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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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CARTOON

11 JAN 2010

DATE

The same steely political will to clean up Manila Bay

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has set its sights on the coastal areas around Manila Bay as its next target for a massive cleanup after Boracay. Early this month, Secretary Roy Cimatu told officials of provinces and towns around the bay of plans for the coming cleanup drive.

At the center of the drive is Metro Manila on the eastern shore of the bay, whose Pasig River spews out massive amounts of sewage. To the west is Bataan, to the north are Pampanga and Bulacan, and to the south is Cavite, all of them with rivers carrying pollution from all around the bay.

Early this week, presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo declared that President Duterte is prepared to show political will to enforce the cleanup of Manila Bay, to the extent of closing down polluting establishments in the cities and provinces around it. What the government did in Boracay, he said, it will also do in Manila Bay.

The President, he said, is expected to issue an executive order to set in motion the cleanup plan being prepared by the DENR. Funds from the Road Users Tax may be used to carry out the rehabilitation projects around the bay and its tributaries.

A look at the Philippine map shows the huge-

ness of the problem. The waters of Manila Bay are more than a hundred times bigger than those of Boracay. And the fecal coliform bacterial level in the bay has now reached 350 MPN (Most Probable Number), compared to the 100 MPN around Boracay when it was closed down for six months last May.

Ten years ago, in 2008, the Supreme Court, acting on the complaint of a citizens group, issued a decision ordering 13 government agencies led by the DENR to clean up and rehabilitate Manila Bay. It is only now that the national government is finally moving to carry out the court order.

It took great political will to close down Boracay, the country's top tourist destination, for six months. Many hotels and other establishments without proper sewage treatment facilities were polluting the surrounding waters which had become a cesspool, to use the term used by President Duterte.

Manila Bay has long been a bigger cesspool than Boracay. It will take a tremendous amount of political will to compel the polluting towns and cities with their factories and their millions of homes spewing their untreated sewage into the streams and rivers flowing into the bay. But, after Boracay, we are confident that President Duterte will carry out this cleanup with the same steely political will.

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MANILA BULLETIN
JANUARY 11, 2019



page 1 : The same steady political will to clean up Manila Bay



D.E.N.R. HAS 1-STRIKE POLICY VS. POLLUTIVE BAY CONDOS

BY MA. STELLA F. ARNALDO @akosistellaBM
Special to the BUSINESSMIRROR

IT will be a one-strike policy at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), when it deals with hotels and other establishments located along Manila Bay found violating environmental rules.

This developed as DENR Undersecretary for Attached Agencies Sherwin Rigor said even residential condominiums are in the agency's target sight for inspections. He told the BUSINESSMIRROR these condos will "definitely" be closed down, "no exemption," if found polluting Manila Bay. The agency is

slated to inspect 500 condos along the bay area.

"Condos need to [install] their septic vault or tank fast or use biotech. While being constructed, technology is available for that. They should not wait for us to discover they don't have any of those equipment," he stressed.

"We believe condo owners will understand because if they cannot pressure the owner, then their property will decrease in value," the DENR official said, adding, "it will also hit their brand because the buyers were shortchanged."

Among the major condominium developers in the bay area are SM Development Corp., Robinsons

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Residences, Federal Land and DMCI Homes, to name a few.

Meanwhile, Rigor said the agency will start inspecting some 2,000 hotels along the bay area and Roxas Boulevard starting January 27. "After we inspect them, we will give them the chance to refute our findings. If they really are not at fault, then they will be exempted [from penalties], and announced as examples that other hotels should emulate."

However, "if found to be discharging wastewater without proper treatment, then we will be filing them penalties from the PAB [Pollution Adjudication Board]," he emphasized. "So based on the date of operation or the date we found the discharge, penalties can range from P1,000 to almost P200,000 per day depending on the size of the business. So we will close them down."

As what happened in Boracay, once closed down, these hotels will have to reapply for permits again with the DENR and Department of the Interior and the Local Government, and accreditation with the Department of Tourism (DOT).

President Duterte recently warned hotels in the bay area to install wastewater-treatment facilities, "or else I will close you." He also said he didn't care if the Philippines loses its tourists, accusing the hotels of dumping their guests' excrement straight into the Bay.

No STP, no permit

TOURISM stakeholders point out,

however, that hotels will not be given permits to operate by local government units if they don't build sewerage-treatment plants on-site. "It is a requirement of city hall, so we should have these [STPs] before they release our permits," said one hotelier, who requested anonymity.

For its part, the DOT expressed support for the initiative to clean up and rehabilitate Manila Bay. In a news statement, the agency headed by Secretary Bernadette Romulo Puyat, said: "We recognize that such efforts are for the best interest of the tourism industry and are in line with the thrust of the DOT to create a culture of sustainable tourism."

"Together with the interagency task force that has transformed Boracay into a model of sustainability, consultations and dialogues will be pursued, to ensure accredited tourism establishments in all parts of the country will conform with the highest standard of environmental conservation."

Under the National Tourism Development Plan of 2016-2022, the DOT aims to attract some 8.2 million foreign visitor arrivals to the Philippines and generate P564 billion in inbound tourism revenue this year.

Rigor said the DENR will be meeting with tourism accommodations, malls and other establishments and stakeholders in the bay area next week to inform them of the agency's rehabilitation plan and hear out their concerns.

Review of Manila Bay reclamation projects eyed

By EMMANUEL TUPAS

In line with President Duterte's order to clean up Manila Bay, the government is mulling a review of all reclamation projects, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Eduardo Año said yesterday.

Año said they will coordinate with other government agencies to determine if the reclamation projects are in accordance with the country's laws.

"Bubusisiin nuna natin yan. Titingnan nuna natin kung iyan ay alinsumod sa batas (We will scrutinize them. We will check if they follow the laws)," he said in an interview over dzMM.

Año cited some of the laws as Republic Act 9003 or the Solid Waste Management Act, RA 9275 or the Clean Water Act and RA 8550, also known as the Philippine Fisheries Code.

The projects involve the reclamation of at least 26,230 hectares of Manila Bay.

The DILG is among the government agencies tasked to rehabilitate Manila Bay on the orders of Duterte.

Task force

Año said they will create an inter-agency task force similar to what was created during the rehabilitation of Boracay Island. It will have inspection, investigation and audit teams that will look into the structures along Manila Bay and its connecting waterways.

Among the units they will tap is the Philippine National Police-Maritime Group for the implementation of laws and ordinances.

The task force will be chaired by Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu while Año is one of the vice-chairpersons.

They plan to clear Manila Bay and other tributaries of informal settler families, who will be relocated elsewhere.

Año said they will also inspect factories and other commercial establishments to check if they have a treatment facility for their wastewater or *"ipapasara natin yan (we will shut them down)."*

Consultations

The Department of Tourism, meanwhile, said yesterday it will hold consultations

with accredited tourism establishments in all parts of the country after Duterte blamed hotels without proper sewage treatment plants for polluting Manila Bay.

Jose Clemente, Tourism Congress of the Philippines president, told **The STAR** that while they would be more than happy to help, "we have yet to be informed as to which properties are supposedly dumping into the bay, if any. We just want to know what the bases were for the statements made."

Cimatu earlier said Manila Bay's waters have reached 350 million most probable number fecal coliform bacteria per 100 milliliter while Boracay's waters reached only 100 million MPN per 100 ml at most when the President called the island a "cesspool."

- With Catherine Talavera



Task Force for Manila Bay rehab eye

by Miguel Togonon

An inter-agency task force similar to that created for the massive cleanup of Boracay, will be created to rehabilitate Manila Bay.

Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año said the proposed task force will have inspection, investigation and audit teams to look into the structures surrounding Manila Bay and its tributaries.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu will remain chairman of the new task force while Año will be

one of the vice-chairmen.

