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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Next admin to face challenges on effects of climate change, calamities — DENR exec

By RICHA NORIEGA, GMA News

Published May 27, 2022 3:02pm

A Department of Environment and Natural Resources official on Friday said the next administration will face challenges on the effects of climate change and calamities, proposing to continue programs of the current administration and strictly implement environmental laws.

DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones called to continue the Task Force Build Back Better, a task force that will streamline and expedite post-disaster efforts.

“Marami tayong ginagawa sa DENR ngayon, ang challenge natin yung epekto ng climate change, marami tayong mga nae-expect na bagyo mga calamity, landslides,” he said at the Laging Handa briefing.

(We were doing a lot in the DENR, the challenge for the current administration is the effects of climate change and we expected many typhoons, calamities, and landslides will occur.)

“Kaya sa panahon ngayon ng ating Pangulong [Rodrigo] Duterte mayroon tayong Task Force Build Back Better so tayo yung pagkatapos ng mga sakuna calamity yung mga ahensya, full government approach nagtutulong tulong para marestore yung mga lugar na nasalanta ng bagyo so ito yung dapat natin maipropose sa susunod na administrasyon na dapat ituloy,” he furthered.

(President Duterte created Task Force Build Back Better so that after calamities, the government agencies will have full approach and help together to restore affected areas of the typhoon. This should be continued by the next administration.)

Last November 2020, Duterte signed Executive Order No. 120 creating the Task Force Build Back Better to ensure post-disaster rehabilitation and recovery efforts of typhoon-hit areas.

He also urged the next administration to strictly implement environmental laws to alleviate the problems in proper waste disposal in some local government units.

“Aming ahensya kasi mandated to protect the environment and conserve the natural resources so Ito dapat yung pagtuunan namin ng pansin maisabi natin na iimplement strictly yung mga batas kagaya ng Clean Water Act at Solid Waste Management Act,” he said.

(Our agency is mandated to protect the environment and conserve natural resources, so it should strictly enforce laws including the Clean Water Act and Solid Waste Management Act.)

“So ito yung ang problema ng ating mga lalo na yung mga local na pamahalaan lalo na yung basura so ito dapat yung matutukan at bigyan ng pansin,” he added.

(The problem of our local government units is the proper waste disposal, it should be resolved and monitored.)

Congress, sitting as the National Board of Canvassers (NBOC), [proclaimed Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. as the winner of the presidential race in Eleksyon 2022.](#)

The NBOC also proclaimed Marcos’ running mate and the President’s daughter Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte as the new vice president. — **RSJ GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/833064/next-admin-to-face-challenges-on-effects-of-climate-change-calamities-denr-exec/story/?fbclid=IwAR3cxS1PewsusZrSDI9U0Oi9SAEikGc8FNWoAbjgejuOSZyUzLrUwg3J2Mc>



Mga epekto ng climate change, kalamidad kahaharapin ng sunod na admin – DENR exec



May 27, 2022 @ 4:12 PM 17 hours ago

MANILA, Philippines- Sinabi ng opisyal ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources nitong Biyernes na kahaharapin umano ng susunod na administrasyon ang hamon ng mga epekto ng climate change at mga kalamidad, at inirekomenda na ipagpatuloy ang mga programa ng kasalukuyang administrasyon at mahigpit na ipatupad ang environmental laws.

Nanawagan si DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones na ituloy ang Task Force Build Back Better, ang task force na magpapabilis sa post-disaster efforts.

“Marami tayong ginagawa sa DENR ngayon, ang challenge natin yung epekto ng climate change, marami tayong mga nae-expect na bagyo mga calamity, landslides,” aniya sa Laging Handa briefing.

“Kaya sa panahon ngayon ng ating Pangulong [Rodrigo] Duterte mayroon tayong Task Force Build Back Better so tayo yung pagkatapos ng mga sakuna calamity yung mga ahensya, full government approach nagtutulong tulong para marestore yung mga lugar na nasalanta ng bagyo so ito yung dapat natin maipropose sa susunod na administrasyon na dapat ituloy,” patuloy pa ni Leones.

Nilagdaan ni Duterte noong Nobyembre 2022 ang Executive Order No. 120 na bubuo sa Task Force Build Back Better upang masiguro ang post-disaster rehabilitation at recovery efforts sa mga lugar na sinalanta ng bagyo.

“Aming ahensya kasi mandated to protect the environment and conserve the natural resources so lto dapat yung pagtuunan namin ng pansin maisabi natin na iimplement strictly yung mga batas kagaya ng Clean Water Act at Solid Waste Management Act,” aniya.

“So ito yung ang problema ng ating mga lalo na yung mga local na pamahalaan lalo na yung basura so ito dapat yung matutukan at bigyan ng pansin,” dagdag pa ng opisyal ng **DENR. RNT/SA**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/mga-epekto-ng-climate-change-kalamidad-kahaharapin-ng-susunod-na-admin-denr-exec/>



DENR admits lapses in keeping track of Coron reclamation

By: [Christia Marie Ramos](#) - Reporter / [@CMRamosINO](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 09:13 PM May 27, 2022



NEW LAND The reclaimed land in the municipality of Coron in Palawan has extended to three villages, burying in soil once unspoiled coastal areas and threatening the marine biodiversity of this tourist-drawing island town. —Photo courtesy of Sagip Coron Palawan

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) admitted lapses in the monitoring of a Coron reclamation project that had been “rushed” amid the pandemic.

DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones also raised the possibility of filing charges if there had been violations to environmental laws in the implementation of the project that should be brought to court.

“Nakikita nga rin namin iyan na mayroong kaunting lapse doon dahil dapat nakikita ng ating CENRO (Community Environment and Natural Resource Officer) or PENRO (Provincial Environment and Natural Resource Officer) in the region iyong progress noon kanilang gawain doon,” Leones said in a Laging Handa briefing on Friday.

(We also saw that there is a bit of a lapse on the part of our CENRO or PENRO in the region on the progress of the project.)

“Although talagang it’s hard to admit – medyo nagkulang tayo sa pagtingin doon kasi pinabilis eh. Parang ang nangyari kasi during the pandemic...doon sila nagmadali kung saan talagang busy tayo sa pag-address ng COVID-19...Noong makita natin, noong nalaman natin, talagang malaki na pala iyong nare-reclaim nila diyan sa Coron,” he added.

(Although it’s hard to admit—we lacked in monitoring the project because it was rushed. What seemed to have happened is that during the pandemic...the project was rushed when we were busy addressing COVID-19...When we saw it, the reclamation had already covered a massive area.)

However, he pointed out that the proponents of the project should have “faithfully” complied with environmental regulations once it received an environmental compliance certificate (ECC) from the agency.

Earlier, the DENR cancelled the ECC for the reclamation project in Coron, Palawan over a failure to comply with the required compliance monitoring report, among others.

“Dapat nagsu-submit sila ng report, mga updates...Nagkaroon ng lapses on the part of the proponent,” Leones said.



(They should have been submitting reports, updates...There are lapses on the part of the proponent.)

According to Leones, the reclamation of the area had been “slow” in the beginning but the DENR was “shocked” when it learned that the project had been “rushed” during the pandemic. “Ang total kasi ng reclamation doon ay dapat 48 hectares...Can you imagine, 40 hectares na, base sa report, ang kanilang na-reclaim. So, iyon ang nangyari diyan,” he added.

(The reclamation was supposed to be 48 hectares...Can you imagine, they’ve already reclaimed 40 hectares, based on the report we received. That’s what happened there.)

“Because bigla silang nagmadali at marami ang nasira, hindi natin na-monitor, kung kaya nakita natin na malaking paglabag ito sa ating relokasyon kaya kinansel nila iyong mga permits na na-issue ng ating department sa kanila,” he also said.

(Because the project was rushed and a lot of damage has been done, we were not able to monitor, we saw violations, that’s why the local officers cancelled the permits the department has issued to the proponents.)

Leones said that the DENR is currently assessing the damage in the coastal area involved in the reclamation project.

He said charges will be filed if the DENR finds violations of provisions under the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) law and the Philippine Clean Water Act.

“Titingnan natin kung may malaking pananagutan sila, kung mayroon silang violations sa provision ng mga batas na ito. At tinitiyak namin na hindi lang administrative sanctions ang ibibigay namin sa kanila, kundi pati kriminal kung makita namin na dapat silang kasuhan sa korte,” the DENR official said.

(We will determine whether they are liable, if there are violations of the provisions under these laws. And we will make sure that not only administrative sanctions will be imposed, but also criminal cases if we see that they should be brought to the courts.)

JPV



DENR admits faults over Coron project

by [Manila Standard](#) [May 27, 2022, 11:00 pm](#)

An official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) admitted on Friday that there were lapses in monitoring the reclamation project in Coron, Palawan.

At the Laging Handa briefing, DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones said officials of the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) and the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) should have been more diligent in monitoring the progress in the project area.

The DENR earlier revoked the environmental compliance certificate (ECC) of the 48-hectare reclamation project in Coron due to a lack of permits.

“We also saw that there were lapses on the part of the CENRO or PENRO in monitoring the progress of their project there. For us, once we issue the ECC, the proponent should comply with it,” Leones said.

“Although it is hard to admit, we failed to fully monitor the project. What seems to have happened, during the pandemic, that’s when they rushed work on the project, while we were busy addressing COVID-19. That’s when they rushed things, while we couldn’t keep an eye on the project. When next we checked, they had reclaimed a large area in Coron,” he added.

Leones said the DENR issued the ECC for the project in 2007 and 2009.

“Based on our investigation, when they started the reclamation, it seemed okay, things were going slowly... But when the investigation team went there, we were all surprised because the reclamation work had rushed ahead,” he said.

“Ang total reclamation kasi doon dapat 40 hectares. Nagulat kami. During the pandemic tingin namin sinamantala nila na magreclaim nang magreclaim. Forty hectares na base sa report ang kanilang nareclaim,” he added.



Coron reclamation project at unfavorable odds: DENR

By Stephanie Sevillano [May 27, 2022, 6:37 pm](#)



UNFAVORABLE ODDS. Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Jonas Leones says during the Laging Handa public briefing on Friday (May 27, 2022) that proponents of the Coron reclamation project would face unfavorable odds should they secure an environmental compliance certificate after the violations made in the project. Leones said it has been more than five years since the proponent sent them a report. *(Screengrab)*

MANILA – Granting renewal or approval for the reapplication of an environmental compliance certificate (ECC) is now highly unlikely for Coron’s reclamation project, a Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) official said Friday.

In the Laging Handa public briefing, DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones said Palawan’s provincial government may have to pass through the eye of a needle, should they vie for ECC after its cancellation.

“Because of what they have done, they will definitely have a hard time to renew or apply for ECC. However, the payment of penalties is their obligation, but the reapplication and for them to expect DENR to issue yet another permit, I think they would have to go (through) a needle hole because of the violations made in this project,” Leones said in Filipino.

All reclamation activities in Coron have been suspended, after reports of significant violations allegedly committed by the proponent.

These violations include failure to submit reports for more than five years, lack of updates despite significant progress on the 48-hectare area, and worse, the alleged destruction of marine ecosystems.

“When they started the reclamation, it was okay. It’s somehow slow, but our investigating team noticed when we went there, we were all surprised that the reclamation seemed fast-tracked,” he said in Filipino.

Leones explained that before a full-blast reclamation, proponents strictly need to secure area clearance, a clearance issued by the DENR that should be submitted to the Philippine Reclamation Authority.

The DENR, meanwhile, admitted there was a lapse on their regional end, considering the pandemic concerns.



“It’s hard to admit, we somehow lacked on looking into that. It seems like, what happened during the pandemic, that’s the time they speed up their (reclamation) when we were so busy addressing the Covid-19 (coronavirus disease 2019), there they are deliberately pushing through,” he said in Filipino.

The DENR pledged to continue to seek accountability and hold those liable for the violations.

The department also urged the public to take part in going after violators, especially to conserve the protected areas in the country.

“Nowadays, even text messages, we are acting on it. If there are complaints... we are no longer that strict with formalities on the complaints. If we learn there’s emails, texts, rest assured we will act on it,” Leones said. **(PNA)**



'Sinamantala': DENR eyes charges over 'rushed' Coron reclamation project

Job Manahan, ABS-CBN News

Posted at May 27 2022 05:49 PM | Updated as of May 27 2022 06:56 PM

DENR admits being 'lax' in Coron reclamation

MANILA — The Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Friday said a reclamation project in Coron, Palawan was "rushed" amid the COVID-19 pandemic, adding it is willing to press charges if the project destroyed the environment.

Environment Undersecretary Jonas Leones said they were "shocked" that the Coron Bay Development Project has already covered 40 of the entire 48 hectares. He admitted the environment agency has faults for failing to monitor it.

The DENR has since canceled the environmental compliance certificate (ECC) of the reclamation project. The reclamation activities have also been suspended, Leones earlier said.

"Sinamantala nila na mag-reclaim nang mag-reclaim at kumuha ng filling materials diyan," said Leones in a televised briefing.

"Nakikita nga rin namin yan na may kaunting lax yun on the part kasi dapat nakikita ng [City or Provincial Environment and Natural Resources] yung progress ng kanilang gawain doon pero ang sa amin naman kasi once we issued the ECC, dapat faithfully kino-comply ng proponent yun," he added.

