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DENR

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Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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Study: Corals still thriving in Manila Bay; three things needed to bring murky bay to life

By **ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ**

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has released the results of the vulnerability assessment for the Manila Bay rehabilitation project, which identified areas where the government and other stakeholders could work on.

The study highlighted that to ensure the success of the efforts to rehabilitate the heavily polluted Manila Bay, there is a need to intensify solid waste management program, implement stricter monitoring of polluting industries, and reforest watershed and mangrove areas.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu said the study, which was conducted by its Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB), will help stakeholders to “address the gargantuan task at hand more efficiently and effectively.”

“We at the DENR believe that by investing in studies such as this, we would be able to find better solutions in solving not only the problem in Manila Bay, but also other issues within our mandate,” Cimatu said.

ERDB supervising science research specialist Jose Isidro Michael Padin presented the results of the Manila Bay Vulnerability **►9**



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Study: Corals still... ◀1

Assessment during ERDB's Annual Technical Seminar.

Speaking on behalf of project team leader Dr. Carmelita Villamor, Padin suggested the establishment of more materials recovery facilities (MRFs) in three regions covering Manila Bay for proper management of solid waste.

Republic Act 9003 (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000) states that MRFs shall be designed to receive, sort, process and store compostable and recyclable material efficiently and in an environmentally sound manner.

"Government agencies must uphold stricter implementation of solid waste management programs not just in the coastal areas of the bay, but for the entire Manila Bay watershed as there

is little or no active public participation in source reduction and segregation activities among local government units," Padin pointed out.

He said that industries and commercial establishments must be monitored regularly for their compliance to existing laws on the release of effluent waste.

Live coral cover

At the same time, Padin underscored the need to focus on the remaining ecosystems, particularly on the western edge of the bay, through reforestation.

"Reforestation of abandoned fishponds and sparsely vegetated mangrove forest can be done, alongside proper maintenance and protection of remaining mangrove stands," he explained.

"Reforestation alongside infrastructure development for disaster risk reduction and management is needed to protect the climate vulnerable communities from flooding and storm surges," he added.

It was also the ERDB, the DENR's research arm, which discovered that many of the coral ecosystems in the Manila Bay region are still thriving despite environmental and human pressures.

Coral cover is found in Maragondon and Ternate in Cavite province, and in the islands of Corregidor and Caballo.

Cimatu said the discovery of live coral cover within the waters of Manila Bay buoyed hopes that the polluted water body could still be restored to its pristine condition.

It is giving the government and other stakeholders more reason to proceed with the rehabilitation, he added.



Bay rehab assessment result issued

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources has disclosed the results of the vulnerability assessment on the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

Secretary Roy Cimatu said the study was able to identify some areas where the government and other stakeholders could work on insofar as the rehabilitation effort is concerned.

The study was conducted by the DENR's Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau would help stakeholders to "address the gargantuan task at hand more efficiently and effectively."

"We at the DENR believe that by investing in studies such as this, we would be able to find better solutions in solving not only the problem in Manila Bay, but also other issues within our mandate," Cimatu said.

ERDB supervising science research specialist Jose Isidro Michael Padin presented the results of the Manila Bay vulnerability assessment during the bureau's first-ever annual technical seminar last June 17.

Among the recommendations were the adoption of an intensified solid waste management program, stricter monitoring of polluting industries, and reforestation of watershed and mangrove areas to ensure the success of the efforts to rehabilitate the heavily polluted Manila Bay.

Padin echoed the suggestion of the project team leader—Dr. Carmelita Villamor—to establish more materials recovery facilities in three regions covering Manila Bay for proper management of solid waste.

Rio N. Araja



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VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT NG MANILA BAY REHAB, INILABAS NG DENR

NAGPALABAS ng vulnerability assessment ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) kaugnay ng Manila Bay rehabilitation.

Ito ay upang mag-ing matagumpay ang isinasagawang rehabilitasyon sa Manila Bay na kinakailangang palakas ang pagpapatupad ng solid waste management program, higgpitan ang pagbabantay sa mga pabrikang nagtatapon ng dumi sa tubig at ang pagkakaroon ng reforestation ng watershed at mangrove areas.

Ayon kay Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, sa pamamagitan ng isinagawang pag-aaral ay madaling matutukoy ng gobyerno at ng iba pang stakeholders ang mga dapat tutukan sa isinasagawang rehabilitasyon.

Sa pag-aaral na ito na pinangunahan ng

Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB) ng DENR, agad matutukoy kung ano ang mga dapat gawin para sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay.

"We at the DENR believe that by investing in studies such as this, we would be able to find better solutions in solving not only the problem in Manila Bay, but also other issues within our mandate," saad ni Cimatu.

Ibinahagi ni ERDB supervising science research specialist Jose Isidro Michael Padin ang resulta ng Manila Bay Vulnerability Assessment sa ginanap na kauna-unahang Annual Technical Seminar ng ahensiya na idinaos noong Hunyo 17.

Ayon kay Padin, naging tagapagsalita ng kanilang team leader na si Dr. Carmelita Villamor, kinakailangang magkaroon ng mas

maraming materials recovery facilities (MRFs) sa tatlong rehiyon na nakasasakop sa Manila Bay para sa tamang pagtatapon ng basura.

"Government agencies must uphold stricter implementation of solid waste management programs not just in the coastal areas of the bay, but for the entire Manila Bay watershed as there is little or no active public participation in source reduction and segregation activities among local government units," pagdidiin pa ni Padin.

Aniya, kinakailangang palaging bantayan ang mga industrial and commercial establishments upang matiyak na sumusunod ang mga ito sa umiiral na batas tungkol sa tamang pagtatapon ng basura.

Idinagdag pa nito na kailangang tutukan ang natitirang ecosystems

partikular ang sa kanlurang bahagi ng Manila Bay sa pamamagitan ng reforestation.

"Reforestation of abandoned fishponds and sparsely vegetated mangrove forest can be done, alongside proper maintenance and protection of remaining mangrove stands," dagdag pa ni Padin.

Kamakailan ay natuklasan ng ERDB na karamihan sa coral ecosystems sa Manila Bay region ay buhay pa sa kabila ng environmental and human pressures.

Karamihan sa natagpuang coral ay nasa Maragondon at Ternate sa Cavite at sa mga isla ng Corregidor at Caballo.

Sinabi naman ni Cimatu na malaki ang pag-asa na maibalik sa dati ang ganda at linis ng Manila Bay dahil sa natuklasang live coral cover.

**BENEDICT
ABAYGAR, JR.**



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Angat Dam water level dips further; review of July domestic allocations eyed

By **ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ**

The water level at Angat Dam further declined on Tuesday, amid a prevailing low-pressure area (LPA) east of the country.

Based on the monitoring of the

Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), Angat Dam's water level was further down past its critical level at 158.77 meters as of Tuesday morning.

This is 0.32 meters lower than last

Monday's 159.09 meters. Angat Dam's normal high water level during the rainy season is between 210 and 212 meters.

National Water Resources Board (NWRB) Executive Director Executive Director Sevillo David ▶9



WATER CRISIS HEARING - Manila Water President and CEO Fernando dela Cruz (right) and Maynilad President and CEO Ramoncito Saldua Fernandez testify during a hearing on the Metro Manila water problem by House Committee on Public Works and Highways Tuesday. (Mark Balmores)



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Angat Dam water...

Jr. said that if there is no significant rainfall in the Angat Dam watershed, "its current level might be lower than the record low of 2010 by end of this week."

During a strong El Niño event in 2010, water level at Angat Dam declined to its lowest level so far in history at 157.56 meters on July 18, 2010.

"We will have to review the decline with PAGASA's climate projections and decide on next allocations particularly for July," David said.

The current water allocation for domestic supply is 36 cubic meters per second, down from 40 cms since the Angat Dam breached its 160-meter

critical level last June 22.

Water concessionaires had earlier pointed out that the 4 cms additional reduction in water allocation is already equivalent to the consumption of almost 700,000 consumers per day.

Amid the dwindling water level at Angat Dam, an LPA estimated at 450 kilometers east of Aparri, Cagayan, has a high chance of developing into a tropical depression within 48 hours.

Should the LPA intensify into a tropical depression, it will be given a local name "Dodong."

Although the weather disturbance is less likely to make landfall in the Philippines, PAGASA weather specialist Ezra

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Bulquerin said the southwest monsoon will bring cloudy skies with scattered rain showers and thunderstorms over Metro Manila, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Pangasinan, Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon, Oriental Mindoro, Occidental Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, Palawan, Aklan, Antique, Negros Occidental, Capiz, Guimaras, Iloilo, Zambales, and Bataan.

Meanwhile, the rest of the country will experience partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain showers due to localized thunderstorms.

Bulquerin warned the public that rains, especially during severe thunderstorms, could trigger possible flash floods or landslides over low-lying and mountainous areas in the entire archipelago.



MM to suffer water supply cuts until August

By JESS DIAZ

Residents of Metro Manila and neighboring provinces will have to endure extended hours of water supply interruption every day for two more months or until August.

Weather and water authorities told a House oversight hearing convened by Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday that supply could start normalizing by September.

That is if nature cooperates, if enough rains fall within the watershed around Angat Dam in Bulacan, the principal source of water for Metro Manila and its environs.

Vicente Mallano, chief of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, said they expect an increased amount of rainfall starting September.

"Right now, there is a low-

pressure area coming, but unfortunately, it is veering toward Japan. Even if it generates a large amount of rain, it is not likely that it will reach the Angat Dam area," Mallano said.

He said the heavy rains that flooded many parts of Metro Manila in recent days did not reach the Angat watershed.

Sevillo David Jr., executive director of the National Water Resources Board (NWRB), the agency that allocates water to distributors, said normalizing water supply would depend on the rains.

"If we can restore the water level in Angat to 180 meters, then we can restore 24-hour supply. We can also restore the usual release of irrigation water to Bulacan and Pampanga," David said.

As of yesterday, he said water level in the dam was at 158.8 meters, less than two meters of

the critical 157-meter level.

David said that if the critical level was reached, the NWRB would be forced to further reduce the allocation for Manila Water and Maynilad as well as the Bulacan local water district.

Manila Water and Maynilad warned authorities and their consumers that a further reduction would mean longer hours of supply interruption.

Manila Water president Ferdinand dela Cruz said that at present, households in their service areas experience up to 16 hours of no supply.

Maynilad chief Ramoncito Fernandez said the interruption lasts only up to eight hours in low-lying areas in their jurisdiction.

He said they have been trying to augment their supply by developing their own water sources, including deep wells, and reducing their "system

loss," a term referring to water lost through leakages, pilferage and other causes.

Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA) chief Jeci Lapus said the water crisis "affects two million households in Metro Manila and an additional 750,000 in neighboring areas."

Lapus said local water districts that are under his agency are willing to provide water to Metro Manila's water concessionaires, but the latter would have to source it from the provinces.

Bulacan Rep. Jose Antonio Sy-Alvarado said it is important to restore normal irrigation supply to ricelands in his province and neighboring Pampanga.

"Thousands of farmers and their families are affected. The total area involved is about 27,000 hectares of rice land," he said.

Outgoing Quezon Rep.

Danilo Suarez said there are rivers in his province that could augment supply in Angat.

"We could provide both the short-term and long-term solution to this problem in Metro Manila. We will just have to build tunnels connecting our water sources and Angat dam," he said.

Blame it on Noy?

Former president Benigno Aquino III should partly be blamed for the water shortage in Metro Manila as his administration rejected proposals to undertake long-term solutions to the recurring problem, according to some members of the House of Representatives.

Makati City Rep. Luis Campos Jr. revealed this in a briefing conducted yesterday by the House minority bloc led Suarez following an investigation on the water crisis.

"During the briefing, we were told that in 2012 it was already proposed that several undertakings be done. There were several instances where this water shortage problem could have been solved," Campos said.

"But the past administration rejected it on the basis that it would just be redundant. As far as the minority bloc is concerned, we'd rather have surplus or an oversupply of water than suffer a shortage. We need long-term solutions to this yearly problem," he added.

Quezon City Rep. Winston Castelo also tried to blame the previous administration for the recurrent water supply problem.

"Had they developed the sources in Quezon, we would not be having this crisis," he said. — **With Delon Porcalla, Alexis Romero, Rhodina Villanueva, Paolo Romero**



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Water from nearby provinces eyed to fill Metro needs

By DJ Yap, Julie M. Aurelio
and Marlon Ramos
@Team_Inquirer

Congress and the Duterte administration are studying all possible solutions to the water crisis in the national capital, including drawing from the reserve of nearby provinces, creating a new water department and returning state control over water distribution in the sprawling metropolis.

Acting Administrator Jeci Lapus of the Local Water Utilities Administration proposed getting water from Bulacan, Cavite and Laguna provinces as a "short-term solution" during Tuesday's hearing conducted by a House oversight panel.

"The only problem is how to transport the water," Lapus said.

The joint hearing held by the House committees on Metro Manila development and public works tackled the monthslong water shortage that was expected to persist well into the monsoon season.