The DILG secretary said they would not only check on the informal settlers on the rivers and tributaries, but also factories and establishments that may be contributing to the bay's worsening condition.

"The task force will also review reclamation projects in Manila Bay to make sure they are complying with the country's environmental laws," Año said.

President Rodrigo Duterte earlier warned hotels along the heavily-polluted bay to follow

environmental laws so as not to jeopardize the rehabilitation set to begin on 27 January.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu will remain chairman of the new task force while Año will be one of the vice-chairmen.

Duterte last year ordered a massive cleanup of Boracay Island which lasted for about six months. The island, one of the country's top tourist spots, reopened last October.



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Manila Standard

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DILG to create Bora-like task force in Bay rehab

INTERIOR and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año said on Thursday that they plan to duplicate the rehabilitation of Boracay for the cleanup of Manila Bay, which officially starts on Jan. 27.

To kick off the Manila Bay rehab, Año said the government will create an inter-agency task force similar to what was created for the massive cleanup of Boracay early last year.

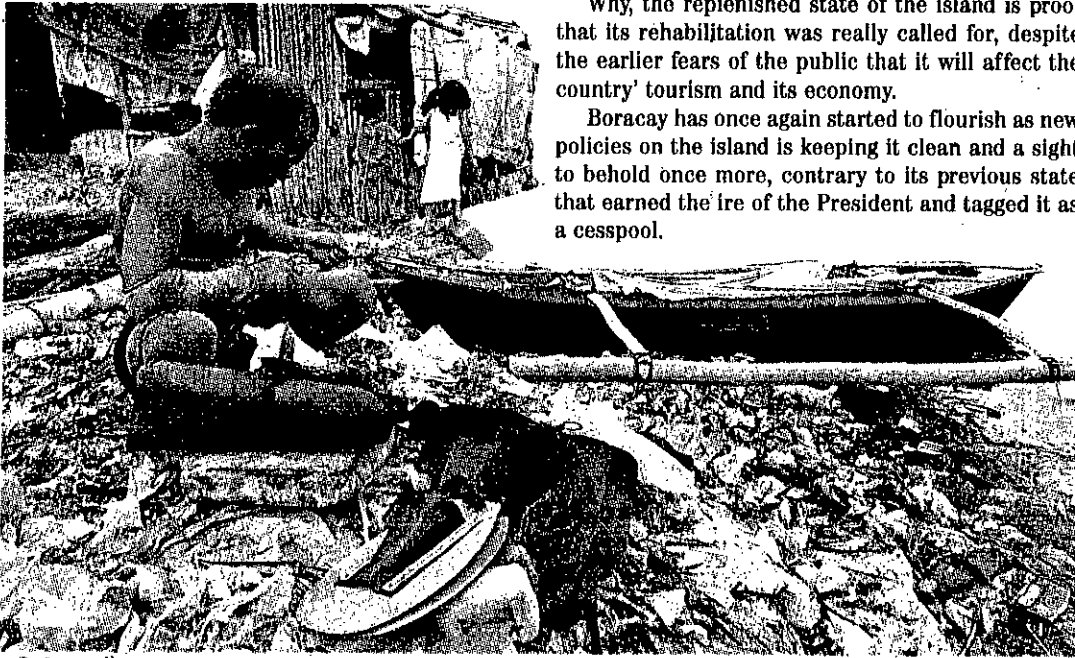
Like in Boracay, the task force for the Manila Bay rehab will be composed of inspection, investigation, and audit teams to look into the structures surrounding the bay and its tributaries.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu will remain chairman of the new task force while Año will be one of the vice-chairmen.



Sheer will to restore

The success of the rehabilitation of the world-famous Boracay island – albeit only within six months – had



A man checks his fishing equipment while sitting on garbage polluting the waters of Manila Bay. In a report published on the eve of World Water Day, the UN said the cravings for clean water and electricity were intertwined and could badly strain Earth's limited resources.

AFP

shown that a solid political will like that of President Rodrigo Duterte can make wonders.

Why, the replenished state of the island is proof that its rehabilitation was really called for, despite the earlier fears of the public that it will affect the country's tourism and its economy.

Boracay has once again started to flourish as new policies on the island is keeping it clean and a sight to behold once more, contrary to its previous state that earned the ire of the President and tagged it as a cesspool.

Now, Duterte has set his sights to another daunting task – one that is long overdue.

Recently, the President gave the green light to the rehabilitation of one of the country's most polluted body of water – Manila Bay, allotting at least P47 billion to fund the clean-up that will also be used to look for relocation sites of affected families living near the bay.

The government aims to start the rehabilitation of Manila Bay by 27 January even as Duterte ordered the establishments near the bay to shape up and follow environmental rules or face closure.

"You do something about your waste otherwise I will close you," the President said in a speech.

And as it turns out, the President's stance in the rehabilitation of Manila Bay is also within the guidelines of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDG) – which targets the prevention and significant reduction of marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.

The UN-SDG – of which the *Daily Tribune* is a media partner – seeks to ensure the conservation of marine ecosystems – including their biodiversity – in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development.

There is no completion date for the rehabilitation, but the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) hopes to finish it by the end of

Duterte's term in June 2022.

According to the DENR, the 2,000-square kilometer Manila Bay has been found to have extreme levels of coliform and the bacteria came from waste spilled by the *esteros* or estuaries in Metro Manila.

We hope to see Manila Bay restored to its clean and life-sustaining state.

The long-term goal is to reduce the coliform level to 100 most probable numbers per 100 milliliters (MPN/100ml) or low enough for the bay to be safe for swimming and, as of the moment, the level is at 333 million MPN/100ml.

This only goes to show that the Duterte administration is keen on keeping its promise to give Filipinos something to be proud of. What it can do to Boracay, we surely know that it is doable also for Manila Bay.

As we said, it was the sheer political will of the President that is making things happen for the country. This is what we really need, considering that Manila Bay's pollution is not only an eyesore, but also blights to the mind and body of every citizen of the city.

What the administration needs, on the other hand, is the full support of everyone – allies and oppositions alike – so that we may see in our lifetime the restoration of Manila Bay to its former state – Clean, serene and life-sustaining.



RECORD-BREAKING ACCOMPLISHMENT NAITALA NG DENR P.2

Record-breaking accomplishment naitala ng DENR

DAHIL sa mahusay na pagpapatupad ng programa sa tamang pagtatapon ng basura nakapagtala ng "record-breaking accomplishments" ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources sa ilalim ng Solid Waste Management program.

Ito'y matapos nitong lampasan ang "target" ng ahensya na pagsunod ng mga local government units sa Republic Act 9003 o mas kilala bilang Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

"Given that SWM stands alongside the other major programs of the DENR, we are determined to go over and beyond our targets and to work fast to show that we are serious in solving this perennial problem," sabi ni DENR Undersecretary

for Solid Waste Management and LGU Concerns Benny Antiporda.

Ayon sa ulat ng Environmental Management Bureau, lahat ng regional offices ng DENR ay tumanggap sa kani-kanilang mga "target" sa tatlong magkahiwalay na indicator ng programa, kabilang na rito ang (1) 10-year SWM plans reviewed and endorsed, (2) LGUs assisted on dumpsite closure and rehabilitation, at (3) materials recovery facilities established.

Para sa 10-year SWM plans, umabot sa 359 10-year SWM plans ang narepaso at inendorso ng DENR sa National Solid Waste Management Commission. Ito ay nakapagtala ng "181% accomplishment" versus sa target na 198 SWM plans para sa taong 2018.

Nabatid pa sa ulat mula sa 359 SWM plans na narepaso ng NSWMC, na pinamumunuan ni Antiporda, 308 SWM plans ang naaprubahan ng komisyon.

