

DATE : 28 MAR 2019

DAY : Thursday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

PEOPLES
JOURNAL
Tonight

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Mercury-free PH

AWARE of the numerous environmental impacts brought about by toxic pollutants, particularly mercury, more and more Filipinos now want the Philippine government to ratify the Minamata Convention.

It's the world's first legally binding treaty to phase out mercury, a highly toxic substance that poses threats to the environment and human health, said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Named after the Japanese city where industrial emissions of the toxic substance caused a poisoning disease that affected thousands of people in the 1950s, according to DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, a retired army general.

Signed by 128 countries, including the Philippines, in 2013, the so-called Minamata Convention, which regulates the use and trade of mercury, entered into force in August 2017.

In a statement during last week's launching of the country's Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA) Report, DENR Secretary Cimatu underscored the importance of the convention.

Cimatu's message was read for him by DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones. The MIA report was prepared by the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB).

As soon as the country ratifies the convention, impoverished Philippines will be protected from being a dumping ground for products containing the highly-toxic mercury.

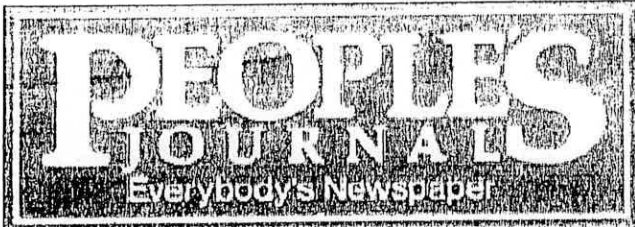
The DENR top honcho expressed the hope the release of the MIA report would serve as a kickoff point for our nationwide campaign for a mercury-free lifestyle for a safer environment.

For now, the government, through concerned offices, is trying hard to avoid further risk to the country's aquatic life, where mercury levels have been increasing.

The ratification of the multi-pronged Minamata Convention is seen to help the government and the Filipino people in transforming the Philippines into a mercury-free country.



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DENR eyes mercury-free PH

WITH the ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Filipinos can look forward to a mercury-free Philippines.

In his message during the recent launching of the Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA) report in Quezon City, Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu said that as soon as the country ratifies the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Philippines will be protected from being a dumping ground for products containing mercury.

Cimatu's message was read by DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones during the launching.

The MIA report, which was prepared by the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), outlines the national requirements and needs for the implementation of the Minamata Convention.

Cimatu expressed hope the release of the MIA report would "serve as a kickoff point for our campaign for a mercury-free lifestyle for a safer environment." "Once it ratifies the convention, it will also help avoid fur-

ther risk to the country's aquatic life, where mercury levels have been increasing," Cimatu said.

The Minamata Convention is the world's first legally binding treaty to phase out mercury, a highly toxic substance that poses threats to the environment and human health. In 2013, the Philippines was one of the 128 countries that signed the convention, which regulates the use and trade of mercury. The Philippines has yet to ratify the convention, which entered into force in August 2017.

According to the MIA report, the primary anthropogenic sources of mercury or those that result from human activities, is the extraction and use of energy sources. This is followed by the production of primary or virgin metal, which includes mining and gold processing, and the production of other minerals and materials with mercury impurities.

The report identified four areas with confirmed mercury contamination: Palawan Quicksilver Mines, Mambulao River in Camarines Norte, Mabuhay Vinyl in Lanao

del Norte, and Lumang-gang Creek in Compostela Valley.

It also identified suspected mercury contaminated sites in 11 regions including the Meycauayan River, Manila Bay, mining sites and gold processing sites in Camarines Norte and Masbate, landfills in Barangay Inayawan in Cebu City, Consolacion town in Cebu province, Naboc River in Davao, and T'boli in South Cotabato.

Other sites include Agusan del Sur in Caraga region, the decommissioned Bulawan Mine of Philex Gold in Negros Occidental, the towns of Sipalay and Hinoban in Negros, Sitio Dalicno in Itogon, Benguet and the municipality of Licuan-Baay in Abra.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that mercury exposure can damage the nervous, digestive, respiratory, endocrine and immune systems. It could also lead to impaired vision and hearing, cause paralysis, affect the development of the fetus, and cause developmental delays in children, the WHO added.

Cory Martinez



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Gov't urged to focus on urban renewal, not on bay reclamation

By Jhesset O. Enano
@JhessetEnanoINQ

Instead of reclaiming parts of Manila Bay, the government should shift its efforts to urban renewal and proper land use in Metro Manila and nearby provinces, according to Sen. Cynthia Villar.

Planned reclamation activities in the bay pose a threat to the livelihood of around 300,000 small fisherfolk, Villar said at a summit attended by fishermen and civil society groups in Intramuros, Manila, on Wednesday.

Villar, who is seeking reelection in May's midterm polls, said it was unnecessary to reclaim parts of the bay when there were several areas in Metro Manila that need a facelift.

Ugly Metro areas

"Other countries do not even have reclamation as an option anymore; they opt for urban renewal instead. We can do the same here," she said. "There are several ugly areas in Metro Manila that we can redevelop to make the city [look] better."

Over 20 reclamation projects, currently in different stages of approval, are estimated to cover at least 10 percent of



LIVELIHOOD THREAT Deckhands prepare a yacht anchored next to Harbour Square in Manila for Wednesday's fluvial protest against reclamation projects in Manila Bay. —EARVIN PERIAS

the heavily polluted Manila Bay, which is now undergoing massive rehabilitation under the Duterte administration.

Proponents of these projects, which cover parts of Metro Manila cities and nearby provinces, include local governments and private developers.

A staunch critic of reclamation activities, Villar was at the

forefront of a campaign to stop a reclamation project in 2012 that could have adversely affected the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area, a wetland system and protected area considered as the metropolis' last frontier.

Citing the position of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Villar said reclamation was

an "irreversible form of environmental degradation."

Urban blight

Reclamation activities also contribute to urban blight as investments are poured into these newly built areas, rather than in existing structures, said Jay Batongbacal, director of the University of the Philippines Insti-

tute for Maritime Affairs and the Law of the Sea.

"You allow opportunity for urban decay because you transfer and focus your resources and economic development in these reclaimed areas to recover investment," Batongbacal told reporters.

Uncontrolled development

He said uncontrolled development and land use mismanagement contributed to the attitude to reclaim bay areas once land became scarce for various construction.

"They build new land without even studying the overall impact of these projects," he said.

On Wednesday morning, fisherfolk and members of environmental and civil society groups led by the People's Network for the Integrity of Critical Habitats and Ecosystems gathered for a fluvial protest in Manila Bay to call for a moratorium on all reclamation projects across the country.

According to the Center for Environmental Concerns, there are at least 60 planned reclamation projects in the country involving about 40,000 ha. The majority of these projects are in Manila Bay. INQ



Gov't should enforce law on reclamation — Oceana

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

A conservation group last Tuesday urged the government to uphold and enforce the law in several reclamation projects submitted to the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) for process.