Lapus said the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, through its two concessionaires, Manila Water Co. Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc., could "touch base" with the water districts of nearby provinces to provide some of the Metro's water needs.

He noted, however, that Metro Manila had a much big-



WATER CRISIS Reynaldo Velasco, administrator of the Manila Waterworks and Sewerage System, stands up to stress a point during a House oversight committee hearing on Tuesday on the monthslong water shortage in the national capital. The committee received a proposal to get emergency supply from the nearby provinces of Bulacan, Cavite and Laguna. —JOAN BONDOC

ger consumer base of 2 million households.

"Laguna, Cavite and Bulacan have only about 950,000 households so if we succeed in getting supply, it will be only for a half or a third of the needs of the city," Lapus said.

Executives of the two concessionaires said they were open to the proposal.

"Manila Water welcomes any additional supply to support the supply deficit ... We support any plan to give us more water," said Ferdinand dela Cruz, Manila Water president and CEO.

Ramoncito Fernandez, Maynilad president and CEO, also welcomed the supply boost but said the services of local water

districts "are not so good." He did not elaborate.

Lapus raised the possibility of a more permanent solution, such as the proposal of Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to create a department of water.

Each of the country's 32 water agencies "have their own minds," he said. When a crisis erupts, they respond with "scattered actions," he added.

Department of water

"This situation can be improved with the integration of all water agencies in one department of water," Lapus said.

Incoming Sen. Francis Tolentino also backed the creation of such a department, saying he

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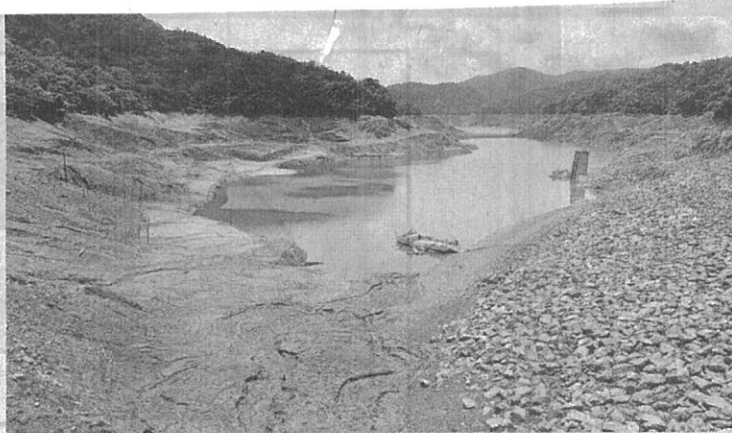
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Water from nearby provinces eyed to fill Metro needs



DRYING UP Angat Dam, which supplies nearly all of Metro Manila's water needs, is fast drying up with its water level dropping below the critical level of 160 meters over the weekend. Heavy rains that flooded the metropolis in recent days did not fall over the dam and its surroundings. Photo taken on Tuesday. —GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

had pushed for it since he started campaigning for the Senate.

It would have supervision over all water utilities being managed by local governments, he told reporters.

"It's about time we [had] a department of water to synchronize all the functions of [state agencies] and as oversight on the [private water concessionaires]," said Tolentino, a former chair of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and presidential political adviser.

He dismissed notions that the new department would only add another bureaucratic layer in solving the water supply problem. "You are just integrating [the government agencies]," he said.

"It [will improve] coordination so that only one agency will be in charge and have control of the operations and maintenance of water dams and river systems so that we will have clean water [even] in the provinces," Tolentino said.

Bato's input

Another senator-elect, Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa, said the government might consider using desalination technology, which is being used by Israel, to produce potable water.

"I don't know how expensive that technology is, but maybe we can do it," said Dela Rosa, a former chief of the Philippine National Police.

At Malacañang, presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo said the administration was open to a proposal by Bayan Muna chair Neri Colmenares to take back control over water supply and distribution from the private concessionaires.

"We are studying everything that would be good for our countrymen. All of that is included in our careful study," Panelo said in a press briefing.

Colmenares has said the government could do a better job at distributing water than Maynilad and Manila Water, which have come under fire for the water crisis this year.

New Angat low looms

The Palace assured the public that the government was doing everything it could to solve the problem.

"This is why we are studying all possible remedies to solve the problem," Panelo said.

At the House hearing, National Water Resources Board Executive Director Seville David warned that the water in Angat Dam might drop to its lowest level of 157 meters again by weekend because of a lack of rain to replenish the stock.

The water in the dam, which supplies about 97 percent of Metro Manila's requirements, last went down to that level in 2010.

David noted that water from recent downpours had not reached the dam. INQ



Sumag River in Quezon eyed as next potential water-supply source for 'thirsty' Metro Manila

By JOVEE MARIE N. DELA CRUZ

@joveemarie

TO address water shortage in Metro Manila and nearby provinces, Quezon province, a potential source of water, will propose to President Duterte the resumption of the construction of the Sumag River Diversion Project.

In an interview following a House oversight hearing on water shortage, Minority Leader and incoming Quezon province Gov. Danilo Suarez said the province is willing to fund the project, which may cost around P1 billion.

According to Suarez, Quezon province provided additional supply in times of shortage since the term of President Benigno Aquino III.

"The province has the money to fund

the project [and] several contractors in the province have committed...[to] build the tunnel," he said.

Suarez said if the construction resumes now, the diversion tunnel will be finished in just one and half years.

According to Suarez, the Sumag River Diversion Project shall supplement the water coming from Umiray River going to the Angat Reservoir. It is expected to provide Angat Dam 1.8 million liters per day of water.

The lawmaker said construction of the Sumag River Diversion Project in Quezon was halted in 2016 because of an accident that took the lives of six individuals who were working on the project.

Moreover, Suarez said, the proposal is now with the provincial government of Quezon.

"This Sumag Project will be part of my talking points with President Duterte, I will bring the proposal to him," he added.

"We recommend revisiting the benefits of this project, which was stalled back in 2016. Of course, the firm and non-negotiable terms of this project should also be revisited, to assure strict and faithful compliance with the Constitution, environment and safety laws," Suarez added.

"No doubt, we need long-term solutions and these solutions are right in front of us. As a country surrounded by bodies of water, however, we shall be a living contradiction of this water shortage continues," he said.

Short term

DURING the oversight hearing, Local Water Utilities Administrator (LWUA) Jeci Lapus urged the water concessionaires to seek additional water supply from nearby provinces, such as Laguna, Cavite and Bulacan as part of the short-term solutions.

For his part, Manila Water President and Chief Executive Officer Ferdinand dela Cruz said the water firm will support any additional supply to address the deficit in Angat Dam. His counterpart at Maynilad, Ramoncito Fernandez, said he will also support the proposal.

Lapus then raised that a short-term solution could be to direct the water districts in the country to apportion their resources to the affected areas.

Lapus, however, noted that the major concern would be the actual transportation of water supply.

Meanwhile, dela Cruz vowed to help the government in looking for ways to transport water to Metro Manila.

In the meantime, LWUA has already been closely coordinating with the water districts, according to Lapus.

Dela Cruz also reported that the current rotational water interruption had already been shortened from 23 hours to 16 hours per day.

Manila Water is able to supply 135 to 140 million liters per day to its consumers in Manila.

The leadership of the lower chamber called for a special committee meeting on Tuesday to look into the ongoing water crisis in Metro Manila as the Angat Dam drops below its 160-meter critical water level.

Department of Water

MEANWHILE, Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo said she will endorse to the 18th Congress the proposed creation of a Department of Water as long-term solution to the water shortage.

Arroyo, the author of House Bill 8068, is seeking to establish the Department of Water, Irrigation, Sewage and Sanitation Resource Management, and is pushing the passage of the measure as a long-term solution to the water shortage.



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Palace studying return of water services to government control

MALACAÑANG said it is considering the possibility of taking water services for Metro Manila back under government control.

In a briefing Tuesday, the President's Spokesperson Salvador S. Panelo said that the government is studying its options on control of water services.

Mr. Panelo was asked to comment on Bayan Muna Chairperson Neri J. Colmenares's statement on Monday that the handling of water services in Metro Manila, which is currently handled by concession holders Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Co. Inc., should be returned to the

government following the failure of both companies to address the water crisis.

Mr. Panelo said, "*Pinag-aaralan lahat ng makakabuti sa mga kababayan natin. Lahat iyan ay kasama sa pag-aaral* (We are studying what would be best for everyone. We are considering all options.)"

"*Pinag-aaralan lahat ng mga pupuwedeng gawin* (Everything that can be done is under study) to solve the problem," he added.

The Metro Manila Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (MMDRRMC), various government agencies, and water concessionaires met recently to

tackle possible contingency measures to address the worsening water shortage in Metro Manila and other areas.

Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and concurrent MMDRRMC chairman Danilo D. Lim has said that trucks of Maynilad and Manila Water are still exempt from the number coding scheme in order to facilitate the delivery of water supplies to areas that may be affected.

The House Committee on Metro Manila Development recommended in a committee report it submitted on June 3 that both the administrative and regulatory offices of the MWSS revisit

the concession agreements with Maynilad and Manila Water and introduce amendments as necessary, "particularly on the sanctions that can be imposed upon the concessionaires when they fail to sufficiently supply water or fail to comply with the terms of the Concession Agreement."

Another recommendation by the Committee is for the government to "break the duopoly in water supply service in Metro Manila and welcome more players to increase competition in the water supply industry which shall thus encourage better and more transparent services." — **Arjay L. Balinbin**



Regulator considering tapping water supply of provinces near NCR

THE Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA) said it may tap the water supply of nearby provinces to augment Metro Manila's dwindling allocation.

LWUA acting administrator Jeci A. Lapus also proposed that water concessionaires Maynilad Wter Services Inc. and Manila Water Co, Inc. should also help transport the water from provinces near the National Capital Region (NCR).

"The measure could be taken to touch base with the local water districts surrounding Metro Manila to assist in the needs of the city. *Pero ang* (But) Metro Manila (has) two million households, (while) Laguna, Cavite, and Bulacan (have only about 950,000 households). *Kung hihingi tayo dun* (If we ask for their water), it won't even cover half or a third of the needs of the city," Mr. Lapus said during a House of Representatives hearing on the water crisis.

Water elevation at Angat Dam last dropped below the critical level of 160 meters on July 13, 2010 when it registered a low of 157.57 meters, during an El Niño dry spell.

Manila Water president and CEO Ferdinand M. dela Cruz and Maynilad counterpart Ramoncito S. Fernandez welcomed the proposal to source water from nearby provinces.

"Manila Water welcomes any additional supply to support the supply deficit of Angat Dam... and to find a way to transport the

water," said Mr. dela Cruz during the House inquiry.

Separately, the House committees on Metro Manila Development and Public Works and Highways adopted Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's House Bill 8068, which seeks the creation of the Department of Water.

Mr. Lapus cited the need for one body to addressing and manage water crises.

"There should be a body *na magi-isip para sa lahat* (that will think for everyone)...What we want is an integration of all water agencies into one, as what was sponsored by the Speaker, the House Bill 8068, the creation of the Department of Water," he said.

Bulacan 1st district Rep. Jose Antonio R. Sy-Alvarado, who presided over the hearing, said the creation of such agency is "overdue."

"*Yan ay talagang long overdue na kailangan na kailangan ng bansang Pilipinas kasi nakikita naman natin yung mismanagement ng tubig*," he said. (That is long overdue because the country needs it given the mismanagement of the water supply).

He also proposed building more dams and augmenting capacity at Angat Dam.

Ms. Arroyo said her bill could be endorsed to the upcoming 18th Congress.

"If the committee members will agree, they can endorse the creation of Department of Water to the next Congress," she said. — **Vince Angelo C. Ferreras**



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New senators offer solutions to water crisis

INCOMING senators have offered different ways to address the water shortage.

Senator-elect Francis Tolentino wants to push for the establishment of a Department of Water that will "synchronize" the functions of all agencies handling water supply – National Water Resources Board (NWRB), Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and the Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA).

"Siguro it's about time that we have this Department of Water to synchronize all the functions of NWRB, MWSS, oversight doon sa Maynilad and Manila Water plus national integration of services and activities of LWUA," said Tolentino.

"It would also concern the sourcing, conservation, regulation, pricing, as well as the sustainability of



TOLENTINO

potable drinking water," the incoming senator added.

Meanwhile, Senator-elect Imee Marcos advised the public to conserve water for the moment as she described the issue as already an "emergency situation."

However, in the long run, she said the government should revisit the plans to build new sources of water such as dams.

"Balikan natin 'yung mga plano tungkol sa iba't ibang dam, alam naman natin yung mga dam eh kulang na kulang. Panahon pa ng tatay ko 'yung mga Angat na 'yan at 'yung mga inaasahan para sa Metro Manila, halos hindi na nadagdagan so I think it's time to revisit all those plans, re-engineer," Marcos said.

She also proposed to "look at the contracts of all water concessionaires" citing "very obvious violations."

Senator-elect Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa, on the



MARCOS

other hand proposed that the government should consider desalination.