Base sa talaan ng EMB, simula 2010 hanggang 2017 ay nakapag-aaprubahan lang ang komisyon ng 46 SWM plans (average) kada taon at ang bilang ng mga naipasang SWM plans nitong 2018 ay umangat ng 568% kumpara sa mga nakalipas na taon.

Ang Region 12 ang may pinakamataas na "accomplishments" na may 32 SWM plans na narepaso mula sa target na 4 o 800% pag-angat ng bilang, sinundan ito ng Region 13 na may 31 mula sa target na 5 o may 620% pag-angat habang ang Region 10 naman ay may 450% pag-angat mula sa 8 ay nagkaroon ito ng 36 SWM plans.

Para naman sa ikalawang programa (LGUs assisted on dumpsite closure and rehabilitation), umabot sa 179 mula sa target na 113 ang nabigyan ng "technical assistance" para sa

pagpapasara at rehabilitasyon ng "open at controlled dumpsites" na may 156% pagtaas ng bilang.

Ang Region 10 ang may pinakamataas na bilang na mayroong 413% pagtaas o 33 LGUs mula sa target na 8 sinundan ito ng Region 2, 35 mula sa 10 o may 350% habang ang Region 6 naman ay may 250% o 25 mula sa target na 10.

Mula naman sa ikatlong programa (establishment of MRFs), nakapagtala ang DENR ng 101% pagtaas ng mga nagawa mula sa target na 532 ay pumalo ito sa bilang na 537 kung saan ay Region 2 ang nanguna na may 36 mula sa target na 31 (16%) habang ang lahat ng regions ay nakapagtala ng 100% accomplishments.

SANTI CELARIO



EDITORIAL

Isang malakas na political will para linisin ang Manila Bay

NAGTALAGA na ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ng mga puntirang lugar sa baybaying bahagi na nakapalibot sa Manila Bay, habang pinaghahandaan na ng ahensiya ang sunod na pakay na malawakang paglilinis matapos ang Boracay. Ngayong buwan lamang, sinabihan na ni Secretary Roy Cimatu ang mga opisyal ng probinsiya at bayan sa paligid ng look hinggil sa plano para sa nakatakdang cleanup drive.

Sentro ng kampanya ang Metro Manila sa silangang baybayin ng look, kung saan ibinubuga ng Ilog Pasig ang malaking dami ng dumi mula sa mga alkantarilya. Sa kanluran ay ang Bataan, sa hilaga ang Pampanga at Bulacan, at sa timog ang Cavite, lahat ng mga ito ay may mga ilog na nagdadala ng polusyon sa look.

Kamakailan lamang, idineklara ni presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo na handa si Pangulong Duterte na magpakita ng political will upang maipatupad ang paglilinis sa Manila Bay, kahit pa ipasara nito ang mga establisyemento sa mga lungsod at kalapit nitong probinsiya na nagdadala ng polusyon. Kung ano ang ginawa ng pamahalaan sa Boracay, aniya, ay gagawin din sa Manila Bay.

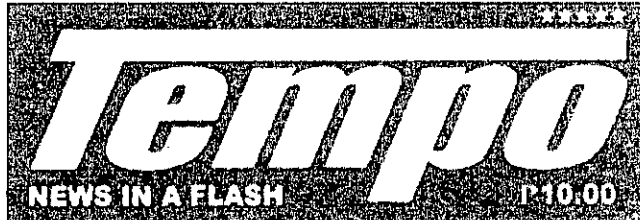
Ayon kay Panelo, inaasahan na ang paglalabas ng Pangulo ng isang executive order para pasimulan ang planong paglilinis na inihahanda ng DENR. Maaaring gamitin ang mga pondo mula sa Road Users Tax para sa pagpapatupad ng proyektong rehabilitasyon sa paligid ng look at mga karugtong nitong bahagi ng tubig.

Kung titingnan ang mapa ng Pilipinas, makikita ang lawak ng problema. Ang katubigan ng Manila Bay ay higit daang beses na mas malawak kumpara sa Boracay. At ang fecal coli form bacterial level ng look ay umaabot na ngayon sa 350 MPN (Most Probable Number), kumpara sa 100 MPN sa paligid ng Boracay nang isara ito sa loob ng anim na buwan noong Mayo.

Sampung taon na ang nakalilipas, taong 2008, bilang tugon sa reklamo ng isang grupo ng mga residente, naglabas ang Korte Suprema ng desisyon na nag-uutos sa 13 ahensiya ng pamahalaan, sa pangunguna ng DENR, na linisin at isaayos ang Manila Bay. Tanging ngayon lamang sa wakas ay kumikilos na ang pambansang pamahalaan upang ipatupad ang utos ng korte.

Kinailangan ang matinding political will sa pagsasara ng Boracay, ang nangungunang tourist destination ng bansa, sa loob ng anim na buwan. Maraming hotel at ibang establisyemento na walang tamang sewage treatment facilities ang nagdudulot ng polusyon sa paligid ng katubigan na naging "cesspool" na, ang terminong ginamit ni Pangulong Duterte.

Matagal nang mas malawak na "cesspool" ang Manila Bay kumpara sa Boracay. Mangangailangan ito ng pambihirang political will upang obligahin ang mga bayan at lungsod kasama ng kanilang mga pabrika at milyun-milyong tahanan na naglalabas ng matinding dumi sa mga sapa at ilog na tumutuloy sa look. Ngunit, matapos ang Boracay, kumpiyansa tayo na maipapatupad ni Pangulong Duterte ang paglilinis na ito sa pamamagitan ng katulad na matinding political will.



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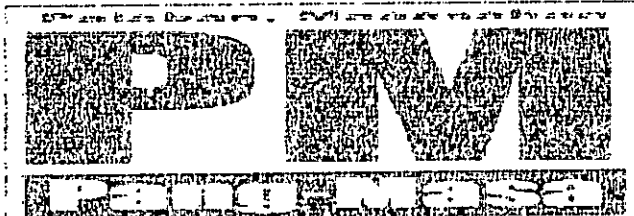
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RONNIE M. HALOS • Editor

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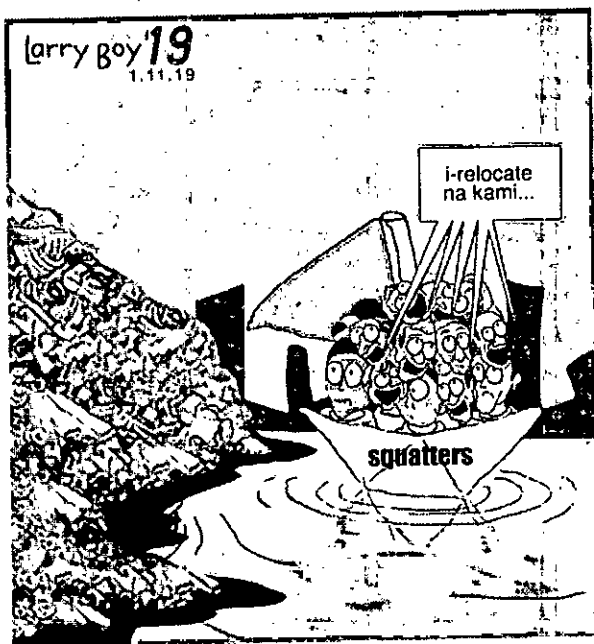


Editorial

Manila Bay: 'Cesspool 2'

TINAWAG ni President Duterte ang Boracay noong nakaraang taon na "cesspool". Ang kahulugan nito ay poso negro. Imbakan ng dumi ng tao. Maiimadyin kung gaano karumi ang Boracay sa ganitong paglalarawan. Kaya ipinag-utos niyang isara ang Boracay at irehabilitate. Sa loob ng anim na buwan, nilinis ang Boracay at nagtagumpay. Bumango ang Boracay na sinalaula ng mga walang disiplinang resort owner, restaurant at mga turista na walang pakialam kung magtapon ng kanilang basura at dumi sa dagat.

