

10 MAR 2019

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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



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Beach bikes, not bods

By Miguel Paulo Togonon

With the bike patrol already on duty, can the public expect any Baywatch-worthy beach bodies to be sighted at the Manila Bay?

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) yesterday launched the Manila Bay Watch bike patrol, with an initial deployment of six bicycles and riders to be on the prowl against polluters.

DENR patrol on two wheels to sweep for polluters, swimmers.

Jacquelyn Caancan, executive director of the DENR's National Capital Region Office, said the bike patrollers are employees of the agency who will pedal from the US Embassy to the Manila Yacht Club.

The bike patrollers will ensure the cleanliness and orderliness of the beachside by going after those who will be found violating environmental laws and ordinances.

The Manila Bay Watch is the first program of the west field office of DENR-NCR which had been divided into four offices to focus on the problems related to rehabilitating Manila Bay.

The government launched last January the Manila Bay clean-up drive with drastic changes expected within six months.

The west field office is already operational and it has jurisdiction over Manila, Pasay, Mandaluyong, Makati and San Juan.

The riders will also stop those who will defy the swimming ban in the waters of Manila Bay found to have high concentration of coliform bacteria which pose health risks to people.

With the swimming ban, there's hardly any need for Baywatch-like made-for-TV lifeguards with abs to watch.



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LUMAHOK ang mga kababaihan, kasama ang iba't ibang grupo ng LGUs sa paglilinis ng Manila Bay kaugnay sa pagdiriwang ng Buwan ng Kababaihan. **Kuha ni NORMAN ARAGA**

MANILA BAY WATCH PATROL INILUNSDAD

INILUNSDAD ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang Manila Bay Watch Bike Patrol sa Baywalk sa lungsod ng Maynila bilang bahagi ng isinasagawang rehabilitasyon dito.

Ayon kay DENR National Capital Region Executive Director Jacquelyn Caancan, anim na bisikleta ang gagamitin ng mga patroller na empleyado rin ng ahen-siya.

Magpapatrolya ang mga ito sa kahabaan ng

baywalk mula sa bahagi ng US Embassy hanggang Manila Yacht Club para matiyak ang kalinisan at kaayusan sa lugar.

Dagdag ni Caancan, maaaring gawing sumbungan ang mga bike patroller ng publiko kung

may reklamong may kaugnayan sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay.

Sisitahin din ng mga ito ang mga lumalabag sa umiiral na ordinansa sa lugar tulad ng pagtatapon ng basura kung saan-saan at paglangoy sa Manila Bay. **DWIZ882**



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Manila Bay Watch bike patrol inilunsad

INILUNSAD ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang Manila Bay Watch bike patrol sa baywalk sa Maynila kahapon ng umaga.

Anim na bisikleta ang gagamitin sa programa na parte ng Manila Bay rehabilitation.

Ayon kay Jacquelyn Caancan, executive director ng DENR-National Capital Region (NCR), ang mga bike patroller ay empleyado ng ahensiya na magpapatrolya at roronda sa Baywalk mula sa US Embassy hanggang Ma-

nila Yacht Club.

Titiyakin ng bike patrollers ang kalinisan at kaayusan sa Baywalk. Sisitahin din nila ang mga lumalabag sa mga ordinansa gaya ng pagtapon ng basura kung saan-saan at paglangoy sa Manila Bay.

Magiging sumbungan din ang mga bike patroller. Puwedeng lumapit ang mga tao kung may reklamo o sumbong ukol sa kalikasan o sa Manila Bay rehabilitation.

Ang paglulunsad ng Manila Bay Watch ay ang unang programa ng bagong DENR-NCR West Field office.

Dati, isang opisina lang ang buong DENR-NCR. Ngayon, hinati na ito sa apat para matutukan ang mga problemang pangkalikasan katulad ng Manila Bay rehabilitation.

Ang West Field office pa lang ang operational at sakop nito ang lungsod ng Maynila, Pasay, Mandaluyong, Makati, at San Juan.

Noong Enero, naglunsad ang gobyerno ng rehabilitasyon sa Manila Bay, kung saan matagal nang problema ang maruming tubig at basura sa baybayin. **SANTI CELARIO**



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Bike patrol sa Manila Bay bubuhayin

NAKATAKDANG buhayin ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources ang bike patrol sa Manila Bay.

Tatawaging Manila Bay Watch, anim na tauhan ng DENR-National Capital Region ang magbabantay sa kahabaan ng Baywalk mula sa Manila Yacht Club hanggang sa US Embassy, ani DENR-NCR executive

director Jacquelyn Caanan.

Bahagi ng tungkulin ng bike patrol na tiyaking hindi nalalabag ang ordinansa ng lungsod laban sa pagtatapon ng basura at paliligo sa Manila Bay.

Ang mga bike patroller din ang magiging sumbungan ng mga tao sa anumang reklamo na may kinalaman sa look.

— *Radyo Inquirer*



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BAYWALK PATROL The Department of Environment and Natural Resources' group of bikers called Manila Bay Watch Bike Patrollers join the bike ride on Saturday to guard the baywalk from littering civilians as it undergoes rehabilitation. PHOTO BY RUSSELL PALMA



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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Balita

ANG NANGUNGUNANG PAHAYAGANG TAGALOG SA BANGSA



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MANILA BAY WATCH Inaayos ng volunteer ang mga bisikletang gagamitin ng mga magbabantay sa Manila Bay, sa Roxas Boulevard sa Maynila, sa paglulunsad kahapon ng Manila Baywatch Bike Patrollers ng DENR. Tututukan ng mga bay watchers ang mga nagkakatat, lumalangoy, at iba pang pasaway na nakapeperhuwiso sa rehabilitasyon ng lawa.

MARK BALMORES



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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Pormal nang inilunsad ka-hapon ng DENR ang kanilang Baywalk Patrol na siyang magbabantay sa baybayin ng Manila Bay at inatasanang manghuli sa mga magkakalat kasabay nang isinasagawang rehabilitasyon dito. (Kuha ni Edd Gumban)





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SEWAGE CAMERA. Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu and Public Works Secretary Mark Villar (with helmets and vests) inspect two remote-operated sewage inspection cameras that will be used to detect the amount of trash passing sewers at the start of the desilting and dredging of 100 meters of the Manila Bay seawall between the US Embassy and the Manila Yacht Club on Tuesday. **Norman Cruz**



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THE EXHIBIT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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BAY MEETS GIRL

And hope floats

“

I just saw. That's the only way I can describe it. I just saw. It's hard to express in words. It's awe. I just clicked. This is what people deserve.

