

02 JUN 2013

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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

02 JUN 2013

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

DENR partners with MPIC to clean 20 dirtiest 'esteros'

By **ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ**

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has forged a five-year partnership deal with the Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC) to clean 20 dirtiest waterways or "esteros" that drain into Pasig River and ultimately into Manila Bay.

Under DENR's Adopt-an-Estero/Water Body program, the water bodies covered by the DENR-MPIC accord are Esteros de Vitas, San

Lazaro, Kabulusan, Magdalena, Binondo, Dela Reina, Sampaloc, San Sebastian, San Miguel, Valencia, Uliuli, Paco, Pandacan, Tanque, Balete, Provisor, Concordia, Sunog Apog, San Antonio Abad, and Quiapo.

The partnership was sealed through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu and MPIC president and CEO Jose Ma. Lim.

"Together, we will continue to clean every estero, assess their water quality and

4

identify sources of pollution," Cimatu said.

"We will take appropriate actions against establishments discharging untreated wastewater to prevent them from further poisoning these waterways," he added.

For his part, Lim assured that the MPIC—through its subsidiary Maynilad Water Services Inc.—"remains fully committed to protecting the environment."

"Upon acknowledging the objective of the DENR to promote stewardship among the private sector, MPIC is set to assist government agencies in improving the water quality parameters of the country's water bodies," Lim added.

Under the MOU, MPIC agreed not only to fund the rehabilitation and water quality assessment of the adopted esterros, but also spear-

head the mobilization of neighboring schools and communities for the cleanup activities.

It also assured that Maynilad will fast-track the rehabilitation of its sewer lines, intensify the connection of domestic and non-domestic customers to the existing sewerage network, install collector pipes and easements, and conduct information and education campaigns related to proper wastewater treatment and disposal.

Meanwhile, DENR will provide MPIC with all the relevant data for the conduct of the water quality assessment study, issue the necessary permits and approvals to enable the MPIC and Maynilad to perform their responsibilities, and take appropriate action against violators within the adopted waterways.



02 JUN 2013

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

CANADIAN GARBAGE OUT OF SUBIC AT LAST

BY HENRY EMPEÑO

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—Goodbye and good riddance.

The 69 garbage-laden shipping containers temporarily stored at the Subic Bay Freeport, including two that were recently transferred from the Port of Manila, finally sailed out of here early Friday morning to be returned to their sender in Canada.

The containerized wastes were loaded onto the *M/V Bavaria*, a Liberian-flagged cargo carrier that arrived here on Thursday afternoon.

Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) Chairman Wilma T. Eisma, who briefed mediemen on the loading procedure, said the reexportation of the Canadian trash was treated here "like any other commercial shipment" and with the ship offloading and loading other cargoes at the port.

Loading of the 69 container vans began at 9 p.m. on Thursday and was completed more than five hours later at 3:19 a.m. on Friday, with a one-hour break at midnight.

SBMA deputy administrator for port operations Rani Cruz said that 127 other commercial containers were loaded thereafter until 6:30 a.m. before *M/V Bavaria* finally left port at 7:22 a.m.

Eisma said the vessel will make a stopover at the Kaohsiung port in Taiwan to unload and load other cargoes before heading for its final destination, the port of Vancouver.

M/V Bavaria will reach Canada after 22 days, port officials here said.

The reexportation of what were originally declared by the shipper as "plastic scraps" came 15 days after the Philippines recalled its ambassador and consuls to Canada over the latter's failure to take back the garbage-filled vans that were brought to the Philippines between 2013 and 2014.

The 69 reexported containers were part

of a total of 103 container vans exported to the Philippines by Chronic Inc. (Canada) and consigned to three local companies: Chronic Inc., Chronic Plastics and Live Green Enterprise.

According to the Bureau of Customs, which took custody of the containers following the discovery of the wastes inside, 34 container vans were transferred to the Metro Clark Waste Management Corp. in Pampanga for disposal, while two remained at the Manila International Container Port (MICP).

The rest were transferred to the New Container Terminal here in Subic for eventual repatriation.

The reexportation is apparently being funded by the Canadian government, which had committed to ship back the garbage from the Philippines.

A reexportation order issued on May 7 by MICP District Collector Erastus Sandino Austria quoted Canadian officials as saying that Canada is "prepared to cover the cost of, and make the necessary arrangements to being the waste materials contained in the subject 69 containers."

The reexportation of waste materials to its country of origin, Austria said, "is legally anchored" under Section 1145 of the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act, which allows such procedure "if goods are found to be injurious to public health."

To facilitate the reexport, ownership over the subject shipment is ceded to the Canadian government, "who shall oversee and ensure that the same are returned to the country of origin, Canada, with dispatch," the May 7 order also indicated.

The removal of the Canadian trash here was warmly applauded by the Subic Freeport community, with SBMA's Eisma describing the pullout as "one proud moment for all Filipinos."

"We thank President Rodrigo Duterte for his decisive action that brought about a satisfactory conclusion to this sordid chapter in our history," Eisma added.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

Manila Standard

A-4
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

02 JUN 2013

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

GROUPS LAUD RETURN OF CANADA TRASH

VARIOUS environmentalist groups described the reimportation of the controversial shipment of garbage to Canada as a victory for the Filipino people.

After six years, the 69 shipping containers of illegally dumped Canadian trash finally left the port of Subic midnight last Friday on its way back to the North American country to comply with the Basel Convention.

The Basel Convention prohibits the transportation of hazardous waste from country to country within the Pacific.

"[This is] a victory for the rule of law, morality and the environment," said Ecowaste Coalition, RightOnCanada, and IPEN in a joint statement.

"We feel jubilant that 69 containers of Canadian rubbish are now homeward bound after being stranded here for so long. The Philippines is not the world's dumpsite. Never again shall we allow other countries to trash our dignity, our

people's health and the environment," said Aileen Lucero, Ecowaste national coordinator.

"This is a victory for the environment and a victory for the rule of law. The Canadian government is now finally going to comply with the Basel Convention and take responsibility for its own wastes. This is what environmental responsibility means," added Kathleen Ruff of RightOnCanada.

From 2013 to 2014, more than 100 containers containing 2,400 tons of trash from Canada arrived in the Philippines, declared as scrap plastics for recycling but eventually found to contain unsorted plastics, household garbage, used adult diapers and electronic waste.

At least 48 container vans consigned to Live Green Enterprise arrived with no prior importation clearance from the Environmental Management Bureau in four batches between December 2013 to January 2014. **Joel E. Zurbano**



EDITORIAL

VIGILANCE PAYS OFF

AS 69 CONTAINERS of trash from Canada dumped in the Philippines six years ago are finally being shipped out back to Vancouver after a smoldering diplomatic row between Manila and Ottawa, we acknowledge the unabated efforts of environmental groups on the issue.

Beyond doubt, the resolute muscle displayed by Greenpeace, EcoWaste Coalition, Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, BAN Toxics and the global Break Free from Plastic Movement has paid off.

The sail back to Canada from Subic Bay, the

former drydock facility of the US Seventh Fleet, on board the *MV Bavaria* will doubtless be lengthy, but at least the trash, superciliously labeled as recyclables and sent to the Philippines from 2013 to 2014, are now being returned to sender, addressee well known.

We take the word of Canada's Environment Minister Catherine McKenna, who welcomed the news of the trash being returned, "We committed with the Philippines and we're working closely with them."

Large quantities of waste plastic and other garbage heaps have been redirected to Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines after China, which had received the bulk of scrap plastic from round the world, slammed shut its doors to foreign refuse in 2018 in efforts to clean up its environment.

Von Hernandez, global coordinator from Break

Free From Plastic advocacy group, has aptly said, "We've seen pristine communities... transformed into dump sites because of a tsunami of waste shipments from the US, UK and Australia as a result of the China ban."