"Ngayon... kaya nga lang although it is hard to admit, nagkulang tayo sa pagtingin doon."

The first ECC was issued to the provincial government of Palawan, which is the proponent of CBBDP, 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.

But based on DENR's investigation, the project lacked necessary permits such as an area clearance, the environment official earlier told TeleRadyo. It also did not operate for 5 years after the ECCs were released.

POSSIBLE CHARGES

DENR's assessment on the environmental damage in the area is currently underway, according to Leones.

He added that the department will not hesitate to file charges against the provincial government and individuals involved in the project. A local official earlier said there was no proper turnover of documents for the reclamation project, since this started from the previous provincial administration.

"Ina-assess namin ang damage diyan sa coastal area, sa ecosystems ng sa ilalim ng tubig diyan at tinitiyak namin na under the Clean Water Act, tingnan natin kung may pananagutan sila, kung mayroon silang violations sa provisions ng mga batas na ito," Leones said.

"Tinitiyak namin na hindi lang administrative sanction ang ibibigay namin sa kanila pati criminal kung dapat silang kasuhan sa korte," he added.

It will be difficult to give another ECC to the provincial government if it applies to continue the reclamation project, he said.



reclamation, Leones said.

For the environment official, they must see accountability first.

"Kung mag-apply sila ng ECC diyan, kailangan makita muna natin yung kanilang liability... dapat panagutan nila 'yan. Pangalawa, baka mahirapan na tayo kasi baka may violation sila na ginawa," 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 sedimentation.

Mangroves are also in danger of dying after being cut off from access to regular water supply, the study revealed.



#Eleksyon2022 #Nakatutok24Oras

DENR, inamin na nagkaroon ng kapabayaan sa Coron Bay Development Project | 24 Oras

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Ecotourism is picking up in Philippine national parks

May 26, 2022 | 12:05 am



“CLIENTS are the lifeblood of a mountain.”

This was said by Lito Z. Babaison, a Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) forester based in Camiguin, 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 totaling three million hectares — the latest being Mr. Arayat in Pampanga and Tirad 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. Babaison, 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, 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 communities,” said UN consultant Gregg H. Yan, in an e-mail. “Local guides constantly but gently inculcate 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 *plantitas* [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 Mirasol**

Source: <https://www.bworldonline.com/arts-and-leisure/2022/05/26/450743/ecotourism-is-picking-up-in-philippine-national-parks/?fbclid=IwAR0RIrJBN2DljfgkowYDptKNZuEX6AiDhEJceEIKuU3pDn5qvG2MS2Qml eE>



YEAR OF THE PROTECTED AREAS, INILUNSAK NG DENR, DILG AT DOT



May 27, 2022 @ 7:11 PM 14 hours ago

LUMAGDA sa isang Joint Declaration ang mga kalihim ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of the Interior and Local Government, at Department of Tourism para suportahan ang selebrasyon ng **YoPA** o ang “**Year of the Protected Areas**”.

Isinagawa ang paglagda nitong May 24, 2022 nina DENR acting secretary Jim Sampulna, DILG secretary Eduardo Año at DOT secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat kaugnay sa 90th anniversary ng pagkakaroon ng national park sa bansa.

Isinasaad sa deklarasyon na pangungunahan ng Biodiversity Management Bureau ng DENR at Biodiversity Finance Initiative ng United Nations Development Program ang kampanya na may pagtulong buhat sa DILG at DOT.

Magtutulong-tulong ang mga ahensya para sa promosyon at proteksyon ng protected areas sa ilalim ng National Integrated Protected Areas System sa Pambansa at lokal na bahagi.

Ang YoPA ay bahagi ng mas malawakang selebrasyon ng **International Day of Biological Diversity 2022**.

Ayon sa CBD, ang Pilipinas ay sa 18 mega-diverse countries sa buong mundo kung saan 2/3 ng Earth’s biodiversity, 70% ng mga halaman, at 80% ng mga hayop ay makikita sa ating arkepelago.

Ikalima ang ating bansa sa pinakamaraming plant species at at mayroon tayong 5% ng mga bulaklak. At mayroong 53,00 species ang tanging sa Pilipinas lamang matatagpuan o endemic.

Pero ang nakalulungkot, may 700 species ay nasa “extinction level” na o malapit ng mawala, 93% ng ating original forest cover ang nasira na matapos ang digmaan, at 53% ng ating coral reefs ang “in poor condition”.

Sa kasalukuyan ay mayroong 246 protected areas sa ilalim ng NIPAS Act kung saan 112 ang ipinasa ng Kongreso, 13 ang idineklara ng Pangulo ng bansa, at 121 ang initial component ng system.

Ang **Mount Arayat** ang siyang first national park sa bansa na itinatag noong June 27, 1933 alinsunod sa Republic Act No. 3915 o ang pagtatalaga ng mga national parks noong 1932.



Sa temang “Protected Areas for a Protected Future”, maliban sa konserbasyon, hangad din na ma-engganyo ang mga Pilipino na bisitahin ang mga national parks.

Kaugnay sa pagdiriwang ngayong taon, may anim na tampok na national parks, ang

- ü Bongsanlay Natural Park sa Masbate;
- ü Apo Reef Natural Park sa Occidental Mindoro;
- ü Samar Island Natural Park sa mga lalawigan ng Samar, Eastern Samar at Northern Samar;
- ü Balinsasayao Twin Lakes Natural Park sa Negros Oriental;
- ü Mt. Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary sa Davao Oriental; at ang
- ü Mts. Timpoong Hibok-Hibok Natural Monument sa Camiguin

Bahagi rin ng pagdiriwang ang paglalabas ng isang Presidential Proclamation na nagdedeklara sa taong 2022 bilang “**National Year of the Protected Area**”, at paggunita sa bawat buwan ng Hunyo bilang “**Month of the Protected Areas**”.

Hinihintay na lamang ang paglagda dito ni Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte.



BICAM REPORT SA WASTE PLASTIC MANAGEMENT NIRATIPIKAHAN NG SENADO

May 26, 2022 jp admin



NIRATIPIKAHAN ng Senado noong Lunes ang bicameral conference committee report sa magkakasalungat na probisyon ng bills na nagtatakda sa mekanismo ng extended producers' responsibility (EPR) sa waste plastic packaging.

Sa Senate plenary session, isinulong ni Sen. Cynthia A. Villar, chairperson ng Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Climate Change, ang ratification ng report sa Senate Bill No. 2425 at House Bill No. 10696.

Sinabi ni Villar na sa ilalim ng bill, gagawing institusyunado ang EPR bilang practical policy approach sa mas epektibong waste management.

"The proposed legislation focuses on waste reduction, recovery and recycling and the development of environment-friendly products that advocates the internationally-accepted principle on sustainable consumption and production, circular economy and producers' full responsibility throughout the life cycle of their products," ani Villar sa kanyang sponsorship speech.

Ipinahayag ni Villar na itinatakda ng EPR na magtatag ang malalaking enterprises o obliged enterprises ng phase-in programs sa plastic packaging ng kanilang mga produkto para sa mas epektibong pangangasiwa ng plastic packaging waste at mabawasan ang production, importation, supply o paggamit ng plastic packaging.

"The obliged enterprises may voluntarily organize themselves to form or authorize a producer responsibility organization for the purpose of establishing a viable platform to implement their EPR program," ani Villar.

Sa ilalim ng reconciled version ng dalawang bills, may target dates sa recovery ng plastic product footprint mula sa nakaraang taon mula sa effectivity nito gaya ng sumusunod:

- 20 percent sa December 31, 2023;
- 40 percent sa December 31, 2024;
- 50 percent sa December 31, 2025;
- 60 percent sa December 31, 2026;
- 70 percent sa December 31, 2027;
- 80 percent sa December 31, 2028; at sa susunod na kada taon.

Dahil dito, kinakailangan ding magsumite ng obliged enterprises sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources ng report ng kanilang compliance kabilang ang nararapat na documentation. (ESTONG REYES)

Source: https://saksingayon.com/news-break/bicam-report-sa-waste-plastic-management-niratipikahan-ng-senado/?fbclid=IwAR3eJ1zjOhrKxw-kmX-pWLVaOqr3R9D5NaFR7VH75lQJ_7qIB45RskTtDv8



Antas ng tubig sa Angat Dam posibleng tumaas pa

Micka Bautista May 26, 2022 Local, News

Inihayag ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB) na posibleng tumaas ang antas ng tubig sa Angat Dam sa lalawigan ng Bulacan na nagsusuplay ng tubig sa buong Metro Manila.

Dahil ito sa patuloy na nararanasang La Niña phenomenon o ang patuloy na pagbuhos ng malalakas na ulan sa Metro Manila at ibang lugar sa bansa.

Ayon kay NWRB Executive 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 naka-alerto ang lahat ng mga nangangasiwa ng dam at lokal na pamahalaan upang maging ligtas ang mga residenteng maaapektuhan ng pagbaha sanhi ng patuloy na pagbuhos ng ulan. (Micka Bautista)

Source: <https://hatawtabloid.com/2022/05/26/antas-ng-tubig-sa-ang-at-dam-posibleng-tumaas-pa/?fbclid=IwAR13Q1KfhAS7VutqVA6G1iZRMrMoNgozBMG0nZ16q6qwenZRD8H0-YhHli4>



Responsible mining

[HIDDEN AGENDA](#) - [Mary Ann LL. Reyes](#) - The Philippine Star May 28, 2022 | 12:00am

Last December, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) lifted the four-year ban on the open-pit method of mining for copper, gold, silver and complex ores in the country.

According to the DENR, open-pit mining is a globally accepted method of mining and the most feasible option for mining near-surface or shallow ore deposits.

Department officials explained that the lifting of the ban is meant to revitalize the mining industry and usher in significant economic benefits to the country by providing raw materials for the construction and development of other industries and by increasing employment opportunities in rural areas.

The total ban was ordered by former DENR Secretary Gina Lopez in 2017, citing the destructive nature and potential for disaster of open-pit mining, aside from the fact that the method is a financial liability, poses risks to host communities, and kills the economic potential of the community.

According to Lopez, most mining disasters in the country were due to the tailings spills associated with open-pit mining

Department Order 2017-10 noted that open-pit mines cause adverse impacts to the environment, particularly due to the generation of acidic and/or heavy metal-laden water, erosion of mine waste dumps and/or vulnerability of tailings dams to geological hazards.

It was meant to prevent a repeat of major mine tailings spills that contaminated waterways in Marinduque in 1996 and in Benguet in 2012.

The Marcopper mining disaster in 1996 has been described as one of the worst mining and environmental disasters in Philippine history.

House Speaker Lord Allan Jay Velasco said the government should continue to demand accountability from Marcopper for its irresponsible mining practices that have caused irreparable damage to the environment and to the people of Marinduque.

But Marcopper's negligence as well as the unsustainable and dangerous practices of a few irresponsible miners should not penalize the whole industry and millions of people who depend on it.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, in overturning the 2017 ban on open-pit mining last Dec. 23, believes that there are methods and technologies that could held avoid or mitigate the negative impacts of open-pit mining.

Cimatu's directive came eight months after President Duterte lifted a moratorium on new mining agreements which was imposed in 2012 by then President Benigno Aquino III as part of efforts to reform the mining sector.

One of the first major mining project to benefit from the lifting of the open-pit mining ban would be Saggitarius Mines' Tampakan Copper-Gold project in South Cotabato.

This was after the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of South Cotabato amended the province's Environmental Code which effectively lifted a ban on open-pit mining and which paved the way for the resumption of the \$5.9-billion mining project.



The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) believes that open-pit mines can be operated safely according to globally accepted standards and can be rehabilitated properly in a manner that provides alternative and productive land use after the life of the mine.

According to COMP, headed by its chairman Michael Toledo, better opportunities lie ahead in South Cotabato and other areas from big-ticket mining projects.

He said that together with Silangan and Kingking (\$2-billion project of St. Augustine Gold and Copper Ltd in Compostela Valley) which are two other copper-gold projects in Mindanao, Tampakan would be a powerful vehicle to achieve a vibrant, multi-faceted local and regional economy that provides sustainable employment, business opportunities, and other social development programs that will improve and enhance the quality of life of those living in these projects' host and neighboring communities.

Toledo noted that when these projects go full swing, they can increase yearly national government revenues by P12 billion a year, local government revenues by P1.5 billion, exports by almost \$2 billion, and social expenditures by P800 million per year, but added that COMP welcomes any regulatory changes that would allow the revitalization of mining in the country.

The Philippines's mining potential is still largely untapped. According to the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, more than a third of the country's total land area of 30 million hectares has been identified as having high mineral potential, but only less than five percent of its mineral reserves has been extracted so far.

To ensure the safe conduct of open-pit mining, the DENR in its new order lifting the ban requires project proponents to ensure that their method would not pose any hazard to public health and safety that might result from ground failure or physical deterioration and that it would not release any hazardous chemicals into the environment but adopting proven and acceptable techniques to control it through internationally accepted containment, collection and treatment methods.

As in any new law or set of rules or regulations, implementation is the key. Mining companies should never be allowed to just extract nature's resources and then leave the land permanently scarred without any thought of the consequences that their activities have caused on the surroundings and the people around it.

