

30 APRIL 2022, Saturday



NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Aklan to put cap on Boracay tourist arrivals

By Perla Lena April 29, 2022, 6:04 pm



BORACAY TASK FORCE. The Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) convenes on the island on Friday (April 29, 2022). In a press conference following the meeting, Aklan Governor Florencio Miraflores said they will implement a cap on the number of tourist arrivals using the QR Code system to comply with the island's daily carrying capacity. *(Photo courtesy of DENR Regional Strategic Communication and Initiatives Group)*

ILOILO CITY – The provincial government of Aklan has denied breaching the daily threshold on the carrying capacity of Boracay Island during the Holy Week and assured that it will stick to the recommended 19,215 capacity at any given time.

“Technically we did not breach the carrying capacity of the island. We have agreed with the (Malay) mayor (Frolibar S. Bautista) already that we have to synchronize our numbers because we are basing our numbers on the actual tourists that pay the terminal fees in the Jetty port in Caticlan and Cagban,” said Aklan Governor Florencio Miraflores during a press conference on the island on Friday.

He said recorded was the number of tourists coming to Boracay but those leaving the island were not reflected.

Miraflores said they are looking at putting a cap based on the number of QR codes being generated by their system.

“As per advice by the DILG (Department of the Interior and Local Government) we should make sure that we will not exceed the 6,400 arrivals a day. If that would be the case then we can do so by putting a cap on the QR code that is issued on that particular day,” he said.



Aklan to put cap on Boracay tourist arrivals

The governor added that they only surpassed the arrivals on Maundy Thursday when they recorded 12,176 tourists but 4,320 guests also left the island on the same day.

For April, the average arrivals are less than 6,000 a day, he said.

While he could not give the exact time when the cap will start, Miraflores has already instructed their Information Technology (IT) personnel to do it in such a way that there is no disruption on the arrival of tourists.

He said a proper study will be done and ample time will be given to allow tourists to adjust to their guidelines.

DILG Undersecretary Epimaco Densing III, in the same press conference, said they are looking at 2023 for the review of the carrying capacity, which is done usually every five years depending on the development of the island.

"It is the responsibility of the local government units to make sure that it does not exceed the carrying capacity and as far as we are concerned the national government agencies –DILG, DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources), we're monitoring to ensure that local government are complying with the carrying capacity," Densing said.

On Friday, the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) chaired by DENR Secretary Jim Sampulna convened on the island and discussed updates on various rehabilitation interventions and how they will move forward as their mandate is about to end on June 30, 2022. (PNA)



DENR Warriors Show Support to Environmental Heroes

Friday, April 29, 2022 [Journal Online](#)



Players for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources [basketball team](#), DENR Warriors, grace the 3rd Environmental Heroes Awarding Ceremony spearheaded by the Environmental Heroes Foundation, Inc. (EHFI) led by its chair, former Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno (5th from left). In 2020, the Warriors donated their prize money of P4M as champions of the UNTV Cup to the families of environmental heroes. Others in photo are Assistant Secretary for Enforcement, Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns and EHFI executive director Atty. Daniel Darius M. Nicer and Legal Affairs Service Director and Warriors assistant coach Atty. Norlito A. Eneran, (6th and 4th from left, respectively). The ceremony was held during the annual celebration of Earth Day on April 22 at the [DENR](#) multi-purpose building in Quezon City.



DENR Honors Fallen Environmental Defender

Friday, April 29, 2022 [Journal Online](#)



Department of Environment and Natural Resources ([DENR](#)) Undersecretary for Luzon, Visayas and Environment Atty. Juan Miguel T. Cuna and Environmental Heroes Foundation, Inc. chair former Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno (left and middle, respectively) hand over the plaque of recognition for environmental hero Gaudencio Araña Jr., (inset) to his son-in-law Eric Matiga (right) for his exemplary bravery and commitment to the protection of the environment. Araña's work as informant for DENR-Region 3 led to the confiscation of illegally-sourced wood products, conveyances, and chainsaws. He was fatally shot on September 2019. His family also received a livelihood package from the foundation. The awarding of Environmental Heroes was held during the Earth Day celebration on April 22 at the [DENR](#) Multi-purpose building in Quezon City.



DENR, EHFI Name Ronald L. Corpuz as Environmental Hero

Friday, April 29, 2022 [Journal Online](#)



In recognition of [environmental heroes](#) in the country, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary for Policy, Planning, and International Affairs Atty. Jonas R. Leones (left) hands over the posthumous award of Ronald L. Corpuz to his daughter Ron Donn Corpuz (3rd from left) accorded by the Environmental Heroes Foundation, Incorporated (EHFI). Corpuz was a forest ranger in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija who was killed by illegal loggers in 2019. The first tranche of cash assistance amounting to 100,000 was also given to his wife Donavilla Corpuz (3rd from right). With Leones are (from right to left) EHFI Board of Trustees Chair and Former Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno, Nueva Ecija Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer Joselito M. Blanco, and Muñoz Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer Florencio J. Lalu. The 3rd Environmental Heroes Awarding Ceremony and Earth Day Celebration was held on April 22, 2022 at the [DENR](#) multi-purpose building.



Bababoy sa Masungi kakasuhan ng DENR



April 29, 2022 @ 2:16 PM 16 hours ago

MANILA, Philippines – Tiniyak ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na ang mga iligal na naninirahan sa loob ng government-protected areas sa Masungi at Upper Marikina watershed ay parurusahan kung patuloy silang labag sa environmental laws.

“We assure His Excellency President Rodrigo Duterte, that the DENR has been consistent in identifying culprits operating in protected areas, investigating on violations, and filing charges against the violators in Masungi and Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape (UMRBPL),” ani Acting Secretary Jim Sampulna sa isang pahayag nitong Huwebes.

Ang pahayag ng DENR ay matapos hilingin ng Palasyo sa ahensya na magsampa ng mga kaso laban sa mga lumalabag sa environmental laws, kasunod ng mga ulat na ang mga mapaminsalang development activities na isinasagawa sa watershed.

Idinagdag ni Sampulna na ang DENR, sa pakikipag-ugnayan sa National Bureau of Investigation-Environmental Crimes Division (NBI-EnCD) at mga tauhan ng UMRBPL-Protected Area Management Office (PAMO), ay nagsampa ng mga kaso laban sa mga ilegal na nakatira noong 2021.

Sa kabilang banda, iniulat ng DENR-CALABARZON na mula Agosto 2018 hanggang Marso 2022, 96 na show cause order at 43 cease-and-desist order ang inilabas dahil sa ilegal na konstruksyon, trabaho, at/o pagsasagawa ng negosyo nang walang clearance mula sa Protektado. Lupon ng Pamamahala ng Lugar.



Bababoy sa Masungi kakasuhan ng DENR

Ayon sa pahayag, ang pagtatayo ng mga iligal na istruktura sa loob ng mga protektadong lugar ay lumalabag sa ilang batas, kabilang ang Republic Act (RA) 7586, na inamyenda ng RA 11038 o ang National Integrated Protected Area Systems (NIPAS) Act of 2018, at Section 81 (dating Section 71) ng Presidential Decree 705 o ang Forestry Reform Code of the Philippines.

Nilinaw din ng acting DENR chief na ang tatlong kumpanyang inisyughan nila ng mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA) sa lugar ay hindi pa operational simula noong 2004.

Aniya, ang isang MPSA ay mag-e-expire sa 2023, habang ang dalawa pa ay mag-e-expire sa 2024. *RNT*



Sara orders retrieval, recycling of used election paraphernalia

By Che Palicte April 29, 2022, 5:51 pm



Davao City Mayor Sara Z. Duterte. (PNA file photo)

DAVAO CITY – Mayor Sara Z. Duterte has ordered political candidates here to create their own teams tasked with retrieving and recycling election materials after the May 9 elections.

In an executive order on April 27, Duterte required all local candidates to participate in a three-day removal and recycling activity on May 10, 11, and 12.

“The city government urges local and national candidates to be responsible for ensuring that their campaign materials will be disposed of and properly managed after Election Day as these will no longer serve their purpose,” the City Information Office said, quoting Duterte’s executive order.

Duterte acknowledged the need to ensure the proper disposal of the campaign materials to avoid contributing to more waste products and promote effective waste management in the city.