"We are alarmed by the apparent disregard of our progressive laws for protection of our vastly threatened natural life support systems, and allowing these reclamation projects to destroy our mangroves, sea grass beds, and other marine habitats," the group Oceana said.

In a summit attended by civil society and fisherfolk groups held at the Bayleaf Hotel in Manila, Ocean stressed that dumping and filling of critical marine support systems in Manila Bay are not only violating laws, "these deprive our artisanal fisherfolk of their living and sustenance as well as fisheries and biodiversity which are heavily impacted."

Oceana questioned the PRA and other national government agencies, as well local government units for processing the application of these projects despite possible violations of the Local Government Code, Fisheries Code, Environmental Impact Statement System Act and Climate Change Act, among other laws.

"Local government units (LGUs) expand their land territory farther into the sea, substantially changing the territorial boundaries. Under the Local Government Code and other laws, rigid requirements include a national law enacted for that purpose, and a majority of votes for its approval are cast in a plebiscite," lawyer Gloria Estenzo Ramos, vice president of Oceana Philippines, said.

"We dare ask the proponents of these projects to prove that they complied with these requirements and they can stand before the people that they did not violate our laws," she said.

Under the Local Government Code (Republic Act 7160), an LGU's boundaries may only be substantially altered by law enacted by Congress. Section 10 of the same Code provides that no substantial alteration of boundaries shall take effect unless approved by a majority of the votes cast in a plebiscite in the affected LGU.

According to Ramos, some local governments use these illegal dumping and filling projects to increase their Internal Revenue Allotment without going through the rigid process set by the Local Government Code. "Thus, disbursements by the Department of Budget and Management of the IRA to a number of LGUs that have not complied with the legal requirements for reclamation projects are questionable," she added.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources identified Manila Bay as a rich spawning area of sardines. *Sardinella pacifica* collected from Manila Bay and in other parts of the country was proven to be a distinct species found only in the Philippines.



People power sa Manila Bay reclamation ban hinirit

NANAWAGAN ang isang kongre-
sista ng pagkakaisa para tutulan
ang reclamation sa Manila Bay.

Kasabay nito ay hinimok ni
Anakpawis Party-list Rep. Ariel
Casilao ang publiko na suportahan
ang House Bill (HB) No. 9067 para
maideklarang "reclamation-free"
zone ang Manila Bay.

"The Filipino people should de-
cisively take the noble task of pro-
tecting Manila Bay by declaring it
as 'reclamation-free,' paghahayag
ni Casilao sa People's Summit on
the Impacts of Reclamation sa Bay-
leaf Hotel sa Maynila kahapon na
inorganisa ng iba't ibang grupo
kabilang na ang People's Network
for the Integrity of Coastal Habitats
and Ecosystems (People's NICHE)

at Pamalakaya.

Isinasaad ng naturang pa-
nukala ang pagbabawal sa ano
mang klase ng reclamation activi-
ties kahit na nasa planning stage
pa lamang.

Pinakakansela rin ang pag-
iisyu ng environmental com-
pliance certificates (ECCs) at
permiso sa lahat ng mga nakabin-
bing reclamation project.

Ang mga lalabag ay pagmu-
multahin ng limang milyong piso
hanggang P15 milyon.

Binigyang-diin ng kongresista
na ang Manila Bay ay isang "heri-
tage asset" na may importanteng
papel sa kasaysayan ng Pilipinas.

Ang mga reclamation project
aniya ay salungat sa mandamus

ng Supreme Court (SC) na nag-
aatas sa gobyerno na ibalik sa
ayos ang kondisyon at panatali-
hin ang magandang kapaligiran
sa Manila Bay.

"The SC decision was triggered
by the people's petition who as-
pire to enjoy Manila Bay, thus, rec-
lamation ia violative of the high
court's order," dagdag ni Casilao.

Hindi lamang ang mga rec-
lamation project sa Manila Bay
ang tinututulan ng solon kundi
ang buong National Reclamation
Plan (NRP) dahil ang mahihirap
na mangingisda ang tatamaan
nito bukod pa sa wawasakin din
nito ang marine biodiversity at
magdudulot ng pagbaha. **(Aries
Cano)**



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HATAW!

D'YARYO NG BAYAN
<http://www.hatawtabloid.com> P10.00

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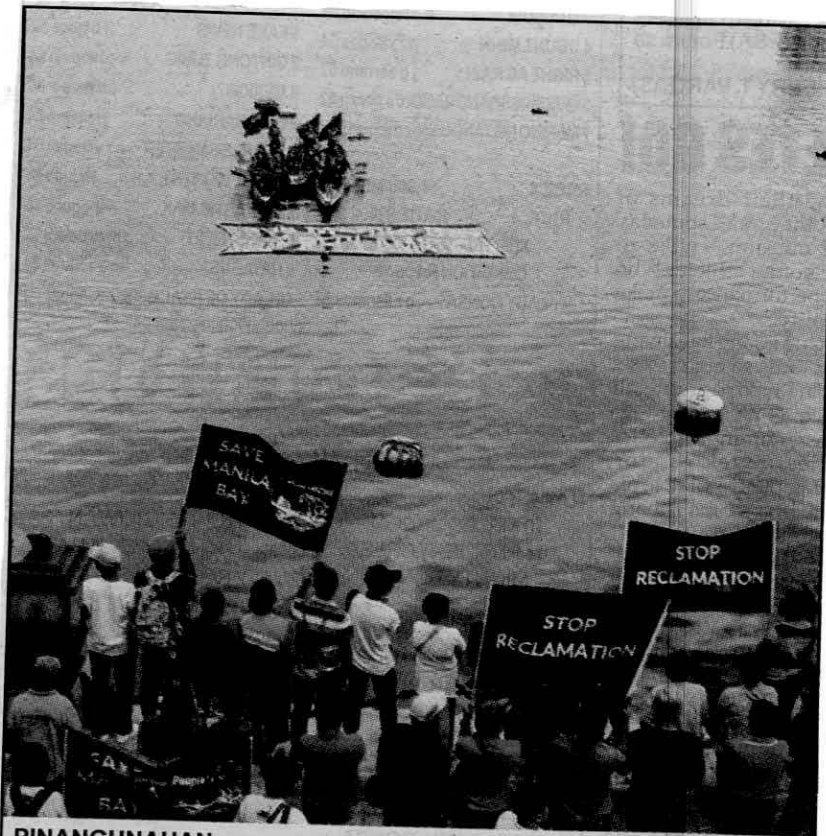
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PINANGUNAHAN ng grupong PAMALAKAYA ng mga mangingisda, urban poor at dragon boat federation at mga miyembro ng Manila Yacht Club ang protesta laban sa planong reklamasyon sa Manila Bay. (BONG SON)