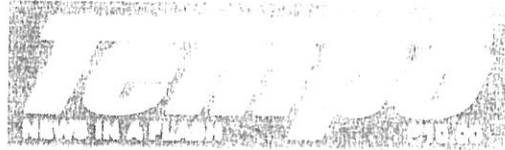
"Problema nila (Israel) noon ang water, pero nagkakaroon sila ng teknolohiya wherein magconvert 'yung saltwater from the sea, ginawang potable water at pandilig sa mga halaman," Dela Rosa stressed.

"Ewan ko kung gaano kamahal yung technology na yan pero baka kaya natin yan," he added. For the meantime, the government should strengthen its management of water resources, Dela Rosa said.

"Management lang siguro ang kulang dito para ma-manage nang husto para makarating talaga sa mga local government units ang mga tubig na yan," the senator-elect said.

"Pero kung wala nang ibang paraan, yun, 'yung teknolohiya na yun (desalination), 'yun pwede natin gawin," he added.

Marlon Purificacion



Water level still low in Angat Dam

The water level at Angat Dam further declined yesterday despite a prevailing low pressure area (LPA) east of the country.

Based on the monitoring of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) as of Tuesday morning, Angat Dam's water level was further down past its critical level at 158.77 meters.

This is 0.32 meters lower than last Monday's 159.09 meters. Angat Dam's normal high water level during the rainy season is between 210 and 212 meters.

National Water Resources Board (NWRB) Executive Director Executive Director Sevillo David Jr. said that if there is no significant rainfall in Angat Dam watershed, "its current level might be lower than the

record low of 2010 by end of this week."

During a strong El Niño event in 2010, water level at Angat Dam declined to its lowest level so far in history at 157.56 meters on July 18, 2010.

"We will have to review the decline with PAGASA's climate projections and decide on next allocations particularly for July," David said.

The current water allocation for domestic supply is 36 cubic meters per second, down from 40 cms since the Angat Dam breached its 160-meter critical level last June 22.

Water concessionaires earlier pointed out that the 4 cms additional reduction in water allocation is already equivalent to the consumption of almost 700,000 consumers per day. **(Ellalyn de Vera-Ruiz)**



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PNoy administration sinisi sa water crisis

MAY kakulangan umano ang nakaraang administrasyon kaya mayroong problema sa suplay ng tubig sa Metro Manila.

Sa joint hearing ng House Committees on Public Works and Highways at on Environment and Natural Resources, ipinaliwanag ni Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System Administrator Reynaldo Velasco na noon pang 2012 natapos ang master plan para madagdagan ang suplay ng tubig subalit

wala umanong ginawa ang nakaraang administrasyon.

Nagtanong si Quezon City Rep. Winston Castelo kaugnay sa pagpapagawa ng Kaliwa dam na gagamitin para madagdagan ang suplay ng tubig sa Metro Manila.

“Do you think that it is safe to assume that had the past administration not been remiss on their duty to roll out the Kaliwa Dam, we would not have experienced this water crisis right now?” ani Castelo.

Positibo naman ang naging tugon ni Velasco.

Isinulong naman ni Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo ang panukala na itayo ng Department of Water, Irrigation, Sewage and Sanitation Resource Management upang matutukan ang paghahanap ng sapat na suplay ng tubig.

Sinabi ni Arroyo na ang susunod na Kongreso na ang bahalang magpasa ng panukalang ito.—*Leif-billy Begas*



PANAWAGAN NG DENR SA MGA RESIDENTE NG MM "MAGTIPID SA TUBIG KAHIT TAG-ULAN NA!"

HINILING ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa mga residente ng Metro Manila na patuloy na magtipid sa paggamit ng tubig kahit na nagsimula na ang rainy season upang maiwasan ang patuloy na pagbaba ng level ng tubig sa Angat Dam.

"Angat Dam can still benefit from the rains falling outside its watershed if these are collected for non-essential uses such as for car washing and flushing of toilets," sabi ni DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu.

Ang panawagang ito ng DENR ay dahil na rin sa kakulangan ng ulan na nararanasan sa 62,300-hectare Angat Watershed Reservation bagama't nakararanas na ng malalakas na buhos ng ulan ang mga naninirahan sa Metro Manila.

Ayon kay Cimatu, sa simpleng pagtipid ng tubig ay malaki na ang maitutulong upang mabawasan ang demand sa tubig na kinukuha sa

Angat Dam.

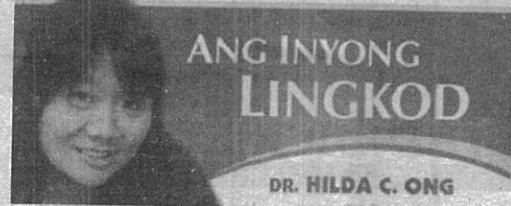
Ang tubig sa Angat Dam, na siyang nagsusuplay sa 96 percent ng mga residente sa Metro Manila, ay nagmumula sa watershed's river basin sa mga lugar ng Doña Remedios Trinidad, Norzagaray at San Jose del Monte sa Bulacan.

"We can reduce water wastage by using only what is required. We can also collect and reuse rainwater," dagdag pa ni Cimatu.

Aniya, ang kakulangan ng ulan sa Angat watershed ay dahil na rin sa "monsoon breaks" na base narin sa paliwanag ng PAGASA ay ang hindi pag-ulan ng ilang araw o linggo dahil narin sa nagbabagong klima.

Hinikayat din ng DENR chief ang mga local government units (LGUs) sa Metro Manila na magpasa ng ordinance sa kanilang lugar na nag-aatas sa mga residente na patuloy na magtipid ng tubig.

"It is high time that the LGUs pass ordinances geared at water conservation to pre-



DR. HILDA C. ONG

vent the water problem from worsening," sabi pa ni Cimatu.

Aniya, malaki ang positibong epekto ng ganitong ordinance sa water at food security na isinusulong ng mga national agencies tulad ng DENR, Department of Agriculture (DA), National Water Resources Board (NWRB) at National Irrigation Authority (NIA).

"The LGUs have proven themselves how pivotal they are to the success of national environmental programs like the Boracay and Manila Bay rehabilitation," dagdag ng kalihim.

Aniya pa: "They (LGUs) are again being called upon to take the challenge to lead their constituents practice water conservation. We should all do our part."

Ayon kay Dr. Seville David, Jr. Executive Director ng NWRB, "Kahapon ng umaga (Hunyo 25) ay bumaba muli sa 158.77 meters ang tubig sa Angat Dam, mas mababa pa sa 1.23 meters sa 160-meter

critical level para sa ating domestic water supply".

Huling naranasan ang pagbaba sa 160-meter mark ng tubig sa Angat Dam noong 2010 kung saan ay pumalo sa 157.57 meters ang water level, ngunit sa taong ito, kapag walang malakas na ulan sa may Angat Dam, mas hihina ang supply ng tubig sa mga kabahayan sa susunod na araw o linggo.

Sa ginanap na press briefing, sinabi ni Executive Director David na ilalagay nila ang dam sa Low Level Outlet (LLO) mode kung bumaba pa sa 160-meter mark, kaya nangangahulungan ng pagbukas ng bottom channel ng dam.

Sinabi pa nito, nagsagawa na rin ng pag-aaral kung saan ay magagawang linisin sa pamamagitan ng "treatment" ng dalawang water concessioners na Maynilad at Manila Water ang tubig kapag iniilagay sa LLO mode ang dam kaya't ligtas pa rin itong magagamit ng publiko.



PAGTANAW AT PANANAW Bert de Guzman

Tubig sa Angat Dam, kritikal

KRITIKAL ang situwasyon ng tubig sa Angat Dam na nagsusuplay ng inuming tubig (potable water) sa may 12.8 milyong residente ng Metro Manila. Ang dam na watershed river basin ay naka-straddle o nasa pagitan ng mga bayan ng Dona Remedios Trinidad, Norzagaray at San Jose del Monte.

Batay sa tala ng Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services

Administration (PAGASA) noong Huwebes ng alas-6 ng umaga, ang level o antas ng tubig sa Angat Dam ay 160.73 metro. Ayon sa National Water Resources Board (NWRB), kapag bumagsak pa nang mababa sa 160 metro ang tubig sa Angat Dam, babawasan pa ang alokasyon ng potable water supply sa mga residente ng Metro Manila na siniserbisyuhan ng concessionaires ng Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) — ang Manila Water at Maynilad.

Sabi ng palabiro kong kaibigan: "Sana naman ay hindi magsabay na walang tubig at kuryente dahil milyun-milyong Pinoy ang mangangamoy at madadapa sa dilim." Sabad ni senior-jogger, umaasa pa naman ang mga Pinoy sa pagdating at pagkakaroon ng PAGBABAGO sa Duterte administration subalit ang pagbabago pala ay kakulangan ng tubig, manipis na kuryente at El Niño.

Gayunman, nakapag-isip yata ang matandang jogger: "Hindi naman kasalanan ng administrasyon ang pagsulpot ng El Niño. Gusto nga ni Pres. Digong bigyang-ginhawa ang mga Pinoy, pero pati ang

kalikasan ay ayaw makisama sa kanya." Samakatwid, badya ni Tata Berto, magnaspu-naspu na lang muna tayo at iwasan ang labis na pagpapawis.

Samantala, matindi raw ang pagdaramdam ng mga Pilipino sa pagbangga ng Chinese vessel sa fishing boat ng mga mangingisdang Pinoy noong Hunyo 9 malapit sa Recto Bank sa Palawan. Lalo raw nagalit ang mga Pinoy dahil hindi tinulungan ng Chinese vessel crew ang mga Pinoy fishermen na nalubog sa gitna ng dagat ng kung ilang oras. Buti na lang at sinagip sila ng isang Vietnamese boat.


Sinabi ni Gregory Poling ng Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (AMTI) at isang fellow sa Southeast Asia Program ng Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), ang pagbangga ay bunga ng pag-deputize sa daan-daang fishing boats bilang militia force ng China.

Kapag hindi raw kumilos ang Pilipinas, posibleng maulit ang pagbangga at pagpapalubog sa mga fishing boat ng mga Pinoy, tulad ng nangyari sa F/B Gem-Ver 1. Ginawa na rin daw ito ng China sa mga bangka ng

Vietnam, binabangga at pinalulubog, pero lumalaban ang Vietnam.

Mahigpit ang labanan sa Speakership ng Kamara. Sa PDP-Laban, ang partido ng ating Pangulo, tatlo ang tumatarget sa puwesto — sina Marinduque Rep. Lord Allan Velasco, Davao del Norte Rep. Pantaleon Alvarez (dating Speaker), at Pampanga Rep. Aurelio Gonzales.

Dalawa pang kongresista ang nag-aambisyon din sa puwesto — sina Taguig City Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano ng Nacionalista Party at Leyte Rep. Martin Romualdez ng Lakas-CMD. Sino man sa kanila ang maging Speaker, tiyak na ito ay may "basbas" ni Duterte o ng kanyang matapang na anak na si D City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio. Sino sa palagay ang babasbasan nina PRRD at Inday Sara?



HAGUPIT

Ni Egco

Kritikal!

NITONG Linggo ang level ng tubig sa Angat Dam sa Bulacan ay tuluyan ng nanganib at bumagsak na sa 'critical level.' Mula sa 159.78 meters noong Sabado naging 159.43 meters ito nitong Linggo. Bumaba ito ng husto sa mismong critical level na 160 meters.

Nagbunga ito ng pagaanunsiyo ng National Water Resources Board na Batasan ang supply na alok anyone ng tubing sa Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) at ang dalawang prob ado nitong concessionaires na Maynilad at Manila Waters. after the water level at Angat Dam hit the critical level.

Resulta- lahat ng customers ng Maynilad Water Services, Inc. at ng Manila Water na makaranas ng mahina hanggang sa literal na walang tubing sa kani-kanilang mga tahanan.

Agad naman kumilos ang Manila Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (MMDRRMC) upang kausapin ang mga kaugnay na sangay ng pamahalaan at ang mga water concessionaires upang masuluyunan ang kakulangan ng tubig sa kamaynilaan dahil sa pagbaba sa Angat Dam.

Si Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) na kasalukuyan ding MMDRRMC chairman Danilo Lim ang nagsabing kailangan maghanda sa pinaka-matinding problema sa kakulangan ng tubig at kung paano ito magagawan ng paraan ng dalawang water concessionaires.

Aniya ang mga truck na may tangke ng tubig ng Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Company Inc. ay exempted muna sa number coding upang mapabili ang pamimigay o pagrasyon ng tubig sa mga lugar ng kamaynilaan.

Ano ba ang dahilan ng pagbaba ng tubig sa Angat Dam. Sabi ng mga dalubahasa at mga tagapagtaya ng panahon, labis na nagbago na ang panahon kayat maging ang init ng sinag ng araw ay parang tagos buto na kung ating maramdaman lao na sa katanghian.

Nasa kritikal na ring kalagayan anila ang ating kapaligiran kaya bago pa tayo rin ay malagay sa kritikal na kondisyon tumulong tayong pangalagaan ang ating kapaligiran at matutong magtipid sa mga likas nating yaman.