“The collected election paraphernalia during the cleanup should not be disposed of into garbage bins and collection points as they must be recycled by the teams or should be delivered to recycling centers,” she said.

Meanwhile, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Davao Region (DENR-11) said it is continuously expediting orders to take down campaign materials posted on trees.



Sara orders retrieval, recycling of used election paraphernalia

DENR-11 said their clearing campaign in the city started on April 18.

DENR-11 Director Bagani Fidel Evasco reminded the local and national candidates to inform their supporters that placing campaign materials on naturally growing or planted trees would violate Republic Act No. 3571.

The law prohibits the cutting, destroying, or injuring of planted or growing trees, flowering plants, shrubs, or plants of scenic value along public roads, in plazas, parks, school premises, or any other public ground. (PNA)



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NEWS ON CUE

LEGARDA HINHIMOK ANG MGA KABATAAN NA MAKIBAHAGI SA ZERO WASTE CAMPAIGN

ER STORE NG VIBER AT I-SEARCH ANG KATRIBU. INAANYAYAHAN ANG LAHAT UPANG SUMALI SA AI

Makibahagi sa zero waste campaign, hiling ni Legarda sa mga kabataan

Nanawagan si Senatorial candidate Loren Legarda sa mga kabataang Pilipino na pangalagaan ang kanilang kinabukasan sa pamamagitan ng aktibong pakikilahok sa pagtugon sa mga isyung pangkalikasan partikular na ang problema sa solid waste management.

<https://www.facebook.com/tribunephil/videos/713830382983805/>

6:17 AM

Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/tribunephil/videos/713830382983805/>



Climate change creating new virus hotspots 'in our backyard'

[Daniel Lawler](#) - Agence France-Presse
April 29, 2022 | 8:21pm



An aerial view shows Lake Milh, also known as Razzaza Lake, which is facing the perils of drought in Iraq's central province of Karbala on April 23, 2022.

AFP

PARIS, France — Climate change will drive animals towards cooler areas where their first encounters with other species will vastly increase the risk of new viruses infecting humans, raising the threat of another pandemic, researchers warned Thursday.

There are currently at least 10,000 viruses that have the capacity to cross over into humans "circulating silently" among wild mammals, mostly in the depths of tropical forests, according to a study published in the Nature journal.

But as rising temperatures force those mammals to abandon their native habitats, they will meet other species for the first time, creating at least 15,000 new instances of viruses jumping between animals by 2070, the study forecasted.

This process has likely already begun, will continue even if the world acts quickly to reduce carbon emissions and poses a major threat to both animals and humans, the researchers said.

"We have demonstrated a novel and potentially devastating mechanism for disease emergence that could threaten the health of animal populations in the future, which will most likely have ramifications for our health too," said study co-author Gregory Albery, a disease ecologist at Georgetown University.



Climate change creating new virus hotspots 'in our backyard'

"This work provides us with more incontrovertible evidence that the coming decades will not only be hotter, but sicker," Albery said.

The study, five years in the making, looked at 3,139 species of mammals, modelling how their movements would change under a range of global warming scenarios, then analysing how viral transmission would be affected.

They found that new contacts between different mammals would effectively double, with first encounters occurring everywhere in the world, but particularly concentrated in tropical Africa and Southeast Asia.

The threat of bats

Global warming will also cause those first contacts to take place in more highly populated areas, where people "are likely to be vulnerable, and some viruses will be able to spread globally from any of these population centres".

Likely hotspots include the Sahel, the Ethiopian highlands and the Rift Valley, India, eastern China, Indonesia, the Philippines and some European population centres, the study found.

The research was completed just weeks before the start of the coronavirus pandemic, but emphasised the unique threat posed by bats, in which Covid is believed to have first emerged.

As the only mammal that can fly, bats can travel far greater distances than their land-bound brethren, spreading disease as they go.

Bats are believed to already be on the move, and the study found they accounted for a large majority of potential first encounters with other mammals, mostly in Southeast Asia.

Even if the world does massively and quickly reduce its greenhouse gas emissions -- a scenario that still seems some way off -- it might not help for this problem.

The modelling showed that the mildest climate change scenarios could lead to more cross-species transmission than the worst-case scenarios, because slower warming gives the animals more time to travel.

'Not preventable'

The researchers also tried to work out when the first encounters between species could start happening, expecting it would be later this century.

But "surprisingly" their projections found that most first contacts would be between 2011-2040, steadily increasing from there.

"This is happening. It is not preventable even in the best-case climate change scenarios, and we need to put measures in place to build health infrastructure to protect animal and human populations," Albery said.

The researchers emphasised that while they had focused on mammals, other animals could harbour zoonotic viruses -- the name for viruses that jump from animals to humans.



Climate change creating new virus hotspots 'in our backyard'

They called for further research on the threat posed by birds, amphibians and even marine mammals, as melting sea ice allows them to mingle more.

The study's co-author Colin Carlson, a global change biologist also at Georgetown, said climate change is "creating innumerable hotspots of future zoonotic risk -- or present day zoonotic risk -- right in our backyard."

"We have to acknowledge that climate change is going to be the biggest upstream driver of disease emergence, and we have to build health systems that are ready for that."

Green finance set to fund burning waste in cement kilns

Projects to burn waste, including plastic, as alternative fuel in cement kilns are being considered for 'green' financing, drawing criticism from environmentalists.



Chemical plants release toxic smoke. Hard-to-abate heavy industries such as cement production, iron and steel manufacturing and chemicals account for almost 20 per cent of Southeast Asia's energy-related emissions today.

Image: Shutterstock

By [Gillian Parker](#)

4 minute read April 28, 2022

The cement industry, a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, could soon be eligible to tap green financing markets to pay for waste to be burned as fuel in its kilns. While the industry is touting this as a way to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels, environmentalists say it will discourage one of the world's biggest polluting industries from transitioning to cleaner energy.

The Climate Bonds Initiative (CBI), a London-headquartered group which mobilises global capital for climate action, is proposing climate financing criteria for the cement industry that uses municipal waste to be burned in cement kilns as an alternative fuel, according to a draft [Cement Criteria](#) currently under public consultation until 7 May.

The Global Cement and Concrete Association (GCCA), an industry group representing some of the world's biggest producers, told Eco-Business that using waste as a fuel reduces its reliance on fossil fuels and that the extremely high heat used in its kilns ensures waste is treated in a "safe and environmentally sound way".

Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/green-finance-set-to-fund-burning-waste-in-cement-kilns/>

Shipping trade measures real carbon emissions for first time

One of the hardest industries to decarbonise is deploying a carbon measurement system that could enable a more reliable path to net-zero.



Shipping emissions are projected to grow from 3 per cent today to 17 per cent of all man-made carbon pollution by 2050, at the current rate of industry growth. Mathieu Carlier, founder and chief executive of Everimpact, says using real-time carbon emissions sensors on ships marked a step towards solving "one of the shipping's most overdue challenges". Image: Robin Hicks/Eco-Business

By [Robin Hicks](#)

3 minute read April 28, 2022

Shipping is one of the toughest industries to decarbonise with efforts complicated by the difficulty to accurately measure the emissions of vessels.