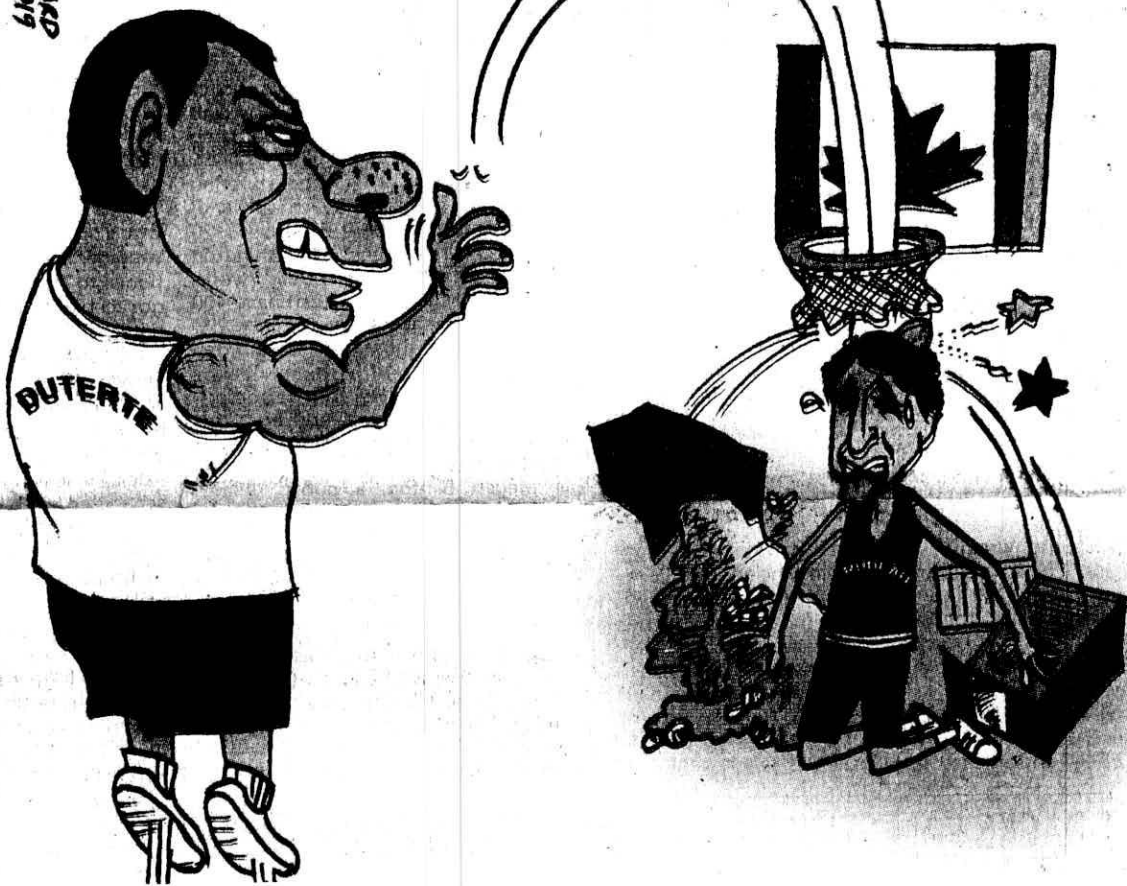
As the EcoWaste Coalition has said, the Philippines is not the world's dump site.

And as the hired container ship *Bavaria*, which sails under the flag of Liberia which now flutters in the sun and rain across the vast Pacific, with tons of garbage on deck, diplomatic observers are seeing a possible reconciliation between Canada and the Philippines.

Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. has advised recalled home diplomats to get ready for their flights back to the land of the maple leaf.

That environmentalists have been relentlessly on the qui vive has done the Philippines a good prop. Well done.

BLAD
M.A. STANDARD
JUNE 02, 2013





LILY'S FILES

ni LILY REYES

SWERTE talaga ang Pinas sa ilalim ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte.

Habang pauwi sa Canada ang 69 container van ng basura na itinambak sa atin, siya naman ang pag-uwi ni Pang. Duterte ng nasa P300 halaga ng negosyong Hapon at tulong ng Hapon sa bansa.

Iniuwi ang mga basura ng Canada nang walang gastos ang pamahalaang Pilipinas.

Nauna rito, sinabi ni Pang. Duterte na ibabalik ng Pinas ang basura at babalikatin nito maging

ang gastos dito. Matatandaang ang gastos sa pagpapauwi ang isang naging rason ng Canada para hindi kumilos sabay sabing walang paki ang gobyernong Canada dahil mga pribadong kompanya umano ang mga sangkot.

Sa huli, gusto ng Canada na sa huling bahagi na lang ng Hunyo kukunin ang basura ngunit hindi pumayag si Pang. Digong at kasunod na nito ang pagpapauwi ng Pilipinas ng mga ambasadador at konsul natin.

DOBLE SWERTE NG PINAS SA MGA BANSANG JAPAN, CANADA

At sa huli nga, iniuwi ng Canada ang basura nito.

Maganda naman ang pabaon ng mga Hapones sa delegasyon ni Pang. Duterte na bumisita sa Japan.

Halagang P300 bilyon lahat ang mga pangnegosyo at libreng bigay ng Japan sa Pinas.

Nasa 25 bilyon ang grant at gagamitin ito sa pagpapaunlad ng Mindanao.

Imprastraktura ang nakikita ng Japan na kailangan ng Pinas kaya malaking halaga ang inilaan para rito.

Ang mga kompanyang Japan naman ay

nangakong magtatayo sila ng mga negosyo sa Pinas.

Bilang ganti, siyempre, sinabi ng Pangulo na ligtas ang pamumuhunan ng mga Hapon sa bansa at hindi masasayang ang salapi ng mga ito.

Kung iisipin, pangalawang partner ng Pilipinas ang Japan at sinasabing mga Kano ang pangunahing dayuhang mamumuhunan dito.

Isa sa mga proyekto ngayon ng Japan ang subway na manggagaling sa Quezon City at papunta ito sa Taguig na sa kalaunan ay hahantong sa Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Napakalaking bagay ang subway na tren ang bibiyahe para maiwasan ng mga Pinoy ang sobrang trapik sa Metro Manila.

Ang lilikhaing mga pabrika, imprastraktura at iba pang negosyo at proyektong Hapon sa halagang P300 bilyon ay lilikha umano ng mahigit 80,000 at malaking solusyon ito sa kakulangan ng pagkakakitaan ng mga Pinoy.

Sana, mapahalagahan ang lahat ng ito at sa mga darating na panahon na maaaring wala na si Pang. Digong sa pwesto ay 'di babuyin ng mga korap.



02 JUN 2013

02 JUN 2013
DATE

TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/ _____



Ginawang basurahan ang ating bansa

DITO ako humahanga kay Pres. Digong Duterte kahit siya masalita ay nakikitaan naman natin siya ng pag-gawa. Tinagurian mang kanto boy at palamurang Presidente, masasabi kong action man naman siya. Kaya siya binoto ng higit 16 milyong Pilipino dahil may sarili siyang style ng panunuyo sa ating mga kababayan. Si Digong ang unang Presidenteng galing Mindanao. Nagmula sa pagka-mayor ng Davao City at lundag agad sa Presidente ng Pilipinas.

Ngayon tungkol naman sa usapin ng basura na tinapon sa atin ng Canada, South Korea, Australia at Hong Kong. Aba'y anong klaseng kaibigang bansa naman ang mga

ito? Ginawa naman na nila tayong basurahan. We are a sovereign nation and should be treated with respect. Siguro naman ay meron silang mga dumpsite sa sarili nilang bansa, bakit kailangan pa nilang magtapon ng dumi nila sa ating bansa? Hindi kaya may sabwatang nangyayari riyan? Basta't pera ang umiral, may himalang namamagitan diyan di ba?

May magandang resulta ang galit ni Digong sa Canada dahil sa ngayon ay bumibiyahe na pabalik sa kanilang bansa ang 69 containers na basura. Tira-tira na lang yan dahil ang iba ay naitapon na sa ating mga dumpsite. Kung hindi pa nagbanta si Digong ay parang pagong kung kumilos ang Canada na animo'y ayaw kunin ang sarili nilang basura. Sa pagkakaalam, ko mahigpit ang Canada pagdating sa basura. Hindi kaya ang basurang itinapon sa atin ay galing sa ating mga kababayan na nagnenegosyo sa Canada? Sana mali ako ng akala pero malakas ang kutob ko sa sitwasyong ito.

Sana ganyan din ang gawin ng Australia at Hongkong. Magkusang hakutin ang kanilang basura. Tulad ng ginawa ni Digong sa US na ibalik ang Balangiga Bells ay nakitaan natin ng resulta kaya huwag nilang subukan ang kakayahan ng ating Presidente.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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Trusted Since 1933

The Manila Times



PAGE



UPPER
LOWER



PAGE 1
STORY



MATTER
STORY



EDITORIAL



CART

02 JUN 2013

DATE

Manila to ship back trash to Hong Kong

IN keeping with the government's policy to stop other countries from dumping their waste on the Philippines, the Bureau of Customs (BoC) is set to ship back to Hong Kong the tons of garbage it sent to the country in February.

Mindanao International Container Terminal (MICT) port collector John Simon said they were instructed by Malacañang to see to it that the garbage would be sent back to Hong Kong.

The electronic trash arrived at the MICT subport in Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental on Feb. 15, 2019.

The cargo, shipped by Hin Yuen Tech. Env. Ltd. and owned by Crowd Win Industrial Limited based in Pasay City, was abandoned.

When the shipment was inspected, Customs authorities found 25,610 kilograms of crushed electronic devices such as computers and cellular phones.

Simon said the electronic trash would be shipped back to Hong Kong on Monday.

Aileen Lucero, the national coordinator of the EcoWaste Coalition, said the electronic trash was a "trial shipment." She said 70

► **Trash A2**

container vans of trash were waiting to be shipped to Manila.

