

DATE : 02 Feb 2010

DAY : Saturday

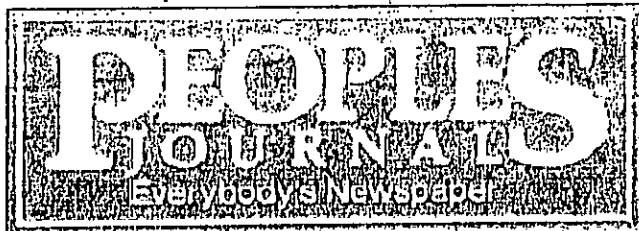
DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE



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CARTOON

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DENR puts up field offices to keep metro environs clean

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has created four field offices in Metro Manila in a bid to strengthen the enforcement of environmental laws in the country's most densely populated region.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatusaid the move was part of the Duterte administration's ongoing effort to make government services more accessible to the people especially in the national capital region.

The new field offices would also enhance coordination between the DENR and other agencies, including local government units (LGUs) in Metro Manila, which

were tasked by the Supreme Court to clean up the heavily polluted Manila Bay.

The DENR-North Metro Manila Field Office would cover the CALAMANAVA area (Caloocan, Valenzuela, Malabon and Navotas) while the South Metro Manila Field Office would have jurisdiction over the areas of Taguig, Parañaque, Las Piñas, and Muntinlupa, and Pateros.

Quezon City, Marikina City and Pasig City would fall under the East Metro Manila Field Office, while the cities of Manila, San Juan, Mandaluyong, Makati and Pasay would be under the West Metro Manila Field Office. A sub-station would be set up in each of the field offices to scale up the implementation of activities to rehabilitate Manila Bay.

Joel dela Torre



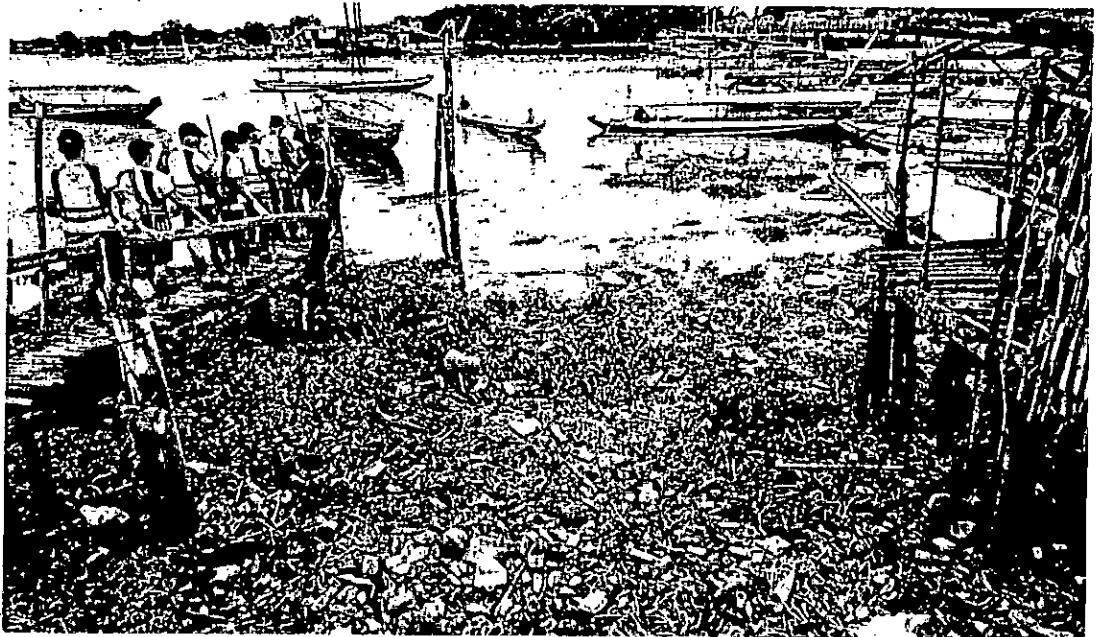
More firms closed over bay pollution

DENR issues notices of violation to 15 establishments along Bulacan's rivers

CITY OF MALOLOS—Environment officials on Friday shut down more companies in Bulacan province that were found polluting Manila Bay while they required other firms to clear their septic tanks.