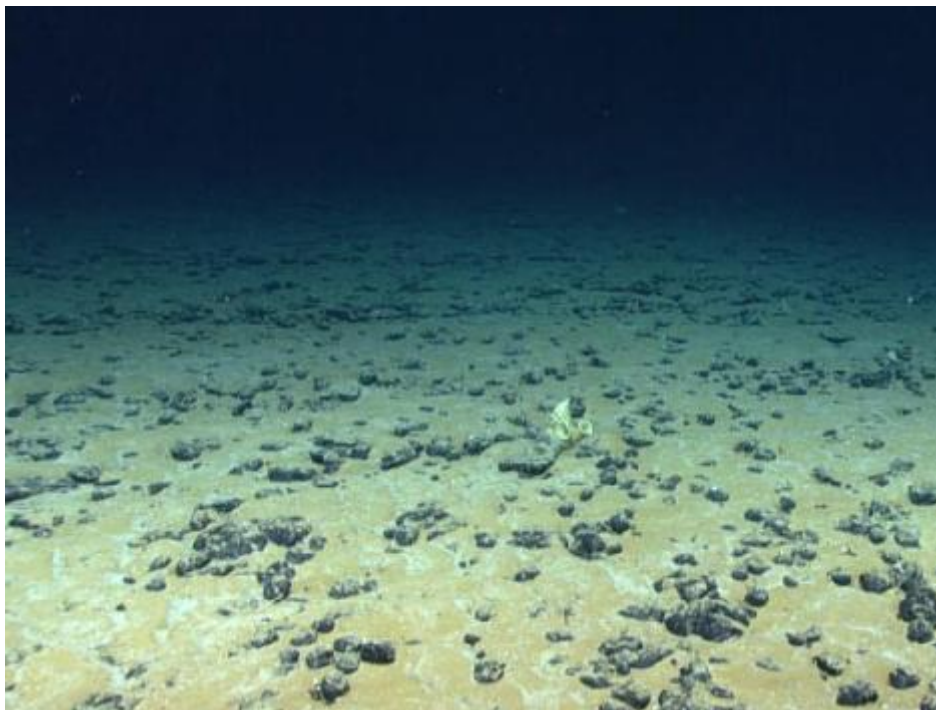
To get a clearer picture of the emissions of ships, eight of the world's biggest shipping and supply chain firms are installing carbon measurement hardware onboard vessels and at ports, it was announced on Thursday.

Maritime emissions are typically measured using mathematical models or visual analysis of exhaust stack smoke. The use of online carbon calculators have produced a range of different results [depending on the technology used](#), which makes tracking the decarbonisation of the sector unreliable. The cost of hardware, high temperatures in exhaust stacks and harsh weather conditions have further stalled efforts to install carbon measurement technology.

Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/shipping-trade-measures-real-carbon-emissions-for-first-time/>

Credit Suisse joins growing list of banks shunning deep-sea mining

Credit Suisse is the sixth major global bank to introduce a policy that rules out funding deep-sea exploration and extraction. Asian banks have yet to form a policy on deep-sea mining, which is estimated to be worth US\$150 trillion in gold deposits alone.



Mineral nodules on the deep sea floor. Image: Mongabay

By [Robin Hicks](#)

3 minute read April 29, 2022

Credit Suisse has committed to rule out financing deep-sea mining.

The French multinational bank published [new lending guidelines](#) for sectors with high environmental, social and governance (ESG) risk on Wednesday, and declared that it would not provide any financing for the exploration or extraction of seabed minerals.

It is the latest global bank to step away from the controversial pursuit of deep-sea minerals, which [supporters of extraction](#) say is necessary to power the energy transition, and less environmentally and socially destructive than land-based mining.

Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/credit-suisse-joins-growing-list-of-banks-shunning-deep-sea-mining/>



Australian rainforest birdlife threatened



By [Xinhua News Agency](#)

April 30, 2022

SYDNEY: Bird populations in Australian rainforests have failed to rebound from the bushfires that tore through large swathes of the nation more than two years ago, according to a new study.

The report, published in *Global Ecology and Conservation* and released on Thursday, investigated the unprecedented impact of the 2019-2020 "Black Summer" fires on the Gondwana Rainforests, which stretched about 366,500 hectares across the states of New South Wales (NSW) and Queensland.

Researchers from the [University of New South Wales](#) (UNSW) Center for Ecosystem Science said it was the first time the World Heritage-listed area had been subjected to such devastating blazes, which wiped out about half the area.

"These rainforests are 40 million years old, and the fact we've burned up to half of it in just one fire season is astounding," said the report's lead author, UNSW ecology researcher [Josh Lee](#).

Lee told [Xinhua](#) on Friday that initially [the birds](#), unlike other wildlife trapped in the fires, were able to escape but they were now in peril because their habitat was struggling to recover.

"Some Australian bushland areas, such as those with eucalyptus trees, do well after fires, as it's part of their cycle, but that's not the case with rainforests," he said.

Lee said among the hardest hit bird species were the wompoo fruit-dove and the paradise riflebird which eat insects, leaves or fruit.

"Rainforests need these birds to eat and then disperse the seeds for the trees to grow in other parts of the rainforest — if we don't have the pigeons and doves to help the fire-affected areas regenerate, then we are in real trouble," he said.

The researchers say it is essential to continue studying the effects of large fires on the long-term conservation of rainforests, especially as climate change is expected to make such natural disasters more common.

"Because of how unique these ecosystems are and how rarely they burn, we really don't know much about what the recovery will look like," Lee said.

He said it would, therefore, be important to get an accurate timeline as to when other flora and fauna, not just birds, return to such fire-ravaged areas.

"There are a lot of species that only exist in the rainforests — they are not found anywhere else — so, if we did lose enough of these areas, then whole groups of species would be threatened with extinction," Lee said.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2022/04/30/news/world/australian-rainforest-birdlife-threatened/1841842>



Illegal ivory tusks seized in Netherlands



By [Agence France-Presse](#)

April 30, 2022

THE HAGUE: Dutch law officials seized several elephant tusks worth tens of thousands of euros in a probe into illegal ivory smuggling, police said on Thursday (Friday in [Manila](#)). In their latest haul, police and customs officers intercepted 85 kilograms (187 pounds) of ivory, valued at around 50,000 euros (\$52,000) in the port city of [Rotterdam](#). The investigation was triggered when a postal company noted a large and suspicious package containing a wooden crate. Inside, police found a single tusk — which had been sent for forensic analysis. Other subsequent shipments have been intercepted, police said.

30 APRIL 2022, Saturday



DENR

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR urges fast land title process

TO put an end to land conflicts and insurgency in the country, land titling procedures must be fast-tracked.

This is the directive of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Acting

Secretary Jim O. Sampilna to the Land Management Bureau (LMB) and other DENR offices in compliance with President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's order to fast-track the land titling process.

"I urge the Land Management Bureau and the Lin-

dersecretary for Legal, Administration, Human Resources and Legislative Affairs and supervising undersecretary of LMB to fast-track the titling of all areas because of the fact that 70% of the conflict

around us is caused by

land conflict," he said. Sampilna also ordered the DENR's regional officials to fast-track the distribution of lands until the end of the year.

"I hope that all of our regional executive directors can fast-track this, to be

By **CORY MARTINEZ**

monitored by LMB Director Emelyne Talabis, for us to be able to distribute lands until the end of the year," he said.

Republic Act 10023 of the Residential Free Patent Act mandates the DENR to accept and process applications for free patent

titles of residential lands.

As he acknowledged the low number of Filipinos with land titles, Sampilna underscored the importance of bringing the agency's services to the public to ease the processing of free patents.



Editorial

Marikina Watershed, patuloy na sinisira

KAPAG hindi umaksiyon si President Duterte at ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa ginagawang illegal mining, quarrying at resort construction sa Masungi at Upper Marikina Watershed sa Baras, Rizal, delubyo ang mangyayari sa Marikina at maraming siyudad at bayan sa Metro Manila.

Nakaluhos ang maring mangyari kapag hindi naputol ang mga ginagawang malawakang paghuhukay sa reserve areas. Ang Marikina watershed ay napagkalooban ng proteksiyon sa ilalim ng Republic Act No. 7586 o ang National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act of 1992.

Pero sa kabila nito, patuloy ang ilegal na aktibidad sa lugar at walang puknat na sinisira. Sabi ng mga residente sa Baras, Rizal, nang manalasa umano ang Bagyong Ulysses noong 2020, buong bayan ng Baras ay hinaha na hindi naman nangyayari dati. Mabibilis umanong tumaas ang tubig. Nangangamba sila na



kung hindi ipatitigil ang illegal activities sa Marikina watershed protected areas, baka malunod sila at matatay. Dapat na umanong maputol ang quarrying, mining at iba pang paghuhukay na nakasisira at nagpapahina sa lupa.

Noong Miyerkules, umapela ang Masungi Georeserve Foundation kay President Duterte at DENR Sec. Jim Sapulna na kanselahin ang mineral production sharing agreements sa Upper Marikina Watershed upang mapigilan ang panganib na idudulot ng mga ginagawang aktibidad sa lugar. Ang grupo ng Masungi ang nagpapanatili at nagre-rehabilitate sa portion ng watershed upang magsilbi itong "first line of defense" laban sa pagbaha kung may bagyo.