Simon said the BoC had been vigilant in detecting garbage ship-

ments since last year, when tons of waste materials misdeclared as "recyclable" materials from South Korea were unloaded at the MICT.

About 50 container vans of waste materials shipped to Misamis Oriental in October last year have been sent back to South Korea. The remaining 5,000 tons of garbage are in the stockyard of the Verde Soko, the South Korean company, after the BoC issued a warrant of seizure

and detention, following the filing of appropriate charges against the South Korean firm.

On Thursday, the Philippines sent back to Canada the tons of trash it shipped to the Philippines in 2014.

CRIS DIAZ AND RAFFY AYENG



Remate

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6
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

1
 2
 3
 4
 5
STORY

1
 2
 3
 4
 5
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

02 JUN 2019

DATE

BASURA NATING LAHAT

NITO lang nakaraang Biyernes, maraming makakalikasang grupo ang natuwa dahil sa wakas, nakaalis na pabalik sa Canada ang nasa 69 container van ng basura.

Ito ang mga tinawag na "Canadian wastes" na dinala rito sa Pilipinas na naipuslit sa Bureau of Customs.

Bukod pa rito, napabalita rin noong mga nakaraang linggo na nalusutan din tayo ng mga basura na galing sa South Korea, Hong Kong at Australia.

Marami rito ang nakalusot sa Customs at sa DENR, dahil mali ang deklarasyon na laman ng mga container van.

"Yung iba, "recycled fuel products" o panggatong daw sa mga planta.

"Yung iba naman daw ay "used electronics" o mga pataon na piyesa ng appliances o computers. Pero kahit ano pa ang itawag nila, basura pa rin 'yan.

Eeewww, sabi nga ng mga

friend kong kolehiyala.

Kakaiba rin ang kapal ng mukha ng mga bansang ito, para ipadala sa Pilipinas ang mga basura nila. Ano sa tingin nila sa bansa natin – isang malaking basurahan?

Nakatatawa lang isipin na pati ba naman basura ay imported na rin.

Sa kabila ng sobra ng ganda ng mga gubat, isla, at mga bundok natin? Sa kabila ng ganda ng mga tao at mga tourist spot natin, bagsakan lang pala tayo ng basura nila? Ano sila, hilo?

Mabuti na lang at nagmatigas si Presidente Duterte at ipinilit na kailangan nang maibalik sa Canada at sa South Korea ang tone-toneladang mga basura na ito sa lalong medaling panahon. Thumbs up!

Sa Canada, medyo nagkalamigan pa nga ang relasyon ng dalawang bansa natin para lang ma-pressure sila



ALIN ANG NAIBA

NI ALIN FERRER

na kumilos. Pero ganoon talaga, kelangan minsan, iparamdam sa kanila na seryoso tayo. We're not kidding, man!

Sa South Korea naman, nakuha sa mabuting usapan. Kaya mabilis at tahimik na ibiniyahe pabalik ang basura nila. Samsamed!

Iba talaga tayong mga Asyano 'pag nagka-intindiha na, hindi masyadong kumplikado ang usapan.

Mahalaga ang mga nangyaring ito, kasi tuwing June 5, ipinagdiriwang ang Pandaigdigang Araw ng Kalikasan o World Environment Day.

Ngayong 2019, ang sentro ng tema ay kung paano lulutasin ang "air pollution" o maruming hangin.

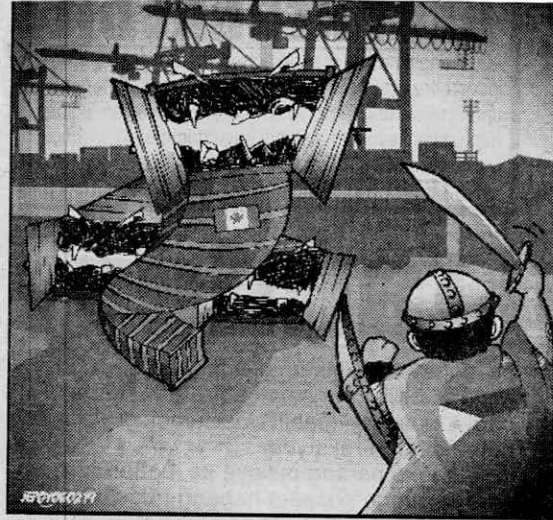
Ang China ang punong abala o "host country" ngayong taon. Medyo malala rin kasi ang duming hangin sa kanila, kasi nga sobrang bilis ng pag-unlad ng industriya nila nitong mga huling dekada.

Kaya hindi naiba ang mga aral na dapat nating tandaan. Bawasan natin ang basura natin. Mula sa bahay, hanggang sa komunidad.

Mas konting basura, mas malinis na mundo. Mas malinis na mundo, mas maayos at mas magandang buhay.

Hindi lang para sa atin ngayon, pati na rin sa mga anak at apo natin.

'Yan ang mahalagang mai-pamana natin sa kanila. Siguruhin na hindi isang malaking basurahan ang mundo natin.



Editorial

'Giyerahin' mga bansang magtatapon ng basura

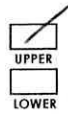
KINUHA na ng Canada ang kanilang basura noong Biyernes. Anim na taon ding nakatambak ang basura sa bansa bago nila kinuha. Pero kumilos lang ang Canada nang magbanta si President Duterte na "gigiyerahin" ito. Binigyan ng taning hanggang Mayo 15 para kunin ang basura pero hindi natupad. Sa galit ng Presidente, pinauwi niya sa Pilipinas ang mga diplomat at consul. Saka pa lamang kumilos ang Canada at kinuha rin ang kanilang basura na kinabibilangan ng household at hospital wastes.

Kailangan lang pala ay bantaang gigiyerahin para mapuwersang kunin ang kanilang basura. Tama lang ito para matauhan ang sinumang bansa na magtatapon ng kanilang basura. Kailangang umalma at lumaban ang mga bansang pinagtatapan ng basura. Huwag matakot kung ang nakataya na ay ang pagkakakasakit ng mamamayan at pagkasira ng kapaligiran dahil sa mga basurang toxic na galing sa mayayamang bansa.

Sa isang report, hindi lamang pala ang Pilipinas ang nakatatanggap ng mga basura mula sa mga mayayamang bansa kundi maging ang Malaysia at Indonesia. Ayon sa report, daang container van ng basura na kinabibilangan ng hospital at household wastes ang dinadala sa Malaysia at Indonesia. Nagra-rally din sa Malaysia para labanan ang mga nagtatapon sa kanila ng basura.

Ang Pilipinas ay naging suki na ng mga mayayamang bansa para pagtapunan ng basura mula pa noong 2013. Una ang Canada na nagtapon ng 106 containers. Kamakailan lang, nadiskubre na ang mga basura mula Australia at Hong Kong ay dinala sa isang port sa Mindanao. Sabi ng Customs, ang basura ng Australia ay gagamitin daw ng isang cement company sa Mindanao pero itinanggi ito ng kompanya. Nagdala rin ng basura ang South Korea pero nagkusa silang ibalik sa kanilang bansa.

Mas maganda kung magkakaisa ang mga bansa sa Southeast Asia na labanan ang mga bansang mayayaman na nagtatapon ng basura. Magdeklara ng giyera laban sa kanila gaya ng ginawa ni Duterte. Huwag pumayag na pagtambakan ng basura ang Pilipinas. Labanan ang mga bansang salaula!



02 JUN 2010

TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/ _____

DATE _____

MMDA: Pagkolekta ng basura, sa LGUs

Sinabi ni House Committee on Metro Manila Development chairman, Quezon City Rep. Winston Castelo, na mangunguna ang Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) sa implementasyon ng Ecological Solid Waste Management Act o RA 9003.

Ito ay nang magsagawa ng pagdinig nitong Martes ang komite sa pagkolekta, pangangasiwa, at pagtatapon ng basura sa Metro Manila.

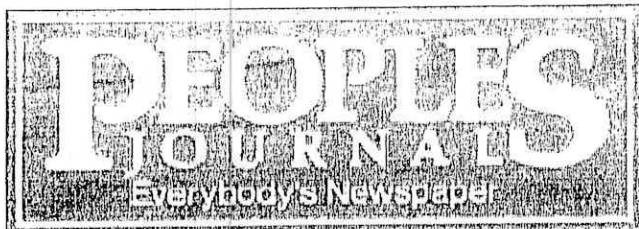
Tinanong ni Castelo si Engr. Reynaldo Estipona, project development officer ng MMDA Solid Waste Management Office, kung bakit hanggang ngayon ay mayroon pa ring hindi nakokolektang basura sa waterways, riverbanks, open spaces at creeks sa maraming lugar sa Metro Manila.