”



GENUINE LOVE Although she didn't intend it, Liana's video (left) gave Pinoys hope



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



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By **DOM GALEON**
IMAGES BY **NOEL PABALATE**

You've probably seen it by now. A video uploaded on Facebook showing an American girl somewhere along Manila Bay. "I never thought I would live to see the day I'm standing on the edge of Manila Bay, on the actual sand!" the girl says in the *selfie* video.

"Previously, for weeks and weeks and months, I've been walking by here every day and this whole area was full of trash—full of trash, not only on the sand but all the way to the water. Everyone here is enjoying the view, enjoying the sand, taking *selfies*, as Filipinos are known to do," she continues.

And then she begins to choke, holding back tears that were slowly filling her eyes, as she says, "Filipinos deserve better. This is what they deserve. I'm very inspired by what I'm seeing right now."

That girl is Liana Meyer, an American who has been in the Philippines since 2012. But she first came to the country as a tourist, back in 2009 and then again in 2011. Working for USAID for five years, she is no stranger to Manila Bay. Every day, she would see the bay when she commutes to her office from her condo near Malate. She would often walk home, too, occasionally glancing at the beautiful sunset on the bay's horizon.

"I feel like the bay has a personality," Liana says. "I don't know if you've ever heard that before, but for me, it has a personality. The sunsets are different every day. Sometimes, like right before it rains, it's epic—nature really shows its force, with these crazy clouds, the waves. Nature is really awesome, right? And I just always felt that this bay has a personality."

Before posting that *selfie* video, Liana had never really been publicly active in social media. Her posts were all private, meant only for her friends and her family in the US. It was a Filipina friend who asked her to make her Manila Bay video public and shareable. The results surprised her. The video became viral, getting nearly 30,000 thumbs-ups, hearts, and wows, and shared by almost 40,000 people on Facebook.

Liana says she's never really done anything like that before, and she definitely does not consider herself to be an influencer or an internet sensation. She was touched by the appreciation of Filipinos who would comment on her post, saying things like "Thank you for loving our nation," "Nakaka-proud naman. yung foreigner na to," or simply "Thank you, Miss Liana."

And it all started because she decided to take a stroll along a newly cleaned portion of Manila Bay, barely a week after the gov-

ernment announced and started its cleanup efforts.

"So they had that weekend when they did that big cleanup, right? That weekend—this is going to sound weird—something was telling me to go there. Just go there. And honestly, I was really thinking just to go there and maybe take a *selfie* or whatever," Liana narrates. "It's funny. My colleague, after the video was uploaded, he was asking, 'What did you see? Was it the people, the water?' I don't know, I said. I just saw. That's the only way I can describe it. I just saw. It's hard to express in words. It's awe. I just clicked. This is what people deserve."

Liana's love and appreciation for nature is something she got from her family. "I grew up on a farm in Northern California, where it's surrounded by natural wonders, redwood trees, beautiful beaches open to the public. I come from that history of appreciating nature—my parents were hippies," she says, adding that she has brought them to the Philippines before and her

dad loved Red Horse beers.

"So I have that appreciation for nature. We all have that there. We're total tree huggers," she continues, laughing. "That's in my blood and that runs deep. Then the other part of that is working at the organization in Santa Ana, California, which is very close to the beach."

Prior to moving to the Philippines, Liana worked for a not-for-profit organization called Taller San Jose Hope Builders. There, she dealt with ex-cons who got a second chance in life, helping them find a livelihood and settle down in the community. Liana has a soft spot for those who are in need, and she's carried that with her during her time at USAID here in the Philippines.

"Looking back, I wish I had appreciated my hometown more. But everyone says that. You only miss what you have once it's gone, right? Maybe that's a good message. You only miss what you had," says Liana, applying the idea to Manila Bay. Filipinos, she says, are lucky because there is a real

opportunity to bring back the beauty of the bay, before it is too late.

At present, Liana has moved with her Filipino fiancé to Cagayan De Oro, where they plan to get married (within the year) and begin their life together. She came to the Philippines almost seven years ago now because of love, and it's also because of love that she has decided to stay—love not just for her fiancé but for Filipinos and the country's natural beauty.

But it isn't just love that Liana found here. "I gained my faith in the Philippines. Before that, I was a staunch atheist, as in," she says. "It took me moving from California and leaving my family and my friends, everyone I loved, and going through a lot of difficult times here to find my faith."

It is with this faith, in God and in people, that Liana hopes Filipinos would continue to appreciate what they have, to love the environment, to demand that they get what they deserve, and to remain compassionate.

"I really hope that it lasts," she says, speaking about the Manila Bay cleanup drive. "Judging also from also my past and working with out-of-school youth in Orange County, the worst thing is for someone to have hope and then it goes two steps backward. You're worse off than before. And Filipinos don't deserve that."



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RESUMED REHABILITATION. Women and members of Local Government Units in the metropolis participate in the cleanup drive at the Manila Yatch Club section of Roxas Blvd. as women and students celebrate Women's Month in March along the erstwhile perfect-picture Manila Bay.
Norman Cruz



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Behold thy garbage Baseco beach in Tondo, Manila is still strewn with trash, underscoring the gargantuan effort needed to clean it up. ALFONSO PADILLA



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Bay patrollers As part of the celebration of International Women's Day last Friday, these Baywalk Patrol volunteers from the DENR conduct a clean-up drive at the Manila Bay.

BOB DUNGO JR.



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PEOPLES JOURNAL Tonight

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Earth Hour Philippines 2019 shines light on plastic pollution

By MIA O. MANGAMPO (OJT)

ON the second year of the global #Connect2Earth theme of Earth Hour that calls for the urgent need to care for the Earth's biological diversity, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Philippines continues to focus on the issue of single-use plastics and how addressing it can help reverse the loss of nature.

"The last decade of Earth Hour has contributed so much to the global climate agenda and has paved the way for many conservation wins. Now that we are ushering in the second year of the movement's new decade, our efforts will still be centered on raising awareness and inspiring action on conserving nature and biodiversity to counter the worsening impacts of climate change," says WWF-Philippines head of Climate and Energy Program and Earth Hour Pilipinas National Director Atty. Gia Ibay.