When I visited the Mt. Isa Mines in Australia before, the mining company many years before the life of the mine ends is already in consultation with the community as to what to do with the huge hole created on the ground by the open-pit mining process.

Transparency and accountability are of course key to making sure that the mining disasters of the past will never happen again. Both the government and the leaders of our mining industry should work hand in hand to create a regulatory environment that will help achieve more sustainable mining practices by learning from the best practices adopted by other countries.

For comments, e-mail at mareyes@philstarmedia.com.



Cheaper medicines

[ENTINEL](#) - [Ramon T. Tulfo](#) - The Philippine Star May 28, 2022 | 12:00am

President-elect Bongbong Marcos' plan for the Philippines to partner with India in making generic drugs will considerably bring down the cost of medicines.

"India is one of the largest manufacturers of generic drugs. We could go into partnership so we could have production here in the Philippines," said Marcos after meeting with Indian Ambassador Shambhu Kumaran.

The cost of essential drugs is so prohibitive that the poor can't afford to buy them.

A giant drugstore chain reportedly makes a profit of 1,000 percent for medicines such as those for diabetes, hypertension, fever and infection.

As an example, if a branded medicine for hypertension sold by a drugstore chain was P100, the cost of the same medicine of the same brand from India would only cost P10.

If the government set up a pharmacy in every town or city dispensing generic medicines from India, big drug stores would be forced to bring down the prices of their medicines.

The poor would greatly benefit from the low cost of medicine as this sector is prey to all kinds of sickness.

* * *

The next climate change meetings will be held in Stockholm, Sweden from June 2 to 3, which President Rodrigo "Digong" Duterte plans to attend before he steps down.

The President has said he regretted not giving much attention to climate change during his six-year term.

Climate change is caused by the degradation of the environment due to massive deforestation, pollution of water, ground and air resources, and other similar issues.

Air pollution is caused by carbon emissions from factories and motor vehicles.

Had Digong listened to this columnist early in his administration, there would have been less air pollution caused by motor vehicles now.

Most of the country's trucks, buses, jeepneys, cars, ships and boats are culprits in polluting our air.

If you're in an airplane above our capital city, you'll see Metro Manila's skyline enveloped in haze, which is mostly caused by emissions from motor vehicles.

I had suggested to the then newly-elected President Digong in 2016 that his government give attention to air pollution that causes lung ailments among the population.

Digong said he would take my advice, but apparently forgot about it.

I care for clean air as I suffer from lung ailments – such as coughing, runny nose and sore throat – when the haze over Metro Manila becomes thick.

Wanting to contribute to a state of cleaner air quality, I accepted years ago the offer from Omstar Corp., based in Los Angeles, California, to distribute DX-1 fuel and oil additives for motor vehicles.

Most of the country's motor vehicles have old, defective engines which emit thick, black smoke from their exhaust.



Omstar DX-1 reduces motor vehicle emissions by as much as 90 percent.

Thick, black smoke from motor vehicles is caused by defective engines, which is “cured” by DX-1 by acting as a “metal soap” for cylinder lubrication.

By cleaning the engine of impurities such as sludge, DX-1 promotes a longer working engine life and saves on gasoline and diesel consumption by 10 to 20 percent.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) under the late secretary Gina Lopez was to have used DX-1 on all motor vehicles of the department after intensive tests.

The plan to use the product on DENR vehicles didn’t push through after Lopez’s appointment was not approved by the bicameral Commission on Appointments.

Based on successful tests by the DENR, I approached the Land Transportation Office (LTO) to convince owners of motor vehicles who were renewing their registrations to try Omstar DX-1 for cleaner air.

Corruption – people asking for bribes – stopped me from pursuing my deal with some government and private agencies to use DX-1, which is considered “liquid gold” in the US, some countries in Europe and Mexico.

This may sound like sourgraping, but I’ve witnessed corruption up close and personal in the government, and even in some private offices, because of DX-1.

Even if I wanted to close deals for DX-1, I couldn’t engage in bribery, as that would be violating Omstar Corporation’s policy. Giving bribes is anathema and illegal to any US company.

A decade ago, I nearly closed a deal with Iran to supply that country with Omstar DX-1.

An Iranian official with the rank of minister surreptitiously came to Manila to talk with me and my principals from California.

Iran, I learned from the minister, is one of the most polluted countries in the world.

The deal didn’t push through because of Iran’s problematic relations with the US, the source of Omstar DX-1.

To contribute to cleaner air, my company has made DX-1 available in 30 ml. bottles at P148 each. Each bottle is good for 40 liters of gasoline or diesel.

Only one liter of DX-1 is needed for 1,280 liters of gasoline or diesel. Its former brand name was D-1280X because of the ratio.

* * *

The war between Russia and Ukraine has exponentially raised the prices of gasoline, diesel and other fuel products.

“Those who are using cars, you complain every day that fuel prices are getting higher by the hour. The reason for the higher prices is we do not have our own. We are importing the source of energy,” said President Digong.

May I humbly offer Omstar DX-1 to motor vehicle owners, including motorcyclists and tricycle drivers?

My 8-cylinder Toyota Land Cruiser, which is diesel-fueled, runs like it’s gasoline-fed. I save 20 percent on fuel costs using DX-1.

My friends whom I’ve convinced to use DX-1 on their cars speak highly of the product.



My company delivers DX-1 through delivery outlets like Lalamove and Grab in Metro Manila, and LBC, JRS, J&T in the provinces.

You may call 0915-926-3088, 0976-001-4413 or 0917-801-3843 for inquiries.



Fruit-bearing trees eyed as possible timber alternatives

By Ma. Cristina Arayata [May 27, 2022, 8:13 pm](#)



TO GIVE WOOD AND FRUITS. Quezon City Task Force Street Lighting personnel prunes a mango tree at the corner of Sanches and Miller Street in Barangay Bungad, San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City in this file photo. Some fruit-bearing trees are being studied as possible alternative to timber, the Department of Science and Technology said on Friday (May 27, 2022). *(PNA file photo by Ben Briones)*

MANILA – The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) is looking at fruit-bearing trees as possible alternatives to commercial timber due to the "insignificant movement of the wood during drying," Secretary Fortunato de la Peña said on Friday.

"Old, fruit-bearing trees that abound in rural areas may help address the local wood industries' huge demand for raw materials. Many of these trees get uprooted whenever there are strong typhoons," de la Peña said in a taped report aired in the afternoon.

The DOST's Forest Products Research and Development Institute (FPRDI) studied the physical and mechanical properties of such trees as nangka, santol, durian, and marang.

Underutilized antipolo and batino trees were also studied.

"All the fruit-bearing species in the study showed low to medium volumetric shrinkage, indicating insignificant movement of the wood during drying. This is an important property when processing wood into high-end products that need high dimensional stability," he said.

The FPRDI suggested that wood from nangka, santol, and antipolo trees be used as construction materials that require moderately low strength.

The three species have the same physical and mechanical properties, de la Peña added.

Researchers likewise found that the batino could be a source of timber for medium to heavy construction due to its moderately high strength and medium volumetric shrinkage.

For light construction, he said durian and marang could be used as alternatives.

Senile nangka, santol, and durian trees, on the other hand, can be cut into timber.

Old trees that are unable to produce a substantial number of fruits are considered senile.



De la Peña noted that since trees can be used for specific purposes based on their properties, they have the potential to be used for new wood applications.

"This is why knowing their physical and mechanical properties is crucial in determining their use as possible commercial timber substitutes," he said. **(PNA)**



BFAR helps rehabilitate Marilao river thru mangrove planting

By Zorayda Tecson May 27, 2022, 8:44 pm



MANGROVE PLANTING. Fisherfolk plant mangrove propagules in Nagbalon village, Marilao town in Bulacan on Friday (May 27, 2022). This is part of the government's effort to help improve the quality of water in the Marilao river and the same time, prevent flooding and serve as a breeding ground for fish. *(Photo courtesy of BFAR-3)*

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga – About 8,000 mangrove shoots will be planted in Barangay Nagbalon in Marilao, Bulacan as part of long-term measures to improve the quality of water in the town's major river.

Wilfredo Cruz, director of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) 3 (Central Luzon), said Friday that 60 fisherfolk were taught how to properly plant mangroves around the Nagbalon creek, a minor water channel of the Marilao river, which in total will cover a hectare of rehabilitated mangrove area.

“Mangroves can prevent storm surge, serve as the breeding ground for fish, and at the same time, protect the dike,” Cruz said in a video interview.

Arlene Morales-Mendoza, officer-in-charge of BFAR's Fisheries Resource Management Section, said mangroves could also improve the quality of water and help avert flooding.

“Makakatulong po ito sa tubig para maging malinis. Alam naman po natin ang kulay ng ating ilog. So, sa takdang panahon, kapag lumaki na ang bakawan, ito ay makakatulong para mag-recycle ng tubig. Makakatulong sa palaisdaan and at the same time, sa kapaligiran (It can help make the water clean. We know the color of our river. In due time, once the mangroves have grown, they can help recycle the water. They can help the fishpond and at the same time, the environment),” Morales-Mendoza said.

Marilao Mayor Ricardo Silvestre thanked the BFAR, citing the importance of mangroves in preventing soil erosion and flooding in the coastal areas.

“Napakahalaga ng bakawan dahil una, ito ay pamamahayan ng mga isda. Kaya napaka-importante ng bakawan dahil ito rin ay magiging lilim ng mga isda (Mangroves are very important, first, because they serve as a breeding area of fish. These mangroves are also important because they serve as shade for fish),” Silvestre said.

According to BFAR-3's Coastal Resource Management Unit, mangroves are expected to be fully grown in five to 10 years.

About one million mangrove propagules have been planted in some areas of Central Luzon in the past five years. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1175327>



Masungi Georeserve's Billie Dumaliang among Forbes 30 Under 30 in Asia 2022

Published May 27, 2022 3:44pm



Masungi Georeserve Foundation's advocacy officer and trustee Billie Dumaliang has been included in the prestigious "[Forbes 30 Under 30](#)" in Asia in 2022.

Dumaliang was named under the [social impact](#) category for "systemically and sustainably transforming education, business and beyond."

Forbes' seventh annual "30 Under 30 Asia" list features 300 young entrepreneurs, leaders and trailblazers across the Asia-Pacific region, all under the age of 30, who are inspiring change and driving innovation in their respective fields amid the challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.

It said the 2022 list featured a diverse set of honorees selected from over 4,000 nominations. "This select group of relentless individuals are disrupting industries and tackling major global issues," said Forbes.

"The criteria for honorees making the list include their demonstration of leadership, how they embody the entrepreneurial spirit that is synonymous with Forbes, and their potential of success in their industry. Other factors like innovation, disruption—and size and growth of their ventures in some categories—play a role in making the final decision," it added.

In a statement, Dumaliang said she dedicated the recognition to their "entire team and rangers who are holding the line at Masungi."

"It shows that our work and innovative approaches continue to be recognized and supported by the international community," she said.

Masungi Georeserve Foundation conserves a limestone forest heavily threatened by quarrying, illegal structures, and corruption. In 2017, it embarked on a mission to restore 2,700 hectares of degraded watershed areas surrounding Masungi through a landmark agreement with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Billie and her sister Ann Dumaliang were also recognized as [awardees](#) of Vanity Fair's Changing Your Mind Awards in 2021.

In 2018, the team at Masungi Georeserve Foundation [received](#) a Special Commendation for Innovation in Conservation Financing and Resourcing at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity held in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt. According to a report by the UN Development Programme, the gap for biodiversity financing in the Philippines is at a staggering 80%. – **RC, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/lifestyle/content/833071/masungi-georeserve-s-billie-dumaliang-among-forbes-30-under-30-in-asia-2022/story/?fbclid=IwAR3O43UGoKF2L-Kc1k27FJTalSafZFTYp-P-LTHi7zi-MGGQxQ3EOJJ1flw>



DA allays fears on Avian Flu infecting PH Eagle



May 27, 2022

AN official of the Department of Agriculture (DA) Davao Region allayed fears that the Avian Influenza (AI) or bird flu might affect the survivability of the Philippine Eagle.

Dr. Karl Pineda, representing the livestock division of the field unit operation of DA-Davao, said the Avian Influenza might contaminate poultry products like chicken and ducks but it does not affect the haven of the Philippine Eagle.

He said most of the time, the bird flu virus thrives on the plain areas while the Philippine Eagles' haven is in the forest.

"The eagles are far from the areas where the [bird flu] virus thrives on poultries in the plain," Pineda said.

He said the tracks of migratory birds which are the carriers of the bird flu virus are far from the places where the eagles fly.

Pineda said the bird flu virus contaminates through the droppings of migratory birds.

He recalled that the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council in Davao Region issued a resolution activating the Regional Task Force on the Zoonotic Diseases for all agency members and local government units to implement measures and support the task force by all means and to include security and border control among others in order to prevent the entry of the AI in the region.

Pineda revealed that the DA-Davao received a report from the Bureau of Animal Industry last April 1, 2022 of the laboratory test result from the grazing ducks owned by a farmer in Magsaysay, Davao del Sur which reflected positive for Avian Influenza.

"The nature of rearing of the AI-affected flock owned by the affected farm is primarily grazing transitory ducks, so he traveled the flock from Koronadal City, South Cotabato to Magsaysay, Davao del Sur during the harvest season from the last week of February 2022. He is a resident of Purok Kinalawi 1, President Quirino, Sultan Kudarat," he said.