Lormelyn Claudio, director of the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) in Central Luzon, said her office had already served notices of violation, with cease and desist orders, to 15 companies operating along the river system of the City of Meycauayan and Marilao and Obando towns connected to Manila Bay.

Claudio said the outfalls of most of these companies had been either plugged or covered with concrete to prevent draining of untreated wastewater into the Meycauayan and Marilao rivers.



BULACAN CLEANUP Volunteers help clean a river in the village of Tawiran in Obando town, Bulacan province, to support the rehabilitation of Manila Bay. —CARMELA REYES-ESTROPE

Bay rehab support

Establishments covered by the orders included leather craft makers and tanneries, smelting plants, restaurants, bakeries, industrial firms, detergent manufacturers and fishponds.

The crackdown was part of local officials' cleanup drive to support the launching of the rehabilitation campaign for Manila Bay.

The EMB started serving closure notices last week to the initial 13 establishments in Obando and Marilao that were found operating without an environmental clearance certificate.

During the EMB's site inspections on Thursday, Claudio ordered 14 other companies to undergo septic tank siphoning. "We're able to siphon off 91,000 liters of septage and 6

liters of grease [from these companies' septic tanks]," she told the Inquirer.

River cleanup

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu and other national and local officials launched on Sunday the Manila Bay cleanup to rehabilitate the water body.

Close to 1,000 environmental personnel, villagers, government employees and mem-

bers of private groups also participated in cleaning rivers and waterways during the simultaneous launch of the campaign in Bulacan. The event was also held in Pampanga, Bataan and Cavite provinces.

Nearly 10 tons (2,000 sacks of garbage) were collected along riverbanks and coastal areas at the mouth of Manila Bay in Bulacan town on Sunday. —CARMELA REYES-ESTROPE INQ



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LLDA issues notices vs. Bay polluters

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources through the Laguna Lake Development Authority has issued a notice of violation against the Government Service Insurance System in Pasay City's Roxas Boulevard as one of the major polluters of Manila Bay.

The LLDA also issued ex-parte orders and notices of violation against

Sogo Hotel, Makchang Korean Restaurant and 2Blue Realty Corp. in Manila's Malate area; Peak Motors Phils. Inc. and Cebuana Lhuillier Building in Pasay City's Roxas Boulevard; Robinsons Land Corp. in Manila's Ermita, and Rizal Park Hotel in Manila's T.M. Kalaw for water pollution. **Rio N. Araja**



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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Bay not yet fit for swimming

1.3 billion most probable number per 100 milliliters of fecal coliform content found

By Kuhlín Ceslie Gacula

Despite Manila Bay's relatively trash-free shoreline as a result of the government's clean-up drive, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources yesterday warned against swimming in its waters.

The Department of Health also issued a similar admonition after social media went abuzz with children swimming in the bay tested to

contain 330 million coliform bacteria per 100 milliliters.

"We advise them to wait until water tests can show that it is safe for swimming," Health Undersecretary Rolando Enrique Domingo said. "Laboratory tests will show the level of coliform in the water and tell us if it is within acceptable levels."

Manila Bay has recorded as high as 1.3 billion most probable number per 100 milliliters of fecal coliform content. The goal is to lower the coliform level to 100 mpn. The swimmable level is at 300 mpn.

The Laguna Lake Development Authority has already dispatched 14 teams of inspectors to gather water discharge samples in Pasay and Manila.

Aside from implementing Republic Act 4850, or the LLDA Law, the agency is also one of the implementing agencies of the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004.

According to LLDA General Manager Jaime C. Medina, the teams, all armed with mission orders, have been given instructions to get water samples from the outfalls to determine whether an establishment's effluent passes environmental standards.