Sagot ni President Duterte sa Masungi Foundation, sampahan ng kaso ang mga sumisira sa Marikina Watershed. Ipinag-utos niya ito sa DENR secretary at sa Anti-illegal logging Task Force. Ayon sa Presidente, nangangamba sila sa illegal activities na ginagawa sa watershed.

Ngayong nag-utos na ang presidente, kumilos naman sana ng maayos ang DENR at iba pang ahensya para mapigil ang illegal quarrying at mining sa lugar. Alamin ng DENR kung sino ang nasa likod ng quarrying operations din. Ayon sa report "malalakas at malalaking pulitiko" ang may-ari ng quarrying at mining kaya hindi mapatigil ang operasyon.

Panahon na para pagbayarin ang mga taong sumisira sa kalikasan.



Mt. Arayat declared protected area

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has signed into law a measure declaring Mt. Arayat in Arayat, Pampanga as a protected area.

Pampanga Rep. Aurelio "Dong" Gonzales Jr. the principal author, expressed gratitude to the President for signing Republic Act 11664.

According to Gonzales, the law will enable the national government, through the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DENR), the provincial government of Pampanga and the towns of Arayat and Magalang, to conserve and preserve its natural resources, cultural significance and tourism potential for the benefit of our people.

He said the DENR, in tandem with the local government units, could promote the mountain and its nearby communities as tourist destinations.

"They could also encourage small-scale farming, mountain climbing, hiking, biking, and similar activities. We have good roads leading to the protected area, as well as good infrastructure there," Gonzales said.

Under the law, the DENR secretary could designate buffer zones as an additional layer of protection to the Mt. Arayat Protected Landscape (MAPL).

In case the designated buffer areas affect private lands, the landowners

would be required to design their development with due consideration to the MAPL management plan.

The protected landscape would be managed by a board headed by the DENR regional director and composed of senators who are residents of Pampanga, district representatives of LGUs where Mt. Arayat is located, and representatives of concerned LGUs and government agencies, including the Department of Tourism and Department of Agriculture.

While Arayat is part of Gonzales' constituency, the town of Magalang belongs to the first district.

The management board could charge reasonable fees for the use of MAPL facilities. Collections would go to a trust fund for the maintenance and development of the area.

Jester Manalastas



PRRD declares Mt. Arayat as 'protected' area

By RYAN PONCE
PACPACO

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Roa Duterte (PRRD) has signed a law declaring Mt. Arayat in Arayat town in Pampanga's third legislative district as a protected landscape or area.

Rep. Aurelio "Dong" Gonzales Jr. on Friday thanked the President for signing Republic Act (RA) No. 11684, of which the congressman is the principal author.

"The law will enable the national government, through the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DENR), the provincial government of Pampanga, and the towns of Arayat and Magalang, where the mountain is lo-

ated, to conserve and preserve its natural resources, cultural significance, and tourism potential for the benefit of our people," Gonzales said.

He said the DENR could promote the mountain and nearby communities as tourist destinations in tandem with the local government units (LGUs).

"They could also encourage small scale farming, mountain climbing, hiking, biking, and similar activities. We have good roads leading to the protected area, as well as good infrastructure there," he said.

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ignate buffer zones as an additional layer of protection to the Mt. Arayat Protected Landscape (MAPL).

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of Tourism (DOT) and the Department of Agriculture (DA).

While Arayat is part of Gonzales' constituency, the town of Magalang belongs to the 1st district.

The management board could charge reasonable fees for the use of MAPL facilities. Collections would go to a trust fund for the maintenance and development of the area.

The DENR secretary is mandated to include additional funding for the MAPL in his annual budget proposal to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and Congress.



Boracay changed: Recovery, peace and order and politics

MY
Family and I
spent the
entire
month



ON THE
CONTRARY

ANTONIO
CONTRERAS

of April in Boracay Island. It is a luxury I have indulged myself and my family after two years of being mainly on lockdown.

It was my fourth time in Boracay and the first time with my family. This is also the first time that I took the RoRo boat from Batangas, which took us on an overnight travel of about 10 hours. It is an entirely different experience compared to air travel, and is advisable if you are traveling in a big group and plan to stay in the island for a longer time and thus would carry a lot of luggage.

➤ ContrerasA5

■ CONTRERAS FROM A1

The first time I went to Boracay was in the early 1990s, which was before the tourism boom in the island. It was followed by a trip organized by my university a decade after. In this trip, I already saw the growing number of establishments and the intensification of tourism commercialization. My third visit was when I brought my students on a field exposure trip sometime in the middle part of the decade of the 2010s. It was then that I began to witness an island bursting at the seams of overdevelopment.

This time around, I saw a totally different Boracay. The beaches are now cleaner and the inner main road is now wider and concrete. Except for Holy Thursday and Good Friday when there was unusual crowding, crowds in Boracay are now more manageable and less intimidating.

Some people accuse President Rodrigo Duterte of so many things, but one thing that he did right was when he ordered the closure of Boracay for rehabilitation. It was a bitter pill to take for certainly it caused disruptions and economic suffering for the island residents who depend on tourism for their livelihood.

The closure of the island prepared its residents for the even longer lockdowns due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was certainly a test of their resilience and their ability to absorb economic shocks and disruptions in their lives. My natural curiosity as a trained social science researcher brought me to doing impromptu field work as I conversed with ordinary people — from service workers in restaurants, hotels and shops, to masseuses and masseurs in spas, to e-tricycle drivers and boat operators. All of them admitted to the difficulties they faced from the one-two punch assaults brought by the closures due to environmental rehabilitation and the pandemic. But all of them also expressed their acceptance of the necessity or the inevitability of both, and that what did not kill them actually made them, and their island, stronger and better.

There is also a new kind of ethos that permeates the air of Boracay. One now feels safer, a feeling one gets by watching the ubiquitous presence of police personnel, in their unique uniforms, perhaps the only force wearing shorts, patrolling and watching over major areas of the island, along White Beach and in major intersections. There is a sense of respect and a feeling of reassurance that they evince by their very presence.

LtCol. Dicksie Don de Dios, the chief of police of Malay that has jurisdiction over the island, attributes this to the discipline, professionalism and the new sense of pride that he has inculcated in his relatively

young police corps. In our one-month stay in Boracay, we did not hear of any major incident except for a brawl between two relatives who were both drunk. Instead, we heard a series of arrests and apprehension of personalities with pending warrants, or were fugitives from the law who thought that the island would shelter them from being reached by the law's long arm.

There is also another development I observed here. It speaks of how politics has cleaved the island's long-term inhabitants. A majority of

the island's elite residents, like hotel and restaurant owners, including those who are not locals, are partial toward Vice President Maria Leonor Robredo. On the other hand, a good number of the service and other blue-collar workers prefer former senator Ferdinand Marcos Jr. What is interesting is that initially, some Marcos supporters were hesitant to articulate their preference. When probed further, they expressed apprehension because their employers are for Robredo and some were not comfortable disagreeing with them. Others were hesitant to reveal their preference toward anyone other than Robredo to avoid being scolded by pro-Robredo customers who, they said, are more vocal and aggressive.

There are two myths, both of which are based on lies, that I discovered prevailing over ordinary island residents. There are those who hesitate to vote for Marcos because they have been told, some by their employers while others by political elites, that he would seize and expropriate the entire island to their disadvantage. And then there are those who are willing to defy elite pressure and insist on voting for Marcos Jr. because of the promise that he has access to tons of gold that he can give to people should he win.

What this political landscape in the island implies is that while its political economy and cultural ecology may be uniquely determined by tourism, its political complexion is very much drawn from how people see themselves. They exist at the margins of an economy that dwells on commercializing its natural landscape, and thus would be at the mercy of the elite class that controls the tourism industry. They will continue to negotiate their survival as they create spaces where they can assert themselves, like on their choice for president.

The fate of this island will now largely depend on good leaders, both local and national. President Duterte cleaned the beaches, while a disciplined local police force under LtCol. de Dios kept its peace. The hope of many is that whoever wins this May will protect this island from threats of excessive exploitative capitalism and enable its people to make the right decisions.



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San Miguel's Parex and CO2 emissions claim

DURING the Environmental Management Bureau's public hearing on the proposed Pasig River Expressway (Parex) last March 25, 2022, one of the disturbing statements made by San Miguel Corp. (SMC) Infrastructure was that the Parex would reduce carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions — in effect declaring that an urban expressway was a tool to fight climate change. This goes against the natural logic and common observation that more road space for motor vehicles attracts increased motor vehicle use and therefore more CO2 production from burning fossil fuels.

