechanisms and preventive responses for addressing wildlife flora and fauna trafficking in close cooperation with relevant govern-

ment agencies, such as lead agency Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB).

"Wildlife trafficking is a serious crime that is already negatively affecting the world, especially Southeast Asia. By illegally taking wildlife from their natural ecosystems and bringing them to cities for commer-

cial purposes, we are exposing our society to risks that might be uncontrollable," said Acting DENR Secretary Jim Sampulna.

The toolkit, which has been deployed in 12 countries, also helps develop short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations for impactful action and responses to combat wildlife and forest crime.

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Don't stop seeking accountability from Marcopper, gov't urged

Lawmaker says quest for justice not over as mine tragedy continues to hound people of Marinduque

By Julie M. Aurelio
@JMAurelioINQ

Following a court decision awarding damages to residents affected by a 1993 mine spill in Marinduque province, a lawmaker has pressed the government to continue to demand accountability from Marcopper Mining Corp.

Speaker Lord Allan Velasco, who represents the lone district of Marinduque in the House of Representatives, has hailed the decision of the Marinduque Regional Trial Court (RTC) to make the mining firm pay damages to residents hit by the mine spill.

"This recent court ruling is very welcome and long overdue. It is a major victory for the people of Marinduque against the company responsible for one of the worst mining and environmental disasters in Philippine history," Velasco said in a statement on Wednesday.

"We strongly believe that

the government must continue to exact accountability from Marcopper for the consequences of its irresponsible mining practices that have caused irreparable damage to the environment and to the people of Marinduque," he added.

Velasco said that more than two decades later, the province was "still hounded by the Marcopper tragedy" when its siltation dam burst in 1993, "killing the Mogpog River and flooding nearby communities with toxic residues of heavy metals and silt."

In 1996, he said "a much worse disaster took place when a fracture in the drainage tunnel of Marcopper's Tapian pit spilled more than 1.6 million cubic meters of toxic mine tailings, flooding villages and poisoning the Boac River."

"But the quest for justice for all victims is far from over. In fact, in 2020, authorities discovered about 100 barrels contain-



Lord Allan Velasco

ing what they described as 'toxic substances' in Marcopper's old storage facility," Velasco said.

Health problems

He said his provincemates "continue to suffer the effects of the mining tragedy as evidenced by health problems, making it all the more imperative to come up with stringent and long-term environmental solutions."

On May 16, the Marinduque RTC Branch 38 awarded dam-

ages to residents affected by the 1993 Marcopper mine spill in Mogpog town.

Marcopper was ordered to pay each of the 30 plaintiffs P200,000 in temperate damages and P100,000 in moral damages. The court also ordered the mining firm to pay them P1 million collectively in exemplary damages.

The temperate damages would cover properties, crops and livestock lost by each of the remaining plaintiffs while the moral damages would compensate for the physical and mental suffering of the plaintiffs due to loss of livelihood and the continuous hazard posed by the Maguila-guila Dam.

The court said the mining firm was "negligent in the performance of its duty to conscientiously operate and maintain the Maguila-guila Dam," which led to its oversedimentation and dam breach that spilled floodwater into the Mogpog River. **INQ**



COMP and anti-mining groups hail court ruling on Marcopper incident

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA
@jonlmayuga

THE Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) and anti-mining groups have welcomed the ruling of a local court ordering a mining firm to pay damages to survivors of the Marcopper mining disaster.

They were reacting to a decision dated May 16, 2022 rendered by Judge Emmanuel Recalde of the Marinduque Regional Trial Court Branch 38, wherein Marcopper was ordered to pay each of the 30 plaintiffs P200,000 in temperate damages and P100,000 in moral damages for the civil case filed in 2001. The court also ordered the mining company to pay P1 million as exemplary damages in favor of the plaintiffs.

COMP, which represents the big players in the country's mining industry, for one, expressed relief that the court has finally rendered a decision in favor of the plaintiffs, but clarified that Marcopper operated under the old mining law.

In news statement, COMP said the tailings spill in Marinduque almost 30 years ago, considered the worst mining incident in the country's history, "is a constant reminder to miners all over the world that the safety of all stakeholders in host mining communities is paramount."

"It underscores that extreme con-

sequences to people and the environment from catastrophic tailings facility failures are unacceptable," COMP said.

Environmental guarantee fund

COMP said new laws governing mining have established a mandatory environmental guarantee fund mechanism known collectively as the Contingent Liability and Rehabilitation Fund (CLRF).

The CLRF—which consists of the Mine Rehabilitation Fund, Mine Waste and Tailings fees, and the Final Mine Rehabilitation and Decommissioning Fund—ensures just and timely compensation for damages and for progressive and sustainable rehabilitation for any adverse effect a mining operation or activity may cause.

COMP initiative

MEANWHILE, through its initiative dubbed Towards Sustainable Mining, COMP-member companies have aligned themselves with the Global Industry Standard on Tailings Management issued by the United Nations Environment Programme-led Global Tailings Review.

"To be compliant with the Standard, mining operators must use specified measures to prevent the catastrophic failure of tailings facilities and to implement best practices in planning, design, construction, operation, maintenance, monitor-

ing, closure, and post-closure activities," it says.

New mining law

THE anti-mining group Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM), a group, which represents mining and mining-affected communities in the Philippines, meanwhile said it "gladly welcomes the landmark decision" in favor of the 30 plaintiffs against the Marcopper Mining Corporation. At the same time, the group said the ruling underscores the importance of a new mining law that would put the environment and mining communities above the interest of the mining industry.

"It may have taken decades for the court to make a ruling, but we are nevertheless hopeful considering that justice is finally served to the victims of one of the worst mining disasters in the country. The decision sends an encouraging signal to communities gravely affected by mining," ATM said.

"At present, the mining laws in the country fall short in preventing destructive mining. A new law must be put in place to ensure mining disasters won't happen again," the group said.

For its part, the environmental group Kalikasan-People's Network for the Environment (Kalikasan-PNE) described the court ruling as a victory of the people of Marinduque.



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GENSAN ADDS VOICE TO MINING OPPOSITION IN SOUTH COTABATO

By Allen V. Estabillo
@InqNational

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The opposition to open-pit mining in South Cotabato has widened beyond the province, just over a week after local legislators voted to allow the method by amending its environment code.