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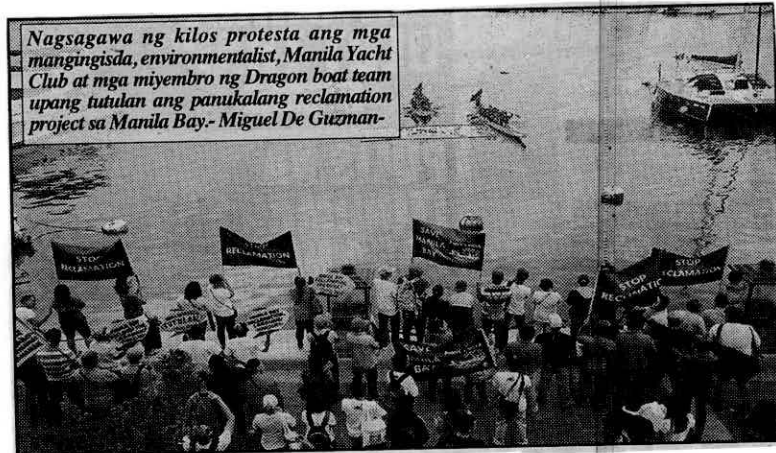
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PILIPINO
FILIPINO MIRROR MEDIA GROUP CORPORATION
MIRROR
- SALAMIN NG KATOTOHANAN -

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NAGPROTESTA ang iba't ibang grupo ng dragon boat team sa harapan ng Manila Yacht Club laban sa iminungkahing reclamation sa Manila Bay.
Kuha ni **NORMAN ARAGA**



Moratorium on reclamations pressed

By **ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ**

Progressive leaders and members of fisherfolk, urban poor, environment, and church groups called for a moratorium on reclamation projects that could threaten coastal and marine landscapes around the country.

They issued the call during a two-day conference titled "2nd People's Summit on the Impacts of Reclamation" held on March 26-27 in Manila.

The advocacy groups said at least 11.24 million people may significantly be impacted by reclamation projects covering 39,414 hectares that threaten coastal and marine landscapes around the country.

Majority of the reclamations or at least 80 percent of these projects are concentrated in Manila Bay. Other reclamation projects are located in Cebu, Iloilo, Laguna, Cagayan de Oro, Iligan City, Davao City, Davao ►9



FLUVIAL PROTEST — A group of fishermen, environmentalists, and dragon boat teams sail at Manila Bay to hold a protest yesterday. The protest is demanding for a stop to the planned reclamation projects in the bay that could threaten coastal and marine landscapes across the country. (Jansen Romero)

Moratorium on reclamations... ◀1

del Norte, Batangas, Bacolod City, Palawan, and Aklan.

These are hectares upon hectares of wetlands and marine habitats where rare migratory birds converge, where fish breed and feed, and where millions of people subsist for their sustenance and livelihood, the groups added.

These are the green corridors that are our first and last line of defense from growing risks of storm surges, floods, and other disasters, they also said.

International ocean conservation group Oceana also urged the government to uphold and enforce the law in several reclamation projects submitted to and being processed by the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA).

"We are alarmed by the apparent disregard of our progressive laws for protection of our vastly threatened

natural life support systems, and allowing these reclamation projects to pave our mangroves, sea grass beds, and other marine habitats," Oceana said.

"Dumping and filling of critical marine support systems in Manila Bay are not only violating our laws; these deprive our artisanal fisherfolk of their living and sustenance as well as fisheries and biodiversity which are heavily impacted," it added.

Oceana questioned the PRA and other national government agencies, and local government units for processing the application of these projects despite possible violations of the Local Government Code, Fisheries Code, Environmental Impact Statement System Act, and Climate Change Act, among other laws.

"Local government units expand their land territory further into the



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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sea, substantially changing its territorial boundaries. Under the Local Government Code and other laws, rigid requirements include a national law enacted for that purpose and a majority of votes for its approval is cast in a plebiscite," Oceana Philippines vice president Gloria Estenzo Ramos said.

"The affected stakeholders' state-guaranteed right of public participation should be honored. We dare ask the proponents of these projects to prove that they complied with these requirements and they can stand before the people that they did not violate our laws," she added.

Under the Local Government Code

or Republic Act 7160, a local government unit's boundaries may only be substantially altered by law enacted by Congress, she pointed out.

Section 10 of the same Code provides that no substantial alteration of boundaries of local government units shall take effect unless approved by a majority of the votes cast in a plebiscite called for the purpose in the political unit or units directly affected.

These are in addition to the other requirements of the Code and pertinent environmental laws, such as consultation of local communities, she also cited.

According to Ramos, some local government units use these illegal

dumping and filling projects to increase their internal revenue allotment (IRA) without going through the rigid process set by the Local Government Code.

"Thus, disbursements by the Department of Budget and Management of the IRA to a number of LGUs who have not complied with the legal requirements for reclamation projects are questionable," she added.

The reclamation summit was organized by the People's Network for the Integrity of Coastal Habitats and Ecosystems (People's NICHE), a national alliance advocating for ecological restoration as an alternative to land reclamation.



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BOSES ng PINOY, MATA ng BAYAN

Editorial **EDITORIAL** *Editorial*

Basura palit-bigas, ayos!

TOTOONG may pera sa basura at may mga kababayan tayong ito na ang ikinabubuhay. 'Yung iba, hindi lang pang-araw-araw ang nasusuportahan, marami na rin ang talagang umasenso.

Mayroong nangangalakal, bumibili o 'yung nagtatayo ng junkshop at mayroon ding nagre-recycle para maging bagong produkto na maaaring ibenta.

Kumbaga, nakabawas na sa basura, kumita pa.

Ito ang isa sa mga layunin ng panukalang-batas na isinusulong sa Kamara, ang pagbibigay ng isang kilong bigas kapalit ng isang kilo ng basura.

Sa House Bill 9170, mabibigyan ng incentives ang mga maghihiwalay ng recyclable plastics at magdadala ng mga basura sa redemption centers kapalit ng bigas, de-lata at pera.

Ang bawat kilo ng non-hazardous at recyclable plastic wastes ay may katapat na isang kilo ng bigas o cash equivalent, habang ang isang kilo ng metallic, non-hazardous, recyclable waste ay dalawang kilo naman ng bigas o katumbas na halaga ng pera.

Sa pamamagitan nito, tiyak na marami ang mahihikayat na mag-segregate at nang mabawasan ang problema sa basura.

Kaugnay nito, inaatasan ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Department of Agriculture (DA) at Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) na hikayatin ang mga indibidwal, may mga bahay at asosasyon na gawin ang segregation ng mga basura.

Kung magiging batas ang nasabing panukala at mabenta sa lahat, hindi lang mababawasan ang basura, hindi lang madaragdagan ang budget ng pamilya, kasama rin sa masosolb ang problema sa baha.

Sa madaling salita, marami ang makikinabang.



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BASURA PALIT BIGAS

Itinutulak sa Kamara

Mula sa pahina 1

Sa ilalim ng House Bill 9170 ni Deputy Minority Leader Harlin Neil Abayon, bibigyan ng insentibo ang mga taong maghihiwalay ng recyclable plastics at magdadala ng mga basura sa redemption centers.