Angat Dam, sasadsad sa pinakamababa

NI ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

Lalo pang bumaba ang antas ng tubig sa Angat Dam kahapon, sa kabila ng low pressure area (LPA) sa silangang bahagi ng bansa na malaki ang posibilidad na maging bagyo.

Sa monitoring ng Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) kahapon ng umaga, patuloy na bumababa ang tubig sa Angat Dam, na lampas na sa critical level sa 158.77 metro.

Ito ay 0.32 metrong mas mababa kumpara noong Lunes, na nasukat sa 159.09 metro. Nasa 210-212 metro ang normal level sa dam tuwing tag-ulan.

Ayon kay National Water Resources Board (NWRB) Executive Director Executive Director Seville David Jr., kung walang pag-ulan na mararanasan sa Angat Dam watershed, "its current level might be lower than the record low of 2010 by end of this week."

Nasa 36 cubic meters per second ang kasalukuyang water allocation para sa domestic supply, mula sa dating 40 cms simula nang bumaba sa 160-meter critical level ang tubig sa dam nitong Sabado. Samantala, sa kabila ng problema sa tubig sa Angat Dam, isang LPA na nasa 450 kilometro sa silangan ng Aparri, Cagayan ang may malaking tiyansa na maging bagyo sa loob ng 48 oras, at tatawaging 'Dodong'.

Bagamat hindi inaasahang maglandfall sa bansa, sinabi ni PAGASA weather specialist Ezra Bulquerin na

magdadala ang southwest monsoon ng maulap na papawirin at mga pag-ulan sa bahagi ng Metro Manila, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Pangasinan, Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon, Oriental Mindoro, Occidental Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, Palawan, Aklan, Antique, Negros Occidental, Capiz, Guimaras, Iloilo, Zambales, at Bataan.

Habang ang natitirang bahagi ng bansa ay makararanas ng maulap hanggang sa maulap na papawirin na may pag-ulan dulot ng localized thunderstorms.



HUNYO 26, 2019

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ROWENA DEL PRADO • Editor

BANSA NGAYON

MM 'mag-iigib' na sa probinsiya

Nina GEMMA GARCIA at ANGIE DELA CRUZ

Handang 'mag-igib' ang mga water concessionaire na Maynilad at Manila Water mula sa mga water district sa kapalit na mga lalawigan upang makatulong sa kapos na suplay ng tubig sa Metro Manila.

Sa joint committees on Public Works and Highways at Natural Resources sa Kamara, sinabi nina Maynilad President Ramoncito Fernandez at Manila Water President Ferdinand dela Cruz na bukas silang pag-aralan at isakatuparan ang nasabing alternatibong paraan.

Sa ngayon, sinabi ni Local Water Utilities

Administration (LWUA) Administrator Jeci Lapus na nakikipag-ugnayan na sila sa mga local water district sa Cavite, Laguna at Bulacan.

"Ang Metro Manila 2 million households. Ang nasa Laguna, Cavite and Bulacan naman is only about 950,000 households so kung makakahingi po tayo dun ay malaking tulong na ito," pahayag ni Lapus.

Gayunman, ang isa sa magiging problema umano ay kung paano ibibiyaha o transportasyon ng tubig patungong Metro Manila.

Sa nasabing pag-

dinig, itinutulak din na madagdagan pa ang mga dam na maaaring itayo sa Quezon province, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija at Bulacan. Kailangan na rin umanong magkaroon ng Department of Water na dapat mangasiwa sa usapin ng supply ng tubig.

Ang MWSS ang namamahala sa pagkukunan ng tubig habang ang National Water Resources Board ang nangangasiwa sa alokasyon ng tubig.

Sa ngayon, sa paparating na malakas na ulan pa rin aasa ang gobyerno para maibalik sa normal level ang tubig sa Angat dam.



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Sumag River Diversion Project ipinatutuloy **LONG-TERM SOLUTION SA WATER CRISIS**

KAKAUSAPIN na ni House Minority Leader Danilo Suarez si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte para maituloy na ang Sumag River Diversion Project na magsusuplay ng tubig sa Angat dam.

Ayon kay Suarez, ito ang nakikitang pangmatalagalang solusyon sa kakulangan ng suplay ng tubig sa Metro Manila at mga karatig na lalawigan.

Ang naturang proyekto na nagkokonekta sa Umiray-Angat Transbasin Tunnel ay sinuspinde ang konstruksiyon noong 2016 matapos na magkaroon ng aksidente at masawi ang anim na

manggagawa rito.

Paliwanag ni Suarez, napapanahon na para muling buksan at simulan ang nasabing proyekto dahil sa nakaambang water crisis sa mga susunod pang taon lalo pa at 70 porsiyento na ang natatapos dito.

Aniya, ang nasabing proyekto na nagkakahalaga ng P1 bilyon ay kayang pondohan ng provincial government ng Quezon at maaaring matapos sa loob ng isa't kalahating taon.

Dagdag pa ng kongresista, aabot sa 1.8 million liters a day ang maaaring makuhang tubig mula rito.

CONDE BATA



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Palitrapan sa suplay ng tubig hanggang Setyembre

Hanggang sa Setyembre pa mararanasan ang krisis sa tubig sa Metro Manila at mga karatig lalawigan dahil ayon sa Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) ay tatagal pa ng tatlong buwan bago tuluyang makarekober ang Angat Dam.

Magiging normal lamang ang water level ng Angat Dam kapag umabot na ito sa 180 meters at ito ay posibleng mangyari sa buwan ng Setyembre o Oktubre kung saan kasagagan ang mga bagyo at malalakas na ulan.

"For it to return to normal, it would not take only one month; maybe three months or more. One factor is that Angat was really low the past months and it did not receive any rain during that period," ayon kay PAGASA weather specialist Junie Ruiz.

Kahit umamo magsunod sunod ang pag-ulan mababasa lamang nito ang lupa ng Angat watershed kapag napuno na ng tubig ang lupa saka pa lamang didiretso ang ulan sa water table at saka pupunta sa dam.

Nabatid na hanggang kahapon nasa 159.09 me-

ters ang tubig sa Dam na nasa below critical level na 160 meters.

Nagbabala ang National Water Resources Board (NWRB) na posibleng bumaba pa sa 157.57 metro ang level ng tubig ng Angat Dam.

Nalaman na noong Hulyo, 2010 nang mairehistro sa Angat Dam ang 157.57 meters na pinakamababang naging level ng tubig ng dam na pinakamalalang episode ng El Niño sa bansa.

Sa kabilang dako, kanya-kanyang panukala na ang mga bagitong senador kaugnay sa nararanasang krisis sa tubig.

Para kay Senator-elect Francis Tolentino, mas makabubuti ang pagbuo ng Department of Water na sasaklaw sa mga ahensya na may kinalaman sa water supply kabilang na ang National Water Resources Board (NWRB), Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), at ang Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA).

Kung patuloy namang lalala ang sitwasyon, iginiit ni Senator-elect Ronald 'Bato' dela Rosa na magpatapat ng desaminasyon katulad ng ginawa ng Israel.

(Juliet de Loza-Cudia/
Dang Samson Garcia)



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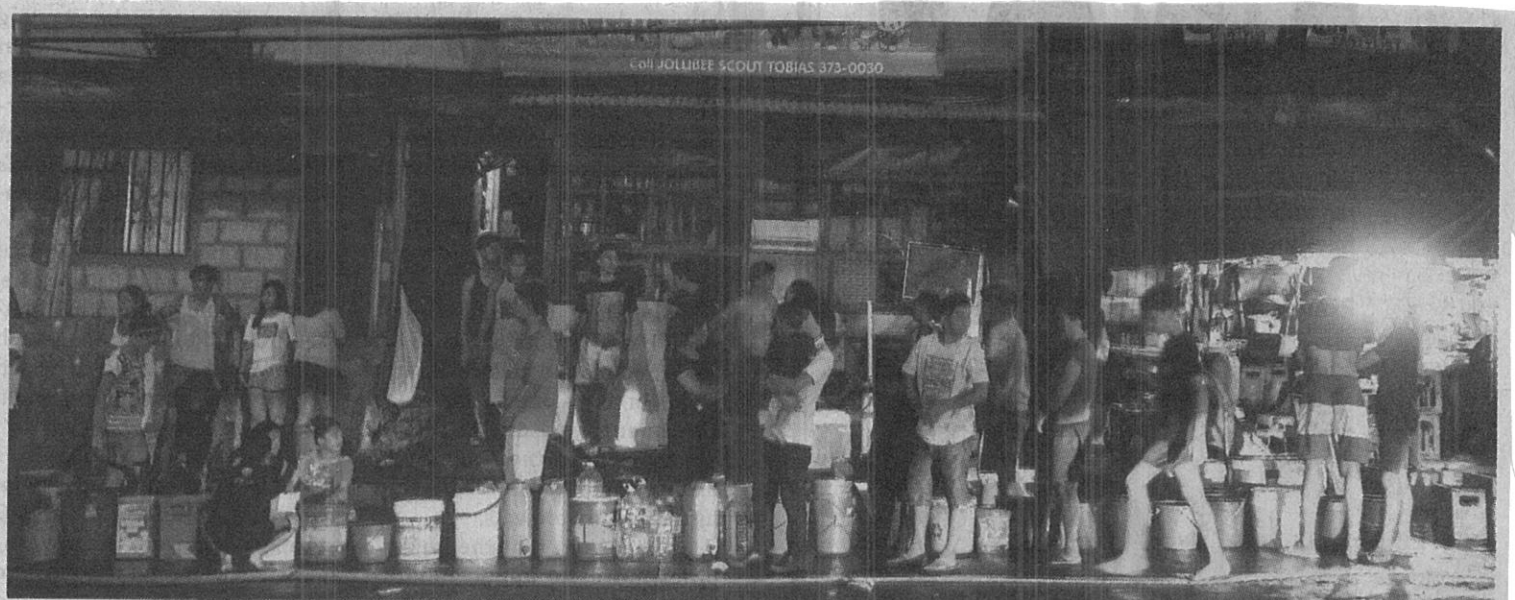
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PHILIPPINE STAR/ MIGUEL DE GUZMAN

RESIDENTS affected by the rotational service interruption of the Manila Water queue with their containers for water ration from the local firetruck at Barangay South Triangle in Quezon City on Wednesday midnight. The service interruption is part of the announced reduced allocation by the National Water Resources Board to consumers as the Angat Dam may reach critical level within days.



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What day is it?

Writing a newspaper column, I sometimes do run out of ideas for topics, which is when I then look for some special day to commemorate something.

A few days ago, I thought I should write something about the environment and vaguely remembered there was some date in June dedicated to the environment.

I Googled "UN Days" and, lo, I found a site listing the many official days designated by the United Nations to commemorate something. There it was: June 5, designated as World Environment Day.

You'll find World Environment Day listed as well in a Wikipedia entry devoted just to "environment days," and I thought that might as well be part of my focus for today's column, to show that environmentalism covers so many issues and concerns.

I'll narrow down the dates first to the ones I feel are especially relevant for the Philippines.

I also suspect this will be the longest paragraph I've ever written:

The year has a slow start—no environment days and the first two months blank until we get World Wildlife Day (March 3); Solar Appreciation Day (second Friday of March); International Day of Action for Rivers (March 14); World Consumer Rights Day (March 15), which serves to remind us that our consumerism often runs counter to environmentalism; Global Recycling Day (March 18); World Sparrow Day (March 20), when we can give attention to our ever ubiquitous *maya*; International Day of Forests (March 21); World Wood Day (March 22); World Water Day (March 22), so very relevant to a waterless Metro Manila; World Fish Migration Day (April 21); Earth Day (April 22), not to be confused with World Environment Day; World Migratory Bird Day (second Saturday of May in the United States and Canada but second Saturday of October in central and south America); Endangered Species Day (third Friday of May); International Day for Biological Diversity or World Biodiversity Day (May 22); Bike-to-Work Day (third Friday of May), but maybe we should choose another day because that's at the height of our summer; and, finally for May, World No Tobacco Day (May 31).

There, I had to catch my breath. I'm starting a new paragraph to save your eyesight.



PINOY KASI

MICHAEL L. TAN

We have World Environment Day (June 5), World Oceans Day (June 8) and Coral Triangle Day (June 9) calling attention to an area in the western Pacific with some 500 species of corals. The Verde Island Passage in Mindoro is the "hottest" biodiversity spot in that triangle.

To continue, there's Global Wind Day (June 15); World Sea Turtle Day (June 16); International Climate Change Day (June 21); World Rainforest Day (June 22); World Population Day (July 11); International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer (Sept. 16); World Water Monitoring Day (Sept. 18); World Cleanup Day (Sept. 21), a strange coincidence with our commemoration of martial law, so maybe we can talk about fighting the attempts to clean up (revise) history; Zero Emissions Day (also on Sept. 21); Car Free Day (Sept. 22); World Environmental Health Day (Sept. 26); World Rivers Day (last Sunday of September).

Moving on, there's World Habitat Day (first Monday of October); World Animal Day (Oct. 4), drawn from the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi; Energy Efficiency Day (first Wednesday in October); International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction (Oct. 13); Sustainability Day (fourth Wednesday of October); International Day of Climate Action (Oct. 24); World Vegan Day (Nov. 1).