Leveraging on the mo-

mentum of its #AyokoNgPlastik movement, WWF-Philippines hopes to further create awareness on the dangers of single-use plastics, spark conversations, change mindsets and habits of consumers, urge businesses to operate more sustainably, and influence policy.

The kick-off event of Earth Hour 2019 that was held on February 28, 2019 in the Magellan Function Room of the Discovery Suites in Ortigas saw commitments for nature formalized and renewed as the Boy Scouts of the Philippines (BSP) inked a memorandum of agreement with WWF-Philippines and national ambassadors Rovilson Fernandez and Iza Calzado, as well as National Youth Ambassador Janine Gutierrez, renewed their contracts to reaffirm their declaration of support to conserve natural assets to ensure a living planet for future generations.

The main switch-off event of Earth Hour 2019 is slated on March 30, Saturday, at the Globe Circuit Event Grounds in Makati from 5-p.m. to 10 p.m., with the actual



WWF-Philippines National Youth Ambassador Janine Gutierrez renews her contract as representative of WWF-Philippines' conservation efforts. Photo by MARY JONALIE CASTILLO

switch-off at 8:30 p.m. At least 3,000 scouts will be deployed to the public event that will feature booths, activities, and performances that will honor the planet. Meanwhile, everyone from all over the Philippines is also encouraged to switch off non-essential lights from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. in solidarity with millions around the world who will do the same.

Using this year's official hashtags #Connect2Earth, #EarthHourPH2019, and #AyokoNgPlastik, WWF-

Philippines is encouraging everyone to harness the power of social media and help share their commitment to start changing the planet for the better by sharing stories and photos of their sustainable living actions, as well as their pledges to say no to single-use plastics, via Earth Hour Philippines' Facebook event page - <http://bit.ly/EarthHourPH2019> that will go live by March 1, 2019.

To engage in conversations on plastics, join [facebook.com/groups/ayokongplastik](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ayokongplastik).



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Editorial

Banning single-use plastics a must to protect environment

"SHOCKING" is, indeed, the word that best describes the enormous consumption by Filipinos of single-use plastic materials, which, simply put and without belaboring the point for those who already know it, cause long-term damage to the environment and marine life.

Data from environmental nongovernment organization GAIA is astounding — every single day, about 57 million plastic bags are used throughout the Philippines, mostly for shopping. This does not include the use of smaller, thinner and often transparent plastic bags, called "*labo*", the packaging of choice for the neighborhood *sari-sari* or variety stores for goods ranging from candies to cola drinks.

More worrisome is the widespread use of plastic sachets — 60 billion pieces a year, or about one per person per day. These packets are nonreusable, as these are often lined with aluminum or contain other materials that do not allow for recycling.

This pattern of *tingi*, or consumption per piece, practiced by *sari-sari* stores and even pharmacies, unheard of in other parts of the world, was hailed years back as a novel and very profitable business model for consumer-focused companies. These manufacturers have been able to move their products in a poor but massive consumer market like the Philippines.

This *tingi* culture is coming back to haunt us, but it needs to go. The great Filipino writer and National Artist Nick Joaquin deplored it in his seminal essay, "A heritage of smallness," where he bemoaned the incapacity of Filipinos to think and do big, to go beyond kinship and the small *barrio*, and yes, to be more economical and buy cheaper by the dozen.

"[T]his is a country, perhaps the only one in the world, where people buy and sell one stick of cigarette, half a head of garlic, a dab of pomade, part of the contents of a can or bottle, one single egg, one single banana. To foreigners used to buying things by the carton or the dozen or pound and in the large economy sizes, the exquisite transactions of Philippine *tingi* cannot but seem Lilliputian. So much effort by so many for so little," Joaquin wrote.

GAIA's report was actually an extrapolation, a scientific one, based on 21 waste assessments in six cities and seven towns. One telling finding is that, while sachet retail is an affordable option for lower-income households, even rich consumers buy products in sachets, perhaps because of a simple reason: they are available in the market.

Another important finding: localized bans work and reduce consumption drastically. Many cities and towns have banned single-use plastics such as shopping bags in supermarkets and straws in restaurants.

The GAIA report calls for the government to "institute a comprehensive national plastic bag ban that promotes reusable bags," as well as "regulations on other single-use plastic products and rules requiring companies to redesign products and packaging to minimize plastic waste."

To be sure, there are other countries among the list of the world's worst plastic polluters: China, Vietnam and Indonesia. This is not good company; a nationwide ban on single-use plastics, through legislation, is in order, not only to strike the Philippines off the notorious list but, more important than that, to protect the environment and marine life from utter ruin.



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BOSES ng PINOY, MATA ng BAYAN

48-M shopping bags, 45-M thin-film bags at 3-M diaper, araw-araw PLASTIK NA BASURA, LUMALA



BOSES

NI RYAN B. SISON

PLASTIK dito, plastik doon, 'yung tipong kahit saan tayo lumingon, napakaramihng plastik, hays!

Ito ay dahil umabot na umano sa 163 million plastic sachets kada araw ang plastic waste na naipo-produced sa Pilipinas.

Nalaman ito matapos ang limang taong trash-audit na ginawa ng environmental group na Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives o GAIA.

Sinabi ni Froilan Grate, executive director ng Gaia Asia-Pacific na lumitaw sa pag-aaral na ang mga Pinoy ay nagtatapon ng 48 million plastic shopping bags, 45 million thin-film bags at 3 milyong diaper, araw-araw.

Isinagawa ang audit ng Mother Earth Foundation sa pamamagitan ng pagkolekta sa trash samples sa mga bahay-bahay sa 21 selected sites sa buong Pilipinas kabilang

ang anim na lungsod at pitong bayan.

Gayunman, ang pag-aaral ay may layon na kalampagin ang mga manufacturer sa paglaganap ng plastic waste, gayundin ang mamamayan na hanggang ngayon ay wala pa ring pakialam sa kapaligiran.

Nakaiinis isipin na kahit marami ng kalamidad ang dumaan sa atin ay marami pa ring Pilipino ang hindi natututo.