Ngayon, nakatuon ang pansin ng Presidente sa maruming Manila Bay. Ito naman ang balak niyang



linisin. Hindi man niya sinasabi, ito sa pakiwari niya ang panibagong "cesspool" na kailangang linisin sa lalong madaling panahon. Baka mas malala pa ang dumi ng Manila Bay kaysa Boracay. Gustong simulan na ang paglilis sa lalong madaling panahon at nang eksakto sa pagbaba ni President Duterte sa 2022.

Sabi ng Malacañang, gagastos ng P47 bilyon sa paglilinis ng Manila Bay. Kukunin umano ang pondo sa "Road User's Tax" na binabayad ng motorista kapag nagrerehistro ng sasakyan. Sabi ni Duterte bubuwagin na ang Road Board sapagkat hindi nagagamit nang tama ang pondo. Winawaldas umano ng mga miyembro ng Road Board ang pera. Sobra-sobra umano ang pera kung gagamitin sa paglilinis ng Manila Bay.

Para maging mabilis ang paglilinis sa Manila Bay, i-relocate ang mga squatters na nasa baybayin nito. Sila at wala nang iba pa ang nagtatapon ng mga basura na karamihan ay plastic. Kapag napaalis na ang squatters, bantayan ang mga baybayin para masigurong hindi na babalik ang mga ito.



PUNCHLINE

Clean up gov't of corruption; clean up Manila Bay – DU30



BY FRED M. LOBO

MALACAÑANG has vowed to pursue and widen its fight against graft and corruption, to include more government officials and agencies allegedly involved in irregularities.

"No sacred cows... the axe should fall," President Duterte vowed.

The President also ordered the clean-up of world-famous Manila Bay from pollution and eyesores as done in the Boracay island-resort.

Yes, let's do a Boracay and restore Manila Bay as the sunset capital of the world.

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said Duterte has ordered an expanded investigation on corruption and concerned government officials will be held accountable if proven guilty.

"Walang friendship, walang friendship. Kung may ebidensya, the axe should fall where it should," Panelo said during a Palace news conference.

Malacañang said the Presidential Anti-Corruption Commission has initiated a probe on complaints against top officials of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and the National Commission on Indigenous People, and the results are just being awaited.

"If there's evidence, the President will act on it," Panelo said.

However, Panelo explained that the President's stance on dismissing officials on a whiff of corruption meant an investigation has to be completed to warrant the imposition of a penalty.

"Pag sinabing whiff of corruption, mayroong substantial grounds. Pinapaimbestiga kaagad ni Presidente. Hindi naman basta porke't inakusahan mo na nagkakaw ka, tatanggalin ka na agad. Hindi naman ganoon si President. He's a lawyer," he added.

Panelo cited that in recent months, the President fired several government officials, including military officers, for alleged corruption and other abuses in office.

If there's a whiff of corruption, here comes the whip!

"The President's policy ever since is there are no sacred cows in this administration. If you violate the law, regardless of your status, whether you're a friend, ally, or political adversary, a relative or a fraternity brother, wala lahat 'yun. You violate the law, you are accountable," he said.

Yes to determined presidential action vs corruption. The law may be harsh but it is the law, as the legal maxim states.

Likewise, Malacañang said it is considering the abolition of the alleged corruption-plagued Road Board and the transfer of its huge revenue to the government's general fund.

The controversial Road Board may be run over, too. *Whew!*

Finance Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez III said the planned abolition of board and the transfer of its funds to the general fund will ensure transparency and accountability in the collection and disbursement of the Motor Vehicle User Charge (MVUC).

How much and where goes MVUC? MVUC may bukkok? Time for more transparency.

The finance chief added that the Road User's Tax Fund should be covered by the comprehensive tax reform program (CTRP) and also scrutinized by lawmakers under the normal budgeting process.

As with accounting for other government funds, yes to "debit" and "credit" but no "kupit" of the road user's tax.

Malacañang said it could close down establishments polluting Manila Bay as part of its planned rehabilitation program like what was done in Boracay.

"Of course, the policy of the government is if you violate certain regulations, then you have to pay for that," Panelo said.

Panelo said President Duterte is prepared to show "political will" to enforce the cleanup of Manila Bay as "we will replicate what we did in Boracay and in other areas."

Yes, Manila Bay is dirty and sick, call Dr. DU30 very quick!



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EDITORIAL



CARTOON

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

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The Manila Bay challenge

I KNOW
President
Rodrigo
Duterte
is still un-



LOWDOWN
**JOJO
ROBLES**

derstandably ecstatic about how he rehabilitated Boracay Island after

►RoblesA6

The famed sunset has been obscured by air pollution and high tides and typhoons bring waves of garbage that cover the coast, where trash is still thrown indiscriminately by promenaders into the water. And except for funding-challenged initiatives by the private sector to plant mangroves on the shoreline and the issuance more than a decade ago of a toothless Supreme Court ruling to clean up the bay, nothing has really been done to fix the problem.

But, just because it's difficult doesn't mean Duterte wouldn't take it on, as his successful cleanup of Boracay proved. And it appears that his government is really preparing to take on the problem with all the resources at its command.

First, the President ordered Interior Secretary Eduardo Año and Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu last Tuesday to start working on a comprehensive, five-year (2019 to 2014) Manila Bay clean-up program. Just like he did in Boracay, Duterte said he wanted to immediately target tourist establishments along the coastline that did not have water and sewage treatment facilities.

Cimatu gave media an idea of just how polluted Manila Bay is. According to him, the nearly 2,000 sq km body of water is really "a cesspool" with extremely high coliform levels of 330 million most probable number (MPN) per 100 milliliters, compared to the accepted safe level of 100 MPN/100ml.

Cimatu's preliminary rehabili-

tation program calls for a change in approach as the bay's water quality has not improved despite the Supreme Court cleanup order issued in December 2008.

"We are putting up a Manila Bay command center, we will get the local government units more involved, and we will be more aggressive in enforcing environmental laws, particularly against the discharge of untreated wastewater into the bay," Cimatu said.

Duterte, as usual, was more direct in his assessment. He decided that the first order of business was cleaning up wastewater coming from hotels and other similar establishments along the bay.

"Put water treatment facilities in your hotels or else I will close you," he declared. "Do not dare me."

Again, as in Boracay, Duterte expressed his disdain for those who believe that tourism revenues were more important than the environment. "If there are no tourists, then so be it; we will not die," he said. "You do something about your waste or else I will close it; that's for sure."

Malacañang was quick to announce where the funds for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay were to come from. The Palace said the government was planning to use the controversial road user's tax to fund the long-overdue environmental cleanup.

This will immediately happen once the Road Board, which manages the road user's tax collections, is abolished, according to Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo. According to reports, the accumulated amount of unused road user's tax is around P45 billion.

The board is a body created by a special law composed of the secretaries of public works and highways, transportation, budget and management, and finance as ex officio members and three representatives of private transport organizations. The Secretary of Public Works and Highways is the ex officio chairman of the Road Board.

Congress is allowed to appropriate funds for public works rehabilitation works under the law creating the board. Duterte, however, has called for the repeal of the law creating the board and the abolition of the agency, which he described as a hotbed of corruption.

The funds must be earmarked solely for adequate road maintenance and improvement of road drainage, adequate traffic lights and road safety and air pollution control devices at both the national and provincial levels.