Sinabi ni Estipona na ang uncollected garbage sa nabanggit na mga lugar ay nasa ilalim ng hurisdiksiyon ng mga local government units (LGUs), at tungkulin ng mga itong kolektahin ang basura mula sa mga bahay para dalhin sa waste disposal facility.

Bert de Guzman



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE



13
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

02 JUN 2013

DATE

BJMP marks Community Service month with waterways clean-up drive

BUREAU of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) officer-in-charge Chief Supt. Allan Iral flew to Cebu City and led a nationwide simultaneous waterways clean up drive to kick off the 8th BJMP Community Relations Service Month.

Officers and men of the BJMP Region 7 office under the leadership of Chief Supt. Paulino Moreno yesterday morning trooped to the Guadalupe River to formally start the clean up drive.

They were joined by the director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region 7 engineer Gilbert Gonzales and Cebu PENRO engineer Jose Cary Colis.

Before the clean-up activity, the BJMP and DENR entered into a memorandum of agreement adopting a segment of Guadalupe River for periodic clean and conduct of information campaign on environmental protection, cleanliness and sanitation.

"This is a reaffirmation of our commitment to protect and preserve the environment, Iral said.

The BJMP is actively participating in different clean up activities in Manila as part of the mission to rehabilitate Manila Bay.

"In Manila, we are actively participating in different waterways clean up program, including our jail personnel from Calabarzon and Central Luzon, such as the Battle for Manila Bay. We hope to replicate it nationwide and that is exactly what I am asking to every regional offices now. Adopt waterways and coastal areas for regular clean up activity," Iral said.

This year's theme of the CRS Month celebration: "Magbantay, Mag-ugnay, Magmalasakit," centers on strengthening community engagement and partnership, encourages all jail units and offices to pursue programs that will not only benefit the persons deprived of liberty under the BJMP's care but also those that could impact the community.

It includes simultaneous waterways clean-up, legal consultation, medical and dental missions, book reading, gift giving, PDL writing and painting competitions, and promotion of the jail management profession.

According to BJMP-CRS head Chief Supt. Xavier Solda, other jail units are also volunteering for the preparation of school opening, which includes clean-up activity, covering books, wall painting and other school beautification activities.

Solda thanked the jail wardens for their efforts to reach the people in their respective communities. He also emphasized the importance of the personnel support in cultivating the value of volunteerism among jail officers, especially in sustaining their efforts on community support since the CRS Month started in 2011.

"As I always mention among our regional directors, it is our continuing mission to bring the Bureau closer to the hearts of every community," Solda said.

Joel dela Torre



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02 JUN 2013

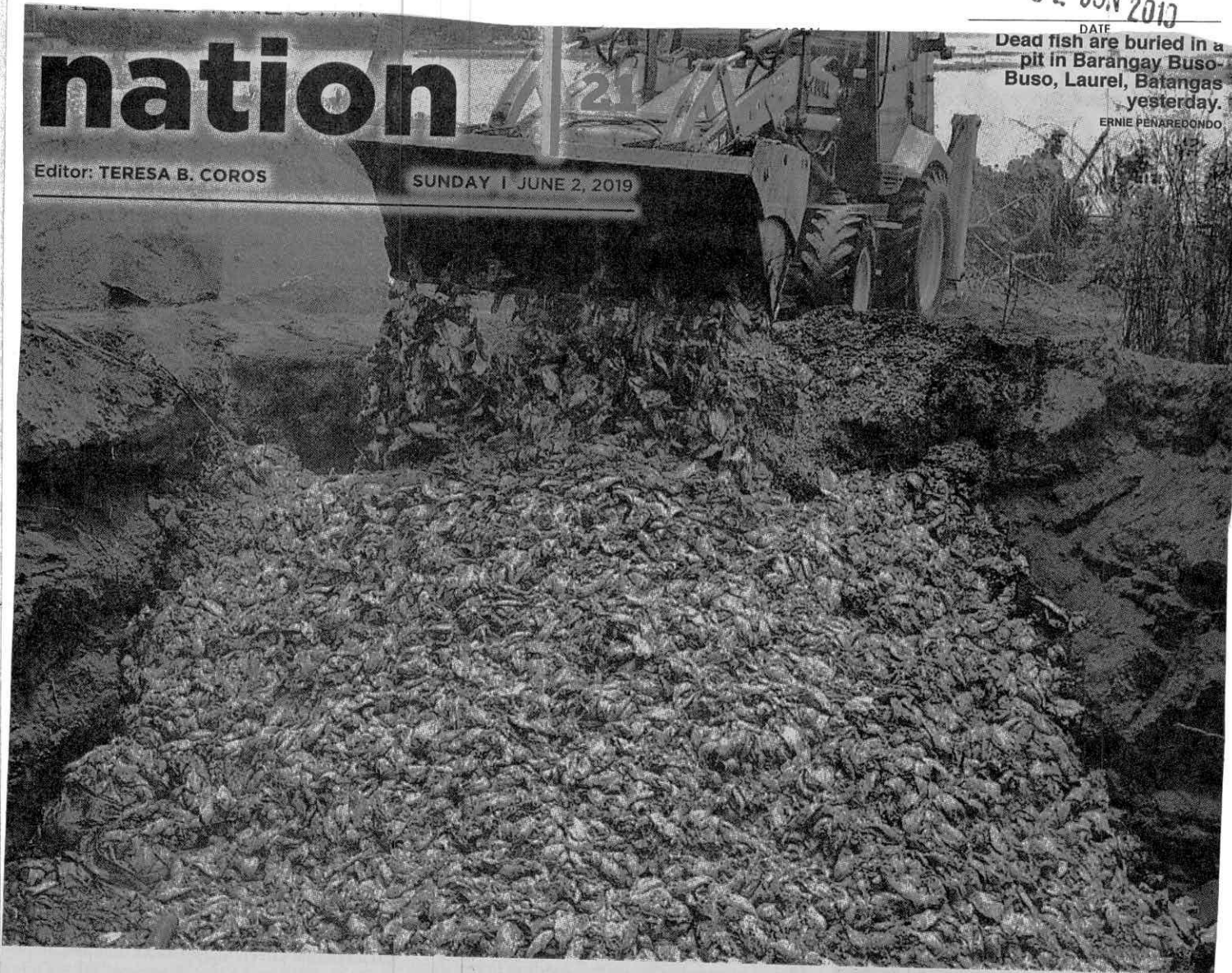
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Dead fish are buried in a
pit in Barangay Buso-
Buso, Laurel, Batangas
yesterday.

ERNIE PENAREDONDO

nation

Editor: TERESA B. COROS

SUNDAY | JUNE 2, 2019



Batangas fish kill damage hits P42.9 M

By ARNELL OZAETA

BATANGAS – At least 605 metric tons or P42.9 million worth of tilapia have been affected by a fish kill in two coastal towns in this province.

Maria Paz Luna, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)-Calabarzon director, said 121 fish cages in Barangays Buso-buso and Gulod in Laurel town and Banaga in Agoncillo were affected on Friday.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) said the fish kill was due to the water's low oxygen content.

On Sunday last week, the BFAR advised fish cage owners to harvest their stocks

after the level of oxygen reached a dangerously low 2.8 parts per million. The normal level is between 5 to 6 ppm.

The fish kill was reported on Monday in only 10 fish cages.

Dead fish in 33 cages have yet to be removed as of yesterday.

"Not all fish cage owners are capable harvesters since they do not own large boats... The harvesters are hauling dead fish from their own cages. Existing boats will

temporarily serve as aerators until the quality of water improves," Luna said.

Fish cage owners were ordered to bury the dead fish within 24 hours or face sanctions.

The DENR said the fish kill is not expected to affect the supply and price of tilapia.

"This... comprises a small percentage... While consumers should continue to check their fish purchases for freshness, there is no cause for alarm," Luna said.

She said the DENR and concerned local government units are monitoring the situation.

Fishing ban

Meanwhile, the BFAR

implemented a three-month ban on commercial fishing in Davao Gulf, which started yesterday, to give tuna and pelagic fishes such as mackerels, scads and sardines, to spawn and allow key fishing grounds to recover.

The fishing ban also aims to stop illegal fishing in the gulf.

The BFAR said the gulf remains open to fisherfolk within their realm of municipal waters.

Bantay Dagat personnel will monitor fishing in the waters off Davao Oriental and Davao Occidental, which are spawning ground for tuna and other fishes, it added. – With Ed Amoroso, Rhodina Villanueva, Edith Regalado



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

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

7
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

02 JUN 2010

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

Tilapia from Taal Lake still safe to eat - DENR

By **LYKA MANALO**

BATANGAS – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR-Calabarzon) has given the assurance that tilapia fish in markets are still safe to eat amidst a massive fish kill that hit Taal Lake Monday.