Kaya sana, sa kabuuang bilang ng mga plastik na ito ay maalarma na tayo na ang paglaganap nito ay hindi na biro at malaki na ang nagiging epekto hindi lang sa mga tao kundi maging sa mga yaman ng bansa!

Para sa inyong opinyon, sumbong, hinaing o nais hingging tulong, ito ang pagkakataong marinig ang inyong boses. sumulat lamang sa BOSES ni RYAN SISON at ipadala sa Bulgar Bldg, 538 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City o mag-email sa bores.bulgar@gmail.com



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**DENR: No conflict
in P1-B deal with SMC**

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) clarified that its P1-billion partnership with San Miguel Corporation (SMC) was solely for Manila Bay rehabilitation and not a "soft payment" to fast-track SMC's development projects in Bulacan and Manila Bay, contrary to criticisms. On March 4, SMC president and chief operating officer Ramon Ang signed a five-year agreement with the DENR for a dredging and clean-up program for the 59.25-kilometer Tullahan River. Environment group Kalikasan People's Network said the deal raises conflict of interest issues as SMC was building the 2,500-hectare Aerotropolis in Bulacan province, which needed an environment compliance certificate from the DENR.—MARIEJO S. RAMOS



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ADOPT- A-WETLAND PROGRAM: Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu (left) and JG Summit Petrochemical Corp. president and CEO Patrick Henry Go present the memorandum of agreement for the rehabilitation of Wetland No. 8 in Brgy. Manoc-manoc in Boracay under the DENR's Adopt-a-Wetland Program. Under the agreement, JGSPC commits to rehabilitate the wetland at no cost to the government, and to prioritize the adjacent local communities for any suitable employment opportunities.



ROAD WIDENING SA BORACAY

SA TAONG 2020 inasasahang matatapos na ang Phase 2 ng pagsasaayos at pagpapalapat ng kalsada sa isla ng Boracay.

Kinumpirma ito ni Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Secretary Mark Villar sa muling pagbisita at pagsagawa ng ocular inspection sa patapos nang proyekto sa Phase I.

Nasa P300 milyon ang pondo para sa naturang proyekto na nagsimula sa Elizalde Compound hanggang sa Tambisaan Port.

Ayon sa kalihim, naging malaking hamon sa kanila ang pakikipag-usap sa mga establisimiyentong apektado ng road rehabilitation, subalit napapayag din ang mga ito para sa mas mabilis na trabaho sa isla.

Matatandaang binigyan ng ultimatum ng Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilita-

Matatapos sa 2020

tion Management Group (BIARMG) ang ilang establisimiyentong lumabag sa 6 meters na road easement mula sa gitna ng kalsada at 25+5 meter easement rule sa baybayin.

Kapag hindi umano nag-self demolish ang mga ito, sila ang titibag.

Tina-tayang nasa P490 milyon ang itinakdang pondo ng DPWH sa Phase I na ginamit sa pagsasaayos ng kalsada mula sa Cagban Port hanggang sa Bolabog Boulevard.

Pinagaaralan pa ng

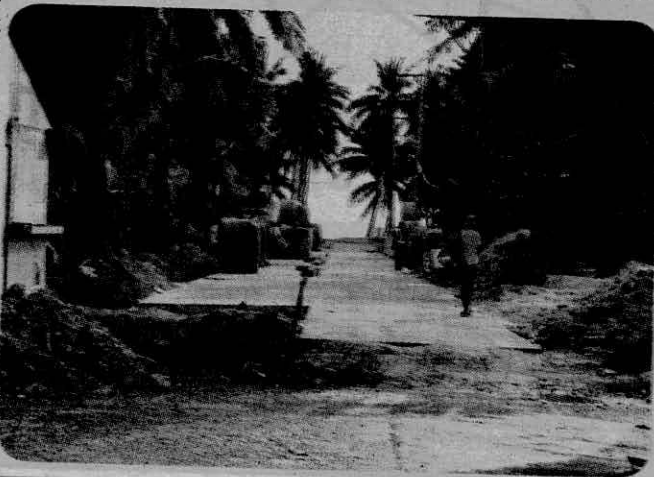
DPWH ang pagpapatayo ng tulay sa isla.

Sinabi ni Villar na hindi pa nila natalakay ang proposal ng isang kompanya na balak magpatayo ng tulay na magdudugtong sa Boracay

at Caticlan sa bayan ng Malay, Aklan na nagkakahalaga ng tinatayang P3 bilyon.

Iginiit ng kalihim na prayoridad ngayon ng kagawaran ang pagpapalapat at pagsasaayos ng kalsada.

NENET VILLAFANIA





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Balita

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Pasaway na Bora resorts, ginigiba na

BORACAY ISLAND - Nagsimula nang mag-self demolish ang ilang resort sa Boracay nang makatangap sila ng kautusan ng Boracay Inter Agency Rehabilitation Management Group (BIARMG) na hindi na papayagang muling magbukas ang establisimento ng mga ito. Ayon kay Rowen Aguirre,

secretariat ng nasabing management group, aabot sa 10 resort, karamihan sa station 2 ang nakatangap ng notice of demolition matapos silang makitaan ng mga paglabag sa batas.

Kabilang sa kanilang paglabag ay ang pagkakatayo ng kanilang establisimyento sa government property, paglabag sa easement

zones habang ang iba naman ay nag-operate habang hindi pa nakatangap ng accreditation sa Department of Tourism.

Nilinaw ni Aguirre, binigyan na nila ng 15 araw na palugit ang 10 resort upang gibain ang kanilang establisimyento.

Jun N. Aguirre



EDITORIAL

Double blow

Two separate reports on pollution that came out recently brought to light problems that continue to plague the country's environment, despite laws that are meant to address them.

One report was more surprising than the other, and no one was more shocked than Filipinos to hear that a foreign study had ranked several Philippine cities as having the cleanest air in South-east Asia. It sounded too good to be true, but there it was: According to the Switzerland-based IQ Air Visual World Air Quality Report 2018, Calamba, Laguna ranked No. 1, with Valenzuela coming in second. Several other cities made it to the top 15: Carmona, Cavite (3rd), Parañaque City (5th), Davao City (6th), Makati City (7th), Manila (8th), Mandaluyong City (9th), Balanga, Bataan (12th), Quezon City (13th) and Las Piñas (15th). Among countries, the Philippines ranked 48th out of the 73 included in the study.