But Duterte said the Road Board must be abolished because it has been turned into a "milk-cow" of corrupt politicians.

I wish Duterte all the luck in the world as he takes on what, to me, is the biggest environmental challenge of his administration. Some may want to focus on Duterte's dirty language, but I'd rather cheer the President on as he shows us that the filthy environment can be cleaned up — and you don't have to use nice words to do it.

■ ROBLES FROM A1

The Manila Bay

shutting down the tourist attraction for six months last year. But rehabilitating Manila Bay, which he has declared he would do in five years starting this month, is an order of magnitude more difficult than fixing the overcrowded tourist destination off the coast of Panay Island.

But rehabilitating Manila Bay, which he has declared he would do in five years starting this month, is an order of magnitude more difficult than fixing the overcrowded tourist destination off the coast of Panay island.

For starters, Manila Bay has been a virtual cesspool since before the Spanish colonization in the 16th century. Ever since there was a shipping trade between Manila and nearby ports in China and elsewhere, the 1,994-square kilometer (sq x km) bay, with its 190 km of coastline stretching from the provinces of Cavite in the south to Bataan in the north, with Metro Manila, Bulacan and Pampanga in between, has been the center of the country's commerce.

To this day, international and domestic shipping is the life-blood of Manila Bay, but downstream industry, manufacturing, domestic and foreign tourism have added to the toxic soup of the bay's water, drained from mostly untreated freshwater sources like the Pasig and Pampanga Rivers and the hotels and other tourist establishments that ring the once-scenic but now garbage-strewn coastline.



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MGA BATAS SA KAPALIGIRAN, TUNTUNIN AT REGULASYON IPATUTUPAD NG DENR NGAYONG 2019

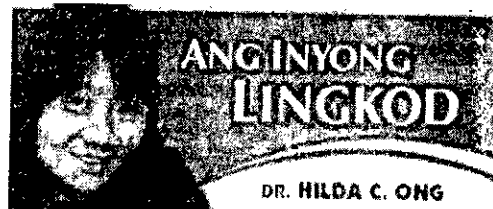
HIGIT pang paligtingin ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang pagpapatupad sa mga environmental laws ngayong taon upang maipagpatuloy ang nasimulang rehabilitasyon sa Isla ng Boracay at iba pang mga

nagawa ng ahensiya sa taong 2018.

"This year, I hope to send a strong message to environmental offenders and to the public of our seriousness in implementing and enforcing environmental laws, rules and regulations," sabi ni Secretary Roy A. Cimatu sa ginanap na DENR New Year Call na idinaos sa DENR central office sa Quezon City.

Ang tradisyunal na New Year's Call ay ang pagsasama-sama ng kalihim at ng iba pang opisyal at empleyado ng DENR upang mabigyan ng prayoridad ang mga programa at proyekto na ipatutupad sa buong taon at ito rin ang pagkakataon ni Cimatu upang iprisinta ang kanyang mga nagawa sa kanyang pinamumunuang ahensiya.

Ayon kay Cimatu, maituturing na "centerpiece" para sa taong 2018 ang



DR. HILDA C. ONG

rehabilitasyon ng Boracay na pinamumuan ng DENR kasama ng iba pang ahensiya ng gobyerno sa ilalim ng Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF).

"With the eyes of the world upon us, we set forth to do what cynics thought was impossible: to transform a cesspool back to being one of the world's best beaches and swimming destinations, within a period of only 6 months," sabi pa ng kalihim

Dagdag pa nito, "In Boracay, our mettle was put to test. We not only passed that test, but also carried over the momentum to other prime ecotourism destinations like El Nido and Coron in Palawan, Panglao Island in Bohol, and Puerto Galera in Oriental Mindoro."

Aniya, ang rehabilitasyon ng Boracay ay maituturing na tagumpay ng DENR

dahilan upang isunod na gawing "big target" ng ahensiya ang Manila Bay rehabilitation.

Kinakailangan umanong kakaiba ang mga hakbang sa gagawing rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay dahil na rin sa dumi ng tubig bagama't may kautusan ang Supreme Court (SC) para sa paglilinis nito may isang dekada na ang nakalipas.

"We are putting up a Manila Bay command center, we will get the local government units more involved, and we will be more aggressive in enforcing environmental laws, particularly against the discharge of untreated wastewater into the bay," sabi pa ng kalihim.



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DENR told: Bare Korean waste test results

By Jigger J. Jerusalem
@inqmindanao

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—A nongovernment organization urged Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu to make public the results of toxicity tests done on 6,500 tons of waste from South Korea which caused a public outcry after it was brought into a port in Misamis Oriental by a Philippine company.

The tests were done by the regional office of the Environment Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) but Bencyrus Ellorin, chair of the group Pinoy Aksyon for Governance and Environment (Pinoy Aksyon), said the results were kept secret.

Ellorin said he found it "mind-boggling" that the results were kept from the public.

The cargo of trash, mostly plastics, was brought into the Philippines through the port in Tagoloan town, Misamis Oriental, from Pyongtaek City in South Korea last year.

Recycling

It was supposedly for a recycling facility owned and operated by Verde Soko Philippines Industrial Corp., located at Phividec Industrial Estate in the village of Santa Cruz.

The shipment was flagged by the EMB and the Bureau of Customs (BOC) after Verde Soko failed to comply with several requirements in importing trash.

The EMB said Verde Soko failed to obtain an import permit while the BOC said the company failed to properly declare the cargo.

Ellorin said the regional office of the EMB should be transparent in its findings.

He said during a meeting, the regional director of the EMB, Sabdullah Abubakar, "admitted that, indeed, the wastes were toxic."

Abubakar has yet to reply to Ellorin.

More left

Ellorin said South Korea must take back the entire garbage cargo as he noted that only 1,400 of the 6,500 tons of trash was to be brought back to its country of origin, leaving behind 5,100 tons.

He raised fear that the cargo "may have already contaminated the environment" as its



If foreign entities and even foreign governments see and treat the Philippines as a final destination for their unwanted waste material, that speaks volumes of the way we are seen abroad

Koko Pimentel
Senator

contents had been removed from shipping containers and "were lying in open air" at the Verde Soko plant.

John Simon, a BOC official at the Mindanao Container Terminal in Tagoloan, where the imported trash were shipped last year, said in another statement that reshipping would start on Jan. 9.

In a separate statement, Sen. Koko Pimentel lauded the agreement by the Philippines and South Korea to return the wastes to South Korea.

"We're not someone else's dumping ground," Pimentel said.

PH image

He said he was grateful to the South Korean government "for its commitment to resolve this matter and take back the misdeclared shipment."

But he added that "it's very urgent" that those behind the shipment be charged and brought to justice.

"Let's ensure that this brazen act is not tolerated and in fact punished to the fullest extent of the law," he said.

"If foreign entities and even foreign governments see and treat the Philippines as a final destination for their unwanted waste material, that speaks volumes of the way we are seen abroad," Pimentel said.

"This should not be tolerated," he added. INQ



Environmental group dismayed over 'trash-lacion'

By **CHITO A. CHAVEZ**

An environmental group appealed to devotees of the Black Nazarene as "stewards of God's Creation" to be responsible for their garbage – learning

from the experience of previous years and not to rely on other people to clean their trash.

"Our public appeal for a trash-less Traslacion has again fallen on deaf ears. Many people un- ▶7

Environmental group... ◀1

ashamedly threw their garbage anywhere turning the parade ground fronting the Quirino Grandstand into a dumping ground," said Daniel Alejandro, Zero-Waste campaigner of the environment group EcoWaste Coalition in disgust.

"Families and barkadas who flocked to the park and even set up tents for the overnight vigil left piles of rubbish behind just like in previous years. There were many urine-filled PET bottles lying on the ground," he added.

