

11-23-19

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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



SUSTAINABILITY

SMC ROLLS OUT PH'S FIRST 'RECYCLED PLASTICS ROAD'

Conglomerate San Miguel Corp. has taken another major step in the area of sustainability, by laying the first recycled plastics road in the Philippines.

Asphalt using plastics were laid on a 1,500-square meter pilot test site at a new logistics center in General Trias, Cavite. The test site was chosen as it would be used primarily as a marshalling area for trucks with heavy loads, including 18-wheelers, and heavy equipment.

SMC president Ramon S. Ang said: "What we want to achieve is to help address an important environmental issue,

and that is plastic wastes. We want to create a sustainable use for waste plastics so that they don't end up in landfills and our rivers and oceans."

Some 900 kilos of plastic waste, equivalent to some 180,000 sachets and plastic bags, were used for the test site.

SMC's technology partner, global materials science company Dow, said that recycled plastic waste acted as a binder together with bitumen, in the production of asphalt.

The company said that using recycled plastics in the production process could help make roads longer lasting and more

durable compared to conventional asphalt.

Independent lab testing done on San Miguel's recycled plastics road asphalt showed that it exceeded the standards of the Department of Public Works and Highways.

The company said that pending further testing, it could build recycled plastics roads in its facilities as well as major infrastructure projects.

Last week, San Miguel also announced that it was adopting the use of biodegradable plastics for food and non-food products.

For this, the company is us-

ing the biodegradable plastics developed by Philippine Biioresins Corp. that can be 64.65 percent degraded in 24 months as compared to non-biodegradable plastics (4.5 percent in 24 months).

The Department of Science and Technology Industrial Technology Development Institute gave this innovation an Environmental Technology Verification certificate.

San Miguel has also discontinued its bottled water business a few years ago and embarked on the move to reduce group-wide non-product water use by 50 percent by 2025.



SMC rolls out plastic roads

Conglomerate San Miguel Corp. (SMC) is targeting two birds with one stone with the start of its project to build plastic roads through a tie up with US giant Dow Chemical that it expects to result to a cheaper alternative to traditional cement while also contributing to efforts to clean the environment.

The technology SMC is using involves the recycling of plastic waste that ends up in the ocean as raw material.

SMC used the technology to manufacture asphalt using plastics on a 1,500-square meter pilot test site at a new logistics center in General Trias, Cavite.

The test site was chosen as it will be used primarily as a marshalling area for trucks with

Only 10 percent of manufactured plastic are recycled annually while eight million tons end up in the ocean, with most of the world's ocean plastics originating in Asia

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"What we want to achieve is to help address an important environmental issue, and that is plastic wastes. We want to create a sustainable use for waste plastics, so that they don't end up in landfills and our rivers and oceans," SMC president Ramon S. Ang said.

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Dow said only 10 percent of manufactured plastic are recycled annually, while eight million tons end up in the ocean, with most of the world's ocean plastics originating from Asia.

"Developing roads using plastics that would have otherwise ended up in landfills or our bodies of water is an environment-friendly method of disposing of scrap plastics," Ang noted.

He added the project serves a dual purpose in that it helps the environment and at the same time improves the quality of infrastructure.

Tougher material

Dow said recycled plastic waste acts as a binder together with bitumen, in the production of asphalt.

The company said using recycled plastics in the production process can help make roads last longer compared to conventional asphalt.

Independent lab testing showed that plastics-based asphalt exceeds the durability standards of the Department of Public Works and Highways.

Pending further testing, SMC said it can build recycled plastics roads in its facilities, as well as major infrastructure projects that it will undertake.

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Dow focuses on Asia

Dow said in a statement it has been collaborating with governments and corporations in Asia to transform "marine debris" into new, durable "plastic roads."

"We're throwing all our weight behind the crisis of plastic waste to help reduce the amount of plastics that

end up in oceans, landfills, streets and rivers," it noted.

At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in December 2017, plastics contamination was recognized as a planetary issue threatening much of the world's marine ecology.