Then there's the longest name for an environmental day: International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict (Nov. 6).

For the rest of the year, we have World Soil Day (Dec. 5) and International Mountain Day (Dec. 11).

Notice how the days seem to trail off toward the end of the year, almost as if the people doing these days ran out of steam? I smiled seeing one of the listed days, Ozone Action Day, as a "variable date depending on weather conditions." The very last entry, "eDay or Electronic Waste Day," observed only in New Zealand, was also listed as a variable date.

There are all kinds of days for particular animals, many clustered around July and August. None of the animals with dedicated days are found in the Philippines: polar bears, giraffes, lions, elephants, orangutans, tigers.

So, there, we didn't even touch religious days or historical days. Wouldn't it be a nightmare for school administrators and teachers if politicians ever converted all these special days into holidays?

mtan@inquirer.com.ph



Youth take over vs climate change

They are determined to beat this threat and they are making a big difference already

By Elmer N. Manuel

Following the failure of the older generations to respond properly to the challenges of climate change, the young ones are thankfully "stepping up to the challenge" and taking the lead to slow the destructive pace of global warming.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres made this assessment in his closing speech recently during the UN-backed World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, and Youth Forum, in the

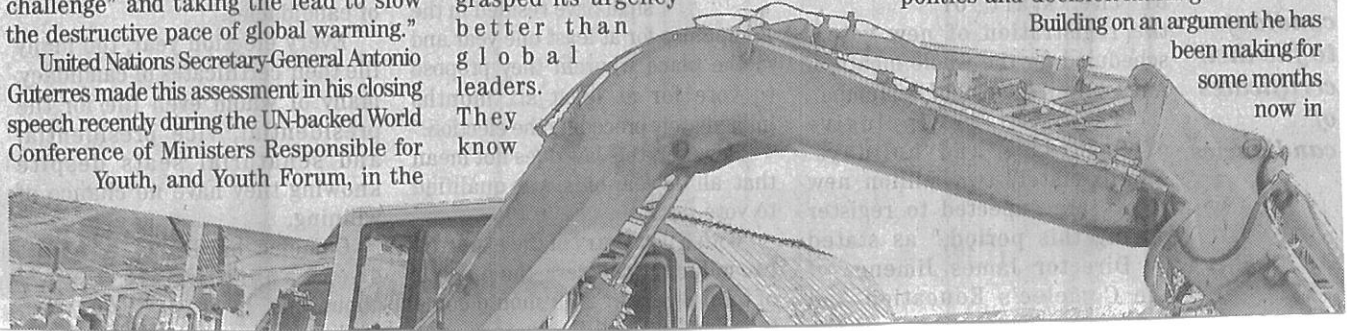
Portuguese capital of Lisbon.

Guterres said that through the actions of inspiration, young leaders such as Sweden's Greta Thunberg who's got classrooms striking for climate action across the world, "schoolchildren have grasped its urgency better than global leaders. They know

the window of opportunity is closing; they are determined to beat this threat and they are making a big difference already."

The summit comes 21 years after the adoption of the Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programs and provides a place for national governments to talk about progress made with young people directly as well as introducing new approaches to empowering youth in politics and decision-making.

Building on an argument he has been making for some months now in



the face of the existential threat posed by climate change, enshrined in the Paris Agreement of 2015 to keep warming to well below two-degrees Celsius, the Secretary-General said that it's "not enough to listen to young people and provide a seat at the table - we need to take a seat at your table".

The UN chief said governments were listening, and "companies are starting to realize that a big carbon footprint is bad for their image, and even for their profits."

This is just the start, he added, saying that the energy and commitment of young people, such as the delegates in the audience in Lisbon, was making action a priority, "stepping up to the challenge."

"We need to create an enabling environment for young people, where they are seen not as subjects to be protected, but as citizens

with equal rights, equal voices and equal influence, as full members of our societies and powerful agents for change."

He lauded the World Program of Action for Youth, the focus of this weekend's efforts in Portugal, saying that it was encouraging a wider focus on policy-making and programs that are truly relevant to youth worldwide.

"Policies on gender are particularly important since we cannot build strong, just and resilient communities and societies without the full participation and leadership of half of their members.

Guterres said he was hoping that many would be in New York in September, for not only the major Climate Action Summit, but also to help push along "more urgent and ambitious global action for implementation."





13 PH cities to join climate contest

THE World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) announced that 13 Philippine cities qualified for its global 2019 to 2020 One Planet City Challenge (OPCC).

The OPCC, which was previously dubbed Earth Hour City Challenge, was launched in 2011. It is a biennial global challenge that recognizes local government efforts in helping combat the effects of climate change.

The WWF acknowledges programs and regulations on infrastructure, housing, transportation and mobility that encourage low-carbon emissions to promote a climate resilient future. According to the WWF, 55 percent of the population resides in urban centers and cities, and were responsible for 70 percent of global

emissions

The cities qualified for the challenge were Batangas City, Cagayan de Oro City, Parañaque City, Pasig City, Quezon City, Santa Rosa City, San Carlos City and Tagum City. New entrants include Davao City, Dipolog City, La Carlota City, Malolos City and Muntinlupa City.

WWF-Philippines President and Chief Executive Officer Joel Palma said the inclusion of more participants to the OPCC was an indication that more cities were committed to the environment.

"With these new cities joining this iteration of the OPCC, it shows that, year by year, we as a country are becoming increasingly concerned with our impact

on the environment. I hope in the future runs of OPCC, we will see even more Philippine cities joining, and that as a nation we begin taking our commitments to the climate more seriously," said Palma.

Global winners of the OPCC in the previous years included Canada in 2013; Cape Town, South Africa, 2014; Seoul, South Korea, 2015; Paris, France, 2016; and Uppsala, Sweden, 2018. Pasig City was named the best city in the Philippines during the OPCC 2017 to 2018, while Santa Rosa clinched the award during the 2015 to 2016 edition.

The 13 cities will be competing with hundreds of participants globally.

DIVINA NOVA JOY DELA CRUZ



Anti-plastics campaign, isinusulong ng ASEAN

PORMAL na nagdeklara ng pakikidigma laban sa mga dumi sa karagatan ang mga lider ng Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) nitong Sabado.

Kabilang si Pangulong Duterte sa mga lider na dumalo para sa 34th ASEAN Summit sa Bangkok, Thailand, na nagtapos nitong Linggo.

Sa isang pinagkasunduang pahayag, na kilala ngayon bilang Bangkok Declaration on Combatting Marine Debris in ASEAN Region, nangako ang mga lider ng rehiyon "[to] strengthen actions at the national level, as well as through collaborative actions among the ASEAN Member States and partners to prevent and significantly reduce marine debris, particularly from land-based activities, including environmentally sound management."

Nagpahayag din ang mga ASEAN leader ng pangamba sa mataas at mabilis na pagtaas ng lebel ng mga basura sa karagatan partikular ang mga marine litter at inasahan na magdudulot ng negatibong epekto sa marine biodiversity, ecosystems, animal well-being, fisheries, maritime transport, recreation and tourism, local societies and economies, at ang agarang pangangailangan upang mapalakas ang kaalaman sa lebel at epekto ng microplastics at nanoplastics sa marine ecosystem, food safety at kalusugan ng tao.

Nangako rin ang mga ito para sa paghikayat ng "integrated land-to-sea approach to prevent and reduce marine debris," kung saan kabilang ang mas mahigpit na batas at mga regulasyon.

Ayon sa mga ASEAN leaders, dapat din umanong palakasin ang inter-sectoral coordination sa pagitan ng ASEAN sectoral bodies upang higit na matugunan ang "multi-dimensional and far-reaching negative effects as well as sources of marine debris pollution."

Nagpahayag din sila para sa pangangailangan sa isang multi-stakeholder coordination and cooperation, at implementasyon ng joint actions at partnerships.

Gayunman, dahil limitado lamang ang kayang gawin ng mga pamahalaan, sinabi ng mga ASEAN leaders na isusulong ang private sector engagement at investment upang maiwasan at mabawasan ang mga dumi ng karagatan, kabilang ang pakikipagtulungan sa publiko at pribadong sektor sa pamamagitan ng iba't ibang mekanismo at insentibo.

Upang higit pang malabanan ang dumi sa karagatan, kinakailangan ding umanong isulong ang inobatibong solusyon, at kabilang dito ang pagbabawas, muling paggamit at pagre-recycle ng plastic.

PNA



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• Filipino youth join global environmental movement

Hundreds of young Filipinos expressed their willingness to protect and preserve the environment as they joined the recent launching of the "Laudato Si Generation," the branch of the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) for the youth. Columban Fr. John Leydon of GCCM Philippines said, the local chapter is the response of young Filipinos to the global call "to move young people for the earth." "We need the youth. The planet needs the youth. Without the youth, nothing's going to happen," Leydon said in a Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines News post. Caceres Archbishop Rolando Tria Tirona, head of Caritas Philippines, presided over the mass during the launching held at the Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City. The event coincided with the fourth anniversary of 'Laudato Si,' Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment. Launched during the World Youth Day in Panama in January, the global youth movement calls on the Church and governments to take action against climate change. The movement has thousands of members worldwide between the ages of 15 to 30. (Christina I. Hermoso)



Sa Laguna

Arbor Day 2019 tinampukan ng tree planting

PINANGUNAHAN ng Laguna Police Advisory Council 4th Cluster Group C ang sama-samang pagtatanim ng 1,000 punong-kahoy sa pasimula ng Arbor Day 2019, tree planting, tree growing na may temang, "Sama-samang Pagtatanim Tungo sa Pagsagip sa Ating Inang Kalikasan," na naglalayong sagipin ang mahalagang kabundukan mula sa pagkasira nito.

Isinagawa ito bilang tulong sa kalikasan na unti-unti nang nakakalbo dahil sa pagpapabaya ng iba nating mga kababayan at kaugnay sa paghihiyay ng mga volunteer para sa pagsasagawa ng reforestation o pagtatanim ng

mga puno at halaman nang maibalik sa dati ang nasirang kagubatan.

Isa itong pasimula ng Laguna Police Advisory Council 4th Cluster Group C na binubuo ng Municipal Advisory Council mula sa mga bayan ng Kalayaan, Paete, Pakil, Pangil, Siniloan, Famy, Mabitac, at Sta. Maria kasama ang 2nd Laguna Provincial Manoeuver Force Company advisory council.

Sa apat na kilometrong haba ng tinamnan sa gilid ng kalsada, mahigit 300 volunteers mula sa walong bayan at partner organizations mula sa DENR, PENRO, PNP at AFP ang nagtanim ng kabuuang 1,000 tire trees sa Barangay

Galalan, sa bayan ng Pangil, at Barangay Saray sa bayan ng Pakil, parehong nasa lalawigan ng Laguna.

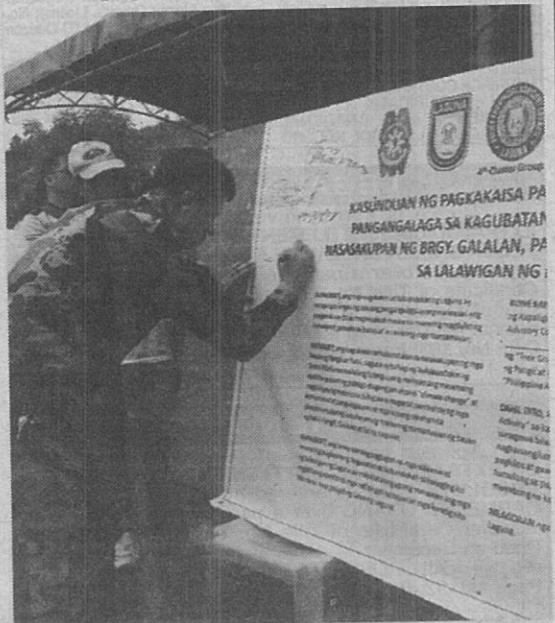
Pumirma ng kasunduan ng pagkakaisa para sa proteksiyon at pangangalaga sa kagubatan at kabundukan na nasasakupan ng Barangay Galalan ng bayan ng Pangil at Barangay Saray ng bayan ng Pakil, Laguna, sa kadhilangang ang mga kagubatan at kabundukan ng Laguna ay nangangailangan ng ibayong pangangalaga.

Bago magtapos ang programa, nagsalusalalo ang mga nakiisa sa pagtatanim sa isang boodle fight.

Bukas sa mga volunteer ang programang "Sama-samang Pagtatanim, Tungo sa Pagsagip sa Ating Inang Kalikasan" na nagnanais magtanim ng mga fire tree sa nasabing lugar.

Ang mga interesado ay maaaring makipag-ugnayan sa mga Police Municipal Advisory Council ng walong Bayan.

(BOY PALATINO)





RESTORING PINE FOREST



BAD WEED The fight against illegal drugs brings policemen to remote plantations in the Cordillera mountains to destroy marijuana plants. —PHOTO COURTESY OF PNP CORDILLERA

MARIJUANA BURNING TRIGGERS FIRE IN KALINGA TREE FARM

BAGUIO CITY—Residents of Tinglayan town in Kalinga province have sought help from the police on how best to restore their pine tree plantations, which were razed by a fire triggered by law enforcers carrying out marijuana eradication in March.