The effluent must pass the SB level water quality of 100 most probable number per 100 milliliters when it comes to fecal coliform.



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Go hopes Manila Bay rehab will inspire Pinoys

FORMER special assistant to the President (SAP) and aspiring senator Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go on Thursday reiterated that political will was necessary to create progress in the country as he cited the rehabilitation of Manila Bay as an example.

"This is proof that the government has the political will to do everything to make our country better. This is also thanks to the volunteers who truly desire to be of help," Go said.

Go issued this statement while he and his supporters visited survivors of fires in two areas in Quezon City: Litex in Commonwealth Avenue and Barangay Talayan.

The fire in Litex on January 29 destroyed at least 50 houses, affected about 100 families, and claimed the life of one child.

In Barangay Talayan, the fire on January 28 destroyed at least 60 houses and affected 154 families. No casualties were reported.

Late Wednesday evening to early Thursday morning, Go and his supporters visited Litex and Barangay Talayan. Upon entering both areas, Go and his companions immediately distributed grocery items, food packs, meals, and cash assistance to the affected families. Uniforms were also assured for students and employees residing in both areas.

Go also said he would shoulder the funeral expenses of the child who died in the Litex fire.

Go's visit to Barangay Talayan was a continuation of the visit he made on Monday evening when the fire was still raging. I promised them that I would return," he said.

He also said that he would seek

the assistance of other government agencies for further assistance for the survivors.

Go then talked about why President Rodrigo Duterte's government has the capacity to produce results in the cleanup of Manila Bay.

"That is because our President has the political will. He closed Boracay temporarily to clean it up. Now Boracay is clean and orderly, the waters are clean, roads are wider and soon the total rehabilitation of Boracay will happen," he said.

He ordered the cleanup of Manila Bay at fortunately, there were volunteers who wanted to help,"

Go added.

After discussing the Manila Bay cleanup operations, Bong Go reminded residents of Litex and Barangay Talayan that they might go to the Malasakit Center in the Lung Center of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City for their urgent medical concerns.

"Representatives of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, the Departments of Health, Social Work and Development, and the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. will process the assistance you need," he said.

Go also made time to join boodle fights with tricycle drivers

in Litex and Barangay Talayan. He shared meals with them and reminded them to join the government's ongoing fight against illegal drugs, criminality, and corruption.

A senatorial candidate in the May 2019 elections, Go's legislative agenda include programs for agriculture, housing, improved health service delivery, education, long-term sports development, fire protection and prevention, localized peace talks, anti-drugs and crime drive, anti-corruption drive, barangay welfare, the creation of a Department of overseas filipino workers, and improved benefits for senior citizens.



Senatorial candidate Christopher Lawrence 'Bong' Go meets with supporters at Litex and Barangay Talayan in Quezon City. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

FROM A DISTANCE

CARMEN N. PEDROSA

7 Crowdsourcing to clean up Manila Bay

The crowds marching to clean Manila Bay reminded me of the crowds who went to Luneta to show who they wanted to lead political change. The million crowd showed up on the *miting de abanse* of Davao Mayor



Rodrigo Duterte to support him to clean up the country.

The crowds are back this time to support him to clean up Manila Bay. It was an awesome sight never seen before in former administrations. Like many others it was regarded as an impossible task and not worthwhile doing.

If we did not have a leader who cared to do such things, why should we care? That is what makes PRRD a different president. He was a shocking change and ready to be different.

In general, those who drive through Roxas Boulevard look askance at the Manila Bay and thought it was doomed with its filth and waste. It is an example of how government under previous leaders did nothing about it.

As a child I knew it as a place to cure a cough or cold because of its fresh air. My parents would dump all of us in the car and cruise along the bay, stopping occasionally to look at its clean and placid waters. It also meant breakfast in Aristocrat (one of the restaurants being accused now as polluters by throwing their wastewater to the bay). We called a drive through the boulevard as *pasyal*, a place to breathe and meander. But after many years the clean bay and its fresh air were gone. It smelled of a sewer tank with bits of trash floating on the placid water. It became a place to avoid, to pass by quickly and look away from.