Dow said the technology it employs links the reuse of plastic waste with the need for new road construction to create polymer-modified asphalt.

"To construct these roads, plastic waste is first collected. Volunteers pick through debris, which is taken to local recyclers who process the material. The plastics are then finely ground before being mixed into the asphalt modification technology," it noted.

"In addition to keeping tons of plastic out of the ocean that might take hundreds of years to decompose, roads following this process are more durable and generate less greenhouse gas emissions by replacing nearly 10 percent of bitumen that would be used in road asphalt," according to Dow.



PH's first recycled plastics road debuts

CONGLOMERATE San Miguel Corp. (SMC) has struck another major blow for sustainability by laying the first recycled plastics road in the Philippines.

Asphalt using plastics was laid recently on a 1,500-square meter pilot test site at the SMC facility new logistics center in General Trias, Cavite.

The test site was chosen, as it will be used primarily as a marshalling area for trucks with heavy loads, including 18-wheelers and heavy equipment.

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FREDERICK SILVERIO



El Nido rehab on track

The tourism industry of El Nido has been thriving for so long, so I'm happy to see this progress in the sewage and solid waste management facilities

The Department of Tourism (DoT) on Friday expressed satisfaction over the ongoing rehabilitation of the island-paradise of El Nido in Palawan.

During the launching of "Save Our Spots" (SOS) movement, DOT Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat was elated over the progress of the rehabilitation efforts jointly by the DoT, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG).

Puyat particularly cited the building of a sewage and solid waste treatment plant.

She also noted that owners of

structures violating the proper easement zones along the shorelines are already self-demolishing their buildings.

"The tourism industry of El Nido has been thriving for so long, so I'm happy to see this progress in the sewage and solid waste management facilities," Puyat said.

"We want our tourists to feel clean and safe when they visit our country," she added.

Puyat stressed that in all tourism sites, sewage and solid waste treatment plants and other infrastructures are needed to secure the welfare of the environment and the industry in the years ahead.

In 2018, the rehabilitation of El Nido was initiated due to unsustainable tourism practices and ecological degradation, thereby enjoining stakeholders to implement the laws and undertake immediate recourse to save the tourist spot from further deterioration.

Apart from El Nido, the DoT, DENR and DILG have also launched initiatives to instill sustainable tourism development in Boracay Island, Cebu, Coron Island, Davao City, Panglao Island in Bohol, Samal Island, Siargao and Siquijor.

Noting that many Filipinos rely on tourism for livelihood and business

opportunities, the DoT looks into three major indicators to attain this vision, namely, the enforcement of national laws and local ordinances; the investments on local infrastructures and facilities, and the private sector engagement.

"A lot of travelers are now looking at the Philippines because of the thrust for sustainable tourism. Our tourists now are more mindful – they choose to go to a place where they know that environmental laws are in place, and that we take care of the environment to make tourist spots very clean and safe to enjoy," Puyat said.

MJM @tribunephil_mjm



Water-critical Phl areas identified

The government is implementing a groundwater management plan to ensure sustainable water resources for future generations, as the list of areas in the Philippines that are running out of water is growing, according to an official of the National Water Resources Board (NWRB).

The plan for water sustainability, she said, seeks to establish systematic and scientific management strategies for groundwater allocation as well as provide information for prioritizing aquifers.

Susan Abaño, an engineer and chief of the policy and program

division of NWRB, said several critical areas where water is running out have been identified. These include Metro Manila, Metro Cebu, Iloilo, Cavite, Angeles City and Mabalacat City, Baguio City, Bacolod City, Zamboanga City, Tagbilaran City and Batangas City.

Abaño, during a presentation at a forum on cities of the future, said these are not the only places where water is growing scarce, as more are expected to join the list. Given this, a groundwater management plan is being implemented for these "water-stressed areas," she added.

The plan for water sustainability, she said, seeks to establish systematic and scientific management strategies for groundwater allocation as well as provide information for prioritizing

aquifers, which are underground layers of rock that hold groundwater that can be drained by man-made wells.