“We are calling on the public to still patronize the remaining stocks. This is not even 25 percent of one town” DENR-Calabarzon, Regional Executive Director Maria Paz Luna said.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) issued warnings on Sunday, March 26, that the dissolved oxygen, which should be between 5 to 6 parts per million (ppm) that would allow fish to breathe, was at a dangerously low level of

2.8 ppm. Thus, fish cage owners were advised to move their cages or harvest early. As of Friday, May 31, there were about 605 metric tons of dead fish that were recovered, placing losses at P42.9 million.

During DENR’s inspection, there were cages which, still had floating dead fish waiting to be hauled to shore and buried. However, it was reported that pits where these fish could be buried were already filled.

“(We) are monitoring almost 24/7 together with the LGU (local government unit) which laments that the industry and owners were not doing enough as government still has to bear the costs of fuel and some heavy equipment” Luna told Manila Bulletin.

“We asked for DPWH help and borrowed water pumps to sieve contaminated water through

the shore. Owners were scrambling first to save their stocks, yung buhay pa, so naiwan yung patay at nagsimulang mabulok. PAMB now requires them to remove in 24 hours,” she added.

DENR’s latest report said there were 121 affected fish cages in Barangays Boso-Boso and Gulod in Laurel, and in Barangay Bañaga in Agoncillo, Batangas. Mayor Daniel Reyes said there were nine fish cages affected out of 1,500 in Agoncillo town and dead fish were already disposed of. He said fish cage owners have their own mortality pits. Reyes said the local government extended their help to Laurel town by sending equipment and manpower.

Regulation of the cage industry started in 2006 when the carrying capacity was established and 6000 cages were permitted to be used.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

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

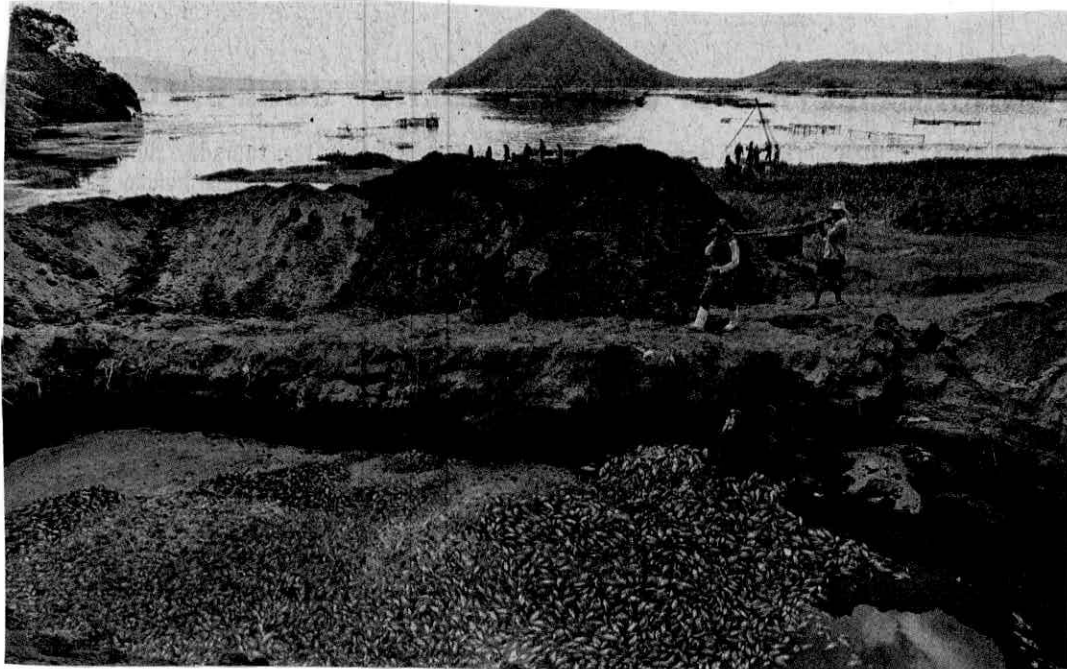


02 JUN 2013

TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/ _____

DATE _____



FISH KILL -
Fishermen
carry a load
of dead
tilapia that
will be
dumped into
this pit in
Barangay
Buso-Buso
in Laurel,
Batangas,
June 1.
According to
the DENR,
the fish kill
was caused
by the
drastic drop
in oxygen
levels in
the waters
of Taal
Lake. Story
on page
7. (Mark
Balmores)



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

Manila Standard

A-7
PAGE

UPPER
LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

02 JUN 2013

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE



Polluted river A man searches for anything of value that he can sell to a junkshop in this polluted river in Las Pinas.

AL PADILLA



Tilapia, safe pa ring kainin --DENR

NI LYKA MANALO

Tiniyak ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Calabarzon na ligtas pa ring kainin ang isdang Tilapia sa kabila ng nangyaring fish kill sa Taal Lake simula nitong Lunes.

"We are calling on the public to still patronize the remaining stocks. This is not even 25% of one town," sabi ni DENR-Calabarzon, Regional Executive Director Maria Paz Luna.

Linggo nang magpalabas ang Bureau of Fish and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) ng babala na ang dissolved oxygen para sa mga isda ay nasa napakababang level na 2.8 parts per million (ppm), kaya naman pinayuhan ang mga may-ari ng fish cages na ilipat ang kanilang mga baklad, o kaya naman ay maghango nang maaga.

Batay sa huling datos nitong Biyernes, aabot sa 605 metriko tonelada ng isda, na may pagkaluging P42.9 milyon sa presyuhang P71 kada kilo, ang namatay sa Taal Lake dahil sa patuloy na pagbaba ng level ng dissolved oxygen sa lawa.

"(We) are monitoring almost 24-7 together with the LGU (local government unit) who laments that the industry and owners are not doing enough as government

still has to bear the costs of fuel and some heavy equipment," sinabi ni Luna sa *BALITA*.

"We asked for DPWH help and borrowed water pumps to sieve contaminated water through the shore. Owners were scrambling first to save their stocks, 'yung buhay pa, so naiwan

'yung patay at nagsimulang mabulok. PAMB now requires them to remove in 24 hours," dagdag niya.

Ayon sa latest report ng DENR, mayroong 121 fish cages ang apektado ng fish kill sa mga barangay ng Boso-Boso at Gulod sa bayan ng Laurel; at sa Barangay Bañaga sa Agoncillo, Batangas.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE



TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/ _____

02 JUN 2013

DATE



FISHERMEN gather tons of tilapia fish affected by the fish kill as they dump it on an excavated part of Barangay Buso-Buso, Laurel, Batangas. According to the DENR, the fish kill was caused by a drop in oxygen in the water caused by the weather. An estimated 150 tons of cultured tilapia are affected by the fish kill. Authorities are also looking for the possibility of irresponsible aquaculture practices. (Mark Balmores)



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE



Balita

ANG NANGUNSAKANG PAHAYAGANG TAGALOG SA BANSA



02 JUN 2013

DATE

TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/ _____



NAGSIMATAY Itinambak kahapon ng mga mangingisda sa isang hukay sa Bgy. Buso-Buso sa Laurel, Batangas ang tone-toneladang Tilapia na naapektuhan ng fish kill sa Taal Lake. Aabot sa 605 metriko tonelada ng isda ang namatay sa lawa simula nitong Lunes, ayon sa DENR.

MARK BALMORES



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

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The Manila Times

47
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BAITER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CART

U 2 JUN 2013

DATE

CoA flags housing council over delayed P12-M projects

BY GLEE JALEA

THE Commission on Audit (CoA) has questioned the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) for failing to fast-track 11 projects totaling P11.7 million that have already been delayed for two years.

"We have noted that as of Dec. 31, 2018, the HUDCC had several outstanding projects consisting of 11 survey work and set-up of one Human Resource Information System amounting to P11,536,182.23 and P178,304.00, respectively," the CoA said in its 2018 report.

The survey projects were located in Palawan, Baguio City, Pangasinan, Quezon, Cabanatuan City in Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Misamis Oriental and Iligan City in Lanao del Norte. An information system

is located in Manila.

Based on the mobilization fees paid by the HUDCC to its contractors and the duration of the project, the CoA noted that all of HUDCC's outstanding survey works, consulting projects and an information system had been delayed from nine months to two years already, "depriving the intended beneficiaries of the projects' benefits."

As of December 2018, a survey project in Narra, Palawan, which started in October 2015 and was

supposed to end in May 2016, has been delayed for a total of 949 days because of a threat from a people's organization of destroying the surveying equipment.

Survey projects in Teacher's Camp, Baguio City (delayed for 985 days); Balungao, Pangasinan (975 days); and Fort Del Pilar, Baguio City (793 days) have submitted the division plans, which are still subject for approval by the Department of Environment-Cordillera Administrative Region and other national and local government agencies.

Meanwhile, other projects are either suspended or under spending validation from concerned local government units.

The CoA noted that a memorandum of agreement made between responsible parties, the contractor or consultant, shall pay the HUDCC for liquidated damages

in an amount equal to one-tenth of 1 percent of the cost of delayed portion of services for every day of the delay.