Pineda said that on April 2, 2022, a composite team of DA-Davao, Bureau of Animal Industry, Veterinary Quarantine Services-Davao and the Provincial Veterinarian of Davao del Sr visited Barangay San Isidro, in Magsaysay, Davao del Sur to meet the Municipal Agricultural Officer and the barangay officials of San Isidro.

He said on April 3, 2022, depopulation of the affected flock of ducks commenced, wherein 3,008 heads of grazing docks were culled using carbon dioxide and were disposed accordingly in the vicinity. **(PR)**

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1930305/davao/local-news/da-allays-fears-on-avian-flu-infecting-ph-eagle>



May mga nag-aalaga ng parrot na daan-daang libong piso ang halaga ngunit hinahayaan lang pakawalan at paliparin.

Dumaan ang mga ito sa matinding training para makabalik sa kanilang amo.

Para sa iba pang mga balita, magtungo lamang sa news.abs-cbn.com.

See Translation



127

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Strawberry farms threaten Spanish wetlands

[Agence France-Presse](#) / 07:38 PM May 27, 2022



Tourists visit the Donana National Park in Ayamonte, Huelva, on May 19, 2022. – The huge Donana National Park, home to one of Europe’s largest wetlands, is threatened by intensive farming. Water supplies to the park have declined dramatically due to climate change and the over-extraction of water by neighboring strawberry farms, often through illegal wells, scientists say. Huelva, the drought-prone province where the park is located, produces 300,000 tonnes of strawberries a year, 90 percent of Spain’s output. (Photo by JORGE GUERRERO / AFP)

Donana National Park, Spain — Standing in the middle of a stretch of land surrounded by dunes and pine forest, Juan Romero examines the cracked ground then stares at the dusty horizon.

“It’s dry... really dry,” the retired teacher said at the huge Donana National Park in southern Spain, home to one of Europe’s largest wetlands, which is threatened by intensive farming.

“At this time of the year this should be covered with water and full of flamingos,” added Romero, a member of Save Donana, a group that has been fighting for years to protect the park.

Water supplies to the park have declined dramatically due to climate change and the over-extraction of water by neighboring strawberry farms, often through illegal wells, scientists say.

The situation could soon get worse as the regional government of Andalusia, where Donana is located, has proposed expanding irrigation rights for strawberry farmers near the park.

It’s a battle pitting environmentalists against politicians and farmers, and the proposal to widen irrigation rights has drawn backlash from the EU, the UN and major European grocery store chains.

The proposal would regularize nearly 1,900 hectares (4,700 acres) of berry farmland currently irrigated by illegal wells, said Juanjo Carmona of the local branch of the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF).

“For Donana it would be a disaster,” he added.

The park, whose diverse ecosystem of lagoons, marshes, forests and dunes stretch across 100,000 hectares, is on the migratory route of millions of birds each year and is home for many rare species such as the Iberian lynx.

“Donana is a paradise for migrating birds. But this ecosystem is threatened,” said Romero. The driving force behind the plan to extend irrigation rights is the conservative Popular Party (PP), which governs the southern region of Andalusia with the support of far-right party Vox.



The plan's fate will be decided after a snap poll in Andalusia on June 19 but with both parties riding high in the polls the controversial proposal looks set to go head.

'Red gold'

Defenders of the proposal argue it will aid those who unfairly missed out during a previous regularization of farms in the area put in place in 2014 under a Socialist government.

About 9,000 hectares of farms were regularized but another 2,000 hectares that started being farmed after 2004 were deemed illegal.

"This plan was badly done. It should have used 2014 as the cut-off date," said Rafael Segovia, a lawmaker with Vox in Andalusia's outgoing regional parliament.

The proposed amnesty "does not present any danger for Donana," Segovia said, adding people should take into account the "economic importance of the sector."

Huelva, the drought-prone province where the park is located, produces 300,000 tonnes of strawberries a year, 90 percent of Spain's output.

Known locally as "red gold", strawberry farming employs some 100,000 people and accounts for nearly eight percent of Andalusia's economic output.

UNESCO, the UN's cultural agency, has designated the park one of its World Heritage sites and has called for illegal farms near Donana to be dismantled.

It has warned that the regional government's plan would have an impact that would be "difficult to reverse".

The European Commission has also weighed in.

The plan's fate will be decided after a snap poll in Andalusia on June 19 but with both parties riding high in the polls the controversial proposal looks set to go head.

It has threatened to impose "hefty fines" if any steps were taken to extract more water from Donana park after a European court ruling last year scolded Spain for not protecting its ecosystem.

And around 20 European supermarket chains, including Lidl, Aldi and Sainsbury's, sent the regional government a letter urging it to abandon the plan.

'Ruin us'

Consumers may get the impression that all strawberries in Huelva come from illegal farms, said Manuel Delgado, the spokesman of an association that represents some 300 local farms.

"This situation will likely cause a major reputational problem," he said.

The group, the association of farmers Puerta de Donana, argues the plan to extend irrigation rights would "only serve the interests of a minority".

"Water resources are limited," said Delgado, who fears farms will be forced to drastically reduce the amount of land they cultivate due to a lack of water.

"That would ruin us," he said.



Backers of the plan, including other larger farmers' associations, reject these concerns. "There is no water problem in Huelva, it's a lie," said Segovia, the Vox lawmaker.

He said water could be diverted to the province's farms from the Guadiana River on the border with Portugal, a solution rejected as "not sustainable" by the WWF.

"When there is no rain, there is no rain everywhere," said the WWF's Carmona, adding Spain should instead rethink its agricultural model.

Passions are running high. Romero said ecologists who oppose the plan have received death threats.

"Without radical changes to curb the overexploitation of water resources, Donana will be a desert," he said.



Finance faces new nature-positive disclosure requirements

May 27, 2022 | 3:03 pm



PHILSTAR

DAVOS, Switzerland — Financial firms already struggling with climate-compliance due to unclear measurement metrics will soon face new disclosure requirements for biodiversity, or nature-related, investments.

“Nature is a financial risk for business,” Elizabeth Mrema, co-chair of the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD), told the Reuters Global Markets Forum, adding that \$10 trillion is accrued every year from nature.

The TNFD working group is putting together metrics to measure biodiversity targets in consultation with industry and financial institutions. Its post-2020 Biodiversity Framework is expected to be adopted later this year.

“It’s about accountability. You cannot improve what you cannot measure. What gets measured gets done. We need that robust measurement system,” said Daniel Stander, deputy chair of the Resilient Cities Network.

The framework will ask financial institutions and corporate bodies to shift their financial flows from nature-negative to nature-positive outcomes.

Another metric will ask the private sector to repurpose and redirect harmful subsidies, worth over \$500 billion a year.

“Biodiversity is getting higher on the agenda,” said David Knibbe, CEO of Dutch insurer NN Group NV, which has 200 billion euros (\$214 billion) in assets under management and is active in sustainable finance.

“If we get biodiversity problems, let’s say the ecosystem is being disturbed, that could lead to food shortages and instability,” Mr. Knibbe said, adding that NN plans to engage with companies so that the insurer can track their progress.

“The good news is quite a few of the biodiversity projects go hand-in-hand with the climate projects,” Mr. Knibbe said. — **Reuters**

Source: https://www.bworldonline.com/world/2022/05/27/451248/finance-faces-new-nature-positive-disclosure-requirements/?fbclid=IwAR1p46GT0jNSJtEGw2v7_Xw1fW34TxmUAD5QVypmx_sXDGizXfJ3qiB5bWY

Singapore lab cracks down on wildlife traffickers with forensic tech

A wildlife forensics laboratory launched in Singapore last year is making breakthroughs in tracking down criminal syndicates trafficking in wildlife.



Since the official opening of the Centre for Wildlife Forensics in August 2021, 14 people have been arrested using evidence gathered by the lab. These arrests, all in China, stemmed from pangolin and ivory seizures in 2019. Image: [flowcomm](#), [CC BY-SA 3.0](#), via [Flickr](#).

By Claire Turrell, [Mongabay.com](#) 6 minute read May 27, 2022

“Initially we were all excited because we had intercepted a record-breaking ivory shipment,” says veterinarian Charlene Fernandez of Singapore’s new Centre for Wildlife Forensics. “But when we started carrying the tusks one by one into this room to process, everyone suddenly became very quiet. A lot of the researchers started leaving the room as they couldn’t take the sight of the elephant graveyard in front of them.”

After a decade of working in veterinary pathology, it was the first time that the Cornell alumna had seen anything so upsetting.

In July 2019, authorities in Singapore had seized 8.8 metric tons of ivory en route to Vietnam aboard a shipment from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Now, following the opening of the centre in August 2021, it was the job of Fernandez’s team to analyze it.

What they didn’t realise at that time was that their work would become part of a breakthrough study, which used the same mode of forensic science adopted to arrest the Golden State Killer. The US serial killer and rapist, who was arrested in 2018 and sentenced in 2020, was caught by using technology to trace family trees. But instead of serial killers, the Singapore wildlife centre’s DNA findings would be used to catch poachers.

[There is an undisputed clear link between the trafficking of wildlife and the risk of future zoonotic diseases and pathogens emerging. Now is the time to address this.](#)

[Scott Robertson, executive director for counter wildlife trafficking, Wildlife Conservation Society](#)

One-third of the world’s shipping containers pass through the port of Singapore, so the city-state’s anti-poaching efforts are key in the fight against wildlife trafficking.

After taking samples for research, the Singapore government destroyed the 8.8-metric-ton ivory haul on a live broadcast to show the poachers they meant business. But they knew that they needed to do more.

“Apart from seizing, crushing and destroying, we need to contribute to the international community somehow,” says Anna Wong, director of wildlife trade at the government-run National Parks Board (NParks), who helped spearhead the record seizure. “So that is why the Centre for Wildlife Forensics was established to collect this vital data, which could be disseminated to the source and destination countries so they can do their part as well.”

The centre aims to become the first laboratory of its kind in Asia that’s approved by CITES, the global convention on the [wildlife trade](#).

Forensics used against wildlife traffickers

Located in the northern farming region of Singapore, the state-of-the-art lab is the antithesis of its leafy surrounds. Researchers are clothed head to foot in PPE garb as they navigate what looks like a ship’s galley with sliding glass doors marking the entrance to individual research labs.

Here, they analyze the flora and fauna found in seized shipments. The team is supported by a K9 unit, which patrols Singapore’s borders and has been trained to detect ivory and pangolin scales in shipments, and a catalogue of wood species housed at the Singapore Botanic Gardens. The timber specimens in this catalogue, known as a xylarium, can be compared against seizures to help identify suspect wood and stop illegal logging.

Each plant or animal sample brought to the centre is processed the same way. First, scientists treat it with liquid nitrogen to make it brittle, and then use a magnetic compactor to reduce the sample to a powder. The powder then goes on a journey along the white-walled corridor of laboratories. A roboticised machine, the QIA Symphony, extracts DNA from the powder — it can do 90 samples in 80 minutes — and then the DNA is multiplied in the amplification room to aid testing.

If the sample is ivory, researchers then check the DNA against a genetic reference map to confirm the species of elephant, and where it originated.

At less than a year old, the centre is still making constant discoveries. Not only have the researchers found they can extract DNA from samples weighing as little as 2 grams (less than a tenth of an ounce), but they can also remove DNA from decrepit artefacts, such as a 40-year-old whale shark.

While elephant ivory and pangolin seizures account for much of its workload, the centre has also received rhino horns, shark fins and sea cucumbers.

The team has continued to seek out more specialised equipment to speed up the process. The quicker they can get results, the faster they can stop traffickers, goes the thinking.

“Previously, when we had small seizures, we would have to send the samples away to get them tested and verified so we could use the results in court,” Wong says. “It could take two to three months to coordinate. Now we can turn it around within days.”

Since the official opening of the Centre for Wildlife Forensics in August 2021, 14 people have been arrested using evidence gathered by the lab, Wong says. These arrests, all in China, stemmed from pangolin and ivory seizures in 2019.

And many more suspected traffickers may soon follow, thanks to the lab’s partnership with US conservation biologist Samuel Wasser. A professor at the University of Washington, whom The New York Times called “the Sherlock Holmes of the wildlife trade,” Wasser has studied elephants for more than 20 years.

In his lab in Seattle, he carries out forensic analysis using DNA to determine the origins of seized ivory. He created the elephant genetic reference map used by the Singapore lab, and can take a tusk from anywhere in Africa and place it to within 290 kilometres (180 miles) of its origin.

Finding criminal organisations like links in a chain

Wasser analyzed his first ivory seizure in Singapore in 2002. And it was here that he made one of his biggest breakthroughs. When studying seized shipments in 2015, he realised that a lot of the tusks didn't have a pair, so he and his team looked for them in other seizures made in Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. This allowed them to connect the shipments.

It also helped highlight the emergence of a new smuggling hotspot in the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA), which covers the border region between the Southern African countries of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The KAZA TFCA is home to 230,000 of the remaining 415,000 elephants in Africa. But getting both tusks could sometimes prove difficult, as Wasser would need each country to give him access to the shipments. Moreover, analyzing each seizure can cost \$50,000.

Then Wasser had another breakthrough.