It also calls for preparing groundwater vulnerability assessment maps to show where the areas prone to pollution are, said Abaño. This is so that gasoline stations, sewerage treatment plants and other polluting establishments can be prohibited in those places where the groundwater can become polluted.

It likewise demands designing a groundwater monitoring network to monitor water quality and quantity of the aquifers. Also part of the plan is developing a groundwater management plan for a study area that considers integrated water resources management

and future impacts of climate change. Results of the project will then be used as basis for policy, planning, programming and project implementation.

Most importantly, Abaño said, the NWRB is continuing to manage the allocation of Angat Dam, which is the main source of water supply for Metro Manila, home to 15 million people.

Short-term measures taken by the NWRB to manage levels at Angat include the following: allowed the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System to continue activating existing deep wells and establishing new wells to serve as standby water source; reactivated deep wells for vital services such as those for hospital use and firefighting purposes.



Lack of investors delaying Silangan mining project

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

BAGUIO CITY – The difficulty in getting investors due to the current regulatory climate is seen to delay the \$750-million Silangan copper and gold project, one of the biggest mining investments in the country.

Pangilinan-led Philex Mining Corp. admitted that it is having a hard time getting investors for the Silangan mine even if it has started the groundwork and has shifted to underground sub-level cave mining method.

On the sidelines of the 66th Annual National Mine Safety Environment Conference organized by the Philippine Mine Safety and Environment Association, Philex president and chief executive officer Eulalio Austin said Philex needs to raise at least \$350 million by first half of 2020 to get on track with the project.

"As of the moment, we don't have fixed investors for the project yet. There are some issues being raised because of the regulatory environment, but we are trying to convince them that Silangan is a different story," Austin told reporters.

"Some investors are telling us that the project is too small for them and the other one is the current climate wherein government is lukewarm to the mining industry. These are some of the feedbacks we are getting," he said.

The Silangan mine is a large-scale high grade copper-gold development, with a number of greenfield and brownfield components, located in Surigao del Norte. It is one of three big-ticket mining projects seen to propel the Philippines as a major regional copper producer.

Philex plans to raise \$350 million in equity and the balance of \$400 million can be raised through loans.

Austin said clear-cut rules or policy regulations would help them secure investors.

There are still mining tax proposals that are pending under the second package of the government's tax reform program.

Under the first package, the excise tax has already been doubled to four percent.

This includes imposing a differentiated royalty for mines inside and outside mineral reservations, windfall profit tax based on profit margin, and registering small-scale mining with the Mining Board and Mines and Geosciences Bureau, among others.

"We support the increase in taxes, but it should be some sort of equitable because the mining industry is so dependent on metal prices that's why we are proposing tax measures that are linked also to metal prices and margins," Austin said.

"The tax regime should be structured in such a way that they take into account the volatile metal prices," he said.

Austin said Philex should be able to bring in Silangan before Padcal mine in Benguet seizes operations by 2022.

Turn to B3

Silangan will be developed in phases with the Boyongan deposit to be fully developed within two and a half years. It is expected to commence commercial production by the second half of 2022.

The first phase of the Boyongan deposit has an initial estimated mine life of 22 years. For the initial stage, Silangan is projected to yield high grade mineable ore grades of 0.63 percent for copper and 1.20 grams per MT for gold.

The second phase, which will be comprised of the Bayugo deposit, is scheduled to undergo preliminary feasibility study for underground sub-level cave mining within the year.



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GREEN STRATEGIES

BSP BATS FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE BANKING

By Daxim L. Lucas
@daxINQ

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is moving toward regulation that will encourage financial institutions to adopt "green strategies" by rewarding lending to undertakings that are environmentally sustainable while penalizing those that are not.

Thus explained the country's chief financial regulator speaking in the recent 2nd Annual National Business Climate Action Summit in Pasay City, where the role of the financial community in achieving a climate-resilient Philippine economy was highlighted.