Wary of its possible adverse environmental impact, the city council here, in a resolution unanimously approved during its regular session on Tuesday, opposed the planned open-pit mining operation in Tampakan, South Cotabato.

"While the mining industry is vital to the economy, the economic benefits of open-pit mining cannot outweigh its long-term degrading impact on the environment. When the gains and risks are placed on a scale, the state must always err on the side of caution," the resolution said.

The council passed the resolution in the wake of the lifting last week by the South Cotabato provincial board of the province's already 12-year-old ban on open-pit mining, as set in Section 22 of its environment code.

The amendment practically re-

moved the only remaining barrier for operating the \$5.9-billion copper and gold project of Sagittarius Mines Inc. (SMI) in Tampakan.

The company had declared open-pit mining as the most viable method in extracting the area's copper-gold reserves, touted as the largest in Southeast Asia and among the biggest of its kind in the world.

In an earlier statement, the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) welcomed the lifting of the open-pit mining ban in South Cotabato, saying it could spur economic activities and create employment and new business opportunities.

Under review

COMP chair Michael Toledo said the Tampakan project would be an "essential postpandemic economic recovery tool whose actual and potential benefits far outweigh the potential negative impacts."

The measure containing the amendment was already transmitted to Gov. Reynaldo Tamayo Jr. who said on Monday that he has 12 days to decide on it.

He has begun meetings with a technical working group in or-

der to thresh out thorny issues about mining and the appropriate method in order to not compromise South Cotabato's environmental integrity.

Tamayo said: "My decision will be based on what I believe is best for our province."

"A plethora of scientific studies reveal that the destructive effects on the environment brought about by open-pit mining are of considerable magnitude which cannot be simply overlooked by the state," said General Santos City Councilor Jose Edmar Yumang, author of the city resolution.

He cited the generation of "acidic and/or heavy metal-laden water, erosion of mine waste dump, and/or vulnerability of tailing dams to geological hazards."

Not another Marcopper

This happened in the Marcopper mining incident in Marinduque (See related story on this page), which was described as the worst industrial pollution accident involving open-pit mining in the country, Yumang said.

He said the Marcopper mining operation caused massive adverse impact on the Boac River, affecting the livelihood of

local residents, and with the onrush of tailings from the mines displacing river water, inundated the low-lying areas.

In March, the council invited resource persons from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau and anti-mining groups to shed light on the planned open-pit mining operation of SMI in Tampakan.

During the sessions, several councilors raised concern on the vulnerability of the city's water resources to possible hazards due to the activity.

"The Sangguniang Panlungsod of General Santos City strongly calls for sustainable and responsible mining where the Philippines may generate wealth without degrading the environment and without compromising the health and safety of its people, thus preserving the environment for the benefit of the next generation," the resolution added.

Last week, the municipal council of Mlang, Cotabato, also expressed opposition to the lifting of the open-pit mining ban. Mlang Vice Mayor Joselito Piñol said they were worried about the Tampakan mining project's impact on the Ligawasan Marsh, the



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De Lima kinastiga operasyon mining sa South Cotabato

BINATIKOS ni Senadora Leila de Lima ang pag-alis ng provincial ban sa open-pit mining sa South Cotabato na siyang makakaapekto umano sa kalikasan at sa mga tao sa komunidad.

Humuk naman niya si South Cotabato Governor Reynaldo Tamayo Jr. na i-veto ang pag-amiyenda ng Provincial Board sa local environment code, partikular ang pagrangal ng probisyon sa open-pit mining.

Noong Mayo 16, nagdesisyon ang mga mambabatas sa South Cotabato na baligtarin ang 12 taong provincial ban sa open-pit mining.

Sebi ni De Lima, maari naman baligtarin ang desisyon ng provincial board sa pamamagitan ng pag-veto dito. Kung hindi ito maaksiyunan sa loob ng 15 araw, matipapasa ito bilang isang batas. **(Dindo Matining)**



IPs join call to stop quarries and resorts in Masungi

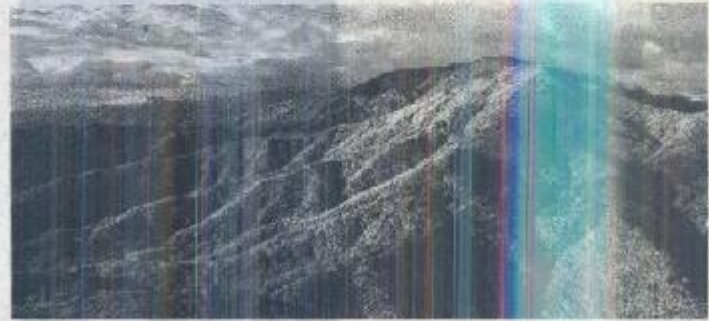
AN indigenous Dumagat-Remontado community joined mounting calls to cancel the Mineral Production Sharing Agreements (MPSAs) inside the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape and the Masungi Geopark Project (MGP).

Some 100 leaders and members of the Dumagat-Remontado of Antipolo released a petition on May 19, 2022 asking President Rodrigo Duterte, Department of Environment and Natural Resources OIC Secretary Jim Sampulna and Rizal Gov. Rebecca Ynares to save the Susong Dalaga mountain from quarrying. They said the Susong Dalaga mountain is sacred to their community and is part of their heritage. It is also included in their ancestral domain.

Based on the areas covered by the two MPSAs, the quarries would level down about 1,000 hectares of mountains within the protected area, including the Susong Dalaga shrine sacred to the Indigenous Peoples (IPs). A deep scar, 400 meters (m) high, 1,200 m wide and 5,000 m long, on the mountains immediately fronting Marcos Highway, would be created.

The tribe also expressed worry about the floods and landslides that would destroy their homes and farms, and impact even those living in downstream areas.

The floods and landslides that ravaged San Mateo, Rodriguez, Marikina, Cairita, Pasig, and other towns and cities during typhoons "Ondoy,"



■ Susong Dalaga mountain CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

"Rolly" and "Ulysses" started from these mountains.