In March 2022, Wasser published a [study](#) in *Nature Human Behaviour*, co-authored by Wong and Fernandez, that showed they could use the same tool that was used to catch the Golden State Killer to catch the criminal syndicates trafficking wildlife. The tool is called familial searchers. To catch the Golden State Killer, US authorities took DNA from the crime scene and compared against the criminal database to find a close relative. Similarly, Wasser compared the DNA from seized ivory to link shipments.

"As females often stay in the family group for their entire life and males leave, but don't go that far, we were able to link dozens and dozens of shipments to the same trafficking network," Wasser says. "We were able to pull together the whole criminal organisation like links in a chain."

The results are now part of ongoing US Department of Homeland Security investigations.

"If the criminals use US currency, you can get to their bank accounts, seize their assets and cut the legs out from underneath them," Wasser says.

Wasser and the Singapore team are now furthering their research by creating a genetic reference map for all eight pangolin species, since 25 per cent of all the large pangolin seizures are shipped with large ivory seizures.

"We are now figuring out how the trafficker accumulates all this material from two species with drastically different life histories. If we can do this, we get to uncover a lot of the strategies being used to move their product," Wasser says.

Scott Robertson, executive director for counter wildlife trafficking at the Wildlife Conservation Society, calls the launch of the new forensic lab in Singapore significant.

"The inclusion of forensics in strengthening the prosecution of wildlife trafficking is vital," he says. "Professionalizing how those cases can move through the court and the judicial system is really important."

Robertson, who has worked in conservation in Southeast Asia for 22 years, says the Covid-19 pandemic, with its links to the wildlife trade, makes action on wildlife trafficking all the more imperative.



“There has never been a more opportune moment for governments, society, academics and media to focus in on wildlife trafficking,” he says. “There is an undisputed clear link between the trafficking of wildlife and the risk of future zoonotic diseases and pathogens emerging. Now is the time to address this.”

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NEWS ALERTS

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Palawan local gov't won't yield on halted Coron reclamation project

But DENR says local execs can face sanctions for environmental law violations

By Romar Miranda
and Nestor Corrales
@TeamInquirer

PUERTO PRINCESSA CITY—The provincial government of Palawan is not taking the shutdown of its prime reclamation project on the island town of Coron sitting down even as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said it would have to “pass through an eye of a needle” to reverse the cancellation of its environmental compliance certificate (ECC).

Lawyer Christian Jay Cojanco, provincial information officer, said the provincial government would appeal the ECC cancellation order for the project that was already halted even before the DENR revoked the ECC and prior to the issuance of the cease and desist order by the Philippine Reclamation Authority.

“The provincial government of Palawan has suspended all reclamation activities at Coron Bay since February 2021. Rest assured that this status quo will

be maintained until all the necessary legal requirements have been complied with,” Cojanco said on Wednesday.

Transition

But Environment Undersecretary Jonas Leones on Friday said the proponents of the Coron Bay Development Project (CBDP) would have to undergo “intense screening” and could even face criminal complaints for environmental violations for the reclamation at the Coron Bay.

“We have to first find their (proponents’) liability. Second, it may now be difficult for us (to reconsider the appeal) because there were already violations found by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, and we have to screen if they faithfully comply with the requirements,” Leones said during a *Laging Handa* briefing aired on government-run media PTV.

He added: “They will definitely find it hard to renew or apply for an ECC. I think they will have to go through the eye of a needle because of their violations.”



NEW LAND The reclaimed land in the municipality of Coron in Palawan has extended to three villages, burying in soil once unspoiled coastal areas and threatening the marine biodiversity of this tourist-drawing island town. —PHOTO COURTESY OF SAGIP CORON/PALAWAN

Leones said the DENR was already assessing the damage of the reclamation project to the coastal area and the ecosystem in Coron town.

He said the agency would see to it that the project’s proponents would be held liable if they violated provision of the National Integrated Protected Areas System law and the Clean Water Act.

“We guarantee that we will not only impose administrative sanctions on them but also criminal [charges] if we see that they should

be charged in court,” Leones said.

The project was given an ECC in July 2007 for a 3-hectare coastal reclamation in Coron and another was granted in October 2009 for an additional reclamation of 48 hectares.

Cojanco explained that the noncompliance with the ECC’s requirement for a monitoring report was due to the lack of proper transition of powers when Gov. Jose Alvarez took the reins from former Governor Baham Mitra and Joel Reyes. ECC is re-

quired for projects that will significantly and potentially cause negative environmental impacts.

“The project started in 2007 by former Gov. Joel Reyes, who applied for the ECC for a 3-ha project. In 2009, it got another ECC for 48 hectares. Unfortunately, there was no transition for the project and only in 2018, when Gov. Jose Alvarez continued with the project,” Cojanco said.

Lapses

Between 2012 and 2013, the project was halted due to “lack of funds” and was only reinstated by Alvarez, who entered into a joint venture with developers for the construction of hotels, docking stations, and other tourism-related facilities in Coron most proper.

Cojanco also stressed that, contrary to the claim of Sagip Coron Palawan, a civic movement staunchly opposing the project, the reclaimed lands will be “turned green” and would match the island town’s iconic land and seascapes.

Leones admitted there were lapses on the part of the DENR

in the monitoring of the project, which was primarily attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“There was a minor lapse. The progress of the project should have been closely monitored (by local environmental officials). It’s hard to admit, but we really erred on that part. They (proponents) acted in haste while we were busy addressing the COVID-19 situation,” Leones added.

“Although it is hard to admit, we failed to fully monitor that,” he said, adding that the team from the DENR who inspected the site were surprised that the reclamation project was rushed.

“We were shocked. During the pandemic, we think they took advantage (of the situation) to reclaim and reclaim,” he further said.

On May 12, Joe Aril Silino, regional director of the DENR-Environmental Management Bureau in Mindanao (Mindoro, Marikinaque, Zamblora and Palawan), canceled the ECC for the 51-ha CBDP and ordered the immediate suspension of all its reclamation activities on the island, etc.



DENR stops quarrying in Masungi Georeserve

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) formally ordered on Wednesday the suspension of the mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA) of three large-scale companies allegedly encroaching on the Masungi Georeserve in Rizal.

In a virtual presser, Acting Environment Secretary Jim Sampulna said they have secured three separate contract suspensions to Rapid City Realty and Development Corp., Quimson Limestone Inc. and Quarry Rock Group Inc.

Despite encroachment allegations, Sampulna clarified that these companies have been non-operational since 2004.

"Due to the numerous arising issues published in the newspapers, people who are allegedly complaining, so they decided to voluntarily cease operations," he said in Filipino.

Separate notices indicate al-

legations against their MPSAs to be "void from the beginning" and "do not have prior rights," among others.

"I am suspending the operation of those three MPSAs and removing the companies' authority to operate to remove the public's speculation," he added.

An MPSA is a type of mineral agreement where the state grants the contractor the right to mine over an area, provided that there will be government shares in the contractor's production.

Meanwhile, the DENR said they will investigate another alleged illegal quarrying in the Upper Marikina river basin protected landscape.

"We will be ordering an investigation if there are any ongoing illegal quarrying operations despite the suspensions," DENR-Mines and Geosciences Bureau Director Wilfredo Moncano said. **PNA**



By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

THE government, through the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), is allocating a huge amount of resources to rehabilitate so-called legacy mines, or mines that were abandoned and left idle by mining companies, prior to the enactment of Republic Act 7942, or the Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

These legacy mines left behind ugly scars on the environment. Their existence, according to anti-mining and environmental groups, is compelling reasons why mining in the Philippines should no longer be allowed.

Legacy mines can be classified into two: Abandoned mines or mines with no valid and existing mining tenement, and none or incomplete rehabilitation was done; and the inactive mines or mines with a pending application for renewal and with valid and existing mining tenement, but temporarily stopped operation or under care and maintenance due to operational constraints (voluntary stoppage) and suspension (involuntary stoppage) of operation.

According to the DENR MGB, there are 11 abandoned mines and six inactive mines, which are also called government mining assets, subject to privatization to raise much-needed revenues by the Mining Privatization Office

(MPO) of the Department of Finance (DOF).

Using the open-pit mining method, described by big mining players in the Philippines as the safest and most efficient way to extract mineral ores underneath the earth's surface, has left forests scraped and mountains flattened, critics have stressed.

Eventually, to extract minerals underneath the surface, it leaves behind a gigantic bowl that eventually become man-made lakes if left idle by mining operators at the end of the mine's life.

Continuing effort

IN an interview with the *BusinessMirror*, DENR-MGB Director Wilfredo Montano said the rehabilitation of these abandoned mines is a continuing effort and, so far, one of the abandoned mines has already been rehabilitated.

Montano said these abandoned mines were tolerated under the old law, but under the new law,



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such will not happen again.

The old law, he explained, does not require mining companies to allocate funds for the final mine rehabilitation program, unlike the current mining law.

The Philippine Mining Act of 1995 requires the implementation of progressive rehabilitation of mined-out areas. It also requires a company to come up with a final mine rehabilitation program, for which it must allot funds, before it begins mining operations.

There are 11 of these legacy mines in various parts of the country, which the government is now duty-bound to rehabilitate because they were abandoned by mining companies that operated under an old mining law that did not require them to allocate funds for the purpose.

Data from the Mine Rehabilitation Section of the Mine Safety, Environment and Social Development Division of the DENR MGB revealed that since 2008, the government has so far spent close to P187 million for the implementation of its Mine Rehabilitation Program (MRP).

From 2008 to 2017, for instance, a total of P83 million was spent to rehabilitate the Bagacay Mines in Hinabangan, Samar. The rehabilitation involves the reforestation or revegetation using assisted natural regeneration, the establishment of a phytoremediation site, and the construction of a diversion channel/pipeline to reduce the amount of surface water flowing in the mined-out areas, to reduce the generation of acid mine drainage or runoff produced when water comes in contact with exposed rocks containing sulfur-bearing minerals that react with water and air to form sulfuric acid and dissolved iron.

Acidic run-off dissolves heavy metals, including copper, lead and

mercury, which pollute ground and surface water, such as rivers and coastal marine waters.

Another ongoing rehabilitation in Puerto Princesa aims to undo the environmental damage from the Quicksilver Mines Inc. in the area, and has so far cost the government close to P50 million.

The rehabilitation, which started in 2015, is now on its second phase and the works done so far include the construction of the peripheral fence, monitoring of water quality, tissue analysis of terrestrial and aquatic biota, and health impact assessment for the Phase 1.

Another rehabilitation initiative involves the control and management of mercury contamination in Santa Lourdes, Puerto Princesa: phytostabilization of mercury-contaminated areas using forest tree species with heavy metal accumulation potential; phytoremediation of mercury-contaminated water; potentials of pull bugs as zoo-stabilization technology for mercury and soil ameliorators in the pit lake area; and organic filter media for mercury adsorption of pit lake of the mines.

Finding the solution

SOUGHT for comment, Rocky Dimaculangan, vice president for communication of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP), said the solution offered by private mining companies to address the so-called legacy mines is for the government to allow the companies to conduct mining operations and extract remaining minerals in these areas.

He said under the new law, mining companies will then be compelled to rehabilitate the mines.

Aside from generating much-needed revenues, mining compa-



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gies, under the Mining Act, will then rehabilitate the mines," he said.

Apparently, Moncayo said this is what the government is doing in the case of the six inactive mines or government mining assets that were abandoned by mining companies. These mines, he said, still have huge mineral reserves—enough for mining companies to profit from.

"What Rocky [Dimaculangan] is talking about are the inactive mines. In fact, the DOI is now in the process of bidding out one of the mines to generate revenues," explained Moncayo.

One such government mining asset is the mining project in Negros Oriental, which was abandoned by Basay Mining Corp. in 1983 for lack of funds.

It still has 105 million tons of copper ore and could generate at

least P1 billion, but some legal issues remain unresolved, hindering its privatization.

With the government now allowing open-pit mining methods, the DENR-MGB has committed to strictly monitor mining operations, particularly the Tampakan copper-gold project in South Cotabato, as part of environmental protection and rehabilitation obligations once it resumes operations.

DENR Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampilna made the commitment following the amendment of the Environment Code of South Cotabato, which lifted the open-pit mining ban in the province.

This development eventually allows Sagittarius Mines Inc., proponent of the Tampakan copper-gold project, to proceed with the development of the area, and proceed with a commercial operation.



A TWIST OF 'LEGACY'

Government targets rehabilitation of 11 abandoned mine sites



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DENR nakadiskubre ng mga ecotourism asset sa ilang tagong lugar

Agarang inatasan ng pamunuan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na simutan nang i-conserve at i-promote ang mga protected areas sa bansa na maaaring maglinggang sa mga natural assets.

Ang mga protected areas ay mga

land and

water

resources

na nag-

bangkin

ng unique physical at biological significance na puwedeng i-consider ang conservation mula sa human exploitation.

Ayon kay DENR acting Secretary Jim Sampulna, ang economic value ng ecosystem services sa bansa ay nasa US\$46.5 billion at 2.3 billion na mayroon ang mga protected area.

Sinabi pa ni Sampulna na ang mga protek-

tedong lugar ay sumasagay ng malinis na tubig, makubunapan ng pagkain, kabuhayan para sa mga kabuhong grupo.