This claim was also made by SMC Infrastructure to the Office of the President in response to questions raised by Malacañang. Because the assertion was made to the highest levels of government, to national agencies responsible for transportation and the environment, and to concerned stakeholders, it should be based on science and backed by careful analysis. Because the climate crisis affects all of us profoundly, such a statement should not be made unless it is evidence-based. If false, and if urban expressways lead to increased CO2 emissions, SMC's statement could misinform key decision-makers and encourage investment decisions that could be harmful to Filipinos and the planet.

On April 21, 2022, the Move As One Coalition wrote to the Climate Change Commission requesting that it and/or its panel of experts comment on the impact of an urban expressway on climate change and on whether they knew of any experts recommending urban expressways as a measure to mitigate climate change. The following day, I put out a call on social media for



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any academic study or scholarly work that supported SMC Infrastructure's claim regarding the alleged beneficial climate impact of urban expressways. As of this writing, I have not received any submission corroborating that claim.

I also tried looking through the various papers of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) — the authoritative global scientific body on climate change and its causes, potential impacts and response options. In a report released on April 4, 2022, the IPCC called for immediate and drastic cuts

in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions if we are to stay within a 2-degree warmer world. There seems to be no recommendation in any IPCC report about building more urban expressways to reduce CO2 emissions. On the contrary, the IPCC has been critical of investments and subsidies that encourage increased motorization.

In my search for the relationship between CO2 emissions and expressways, what I found was study after study that concluded that new expressways encouraged more motor vehicle use, increased consumption of fossil fuels and therefore more emissions. This appears to be the consensus of climate scientists and transportation experts.

Increased motor vehicle use due to the Parex was actually confirmed by the Parex project leader, Edgar Dona, who stated at the July 14, 2021 public scoping meeting that, "We are aware

that the project will induce more trips." The growth in motor vehicle trips was again corroborated by Dona at the March 25, 2022 public hearing when he disclosed that the volume of motor vehicles on the Parex was expected to rise steadily and exceed the roadway's design capacity by 2035.

SMC Infrastructure's disclosure regarding the increase in motor vehicle trips is consistent with findings from a California Environmental Protection Agency report entitled "Impact of Highway Capacity and Induced Travel on Passenger Vehicle Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions," authored by Susan Handy (University of California, Davis) and Marlon Boarnet (University of Southern California) and dated Sept. 30, 2014. Below are the study's important conclusions:

— "An increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) attributable to increases in capacity is called 'induced travel.' Any induced travel that occurs reduces the effectiveness of capacity expansion as a strategy for alleviating traffic congestion and offsets any reductions in GHG emissions that would result from reduced congestion."

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San Miguel's Parex and CO2 emissions claim

— "Increased highway capacity can lead to increased VMT in the short run in several ways: if people shift from other modes to driving, if drivers make longer trips (by choosing longer routes and/or more distant destinations), or if drivers make more frequent trips . . . Studies consistently show that increased capacity induces additional VMT."

— "An important question is whether VMT on highways following capacity expansion is partially offset

by decreases in VMT traveled on other roads. This would be the case if drivers shifted from slower and more congested roads to the new or newly expanded highways. However . . . [studies show that] capacity expansion leads to a net increase in VMT, not simply a shifting of VMT from one road to another."

— "[A]ny induced travel that occurs reduces the effectiveness of capacity expansion as a strategy for alleviating traffic congestion and offsets any reductions in GHG emissions that would result from improved traffic flow."

— "Given the induced travel effect, capacity expansion has limited potential as a strategy for reducing congestion. The additional vehicle travel induced by capacity expansion increases GHG emissions as well as other environmental effects, including increased air, water and noise pollution."

The above conclusions and SMC

Infrastructure's own statements regarding more vehicle trips due to induced demand call into question its claims about the Parex's impact on CO2 emissions. Because climate change is today a life and death matter for millions, any misinformation or misrepresentation about emissions should not be tolerated or left uncorrected.

San Miguel Corp's stated values include "doing what is right," "profit with honor," and "acting with honesty, fairness and integrity." Today and in the years ahead, we need a company that is true to its values — not an entity that peddles "fake news" in order to suit its commercial interests.

Robert Y. Siy is a development economist, city and regional planner, and public transport advocate. He can be reached at mobilitymatters.ph@yahoo.com or followed on Twitter @RobertSiy.



Cold chain industry eyes energy efficiency

THE Philippine cold chain industry is aiming to be more energy-efficient, the Board of Investments (BoI) said, after the government and the private sector signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the creation of guidelines on Minimum Energy Performance (MEP) for the industry, which includes commercial refrigeration products.

In a statement on Friday, the BoI said it signed the MoU with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau, the Department of Energy-Energy Utilization Management Bureau and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization on April 8 this year.

Republic Act 11285 or the "Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act" guides the development of MEP in important industries in the country. The agency stressed that the MEP encourages energy savings at the sector level while also contributing to the country's nationally determined contribution targets.

According to the BoI, its governor, Marjorie Ramos-Samaniego, said the new alliance will help promote a sustainable cold chain business with a lower environ-

mental imprint and more efficient energy use.

Ramos-Samaniego, who is also the co-chairman of the National Cold Chain Committee (NC3), said cold chain activities in the country consume a lot of energy, and the MEP will urge local and prospective operators to adopt energy-efficient operations.

As chairman of the NC3, the BoI stated that it supports efforts to prepare policy recommendations and align with existing programs/strategies of concerned government agencies in order to ensure harmonization/complementation of strategic directions toward food security and resilience through the promotion of investments in cold chain using greener technologies.

It will also assist the technical working group in developing MEP standards, and will offer relevant available information in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

"The BoI and the NC3 is 100-percent committed to co-implement this MoU and make this project a success toward an energy efficient and sustainable Philippine cold chain industry," Ramos-Samaniego was quoted as saying. **MAYVELIN U. CARABALLO**



ENERGY PLAYERS PUSH SHIFT TO RENEWABLES

The Manila Times
Online Forum
**BOOST THE FUTURE OF
POWER STAKEHOLDERS**

BY FAYE ALMAZAN

ENERGY stakeholders on Friday underscored the urgency of transitioning to renewable energy (RE) in the country and said the government can help attract more investments in the sector.

In a virtual forum organized by *The Manila Times*, Jose Layug Jr., president of Developers of Renewable Energy for Advancement Inc., said the Philippines has a lot to offer RE investors, especially now that legislation promoting alternatives to fossil fuels is in place.

"We just need to make sure that the government enables them, and we need to declare as a fundamental policy of the government that we should have preferential bias for cleaner forms of indigenous energy resources," Layug said.

Layug noted that the Philippines has abundant RE resources and should push

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RENEWABLES FROM A1

for it instead of relying on traditional fuel.

Layug said RE is cheaper than conventional fuel and allows the country to be less reliant on imported fuel resources.

REs never deplete and have lower carbon emission, he said.

Layug added that another reason to push for RE is that "we don't produce a lot of oil, hardly. We don't produce a lot of gas... and definitely we don't produce a lot of coal... So, you can imagine if we have little resources, then we use our own indigenous energy resources."

Citing data from the Department of Energy (DoE), Layug said that as of 2020, the country generated 7,653 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy in installed capacity and 6,825 MW in dependable capacity.

He stressed the need for the government to be fully involved in RE development, particularly in streamlining the requirements needed in building power plants.

"It starts from [the] government. Be an enabler, don't create barriers so that we will allow more RE developers to put up more power plants," he said.

Charlie Ayco, WeGen Energy Philippines chairman and president, said one problem the country faces in developing renewables is concentration risk, which is inherent in how the grid is being organized.

To address the risk, Ayco called for a decentralized distributed energy system and building small household and community solar installations bundled into one system.

Another risk Ayco mentioned is energy or fuel source. He said the country still relies largely on coal, gasoline, diesel and natural gas.

He said this can be addressed through di-

versification, especially in renewable energy.

"Even if the cost of energy or the cost of diesel or the cost of coal will increase 200 to 300 times, they are already covered or they are protected from that because... the energy produced by these solar installations is already fixed. It will not fluctuate," Ayco said.