Thus, the group urged government officials and the relevant quarry companies to withdraw their plans to quarry Susong Dalaga. They also asked that resorts and other destruc-

tive activities be similarly stopped and removed from the MGP and the protected area.

The same tribe earlier expressed its desire to conserve the area together with partners such as the award-winning Masungi Georeserve Foundation.



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Giant bamboo nursery to rise in Zamboanga

A GIANT bamboo nursery will soon rise in Zamboanga City in a bid to meet the rising demand of bamboo seedlings in the area.

This is all thanks to stakeholders and key players who continuously work together to develop the country's bamboo industry.

The Confederation of Western Mindanao Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc. (Philexport WesMin Phils.) headed by its president, Engr. Jaydrick Johnson Yap, and Zamboanga Bamboo Development Council Inc. (ZBDCI) President George Madrazo, will formally sign next month a memorandum of agreement on the operation of the proposed giant bamboo nursery.

The nursery and purchase of giant bamboo seedlings project aims to provide local farmers with the readily available seedlings in the area, and a sufficient supply of bamboo raw materials for various industries and end-products.

Philexport WesMin Phils. will fund the construction of the nursery structure and provide an initial 2,500 giant bamboo seedlings.

"We will start [the construction] by the last week of May 2022; it will take at least two weeks. [This will be] funded through our Philexport regional/sectoral support fund of 2021. It (nursery) will be our showroom for interested buyers/farmers," said Philexport

WesMin Phils. Executive Director Ross Alfred Estrada.

The ZBDCI will manage the bamboo nursery located at Mel-Roseville Subdivision in Divisoria for establishing seedlings nursery that will provide the seedlings to its member-farmers, people's organization, and LGUs in Zamboanga Peninsula. It will be responsible for the nursery's daily operation and expenditures.

The ZBDCI and Philexport WesMin Phils. have agreed to a 50-50-percent sharing of the total net income of the nursery.

Estrada said they target to cater the entire Zamboanga Peninsula and different chapters of Philexport.

"This will be a prototype giant bamboo nursery and it can be duplicated to other chapters. Bamboo is a diverse product for the environment and a sustainable material for the replacement of timbers for construction used as engineered bamboo, furniture, processed bamboo shoot, etc. It's a huge export product industry in the future," he said.

Estrada said they will start locally by giving livelihood to the community.

"We have local post-harvest facilities in Bukidnon who already supplied and exported the engineered bamboo planks to Vietnam and the United States," he added.

EIRENE JAIREE GOMEZ



Neda chief prescribes door-to-door drive for passage of natl land use act

By CAI U. ORDINARIO
@caiuordinario

IF the next administration wants to finally pass the National Land Use Act (NALUA), the government must adopt a "door-to-door approach" used by the current administration in passing the tax reform program, according to the country's outgoing chief economist.

In a virtual briefing at the Kapitan sa Manila Bay on Wednesday, outgoing Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Karl Kendrick T. Chua and the architect of the country's tax reform program said this approach would ensure that lawmakers are able to understand the impact of passing such a law.

Chua said the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) staff could carry on this mandate by explaining to each legislator and making as many presentations as possible.

"You know in tax reform, we have to do door-to-door to explain to each legislator so this is something that should just continue, door-to-door and then make as many presentations as you can get the point across," Chua said.

Chua said there are currently many misunderstood portions of the proposed NALUA. He said some

quarters are saying that land use will be the responsibility of one centralized agency in government.

He said this was not true and that local government units (LGUs) still had jurisdiction over land use. However, land conversion of land from agriculture to other use has to be decided by a more centralized agency.

The bill currently proposes that this centralized agency be the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) instead of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR).

Land use is very important for an archipelago like the Philippines, and Chua said the entire country only has 300,000 square kilometers of land. This size is not bound to increase even if the country's population continues to multiply.

"The law or the bill mandates the preparation of all the physical land use, these are all very important. The point here is the land is the most scarce resource so we better know how to use it best," Chua said.

"We have to know that so that we can do urban planning better to better manage traffic, we have to do that so that we know which land or mountain or watershed should not be touched for our future," he added.

Water

ANOTHER bill that needs to be communicated well to legislators is the creation of the Department of Water. Chua said there are critics who believe this new department will create another layer to the bureaucracy that is already cumbersome for the water sector.

There are at least 30 agencies related to the creation of policy and regulation for the water sector. This includes the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the National Irrigation Administration, the National Water Resources Board (NWRB), and various local water districts, among others.

Chua said the creation of an apex body for water policy and a single body that will regulate the sector, similar to the set up of the Department of Energy and the Energy Regulatory Commission, would be ideal for the water sector.

This will not only create order in the management of a very important natural resource but also government savings that will be avoided through the removal of duplicate functions in government.

"We have no coordination and single policy on water use and water, fresh water drinking water and for use for sanitation [which] is important to daily life," Chua said. "It's

not costly because you're not adding [another agency because] you're actually [consolidating] and making it more efficient."

The Neda earlier said there is a need to improve water and sanitation investments to around P100 billion annually between 2020 and 2030 to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. The total price tag is P1.1 trillion by 2030.

The country has not invested this amount before on the water and sanitation sector and Neda said this is the reason for the need to also provide incentives for other stakeholders in the sector.

Without an apex body Neda said, the efforts of these agencies could overlap and the water supply and sanitation sector would continue to struggle to provide services to millions of Filipinos.

If legislation will not be forthcoming, Neda said the government has the option to strengthen the NWRB through an executive order.

The Neda supports the proposed executive order on Integrating and Coordinating Management of Water Resources by Transforming and Strengthening the NWRB into the National Water Management Council, pending the legislation of the Department of Water Resources and the Water Regulatory Commission.



Antas ng tubig sa Angat dam posibleng tumaas pa

INIHAYAG ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB) na posibleng tumaas pa ang antas ng tubig sa Angat Dam sa Bulacan na siyang nagsupply ng tubig sa buong Metro Manila.

Ito ay dahil sa nararansang patuloy na La Niña phenomenon o ang patuloy na pagbuhos ng malalakas na ulan sa Metro Manila at ibang lugar sa bansa.