"We are happy to report that we have now 246 designated protected areas that are receiving regular government budgets to maintain their conservation program and operations," ayon sa kay Sampulna.

Sinabi naman ni Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Bernadette Romulo Noy, na mayroon na silang napiling protected areas labilang na ito ang Bungsangley natural park, Balinsasayao Twin lakes natural park sa Negros Oriental, Apo reef natural park, at Mt. Hamiguitan, na nasa Davao, Sumner Island natural park sa Eastern Samar, at Mt. Timpoong Hibok-hibok natural

monuments sa Cariguin.

Nagpaayag ng maliit si Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Eduardo Año na magugustuhan ng mga turista ang natural wealth ng bansa.

"By calling visitors and tourists from all corners of the archipelago and the world to view and experience our protected areas, we anticipate that many will finally learn to love and value our national parks and natural wealth as important sources of livelihood and ecosystem services such as water, erosion control, and natural risk management," ayon kay Año.

Sinabi pa ni Año na matalaki ang magbabahagi ng mga local government unit (LGU) na makatulong na maprotektahan ang mga lugar. (Vick Aquino)



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Responsible mining

Last December, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) lifted the four-year ban on the open-pit method of mining for copper, gold, silver and complex ores in the country.

According to the DENR, open-pit mining is a globally accepted method of mining and the most feasible option for mining near-surface or shallow ore deposits.

Department officials explained that the lifting of the ban is meant to revitalize the mining industry and usher in significant economic benefits to the country

HIDDEN AGENDA



MARY ANN
LL. REYES

by providing raw materials for the construction and development of other industries and by increasing employment opportunities in rural areas.

The total ban was ordered by former DENR Secretary Gina Lopez in 2017, citing the destructive nature and potential for disaster of open-pit mining, aside from the fact that the method is a financial liability, poses risks to host communities, and kills the economic potential of the community.

According to Lopez, most mining disasters in the country were due to the tailings spills associated with open-pit mining.

Department Order 2017-10 noted that open-pit mines cause adverse impacts to the environment, particularly due to the generation of acidic and/or heavy metal-laden water, erosion of mine waste dumps and/or vulnerability of tailings dams to geological hazards.

It was meant to prevent a repeat of major mine tailings spills that contaminated waterways in Marinduque in 1996 and in Benguet in 2012.

The Marcopper mining disaster in 1996 has been described as one of the worst mining and environmental disasters in Philippine history.

House Speaker Lord Allan Jay Velasco said the government should continue to demand accountability from Marcopper for its irresponsible mining practices that have caused irreparable damage to the environment and to the people of Marinduque.

But Marcopper's negligence as well as the unsustainable and dangerous practices of a few irresponsible miners should not penalize the whole industry and millions of people who depend on it.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, in overturning the 2017 ban on open-pit mining last Dec. 23, believes that there are methods and technologies that could help avoid or mitigate the negative impacts of open-pit mining.

Cimatu's directive came eight months after President Duterte lifted a moratorium on new mining agreements which was imposed in 2012 by then President Benigno Aquino III as part of efforts to reform the mining sector.

One of the first major mining project to benefit from the lifting of the open-pit mining ban would be Saggiarius Mines' Tampakan Copper-Gold project in South Cotabato.

This was after the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of South Cotabato amended the province's Environmental Code which effectively lifted a ban on open-pit mining and which paved the way for the resumption of the \$5.9-billion mining project.

The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) believes that open-pit mines can be operated safely according to globally accepted standards and can be rehabilitated properly in a manner that provides alternative and productive land use after the life of the mine.

According to COMP, headed by its chairman Michael Toledo, better opportunities lie ahead in South Cotabato and other areas from big-ticket mining projects.

He said that together with Silangan and Kingking (\$2-billion project of St. Augustine Gold and Copper Ltd in Compostela Valley) which are two other copper-gold projects in Mindanao, Tampakan would be a powerful vehicle to achieve a vibrant, multi-faceted local and regional economy that provides sustainable employment, business opportunities, and other social development programs that will improve and enhance the quality of life of those living in these projects' host and neighboring communities.

Toledo noted that when these projects go full swing, they can increase yearly national government revenues by P12 billion a year, local government revenues by P1.5 billion, exports by almost \$2 billion, and social expenditures by P800 million per year, but added that COMP welcomes any regulatory changes that would allow the revitalization of mining in the country.

The Philippines's mining potential is still largely untapped. According to the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, more than a third of the country's total land area of 30 million hectares has been identified as having high mineral potential, but only less than five percent of its mineral reserves has been extracted so far.

To ensure the safe conduct of open-pit mining, the DENR in its new order lifting the ban requires project proponents to ensure that their method would not pose any hazard to public health and safety that might result from ground failure or physical deterioration and that it would not release any hazardous chemicals into the environment but adopting proven and acceptable techniques to control it through internationally accepted containment, collection and treatment methods.

As in any new law or set of rules or regulations, implementation is the key. Mining companies should never be allowed to just extract nature's resources and then leave the land permanently scarred without any thought of the consequences that their activities have caused on the surroundings and the people around it.

When I visited the Mt. Isa Mines in Australia before, the mining company many years before the life of the mine ends is already in consultation with the community as to what to do with the huge hole created on the ground by the open-pit mining process.

Transparency and accountability are of course key to making sure that the mining disasters of the past will never happen again. Both the government and the leaders of our mining industry should work hand in hand to create a regulatory environment that will help achieve more sustainable mining practices by learning from the best practices adopted by other countries.

For comments, e-mail at mreyes@phinstarmedia.com



Pangasinan RE plant starts operations in '23

ABOITIZ Power Corp. will begin the commercial operation of its second solar power project in Pangasinan in June 2023.

In a statement on Friday, the firm said, through PV Sinag Power Inc., a special purpose vehicle of its unit Aboitiz Renewable Inc. (ARI) — the 159 megawatts (MW)-peak Laoag and Laoag 2 Solar Project in Barangay Laoag, Aguilar, Pangasinan — will have a capacity to produce 261 gigawatt-hour of clean energy annually. This is equivalent to the power consumption of around 100,000 households in a year.

AboitizPower said the bulk of the generation from the solar power plant will be contracted to a retail company for 20 years.

PV Sinag Power recently awarded the engineering, procurement and construction contracts to Sumec Complete Equipment and Engineering Co. Ltd. for the Laoag unit and Hansei Corp. for the Laoag 2 unit.

"Here at ARI, we are excited for this incredible journey ahead with

our second solar project in Pangasinan. It marks another significant milestone of our increasing renewable energy portfolio in support of the country's energy transition to more environmentally sustainable sources," ARI Executive Director David Smith said.

Last February, AboitizPower started the construction of the 94-MW solar power project in Cayanga, Bugallon, Pangasinan, which is targeted to be delivered by the fourth quarter of this year.

Its second power venture is 14 kilometers away from the Cayanga-Bugallon project.

"This project is proof that AboitizPower is well underway in terms of our renewable energy growth ambitions. We look forward to its completion so we can continue to serve our country's growing needs with zero-emissions renewable energy and contribute to achieving a sustainable energy transition," said AboitizPower President and Chief Executive Officer Emmanuel Rubio.

PNA



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SENTINEL

RAMON T. TULFO

Cheaper medicines

President-elect Bongbong Marcos' plan for the Philippines to partner with India in making generic drugs will considerably bring down the cost of medicines.

"India is one of the largest manufacturers of generic drugs. We could go into partnership so we could have production here in the Philippines," said Marcos after meeting with Indian Ambassador Shambhu Kumaran.

The cost of essential drugs is so prohibitive that the poor can't afford to buy them.

A giant drugstore chain reportedly makes a profit of 1,000 percent for medicines such as those for diabetes, hypertension, fever and infection.

As an example, if a branded medicine for hypertension sold by a drugstore chain was P100, the cost of the same medicine of the same brand from India would only cost P10.

If the government set up a pharmacy in every town or city dispensing generic medicines from India, big drug stores would be forced to bring down the prices of their medicines.

The poor would greatly benefit from the low cost of medicine as this sector is prey to all kinds of sickness.



The next climate change meetings will be held in Stockholm, Sweden from June 2 to 3, which President Rodrigo "Digong" Duterte plans to attend before he steps down.

The President has said he regretted not giving much attention to climate change during his six-year term.

Climate change is caused by the degradation of the environment due to massive deforestation, pollution of water, ground and air resources, and other similar issues.

Air pollution is caused by carbon emissions from factories and motor vehicles.

Had Digong listened to this columnist early in his administration, there would have been less air pollution caused by motor vehicles now.

Most of the country's trucks, buses, jeepneys, cars, ships and boats are culprits in polluting our air.

If you're in an airplane above our capital city, you'll see Metro Manila's skyline enveloped in haze, which is mostly caused by emissions from motor vehicles.

I had suggested to the then newly-elected President Digong in 2016 that his government give attention to air pollution that causes lung ailments among the population.

Digong said he would take my advice, but apparently forgot about it.

I care for clean air as I suffer from lung ailments — such as coughing, runny nose and sore throat — when the haze over Metro Manila becomes thick.

Wanting to contribute to a state of cleaner air quality, I accepted years ago the offer from Omstar Corp., based in Los Angeles, California, to distribute DX-1 fuel and oil additives for motor vehicles.

Most of the country's motor vehicles have old, defective engines which emit thick, black smoke from their exhaust.

Omstar DX-1 reduces motor vehicle emissions by as much as 90 percent.

Thick, black smoke from motor vehicles is caused by defective engines, which is "cured" by DX-1 by acting as a "metal soap" for cylinder lubrication.

By cleaning the engine of impurities such as sludge, DX-1 promotes a longer working engine life and saves on gasoline and diesel consumption by 10 to 20 percent.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) under the late secretary Gina Lopez was to have used DX-1 on all motor vehicles of the department after intensive tests.

The plan to use the product on DENR vehicles didn't push through after Lopez's appointment was not approved by the bicameral Commission on Appointments.

Based on successful tests by the DENR, I approached the Land Transportation Office (LTO) to convince owners of motor vehicles who were renewing their registrations to try Omstar DX-1 for cleaner air.

Corruption — people asking for bribes — stopped me from pursuing my deal with some government and private agencies to use DX-1, which is considered "liquid gold" in the US, some countries in Europe and Mexico.

This may sound like sourgraping, but I've witnessed corruption up close and personal in the government, and even in some private offices, because of DX-1.

Even if I wanted to close deals for DX-1, I couldn't engage in bribery, as that would be violating Omstar Corporation's policy. Giving bribes is anathema and illegal to any US company.

A decade ago, I nearly closed a deal with Iran to supply that country with Omstar DX-1.

An Iranian official with the rank of minister surreptitiously came to Manila to talk with me and my principals from California.

Iran, I learned from the minister, is one of the most polluted countries in the world.

The deal didn't push through because of Iran's problematic relations with the US, the source of Omstar DX-1.

To contribute to cleaner air, my company has made DX-1 available in 30 ml. bottles at P148 each. Each bottle is good for 40 liters of gasoline or diesel.

Only one liter of DX-1 is needed for 1,280 liters of gasoline or diesel. Its former brand name was D-1280X because of the ratio.

The war between Russia and Ukraine has exponentially raised the prices of gasoline, diesel and other fuel products.

"Those who are using cars, you complain every day that fuel prices are getting higher by the hour. The reason for the higher prices is we do not have our own. We are importing the source of energy," said President Digong.

May I humbly offer Omstar DX-1 to motor vehicle owners, including motorcyclists and tricycle drivers?

My 8-cylinder Toyota Land Cruiser, which is diesel-fueled, runs like it's gasoline-fed. I save 20 percent on fuel costs using DX-1.

My friends whom I've convinced to use DX-1 on their cars speak highly of the product.

My company delivers DX-1 through delivery outlets like Lalamove and Grab in Metro Manila, and LBC, JRS, J&T in the provinces.

You may call 0915-926-3088, 0976-001-4413 or 0917-801-3843 for inquiries.

★



AboitizPower taps partners for solar farm in Pangasinan

By DANESSA RIVERA

Aboitiz Power Corp. has tapped Chinese firm SUMEC Complete Equipment and Engineering Co. Ltd. and local firm Hansel Corp. to build its second solar project in Pangasinan.

AboitizPower, through special purpose vehicle PV Sinag Power Inc. of subsidiary, Aboitiz Renewables Inc. (ARI) signed engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) agreements with Sumec Engineering and Hansel.

The agreements cover the direct current and alternating current of the 159-megawatt peak (MWp) Laoag and Laoag 2 solar power project in Batangay Laoag, Aguilan, Pangasinan.

Sumec, which specializes in EPC contracting for both international and domestic markets, is the core member of SUMEC Group Corp., subordinated to the Central Government directly supervised enterprise China National Machinery Industry Corp. (SINOMACH).

On the other hand, Hansel is a Philippine-based EPC as well as operation and maintenance (O&M) company and contractor for electric power transmission, distribution and substation utilities services that support the global initiatives towards renewable energy.

ARI executive director David Smith said in a statement that the company is

excited for this incredible journey ahead with the second solar project in Pangasinan.

"It marks another significant milestone of our increasing renewable energy portfolio in support of the country's energy transition to more environmentally sustainable sources," Smith said.

The project is the second solar venture of AboitizPower in Pangasinan, following the Cayanga Solar power plant in the town of Bugallon that is targeted to start commercial operations by June next year.