At the Quirino Grandstand and parade ground, EcoWaste Coalition's volunteers who helped with the cleanup found plastic bottles with urine, soiled diapers, mucky wipes, makeshift bedding, food containers and leftovers, spoiled pancit, cup noodles, instant coffee sachets, cigarette filters, and lots of things plastic from carry bags to cutlery.

At the Quiapo district, EcoWaste Coalition noted the garbage mess was similarly dreadful with litter scattered all over the place.

The group's Basura Patrolers reported rampant disposal of foam food containers in street corners and gutters and in places where exhausted devotees ate and rested.

"Despite the painstaking efforts of street sweepers to pick up after the devotees, rubbish can be spotted everywhere! Old habits die hard," said Alejandro.

"People seem to have no qualms about littering, a prohibited act under local and national environmental laws that is more often disregarded than enforced. Littering, especially in godly activities, is totally unacceptable. Devotion should not lead to pollution," he emphasized.

While critical of the litterbugs, the EcoWaste Coalition thanked the hundreds of environmental personnel and volunteers, as well as the informal waste recyclers, who all helped in cleaning up the littered streets.

The group specifically cited the round-the-clock service rendered by cleaners from the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, Department of Public Works and Highways, Manila's Department of Public Services, and volunteers from civic and religious groups.

EcoWaste Coalition also cited the student volunteers from the Philippine College of Criminology

for the cleanup work, particularly in Luneta.

"We hope that our people's devotion to the Black Nazarene will also find its expression in the way we act toward our shared environment — with care and respect," Alejandro ended.

Peaceful, orderly

Manila Police District chief Supt. Vicente Danao Jr. said this year's Traslacion was "better" and "more peaceful compared to previous years.

There was no major untoward incident recorded but data from the Philippine National Police showed at least 846 persons were injured with 714 seeking medical help during the 21-hour procession that started at 5 a.m. Wednesday.

This year the Traslacion joined by an estimated 1.4 million devotees ended an hour early compared to 2018.

But church officials there were more than the police estimates.

"They did not include in the count those waiting in other areas that are not along the procession route such as in Quezon Boulevard. Those who walked to join the procession as well as those in secondary roads. Next time that will be included in the count," Monsignor Hernando "Ding" Coronel, Quiapo Church rector said.

Next year, Coronel said a working group will be created and Quiapo Church will join in estimating the crowd.

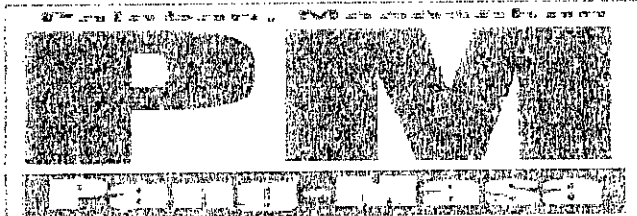
"It will be researched based... there are a lot of new ways to estimate the crowd. There is aerial imagery among others," Coronel added.

"We are very happy. We are not after quantity but quality because we hear stories of ordinary people and their relationship with the Nazarene," said Coronel.

As of 7 a.m., the Philippine Red Cross said 1,613 patients sought treatment for various medical emergencies.

Of this number, 62 devotees suffered from major cases such as difficulty in breathing, laceration, dizziness, body weakness, and trauma caused by blunt objects.

Seven hundred forty seven patients had their blood pressure monitored and 197 devotees sought psychosocial support. (With reports from Aaron B. Recuenco, Erma R. Edera and Leslie Ann G. Aquino)



Problema sa basura lumalala!

TONE-TONELADANG basura ang naiwan sa kalsada matapos ang 21 oras na Traslacion.

Ayon nga sa mga opisyal ng Dept. of Public Service ng Manila nasa 80 trak ang nahakot.

Mas doble o tripleng pagtaas ito kumpara umano sa nahakot na basura noong nakaraang taon.

Bukod pa umano sa mga nasirang halaman na karamihan ay nakatanim sa center island.

Tulad ng dati sangkaterbang mga plastic at styrofoam ang nahakot.

May Traslacion man o wala, talagang malaki na ang problema ng bansa sa basura, dahil sa kawalan ng disiplina ng marami.

Yan nga lang Manila Bay, sangkaterbang basura na ang naglulutangan, dati malinaw ang tubig naging itim dahil hindi naalagaan at ginawang tapunan.

Maging ang mga creek at ilog sa maraming lugar sa bansa, barado na dahil sa basura, kaya konting ulan lang baha dahil umaapaw.

Dapat na itong matignan nang husto ng mga kinaukulan, bago pa tuluyang lumala ang problema.

Marahil dapat na ring magkaroon ng matapang batas na magpapataw ng mabigat na parusa sa mga walang pakundangang nagtatapon ng basura.

Dapat talagang may masampolan para magtanda.

Hindi lang talaga napapansin, pero matindi na talaga ang problema sa basura, bukod pa dito ang mga dinadalang basura ng ibang bansa na mistulang ginawang landfill ang Pinas.

Tila walang talab sa marami ang kasabihang, 'basurang itinapon mo babalik sa yo'.



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Inilalathala ng Pilipino Star, NGAYON, Inc. na nasa 202 Roberto S. Oca Corner Railroad



2 firms rapped for dumping medical waste

By **MINERVA BC NEWMAN**

CEBU CITY – The Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) issued violation notices to two firms in Mandaue City for allegedly dumping medical waste that were found floating in the Mactan Channel last Jan. 5.

EMB said the Lapu-Lapu City Health Office presented the collected healthcare waste recovered from the channel near Sitio Sta. Maria, Barangay Ibo.

The board said healthcare bottle waste bore the name of Chong Hua Hospital Mandaue and Cancer Center (CHHMCC). The source of the other waste still has to be determined.

EMB also found that the Davao City Environmental Care, Inc. (DCECI), a Treatment Storage and Disposal (TSD) facility, is the third-party Health Care Waste Service Provider contracted by Chong Hua hospital.

DCECI uses the autoclave and charring method to treat medical waste from its clients that included the University of Cebu Medical Center (UC Med), St. Vincent Hospital, and CHHMCC.

After checking on CHHMCC and DCECI, an EMB team determined the two firms to be the sources of the dumped waste.

Based on EMB investigation, CHHMCC and DCECI were also found to have committed another violation that carries a P50,000 fine.

EMB said DCECI presented

forms and a certification that it could treat waste from CHHMCC only until last September. Yet the facility continuously collected and treated the hospital's healthcare waste up until Jan. 2, EMB said.

It was also found out that DCECI has exceeded the allowable 8 metric tons (MT) annual treatment capacity, a violation of the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) issued to the facility on April 16, 2013.

The violation could lead to the cancellation or suspension of the EEC and a fine of P50,000.

CHHMCC also cannot present any manifest form for the previous and current collections of its healthcare waste by DCECI. Instead, it presented signed waste pull-out forms from DCECI which is also a violation of Section 7 of DENR Administrative Order (DAO) 2013-22, EMB said.

Further investigation showed that the data CHHMCC declared in its Self-Monitoring Report (SMR) for the third quarter of 2018 did not match the data in its waste pull-out forms.

EMB has called DCECI and CHHMCC to a conference Wednesday to appraise them of their violations.

Meanwhile, another Facebook post showing photos of medical waste in Sitio Apro in Barangay Ibo, Lapu-Lapu, went viral last week.

A team sent by EMB Regional Director William Cuñado to Sitio Apro found that some of the waste carried the name of UC Medical Center.



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Samar town bans plastic utensils, styro containers

By **MARIE TONETTE MARTICIO**

TACLOBAN CITY - A town in Samar has banned the use of disposable utensils, plastic bottles and canned drinks at government-sponsored activities.