Naniniwala si Abayon na makatutulong ito para maengganyo ang publiko na ipunin ang

mga basura para sa proper disposal.

Sa ilalim ng panukala, ang bawat isang kilo ng non-hazardous at recyclable plastic wastes ay may katapat na isang kilong bigas o cash equivalent.

Samantala, ang isang kilo naman ng metallic non-hazardous waste ay may katumbas na dalawang kilo ng bigas o

katapat na halaga sa pera.

Inaatasan ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Agriculture (DA) at Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) na hikayatin ang publiko, mga tahanan at mga asosasyon na gawin ang segregation ng mga basura sa kanilang mga lugar.

CONDE BATAÇ



Arroyo wapakels sa kalikasan – environmental group

INAKUSAHAN ng Alyansa Tigil Mina si House Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo na anti-poor at walang malasakit sa kalikasan matapos nitong ihayag na dapat umanong itaguyod ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang pagmimina sa bansa.

Ayon kay Jaybee Garganera, national coordinator ng ATM, tanda ng kawalan ng malasakit sa kapakanan ng mga

tao at kalikasan ang pahayag ni GMA dahil wala umano itong pakialam sa negatibong epekto ng pagmimina.

Sa halip na magsulong ng mapanirang industriya, mas dapat umanong payuhan ni GMA ang DENR na pagbutihin ang trabaho sa pamamagitan ng mahigpit na pagpapatupad ng mga batas sa kapaligiran.

Nakalulungkot aniya na hindi nakikita ng mambabatas ang negati-

bong dulot ng pagmimina sa mga komunidad at ang naiaambag nito sa pagbabago ng klima sa mundo dahil sa panirirwalang magiging malago ang ekonomiya ng bansa kung malakas ang mining industry.

Isinulong ni GMA ang pagpapatupad ng Philippine Mining Act of 1995 o RA 7942 noong isa pa siyang senador.

Nang maging Pangulo ng bansa, ipinatupad ni GMA ang Executive Or-

der 270-A noong 2004 na nagpabilis sa pagsisimula ng operasyon ng 40 malalaking proyekto sa pagmimina.

Ayon sa ATM, ngayong naging House Speaker na si GMA ay plano naman umano nitong ipasa ang bersyon ng cha-cha at pederalismo na magpapalakas sa mining industry at magbibigay oportunidad sa mga bayagang nais magmay-ari ng mga lupain sa Pilipinas. **(Mia Billones)**



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SANDAMAKMAK NA PLASTIC SA DAGAT, INIREKLAMO NG ENVIRONMENTALIST SA DAVAO

DUMULOG sa ginanap na 18th Davao City Council ang isang environmentalist bunsod ng hindi na masikmurang kalagayan sa mga nagkalat na basura sa karagatan ng Region 11 na kung saan isang balyena ang natagpuang patay at nang siyasatin ay natuklasan ang sandamakmak na mga plastic na basura na nakain nito na hindi natunaw.

Ayon kay Darrel Blachley, founder ng The Bone Collector Museum, nasa halos 40 kilos ng basura ang nakuha niya mula sa tiyan ng nasawing balyena.

Bunsod nito, hiniling ni Blachley na mas palakasin pa ng lungsod ng Davao ang mga batas para sa tamang pagtapon ng mga

basura upang hindi na ito mapunta pa sa karagatan.

“Ang problema lang dito ‘yung mga basura... ang mga basura ‘di mananatili sa karagatan lamang ng Davao. It goes to other countries as well. Ang mga balyena na makakain nito ay aabot din sa ibang lugar. ‘Yung last na balyena na nasawi sa Davao Gulf ay nakuhanan ng 40 kilo ng mga plastic na basura sa kanyang bituka. ‘Di niya ito matutunaw. Parang busog palagi ang balyena, kaya manghahina hanggang sa mamatay dahil wala nang nutrients na maipasok mula sa pagkain dahil nabarahan ng maraming plastic na basura ang kanyang tiyan,” paliwanag ni Darrel Blachley na nakabase sa Davao City.

**BENEDICT
ABAYGAR, JR.**



Gov't orders halt to Diwalwal mining

By **LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON**

The government has issued cease and desist order against all illegal mineral processing operators in Diwalwal, one of the country's richest gold ore deposits.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau and the Environment Management Bureau issued CDOs against over 300 ball and rod mills and carbon-in-pulp plant operators in Mt. Diwata in Monkayo, Compostela Valley, more commonly known as Diwalwal.

The issuance of the CDO followed the audit conducted on all the mineral processing plant operators in Diwalwal.

A mineral processing permit is required under the Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

The CDO effectively bars the plant owners from processing minerals without the necessary license and/

or permit. The concerned parties were also directed to explain why the CDO should not be made permanent.

The same order also directs the Diwalwal processing plant operators to immediately vacate the area in compliance of the geohazard threat advisory.

MGB director Wilfredo Moncano said the transfer of processing plants should be a priority for the local government units to prevent further contamination in Naboc River caused by the dumping of hazardous wastes from the illegal small-scale mining and processing operations in Mt. Diwalwal.

The transfer of the rod and ball mills and CIP processing plants is in compliance to the Naboc River clean-up as ordered by President Duterte, which he emphasized in his recent State of the Nation Address.



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Schools warned vs lead-painted medals

Environmentalists yesterday warned schools against lead-painted medals as administrators, teachers, parents and students prepare for end-of-school-year graduation and moving-up ceremonies next week.

The EcoWaste Coalition urged school authorities to ensure that only lead-safe mementos are procured and given to outstanding student

achievers after finding some cheap, unlabeled medals sold for as low as P25 in Quiapo and Sta. Cruz, Manila tainted with lead paint.

Out of 15 medal samples, nine were found to contain lead in the range of 1,316 to 22,900 parts per million as per x-ray fluorescence screening.

"Despite the regulatory ban, we still find school

achievement medals decorated with lead paint. Children's products must be safe from lead, a hazardous substance that is known to harm the brain, decrease intelligence, stunt development and growth, and cause behavioral disorders," EcoWaste Coalition chemical safety campaigner Thony Dizon said.

- Rhodina Villanueva



Climate impacts seen to reduce rice yields

By PIA LEE-BRAGO

The impacts of climate change are expected to reduce yields and nutritional value of rice as temperatures rise, hitting farmers particularly hard in regions such as Southeast Asia, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) said Tuesday.

Rice contributes to climate change, with methane emitted by flooded paddy fields responsible for 10 percent of total global methane emissions.

UNEP said "rice may be cheap, but production comes at a cost."

A single kilo of rice needs an average 2,500 liters of water to produce. Rice production uses over a third of the world's irrigation water.

"With rice production needing to grow by 25 percent over the next 25 years to meet projected future demand, it is clear something has to change in how we grow rice in order to limit climate change, conserve water and the environment, while at the same time providing farmers with improved, sustainable incomes," UNEP said, noting that this is where the Sustainable Rice Platform comes in.