This is also the company's third solar facility, including the 59 MWp plant in San Carlos City, Negros Occidental.

Majority of the Laoag solar plant's output is already contracted for 20 years to a leading retail company in the Philippines.

Once completed, the project is expected to generate approximately 261 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of clean energy annually, equivalent to the yearly power consumption of around 100,000 average Filipino households.

AboitizPower president and CEO Emmanuel Rubio said that the project is proof that renewable energy growth ambition of the company is well underway.

"We look forward to its completion so we can continue to serve our country's growing needs with zero-emissions renewable energy, and contribute to achieving

a sustainable energy transition," Rubio added.

The company has 721 MW of renewable energy projects under priority development, which are expected to commercially operate by 2024

to 2025.

AboitizPower has set a 10-year growth strategy that aims to contribute to a more reliable, cost-efficient, and sustainable power system for the country.



Nickel Asia targets 10% higher ore sales volume by 2025

By CATHERINE TALAVERA

Nickel Asia Corp. aims to grow its nickel ore sales volume by 10 percent by 2025 as two mines are set to begin production in the coming years.

"Over the next four years, we expect to grow our nickel ore sales volume by deploying two new nickel mines," Nickel Asia VP for Public and Social Affairs group Jose Bayani Baylon said during the Philippine Stock Exchange

Strengthening Access and Reach Investors Day forum.

Among these new mines to be deployed are the Dinapigue mine Isabela and the mine in Manicani island in Guiuan, Eastern Samar.

The Dinapigue mine is set to be launched this year, while the Manicani mine is set to be deployed by 2024.

"These will compensate for the depletion of our Hinatuan mine by 2023," Baylon said, referring to the project in

Hinatuan island in Surigao del Norte.

With the addition of the two mines, Nickel Asia is targeting nickel ore sales volume to reach 19.775 million wet metric tons (WMT) by 2025, a 10 percent increase from the 17.935 million WMT sales volume in 2021.

Nickel Asia reported a 10 percent decline in nickel ores sales volume to 2.39 million WMT in the first quarter despite a 17 percent hike in revenues from the sale of nickel to P3.32 billion.



RESUMPTION OF MINING OPERATIONS: Residents of Manicani Island in Eastern Samar attend a briefing by representatives of the Social Security System, Philippine Health Insurance Corp. and Philippine Statistics Authority in preparation for job requirements as Hinatuan Mining Corp., a subsidiary of listed firm Nickel Asia Corp., resumes operations of its Manicani Nickel Project.



ILO urges measures to mitigate impact of coal phaseout on jobs

The Philippines will need to implement measures to mitigate the impact of its shift away from coal on jobs, according to the International Labor Organization (ILO).

In its report "A just energy transition in Southeast Asia – The impacts of coal phase-out on jobs," the ILO said countries like the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam, need to ensure any phaseout of coal is matched by steps to address the effect on employment.

The ILO identified the three countries as among the five economies with the highest levels of coal consumption in Southeast Asia.

"Indonesia and Vietnam are important coal producers while the Philippines relies heavily on coal imports," ILO said.

It also said all three are vulnerable to climate change.

"In order to mitigate the negative socio-economic effects of coal phase-out, it is essential that the governments implement just transition policies for affected populations," said Cristina Martinez, ILO Senior Specialist on Environment and Decent Work.

She said it is important to maintain employment in regions where coal production is concentrated.

"However, this can be a large barrier against a transition away from coal, unless it is addressed specifically through targeted national support for regions affected. Policies that are adapted at the regional and local levels with the aim to create 'just transition hotspots' are of vital importance for a human-centred transition away from coal," she said.

The report said the Philippines was the first country in the region to announce a moratorium on new coal power plants.

The moratorium is seen to put pressure on coal mining in the coming years.

"In the Philippines, a direct effect of the closure of all mines will be a decrease in wages (\$26 million in 2017 prices), and an indirect effect will be a decrease of \$33 million in wages due to layoffs by suppliers of coal mines," ILO said.

– Louella Desiderio



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Incentives available for bamboo plantation developers

REGISTERED bamboo plantation development owners and processing enterprises can avail of incentives under a policy and be allowed without restriction the exportation of bamboo poles and resources derived from the registered farms and/or plantations.

In a webinar, Ildefonso Quilloy, chief of the Department of Envi-

ronment and Natural Resources (DENR) Forest Resources Management Division, said DENR Administrative Order (DAO) 2021-26 on rules and regulations governing the establishment, harvesting, and transport of bamboo provides incentives to investors of bamboo plantation development and processing enterprises, and even

support activities.

Quilloy said that under Section 13 of DAO 2021-26, which became effective on Sept. 8, 2021, plantation owners shall be exempted from payment of government share for the use of public lands for commercial bamboo plantation for the first 10 years, or when the planta-

tion owner starts to harvest his or her plantation, whichever comes first.

"[And] of course, they are exempted from paying forest charges considering that bamboo is planted and they can export the bamboo without restriction," he said.

Quilloy said the bamboo plantation should be registered for the

owners and processing enterprises to avail of these incentives.

He said bamboo poles transported outside of the municipality shall be required to have the bamboo farm registered.

The registration is meant to systematize and harmonize all incentives into the system, including approving authority, he added.

Quilloy said the registration process has been harmonized or streamlined under the DAO.

However, registration shall not be required for backyard farmers who will harvest and utilize their bamboo for personal use, as long as these bamboo will be transported only within their municipality, he said.

THE TIMES



Marilao River gets 8K mangrove shoots

BY JONAS REYES

MARILAO, Bulacan – Around 60 local fisherfolk along with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources-Central Luzon (BFAR) and the local government unit here planted 8,000 mangrove shoots at the Marilao River.

BFAR regional director Wilfredo Cruz revealed that the planting of 8,000 mangrove shoots is to improve the water quality of the Marilao River, adding that the mangrove propagules were planted in Barangay Nagbalon.

Nagbalon Creek, a minor water channel of the said river, will have mangroves across

the earthworks and will cover a hectare of mangrove rehabilitated area.

Cruz and Municipal Mayor Ricardo Silvestre led the planting activity and expressed gratitude to one another for the effort in bringing environmental progress for the benefit of both the town's fisherfolk and locals.

He also assured the local chief executive that fisheries support from the bureau will permeate in Marilao considering their brim contribution of the town in achieving food security in Central Luzon.

Recently planted mangroves are expected to be fully grown in about 5-10 years according to BFAR's Coastal Resource Management

(CRM) Unit and are expected to provide multiple environmental and fisheries benefit.

Among is that mangroves can minimize disaster effects such as flooding while providing shelter and breeding grounds to fish commodities.

The bureau's CRM explained that instant effects of improved air quality in the area can be immediately realized by merely planting the mangroves since the process of photosynthesis will produce more oxygen while absorbing carbon dioxide within the area.

Mangrove propagules were retrieved from the mangrove rich areas in Sasmuan, Panopanga.



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Twister hits 2 Ecija town villages, destroys houses, electric posts

By Steve Gosuico

TALAVERA, Nueva Ecija – A tornado hit two barangays in this town destroying several houses, damaging crops and toppling electric posts causing a power outage in the area.

The twister struck before 5 p.m. Wednesday, catching residents of barangays Caaninaplahan and Mabuhay in this municipality off guard as the areas were engulfed by a spinning cone of strong winds that moved swiftly across the ground, leaving trails of destruction.

The camp of Team Kaunlaran led by outgoing three-term mayor now Vice Mayor-elect Nerivi Santos-Martinez and her brother, Mayor-

elect and Liga ng Barangay president Nerito "JR" Santos Jr. immediately rushed to provide aid to their affected constituents.

"Inabutan po natin ang dalawang barangay na tinamaan ng buhawi na walang kuryente. Maraming nakabuwal na poste ng kuryente at mga puno, gayundin nakitang nalin ang mga kabahayan dito na nilipad ang kamilag mga yero at buhong," said Santos-Martinez, in her Facebook page right shortly after the tornado struck.

She said at least 18 houses were destroyed during the howler.

"Tinungo po natin ngayon gabi ang mga mamamayan ng Barangay Caaninaplahan at Mabuhay na nasman ng

mga bahay dahil sa malakas na buhawi. Kasama si Mayor JR, konsehal Nel Rayo at konsehal Ape Reyes ay nagpaabot po tayong hilong sa 18 pamilyana appektado," the vice mayor-elect added.

"Bukas po ay magsasagawa tayong clearing operations at magpapakot ng dagdag na tulong sa mga iba pang naapektuhan," Santos-Martinez said.

The swift response of Team Kaunlaran to the affected barangays earned praises from netizens who lauded their efforts in bringing instant relief such as food and cash assistance to the distressed residents.

Santos-Martinez's FB post generated more than 2.9k reactions from netizens, including Donald

Naco, who commented: "Real life wonder woman ng Talavera. God bless Mayor Nerivi Santos Martinez for your immediate response sa atin pong mga kubabayan parang si Darna sa bilis (with smiling face with smiling eyes emoji).

Talavera is really in good hands also to our next Mayor-elect Nerito Santos Jr. and councilor Ape Reyes Nel Rayo," another netizen said.

On May 19, 84 families were affected by a tornado that hit Silo Capriohan in Bay. Santiago, General Trias City, Cavite.



Biodiversity eyed as tool vs climate crisis

BY EIREENE JAIREE GOMEZ

BIODIVERSITY protection is a major tool against climate change, advocates said during the first episode of youth-led climate webcast Stories for a Better Reality titled "Biodiversity and Climate Change: Among Konek?"

Stories for a Better Reality is a collaboration between the Climate Change Commission and The Climate Reality Project Philippines Youth Cluster with support from the Department of Education, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, National Youth Commission, and youth groups Kids for Kids, and WaveLaris.

In observance of the International

Day for Biological Diversity, the inaugural episode centered on the importance of protecting and restoring biodiversity and its role in climate change adaptation and mitigation.

"The more species we protect, the better natural spaces we have, the more climate-resilient we get," said Jamie Dichaves, the campaign lead of 30x30 Southeast Asia Coalition.

The Philippines has 15.4 per-

cent of its land and 1.42 percent of marine waters under protected areas, Dichaves noted. She said that the country needs more land and water protection given the overwhelming scientific and economic data that protecting 30 percent globally would reduce the extinction risk of nearly 9 out of 10 threatened terrestrial species, support 30 million jobs and adding 650,000 more; add \$500 billion to economic growth and sustainable fisheries; and push for the inclusion and leadership of Indigenous People and local communities (IPLCs).

Abigail Kitna, an Ibaloy Igotot from Baguio City, highlighted the need to include IPLCs in biodiversity management planning and

policy-making, noting that their traditional knowledge is vital in protecting wildlife and resources.

Kitna, who is also currently the chairman of the United Nations Youth Advisory Board, pointed out that the indigenous practices and culture are reflective of nature, providing a template of answers and solutions to various climate and environmental problems.

Protecting biodiversity also helps in disaster risk reduction and management. "During the Typhoon Odette, the ones with fewer human casualties are places with an intact natural ecosystem. One with thicker forests and with intact mangrove systems," Dichaves recalled.



LAST FRONTIER IN DANGER Bataraza in the southern part of Palawan needs to implement anti-littering and environmental protection laws based on this photo taken on May 17, 2022, showing trash items, such as plastic bottles, aluminum cans, food wrappers, shopping bags and cigarette butts, abound near the Bulluyan Ferrera Station at the Bulluyan port. The port is the jump off point going to Balabac Island located in the southernmost part of the country's last frontier Palawan. PNA PHOTO



Editor: DOREEN G. YU

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

CHIT U. JUAN

Where's the coffee?

I may as well start this new humble column on a subject that excites not just myself but many coffee lovers and enthusiasts.

There is a shortage of coffee locally and a high demand for it, causing prices to skyrocket in a matter of months. Blame it on the war, or climate change, or gas prices, or all of the above. Or maybe more people have time to brew coffee at home, causing higher demand for roast and ground coffee than taking the usual regular soluble kind.

Either we have been doing a good job for about 20 years now, or someone is hoarding coffee somewhere. There is no coffee – green raw beans – to be found from the usual farmer cooperatives, associations and consolidators.

Coffee is harvested only once a year, which explains coffee “seasons” – buying seasons, harvest seasons which come annually in most areas.

Twenty years ago, industry players gathered to form the National Coffee Development Board which evolved into the Philippine Coffee Board Inc. (www.philcoffeeboard.com) to help promote coffee as an industry and to create jobs. Who would have thought this day would come that we are running out of local supply?

Soon after, millennials joined the industry and pumped it up into a specialty business – one requiring more skills for farmers in processing, more skills for tasters and cuppers and eventually higher prices at farmgate for the coffee farmer. We feel a little guilty when a farmer sells his “reserved for home consumption” beans because he needs the money. Usually farmers keep their best lots, or some of their harvest, for their own use. This goes for other staples like rice, where heirloom rice is as precious as their local coffee. But these days, farmers get the higher prices for heirloom rice and specialty coffee, while they buy NFA rice and instant coffee mixes. Sad but true.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) also got into the fray and conducted competitions which we started as Kape Pilipino in 2017 and soon became PCQC as it is called now. The coffee auctions fetch prices never before seen by coffee farmers. A prized lot can only be had if one paid almost 10 times to 15 times higher than regular coffee prices. Indeed, a well-deserved prize for best farming and processing practices. How we wish that could also happen to rice and cacao.