Pinabacdao Mayor Teodoro Mabag signed an order to strictly enforce Republic Act A 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Act of 2000.

The order puts "serious efforts to 'clean' the entire stretch of the town... from its uplands and forests to the coast."

It also aims to protect its people, especially its employees from the harmful effects of

unhealthy food.

The order prohibits the use of disposable utensils, styro-foam food containers during government-sponsored activities such as programs and seminars.

The hosts, organizers and caterers are directed to use reusable and washable items made of glass, ceramics or stainless steel.

It also disallows the use of water bottles, juice in cans and soft drinks, and promotes the use of jugs, dispensers and pitchers instead.

Only water, vegetable and fruit juices can be served instead of carbonated drinks.



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MEDICAL WASTES

SEAS OFF 3 CEBU CITIES DECLARED UNFIT FOR SWIMMING

By **Morexette Marie B. Erram**
 @inquirervisayas

CEBU CITY—Swimming in the seawaters off the cities of Lapu-Lapu, Mandaue and Cebu along the Mactan Channel was prohibited on Wednesday after hospital wastes containing toxic materials were collected there.

An official of the Lapu-Lapu City Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro) said it was no longer safe for people to bathe at the Mactan Channel as it can cause health problems.

Cenro employees on Wednesday found at least large garbage bags containing lab specimens, like stool and saliva samples, inside tubes along the shores of four villages—Pusok, Ibo, Pajo and Poblacion.

Adelino Padilla Sr., Lapu-Lapu City Cenro officer, said the volume of hospital waste collected in the area was the highest since officials started monitoring for hospital wastes

not properly disposed of.

"Some of them might have been thrown from the hospital where they came from," he said.

TB, hepa

Padilla said some of the wastes contained specimens contaminated with tuberculosis and hepatitis B, according to stickers still placed around the discarded bottles and tubes.

"These toxic wastes are extremely hazardous since they have the capacity to contaminate a certain area and spread unwanted diseases," he said.

"This is why we urge residents to alert us if they see hospital wastes floating nearby or smell anything foul coming from the sea," Padilla added.

The Lapu-Lapu City government is conducting an investigation to find out how the medical wastes ended up in the sea.

On Saturday, photos and videos of medical trash, such



DEADLY DUMP Hospital wastes, including tubes containing tuberculosis and hepatitis samples, were found floating on the sea off Mactan Island on Jan. 5. —DENR PHOTO

as used syringes, kidney trays, chemical bottles, a tube containing a blood sample and several gloves were photographed floating near the shore of the village of Ibo in

Lapu-Lapu City.

Viral

The videos and photos were uploaded on Facebook, quickly becoming viral.

In a statement, Chong Hua Hospital, whose name appeared on some of the chemical bottles floating on the sea, said it would coordinate with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Central Visayas to shed light on how the medical wastes ended up in the seas.

Chong Hua said the hospital would review its current solid waste management protocol and also assured the public that its waste disposal system was working according to rules.

Another private hospital based in Mandaue City was also being investigated after its wastes were also found at the Mactan Channel. The Inquirer withheld the name of the hospital since it has yet to issue a statement.

At a press conference on Tuesday, Lapu-Lapu City Mayor Paz Radaza said the local government had issued a notice requiring the hospitals to explain how their wastes were being handled. **INQ**



#nationataglance

CENTRAL VISAYAS: MANDAUE CITY

2 firms face fines for medical wastes in waters off Lapu-Lapu

THE ENVIRONMENTAL Management Bureau-Central Visayas (EMB-7) is set to issue a notice of violation and impose corresponding fines of at least P50,000 against two firms in Mandaue City linked to the medical wastes found floating in the seas off Lapu-Lapu City the past few days. EMB-7, in a statement, said evidence showed that Davao City Environmental Care, Inc. (DCECI) and Chong Hua Hospital Mandaue and Cancer Center (CHHMCC) were found to have committed lapses that merit the imposition of penalties against them. DCECI is a treatment, storage, and disposal (TSD) facility that uses autoclave and charring method as treatment for its medical wastes from the University of Cebu Medical Center (UC Med), St. Vincent Hospital, and CHHMCC. Among the wastes collected was a bottle bearing the name of CHHMCC. In a meeting over the weekend, DCECI presented manifest forms and certificate of treatment for collected and treated health care wastes of CHHMCC only up to September 2018, but continued to provide services to the hospital until Jan. 2. CHHMCC, for its part, could not present any manifest form for the previous and current collections of health care wastes by DCECI. — *The Freeman*



P1

Swift action on pollution

Cities are major contributors to climate change. According to United Nations (UN) Habitat, cities consume 78 percent of the world's energy and produce more than 60 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. Yet, they account for less than two percent of the Earth's surface.

The sheer density of people relying on fossil fuels makes urban populations highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Fewer green spaces exacerbate the problem. According to the IPCC report, limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius would "require rapid and far-reaching transitions in uses of energy, land, urban and infrastructure (including transport and buildings) and industrial systems."

Pollution, mostly associated as a by-product of urban landscapes, is also linked with climate change.

An added challenge is the projection, in a UN report, that another 2.5 billion people will reside in urban areas by 2050; nearly 90 per cent of them in cities in Asia and Africa. The good news is that cities around the world have already begun to take measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and are putting policies in place that encourage the use of alternative energy sources. Efforts by policy makers and administrators to address climate change, however, will need to accelerate to keep pace with population growth and the rapid climate change.

The effects of climate change are worse among poor and low-income communities, in part because many live on the margins of society, in unstable structures and in areas more susceptible to flooding, landslides, earthquakes, but also because of inadequate capacities,

inadequate resources and reduced access to emergency response systems. This is even more pronounced in developing countries.

To address the issue of climate change in cities, UN-Habitat, UNEP, the World Bank and Cities Alliance have established the Joint Work Programme to assist cities in developing countries to mainstream environmental considerations into urban policymaking.

In Jamaica, UN-Habitat's Cities and

Climate Change Initiative (CCCI) helped people understand "planning as a long-term tool for climate compatible cities." The program, through partnerships with the local administrators and activists, has fostered communication within the community so that residents become informed on climate-resilient activities.

Pollution, mostly associated as a by-product of urban landscapes, is also linked with climate change. Both climate change and air pollution are exacerbated by the burning of fossil fuels, which increase CO2 emissions, the cause of global warming.



The power plant "Neurath" run by coal from the brown coal open cast mine Garzweiler is pictured in Rommerskirchen, west Germany. Smoke from factories is one of the major causes of air pollution.



P2

Swift action on pollution

The reality of climate change

The impacts of climate change are being felt everywhere and are having very real consequences on people's lives. Climate change is disrupting national economies, costing us dearly today and even more tomorrow. But there is a growing recognition that affordable, scalable solutions are available now that will enable us all to leapfrog to cleaner, more resilient economies.

The Paris Agreement adopted in 2015, was an essential step to address climate change. It has the central goal of keeping global average temperature rise this century to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to as close as possible to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The 2015 Paris Agreement marked a historic turning point. World leaders from across the globe clinched a new, universal agreement under the umbrella of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Last December at the UN Climate Change Conference COP24 in Poland,

governments were set to agree the implementation guidelines of the Paris Agreement, thereby unleashing its full potential.

As of November 2018, 184 states and the European Union have joined the Agreement, which entered into force with record speed.

Countries will have to enhance their national climate pledges under the Paris Agreement.

Countries have designed their own national climate action plans under the Paris Agreement, but the sum of these plans are not sufficient to limit climate change to well below 2°C. It is critical for countries strengthen their strategies to reach the targets set in the Paris Agreement and raise ambition to tackle climate change.