Ayon kay NWRB Execu-

tive Director Seville David, mas mataas pa sa normal water level ang inaasahan ngayong taon, batay na rin sa abiso ng PAGASA.

Ayon kay David, kailangang nakaalerto ang lahat ng mga nangangasiwa ng dam at lokal na pamahalaan upang maging ligtas ang mga residenteng maaapoktuhan ng pagbaha senhi ng patuloy na pagbuhos ng ulan.

DANNY GRAVADOR



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'Admin showed strong will on climate change'

By Vito Barcelo

THE Duterte administration has demonstrated a strong political will to address climate change from extensive beach cleanups, and tracking emission levels to pushing legislation aimed at building climate change resilient communities, Malacanang said.

Climate Change Commission Secretary Robert E.A. Borje said among the Duterte government's pro-environment initiatives include the closing of Boracay, undertaking the comprehensive Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program, and imposing a moratorium on new coal-fired power plants.

The government also operationalized the National Greenhouse Gas inventory to generate data and track emissions essential in decision and policymaking, including the ratification of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, according to Borje.

At the same time, the government also came up with the first Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), pegging it at 75 percent, which is more ambitious than other countries.

"And we're saying, Mr. President, we did not ask for dole-outs. We did not beg. What we are asking for is a responsible partnership because we are least responsible for climate change," he said.

Under the present administration, climate policies were formulated such as the National Climate Risk Management Framework to be used by different government agencies to increase the resiliency and climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.

The administration also advocated relevant laws that protect the people and communities. These include R.A. 11201, the act that created the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD).

Borje said that under the Duterte administration, the government considers climate change adaptation in building shelters so that houses could withstand the challenges posed by changing weather.



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Southeast Asia urged to take firm steps vs climate change

By LENIE LECTURA [@ilectura](#)

EXPERTS in climate change urged Southeast Asian countries to step up efforts to combat global warming more urgently following reports of the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on implications of the climate crisis on critical sectors and economic development in the region.

"We can strengthen the participation of countries in the international arena through research input—by mobilizing developing countries' leading experts, practitioners, and scientists to strengthen the regional climate science agenda to build a common understanding," said Dr. Mahawan Karuniasa, Indonesia Expert Network for Climate Change and Forestry (APIK Indonesia Network) chairman and co-founding member of the regional group Asia Climate Experts.

"A regional perspective is the best position to learn from one another and redouble our efforts, and the time is now," Karuniasa added during a virtual forum on May 23.

Based on the mitigation report under the IPCC's sixth assessment cycle, the world would encounter inevitable climate hazards in the next two decades once global warming breaches the 1.5-degree threshold. Once this level has been exceeded, there will be severe impacts.

The forum coincided with the International Day of Biological Diversity.

ICSC energy transition advisor Alberto Dalusung III said energy has a direct impact on biodiversity, as fossil fuels continue to pollute the world's resources adversely affecting life on land and water.

"As renewable energy and grid modernization investments continue to increase in the region, Indonesia taking the lead in the energy transition provides a signal to policymakers in other Southeast Asian countries to make the shift," said Dalusung.

The call is not only to shift to renewable energy, but also to reallocate funds from fossil fuel-related investments to clean energy programs consistent with net-zero goals.

"Accelerated climate action in mitigating and adapting to impacts is critical to sustainable development. We need equity on adaptation and mitigation finance, considering investments for the co-benefits which are prominent in the IPCC discussions," said Angelo Kairos dela Cruz, ICSC deputy executive director.



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POLITICIANS CAN INFLUENCE THE CLIMATE

WHEN Angela Merkel ended her term as prime minister of Germany, she left a legacy that would be a hard act to follow. Armed with a doctorate in quantum chemistry, she investigated the quantum mechanics of gas-particle collisions before she entered politics (Nature, 2022). Because of her sterling academic background, her government generously supported scientific inquiry. She regularly met with active scientists and grounded her policies on scientific evidence. However, her one glaring failure was her lukewarm support for climate action.

Reducing greenhouse gasses and building climate resilience demand political will and concerted action. This reality is seen in the United States, where national policies and actions on climate change gyrate, wildly depending on the occupant of the White House. Thus, the role of decision-makers, especially at the very top, is critical.

Following the elections, the incoming decision-makers will largely

determine how far the country will advance (or regress) in capacitating our people against the new climate normal. Recently, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has warned that humanity must act decisively within this decade, or else we will face a much warmer world.

Our incoming executives and legislatures do not have an easy task. They must wrestle with how to allocate our meager resources to enhance the capacity of our people to cope with stronger typhoons and more variable ENSOs, among others. They will have to decide what form of assistance should be given to the most vulnerable sectors of society. They must learn to work together to lessen conflicting efforts while maximizing synergies.

For example, one of the most compelling approaches to address climate change is through nature-based solutions. There is now increasing recognition that natural ecosystems hold the key to building the resilience of

human communities and the environment. Our forests, mangroves, lakes, and oceans help reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere while providing countless services that strengthen the climate resilience of our people.

The role of the scientific community is critical here. The challenge of climate change is unprecedented and full of uncertainties. A great deal of information must be gleaned from computer simulations and projections. We must resist simplistic and knee-jerk reactions. Instead, policymakers must regularly sit with scientists and relevant stakeholders to arrive at a common understanding of the problem and the available solutions.

Hopefully, our new leaders will back up their promises with action. The last thing we need in this time of global warming is more "hot air."

RODEL LASCO,
executive director,
OML Center



Blessed with wind

The weather has turned rainy, putting an end to a relatively short summer of high humidity and heat – and surprisingly, very few brownouts or water supply disruptions. Summer months, by our books, is usually from March to October, while the monsoon period is from November to February. It does not seem so lately.

Climate change may be behind the weather aberrations we are seeing, and while a division between the two distinct seasons of wet and dry still holds true, data about when they occur, and how mild or intense they are will be is something that environmental scientists and weathermen will, for some time, be observing with vigor.

BIZLINKS



REY GAMBOA

While weather is something that most people check on a daily basis in the course of planning their day, my more than cursory interest in it would be its impact on renewable energies, particularly solar and wind. Lately, it has been on wind farms – both on land and offshore.