"However, verification and records from the management revealed that liquidated damages were not imposed [on] the contractors/consultant despite delays from nine months to two years," it added.

The agency was urged to develop a strategy that would strengthen coordination with government agencies in addressing issues surrounding backlog of projects, and impose liquidated damages as stipulated in their agreement.

The HUDCC is mandated to oversee and fast-track through appropriate project schemes and contractual arrangements the implementation and development of housing projects in areas proclaimed as housing sites.



Editorial EDITORIAL Editorial

BABALA SA PAGBILI NG SCHOOL SUPPLIES!

ISANG tulog na lang at pasukan na.

Siguradong marami na ang nakapamili ng school supplies ng kanilang mga anak at mayroon ding humihirit pa ng last minute shopping para makumpleto ang kanilang nasa listahan.

Dahil dito, nagbabala ang EcoWaste Philippines sa mga magulang na namimili ng school supplies para sa kanilang mga anak.

Ayon sa grupo, lead at cadmium ang dalawang klase ng kemikal ang kadalasang inihahalo sa school supplies, partikular sa mga gawa sa plastic material.

Nakasasama sa utak ang lead habang ang cadmium ay posibleng pagmulan ng cancer.

Gayunman, nilinaw ng grupo na hindi agad lalabas ang mga sintomas ng cancer kung mae-expose ang indibidwal sa mga nasabing kemikal ngunit, depende ito sa tagal ng pagkaka-exposed.

Panawagan sa mga magulang, suriing mabuti ang label ng bawat produkto para makatiyak na ito ay FDA approved.

Pinaaalalahanan din ang mga manufacturer na lagyan ng tamang label ang mga produkto.

Dahil matagal gagamitin ng mga bata ang school supplies, siguradong hindi maganda ang magiging epekto nito sa kanilang kalusugan kung matagal silang mae-exposed sa nabanggit na mga kemikal.

Kaya para sa mga magulang, huwag basta bumili ng murang gamit kung hindi sigurado sa materyales na ginamit dito.

Kung kailangang paulit-ulit na suriin ang label ng mga produktong bibilhin, gawin natin upang hindi ito makasama sa kalusugan at nang hindi magsisi sa huli.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE



02 JUN 2013

TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/ _____

DATE _____

Cloud-seeding operations to continue until July

By **RAMON EFREN LAZARO**

CITY OF MALOLOS – As the water level continues to drop at Angat Dam in Bulacan, the primary source of potable water of Metro Manila residents, the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM)

of the Department of Agriculture continues to conducting cloud seeding operations to induce more rains.

Records at the provincial government of Bulacan showed that from 169.63 meters on Thursday, the water level at Angat Dam was moni-

tored at 168.96 meters yesterday morning.

Mary Joy David, BSWM project development officer II, told **The STAR** that they are still conducting monitoring activities to search for clouds that could be used for cloud seeding operations

within the vicinity of Angat and the La Mesa watershed that is the main reservoir of Metro Manila's potable water supply.

The cloud seeding operations have been extended until July, David added.

David said the cloud seed-

ing operations started on April 10 to help replenish the dwindling water level at Angat and La Mesa dams.

The dam's primary purpose is the supply of potable water to Metro Manila residents, power generation and irrigation of farmland in Central

Luzon.

The National Water Resources Board has given water allocation for irrigation for Bulacan and Pampanga farmlands only up to May 15 this year.

Farmlands in the two provinces now rely on rains.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

A5
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

02 JUN 2013

TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/ _____

DATE _____

Forest guards confiscate illegal logs abandoned in Angat
NORZAGARAY, BULACAN—About P200,000 worth of illegally cut timber were seized on May 30 by forest guards manning the Angat Dam Watershed, a belated report said. The 2,350 board feet of white and red lauan were abandoned by unidentified men who fled when they were confronted by the forest guards at Sitio Macaingalan, Barangay Puray at Rodriguez town in Rizal province, said Ramil Gata, head of the National Power Corp. (Napocor) Angat Watershed Area Team. Napocor manages the watershed of Angat Dam.
—CARMELA REYES-ESTROPE



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

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

7
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

02 JUN 2013

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

2 nabbed for illegal logging in Pangasinan

By LIEZLE BASA-INIGO

MALASIQUI, Pangasinan – Police operatives here arrested two men for illegal logging after 72 pieces of mahogany lumber were confiscated from them in Barangay Cawayan Bogtong.

Police Lt. Col. Joseph Fajardo, chief of police here, said that around 11:30 a.m., Malasiqui police were able to intercept Allan Bauzon, 36, and Michael Soriano, 27, in a truck which was carrying 72 pieces of mahogany lumber.

Bauzon failed to show any legal document from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), prompting the police to arrest him and Soriano and seize the logs.

It was later learned that the illegally-cut logs were supposed to be delivered to a furniture shop in this town.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE



Balita

ANG NANGUNINGANG PAHAYAGANG TAGALOG SA BANSA



PAGE



UPPER

LOWER



PAGE 1
STORY



BANNER
STORY



EDITORIAL



CARTOON

02 JUN 2013

TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/ _____

DATE _____

2 illegal loggers, inaresto

Dalawang umano'y illegal logger ang inaresto ng mga pulis nang masabat ang mga ito habang nagdedeliver ng mga pinutol na kahoy sa Barangay Cawayan Bogtong, Malasiqui, Pangasinan, kahapon.

Ang dalawang suspek ay kinilala ni Lt. Col. Joseph Fajardo, hepe ng Malasiqui Police, na sina Allan Bauzon, 36, may asawa, driver, ng nasabing lugar, at Michael Soriano, 27, may-asawa, Bgy. Balingueo, Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan.

Tinangka aniya ng dalawa na ilusot sa checkpoint ang dala nilang truck na may kargang 72 na iligal na torso, dakong 11:30 ng umaga.

Nahaharap ang mga ito sa kasong paglabag na Presidential Decree 705 (Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines).

Liezle Basa Inigo



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

Twisted Slaco (P) 03

The Manila Times

B 3
PAGE

UPPER
LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

EDITORIAL
STORY

EDITORIAL

CART

02 JUN 2013

DATE

Curbing the imminent onslaught of climate change

DIRE predictions of the severe impacts of global warming beginning year 2030 have elicited varied responses from the international community. A *New Yorker* piece warns that due to the destruction of their habitat, individual species are going extinct, which could threaten mankind's very existence over the long haul.

A separate essay on climate change in *Forbes* advances the more buoyant perspective that climate change could be this generation's greatest impetus towards innovation and the related drive for game-changing entrepreneurship.

The Philippine Climate Change Commission has started to make a difference in what may be considered the contemporary poster child on the scale of the havoc wrought by climate change. The



TECH SPACE

**TONY
MAGHIRANG**

Commission is pursuing a proposal entitled "Modelling Locally Driven Water Resilience Through Climate Change Adaptation in Coastal and Small Island Regions in the Haiyan Corridor." It is also fast-tracking the development of an incentives system for enterprises that generate green jobs.

There's also the legal action to determine the accountability of 47 cement, coal, oil and gas companies worldwide, whose contribution to climate change allegedly violated the Filipinos' basic rights to life, water, food and self-determination. Arguably, in

this case, the international pursuit of justice is foreshadowed by the country's victory at the International Criminal Court against China's intrusion in West Philippine Sea (South China Sea).

Future prospects look bleak. More so when the countdown to extreme global warming by 2030 is ticking.

It would be easy to fall into despair. Time is not exactly on our side and time-honored approaches to environmental protection such as tree planting may not be up to the enormous challenges ahead.

In the search for innovative solutions to reduce the adverse impacts of climate change, the conversation seems to leave out the fact that the world's population now stands at 7.7 billion plus people. Each of us could

contribute to carbon emissions and add unnecessary wastes on land, sea and air.

On the other hand, everyone could adopt a green habit that curbs his contribution to global warming.

Who knows? Unabated carbon accumulation might lead to a tipping point that could give rise to runaway global warming. That should be enough incentive for every human being to keep his carbon footprint at a minimum.

Governments around the world are doing their share in crafting environment-friendly policies, programs and projects. Their actions follow from expressed national development goals to combat climate change and its impacts as signatories to the Paris Agreement.

Nations meet every five years to

measure and assess their accomplishments against their targets. The latest update shows that the world itself is nowhere near on track to avoid the 1.5-degree rise in temperature that's a precursor to global warming and its grave consequences.

The massively carbon emitting industries, meanwhile, seem to be taking their sweet time to undertake unprecedented initiatives to meet their own sustainability targets including the reduction of their climate change footprint.

There's a scenario built around the projection that carbon-based fuel would be extremely expensive in the near future. This would compel most industries to realign their demand for energy, for instance, to new unconventional sources that tap technologies, which help reverse rather than

escalate the global warming trend.