And as if that is not incentive enough, the Slow Food Movement recently launched the Slow Food Coffee Coalition (www.slowfood.com) where coffee communities can sign up to undergo a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS), a certification that these coffees are produced in a good, clean and fair fashion, compliant with Slow Food standards. Higher prices for fair trade and organically-grown coffee, stamped with the Slow Food seal.



How we wish this opportunity masked as a crisis can happen to rice and other staples, too. But first, let's look for the coffee and find out what has been going on:

- Farmers can now talk to consumers directly. Now, Mount Apo in Davao has become a tourist destination where coffee buyers meet the farmers and transact directly, without having to go through middlemen. Is that not what we always wanted? It is about finding the source of the food. A bit cumbersome for beginners, this way of buying is happening in many coffee lands where coffee roasters go up the mountaintops to meet a farmer and establish a relationship.

- There is better coffee compared to many years ago. The game has stepped up and though naysayers will still sneer and say we don't have the volume, these farmers are selling small lots (one to two 60-kilo bags) to those who come up with the cash. But farmers are now mindful of quality and strive to come up with coffee that suits the buyers' tastes and quality requirements. You get what you work for. If the farmer put in extra effort to produce better quality, he now gets rewarded with better farmgate prices.

- Major roasters have stepped up buying locally, too. Major food manufacturers have been sweeping up farmers' harvests with their big buying funds, and have increased their buying prices as well. All is well for the Filipino coffee farmer.

- Climate change has caused low yields. Many reports say climate change has caused less flowering and less fruits. Although coffee also has biennial fruiting patterns (one year good, one year less so) like the Liberica or Barako, climate change has generally changed weather patterns, causing unpredictable harvests.

- Logistics from mountain to town. Believe it or not, we still carry sacks of coffee by hand and transport by foot or *burikoy*, if one has this beast of burden. There are no roads, maybe just bike trails if at all, to get to the sources of coffee.

So it is high time we reward the Filipino coffee farmers for staying the course and keeping his or her farm, and even expanding the areas. Just continue to support Philippine coffee – all the varieties in the country: Robusta, Excelsa, Arabica or Liberica (Barako) – and see its sustainable resurgence in your lifetime.

This is a supply crisis that we probably put ourselves in. But for as long as it makes the farmer continue to grow coffee, we are OK with making prices settle where they should. Let's give the coffee farmer a break. A real coffee break.

Chit Juan is president of the Philippine Coffee Board and the NextGen Organization of Women Corporate Directors and councilor for Southeast Asia of the Slow Food Movement.





Flooding is a risk and must be addressed

WE are at a climate crossroads. The world has already warmed by 1.2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Beyond 1.5 degrees, as science has said, we risk experiencing bigger and more destructive climate-induced disasters that will disproportionately affect the poor, vulnerable and the marginalized, especially in the developing world.

The Philippines will not be spared. The increasing severity of typhoons is a stark reminder that climate change, which causes extreme weather events, is a clear and present threat. The country has been subjected over and over again to a cycle of destruction and reconstruction and the time has come for this to stop. The lack of community capacities to be prepared for worst-case scenarios must be urgently addressed.

Most of the impacts of climate change and disasters are preventable. Flooding, for example, has affordable primary prevention mechanisms such as dams, dikes and drainage systems. Poor drainage and garbage disposal problems aggravated the impacts



ALL ABOUT
CHOICES

LUDWIG O.
FEDERIGAN

of typhoons.

Areas around waterways have become densely populated, affecting water flow and preventing maintenance. In addition, trash consisting mostly of plastic and other solid waste continually clog waterways and entrances to pumping stations.

The social challenges that aggravate climate and disaster risks include overpopulation and urban congestion, where a considerable number of people live in informal settlements that are particularly vulnerable to flooding. Many communities live in inadequate housing near waterways.

While heavy and excessive rainfall is part of the new normal due to climate change, we need not live with the vulnerabilities that disrupt our social and economic activities. We need not have flooded streets, heavy traffic, stranded commuters, washed

away houses, collapsed bridges, displaced families and devastated farmlands for every intense rain or typhoon.

We have two vital laws to foster climate adaptation and mitigation and disaster resilience. These are Republic Act (RA) 9729, or the "Climate Change Act" and RA 10121 or the "Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act." Still, integration with local development planning remains a challenge.

During heavy rainfall, water levels in small and medium-sized river basins may rise rapidly and often do not leave enough time for local officials to issue alerts. Insufficient preparation for such recurring events, in addition to limited coping strategies, pose major challenges to local government units (LGUs) and their communities.

Our country, like many other climate-vulnerable ones, faces a huge task of reducing climate change and disaster risks, particularly at the community level. Local chief executives must take the lead in putting in place flood mitigation measures amid worsening extreme weather events.



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Bureau of Customs officials launch an exhibit hall at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport yesterday to highlight the BOC's accomplishments in confiscating illegal goods, wildlife species and other contraband.

RUDY SANTOS



*NAGLUNSAH ng clean up drive ang Quezon City Police District (QCPD) personnel sa ilang pangyayaring lansangan sa bahagi ng Kamuning hilag ng bahagi ng kaniyang programa na "makatalkasan" na inorganisa ng National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO).
(Jeff Tambako)*



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Teachers and barangay workers participate in a dengue cleanup drive in Mandaue, Cebu yesterday.

THE FREEMAN



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Pampanga River trash traps eyed

Last year, around 23,000 tons of wastes have been collected during a massive cleanup effort in major river systems and tributaries of Manila Bay in Central Luzon.

BY JONAS RYEN

SAN ANTONIO, Nueva Ecija — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) are mulling to put up trash traps at the newly constructed bridge in Barangay Luyos here.

The inspection of the area was conducted through DPWH's Nueva Ecija 2nd District Engineering Office and the DENR's Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO), as both agencies take part in the Manila Bay Rehabilitation and Clean Up project.

According to District Engineer Elpidio Trinidad, the meeting coincided with their visit to the Luyos-Buliran Bridge — the DENR's target trash trap location that will help prevent garbage and other floating debris flowing from the upper Pampanga River to reach Manila Bay.

"This initiative is part of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation and Clean Up Project whose primary objective is to restore bay water quality in accordance with the Supreme Court's Writ of Continuing Mandamus directing 13 government agencies including the DPWH to clean up, rehabilitate and preserve Manila Bay and make it suitable for swimming and other recreational activities," Trinidad said.

Last year, around 23,000 tons of wastes have been collected during a massive cleanup effort in major river systems and tributaries of Manila Bay in Central Luzon. The cleanup drive started from January 2021 and ended on August 2021.

A total of 125 trash traps were installed last year in Bulacan, Bataan and Pampanga to prevent solid wastes from reaching the coastlines of Manila Bay.



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Chinese drills tense up South China Sea anew

BY AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE,
JAVIER JOE ISMAEL AND FRANCO JOSE C. BAROÑA

CHINA will hold naval exercises in the South China Sea on Saturday, its maritime authority said, after a week of recrimination from Western powers over its military ambitions across the Pacific region.

The exercises, set to take place in the sea less than 25 kilometers (15.5 miles) off the coast of south China's Hainan province, come as the United States leads warnings over China's growing military and economic presence in an area spanning from the South China Sea to the Pacific Islands.

"Military exercises will be held and entry is prohibited," the Maritime Safety Administration said in a statement Thursday, warning that an area of roughly 100 square kilometers would

be closed off to maritime traffic for five hours.

China routinely conducts similar drills in waters near its shores, with an exercise in another area of the sea near Hainan scheduled for next week, as well as multiple others along the country's eastern coastline.

But the latest exercises come as Beijing faces a growing chorus of warnings from the United States and Western allies over its naval ambitions.

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■ TENSE FROM A1

Chinese drills tense up South China Sea anew

which critics say are a beachhead for a wider attempt to change the regional balance of power.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Thursday accused Beijing of raising tensions over Taiwan, which China claims as part of its territory.

"Beijing has engaged in increasingly provocative rhetoric and activity like flying PLA aircraft near Taiwan on an almost daily basis," Blinken said in a speech, referring

to the People's Liberation Army.

He also called for efforts to counterbalance China's "intent to reshape the international order."

Blinken's comments followed verbal sparring between Beijing and Washington over President Joe Biden's promise to defend Taiwan if attacked by China, made on the president's trip to the region earlier this week.

China has in turn vowed to defend its national interests over

Taiwan, warning Washington not to "underestimate" Beijing's resolve and capabilities on the issue.

Meanwhile, governments including Australia and New Zealand have sounded the alarm this week over leaked documents that appeared to show a plan to build broad security cooperation between China and the Pacific Islands.

But China has said its cooperation with Pacific Island countries "does not target any country."

and rejected claims that it is pressuring small states into security agreements.

China claims almost all of the South China Sea, a claim disputed by several nations, including the Philippines.

As tensions heat up again in the waterway, senators in Manila expressed support for a plan of President-elect Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. to extend the Philippines' 23-year-old Visiting



Forces Agreement (VFA) with the United States.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, chairman of the Senate Committee on National Defense and Security, said the US-Philippine alliance must be strengthened since developments in the West Philippine Sea, the part of the South China Sea claimed by the Philippines, are moving at a fast pace.

Marcos had told US Chargé d'Affaires Heather Variava during a meeting on May 23 he is considering re-signing or extending the VFA.

The pact, signed on May 27, 1999 by Thomas Hubbard, representing the US, and then Foreign Affairs secretary Domingo Siazon Jr., lays down the guidelines for the conduct of American troops temporarily assigned to the country. It also allows unrestricted movement of US vessels and aircraft in the Philippines.

The incursions by Chinese vessels in Philippine waters have long been one of the irritants in relations between Beijing and Manila.

Marcos affirmed last Thursday his administration would never cede a millimeter of its territory to any country.

In 2016, the United Nations Arbitration Court rejected the "historical" claim of China over most parts of the South China Sea, including the WPS.

Lacson said the Philippines should not only strengthen its alliance with the US but also with Australia, Japan, Canada and the

European Union to ensure a stable and peaceful South China Sea.

Sen. Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel 3rd, chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, underscored the need to review the VFA with a view to making it fair to both sides.

In 2020, President Rodrigo Duterte scrapped the VFA only to change his mind after a meeting with then US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin.

In a related development, Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) bolstered its interoperability with Indonesia's Directorate of Sea Transportation (DGST) and Japan Coast Guard (JCG) through the holding of joint maritime drills in the waters off Makassar, Indonesia.

During the Regional Marine Pollution Exercise 2022 held on Thursday, the PCG, DGST and JCG conducted search and rescue, firefighting, and oil spill response training to test, evaluate, and improve their maritime capabilities.

The biennial exercise is part of the 1981 Sulawesi Sea Oil Spill Response Network Plan Agreement.

At the closing ceremony on Friday, Makassar Mayor Petahana Danny Pomanto thanked the PCG and JCG for participating in the exercise.

Pomanto said the training will be of great help in preventing oil spill incidents, and that the DGST can provide the services needed by Makassar near the Sulawesi Archipelagic Sea Lane, a key waterway for international shipping.

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NCR Alert Level 1 hanggang Hunyo 15

[Malou Escudero](#) - Pang-masa May 28, 2022 | 12:00am



Commuters queue for the free ride at the MRT-3 North Avenue Station in Quezon City on Monday morning, March 28, 2022.

The STAR / Miguel de Guzman

MANILA, Philippines — Simula Hunyo 1 hanggang 15, 2022 sa gitna ng COVID-19 pandemic ay mananatili pa rin sa Alert Level 1 ang National Capital Region (NCR) batay sa ilalim ng Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) Resolution 168-A.

Maliban sa NCR ang mga lugar na nasa Alert Level 1 ay ang mga sumusunod: CAR: Abra, Apayao, Kalinga, Mountain Province, Baguio City; Region 1: Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Pangasinan, Dagupan City; Region 2: Batanes, Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, City of Santiago; Region 3: Aurora, Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac, Zambales, Angeles City, Olongapo City; Region 4-A: Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, Rizal. Lucena City; Region 4-B: Marinduque, Oriental Mindoro, Romblon, Puerto Prinsesa City; Region 5: Albay, Catanduanes, Naga City; Region 6: Aklan, Capiz, Guimaras, Iloilo, Bacolod City, Iloilo City; Region 7: Siquijor, Cebu City, Lapu-Lapu City, Mandaue City; Region 8: Biliran, Eastern Samar, Southern Leyte, Ormoc City, Tacloban City; Region 9: Zamboanga City; Region 10: Bukidnon, Camiguin, Misamis Occidental, Misamis Oriental, Cagayan de Oro City, Iligan City; Region 11: Davao City, Davao Oriental, CARAGA: Surigao del Sur, Butuan City.

Pinapayagan sa ilalim ng Alert Level 1 ang intrazonal at interzonal travel maging anuman ang edad at comorbidities, at ang lahat ng establisimyento, tao o aktibidad na mag-o-operate, magtatrabaho ng full on-site capacity ay 'subject' sa minimum public health standards.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/pang-masa/police-metro/2022/05/28/2184240/ncr-alert-level-1-hanggang-hunyo-15>

28 MAY 2022, SATURDAY



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