The platform co-founded by UN Environment in partnership with the International Rice Research Institute and German development agency – Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit – was set up in 2011 to connect governments, development partners, businesses, farmers and non-governmental organizations around the world to develop and implement proven solutions that benefit rice producers, consumers and the environment.



Climate change reports are getting scarier



**BUSINESS
CLASS**
**RUDY
ROMERO**

THE world's scientific men and women continually produce reports detailing conclusions derived from their researches and observations. Some are looked-forward-to with greater intensity than others. With the passage of time the reports of elements of the climatological community have, arguably, become the most looked-forward-to of scientific reports.

There are two reasons for this development. The first is that climate change has become Earth's No.1 problem—he tweets of President Donald Trump to the country notwithstanding. The second reason is that the world's knowledgeable people, seeing the increasing frequency and ferocity of natural disasters, want a blow-by-blow account of how rapidly Earth's physical condition is deteriorating.

The reports of the climatological community have become more agitated—even almost despairing—in tone with every year that passes. A case in point is the National Climate Assessment, which is mandated by US law. The last Assessment was released to the public last year. It is a massive report; the findings of more than 1,000 previous research studies are incorporated in it.

Says the report: "Climate change is transforming where and how (people) live and presents growing challenges to human health and quality of life, the economy and the natural systems that support (people)." These challenges include worsening air pollution causing heart and lung problems, more diseases from insects, nastier allergies and potential for a jump in deaths during heat waves, the report states.

One of the report's co-authors, Dr. Katherine Hayhoe, had this to say: "We are seeing the things we said would happen now in real life." (To) a climate sci-

entist, it is almost surreal." Dr. Hayhoe doubtless had the wildfires in California, the hurricanes in Louisiana and Puerto Rico and the unprecedented floods in the Midwest—among many other disasters in mind.

The report could well have had the Philippines and other island countries in mind when it said that climate change would be especially costly for a nation's coasts because of rising seas and severe storm surges, which will lower property values." In some areas ... coastal flooding will likely force people to relocate," it said.

Another co-author, a University of Illinois climate scientist, said this in the

“The reports of the climatological community have become more agitated—even almost despairing—in tone with every year that passes.”

report: "We are going to continue to see severe weather events get stronger and more intense."

As in the rest of the planet, temperatures in the US have been rising at a progressively faster rate during the past century, according to the National Climate

Assessment. "The (mainland) 48 states have warmed one degree Celsius since 1900 and slightly higher in the last few decades, (and) by the end of the century the US is projected to be from 1.6 to 6.6 Celsius hotter, depending on how much greenhouse gasses are released into the atmosphere."

That should be a terrifying thought not only for Americans but for all the world's people. Everyone, i.e., except the President of the country that accounts for approximately 20 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions. Donald Trump's tweet on the most recent Northeast US cold spell ended with the question: "Whatever happened to Global Warming?"

Reacting to the tweet, another co-author of the report, an international policy expert of the World Resources Institute, said that the Trump administration was "continuing a campaign of not only denying but also suppressing the best of climate science."

Scary does not begin to adequately describe the latest report on global warming and its impact on the world's climate.



Daigdig

'Ambitious proposal' sa climate summit

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) - Umaasang mapalakas ang international action sa climate change, sinabi ni UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres sa world leaders na tanging ang pinakaambisyosong carbon-cutting countries ang ipapamalas sa pangunahing summit sa Setyembre.

Sa mensahe sa member states, inilatag ni Guterres ang mga plano para sa "action-oriented" summit na magtatampok ng malawak na "deliverables" mula sa mga gobyerno para mabigyan ng panibagong sigla ang paglaban sa global warming.

"It will be a summit of showcasing ambitious proposals for climate action and implementation," saad sa apat na pahinang dokumento na ipinadala sa UN member-states at nakita ng AFP nitong Martes.

Ang summit sa Setyembre 23 sa United Nations ay binansagang unang major stock-taking gathering ng world leaders sa climate change simula nang mabuo ang Paris agreement noong 2015.

Sa document, hiniling ni Guterres sa mga bansa na magpresinta ng "concrete, realistic plans" para mabawasan ang greenhouse gas emissions ng 45 poprsiyento sa susunod na dekada at maging zero pagsapit ng 2050.



Water: Too big a problem

COMMENTARY

EDDIE ILARDE

This is a sequel to what we wrote eight years ago about an impending water crisis all over the world, which can cause a “water war” among nations. In 2011, President Noynoy Aquino designated a “water czar to look into all concerns regarding water.” Now that our prognostication is coming true, people are asking, “Where is that water czar and what has he done?”

Two-thirds of the world today is facing a water crisis. This urgency screams in our face and, yet, the government tells us “not to panic.” Water is the most precious gift of nature but the most ignored and misused. One can last for three weeks without food but cannot, in three to seven days, without water.

Water, sunshine and air are “free goods”—God’s gift for all. In this country, however, water has become big business for a few smart (and greedy) businessmen, in partnership with the government; people say “don’t be surprised if tomorrow they sell us the sunshine and the air we breathe.” Meanwhile, “don’t panic” even as people elbow each other to collect water from fire trucks, unmindful if it is dirty or fit for drinking. They’re desperate and angry, but who’s panicking?

We have Presidential Decree No. 1067, known as The Water Code of the Philippines, dated Dec. 31, 1976, to implement the constitutional mandate that the government shall “conserve and develop the patrimony.” Patri-

mony includes waters which are under the ground, above the ground, in the atmosphere and of the sea within the territorial jurisdiction of the country—Sabah included. It is true that there is a need to educate people about water—about its preservation and conservation. But isn’t it quite late and ridiculous to tell people not to flush the toilet every time, not to take a bath daily (never mind if you repulse fellow MRT passengers with your smell), not to gargle twice when brushing the teeth, not to wash clothes too well, not to shower alone, not to drink eight glasses a day (just beer instead), not to do this, not to do that when using water—now that only air comes out of the tap?

Many countries today are not sparing time, effort and money to mitigate the horrible portent of a waterless world due to fast population growth and global warming. We should act fast to make use of what water assets we have. Pump more funds to clean up our abundant but polluted river system, dredge and resuscitate our fresh water sources—for example the shallow and polluted Laguna de Bay, which can supply water for the whole Manila area and environs

(now on the throes of drying up)—and resuscitate abandoned factory and irrigation pumps.

Just as important, make some valid suggestions mandatory, such as commercial buildings building rain catchments for their use, local government units financing the building of minireservoirs in every barangay to collect rainwater or pumped-up water from their aquifer, and the national government funding a massive desalination of sea water from Manila Bay, perhaps with donations from patriotic rich benefactors from the private sector such as Maynilad and Manila Water.

Otherwise, sequester the two money-rich water companies and let the government run them again, and give free water to a hungry and thirsty population before they run amok, which is worse than panicking.