Thankfully, climate change has not significantly changed the outlook for wind energy in the Philippines, one of the handful of countries in Asia that multilateral agencies like the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank see as having a breezy future when considering wind power as a replacement to fossil fuel used for electricity generation.

Two decades ago, the Philippines was assessed on its onshore wind power capabilities, and passed with flying honors. The viable technology available at that time was only for land-based wind turbines, and yet a report prepared by the US Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory yielded a potential of 76 gigawatt (GW) of power.

Paring down non-renewables

A recent comprehensive study by the World Bank, on the other hand, focused solely on offshore wind (OSW) energy in the Philippines, not just because of the growing number of projects involving floating wind turbines in other parts of the world, but also because of the country's need to pare down its fossil fuel use for power generation.

From an environment perspective, the Philippines' high dependence on oil and coal for power plants already accounts for 87 percent of carbon emissions. A bigger concern, though, is the risk from global supply and pricing, the country being wholly dependent on oil imports.

The World Bank favorably sees OSW projects as potentially more manageable given the competing character of onshore wind farms for land use in the Philippines where 22 percent of the population rely on it for agriculture and food production.

Offshore wind turbine location sites in the Philippines are likewise generally close to shore even if in deep waters, and some are near population centers. These are plus factors that lend support to giving it more prominence in the country's National Renewable Energy Program.

While OSW technologies currently are still not competitive to fossil-fired power generation, at least in the Philippines and many parts of Asia, the World Bank is optimistic that parity is not far off in the near future, especially now that Europe is bankrolling a big shift to renewables to replace oil and natural gas.

Renewable energy generation's share in the country's total electricity mix had decreased substantially from 34 percent in 2008 to just around 21 percent in 2021. OSW could contribute significantly to new generation capability from renewables by 2030, according to the World Bank study.

Under a high growth scenario, should the Philippine government seriously support a comprehensive OSW program, offshore wind alone could contribute as much as 14 percent of the country's electricity requirements by 2040, with over 20 GW of installed capacity.

A high growth scenario, understandably, is favored since it would create more jobs, a lower net cumulative cost, faster payback, and contribute to lower carbon emissions. The World Bank study, however, notes that this requires a greater commitment and more urgent action from the government.

Challenges

Whether the government pursues a low or high scenario to support OSW, it will need to put in place the regulatory support to encourage the entry of capital to build such projects to completion with the least bureaucratic delays.

Another challenge would be in the transmission phase, where some OSW projects will need grid upgrades and strengthening to be able to deliver power to the market. Investments in new long transmission lines will have to be factored in and negotiated with the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines.

Another concern deals with the environmental and social impacts, thus the need to get concerned stakeholders involved early on in the project planning. Construction sites of fixed OSW projects should consider underwater ecologies, as well as fishing patterns of local communities.

Most of the components for OSW projects will need to be imported, and this will require prior understanding by and eventual cooperation from the national and local port authorities. Risk management and mitigation measures will also have to be adopted given the scale of investments for each project.

Financing will be a challenge too, and with this, the Department of Energy (DOE) must find a way to resolve the restrictions of a 40 percent foreign ownership requirement enshrined in the Public Service Act. A growing number of local and international companies have already shown high interest in developing offshore wind energy facilities in the Philippines, as long as the associated risks are adequately answered.

Wind offers one of the brightest options for strengthening the country's renewable energy sources, and the government should give it more importance.

Facebook and Twitter

We are actively using two social networking websites to reach out more often and even interact with and engage our readers, friends and colleagues in the various areas of interest that I tackle in my column. Please like us on www.facebook.com/ReyGamboa and follow us on www.twitter.com/ReyGamboa.

Should you wish to share any insights, write me at Link Edge, 25th Floor, 139 Corporate Center, Valero Street, Salcedo Village, 1227 Makati City. Or e-mail me at reydgamboa@yahoo.com. For a compilation of previous articles, visit www.BizlinksPhilippines.net.



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WILL PHARMALLY CASE BE BRUSHED UNDER THE RUG?

PRESIDENT Duterte campaigned against the re-election of Sen. Richard Gordon and got his way. He had minced no words about destroying Gordon for exposing the shenanigans of his Pharmally friends. With Gordon out of the Senate, Pharmally people must now be really jumping with joy at the prospect of being able to keep the loot they were accused of hoarding from the Department of Health funds intended for the COVID-19 pandemic under the watch of Health Secretary Francisco Duque III who continues to play dumb about what to many observers looked every bit like highway robbery!

With Mr. Duterte's not-so-secret choice for Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. as his successor, what are the chances that those Pharmally scammers will get prosecuted and the money they were said to have stolen recovered? Given Marcos Jr. and his family's utter lack of moral ascendancy—being themselves named plunderers in previous Supreme Court decisions that

ordered them (all in vain) to surrender to the government ill-gotten wealth aggregating about \$660 million (P33 billion-plus) as of 2002 plus interests, let alone billions of dollars more still hidden in foreign accounts, a big fat zero!

Unless Marcos Jr. is disqualified by the Supreme Court on account of his conviction for tax evasion with perpetual disqualification from holding public office as explicitly provided in the law—never mind for the love of God and country—Filipinos will go down in history as probably the most stupid people in all of Asia, all thanks to Mr. Duterte and his millions of followers who himself said were stupid enough to believe all the lies he told them in 2016. And despite all the lies Marcos Jr. himself was dishing out during his own campaign, that stupidity apparently lingered on until May 9, 2022, and beyond. How pathetic Filipinos have become in the eyes of the world.