The forward thinking situation assumes that a cooperative spirit would befall all nations and all of mankind, and the benefits would be equally shared and enjoyed. History has shown, though, that the control of vital resources like energy is a political act. He who owns the gold, in the present case the supply of energy and other vital resources, makes the rules.

That sense of "me-first-against-all-odds" is clearly conveyed by the lackluster participation of some countries in the international cooperation to combat global warming. Whatever happened to "Save Earth, save yourself, save the future?"

There's the next ten years to figure our way out of this extraordinary mess.



Climate crisis conference pagsasayang lang ng pera - Duterte

MINALIIT lang ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang mga ginawang pandaigdigang kumperensiya patungkol sa climate change o crisis.

Sa kanyang talumpati sa ginanap na 25th International Conference on the Future of Asia sa Tokyo, Japan, sinabi ng Pangulo na nagsasayang lamang ng panahon at pera ang mga dumadalo sa kumperensiya dahil wala namang mga konkretong hakbang na nagagawa para mahadlangan ang epekto ng climate change.

Matagal ng pinag-uusapan aniya ang ka-

lamidad, kamatayan ng maraming tao at iba pang sakunang maaring idulot ng pagbabago ng panahon na naranasan na ng Pilipinas.

Huwag na aniyang magbolahan dahil kahit paulit-ulit ang mga kumperensiya sa climate change ay hindi naman mapipigil ang kalamidad na dulot ng kalikasan.

"I said to the body, lets stop kidding each other. We are just wasting the time and the money of the people coming back and forth to these conferences, which have not improved a bit since we started to talk about it,"

anang Pangulo.

Matatandaang sinibak ng Pangulo ang ilang opisyal ng gobyerno dahil sa malimit na biyahe sa iba't ibang bansa para dumalo sa mga kumperensiya patungkol sa climate change subalit wala naman aniyang pagbabago sa bansa kung ang epek-

to ng climate change ang pag-uusapan.

May mas matinding problema aniya ang mundo bukod sa climate change dahil maraming bansa ang mayroong atomic at hydrogen bombs na kapag ginamit ay magiging katapusan ng mundo sa isang iglap.

"There are so many countries with so many bombs, atomic, hydrogen and all. If anyone of them would start to send one into the air, there's a chance that it will be the end of the world. That's why climate change does not really matter to us at all," dagdag pa ng Pangulo. **(Aileen Taliping)**



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

The Anthropocene is here

No, it is neither some mysterious creature from "Jurassic Park" nor some creeping giant insect. Since The Economist declared "Welcome to the Anthropocene" on its cover in May 2011, the concept has steadily crept into mainstream discourse. The actual genesis of this notion started in 2000 when two scientists (Crutzen and Stoermer) coined the term in its modern sense. Just like any new concept, it spawned a healthy debate among scholars with diverse backgrounds, with no end in sight.

According to Yadvinder Malhi of the University of Oxford, "The core concept that the term is trying to capture is that human activity is having a dominating presence on multiple aspects of the natural world and the functioning of the Earth system, and that this has consequences for how we view and interact with the natural world—and perceive our place in it."

In other words, it is now recognized that human activities have become the most influential factor of change on Planet Earth, making the Anthropocene the human-dominated geologic epoch.

Consider the following facts. Fossil fuel emissions and deforestation have dumped record levels of greenhouse gases on the atmosphere, leading to a warming climate. We are the first living organisms to inhabit an Earth with more than 400 ppm of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

According to the Millennium Ecosystems

COMMENTARY

RODEL D. LASCO

Assessment Report, some of the key global changes that have taken place as a result of human activities include: more land was converted to cropland in the 30 years after 1950 than in the 150 years between 1700 and 1850; around 20 percent of the world's coral reefs have been lost and an additional 20 percent have been degrading in the last several decades of the 20th century, while approximately 35 percent of mangrove area have been lost during this time.

The United Nations' Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services recently released its report, which concluded that about 1 million of the earth's 8 million species are threatened with extinction because of human activities.

The Philippines is no stranger to the impacts of humans on our ecosystems. We have lost more than 50 percent of our forest cover in the last century, which is about 15 million hectares of prime tropical forest ecosystems. Our mangroves declined by 80 percent, from more than 500,000 hectares to about 100,000 hectares. We are a megadiversity country yet also a global hotspot because of the high risk of species loss. Let us not even talk about air and water pollution, especially in Metro

Manila and surrounding areas.

What does the age of Anthropocene mean for us? First, it is a wake-up call about the power of humans to determine the course of the planet. Quite astonishingly, our collective action can alter the condition of the world we live in. Each individual act may be insignificant, but combined with that of others, it becomes an irrepressible force whose outcome will affect us all.

Second, with such power comes great responsibility (to paraphrase Spider Man). We must not lose sight that we humans are mere stewards of the natural environment. We are here not to destroy, but to nurture. Our nobility lies not in how much we can extract from nature, but in how hale and hearty we leave the planet for future generations.

The age of the Anthropocene may be here. But it is up to us to define what power or influence humans exert on the Earth system. Beyond rhetoric, there must be action. And not just any action, but science-based action. For as science has helped humankind understand and recognize what's wrong with our climate, so will science help in finding solutions.

Rodel D. Lasco is an author of several Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports, including the forthcoming sixth assessment report. He is the executive director of The OML Center, a foundation devoted to discovering climate change adaptation solutions (<http://www.omlopezcenter.org/>).



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

Founded 1898

The Manila Times

6-4
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARD

02 JUN 2013

DATE

RWM, ABS-CBN team up for Bantay Langis environmental project

PREMIER lifestyle and tourism destination Resorts World Manila (RWM) forges a new path in corporate social responsibility (CSR) and environmentally sustainable operations through a partnership with ABS-CBN *Lingkod Kapamilya* Foundation Inc. *Bantay Kalikasan* for the foundation's *Bantay Langis* Project.

The Bantay Langis Project is an advocacy and media campaign that seeks to inform the public of the dangers of improper handling and disposal of used industrial and engine oil.

The project asks companies like RWM to donate used industrial oil for proper treatment, recycling, or disposal. Once a donation is confirmed, ABS-CBN's DENR registered oil treater and recycler, Genetron International Marketing, determines the monetary value of used oil reprocesses it, and remits the proceeds to ABS-CBN *Lingkod Kapamilya* Foundation Inc. *Bar ay Kalikasan*.

As a tourism and lifestyle brand,



■ During the contract signing (from left) Atty. Domingo Clemente Jr., EMB-NCR regional director; Engr. Gretchen Fontejon-Enarle, Pollution Control Association of the Philippines vice president for external affairs; Stephen Reilly Resorts World Manila chief operating officer; Engr. Geri-Geronimo Sañez, DENR-EMB Hazardous Waste section chief; Susan Afan, ABS-CBN *Lingkod Kapamilya* Foundation managing director; and Engr. Jocelyn Panen, Genetron International Marketing technical sales director.

RWM will be donating its used kitchen oils from the many kitchens within its vast complex.

In a signing ceremony witnessed by Environmental Management Bureau-National Capital Region Regional Director Atty. Domingo Clemente Jr., RWM became the first integrated resort in the Philippines to sign up for

the Bantay Langis Project.

"That we are pioneering this move towards environmental sustainability is fitting, as we are celebrating our 10th year as the integrated resort industry pioneer," says Stephen Reilly, RWM COO. "RWM welcomes tens of thousands of people a day, and many of them dine in our restaurants

which means that we use thousands of liters of kitchen oil per day to meet their orders. Through this Bantay Langis partnership, we have a better way of disposing of our used oil while helping communities win through the ABS-CBN Foundation."

For more information, visit www.rwmanila.com/csr.



P-1

UNPRECEDENTED DEAL

MT. APO'S MANOBO TRIBE GETS ROYALTY FROM POWER PLANTS' OPERATION

By Orlando B. Dinoy
@inqmindanao

KIDAPAWAN CITY—With tribe leaders imploring their ancestors to bless the project site for the next quarter century, the Manobo people at the foot of Mt. Apo have allowed a power company to continue operating two geothermal plants in their ancestral domain.

In exchange for royalty from the company's operation, the Manobo tribe granted Energy Development Corp. (EDC) free rein to tap geothermal energy in the area for the next 25 years, or until 2044.

The right to operate at the foot of the country's tallest mountain was sealed in a memorandum of agreement signed on Saturday between EDC officials and leaders of the Manobo-Apao Descendants of Ancestral Domain of Mt. Apo (Madadma) at Sitio Sayaban, Barangay Ilomavis, in this city.

Madadma has ancestral domain over the site, where the 52-megawatt Mindanao 1 Geothermal Partnership (M1GP) and the 54-MW Mindanao 2 Geothermal Partnership (M2GP) plants are located at Barangay Ilomavis.