Water is a problem. Listen to the people shouting, “*Tuuubiig!*”

Eddie Ilarde is a former senator, author, freelance writer and lifetime achievement awardee for radio and television. He is founding chair of Maharlika Movement For National Transformation and founding president of Golden Eagles Society for Senior Citizens. He is heard on radio in “Kahapon Lamang” over dzBB 594 Khz 1:30-2:30 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays. Address: PO Box 107, Makati City 1222.



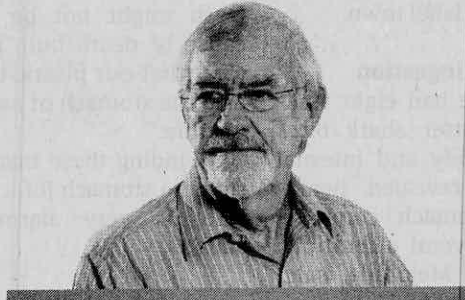
The lifeblood of a nation

Water. Man can live for about three weeks without food, but he/she dies after three to four days without water. Water is essential to life. We in Manila are fortunate that the Ramos administration privatized water service. It turned a government-run disaster with only about a quarter of the population with on-tap water 24 hours a day to today's situation where 98 percent of the Manila service area has 24-hour potable water access. Or at least those areas did, until the first week of March when supply to some 280,000 households ran out or became intermittent. This happened because sources of supply remained unchanged, even as there was a threefold increase in Manila Water's service connections—to about 990,000 in 2019 from 325,000 in 1997.

Manila Water has been blamed for the debacle, but it shouldn't be. Water concessionaires Maynilad and Manila Water have won a number of global awards recognizing their excellent performance, considered world-class for a developing country.

I blame previous governments. It has been known for decades that Manila needs more water sources. Yet government after government has dithered and done nothing. That's where you should put the blame. In fact, the original concession agreement in 1997 required the government to provide an additional dam within 10 years. It didn't. Manila Water saw the crisis coming and asked permission to develop other sources in February 2017, but the National Water Resources Board denied the request until March 2019. That meant two years were lost.

I don't want to downplay the suffering of people who went through days without water. It's not something we should ever have to experience, but we would have years ago if water supply wasn't privatized.



LIKE IT IS

PETER WALLACE

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) did a lousy job. When MWSS managed it, only 67 percent of the population was connected to the system. Of these, only 26 percent had 24/7 water service. System losses stood at an incredible 63 percent of total water production. But with Manila Water running it, it's 12 percent.

It's human nature to fly off the handle when things go wrong, but a little more balance could have been exhibited. Yes, it was bad that about 280,000 households suffered poor service, but they'd had 24/7 water practically uninterrupted for about 22 years. The exaggerated threat that there'd be no water worsened the situation as people scrambled to store more water than they needed, even those outside the affected area, draining La Mesa Dam, which is an important source for Manila Water.

What happened was the fault of previous governments sitting on their hands, not doing what was blatantly obvious: build another dam. It wasn't the fault of the present MWSS leadership and the concessionaires, which already warned the public of the impending disaster. So why want the head of MWSS administrator Rey Velasco when he's only been in the MWSS

for two years? Go after his predecessors.

The water crisis we are now facing boils down to a root problem: the source—our one and only source, Angat Dam, and the La Mesa Dam it feeds. They cannot support the (too rapidly) growing population. What if there's a massive earthquake, as Indonesia experienced, and the one dam we have is damaged? We'll have no water, and millions will die. So it's a relief that the Duterte administration did act and a contract has been signed to build the Kaliwa Dam—finally. But that will take about five years, so a quicker solution is needed.

The only feasible short-term solution is to tap Laguna Lake, and that can be done. In the longer term, though, Laguna de Bay must be cleared of fish pens and dredged. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo did issue a contract to a Belgian firm to do just that. President Noynoy Aquino, bless his heart, canceled it due to alleged irregularities. But in his do-nothing style, he never replaced it with something else. Laguna has since gone from 10 to 12 meters deep to 2.5 to 3 meters.

The water regulatory setup is a mess. Water regulation and management need to be under one authority, with one law. It should be adequately funded to deal with chronic water woes. The House Speaker has introduced a bill to create a water department. It should be supported, as we need a single agency with overall control of our water systems.

New clean water sources are needed with urgency, and people have to pay for it. People also have to conserve water because far too much is wasted. I've seen no discussions on being more thoughtful in our water consumption. Reducing our personal use is a whole other subject in itself, and the government needs to act on it, too.

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MWSS chief to push for Laguna de Bay rehab to boost Metro's water supply

METROPOLITAN Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) Administrator Reynaldo V. Velasco will push for the rehabilitation of Laguna de Bay to boost water supply for Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

At a press conference on Tuesday, Velasco said he will recommend to Malacañang the massive rehabilitation of Laguna de Bay, a 90,000-hectare freshwater lake.

Aside from the Kaliwa Dam, Velasco said Laguna de Bay is a potential source of freshwater. However, because of its current condition, Laguna de Bay will require massive rehabilitation, he said.

Maynilad Water Services Inc. is drawing 150 million liters per day from Laguna de Bay which it treats at the Putatan Water Treatment Plant. The recently operated Cardona Water Treatment Plant of Manila Water Co. Inc. started drawing water from Laguna de Bay on March 14. By the end of the year, it is expected to produce 100 MLD.

The Laguna de Bay, he said, can potentially supply around 12,000 MLD of raw water.

"That is why I said maybe, let us push through with the program to dredge Laguna de Bay and remove problems so that it will not be costly to use," he said.

Velasco defended the decision of the Duterte administration to pursue the P12.2 billion, 600 MLD New Centennial Water Source—Kaliwa Dam Project against critics, saying it is by far cheaper than the \$410-million Kaliwa Intake Weir Project offer of a Japanese firm. Aside from Kaliwa Dam, the Duterte administration is also eyeing the revival of the Wawa Dam in Montalban, Rizal.

Velasco said the Duterte administration has put in place short-term, medium-term and long-term solutions to the perennial water-supply shortage in Metro Manila and nearby provinces, including the possibility of drawing more water from Laguna de Bay. **Jonathan L. Mayuga**



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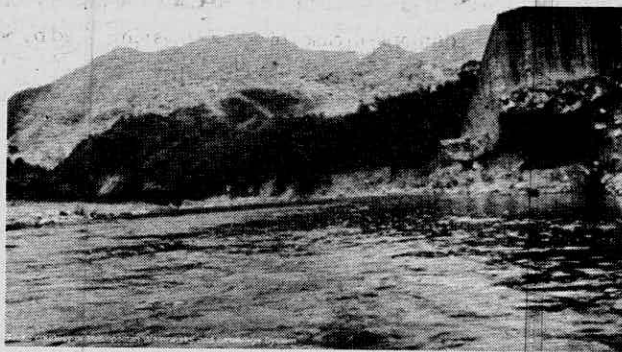
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ODA financing means cheaper Kaliwa project cost

THE use of highly concessional Official Development Assistance (ODA) financing to construct the New Centennial Water Source-Kaliwa Dam Project will benefit Filipino consumers more with cheaper project and financing costs rather than if the project were to go through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) route, which would entail additional charges passed on to water users so whoever the private proponent will be can recoup its investments, Department of Finance (DOF) Assistant Secretary Antonio Joselito Lambino II has said.