ROSE ANNE BARTOLOME,
roseannebar88@yahoo.com



TELE _____

PAGE _____

05-26-22
DATE



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICE
CENRO RXI, Bangkal, Davao City
Telephone No. (882) 287-2695

PAGPAPAUPA NG LUPANG PUBLIKO

Ipinabibigay alam sa media na ang Community Environment and Natural Resources Office, Davao City ayatanggap ng selyado o nakasulat na alok sa ika-14 ng Junyo 2022 para paupahan ang isang suklat na lupang publiko na inilarawan sa ibaba nito:

Lugar	Panacan, Davao City
Deskripsyon	Lot 2-A, Mic-11-061241-D
Sukat	2,310 square meter
Tatanganan ng lupa:	Php 11,990.00 kada metro kwadrado o Kabuuang Php. 27,666,500.00
Halaga ng nakalayo At itatayang Proyekto	Php. 385,200.00
Aplikante	DAVAO MODERN PORT TERMINAL, INC. Rep. by James Lee Ang

Ang karapatan na upahan ng nasabing lupa ay ibibigay sa tao o partido na makapagbigay ng pinakamataas na upa sa isang taon na hindi bababa sa tatlong porsyento (3%) sa halaga ng lupa at isang porsyento (1%) sa halaga ng itatayang estruktura. Upang ang isang tao ay makakasama sa isasagawang subasta, kailangang siya ay karapat dapat na aplikante at kailangan iingo magsumala ang subasta ay nakadeposito siya ng halagang katumbas ng tatlong buwang upa. Ang deposito ay kailangang salaping papel, money order, cashier's or manager's check, ang siya lamang itatanggapin. Ang isang tao na sumali sa subasta na nagrepresenta ng ibang tao ay makakasalit lamang kung mayroon siyang pahintulot na ibinigay sa pamamagitan ng kaukulang pahintulot na nilagdaan ng Notaryo Publiko. Sa panahon ng subasta, ang taong sumali ay makaroon ng dagdag na deposito kape ang kayang alok ay itinatals para makupleta ang kabuuang tatlong buwang upa. Ang karapatang tumanggi o tanggihan ang anumang alok o sa lahat ng alok ay palaging nakalaan para sa mapahalaan.

Ang magwawagi sa alok na ito kung hindi siya ang aplikante ay kinakailangang tumubasan ang kabayarang nagugol sa pagpapalathala ng panawagang ito at sa pagpapasukat ng lupa.

Lungsod ng Dabaw, April 26, 2022.

JUDY C. HOFILERA
OIC, CENRO Officer



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICE
CENRO RXI, Bangkal, Davao City
Telephone No. (882) 287-2695

PAGPAPAUPA NG LUPANG PUBLIKO

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Lugar	Panacan, Davao City
Deskripsyon	Lot 1, Mic-11-001242-D
Sukat	5,340 square meter
Tatanganan ng lupa:	Php 11,990.00 kada metro kwadrado o Kabuuang Php. 64,026,600.00
Halaga ng nakalayo At itatayang Proyekto	Php. 52,364,621.15
Aplikante	DAVAO MODERN PORT TERMINAL, INC. Rep. by James Lee Ang

Ang karapatan na upahan ng nasabing lupa ay ibibigay sa tao o partido na makapagbigay ng pinakamataas na upa sa isang taon na hindi bababa sa tatlong porsyento (3%) sa halaga ng lupa at isang porsyento (1%) sa halaga ng itatayang estruktura. Upang ang isang tao ay makakasama sa isasagawang subasta, kailangang siya ay karapat dapat na aplikante at kailangan bago magsumala ang subasta ay nakadeposito siya ng halagang katumbas ng tatlong buwang upa. Ang deposito ay kailangang salaping papel, money order, cashier's or manager's check, ang siya lamang itatanggapin. Ang isang tao na sumali sa subasta na nagrepresenta ng ibang tao ay makakasalit lamang kung mayroon siyang pahintulot na ibinigay sa pamamagitan ng kaukulang pahintulot na nilagdaan ng Notaryo Publiko. Sa panahon ng subasta, ang taong sumali ay makaroon ng dagdag na deposito kape ang kayang alok ay itinatals para makupleta ang kabuuang tatlong buwang upa. Ang karapatang tumanggi o tanggihan ang anumang alok o sa lahat ng alok ay palaging nakalaan para sa mapahalaan.

Ang magwawagi sa alok na ito kung hindi siya ang aplikante ay kinakailangang tumubasan ang kabayarang nagugol sa pagpapalathala ng panawagang ito at sa pagpapasukat ng lupa.

Lungsod ng Dabaw, April 28, 2022.

JUDY C. HOFILERA
OIC, CENRO Officer



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICE
CENRO XXI, Sangkal, Davao City
Telephone No. (082) 287-2695

LEASE OF PUBLIC LAND

Notice is hereby given that Community Environment and Natural Resources Office, Davao City will accept oral or written bids not later than ten (10:00) o'clock A.M. on June 14, 2022 for the lease for commercial purposes of the tract of land herein below described:

Location	Panacan, Davao City
Description	Lot 1, Mic-11-001242-D
Area	5,340 square meter
Appraisal of Land	Php. 11,090.00 kada metro kwadrado o Kabuuang Php. 54,026,600.00
Value of Existing & Proposed Improvements	Php. 52,364,621.15
Applied for by	DAVAO MODERN PORT TERMINAL, INC. Rep. by James Lee Ang

The successful bidder other than the applicant must reimburse the letter of the expenses for the publication of the notice of lease and the survey of the land.

The right to lease the land will be awarded to the person offering the highest annual rental, which shall not be less than three per centum (3%) of the value of the land plus one per centum (1%) of the value of the proposed/existing improvements. In order that a person may be entitled to participate in the bidding, he must be a qualified public land applicant, and must, before the commencement of the same, make a deposit equivalent to at least three (3) months rental. Only deposit in cash, money order, treasury warrant, certified checks, cashier's or manager's check can be accepted. A person bidding in representation of another may do so under a duly executed power of attorney. During the bidding, the bidder has to make an additional deposit every time his bid is raised, to complete the three (3) months rental, otherwise such bid as raised shall not be accepted. The government reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

Davao City, Philippines, April 28, 2022.

JUAMY C. HOFILEÑA
OIC, CENRO Officer



TITLE: _____

PAGE: _____

DATE: _____



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICE
CENRO XXI, Bangkal, Davao City
Telephone No. (082) 287-2695

LEASE OF PUBLIC LAND

Notice is hereby given that Community Environment and Natural Resources Office, Davao City will accept oral or written bids not later than ten (10:00) o'clock A.M. on **June 14, 2022** for the lease for **commercial** purposes of the tract of land herein below described:

Location	Panacan, Davao City
Description	Lot 2-A, Mlc-11-001241-D
Area	2,310 square meter
Appraisal of Land	Php 11,890.00 kada metro kwadrado o Kabauang Php. 27,896,900.00
Value of Existing & Proposed Improvements	Php. 385,200.00
Applied for by	DAVAO MODERN PORT TERMINAL, INC. Rep. by James Lee Ang

The successful bidder if other than the applicant must reimburse the laborer of the expenses for the publication of the notice of lease and the survey of the land.