"The BSP has a role to play in the process," Governor Benjamin Diokno said in his speech. "We have rolled out a two-pronged approach in promoting environmental, social and gov-

ernance principles."

The first is through capacity building and awareness campaign, and second is by mainstreaming these environmental principles through the issuance of enabling regulations.

"We deem that this approach will increase the BSP's and the banks' understanding of the risks posed by environment degradation and climate change on the financial sector, enhance capacity to manage these risks, and increase banks' awareness on the investment opportunities for green or sustainable projects before issuing regulatory expectations on sustainable finance," he said.

Operationally, the BSP is already undertaking pockets of activities related to green practices. It recently participated in the open-ended green bond fund launched by the Bank for

International Settlements as part of sustainable investing in reserve management.

On the regulatory pathway, Diokno said the BSP believed that the optimal approach remained to be one that was "enabling"—one that would provide ample flexibility, sensitive to risk-appetite and business models, and proportionate to the banks' size, structure and complexity of their operations.

"This approach aims to shift perspectives from a myopic compliance exercise to a forward looking stance that puts greater weight on the long term financial interest and sustainability of the organization," he said.

Following this approach, the BSP will be issuing environmental-related regulations in phases. The first phase will provide high level principles and broad

expectations on the integration of environmental and sustainability principles in the corporate and risk governance frameworks as well as in the business strategies and operations of banks.

The second phase will provide more granular expectations in managing climate change and other environment-related risks in relation to credit, market, liquidity, and operational risks. The third phase may cover potential regulatory incentives.

"Climate change and environmental challenges can pose risks on the stability of the financial system," Diokno said.

"A whole-of-country approach is basic and necessary to address such risk and scale up promotion of green or sustainable finance." INQ



Forest projects eyed for climate change commitments

More than two dozen countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America are set to benefit from a United Nations (UN) project to help tackle climate change through better forestry management.

Under the scheme, announced by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 26 nations will soon be able to provide improved data on forest and land use — a key pledge of all state signatories to the Paris Climate Agreement.

Accurate monitoring of forest and land use is essential if countries are to track progress towards the sustainability goals as they adopt climate change-mitigation and adaptation measures, FAO explained.

“Forests are more than trees and fundamental for food security and improved livelihoods,” FAO said in a statement.

“They contribute to resilience of communities by regulating water flows, providing food, wood

energy, shelter, fodder and fiber, generate income and employment as well as harbor biodiversity. Furthermore, forests support sustainable agriculture and human wellbeing by stabilizing soils and climate.”

Forests are more than trees and fundamental for food security and improved livelihoods.

The \$7.1 million initiative is being implemented by FAO and national officers, who already support 70 countries with forest-monitoring to ensure more sustainable land management.

The data gathered on the status of the world's forest resources is available via FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA 2020) reporting platform.

Welcoming the launch of the project, Hiroto Mitsugi, from the agency's Forestry Department, explained that many developing countries are unable to generate reliable forest data to highlight their “climate achievements.”

“This project will provide an essential platform for more transparent forest-related data, helping countries to compile, analyze and disseminate better data in line with the Paris Agreement's requirements,” he said.

In concrete terms, the scheme will support an e-learning course on transparency in the forest sector for national forestry staff and the course will also be made

available more widely, to universities, the private sector and intergovernmental organizations, FAO said.

To date, 187 parties have ratified the agreement, out of 197 parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The United States formally announced its withdrawal just last week.

The agreement's central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping global temperature rise this century to well below two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Countries are also expected to pursue efforts to limit the planet's temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius and invest in ways to strengthen their ability to deal with the impacts of climate change.

All parties to the agreement are also required to implement “nationally determined contributions” and to strengthen these efforts in the years ahead.

This includes requirements that all parties report regularly on their emissions and on their implementation efforts and participate in a global stock take every five years to assess progress.