Until Duterte became president we did not care how it smelled and looked like. Through several administrations, Philippine presidents did not care, so why should we? It was too big a job for individuals wanting fresh air and clean water. Foreign friends who were long time Manila presidents used to rhapsodize about the Sunset of Manila Bay as incomparably beautiful and driving through the boulevard was a pleasant experience. The beautiful sunset followed as you drive along the stretch of a winding boulevard without the reclamation then.

"I've been to UK, US, Egypt, Dubai, Japan, Australia and nearby Asian countries but I have never seen a sunset as beautiful as Manila Bay's Sunset. Truly, it is one of the Best Sunset in the Whole Wide World!" (from a Manila tour operator).

The crowd of volunteers to clean up the bay was heartening. It was not just about cleaning the bay but the togetherness that counted.

"We all have to pitch in if we want a beautiful country we can be proud of." It is not mine or yours but our Manila Bay.

We are not alone in wanting to clean bodies of water around the world. Other countries are waking up to realize that bodies of water are what give life to communities as Victor Mallet wrote of the Ganges in India - "River of Life, River of Death".

The Philippines had earlier won the competition among countries cleaning up their rivers. Philippines won over China's cleaning of the Yangtze.

Volunteerism was the key to that success. A few thousands volunteered from different barangays traversed by Pasig. But the number of volunteers to clean the Manila Bay was overwhelming. Crowds came to clean peacefully and orderly to follow the leader. Here he comes. We are with you Mr. President in small and big tasks to re-build our country after years of neglect.

I was in Singapore, one of the cleanest cities in the world, which respects bodies of water that give life to their communities. I wondered then whether we would attain that goal with a divided population, with the egging of Liberal opposition and other groups to oppose anything from Duterte's government. To them he could do nothing right, even the cleaning of rivers and calling on crowds to volunteer because the Manila Bay belongs to all of us. With that kind of flimsy attitude of opposing for the sake of opposing we will not succeed in cleaning our rivers or indeed rebuilding a nation after years of corruption and neglect.

The competition for cleaning rivers was held in Sydney sometime ago. The Philippines won over China, a big country capable of great tasks. The judges of the contest said it was not the bigness or superpower of China that mattered but the enthusiastic organization of volunteers.

We won the 1st Asia RiverPrize award for cleaning the Pasig River because so many volunteers pitched in. We did the same thing in Boracay despite objections from big businesses like hotels and restaurants and now - the Manila Bay.

We did it once and we will do it again and again. Those who prize the bay as a window to our country should keep watch that it does not happen again.

Cleaning the Pasig River brought us an ongoing affair. It brought in around 18,000 people to decent housing and transforming these communities and their lives into environmentally responsible citizens.

Pasig River, being the winner of the 2018 Asia RiverPrize, received widespread global recognition, which can build new partnerships, provide opportunities for exchange of knowledge and best practices, and open doors for international support. "One of the five critical criteria in the determination of the winner was leadership, which the judges attributed to the leadership of President Rodrigo Duterte. It was PRRD's leadership that united both the public and private sectors.

Manila Bay is historically significant. We must remember that it was on this bay that American colonization of the Philippines was achieved. Dewey's decisive victory cleared the way for the US occupation of Manila and the eventual transfer of the Philippines from Spanish to American control.

Philippine insurgents who fought against Spanish rule during the war immediately turned their guns against the new occupiers. We honor these insurgents when we show respect for Manila Bay.

★



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1800

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



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PAGBABAGO

Heroes of the environment – A narrative of hope

By **FLORANGEL ROSARIO BRAID**

(Part 1)

“NEVER doubt for a single moment that a handful of thoughtful and committed men and women can change the world.... Let it be said that in our time and during our watch, we did our share... And maybe, just maybe, we make a little difference – these were the words of Tony Oposa, conceptualizer and counsel of the Manila Bay project that was recently launched with a Unity Walk for the Rehabilitation of Manila Bay. Organized by the Manila Yacht Club and the Rotary Club, it started from the Quirino Grandstand to the streets of Roxas Boulevard. Some 6,000 volunteers joined the walk in support of the 13 government agencies which had been issued a mandamus to clean up the bay. The agencies, which included the DENR, DILG, DOH, DBM, DepED, DA (Fisheries), Maritime Police, Ports Authority, MWSS, LWUA, MMDA, etc., were ordered to spearhead efforts to involve other groups to support this cause. President Duterte approved earlier this month the project prepared by DENR and allocated P42.95 billion for the implementation of the project within three to seven years.