The right to lease the land will be awarded to the person offering the highest annual rental, which shall not be less than three per centum (3%) of the value of the land plus one per centum (1%) of the value of the proposed/existing improvements. In order that a person may be entitled to participate in the bidding, he must be a qualified public land applicant, and must, before the commencement of the same, make a deposit equivalent to at least three (3) months rental. Only deposit in cash, money order, treasury warrant, certified checks, cashier's or manager's check can be accepted. A person bidding in representation of another may do so under a duly executed power of attorney. During the bidding, the bidder has to make an additional deposit every time his bid is raised, to complete the three (3) months rental, otherwise such bid as raised shall not be accepted. The government reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

Davao City, Philippines, April 28, 2022

JUUVY C. HOFIENÑA
OIC, CENRO Officer



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
PROVINCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICE
San Antonio Guagua, Pampanga

The Official Gazette
c/o National Printing Office
East Avenue, Quezon City

Sir:

I have the honor to enclose the Notice of Sale of the following Insular Government Property Sales Applications all situated at Sto. Niño, Magalang, Pampanga.

Application No.	Applicant	Lot No.	Area (sq.m.)	Appraised value of the land	Amount of Improvement
1. 035411-97	Rodel S. Dayrit	802-F, Csd-03-000614-D	569	Php 273,120.00	Php 65,000.00
2. 035411-103	Eduardo Dungca	802-D, Csd-03-000614-D	864	Php 414,720.00	Php 500,000.00
3. 035411-96	Conrado Cruz	802-C, Csd-03-000614-D	741	Php 355,380.00	Php 50,000.00

It is requested that this Notice be published in the Official Gazette once a week for a period of six (6) consecutive weeks to start on or before MAY 16, 2022 and completed not later than

After publishing the notice for the period herein above stated, please send us in triplicate a certificate of the Director of Printing showing the inclusive dated of publication of the notice of auction. It is also requested that a copy of your paper showing the publication of the attached notice be furnished this Office immediately after each issue.

If we do not hear from you on or before SEPTEMBER 02, 2022 it will be presumed that the publication of the notice can and will be made as herein requested.

Very truly yours,
(SGD) LAUDEMIR S. SALAC
PENR Officer

706-500 PRR - PRR 770077
Tel. 8781 25 26 9141/05 12 19 26 26 2021

26 MAY 2022, Thursday



DENR

NEWS

ALERTS

COVID-19

NEWS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Adults urged: Get vaxxed to protect children

By [Sheila Crisostomo](#)(The Philippine Star) - May 26, 2022 - 12:00am



Children 5 to 11, 12-18 and 18 above adult received their first jab and booster shots at Marikina Sports Complex Mega Vaccination site Monday (May 23, 2022).
Walter Bollozos

MANILA, Philippines — To protect children from COVID-19 now that more Omicron subvariants are emerging, the Department of Health (DOH) yesterday reiterated its call for eligible adults to get their vaccines.

At a forum, DOH Technical Advisory Group member and pediatric infectious disease expert Anna Ong-Lim said the virus “takes advantage” of people who are not yet vaccinated “whatever the age group.”

“If they are not vaccinated or if they don’t have some kind of natural immunity, they are the ones who will likely get infected,” Lim added.

At present, however, children below five years old are still not qualified to get COVID-19 jabs, according to the DOH official.

“There is no vaccine yet for children below five years old, which only highlights the need for people around these kids to really optimize their protection,” Lim said.

She emphasized that if there are children in the household who could not be immunized against COVID-19, “we should ensure that other members of the family are fully protected” to also protect the young ones.

DOH data showed that as of May 25, some 70.64 million individuals have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, but only 13.94 million of them have received their booster shots.

Lim noted that people have become complacent in getting their jabs when COVID-19 cases declined in the past months.

With the emergence of new sublineages of the highly transmissible Omicron variant, however, she said those eligible should get their shots.

“We need to encourage people to take the primary series first and then their boosters,” she added.

COVID-19 beds

Meanwhile, an infectious disease specialist said private hospitals are still maintaining beds for COVID-19 patients even when the number of new cases has been declining in the past months.

In an interview with “The Chiefs” aired on One News last Tuesday night, Dr. Leilani Gustilo of Dr. Paulino J. Garcia Memorial Research and Medical Center in Cabanatuan City said private hospitals still have “COVID-specific beds” as required by the DOH.



"We maintain the 30-percent bed capacity... The DOH has given that recommendation to maintain," Gustilo added.

She noted that there has been an uptick in hospital admission in various areas across the country.

"But as a whole in the Philippines, cases are still low... They are mostly moderate," she said.

Gustilo warned that a majority of COVID-19 patients are not vaccinated against the virus.

"Please, if you have the chance, get the vaccines because vaccines really work. Even for Omicron cases, these vaccines really work," she said.