An official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Monday said the fire razed pine trees planted in 22.5 hectares.

Marijuana plants uprooted were automatically destroyed by burning but the operations might have triggered brush fires that spread to a 50-ha tree farm overseen by three peoples' organizations in Tinglayan town, according to Ralph Pablo, DENR Cordillera director.

The fire happened on March 27 in Barangay Loccong in Tinglayan.

2-day blaze

"Residents fought to suppress the fire. It took them two days to beat the blaze, which spread due to the steep terrain and high winds," said lawyer Severino Dalutag, Tabuk City community environment and natural resources officer.

The tree farm was about 100 meters from the marijuana

plantation.

The Cordillera police and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency earlier said marijuana plants worth P70.5 million were uprooted and burned in the three-day operation in Loccong.

On June 14, residents met police officials to discuss new protocols regarding future eradication drives, Dalutag said.

Like ordinary grass

He said the police volunteered to help replant 30,000 seedlings between July and October, the monsoon months. "We are trying to raise the seedlings. Loccong residents want to build a pine forest to match the natural pine growth in neighboring Balbalan town," Dalutag said.

Loccong continues to be the subject of antidrug operations because marijuana "grows naturally in the area like ordinary grass," he said.

Kalinga and Mountain Province are transshipment points for marijuana, police said, adding that they were considering putting up a police outpost at the provinces' borders.

—REPORTS FROM VINCENT CABREZA AND VALERIE DAMIAN INQ



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Burn weeds not trees

He said that the authorities failed to control the fire that it spread to different directions razing about 1,000 Pine tree saplings

By Aldwin Quitasol

BAGUIO CITY – Prior to the observation of the Arbor Day where all are urged to help in the collective reforestation efforts in the country, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Cordillera Regional Director Ralph Pablo appeals to the authorities to consider the safety of the trees before setting fire unto discovered marijuana plantations.

According to Pablo, in March this year, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency Cordillera, the Cordillera police and the Philippine Army successfully uprooted and burned more than P70 million worth of full

grown marijuana at Sitio Lokkong, Tinglayan Municipality in the Province of Kalinga.

However, he said it was never put into news the collateral damage that accidentally followed during the illegal weed eradication and that was the burning of three-year-old Pine trees that were planted under the government's National Greening Program.

According to Provincial Advisory Council member and Chairman of the Kalinga Provincial Peace and Order Council Andy Ngao-i, the enforcers burned more than 2 hectares of marijuana plantation.

He said that the authorities failed to control the fire that it spread to different directions razing about 1,000 Pine tree saplings.

Ngao-i said they are appealing to the DENR for Pine tree seedlings to replace the charred ones. He blamed the members of the Barangay Anti-Drug Council because of their alleged negligence to pinpoint the specific areas that should be burned and failure to see to it that there will be no grass or trees destroyed during the marijuana eradication operation.

Pablo said that they are still determining if there are enough Pine tree seedlings available to be used in the said restoration.

On the estimated cost of the burnt Pine tree saplings in Kalinga, he said that the planting and maintenance of trees for one year per hectare cost approximately around P10,000.

The regional director said that the ones who should replace the destroyed young Pine trees are those who burned them.



Shock factor

BIZ BUZZ



Who doesn't like surprises? Well, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza), for one.

But this is exactly what Peza got last week, when Malacañang suddenly—through an administrative order—banned new economic zones in Metro Manila.

Economic zones in the country's capital don't look like the ecozones you'd find in Laguna or elsewhere. In Metro Manila, these ecozones look like any other office, except these buildings house information technology and business process management (IT-BPM) firms.

And so Peza called for a press briefing to clear things up. Yes, Peza wants countryside development. But then again, the moratorium should at least give it some time to adjust.

Tereso O. Panga, Peza deputy director general for policy and planning, recalled how the idea for a ban came up in a memo back in 2017.

In January last year, he said Peza asked Malacañang for at least a 6-month period to give companies in the industry time to adjust their respective plans.

But here we are, with an order that only gives pending proposals for ecozone development a grace period of 30 days to sort out whatever is lacking in their submissions.

There were signs that foreshadowed this, such as the slower-than-usual presidential proclamation of new ecozones last year.

So, in a way, Peza did anticipate this would happen. However, Peza Director General **Charito**

Plaza said she did not expect it to happen this soon.

But why tell Peza beforehand, right? Why give a courtesy call? That would have only ruined the surprise. —ROY STEPHEN C. CANIVEL

Not-so-solid ground

There is some debate among construction experts about last weekend's incident along Roxas Boulevard in Manila where a portion of the road collapsed from under a 14-wheeler truck loaded with sand.

The debate is whether it was caused by a sinkhole as some observers contended or merely the collapse of an underground drainage culvert, no thanks to the weight of the cargo truck.

Well, whether it's a sinkhole or not, property owners in the area are alarmed. That's because some construction industry veterans point out that the entire area may be at risk of more incidents like this over the coming years.

Recall that the entire stretch of Roxas Boulevard actually stands on land that was reclaimed from Manila Bay long before World War II by American construction companies like Atlantic, Gulf & Pacific, the corporate predecessor of today's local firm, AG&P. (This partly explains why many properties in this area are or used to be owned by Americans.)

The problem was that its builders had no idea that Manila would grow into the sprawling metropolis that it is now. Back then, the shoreline was actually closer to Taft Avenue. As such, not enough provisions were put in for drainage pipes that water could use to drain into the bay.

Unfortunately, the country's capital is now a megacity of more than 10 million people and a lot of water that consumers expend sim-

ply seeps into the ground—and is drawn into the biggest body of water, which is Manila Bay. This means that one could not entirely discount the possibility that more incidents like last Sunday's mishap will repeat itself.

Property owners along the scenic boulevard now want the government to study the entire area and prepare a contingency plan. —DAXIM L. LUCAS

PNB surprise

Things have been exciting in the business empire of taipan **Lucio Tan** in recent weeks and it's not different at the group's flagship financial institution, Philippine National Bank. But in a good way.

That's because, a few days ago, PNB closed the deal for a \$750-million bond deal that made the record books as the biggest such transaction for a Philippine financial institution. What's even more amazing is that total tenders from overseas investors reached \$3.25 billion—which meant would-be creditors were willing to lend PNB over three times the money it needed.

Even the deal's underwriters were surprised by the strong response from investors in Hong Kong, Singapore and London, where PNB president **Wick Veloso** was able to leverage off his previous ties with global banking giant HSBC.

And what does the bank need the money for? Veloso said the proceeds from the deal would be used to support the bank's loan growth, "especially on infrastructure and commercial countryside projects as we increase focus on opportunities brought by the positive momentum of the 'Build, Build, Build' program of the Republic of the Philippines."



P-2

Shock factor

That's welcome kind of news after all. —DAXIM L. LUCAS

Local PT license inferior to US?

Pace Prehab & Recovery opened in 2016 with a promise to bring US service levels at a performance center principally targeting triathletes. Pace has since focused only on physical therapy and its clinic in Bonifacio Global City is booming.

But why are the original partner-owners jumping ship? Nowadays, we hear it's only head physical therapist Francis Diano left as the sole owner.

It appears that the previous partners are into risk management mode. It might have something to do with the word going around that Diano has a PT license issued in New York, but refuses to apply for a local one, believing that the stateside version is enough. What's wrong with having a local license as well, his former partners are asking. Watch this interesting dispute. —DAXIM L. LUCAS

Mining dispute

The local government unit of Didipio, Nueva Vizcaya, is not happy with the operations of Australia-based mining firm OceanaGold Corp. in its community that it opposed the renewal of its mining permit, which expired yesterday, June 25.

The firm applied for the renewal of its financial and technical assistance agreement (FTAA) that would enable it to continue mining in the area for another 25 years, but resistance spearheaded by Gov. **Carlos Padilla** remained in the way.

Padilla said lands acquired by OceanaGold were designated for agriculture and not mining.

However, the LGU's stand may not hold much bearing as the De-

partment of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) already endorsed OceanaGold's renewal application to the Office of the President, which would have the last say in the company's operations.

The case is especially interesting since no company has availed itself of an FTAA renewal yet. How Malacañang and the DENR will handle the application may be a precedent as to how other FTAA's will be treated.

The government of Nueva Vizcaya may take up its issues directly to the Palace, although a source told Biz Buzz that Environment Secretary **Roy Cimatu** was scheduled to go to the province today to hear the latter's concerns.

How will the dialogue affect the DENR's position? We don't know yet. But public clamor has been a major consideration with the government's policy direction when it comes to mining.

It may take some time before Malacañang reaches a decision, but until then, OceanaGold may continue operating its gold-copper mine in Didipio. —KARL R. OCAMPO

Garlic oversupply

The spirit of "bayanihan" has emerged once again following the reported oversupply of garlic in Lubang, Occidental Mindoro—a repeat of the goodwill that Filipinos showed for local mango farmers when the surplus reached 200 million kilos.

The Department of Agriculture said that of the 300 metric tons of garlic produced between April and May, only about four tons were left after traders began calling to buy directly from Lubang producers.

Medium to large-sized garlic were sold at P100 a kilo.

One of the private individuals at the forefront of the movement is Philippine Culinary Heritage Movement chef **Jam Melchor**, who has helped in creating awareness regarding the local garlic industry through a series of Facebook posts encouraging consumers to buy local.

"Imported garlic is way cheaper. But you have to understand that we need to support these small-scale garlic producers for them to continue planting for us. If farmers were prioritized and given enough significance, the economy of the Philippines may have boomed long ago," Melchor said in one his posts.

"Mr. Melchor positively gained support from our consumers. The DA thanks him for drumming up market awareness," the agency said. "We hope the overwhelming support generated for our farmers will not stop but will continue in the future so that more farmers will be encouraged to produce food for the nation."

While the country imports most of its garlic, what happened in Lubang is a classic case of market displacement. We hope the government would be more efficient in repositioning food commodities to places where there is demand but lacks supply. —KARL R. OCAMPO INQ



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Reg. 2 miners' best practices highlighted

By Ben Moses Ebreo

SANTIAGO CITY—Good practices of Cagayan Valley's mining companies were recently highlighted in an environment forum sponsored by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Mines and GeoSciences Bureau.

The forum, held at Zen Hotel in this city, featured the JDVC Resource Corp.'s take on offshore responsible magnetite mining practices in Cagayan province, Dinapigue Mining Corp.'s responsible stewardship in Isabela province, FCF Minerals Corp.'s best practice in stakeholders disclosure, and OceanaGold Philippines Inc.'s legacy of responsible mining.

DENR-MGB also presented their updates on technical instruments and other permits, environmental laws, rules and regulations, and its geohazard assessment and mapping project/landslide and flood susceptibility mapping.

However, Nueva Vizcaya Governor Carlos Padilla has criticized both agencies regarding their handling of the mining license renewal of OceanaGold, the gold miner in Didipio in Kasibu town. **With Brenda Jocson**



MINING FIRM ACHIEVES HIGH REFORESTATION SURVIVAL RATE



Using world-class technologies, OceanaGold (Philippines), Inc. group of Foresters continually puts forward the Company's reforestation and rehabilitation projects. The mine has already planted more than 1.6 million trees in its rehabilitation areas within the Didipio Mine including reforestation plantations in the provinces of Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino. The reforestation survival rate is an impressive 92%, above the Philippine national standard of 80%.

The Didipio Mine's Environment Team utilizes macrosomatic clonal propagation to produce various species of trees faster and more efficient than conventional planting. It produces approximately 500,000 seedlings in a year hence the Company's partnership with different organizations and individuals in tree planting activities. Through the Mining Forest Program, OceanaGold has reforested a

total area of more than 1,258 hectares in Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino.

Most seedlings produced in the mine's nursery include endemic species such as Narra, Tuai, Mayapis, Tanguile, yakal, Guijo, Kalantas, Kupang, Agoo, Balete, and Alnus. It also produces exotic trees like Mahogany, Gmelina, and Mangui. Local farmers are capacitated in order to practice mass propagation of seedling through macrosomatic clonal propagation even in their own farms.

Furthermore, the Company progressively rehabilitates areas that are no longer needed in its mining activities. Oceana Gold has progressively rehabilitated 94.62% of the Didipio Mines total rehabilitation area. Rehabilitation includes adding top soil to rock face walls within the mine, planting of grasses, and installing coconut nets to avoid erosion. Vertiver grasses are usually planted as its roots

can grow to one meter thereby providing better slope stabilization.

To fast-track its progressive rehabilitation, hydroseeding technology is applied wherein seeds, soil, and organic fertilizer are mixed and sprayed on rock face walls. It only takes a few weeks before grasses grow and area eventually becomes nutrient-sufficient for trees. Progressive rehabilitation is aligned to the Company's effort to sustain the rich biodiversity in Didipio.