PAPUA New Guinea's rare cloud forests are high-elevation rainforests characterized by low-level cloud cover. UN PHOTO





Geoengineering 'false solution' to climate crisis

AS THE climate crisis continues to worsen despite warnings by experts, a new potential solution is emerging in international dialogues. Geoengineering, or large-scale man-made interventions to the Earth's atmosphere, oceans and soils, aims to either reduce carbon dioxide from the environment or regulate sunlight reaching the surface. However, advocates consider geoengineering a false solution to the climate crisis.

"None of the technologies have a track record. All of them come with major risks and unknowns, and in some cases, the effects would be obviously catastrophic," said Niki Miranda-Martinez, coordinator of the Hands Off Mother Earth campaign, an international collaboration of nongovernment organizations.

Martinez added that if deployed, geoengineering technologies "are highly likely to worsen rather than mitigate the impacts of global warming." This would have significant consequences for the Philippines, one of the most vulnerable countries to the climate crisis.

She also said geoengineering requires the intensive exploitation of vast amounts of resources on land and oceans. These projects "would inevitably displace millions of people and potentially wipe out entire ecosystems" and "could redirect funding and

investments away from real climate solutions."

The Philippine context

There have been a few attempts at geoengineering in the Philippines. In 2007, the Australia-based Ocean Nourishment Co. (ONC) proposed to dump 500 tons of urea into the Sulu Sea. Urea, an organic compound made from ammonia and carbon dioxide, is supposed to stimulate the growth of phytoplanktons in the oceans, which could absorb more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

However, this project was opposed by local communities and environmental organizations. The University of the Philippines-Marine Science Institute stated then that "the impacts of large-scale ocean nourishment or artificial fertilization on the environment cannot be predicted at the present time with an acceptable level of certainty."

Specifically, the artificial fertilization could disrupt marine ecosystems in an area home to key biodiversity sites, including Tubataha Reef. It could also cause harmful algal blooms or red tides, and even release more greenhouse gases into the environment.

The World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) Philippines also criticized the proposed project, as it could adversely affect the seaweed farms in the southern Philippines and deprive

millions of people of their livelihood and food source.

Prior to this, ONC dumped a ton of urea off the coast of Antique, a move the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said they did not permit. These criticisms caused the ONC to call off the ocean fertilization project.

Currently, the US-based Climate Foundation (TCF) is proposing an artificial upwelling of the waters near Bohol by 2020. This technology aims to bring nutrient-rich waters up from deep in the oceans into the surface using giant sea pumps. Similar to ocean fertilization, it aims to absorb more carbon dioxide from the oceans, stimulate phytoplankton growth, and enhance fish production.

TCF also claims the project would help about 2,000 local farmers improve their red seaweed production. It also has deployed wave- and solar-powered deepwater pumps in the country.

However, Martinez questioned the lack of publicly available information regarding the project. "We know nothing about the logistics of this experiment and this is one of the things that we are trying to find out," she said.

Martinez added the public deserves to know "whether TCF has indeed secured a permit, where they are operating, what the scale of their experiment is, and any

other information about the endeavor."

True solutions

Ultimately, geoengineering schemes are a "band-aid" fix designed to preserve the current economic systems that benefit capitalists and fossil fuel companies, according to Martinez. "High-risk technofixes are proposed so that some can survive while preserving their privileges, even if it implies a whole series of new environmental and social threats for millions of other people," she said.

Martinez added governments and businesses should focus on funding and implementing true solutions to the climate crisis, including ecosystems-based adaptation measures and enhancing natural carbon sinks such as forests. "We need real solutions that are inclusive, holistic and safe; geoengineering is none of these. We need are deep transformations and radical systems change," she said.

As geoengineering remains a largely unfamiliar topic in the Philippines, she called for a more careful information dissemination process from policy makers to grassroots communities, as "it is very complicated and it takes time for people to truly understand how troublesome it is for our world should these technologies run its full course."

JOHN LEO ALGO



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ACROSS THE COUNTRY

DENR-Caraga land investigator shot dead

BUTUAN CITY – A land investigator of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Caraga was gunned down in Bislig City, Surigao del Sur on Thursday night.