26 MAY 2022, Thursday



DENR

NEWS

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



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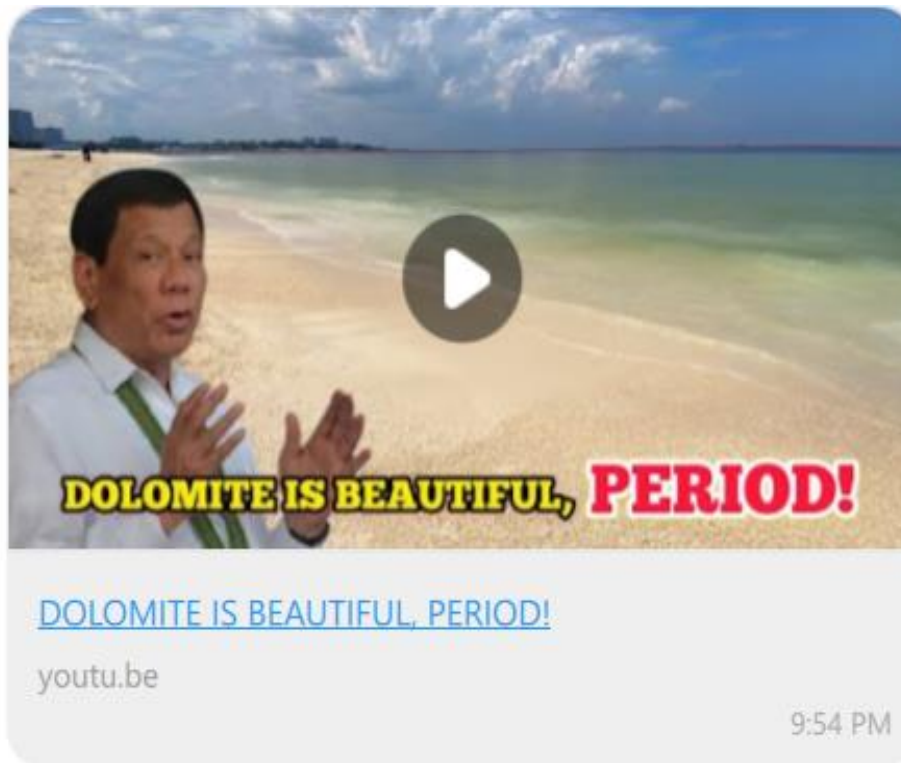
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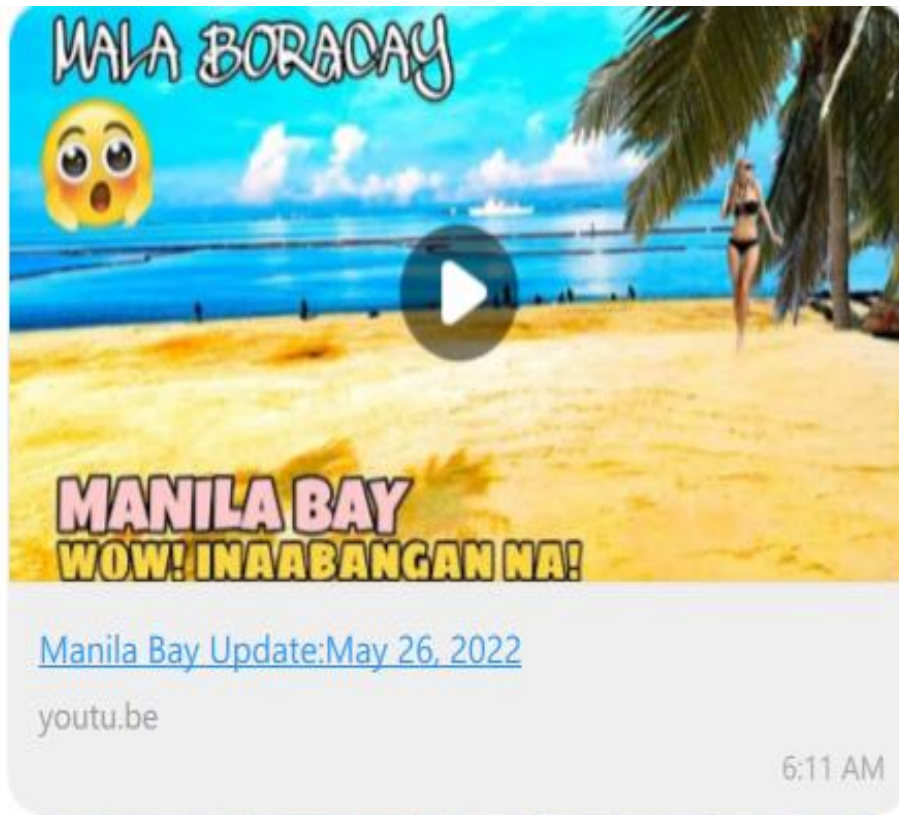
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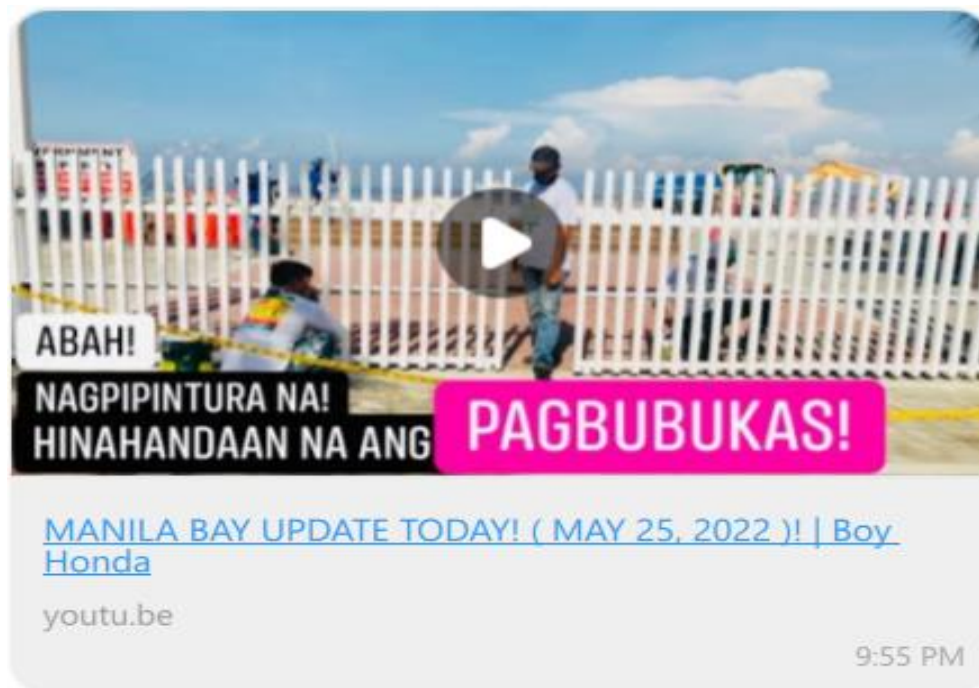
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