Even prior to the commencement of its operation in 2013, the Company has established reforestation areas in Didipio during its exploration phase. These areas are now rich forests that are home to numerous species. Oceana Gold commits to continuously support the government's National Greening Program (NGP) and progressively rehabilitate more areas to minimize its environmental footprint.



Two fishers drown in open pit mine site

LEGAZPI CITY: Two fishers drowned while two other farmers remain missing after they tried to retrieve a submersible pump in an abandoned open pit mining site in Batan Island, Rapu-Rapu, Albay on Tuesday.

Capt. Dante Bonafe, acting chief of police of the Rapu-Rapu municipal police station, identified the victims as alias "Kalbo," a resident of Sitio Lipata, Barangay Villahermosa, Rapu-Rapu, and a certain alias "Uwak," a resident of San Roque, Tabaco City.

The two farmers identified as Orly Bisco, 40, and Timoteo Balunzo, 30, both residents of Sitio Calpe, Barangay Calanaga, Batan were still missing, he added.

The bodies of Uwak and Kalbo were recovered through the joint retrieval operations of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and the Philippine National Police, Bonafe said, adding that

the team was still looking for Baluzon and Bisco.

The incident, Bonafe said, was reported to their station by a concerned citizen. He said they immediately sent off the composite team of the PCG and the police to rescue the victims.

Initial investigation showed the victims reportedly swam to the deeper portion of the mining site to get the submersible pump, which was reportedly abandoned by the miners after the site's operations.

"The victims were trying to get the submersible pump left at the 30-foot-deep abandoned open pit mining site filled with water. Bisco and Balunzo remain missing since yesterday, but our men, along with personnel of Philippine Coast Guard, are working together to recover their bodies," Bonafe said.

RHAYDZ B. BARCIA

Negros bishop's call: Reject coal

Church leader urges DOE to promote investments in renewable energy sources

By Carla P. Gomez
@carlagomezINQ

BACOLOD CITY—Don't listen to the Department of Energy (DOE).

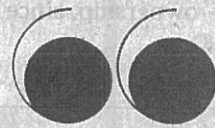
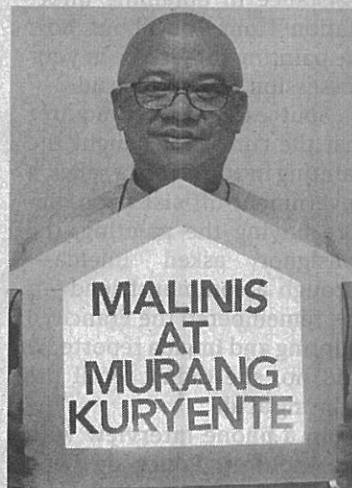
This was the appeal of religious leaders and environmentalists after the DOE called on local officials and business groups to seek investors to build power plants and sustain the growing power demand in the Visayas.

San Carlos Bishop Gerardo Alminaza warned against the apparent bias for coal on the part of the DOE, which downplayed the contribution of renewable energy to growth in the Visayas, and the impact of these projects on public health and the environment in the region.

"As our province's coal-free status is being threatened by the incoming provincial administration, we are alarmed as the DOE is not giving policymakers and the business sector the whole picture in terms of the costs attached to coal-fired power plants, and why it is not the better choice as opposed to renewable energy," Alminaza said.

Executive order

The bishop expressed his disappointment over Governor-elect Eugenio Jose Lacson's statement that he would consult his legal team on the need to revoke an executive order declaring Negros Occidental a coal-free



As our province's coal-free status is being threatened ... we are alarmed as the DOE is not giving policymakers and the business sector the whole picture

Gerardo Alminaza
San Carlos Bishop

province, Lacson earlier maintained that he would not stand in the way if San Carlos officials would approve the building of a coal-fired power plant in the city.

Outgoing Gov. Alfredo Marañon Jr. issued on March 7 an executive order declaring Negros Occidental a coal-free province.

"In encouraging energy investments, the DOE should not just focus on bringing in new energy sources, but also the role of investments in improving the grid system and energy storage in the Visayas to maximize and encourage more renewable energy sources," Alminaza said.

"In failing to do so, it is basically implying that the Visayas should look to massive coal-fired power plants, which harm our environment, health and worsen the climate crisis," he added.

A power firm is planning to build a 300-megawatt CFB (circulating fluidized bed) coal-fired plant in San Carlos.

Investments

The DOE is urging local officials and business groups in the province to seek more investors in the power industry because the Visayas will need 9,180 megawatts more by 2040.

Bro. Tagoy Jakosalem of the Order of Augustinian Recollects urged the DOE and policymakers to not just present the business side of the need to generate power, but to also

show the hidden costs of coal.

"The profitability of these projects does not account for the costs related to pollution impacts, health-related issues, loss of ecosystems and livelihood, as well as exacerbating the effects of climate-related disasters," Jakosalem said. "We need to calculate our energy needs within the framework of long-term economic advantage."

Dr. Romana de los Reyes of Coal-Free Negros Network said the specter of power shortage was also raised in the late 1990s to the early 2000s when Negrenses resisted the proposed coal-fired power plants in Bago, Silay, Pulupandan and Cadiz.

"Coal plants are the No. 1 culprits of this climate crisis, so why should we add one more coal plant in San Carlos City?" she said.

Power rates

Gerry Arances, executive director of Center for Energy, Ecology and Development, said coal should no longer be associated with affordability and energy security, following recent developments faced by consumers across the Philippines.

"In Mindanao, the rush of coal-fired power plants led to a surge in the prices of electricity, as consumers are obligated to pay for the abundance of coal plants providing not just base load of electricity, but also the peaking and intermediate loads," Arances said. INQ



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DENR okays Dumaguete reclamation

By Daniel Yap

DUMAGUETE CITY – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has granted the local government an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) for a reclamation along the famed Rizal Boulevard despite protests from some sectors.

The issuance of ECC came after the Dumaguete City government satisfied all the requirements to conduct reclamation and improvement works along the boulevard.

In a statement, the city government said that the project is necessary in order to protect the buildings and communities along the shoreline from storm surges that reach even the highway endangering motorists and pedestrians.

“To maximize the use of this shoreline protection, beach courts and promenade, which are well lighted, (the area) will be developed to give more space for games and amusements,” the city government stated.

The Dumaguete City government stressed that it has not received any cease and desist order from the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) contrary to what is being spread in the social media.

City information officer Dems Rey Demecillo said that city officials are not expecting any order from the PRA against the reclamation project.

The DENR, through the Environmental Management Bureau, issued the ECC allowing the rehabilitation of a portion of the Rizal Boulevard located in the capital.



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19 arrested in anti-illegal logging ops

CAMP COL. RAFAEL C. RODRIGUEZ, Butuan City — Nineteen suspected timber poachers and traders were arrested in weeklong anti-illegal logging operations conducted by various police units in Caraga region, police official reported Tuesday.

P/Brig. Gen. Gilberto DC Cruz, regional director of Caraga Police Regional Office 13 (PRO 13) also said the operation recovered a total volume of 5,284.53 board feet of illegally-cut Lauan lumbers and Narra flitches.

The separate operations were targeted in eight areas based on the

reports of concerned citizens, during the weeklong operations, June 17-23, 2019, he said.

“The banned narra trees were believed cut in clandestine operations conducted by timber poachers,” he said.

In the area of Surigao del Sur, three anti-illegal logging operations were conducted in the municipalities of Cantilan, Lanuza, and Tandag City which resulted in the arrest of 15 suspects, with the confiscation of 2,430 board feet of Lauan lumbers worth ₱42,000.00.

While in Surigao del Norte, two

operations conducted in the municipalities of Gigaquit and Bacuag resulted in the arrest of three suspects and the confiscation of Green Rusco Multicab, passenger tricycle loaded with 2,499.2 board feet of Lauan lumbers worth ₱93,254.00.

The two operations conducted in the town of Esperanza and Bayugan City in Agusan del Sur resulted in the confiscation of three motorcycles, 186FA Air-Cooled diesel engine, sawmill blade, fan belt, flywheel (bolante), and 145.33 board feet of Narra flitches worth ₱11,626.40. (Mike U. Crismundo)



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Pangasinan reforestation efforts to continue

By **LIEZLE BASA INIGO**

LINGAYEN, Pangasinan – Volunteers from several agencies and organizations continue to plant tree seedlings at the Cayanga village reforestation site in Bugallon town.

"Na-appreciate na ng mga tao ang Adopt-a-Mountain project ng provincial government. That's why they volunteer to go here and plant

trees," said Nathaniel Pulido, Senior Environment Management Specialist, during the third tree planting drive recently.

The reforestation program, dubbed as "Pangasinan Onwards Greening Initiative", is a brainchild of Gov. Amado I. Espino III.

Pulido said there has been a dramatic development since it was launched three years ago.



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Info caravan pushes '3-Palawan'

The provincial government has rolled off a massive information caravan to inform all Palawenos of the positive prospects of Republic Act 11259 or the law dividing Palawan into three separate provinces.

Gov. Jose Alvarez is leading the province-wide information and education caravan that is targeting even the remotest barangays in Palawan for the people to know the true spirit of RA 11259 signed by President Rodrigo Duterte last April.

Under the law, Palawan will be divided into three provinces, namely Palawan Del Norte, Palawan Oriental and Palawan Del Sur.

However, Palawenos will still decide on the issue through a plebiscite scheduled 11 May next year.

The information caravan rolled off on 19 June journeying from one barangay to another to conduct community consultations targeting the entire 367 barangays of the province.

"The campaign aims to bring into the attention of every Palawenos the positive

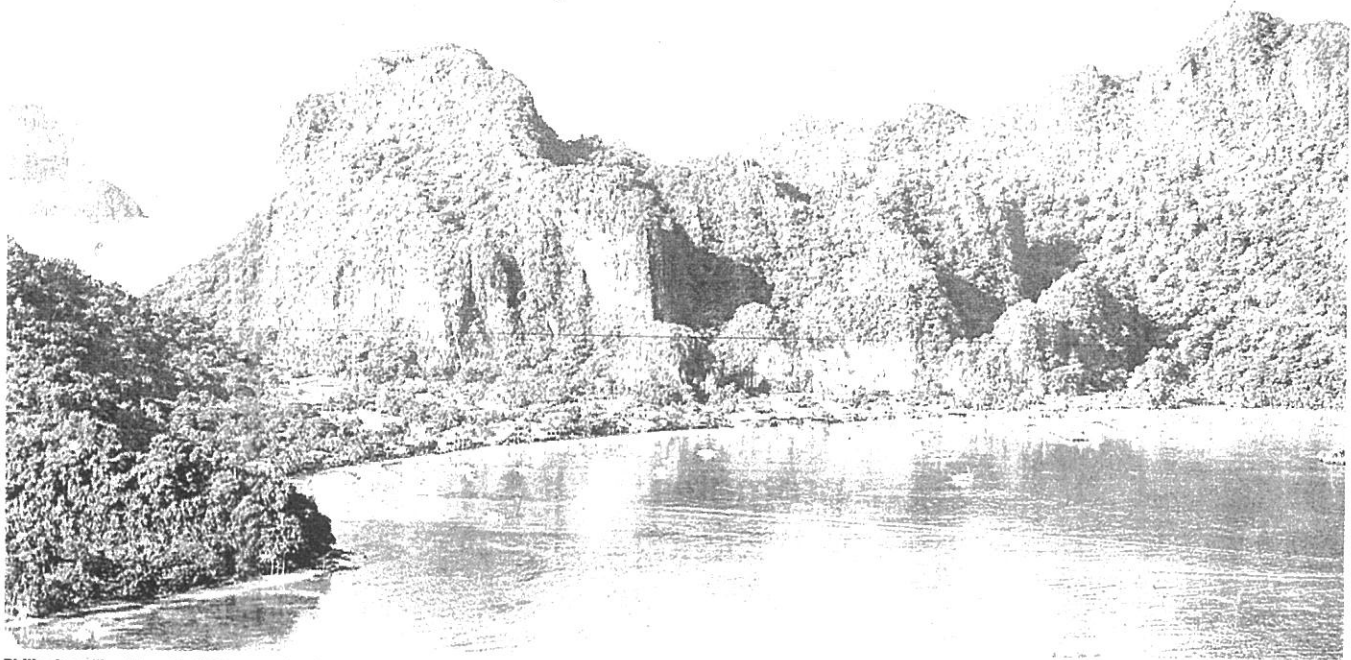
prospects of RA 11259 as well as the other salient features of the law," Palawan-Provincial Information Office (PIO) stated.

On the first week of the campaign, The Palawan-PIO noted the multi-sectoral presence of participants from the barangays ranging from the elderlies, women, youth, the academe as well as the attendance of the religious sector.

Palawan is the country's largest province with its vast land area comprising 1.452 million hectares. The mainland is surrounded by 1,780 islands and islets dotting the seascape.

"Interestingly, the crowd remains very attentive throughout the whole duration of the town hall consultation," the PIO said.

To spice up the program, the PIO said that the audience were asked to participate in the trivia questions dwelling on RA 11259, to the delight of the crowd.