To support efforts to implement the Paris Agreement and to increase ambition and climate action, UN Secretary-General António Guterres will bring world leaders, from government, finance, business, and civil society to the Climate Summit on 23 September 2019. He has asked these leaders to bring bold announcements and actions to the Summit that will reduce emissions, strengthen climate resilience and mobilize political will for an ambitious and meaningful agreement in Paris in December 2015.

The Summit next year will come exactly one year before countries will have to enhance their national climate pledges under the Paris Agreement.

The Secretary-General said, "Only a significantly higher level of ambition will do. To that end, the Summit will focus on areas that go to the heart of the problem – the sectors that create the most emissions and the areas where building resilience will make the biggest difference."

"We will bring together players from the real economy and real politics, including representatives of trillions of dollars of assets, both public and private."



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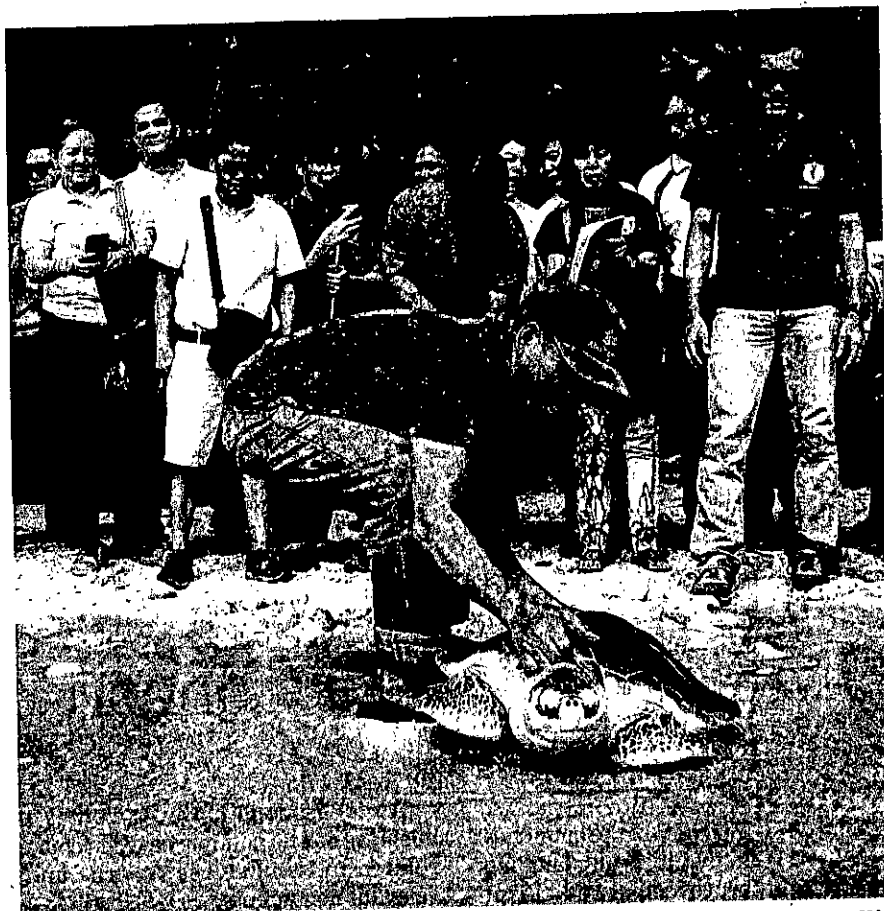
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SEA RESCUE - A Hawksbill sea turtle is released back into the sea at Aboitiz Cleanergy Park in Matina Aplaya, Davao City on Thursday. (Keith Bacongco)

Pawikan Center continues rescue of Hawksbill turtles

By **ARMANDO B. FENEQUITO JR.**

DAVAO CITY - A total of 4,370 pawikan eggs found in the Cleanergy Park and 3,482 hatchlings have been rescued and released to the shores by the Pawikan (marine turtle) Center here.

The Aboitiz Group has built up the facilities of the pawikan (marine turtle) center as part of its effort to intensify the conservation of hawksbill turtle in the Davao Gulf.

This after the company signed a memorandum of agreement with the city government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Wednesday morning.

Aboitiz Power chief operating officer for distribution group Jaime Jose Aboitiz said the signing aims to collaborate with the stakeholders for the better assistance given to the rescued marine turtles.

"Today, after more than 13,000 mangroves seedlings planted and more than 3,000 hatchlings released, we renewed our commitment," he said.

Aboitiz said the facility has been already used for many years and they just improved the facilities now for more marine turtles to be rescued.

DENR assistant secretary Ruth Tawantawan said the facility will really help the conservation of the Hawksbill turtles since they are already considered endangered species.

"This will help prevent the extinction of the Hawksbill turtles," she said.

Tawantawan said this turtle species has only one percent of survival after being hatched so it is important to preserve them.

The center is the rescue and hatchery facility located inside the Aboitiz Cleanergy Park in Punta Dumalag, Barangay Matina.

The facility is a temporary shelter, clinic, laboratory, observation deck, boardwalks and other facilities for the rescue, rehabilitation, and conservation of marine turtles.

The center also aims to identify, document, and address the threats to marine turtles and their habitats in the area, and promote research as well as enhance public awareness.



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Popular Siargao lagoon to close for a month

Execs say place needs to heal from heavy tourist traffic, deserves a 'vacation,' too

By Erwin M. Mascariñas
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BUTUAN CITY—An age of awareness about protecting popular tourism sites from abuse is sweeping many other once pristine locations, including Sugba Lagoon, one of the most sought-after destinations on Siargao Island.

The local government of Del Carmen town will rehabilitate the area to allow it to heal from the destructive impact of tourism and its popularity.

Although smaller in scale than the rehabilitation of world-famous Boracay Island, which President Duterte had described as a big cesspool, the rehabilitation of Sugba was a

long-deserved break for the place, according to officials.

Alfredo Matugas Coro II, mayor of Del Carmen, said the local government decided to close down Sugba for a month starting on June 10 "as the area needs its well-deserved breather from the flock of tourists that has enjoyed the waters of the lagoon."

Time to heal

"For one month every year, we allow nature to recover by itself," Coro said.

"It's more like a vacation leave, a time for the waters and its flora and fauna to heal as the lagoon is different compared to a beach," the mayor said.

"It does not have a direct

flow of water coming from the open sea," he added.

According to the data from the Del Carmen local government, the lagoon had brought in more than P7 million in revenue in 2017.

Income figures for 2018 were not yet available but the area accommodates an average of 700 to 1,000 visitors per day.

"The sudden influx of visiting guests enjoying the clear turquoise waters of the lagoon has skyrocketed," Coro said.

Increased demand

He said the first time the local government rehabilitated the lagoon, an estimated 300 to 400 visitors have been going to Sugba.

The mayor said the increase in the number of visitors also "spiked the need for boats" to bring the tourists to the island of Caub where Sugba is located.

More boats were also needed to bring tourists to other sites in Del Carmen, the mayor said.

He said at least 105 boats were now needed to meet an increasing demand.

In 2017, boats bringing tourists to Caub and Sugba started servicing package tours to other areas in Del Carmen that have been attracting more visitors, like the island of Kawhagan known for its white sand beach, Isla Berdi known for its clear and shal-

low blue waters and other tourists spots in Siargao.

Reopening

The local government planned to reopen Sugba Lagoon before Valentine's Day during which tourism arrivals were expected to peak.

The need to give tourism spots a breather was highlighted by a rant made by Mr. Duterte against pollution and unbridled development in Boracay.

The President's rant led to a six-month rehabilitation of the island famous only for its white sand beaches and shallow waters but which had drawn the most tourists among Philippine destinations. INQ