Tony narrates how it all started:

“Twenty years ago, young Filipinos (he and his students in Environmental Law at the University of the Philippines) took the government to the Supreme Court. After a long and lonely journey and a legal battle of 10

years, they finally got a court judgment ordering a dozen or so government agencies to do what they would have done 50 years ago. The court gave the order a new name – “a continuing mandamus” – which means that the 13 agencies were ordered to report the clean-up progress every three months.

The court judgment was ten years ago – December, 2008. But even as early as January, 1999, when the case was filed, the fecal bacteria in Manila Bay was one million per cubic meter. Twenty years later, in January 19, one would expect it to be a little lower... But guess what? It's now 330 million units of fecal bacteria for every cubic meter. In some parts of the bay, it is one billion.

I suggested practical pathways in solving the three problems which consist of (1) solid waste (basura); (2) sewage/septage from humans, which is the primary source; (3) relocation of informal settlers.

These can be addressed through “bayanihan” and the relocation of informal settlers like what had been done in Puerto Princesa (where the government built low-cost condos) as well as the Iloilo River Restoration. Lessons learned were:

1. Planting seeds – That anything that is worth doing cannot be done in one lifetime; we can only plant seeds... of hope

2. The power of positive energy. The greatest human hunger is not the hunger for food. It is the hunger of the heart for appreciation. It is time to change the narrative of the law from

being an enforcer to being an enabler. It is time to shift the emphasis of law from the negative energy of enforcement to the happy energy of positive reinforcement. “Kind words do not just praise the goodness of others. Kind words have the power to change the destiny of a nation.”

It is a lonely journey in defense of the sea and the fish, clients that do not pay attorney's fees. But just when the concerned citizens had lost almost all hope that the Manila Bay will even see the light of day, something sparkles. Just when everything seems dead, that is when everything comes to life.

At last Sunday's “Walk,” DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu cited the historic battle of Manila Bay between the Spaniards and the Americans led by their two country admirals on May 1, 1899, and expressed that this time it was not a battle between ships or against foreign invaders but a battle with ourselves to clean Manila Bay for future generations.

For this good news, a fitting New Year's gift, we extend our gratitude to the President, the Supreme Court, heads of government agencies mandated to implement the project, and their partners in the private and NGO sectors, the various volunteers, lawyer Antonio Oposa, Ramon Magsaysay awardee, creative litigator, one of Asia's leading voice in the global arena of International Law, and share the hope that together, we shall win this battle.

My e-mail, florangel.braid@gmail.com





DILG: 178 local officials makakasuhan sa maruming Manila Bay

AABOT sa 178 mayors, vice mayors at iba pang opisyal ng local government units (LGUs) sa mga lugar sa paligid ng Manila Bay ang nanganganihin na kasuhan ng Department of Interior and Local Government.

Ayon kay DILG Undersecretary Epiñaco Densing III, bubuhayin nila ang Legal Investigation Committee ng DILG na binuo nila sa clean-up ng Boracay Island.

Kailangan aniya nila maging balanse sa imbestigasyon dahil kailangan parin ng DILG ng tulong ng LGUs para sa paglili-

nis ng Manila Bay sa susunod na dalawa hanggang tatlong taon.

Sakali aniya mapatunayang may nilabag ang LGUs sa Clean Water Act, solid waste management at nagpabaya sila kaya't dumami ang informal settlers, kaka-suhan nila ng administratibo ang mga LGU.