Lambino pointed out that even if going through the PPP route to build the Kaliwa Dam would be at "no cost to the government," it does not mean "no cost to consumers."

"The higher project and financing costs of a solicited PPP would have been borne by users, eventually," Lambino said during a press briefing. "There's no such thing as free water."



Lambino recalled that in January 2014, the then-Investment Coordination Committee (ICC) restructured the project components of the Kaliwa Dam and changed the mode of financing from ODA to PPP with an estimated project cost of P18.7 billion. This amount was subsequently slashed to P12.25 billion when the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)-ICC approved the recommendation of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) to revise the project's funding com-

ponent. This approval was subsequently confirmed by the NEDA Board, which is chaired by President Duterte.

An ICC document from 2014 stated that under a PPP mode for the Kaliwa Dam project, "amortization payments will be financed through the imposition of a Water Security Charge as a separate line item in the water bill of the consumers," Lambino said.

Lambino said that when the Duterte administration took over and decided to undertake the project through ODA, the

project cost went down from P18.7 billion under a PPP scheme to P12.2 billion. Even if fees and interest payments are taken into account in completing the project through ODA, the cost would still be significantly lower at P14.5 billion compared to the estimated price tag of P18.7 billion under a PPP scheme, he added.

"The ODA has helped us ensure faster implementation and has allowed us to finance the project at rates lower than the private sector would be able to get," said Lambino.

As for the unsolicited proposal of the Japan-based Global Utility Development Corp. (GUDC), Lambino noted that it only involved the construction of the Kaliwa intake weir, which is just a portion of the whole project.

"A weir would have made the project incomplete and unable to address the long term needs and the water shortage problems we will continue to face into the future," Lambino said.



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Mas malalang epekto ng El Niño sa Abril

MAAARING magdulot ng mas tuyot at mainit na panahon ang pananalasa ng El Niño sa bansa ngayong Abril.

Ayon sa Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services (PAGASA) posible ang "way-below normal rainfall" 26 na probinsiya at "below-normal rainfall" sa 57 probinsiya sa susunod na buwan.

Inaasahan ding 51 probinsiya o 61 porsiyento ng bansa ang matinding masasalanta ng tagtuyot bago magtapos ang Abril ngayong taon habang nasa 32 probinsiya ang makararanas ng dry spell.

"April is when we see severe impacts in terms of meteorological drought," pahayag ni Analiza Solis, officer-in-charge ng PAGASA Climate Monitoring and Prediction Section.

Iपालिwanag ni Solis ang tagtuyot na namamarka ng tatlong buwang way-below normal rainfall o limang magkakasunod na buwang ng below-normal rainfall.

Sa kabilang banda, ang dry spell ay maaaring dalawang buwang way-below normal rainfall o tatlong buwan ng below-normal rainfall.

Sa talakayan na ginanap kamakailan sa Quezon City, pinaalalahanan ni Solis ang publiko para sa mararanasang init lalo't sa pagtataya ng PAGASA mararanasan din sa susunod na buwan ang maximum temperature na 28.9 degree Celsius sa mga kabundukan ng Luzn hanggang 38.9°C sa mababang lugar ng Mindanao at 39.5 sa Hilagang Luzon.

"We'll likely have a prolonged dry season," aniya.

Ang maagang pagkawala ng northeast monsoon o 'amihan' ngayong taon at ang posibleng pagkaantala ng tag-ulan dahil sa El Nino ay nangangahulugang mahaharap ang bansa sa tagtuyot, ani Solis.

Inaasahan ng PAGASA na unti-until nang huhupa ang tagtuyot pagpatak ng Mayo, bagamat "near-normal rainfall" pa rin ang mararanasan sa maraming bahagi ng Hilagang Luzon at Mindanao, ang possible itong mararanasan ng Visayas at ibang bahagi ng Mindanao sa Hunyo.

PNA



EARTH HOUR ACTIVITIES

Mall-wide celebration

SM malls across the country will take part in the symbolic hour-long lights off at exactly 8:30 p.m. on 30 March in order to spark awareness on how to take care and take actions for a healthy planet.

Now on its 11th year with SM, Earth Hour's worldwide theme for 2019 is "#Connect2Earth," a global campaign that aims to highlight the importance of nature. The theme focuses on biodiversity. It seeks to raise awareness of climate change and get the community involved

weather stations, solar rooftops and environmental campaigns such as the Green Film Festival. For more information visit www.smcare.com.ph, www.facebook.com/OfficialSMCares or email smcares@smsupermalls.com.



SUSTAINABILITY ambassadors from the different departments of City of Dreams lead the hotel's Earth Hour 2019 activities.



WITNESS the Earth Hour program from Pan Pacific Manila's Sunset Lounge.

in helping care for the environment and all living species. Participating SM malls will come up with their own creative executions and programs in raising awareness about climate change and in getting the community to participate in a collective effort to care for the environment.

Aside from Earth Hour observance, SM has several other environmental sustainability programs including the Trash to Cash recycling markets in SM malls, daily water recycling system, automated

Ceremonial parade of lights

Pan Pacific Manila will join millions of people in the observance of Earth Hour on 30 March. The hotel will not only switch off lights in its main public and office areas from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m., it will also host a ceremonial parade of lights at the lobby culminating the symbolical lighting of the Earth

Hour logo installation at the seventh floor.

Diners may bask in the beauty of Manila Bay sunset, relax in the cool summer breeze and enjoy the screening of *2012* at 6 p.m. followed by performances and dance numbers at the al fresco Sunset Lounge & Bar. To make the evening more indulgent, Unlimited Pasta and Wings will be available from 6 to 9:30 p.m.