Many who live in these cities were surprised, as their daily anecdotal experience did not seem to match the study's assertions. The dense, car-choked urban centers of Makati, Manila and Mandaluyong as having some of the cleanest air in this part of the world? Really?

Greenpeace Philippines would eventually clear the air, so to speak, by explaining that the results were flawed, because there was a shortage of systems that monitor the air and could provide more accurate readings. Among countries in the region, in fact, the Philippines has the least number of recording devices to measure air pollution. Greenpeace Philippines campaigner Khevin Yu lamented: "The report therefore represents only a small fraction of the air pollution situation in the country."

A more pertinent study to consider may be the World Health Organization's report last year that the Philippines had the third highest number of deaths due to outdoor air pollution in the Western Pacific region. The WHO said 45.3 out of every 100,000 Filipinos die due to the dire state of the country's air. Only China (81.5 per 100,000) and Mongolia (48.8 per 100,000) had more deaths caused by outdoor air pollution.

How about deaths due to indoor air pollution? The WHO said the Philippines had the second highest death rate in the Asia-Pacific region due to the use of kerosene and wood stoves in home kitchens. Add to that the fact that the recorded average of PM2.5 concentration is more than twice the acceptable level.

There is a law that mandates clean air, but obviously it's not working. Republic Act No. 8749, or the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999, was to serve as the vanguard of efforts to improve the air quality in the country, including raising awareness about and clamping down on pollution from sources such as coal-fired plants and factories. But improving air quality requires more than information drives and regulatory efforts, it also requires a change in the culture. Last year, WHO director for public health Maria Neira said: "You should promote a cleaner public transport system, which is reliable and affordable for citizens, and discourage the use of private cars." Local government units (LGUs) were also urged to get in on the action to reduce emissions on the ground.

As it happens, dirty air isn't the only pressing pollution issue the Philippines needs to address. There's also its enormous plastic problem.

Unlike the air quality report, the warning last week by the Environmental group Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (Gaia) hardly took anyone by surprise. Filipinos, according to Gaia, are throwing away over 163 million plastic sachets daily, along with 48 million plastic shopping bags, 45 million thin-film bags, and 3 million diapers. Yes, every day. Gaia said that if this continued, the country would be knee-deep in plastic waste in a year.

The Philippines has a law that specifically addresses this issue: RA 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, which tasks LGUs to compel companies to ban plastics or to regulate their use. The government has already required shopping malls to ban the use of plastics, including plastic straws, in day-to-day commerce. But it should put pressure as well on manufacturers to use more environment-friendly and sustainable packaging for their products, instead of singling out consumers, especially the poor, who are forced to buy by "tingi" or in smaller plastic sachets simply because that is all they can afford.

The application of both the Clean Air Act and the Solid Waste Management Act has been spotty, to say the least. And because of that, Filipinos are being dealt a double blow: suffocated by dirty air on one hand, and swamped by a tsunami of plastic waste on the other.



Erap hails Manila clean air ranking in Southeast Asia

MANILA Mayor Joseph Estrada feels inspired to launch a more aggressive program in protecting the environment as he expressed happiness on the reported high ranking of the capital as one of the cities with the cleanest air in Southeast Asia.

Estrada said that this achievement belongs to all the departments of the city government which he said always work as a team to advance the public health interest.

According to Switzerland-based IQ AirVisual and Greenpeace's 2018 Air Quality Report, which measured the amount of fine particulate matter known as PM2.5 ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) in cities in 73 countries, the city of Manila is at No. 8th with moderate 14.3 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.



ESTRADA

PM2.5 refers to a particulate matter (ambient airborne particles), which measures up to 2.5 microns in size and causes a wide range of short and long term health effects.

Greenpeace said that common sources of PM includes combustion and other pollutants reacting in the atmosphere.

"This ranking of Ma-

nila will drive us more to be on top of the situation where we can assure clean air for our residents," Mayor Estrada said.

As this developed, Estrada reiterated his full support to the effort of the DENR in cleaning Manila Bay as he directed the entire departments of the city to assist the national government in accomplishing the much awaited project of President Rody Duterte in reviving the famous Manila Bay and all the waterways of the country.

Aside from Manila, also in the rankings as cities with the cleanest air are Calamba, Laguna; Valenzuela; Carmona City; Paranaque; Davao City; Makati; Mandaluyong; Balanga; Quezon City and Las Pinas.



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'PINAS NAMAYAGPAG

Maynila sa 'cities with cleanest air', paninindigan

Ni Ria Fernandez

Asahan na ang mas agresibong programa para sa kalikasan sa lungsod ng Maynila matapos na mapabilang ang kabisera ng bansa sa listahan ng mga lugar sa Southeast Asia na may 'cleanest air'.

Base sa 2018 Air Quality Report ng Switzerland-based na IQ Air Visual at Greenpeace, namayagpag ang Pilipinas sa mga siyudad sa rehiyon na may pinakamalinis na hangin, makaraang 11 sa 15 lugar sa tala ang nasa Pilipinas.

Sinukat sa pag-aaral ang kalidad ng hangin sa 73 bansa sa buong mundo, mula sa dami ng 'fine particulate matter known as PM2.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ '.

Ayon sa Greenpeace, ang

combustion o pagsusunog at iba pang pollutants na sumasama sa hangin ang karaniwang pinagmumulan ng PM.

Nanguna sa listahan ang Calamba sa Laguna, na may $9.3 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, pasok sa $10 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ annual mean exposure threshold ng World Health Organization (WHO), habang nasa ikawalong puwesto ang Maynila na may moderate $14.3 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

Pasok din sa listahan ang Valenzuela, Carmona sa Cavite, Parañaque, Davao, Makati, Mandaluyong, Balanga sa Bataan, Quezon City, at Las Piñas.

Kinilala naman ni Manila Mayor Joseph Estrada ang lahat ng departamento ng lungsod para sa karangalang nakamit.