In a recorded message to the forum participants, Energy Undersecretary William Fuentebella highlighted the innovations and technologies implemented by the government in energizing off-grid communities.

"We are promoting the productive uses of renewable energy that not only ensures electrification of households in off-grid areas, but also mechanizes agricultural processes, which will help provide credible income generating possibilities for our rural communities," Fuentebella said.

The government plans to replicate and scale up the program for "widespread use and increased commercialization," he said.

"We will now work with projects not only for technology demonstration, but should also demonstrate feasibility and at the same time increase economic activities for our far-flung communities," he added.

Fuentebella said the DoE is working on the draft rules and regulations of Republic Act (RA) 11646, expected to be finalized in May.

RA 11646, the "Microgrid Systems Act," aims to "promote the use of microgrid systems in unserved and underserved areas to accelerate the government's goal of total electrification in the country."

Fuentebella said the department recorded a 95.4 percent household electrification level in December 2021, equivalent to energizing 25 million households.



Coca-Cola boosts plastic waste mgmt

COCA-COLA Beverages Philippines Inc. (CCBPI) is accelerating its plastic bottle collection program Tapon to Ipon: Basta Klaro, Panalo to benefit more communities nationwide.

Through Tapon to Ipon, clear beverage plastic bottles made from polyethylene terephthalate (PET) — a material 100-percent recyclable — are collected to be given new life through PETValue Philippines, the country's first bottle-to-bottle recycling facility.

CCBPI hopes to change the mindset about packaging recyclability because clear used PET plastic bottles usually get thrown away after use and their potential wasted. In *sari-sari* (variety) store collection hubs first launched in Batangas City and the City of Manila, used PET plastic bottles are being collected and exchanged by community members for incentives.

All Tapon to Ipon collection hubs are accepting all types of clear post-consumer PET plastic bever-

age bottles — regardless of brand — thus the tagline Basta Klaro, Panalo!, underscoring that clear plastic bottles chart higher in recyclability compared to colored ones.

"Through Tapon to Ipon, we want to raise awareness about recycling, and we want to do our part in ensuring that plastic packaging materials that are 100-percent recyclable are collected and used again," said Gareth McGeown, chief executive officer and president of CCBPI.

"At the same time, we're starting a movement within local communities — World Without Waste is a collective movement and the contribution of every single individual is valuable," he added.

World Without Waste is Coca-Cola's global goal to collect and recycle 100 percent of the bottles and cans it sells by 2030 — a campaign now finding a pillar in Tapon to Ipon and its ability to enjoin every stakeholder within and beyond the Coca-Cola ecosystem in taking part.

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Destileria Limtuaco champions waste reduction



Rainier's Research & Development Institute, Inc. president and CEO Dr. Rainier Villanueva, Destileria Limtuaco & Co., Inc. president and CEO Olivia Limpe-Aw, and Manille Liqueur de Dalandan brand ambassador renowned chef and restaurateur Margarita Fores

Since developing Paradise Mango Rum Liqueur in 2002, Destileria Limtuaco & Co., Inc. has been at the forefront of championing Philippine raw materials in the development of value-added alcoholic beverages that every Filipino can be proud to call 100-percent locally-made. In 2014, the company developed Manille Liqueur de Calamansi, an innovative product that sought to capture the unique zest of calamansi in a bottle, and they would later develop a dalandan variant. The company supports local farmers by paying them the market price of calamansi and dalandan, which enables the farmers to get 100 percent of the profits from dealing directly with the company. "It's sort of a CSR effort for our company. This increases every farmer's margin a

great deal," Destileria Limtuaco & Co. CEO Olivia Limpe-Aw shares. With the brand's success, the company has been busy improving its production process, especially in the field of waste management. The Si Anti-Bacterial Liquid Hand Soap, in particular, is a groundbreaking result of the company's efforts to reduce waste in all their production processes. The hand soap has whitening and antiseptic properties while the fruit pulp exfoliates dead skin, removes dirt, and lightens dark spots, all thanks to the natural citrus by-product from the production of Manille Liqueurs.

You may email me at jlitton@indunet.com. Follow me on Facebook and YouTube: [Johany Litton by Jayelles PH](#) and on Instagram: [@jayellesph](#).



Destileria Limtuaco's Si Anti-Bacterial Liquid Hand Soap in Calamansi and Dalandan variants have the citrus mud — ground calamansi and dalandan rinds, seeds and juice transformed into a natural by-product — as their active ingredient that contains whitening and antiseptic properties.



HSBC backs WWF mangrove program

BY MAYVELIN U. CARABALLO

HSBBC Philippines said it has partnered with Kabang Kalikasan ng Pilipinas (World Wide Fund for Nature Philippines or WWF Philippines) for a four-year mangrove ecosystem management program.

The Ticao-Burias Pass, which runs through the provinces of Masbate, Sorsogon, Albay and Camarines Sur, will be the focus of the mangrove ecosystem program, the bank noted in a statement.

It said the P18-million, four-year initiative aims to rehabilitate 80 to 100 hectares of mangrove forests through supported natural regeneration and enrichment,

thereby strengthening local communities' resilience to climate change risks and impacts.

Sandeep Uppal, HSBC president and chief executive officer, was quoted as saying, "As we observe Earth Day, we take this opportunity to launch our partnership with WWF Philippines on a 4-year Mangrove Ecosystem Management Project in the Bicol Region."

"This is in line with our commitment to HSBC's Climate Strategy as we aim to significantly contribute to our organization's and also to the Philippines' sustainability goals," he added.

The conservation of mangrove forests is underlined as a key step to safeguard coastal populations from the impacts of increasing sea levels, HSBC continued, with more than 60 percent of the Philippine population residing in coastal areas.

Mangroves provide an effective defense for towns against storms and coastal floods when paired with developed infrastructure. As a result, public and private sector interest in mangrove conservation initiatives has grown as a means

of limiting the effects of future typhoons, it added.

"This program is set to help mitigate climate change through carbon sequestration, engage the community in stewardship of their own resources and increase protection against storm surges, sea level rise, flooding, and coastal erosion; and ultimately, the project will maintain and improve the health of the ecosystem that feeds both the ocean, land and people," said Katherine Custodio, WWF Philippines executive director.

"Indeed, we are delighted to partner with HSBC Philippines in this endeavor, and we are excited to implement this project that will bring enormous benefits to our future," he added.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
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THE PHILIPPINE STAR
metro

EDITOR: PULCELA SAMONTE

SATURDAY | APRIL 30, 2022

Kalingin, by artist Jinggoy Luaneuseco, transforms the Cultural Center of the Philippines' front lawn into a burial forest with over 1,000 fiberglass kalingas (kings' rice gods). Burnt double and soil collected from all over the country will be placed across the lawn to symbolize nature's destruction. The installation, to be launched today, honors the Earth Month celebration and will be on view until May 31.
PHOTO: JINGGOY LUANEUSECO



Responsible mining

BY AARON RONQUILLO

MINING is one of the industries societies find essential. It is here that resources of the earth are tapped and in turn converted into materials we need in our daily lives ranging from batteries to machinery, and to some extent vanity since precious stones can only be obtained from mining.



PHOTOS FROM PIXABAY

If one were to look at a larger picture, the mining industry also contributes to the economy. In stating the obvious, it provides jobs and is one of those industries that help promote economic growth.

While countries and societies pursue economic prosperity, there is a tendency to overlook the drawback of mining – the negative impact it is making on the environment.

Climate change

One of the adverse effects of mining, which is caused by the consumption of fossil fuels from the use of machinery. This in turn releases greenhouse gases, which harms the planet's ozone layer and in turn causes unusual changes in the climate.

Pollution

Mining also contributes to pollution. Waste products or tailings from mining find their way to the ecosystem. Industrial waste has so polluted the oceans that they are becoming less alkaline (they acidified by 30 percent over the last few decades).

Lower ocean pH is already reducing the size and weight of oyster and crab shells and corals as calcium carbonate becomes less available. Slowing the pace of destruction is no longer adequate; the human economy must scale down to an earlier and safer state of environmental resilience by actively reversing damage as well as improving prevention.