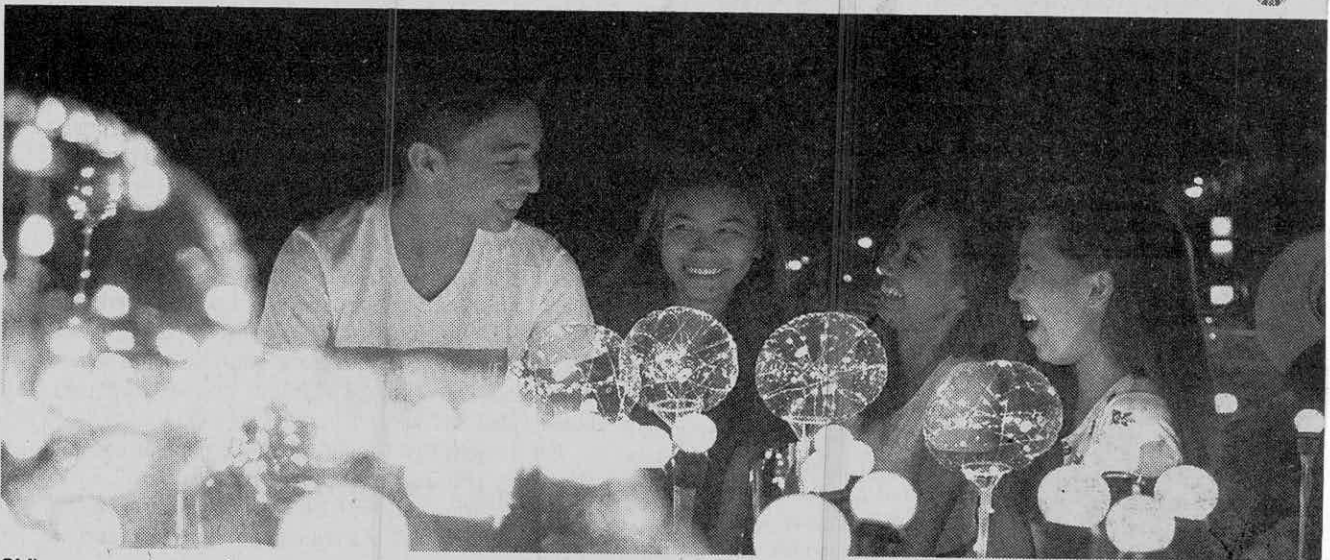
For reservations, call (02) 318-0788 or email dining.ppmnl@panpacific.com. Price is subject to change without prior notice.

A walk to save

City of Dreams Manila in partnership with Bantay Kalikasan, ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation Inc.'s environmental arm, is taking part in the global annual Earth Hour on 30 March. The event to be held at the luxury resort's main casino entrance, also highlights both proponents' pledge for environmental protection and a sustainable future through practicing eco-efficient operations.

Two hundred employee-volunteers and a contingent from Bantay Kalikasan will lead the symbolic walk at 8 p.m. around the property. It will be followed by the observance of the ceremonial switch off from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m., simultaneous with other countries. The resort will be turning off the lights of its dome dubbed the "Fortune Egg-City of Dreams" and the Manila Bay area's iconic landmark.

For inquiries, call 800-8080, e-mail guestservices@cod-manila.com or visit www.cityofdreamsmanila.com.



SM's program aims to raise awareness of climate change and to get the community involved in helping care for the environment.



Trusted Since 1990

The Manila Times

Green architecture

WINSTON Churchill said, "We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us." Frank Gehry's insight on the work of an architect is: "Architecture can profoundly affect a place, sometimes transform it. Architecture and any art can transform a person, even save someone." In my years of experience as an architect and urban planner, I have been fortunate to share many unforgettable and life-changing moments with clients and colleagues and in my speaking engagements.

As professionals in the field, we ought to familiarize ourselves with emerging trends in architectural design that are changing the way people experience the world. In our profession, this implies learning and practicing green architecture. Broadly speaking, green architecture minimizes harmful effects on human health and addresses environmental sustainability.

Architects all over the world are incorporating green sustainable practices into the design process. As a result, more and more buildings include trees and use solar panels, and architects are seeking creative solutions to achieve natural lighting and ventilation with sustainable materials. The US, Australia, Italy, Singapore, and the Scandinavian countries are leading the way in green architecture. It is about time that we explored the possibilities of green architecture here in the Philippines. It is a timely moment in our history to apply the principles of green architecture to building design and to add value to the urban renewal initiatives in our country today.

To adopt green architecture we need to employ its principles in the design process. These include: energy, water, and land use efficiency; low environmental impact and conservation of natural characteristics; material efficiency; low maintenance cost; waste reduction; use of renewable energy; and indoor environmental quality.

Let us take a look at some of the world's most innovative green architecture designs to have an idea of where we can possibly innovate next.

An energy-efficient design is not necessarily complex. If we study the natural environment well, we can identify opportunities to incorporate sustainable techniques and designs to the building. For instance, the Center for Sustainable Energy Technologies (CSET) in Ningbo, China uses unique



FELINO A. PALAFOX, JR.

under-floor heating panels that use geothermal energy to heat and cool the atmosphere depending on the season. Like many green buildings, it includes a photovoltaic system that provides energy to the entire structure. The Diamond Lotus Riverside in Vietnam, when completed this month, will be the first in a series of apartments with a LEED certification in the apartments category. The development boasts the highest density of plants with 8,000 square meters of trees in the balconies of the facade and will feature meditation gardens and an ecological park along the river. These locations provide residents clean fresh air and an enjoyable view of the waterfront development right in front of the building.

Green architecture is sustainable when it uses materials with energy-efficient features and benefits. We can recycle materials — create insulation from recycled newspapers and cardboards and incorporate cotton insulation from recycled denim, stone and steel. Renewable materials like certified wood and solar tiles contribute to lower carbon emissions because they are durable, locally available, non-toxic, and with low volatile organic compounds (VOC).

If you are familiar with "the poor man's timber," a.k.a. bamboo, you may have realized how abundant and renewable a resource it is in this part of the world. Here in the Philippines, poor communities will use bamboo to build houses until they have money to reconstruct with stone or concrete. Architects in Southeast Asia use bamboo to design modern, contemporary buildings like the Ecological Children Activity and Education Center in Thailand. Using bamboo in architecture contributes to social sustainability. It generates jobs for both the supplier farmers and construction workers who get a chance to extend their knowledge from traditional bamboo construction techniques to contemporary ways of building.

Indoor environmental quality refers to comfortable interior space

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GREEN ARCHITECTING

■ PALAFOX FROM A5

Green

through natural temperature control, proper ventilation, and the use of products that do not give off toxic or compound gases.

The headquarters of 3M in Italy is a good example. It uses interior signs, lights, and colors to create a welcoming environment favorable to the synergy inside the building. It was clever of the architects and designers

to incorporate high-performance, sound-absorbing materials and carpeting. The Artists Retreat in Sri Lanka — which functions as a residence, studio, art storage and gallery — was designed to provide artists and guests a cordial space for interaction and reflection. A rooftop pond with water lilies and freshwater fish keeps the spaces beneath it cool, and a screen of perforated brickwork provides air voids in the facade, allowing for a cooler microclimate and filtered

sunlight. This setting contradicts the city and noisy expressway outside it and allows art enthusiasts to experience culture and history undisturbed.

In recent years, we have observed how the green design process requires a highly integrated approach that involves all members of the development team — the developer, project manager, architects, landscape architects, engineers, contractors, facilities managers, and others. Experience has shown that

this collaborative approach leads to solutions that might not have been possible in a traditional development process. No architect is alone in his work. The designs he creates benefit or harm end users. I remind the architects I work with to keep in mind the beneficiaries of our projects, helping them realize that we do not inherit the earth from our ancestors — we borrow it from our children. Let us continue designing spaces for all to enjoy now and in the future.