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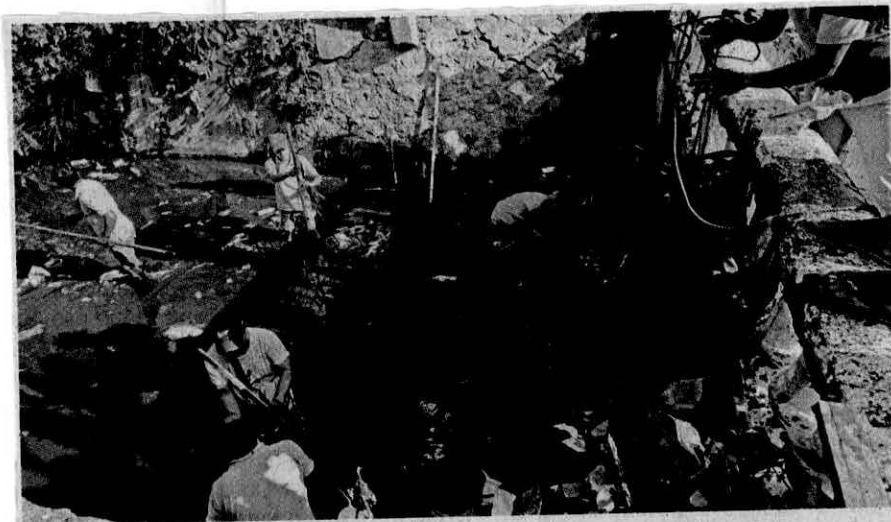
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RESURRECTING A RIVER - Cebu City government employees, and volunteers from different schools and fraternities join hands in a clean-up drive to clear water ways connecting to the Lahug River, which is considered dead by the Environment Management Bureau. (Juan Carlo de Vela)



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Maynilad builds big sewage treatment plant

West Zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services, Inc. (Maynilad) started the construction of what could be its next biggest sewage treatment plant (STP) in terms of capacity. Maynilad announced yesterday that it already broke ground to construct the Las Piñas Water Reclamation Facility, which, once completed in 2021, will be the company's largest sewage treatment plant in terms of capacity. With an investment cost of ₱2.05 billion, the plant will be able to treat about 88 million liters of wastewater per day and will further boost Maynilad's sewerage coverage expansion in Manila. (MBM)



Tubig sa mga dam patuloy sa pagbaba

Patuloy ang pagbaba ng water level sa iba't-ibang mga dam sa bansa.

Batay sa latest monitoring ng Philippine Atmospheric Geophysi-

cal and Astronomical Service Administration, may pagbaba sa 48 meters ang tubig sa Angat dam sa loob ng 24 oras o nasa 201.27 meters ng water level ng dam, alas-6:00 ng umaga kahapon o mas mababa sa 201.75 meters noong Biyernes ng alas-6:00 ng umaga. Umaabot sa 212 meters ang normal water level ng Angat dam na nagsusuplay ng 90 percent ng tubig sa Metro Manila.

Ang Ipo dam ay nakapagtala naman ng 101.03 water level kahapon, Sabado, alas-6:00 ng umaga o may pagbaba ng 0.02 meters mula sa 101.01 meters

noong Biyernes ng alas-6:00 ng umaga. 101 meters ang normal level ng tubig sa Ipo dam.

Kahapon, ang La Mesa dam ay may 69.10 meters ng water level mula sa 69.16 meter ng water level noong Biyernes ng umaga. Nasa 80.15 ang normal water level sa La Mesa dam.

Ang Ambuklaw dam ay nasa 749.17 meters ang water level kahapon ng umaga na mas mababa kung ikukumpara sa 749.32 meters noong biyernes ng umaga. Umaabot naman sa 752 meters ang normal water level sa naturang dam.

Ang Binga dam ay may 573.37 meters ng

water level kahapon ng umaga na mas mababa sa 573.67 meters noong Biyernes ng umaga, samantalang ang Magat dam ay may 170.91 meters ng water level kahapon ng umaga at nasa 171.51 meters ng water level noong Biyernes ng umaga.

Ang San Roque dam naman ay may 266.09 meters ng water level kahapon ng umaga na mas mababa kaysa sa 266.27 meters ng water level noong biyernes ng umaga. Umaabot sa 280 meters ng normal water level sa naturang dam.

Bunga ng pagbaba ng level ng tubig sa naturang mga dam, hinikayat ng PAGASA ang publiko na magtipid sa paggamit ng tubig upang may sapat na suplay na magagamit sa panahon ng El Niño phenomenon o panahon ng tagtuyot. (Angie dela Cruz)



Anilao dive spot gets coral restoration lab

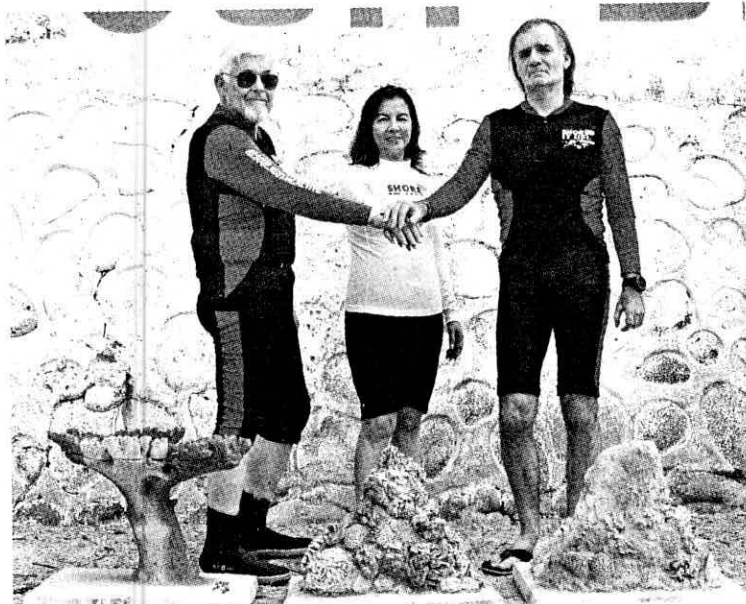
As part of its corporate social responsibility, Metro Pacific Investments Corporation (MPIC) Foundation, through its Shore It Up program, recently received a donation of 40 eco-reef modules, which will be installed in Balayan Bay, one of the country's top scuba-diving destinations.

Since 2016, MPIC Foundation has been nurturing a Coral Restoration Field Laboratory in Barangay Solo in Mabini, Batangas, to help restore the marine ecosystem of the area. In the past two years, it has laid 12 modules that had provided valuable data to help in the flourishing of aquatic life in the barangay.