Habitat destruction

Mining activities, especially those using open-pit mining techniques, and oil and gas development projects often require clearing large areas of land. It just so happens that the land being cleared is the natural habitation of plants and animals. The loss of these habitats contributed to the reduction of their population leading to their endangerment and to an extent, extinction.

At this point, would one consider mining to be totally harmful to the environment. However, there are those who believe a balance can be attained. It is possible to still allow mining but it has to be done responsibly to protect the environment.

Responsible mining

Why should mining become responsible? Two reasons are put forward. First, mining is apparently damaging communities and ecosystems. In the past, mining on a large scale was acceptable because the population was then smaller and land and water resources were vast. Back then, the human economy miniscule. Nowadays, the world has shifted and the natural world has become vulnerable and excessively crowded as the population increased. Energy and industrial activities have released enough carbon into the atmosphere to damage the climate.

Even as some mining companies begin to adopt some sustainable practices, certain forms of metal mining are intensifying social and environmental impacts because, as the price of gold and other metals soars, it becomes economical to exploit leaner ores in more remote places, such as tropical forests in developing countries, and in areas with weak governance. Mining entails excavating huge open pits, which may be abandoned after mining. Also abandoned are the commonly toxic and extensive tailings lagoons retained by impermanent dams, which often fail in severe weather. Open mining pits and tailings lagoons can remain risky for decades or longer. Therefore, it is important for the mining industry to be aware of the environment and the consequences it may bring.



Furthermore, mining is extractive in nature. Natural resources are depleted and cannot be replaced. The usual course of action to mitigate the adverse effects would be recycling and efficiency but this can only postpone exhaustion. This cannot guarantee or make mining sustainable.

Second, it is still possible for mining companies to profit big from responsible mining and at the same time without harming surrounding communities and with fewer impacts than irresponsible mining. Most would think that the environment is sacrificed and human resources are exploited in the name of profit. This is not the case if responsible mining is observed.

Mining companies often have a dialogue with the communities where they will conduct operations. They present both opportunities and risks to local residents, as well as other stakeholders like the government. They usually explain that mining can provide significant local employment, economic opportunity, and government revenue. It provides many basic materials for our generation and future generations. But because minerals are public assets, decisions about their exploitation must be transparent, participatory and subject to informed scrutiny by civil society. Problems arise from the gross asymmetry of power between rich and knowledgeable mining corporations and impacted people who are unprotected by weak governance. Responsible mining seeks to redress this imbalance.

Responsible mining is a relatively new concept, and it is something companies cannot immediately grasp as it may conflict with their

plans. Mining corporations are under pressure to meet their targets. In the process, contractors may cut corners, and the remoteness of sites limits government oversight. This then leads to the perennial problems that follow with mining.

As one may expect, responsible mining takes the position that any course of action should entail that mining operations should not damage life-support systems, namely the environment.

According to constitutionalist Christian S. Monsod, "Mining is an issue of social justice, because its impacts on agriculture, rivers and coasts are mostly borne by the poor." It is also an issue of intergenerational justice where the current generation is burdening the coming generations with expensive problems while bequeathing them fewer resources to cope.

Thus, mining operations should be designed to secure optimal net benefit for the citizens of the host country over the long term with the lowest social and environmental impact. Without such care, mining could become an example of privatizing benefits and socializing costs. In other words, mining can be considered responsible if the economic benefits can outweigh social and environmental costs, and if the mining industry will invest on sustainable projects.

Principles of responsible mining

Responsible mining adheres to a framework grounded on principles – social and environmental assessment; transparency vs. secrecy; acceptance by stakeholders; food production over questionable mining; compliance with international standards; qualifying potential mining permit seekers; insurance and performance bonds; and royalties, taxes and fees.

Having an objective social and environmental assessment is essential as it will serve as a starting point in designing a project consistent with responsible mining. This would mean conducting feasibility studies conducted by experts in the relevant fields. This would include environmental specialists (who may be an independent third party) who can help identify potential problems to allow solutions to be developed should they arise.

These assessments must not be kept secret, most especially to the stakeholders. Mining companies must publicly declare they will not tolerate any corruption or the like in doing business and everything will be transparent. This must also be conveyed to the communities where they will be conducting their operations. Citizens groups must also be involved. Simply allowing them to speak at public meetings has little value. Corporations should pay for citizen participation efforts but remain at arms-length in terms of influence on civil society.

Projects must get the approval of stakeholders. If they reject it, this must not push through. Stakeholders are not limited to the company's stockholders but also include mining company employees, local communities and residents where mining operations take place, and the government units that receive taxes, royalties and grant permits.

Ideally, responsible mining corporations must not impose themselves on people and communities who do not want them. They must not force the issue if this is the case. If the national interest, creation of many jobs and big net benefits will accrue to impacted communities, local, and national governments, then there may be a rare case to convince these potential stockholders of the benefits they stand to receive. Further, these benefits must outweigh the risks and costs in resources and the environment.

In doing so, mining companies must make sure they adhere to corporate social responsibility (CSR) to win over these potential stakeholders. What the latter



MINING FROM B4

would probably want from this "relationship" is less risks to the community and environment, employment and career growth in terms of job training.

While mining entails extracting resources in areas near communities, mining companies must ensure essential resources like water and food, are not affected by their operations. The welfare of people must take priority above everything else. People employed as miners must not be considered cheap while the minerals are seen as precious. Adequate safety regulations and living wages must be integrated into the cost-benefit analysis. Mining proponents often claim that people will benefit from mining because the royalties the company pays to the government will permit it to import foreign food. This "trickle down" theory of economics is not always true and not successful. Domestic agriculture, especially irrigation for food crops, must always be given priority over mining in water allocation. Companies cannot decide upon development priorities; that is the job of government. It is for this reason mining in areas of weak governance or in failed states is not advisable as it is prone to corruption and illegal practices. In such cases, companies may assume a development role, which brings with it many conflicts of interest.

In addition, "no-go" zones must be identified. These are considered the non-negotiables and mining companies must respect these areas where they cannot operate - cultural properties, biodiversity, habitats and wildlands, watersheds, and indigenous peoples reserves. Conflict areas are also considered for obvious reasons but during wars, this is sometimes exploited and provides room for illegal practices.

Mining companies are expected and must adhere to international

social and environmental agreements as well as the practices of corporate and social responsibility. Responsible corporations possess in-house environmental and social units staffed by seasoned social and environmental professionals, who will see to it that the corporation follows CSR. This seeks to ensure that the interests of all stakeholders about social and environmental impacts are met in corporate policies and projects. In a narrow sense, CSR means operating a business in a manner that accounts for the social and environmental impacts it creates. It is a form of voluntary corporate self-regulation such that the company actively complies with the not just the letter of the law but also its spirit, ethical standards, and international norms.

Responsible mining must involve responsible mining companies. As such, these companies must engage in a strict certification program. This certification should be funded by the payments from the mining corporation, and be entirely independent. National governments often mandate prequalification or certification of potential bidders on governmental work.

Insurance and performance bonds, mechanisms to ensure compliance with contractual obligations and to improve the quality of results, is expected to and should become standard in the mining industry. Bonds are in widespread use in the construction industries and elsewhere. The challenge is setting the insurance and bonds high enough to adequately cover accidents and noncompliance. Often, after a mine closure, a mining company may declare bankruptcy or be taken over by another company. If, some decades after a mine closes, a toxic waste lagoon ruptures, liability may not be clear. Reclamation bonds

are designed to finance clean-up and restoration if it is called for.

Like in any business, money is always involved. Responsible mining accurately assesses all relevant costs and benefits to ascertain whether the proposed mine will earn a significant net benefit. Net benefit is not limited to profits but may also include benefits and the like accruing to the corporation or government, minus the environmental and social impact to the impacted communities. Companies should publish what they pay to governments in royalties, taxes and fees as part of

being transparent. Countries need robust governance if they are to verify data on the volume and value of resources being extracted and exported. Estimating social and environmental costs is more difficult but unavoidable. If the affected people find that social and environmental costs outweigh the benefits, they have the right to call for the halting of the project until an agreement can be reached.