Joash Peregrino, 36, was parking his Honda Fit in front of a commercial establishment along Espiritu street when he was shot at close range by motorcycle-riding assailants at around 6:15 p.m., Lt. Col. Zaldy Abellera, Bislig police acting chief, said.

Peregrino was pronounced dead on arrival at the Andres Soriano Memorial Hospital.

Probers said the killing could be work-related.

– Ben Serrano



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Kawani ng DENR-Surigao, binoga malapit sa opisina

SURIGAO – Patay ang isang kawani ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources sa Surigao matapos na pagbabarilin ng hindi pa nakikilalang salarin.

Kinilala ang biktimang si Joash Peregrino, Special investigator ng Community Environment and Natural Resources Office sa bayan ng Bislig.

Kabilang din sa trabaho ni

Peregrino ang pangangalaga sa kagubatan sa lugar.

Ayon kay DENR Regional Executive Director Felix S. Alicer, binaril si Peregrino sa hindi kalayuag tindahan mula sa DENR Office.

Patuloy nang iniimbestigahan ng pulisya ang nangyari para mapanagot ang nasa likod ng krimen at malaman ang motibo sa pagpaslang.



Kawani ng DENR-Surigao, itinumba malapit sa opisina

PATAY ang isang special land investigator ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources sa Surigao Del Sur matapos pagbabarilin ng hindi pakilalang salarin kamakalawa ng gabi,

Kinilala ng Bislig City Po-

lice ang biktimang si Joash Peregrino, residente ng Barangay Maharlika at empleyado ng Community Environment and Natural Resources Office sa Bislig.

Ayon sa report ng pulisya, binari si Peregrino, bandang 6:15 p.m. sa harap ng G-Mar Commercial sa Espiritu St., Brgy. Mangagoy. Pauwi na ang biktima, kasama ang asawa na nagdesisyon dumaan sa convenience store.

Nang maiwan mag-isa ang biktima sa sasakyan ay dito na siya nilapitan at pinagbabaril ng salarin.

Isinugod ng mga concerned citizen ang biktima sa

Soriano's Hospital Mangagoy sa Bislig City pero binawian din ng buhay.

Ayon kay DENR-13 Information Officer Herzon Gallego, si Peregrino ang humahawak sa lahat ng land conflicts at issues sa lugar na sakop ng kanilang hurisdiksyon tulad ng munisipalidad ng Tagbina, Hinatuan at Lingig, Surigao del Sur.

Pinaniniwalaan ni Gallego na may koneksyon sa kanyang trabaho ang pagkakatay sa biktima.

Kabilang din sa trabaho ni Peregrino ang pangangalaga sa kagubatan sa lalawigan.

REMATE.PH



DENR employee gunned down

BUTUAN CITY – A special land investigator of the Bislig City Community Environment and Natural Resources Office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources was shot dead in Bislig City Thursday.

A flash report reaching the Police Regional Office 13 headquarters in Camp Col. Rafael C. Rodriguez here identified the victim as Joash "Jog-jog" I. Peregrino, 36.

Initial investigation conducted by the Bislig City police station disclosed that the victim was inside his Gray Honda Fit car, with license plates MFM-248, waiting for his wife, also a DENR-CENRO employee, who was buying some goods

from a commercial store on Espiritu St., Barangay Mangagoy, when two men on board a motorcycle arrived at around 6:15 p.m.

One of them drew a gun and shot the victim twice at close range.

The suspects fled towards Barangay Mangagoy proper while the victim was taken to Andres Soriano Memorial Hospital also in Bislig where he was pronounced dead.

Found in the crime scene were two empty shells of caliber .45 pistol and one deformed slug.

The Bislig police are conducting city-wide manhunt against the suspects. Motive of the incident is yet to be determined. **(Mike Crismundo)**



JOASH 'Jog-jog' I. Peregrino, SLI of the Bislig City DENR-CENRO, is slumped on the steering wheel of his car after he was gunned down on Espiritu St., Barangay Mangagoy, Bislig City. (Photo courtesy of DENR-RPAO Erik Gallego)