Eco-Mer artificial reef units are made of marine concrete, which has better larval attachment, higher survival rates of coral recruits and wider niche range for higher species diversity, beyond any other commercial artificial reefs. The laboratory serves as an underwater work station for volunteer divers to study the fluid dynamics, study coral growth potential at Eco-Mer units per depth, and other scientific diving related to monitoring and coral restoration for Mabini.

The artificial coral reefs undergo monitoring and scientific activities to help enrich the ecosystem of Anilao's dive spots by setting up marine sanctuaries.

Volunteer divers and local Bantay Dagat who will serve as technicians of the underwater laboratory were certified by the National Association of Underwater Instructors.



IN photo, Eco-Mer and Divers Institute of Technology consultant William McGilton, MPIC Foundation President Melody del Rosario, and marine ecology expert Prof. Avigdor (AV) Abelson of the Tel Aviv University in Israel.

Mooring buoys will also be installed in dive sites to prevent damage to corals caused by dropping of anchors. According to MPIC Vice President for PR and corporate communications Melody del Rosario, Shore It Up started in 2009 as a coastal cleanup movement in the Anilao dive spot, and has expended into

a comprehensive marine biodiversity conservation program which covers underwater cleanups, mangrove propagation, giant-clam rearrangement, artificial reef restoration and community livelihood projects.

She added that coral restoration is one way of responding to the effects of climate change

and help working on solutions for sustainable use of the sea as a source of food and livelihood for fishermen and ocean stakeholders.

Shore It Up has been held in key coastal areas such as Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro; Subic Bay Freeport Zone; Hundred Islands National Park in Alaminos City, Pangasinan; del Carmen in Siargao Island; Panglao and Pamilacan Islands in Bohol; Surigao City; Medina, Misamis Oriental; and Cordova, Cebu.

For the past 10 years, it has mustered over 85,000 volunteers from the Metro Pacific group of companies, national government agencies, local government units, law-enforcement agencies, academe, civil-society groups and dive industry stakeholders. A good number of these volunteers are recruits in the Junior Environmental Scouts (JES), an environmental education initiative for school children. To sustain these environmental undertakings, the Foundation helped establish Mangrove Propagation and Information Centers in Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao, which can be located in Alaminos City, Pangasinan; del Carmen, Siargao Island, Surigao del Norte; the third in Cordova, Cebu.

The Metro Pacific program is a recipient of the Public Relations Society of the Philippines' Anvil Award of Merit for sustained environmental program for the environment from 2011 to 2016, as well as the Best Corporate Social Responsibility Program in the Corporate Governance Asia Award for 2017 and 2018.



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Zero access to hazardous mines urged

By **CHINO S. LEYCO**

Finance Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez III has requested the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) to strictly enforce laws and regulations limiting the access of people in areas identified as vulnerable to landslides and other geohazards.

Dominguez also asked the DILG during the recent meeting of the interagency Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC) to hold accountable local government unit (LGU) executives found remiss in their duties in allowing their respective constituents to build their homes in these dangerous areas.

"We should put another special item

there to work with the MGB (and) to work with DILG on zoning rules basically to prevent housing or any construction in quarry areas, and mining areas that have been determined to be in a geohazard area," Dominguez stressed, referring to the inclusion of this matter in the workplan of the MICC for 2019.

He suggested that the MICC place this as Number 1 in the list of priorities under its 2019 agenda.

Dominguez co-chairs the MICC with Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu.

Finance Undersecretary Bayani Agabin, who heads the Department of Finance's (DOF) legal affairs group, said Dominguez had also called on the DILG earlier to take action against LGU executives in localities where unscrupu-

lous traders have managed to operate factories for illicit cigarettes disguised as legitimate businesses.

In a February letter to DILG Secretary Eduardo Año, Dominguez said, "inexcusable lapses" of the local officials and employees involved in the issuance of the permit "should not be left unnoticed," more so now that barangays have the authority and resources to enforce all applicable laws and exercise diligence in inspecting establishments before approving applications to operate commercially.

"The officials/employees who were instrumental in the issuance of the permit and all other accountable persons who failed to exercise the degree of diligence required of them should be investigated and subsequently subjected

to appropriate charge/s," Dominguez said in his letter.

He had written Año following the raid by Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) operatives of an illicit cigarette factory disguised as a piggery in Bugallon, Pangasinan.

Earlier, the MICC agreed to conduct the second round of "objective, science-based, and fact-finding" review of mining operations in 2019 to cover the remaining 15 mining companies that were part of the 41 mines initially reviewed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) under former Secretary Regina Lopez in 2016.

It also deferred a recommendation on the lifting of the moratorium on the issuance of new mineral agreements.



Ombudsman: No merit in Zambales mayor's plea vs conviction

By **ELIZABETH MARCELO**

The Office of the Ombudsman has urged the Sandiganbayan to deny the appeal of Mayor Luisito Marty to reverse its ruling convicting him of graft and usurpation of authority for stopping the operations of two mining firms.

In an opposition paper filed before the anti-graft court's third division, the prosecution team said Marty failed to raise any new argument in his motion for reconsideration.

"Motion is utterly bereft of merit... the proffered arguments are mere rehash of his previous arguments, all of which have been passed upon and found without merit," the opposition paper read.

Marty was sentenced to a minimum of six years to a maximum of 10 years in prison for graft and four months to six years for usurpation of authority. He was also perpetually disqualified from holding public office and ordered to pay a fine of P50,000.

The case stemmed from

Marty's refusal to grant permits to Zambales Diversified Metals Corp. and Zambales Chromite Mining Co. Inc. in 2011 even though they complied with certain requirements.

Graft probers said Marty also issued a memorandum directing the municipal treasurer not to accept occupation fees from holders of mineral production-sharing agreement (MPSA) without securing a mayor's permit.

The prosecution said Marty's "criminal intent" was apparent when he required the mining firms to secure a permit from his office before they can be allowed to pay their occupational fees and continue to operate.

The memorandum was illegal because it was not approved by the Sangguniang Bayan, the ombudsman said.

The municipal government suffered undue injury when it failed to collect income from the mining firms through the payment of occupation fees as MPSA holders, it added.



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Fast-track Manggahan floodway project land title distribution, House panel urges

By **BEN R. ROSARIO**

The House Committee on Housing and Urban Development has appealed to government housing agencies to fast-track the processing of documents that would pave the way for the awarding of land titles to qualified beneficiaries of the 71 hectares of the Manggahan Floodway Socialized Housing Project site in Taytay, Rizal.