Philippines "Last Frontier" Palawan province is composed of 1,780 islands and isles dotting the beautiful seascape.



EDC joins global effort to save threatened tree species

IUCN is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it, such as data gathering and analysis, research, field projects, advocacy, and education. Through the GTA, BGCI aims to come up with the world's first global list of tree species and their conservation assessments by 2020.

According to BGCI, only 25,000 of the world's 80,000 tree species have been assessed globally or nationally for their risk of extinction. Through EDC's BINHI corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative, BGCI will be able to obtain information on 800 Philippine



■ Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), the world's largest plant conservation network and the secretariat of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), has tapped Philippine renewable energy leader and geothermal producer Energy Development Corporation (EDC) as the first and only local partner for its Global Tree Assessment program (GTA).

endemic tree species.

Binhi is EDC's flagship environmental program since 2011 that has successfully reforested 9,500 hectares with indigenous species, and has also succeeded

in searching, sampling, and propagating 96 premium native tree species under threat of extinction. Most recently, as part of Binhi's aim to upgrade the conservation status of 35 species,

EDC submitted data on five endemic *Xanthostemon* species to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) as well as the IUCN, which paved the way for the partnership.

GOTCHA
JARIUS BONDOC



How many pushers, addicts are there?

The PNP Directorate for Operations collates the latest drug war statistics: At least 6,600 pushers and users were killed in shootouts with police from July 1, 2016 to May 31, 2019. Another 240,565 were arrested and are now crammed to overcapacity in jails. Plus, 1,283,409 were home-visited by cops and warned to desist or else. The figures do not include those killed by vigilantes and rival narco-gangs. Or, those who have been rehabbed or still in clinic.

The persistent finding though is that nearly all pushers are users who crave to sustain their vice. And their drug of choice is shabu (meth).

So how many more of them remain out there?

Obviously lots more, going by frequent interdiction of shabu by the tons, worth billions of pesos, at seaports and secret factories. Supply reflects demand; the risk of trafficking in huge volumes, for huge profits, indicates huge demand. A ton of shabu equals a million one-gram sachets, good for two to five hits over as many days, depending on gravity of addiction. Recent foiled shabu smugglings at the Manila container port reached hundreds of tons. Successful sneak-ins can only be guessed from street-price fluctuations. Example is the discovery in a Cavite warehouse last year of emptied magnetic lifters, similar to those in which shabu was found at the Manila piers. Street prices suddenly dropped as volumes in the hands of arrested pushers rose; narco-lords apparently were striving to dispose of stocks fast.

Still, those details do not show the number of remnant druggies. Street-level surveys and research are needed. Of the 42,045 barangays nationwide, 12,177 were cleared of the menace. Still drug-plagued are 20,471, or 48.69 percent. Of those, 282 are seriously affected, 10,835 are moderately, and 9,354 slightly. Worst are in Metro Manila, 88.6 percent of barangays affected; Central Visayas, 76.36 percent; Central Luzon, 75.5 percent; and Bicol, 72.89 percent.

At the start of the drug war pushers-users were estimated at 3.6 to four million. That's about three times those home-visited, around 1.3 million. Hopefully it should not mean three times the 6,600 still need to be slain, and three times the 240,000 need to be arrested to lick the drug scourge.

The better strategy is two-fold. One, wipe out the sources: makers and smugglers. Swift hefty rewards for tipsters can multiply the number of interdictions. Two, make people aware. Drug education can be done through media, especially television and cinema, and in schools. This can include reenactments of harrowing family experiences with pusher-addict kin. Publicizing the drug-affected and

cleared barangays would prod citizen action.

* * *

Two brand new bed-and-seat vacation ferries now ply Boracay – adding to the island paradise's top-class features. Japan-made *SWM Salve Regina* and *Starlite Archer* sail daily to Boracay's Caticlan landing from Batangas. Dennis Uy's Chelsea Logistics offers four ride options: reclining airline-type seat, bunk bed, shared room for four or eight, and VIP cabin for four with bathroom. All classes were designed safe, comfy, and clean – not luxurious but right for the route. As millennials would say, "sakto lang."

Boracay continues to top all tourist destinations in the Philippines. Reopened in Oct. after a six-month rehab, it lured 619,934 vacationists in the first quarter of 2019. Tourism officials noted a 12-percent jump from the same period last year. Environment breaches and congestion prompted the rehab. In 2017 Boracay was the *Conde Nast Traveler* readers' choice as best island in the world. (Cebu/Visayas Islands and Palawan ranked as Asia's second and third best in that survey by the international luxury and lifestyle magazine.)

Foreign and local tourists appreciate the cleanup, the Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Management Group reports. Nature preservation is foremost for visitors. Top attractions continue to be the powdery white sand beaches and calm, clear waters, group general manager Natividad Bernardino says. Cozy accommodations, easy transport, and nightlife come next. Eleven establishments were shut down for unsanitariness; 20 more face closure for easement violations. Rejected from the four-square-mile resort isle were huge but potentially ruinous casino investments from China and Korea. The long view is to balance economic boons from tourism with conservation.

The new ferries have convenient sail times: *Salve Regina* leaves Batangas port at 6 p.m. daily, *Starlite Archer* at 7:30 a.m. Arrive in ten hours. The next day *Salve Regina* leaves Caticlan port at 6 a.m., *Starlite Archer* at 7:30 p.m. Peak season rates start at P1,200; sizeable discounts during off-peak. The vessels also take on roll on-roll off cargo between Panay and Luzon.

Featured earlier in this space was Philippine Airlines-Maritime's two new ferries from Kalibo International Airport straight to Boracay. Catamarans *MV Malambing* and *MV Magalang* sail daily, skirting the road trip. PAL passengers can book with their flights.

* * *

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The MOU between PHL and China and a timely revisit of the La Bugal case

On Nov. 20, 2018, the Philippines and China entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Cooperation on Oil and Gas Development. Premised on the Charter of the United Nations, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and the 2002 Declaration of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, the two governments agreed to negotiate on an accelerated basis (i.e., within 12 months of its signing) arrangements to facilitate oil and gas exploitation in "relevant maritime areas."

Under Section III of the MOU, the two governments intend to establish an Inter-Governmental Joint Steering Committee and Inter-Entrepreneurial Working Groups.

The Committee will be co-chaired by the Foreign Ministries, and co-vice chaired by the Energy Ministries, with the participation of relevant agencies of both governments, and with equal number of members nominated by the two governments. Under the same section, the Committee is responsible for negotiating and coming up with cooperation arrangements and the maritime areas (or cooperation areas) to which they will apply. The Com-

mittee will also decide on the number of Working Groups to be established and for which part of the cooperation area each Working Group will be established (working area).

More specifically, each Working Group will consist of representatives from enterprises authorized by the two governments. For this purpose, China will authorize the China National Offshore Oil Corp. (CNOOC) while the Philippines will authorize enterprises that have entered into service contracts with the Philippine Government with respect to the applicable working areas. Should there be none, the Philippine National Oil Company-Exploration Corp. (PNOC-EC), will be the Philippine enterprise authorized to represent it in a particular Working Group.

The MOU is without prejudice to the respective legal positions of both governments with respect to their claims in the disputed sea and will not create rights or obligations of both parties under international or domestic laws.

It can be observed that the MOU is an effort by both parties to peacefully settle their conflicting territorial claims. Still, any joint development agreement

AMICUS CURIAE FRITZ MICAH A. DIUMANO

There are those who opine that a joint development agreement with China can hurdle Constitutional issues in view of the Supreme Court's ruling in *La Bugal B'laan Tribal Association v. DENR*.

that may be entered into with respect to the relevant maritime areas will inevitably have to be measured against the yardstick of the 1987 Constitution.

Section 2, Article XII of the 1987 Constitution provides that the exploration, development, and utilization of natural resources shall be under the full control and supervision of the State. Moreover, it mandates the State to protect the nation's marine wealth in its archipelagic waters, territorial seas, and exclusive economic zone, and reserve its use and enjoyment exclusively to Filipino citizens.

Nonetheless, it gives the President authority to enter into agreements with foreign-

owned corporations involving either technical or financial assistance for large-scale exploration, development, and utilization of minerals, petroleum, and other mineral oils, subject to certain safeguards. In the 2004 case of *La Bugal B'laan Tribal Association v. DENR*, the Supreme Court held that the language of Section 2, Article XII of the Constitution should be interpreted as allowing the President to enter into an agreement to explore, develop, and utilize minerals, petroleum and other mineral oils even with a 100% foreign owned corporation. It further held that this type of agreement should not be restricted to one that is merely for financial or technical assistance.

The Supreme Court, however, reminded that the State must still retain full control and supervision over the exploration, development, and utilization of these resources. In particular, the Supreme Court held that while the foreign contractor may be allowed a certain degree of management prerogative, the State must still be able to direct, restrain, regulate, and govern the affairs of the foreign contractor.

There are those who opine that



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a joint development agreement with China can hurdle Constitutional issues in view of this ruling in La Bugal. However, a conclusion is not as easily arrived at as it may seem. In this regard, it is apt to quote Professor Jay L. Batongbacal's assessment of the MOU as published in the website of Asian Maritime Transparency Initiative, thus:

"... the MOU... still does not address the specific challenges and restrictions posed by the Philippine Constitution and legislation... It also does not address the constitutional and legal requirement of 'sole control and supervision by the State' of natural resource exploration and exploitation. Unfavorable answers to these questions may lead to the conclusion that Philippine sovereignty and sovereign rights will indeed be compromised. These can be finally determined only when the parties agree on the actual cooperation arrangements for specific areas." ■

This article is for general informational and educational purposes only and not offered as and does not constitute legal advice or

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Naval base plan opposed

By Jonas Reyes

SAN ANTONIO, Zambales – Incumbent Mayor Estela Antipolo yesterday raised objections to the plan of the Department of National Defense (DND) to transform 70 percent of this town into a naval base.

“We strongly object and have conveyed our disapproval of the plan of the Department of National Defense to the proposed Subic Naval Reservation. The proposed Subic Naval Reservation will encompass the entire Redondo Peninsula, leaving only 30 percent of our present land area,” she said.

The statement of Antipolo is in response to the DENR’s directive asking the local government to comment to the recommendation of the DND for an issuance of a Presidential Proclamation to transform the 289,051,550 square meters of land in Redondo Peninsula into a navy facility.

Redondo Peninsula is divided between two municipalities – San Antonio in the west and the town of Subic in the east.

The west coast of the peninsula is indented by several coves and bays, namely Silanguin Bay, Nagsasa Cove, Talisain Bay, Agnaem Bay and Anawangin Cove.

These areas are known to be the prime

tourism sites of the province.

Islands such as the Capones Island, Tabones Island, Silanguin Island and Los Frailes Islands are also found near the Redondo Peninsula.

She said the proposal is a threat to the natural resources of San Antonio and to the tourism industry as well.

“This will make San Antonio the smallest town in Zambales and one of the smallest towns in the Philippines. More than that, we stand to lose the Camara and Capones Islands and the five coves for which San Antonio is famous for, which will all be under the direct supervision, control and use of the Philippine Navy,” Antipolo said.

According to Antipolo, her office already answered the letter from the DENR and has asked her constituents to unite and oppose the proposal of the DND.

She said the proposal is a threat to the natural resources of San Antonio and to the tourism industry as well.

The local government unit of the area conducted a meeting that included all of the elected officials of the town, including the barangay officials, to ask for information and support in opposing the proposed Subic Naval Reservation.



Nestlé Philippines volunteers (left photo) from the Makati administrative office with chairman and CEO Kais Marzouki (standing, center left), director of finance and control Mandeep Chhatwal (standing, 2nd from right), and SVP for Corporate Affairs Ernesto Mascenon (standing, second from left) during a clean-up and audit of wastes on the shoreline of Freedom Island. Nestle Cares volunteers (right) from the Tanauan factory during a shoreline clean-up in Batangas on World Oceans Day.

Nestlé joins World Oceans Day clean-ups

Several hundred Nestlé Philippines employees from different work sites joined their colleagues in over 30 countries, participating in the clean-up of coastlines and waterways, in celebration of World Oceans Day under the auspices of Nestlé Cares, a global employee volunteering program.

In Metro Manila, Nestlé Philippines employees led by chairman and CEO Kais Marzouki conducted a clean-up and audit of collected wastes on Freedom Island or the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habi-

tat and Ecotourism Area, with the assistance of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and WFF Philippines.

"This activity is one of the many ways in which we work together to help shape a waste-free future," according to Marzouki. In April 2018, Nestlé announced a global commitment that 100% of its packaging will be designed for recycling or reusable by 2025. The company's vision, that none of its waste ends up in landfill or as litter, is being pursued in three focus areas: devel-

oping the packaging of the future; helping shape a waste-free future through collection and recycling; and addressing consumer beliefs and behaviors.

"We at Nestlé Philippines are accelerating efforts to find solutions to the plastics problem. It is imperative that while we look for innovative packaging solutions among our initiatives, we also take immediate action to stop leakage into waterways and oceans, and find ways to recycle our packaging," Marzouki said.