1 centavo per kilowatt-hour

In a region where several indigenous peoples abhor the entry of investors for fear that their operations would cause the degradation of their an-

cestral lands, the EDC-Madadma agreement is a whiff of fresh air.

The royalty—equivalent to 1 centavo per kilowatt-hour of geothermal power generated each year by EDC—will be used

to uplift the living conditions of the Manobo community.

Tribe leaders said the deal on royalty was unprecedented and would give the Manobo a steady source of income to help provide livelihood to the indige-

nous peoples in the area.

Nancy Ebona, external media operations officer of EDC, said the company signed the agreement with the tribe after the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) grant-

ed free, prior and informed consent to EDC.

The NCIP consent allows EDC to operate in an ancestral domain area.

Datu Umpan, tribal chieftain from Barangay Balabag,

said the agreement would now directly benefit the Manobo community, unlike in the previous 25 years when the geothermal power plants were operated by a consortium.

Before the two parties signed the deal, the Manobo held a "samaya" (a tribe ritual) to ask their ancestors to bless the site.

The two geothermal power plants actually started operation on March 4, 1997, and June 17, 1999, and were owned by M1GP, a partnership between Oxbow Power Corp. and Japanese energy company Marubeni Corp.

EDC acquired the two power plants in 2009.

M1GP and M2GP provided nearly 11 percent of the entire electricity supply in Mindanao, mainly in the Soccsksargen and Davao regions.

The geothermal service contract for Mindanao was previously awarded by the Department of Energy to the then government-owned Philippine National Oil Company-Energy Development Corp. in 1992. It was renewed for another 25 years in 2017.

Ebona said the contract that EDC entered with the energy department was different from the agreement it signed on Saturday with Madadma.

EDC, which was privatized in 2006, is the country's leading producer of geothermal energy, accounting for 62 percent, or 1,199 MW, of the total installed capacity of 1,980 MW. INQ



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PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

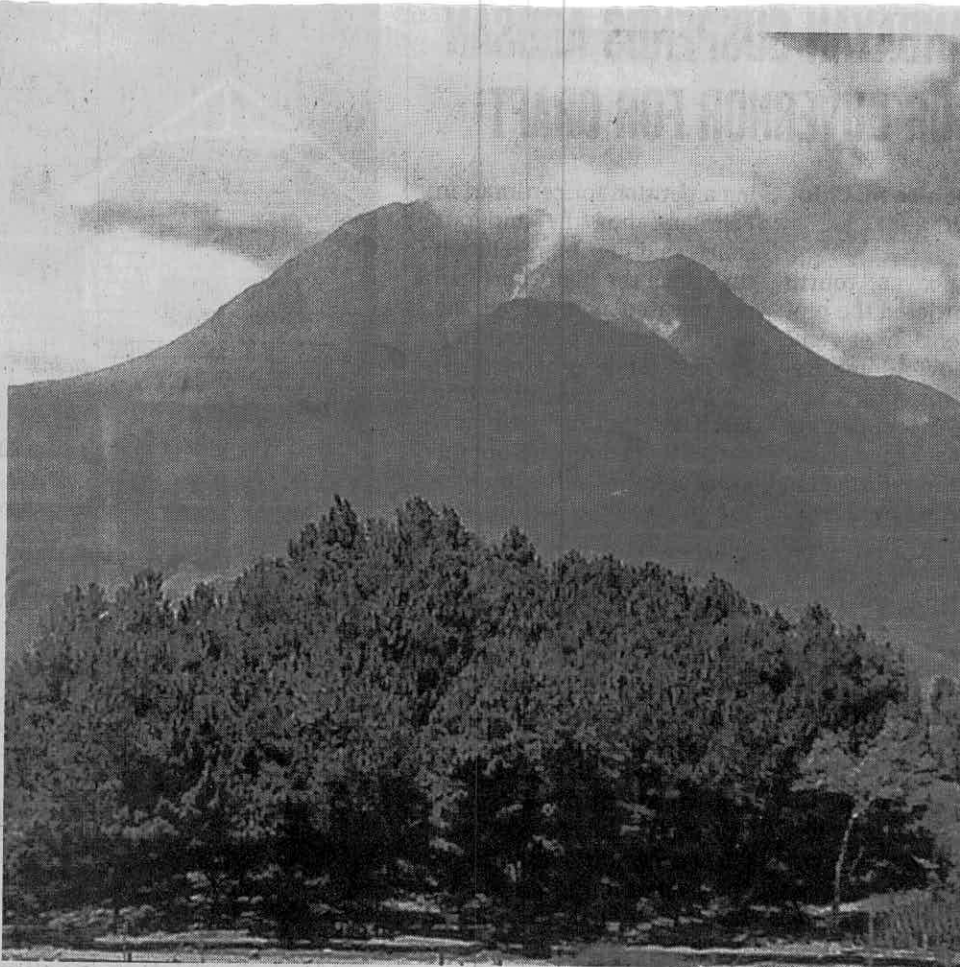
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TITLE: _____

PAGE 1/ _____

P-2



PRAYERS FOR PROTECTION Tribal leaders of the Manobo-Apao Descendants of Ancestral Domain of Mt. Apo (right) perform a “samaya” to implore their ancestors to bless the site of the two geothermal power plants at the foot of the country’s tallest peak in Kidapawan City. Mt. Apo, as seen from Digos City in Davao province (left), is home to many of the region’s indigenous peoples.
—PHOTOS BY ORLANDO B. DINOY



02 JUN 2013

TITLE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

P-1

The worst flood

While it was not the strongest weather disturbance to hit the country, the damage it left behind was one of the most massive

It was like a scene from a 1995 Kevin Costner movie where all oceans had converged and covered every continent on Earth, and what remained of human civilization lived in floating communities.

But it was not a Hollywood movie. It was not a soundstage surrounded by a green chroma screen with computer-generated special effects.

On 26 September 2009, tropical storm "Ondoy" (Ketsana) ravaged parts of Luzon and transformed Metro Manila into a real life "water world."

While it was not the strongest weather disturbance to hit the country, the damage it left behind was one of the most massive.

The heavy rains and strong winds of "Ondoy" affected 993,227 families or 4,901,234 people. Of that figure, 464 perished, 529 were seriously injured and 37 went missing.

Before Typhoon "Yolanda" (Haiyan), "Ondoy" was the prime example of climate change which exposed the country's vulnerability to its effects and serious lack of a concrete contingency plans should another calamity of its kind hit.

Only six hours since making landfall, rainfall measurements of "Ondoy" had equaled a month's volume of rain with a rate of 56.83 mm/hour based on its 24-hour recorded rainfall. Twenty-three provinces and Metro Manila were placed under a state of calamity due to the widespread destruction.

Barely a week later, as residents atop roofs of their submerged homes were desperately waiting for rescue, then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo placed the whole nation under a state of calamity via Proclamation 1898.

Damage by "Ondoy" to agriculture (with 126,721 hectares of rice lands destroyed), infrastructure and private properties was pegged at around P11 billion.

Neighboring Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand were also not spared from the typhoon's wrath.

Before Typhoon "Yolanda" (Haiyan), "Ondoy" was the prime example of climate change which exposed the country's vulnerability to its effects and serious lack of concrete contingency plans should another calamity of its kind hit.

A poor, outdated weather-forecasting system, environmental degradation, the government's disaster risk-reduction management plans still wanting and sloppy urban planning with illegal structures directly blocking waterways heavily contributed to the heavy beating the public experienced before and during "Ondoy."

By all indications, the massive flooding could have been mitigated, if not controlled.

Aftermath

Nearly 10 years since "Ondoy" submerged a big part of the metropolis for days, the Philippines has remained typhoon-prone and similar scenarios of lesser magnitude have, unfortunately, become the norm.

However, while the effects of "Ondoy" could still trigger post-traumatic stress disorders among those who lived through the ordeal, a lot has changed since then.

Cities and municipalities prone to heavy flooding and other mishaps caused by typhoons have stepped up efforts in their disaster risk-reduction management programs for a more streamlined emergency response.

There is now a closer coordination between the local government units and the national government when it comes to evacuation; rescue, relief and retrieval operations; and rehabilitation and rebuilding efforts.

The government has also implemented proactive





P-2

The Worst Flood

measures in addressing environmental degradation such as the reforestation of lands surrounding water reservoirs and the cleaning and declogging of canals and other waterways to ensure floodwaters will flow freely out to a bigger body of water like the Manila Bay.

Some localities have also passed ordinances banning the use of single-use plastics such as straws and plastic bags as they are major contributors to the congestion of waterways due to their improper disposal.

"Ondoy" showed that even a weak tropical storm (85 kilometers per hour) can

adversely affect millions of people.

No two disasters are the same, but increased public awareness, discipline and obedience to the government can go a long way in cushioning their impact and significantly decrease loss of lives, income and property.

Kristina Maralit

A HUGE part of Marikina was submerged when "Ondoy" hit in September 2009.