Chaired by Negros Occidental Rep. Alfredo "Albee" Benitez, the House panel issued the appeal during a hearing held last week on House Bill 8255, authored by former President and now House Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The bill seeks to award 71 hectares of the Manggahan Floodway Socialized Housing Project site to qualified beneficiaries.

Arroyo said that under the bill, the land titles should be available for distribution by 2020.

The bill is a result of Proclamation No. 458, issued by then President Fidel V. Ramos in 1994, declaring certain parcels of land along the floodway for disposition in accordance with Republic Act No. 7279 or the "Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992."

In the explanatory note of the bill,

Arroyo lamented that the lots that are subject of Proclamation No. 458 have not been awarded by the National Housing Authority (NHA) to beneficiaries.

"Despite a series of dialogues, consultations, and the creation of a technical working group to identify issues and concerns regarding the Manggahan Floodway Socialized Project site, no actual and specific action has been taken to fully provide security of housing to the urban poor," said Arroyo.

Speaker Arroyo further said that the Urban Poor Affairs Office of the local government of Taytay previously estimated the population in the Manggahan Floodway within the jurisdiction of Taytay to be around 42,033 as of 2014, from 6,365 households in 2005.

"It is a thriving community which, if properly supported by the government, could be utilized as a model community for the urban poor for its self-sustaining development, community participation, maintenance of peace and order, and economic independence," the House leader said.

Consequently, plans and programs that aim to develop and implement procedures on the issues of sanitation, environmental protection, structural

stability, as well as economic viability have not been fully achieved to this day, she said.

Responding to the call of the Lower House, NHA Division Manager Engr. Ma. Therese Siat, informed the panel that the housing agency shall conduct a board meeting to discuss and approve their corporate funds, including the P38-million budget needed for conducting the survey in the area, which she explained is the initial step to fully execute the legislative measure.

Thereafter, the NHA shall publish advertisements to reach out to potential bidders. Upon completion, the agency shall begin the survey within the area to determine its current state, she said.

Siat said that while the aforementioned budget is expected to be available by June, 2019, the survey up to the actual land titling shall be completely accomplished 360 days thereafter.

Siat also said that another crucial component for the land titling is the revision of the area's special patent.

The Land Management Bureau (LMB) shall first carve out the property included in the document that overlaps with a titled property, which was about 1,000 square meters only, she said.



PH-WIDE ALERT AS EL NIÑO SEARS NORTH LUZON, COTABATO

WEATHERMEN have alerted residents of many areas in this archipelago republic—particularly in Northern Luzon and in Mindanao—on the effects of El Niño, with summer charging in this month.

In North Cotabato, for instance, the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council said the dry spell prevailing over the province has thus far damaged P477 million worth of agricultural crops.

El Niño, a climate pattern that describes the unusual warming of surface waters in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, is the “warm phase” of a larger phenomenon called the El Niño-Southern Oscillation or ENSO, with such events occurring irregularly at two- to seven-year intervals.

Climate analysts and weather forecasters say 2019 may be the hottest year yet, spurred by El Niño and climate change.

Turn to A2

Experts say that in normal, non-El Niño conditions, trade winds blow in a westerly direction along the equator, with these winds piling up warm surface water in the western Pacific, so the sea surface is as much as 18 inches higher in the western Pacific than in the eastern Pacific.

El Niño is an abnormal weather pattern caused by the warming of the Pacific Ocean near the equator, off the coast of South America.

Experts add the sun warms the water near the equator, which can make more clouds and, therefore, more rain. However, normally there are trade winds, which blow that warm water west.

According to Climate Information monitoring section chief Analiza

Solis, in an interview on Super Radyo dzBB beamed nationwide, there was a possibility the Philippines could get a temperature as high or more than 40 degrees Celsius or 104 degrees Fahrenheit in many areas of Northern Luzon, particularly Tuguegarao in Cagayan.

But weathermen said they would monitor the so-called “human comfort index” since high humidity could worsen the heat felt by people.

In simplest terms, the heat index is the “feels-like” temperature, or how hot it really feels when the relative humidity is factored in with the actual air temperature.

According to experts, a human body cools itself by the evaporation

of perspiration from the skin. On a hot, humid day, less evaporation of sweat occurs, diminishing the body’s ability to cool itself.

Solis said some 10 provinces, six in Luzon and four in Mindanao, might experience drought or dry spell as the phenomenon would mean lesser rainfall.

North Cotabato’s PDRRMC warning and action officer Arnulfo Villaruz also placed the number of farmers affected by the drought-spawned El Niño phenomenon at 8,500, based on data provided by municipal disaster offices in the province.

The province has experienced less amount of rainfall since early February.

Due to extreme weather condition, the towns of M’lang, Aleosan, Alamada, and Pikit have declared a state of calamity, prompting the local government units to use their respective calamity funds to aid affected farmers in cushioning the impact of the dry spell.

“The number of affected farmers and amount of crop damage could still go up when all reports are forwarded to our office,” Villaruz said over the Church-run dxND radio station in Cotabato City.

He said North Cotabato was not included in the list of provinces that would be hit by the extreme weather condition, “but nevertheless, farms were dried up, damaging crops in the process.” **PNA**



WRITING ON THE WALL. An unidentified farm hand looks forlorn while footslogging through his parched terraced land in the countryside during the weekend, with weathermen forewarning residents in many provinces in Luzon and Mindanao that 2019 may be the hottest year yet, spurred by El Niño and climate change, with temperature projected to hit over 40 degrees C, or 104 plus degrees F.



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2 FOREST GUARDS TIKLO SA KIKIL

BENGUET—Dalawang forest guards ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang dinakip ng mga awtoridad dahil sa pangingikil sa mga small scale miner, kamakalawa sa Bgy. Tuding, Itogon sa lalawigan ito.

Kinilala ang mga suspek na sina Danilo Atompa at Dino Lasaten, kapwa forest guards ng DENR na nakabase sa lalawigan.

Ayon sa ulat, inireklamo ng mga small scale miner ang pangingikil sa kanila nina Atompa at Lasaten kaya dinakip ng pulisya ang dalawang suspek.

Hindi naman nanlaban ang dalawang suspek nang dakpin sila ng mga awtoridad sa nasabing lugar.