In conclusion, responsible mining can be achieved by ensuring that the benefits accruing to the potentially impacted people clearly exceed the costs

and impacts. This issue comes down to compensation and other payments from the mining proponent to the impacted people. Responsible mining is not limited to just the mining companies, but it also involves other stakeholders, most notably the communities concerned, as well as the government since it is the overseer. Societies cannot rely only on the good intentions of mining companies. These companies need the support and guidance from government. All parties involved must depend on each other to have smooth dynamics.



BBM: 180K plantilla positions vacant, while thousands of govt casuals suffer

NOTING the predicament of thousands of state workers who have been serving for the longest time without being given permanent status despite meeting qualifications, presidential frontrunner Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos, Jr. on Thursday said it's about time the government pays attention to their plight.

Many of these employees have spent the best years of their lives in public service and yet continued to be classified as contractual employees or job-order (JO) workers, he said.

Marcos pointed out that regularization is a major issue not just for the private sector, but it has long been a concern also for those working in the government, "because some of them are only hired through job orders or contracts of service for one reason or another."

Currently, there are around 600,000 to 700,000 JO workers in the government, even as there are about 180,000 "unfilled" plantilla positions.

"There are 180,000 unfilled plantillas, so let's fill them up first and we will strive to regularize the status of JO workers at the national and local government levels, given the funds available and what the law allows," Marcos said, partly in Filipino.

Many government JO workers, especially those with the local government units earn only around P10,000 per month without enjoying the benefits and other perks that come with being on permanent status.

The current minimum wage in Metro Manila is P537 per day, which is still comparatively low and could barely keep a family of five live decently, considering the high cost of living in the National Capital Region.

"Our minimum wage is low enough as it is, and yet there are those receiving lower than that, and what's sad is that they serve people as State workers," said Marcos.

He said he can not imagine "how our JO workers survive these days. We will fix that so that they and their families can enjoy some relief," he added.

Aside from lower salaries, casual and JO workers often do not receive benefits such as Christmas bonuses and 13th month pay that regular or permanent employees get.

Marcos said he intends to propose legislation that state workers who consistently receive "excellent performance evaluations" for at least three consecutive years be given the chance to be hired as permanents.

"If their record at work is good and they have consistent outstanding performance ratings, maybe they can be made regular even without the corresponding eligibility," said Marcos.

30 APRIL 2022, Saturday



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57.77% of places in PH under Alert Level 1 from May 1 to 15

By Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos April 29, 2022, 9:39 am



(PNA photo by Joey Razon)

MANILA – More than 50 percent of 1,634 total cities and municipalities nationwide have been included in the list of places that will be under the most lenient Alert Level 1 for the first half of May, Malacañang said Friday.

In a press statement, acting Presidential spokesperson and Communications Secretary Martin Andanar said Metro Manila is one of the places in the country that will remain under Alert Level 1 until May 15.

This, after the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) approved the new alert level classifications that will be implemented from May 1 to 15.

For Luzon, Abra, Apayao, Kalinga, Mountain Province, Baguio City, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Pangasinan, Dagupan City, Batanes, Cagayan, Isabela, Quirino, City of Santiago, Aurora, Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac, Zambales, Angeles City, Olongapo City, Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, Rizal, Lucena City, Marinduque, Oriental Mindoro, Romblon, Puerto Princesa City, Albay, Catanduanes, Naga City will stay under Alert Level 1.

The Alert Level 1 classification in Aklan, Capiz, Guimaras, Bacolod City, Iloilo City, Siquijor, Cebu City, Lapu-Lapu City, Mandaue City, Biliran, Eastern Samar, Southern Leyte, Ormoc City, and Tacloban City has also been retained.

The Iloilo province has been added to the roster of areas in the Visayas that will be put under Alert Level 1 from May 1 to 15.

In Mindanao, the places that will stay under Alert Level 1 include Zamboanga City, Camiguin, Bukidnon, Misamis Oriental, Cagayan de Oro City, Iligan City, Davao City, and Surigao del Sur and Butuan City.



57.77% of places in PH under Alert Level 1 from May 1 to 15

The following component cities and municipalities will also be placed under Alert Level 1 from May 1 to 15:

- *Cordillera Administrative Region: Tublay, Benguet
- *Region 4-A: Candelaria, Quezon; Dolores, Quezon; and San Antonio, Quezon
- *Region 4-B: Cagayancillo, Palawan
- *Region 5: Caramoan, Pili, and Tigaon, Camarines Sur; and Capalonga, Camarines Norte.
- *Region 6: Candoni, Negros Occidental and Tobias Fornier (Dao), Antique
- *Region 7: Amlan (Ayuquitan), Negros Oriental and Duero, Bohol
- *Region 8: Matalom, Leyte.
- *Region 9: Jose Dalman (Ponot) and Labason, Zamboanga del Norte; Molave and Ramon Magsaysay (Liargo) Zamboanga del Sur; and Buug, Zamboanga Sibugay
- *Region 10: Tudela, Misamis Occidental; Baroy, Lanao del Norte; Lala, Lanao del Norte; and Tubod, Lanao del Norte
- *Region 11: Caraga, Davao Oriental
- *Region 12: City of Koronadal, South Cotabato; Arakan, North Cotabato; and Lebak, Sultan Kudarat
- *CARAGA: Kitcharao, Agusan del Norte; Santa Josefa, Agusan del Sur; Libjo (Albor), Dinagat Islands; and General Luna, Surigao del Norte;
- *Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM, South Upi, Maguindanao and Turtle Islands, Tawi-Tawi.

The provinces, highly urbanized cities (HUCs), and independent component cities (ICCs) that will be placed under Alert Level 2 are as follows:

- *Cordillera Administrative Region: Benguet, Ifugao
- *Region 2: Nueva Vizcaya
- *Region 4-A: Quezon Province
- *Region 4-B: Occidental Mindoro and Palawan
- *Region 5: Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Masbate, and Sorsogon
- *Region 6: Antique and Negros Occidental
- *Region 7: Bohol, Cebu, and Negros Oriental
- *Region 8: Leyte, Northern Samar and Western Samar
- *Region 9: City of Isabela, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga Sibugay
- *Region 10: Lanao del Norte and Misamis Occidental
- *Region 11: Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Davao Oriental, Davao de Oro and Davao Occidental
- *Region 12: General Santos City, North Cotabato, Sarangani, Sultan Kudarat and South Cotabato
- *CARAGA: Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Dinagat Islands and Surigao del Norte
- *BARMM: Basilan, Cotabato City, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

Andanar said Alert Level 2 in the provinces, HUCs, and ICCs is without prejudice to their respective component cities and municipalities which may be under a different alert level classification from May 1 to 15.



57.77% of places in PH under Alert Level 1 from May 1 to 15

"Alert Level classifications of component cities and municipalities under IATF Resolution No. 166-A (s.2022) not otherwise affected by this Resolution shall remain in effect until May 15, 2022," he added.

According to the IATF-EID Secretariat, around 77 provinces, HUCs, and ICC are under Alert Level 1.

Around 57.77 percent or 944 of 1,634 total cities and municipalities are under Alert Level 1. (PNA)

Omicron subvariant BA.2.3 logs highest cases in PH: PGC

By Ma. Teresa Montemayor April 29, 2022, 4:40 pm



MANILA – The Omicron subvariant BA.2.3 logged the highest cases of Covid-19 in the country, the Philippine Genome Center (PGC) said Friday.

In a televised public briefing, PGC Executive Director Dr. Cynthia Saloma said the subvariant BA.2.3 cases were the highest from December 2021 to the present, comprising 95 percent of the cases recorded for the months of March and April.

"As you have noticed *po*, *masyado mababa 'yung ating mga kaso, kaya kaunti rin po ang mga samples ang sina-submit din sa atin sa PGC* (the cases are low so few cases are submitted to us at the PGC)," Saloma said.

She added that there are a number of Delta variant sequences in other regions but only four cases have been detected for the month of March and April.

The only subvariant BA.2.12 case detected in the country was that of the 52-year-old Finnish woman. No onward transmission was detected.

The subvariant BA.2.12 has a transmission advantage of 10 percent in other countries which has spread in Europe and not in its country of origin - Canada.

In the latest run of whole-genome sequencing, about 83 persons or 63 percent of the 132 sequenced samples had an Omicron variant.

The 83 samples were from 10 regions and one foreign national.

Of the remaining 49 samples - four were Delta cases, all from Region 11 and the other 45 had no lineage assigned. (PNA)

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1173324>

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