Robinsons-Gokongwei, Cebuana Lhuillier, GSIS sinalaula ang Manila Bay

INIISA-isa ng Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (DENR) ang mga establisimyentong malapit sa Manila Bay na maaaring lumabag sa mga regulasyon ng polusyon sa tubig na bahagi ng kanilang paglilinis sa look kasama ang ilan pang ahensiya ng gobyerno.

Hindi nakaligtas dito ang gusali ng biyonaryong si John Gokongwei na Robinsons Place Manila, at mga sangay ng Cebuana Lhuillier at Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) sa lugar.

Ilan lamang ito sa 16 establisimyento na isinara o binanggit na lumabag sa mga regulasyon ng polusyon sa tubig.

Ang Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) ay nag-isyu ng Notice of Violation (Water Pollution Case) laban sa sumusunod:

1) Gokongwei's Robinsons Place Manila sa Pedro Gil corner Adriatico St., Ermita, Manila; 2) Cebuana Lhuillier building sa Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City; 3) GSIS sa Roxas Blvd., Pasay City; 4) Sogo Hotel-Quirino sa Madre Ignacia St., Malate, Manila; 5) Peak Motors Phils Inc. sa EDSA corner

Roxas Blvd., Pasay City; 6) Makchang Korean Restaurant sa Adriatico St., Malate, Manila; 7) 2Blue Realty Corp. sa Madre Ignacia St., Malate, Manila; 8) Rizal Park Hotel sa South Drive, TM Kalaw, Ermita.

Nauna nang isinara ang apat na establisimyento dahil sa pagtatapon ng basura sa Manila Bay na kinabibilangan ng Billion Building o Philippine Billion Real Estate Development Corp.; HK Sun Plaza na nasa Roxas Blvd., Pasay City; Tramway Bayview Buffet Restaurant sa Roxas Blvd. corner Layug St., Pasay City; at D Circle Hotel sa MH Del Pilar St., Malate, Manila.

Kaugnay nito, nilinaw ni DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda na ang notice of violation ay ibinibigay kapag hindi masyadong malaki ang pollutants na inilalabas nila at maaari pang lumubog, ngunit may katapat pa rin itong mga penalty dahil bagsak pa rin sila sa waste discharge.

Sinabi pa ni Antiporda na mayroon itong multa na nasa P10,000 hanggang P200,000 kada araw, depende sa polusyon na nilikha nila. **(Mina Aquino)**



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MAYOR TIANGCO PINURI ANG CLEAN-UP DRIVE NG MGA PAARALAN

PINURI ni Mayor John Rey Tiangco ang sektor ng edukasyon sa Navotas sa pagsimula nito ng kampanya na makatutulong sa pagpapana-tili

ng kalinisan sa lungsod. Sa kanyang talumpati, nagpasalamat si Tiangco sa Navotas Schools Division Office sa pangunguna nito

sa proyekto na naghihimok sa mga estudyante at guro na makilahok sa clean-up drive tuwing unang Biyernes ng buwan.

"Ang ating kapaligiran ay karugtong ng ating mga tahanan. Sa pagpapana-tili nating malinis ang ating mga bahay, dapat sinisiguro rin nating malinis ang ating paligid," aniya.

Sabi pa ni Tiangco na simula 2011, nagpatupad na ang pamahalaang lungsod ng clean-up sa mga tabing-dagat at tabing-ilog dalawang beses sa isang buwan.

Layunin ng kampanya, na pinangalanang "Navotas Ko, Love Ko," na mai-kintal sa mga Navotefo ang pagpapahalaga at pagmamalasakit sa lungsod.

"Karamihan sa ating mga basura ay napupunta sa mga kanal at dumidirekto sa karagatan, na siya namang unti-unting sumisira ng buhay sa dagat. Dahil nakadepende ang ating kabuhayan sa karn-



NAMULOT ng basura ang mga nagbakasyong OFW na sina Cris Vallejos (kaliwa) at Nelson Delgado para sa cleaning ng Manila Bay coastline sa Roxas Boulevard, Manila, Huwebes ng umaga. **Kuha ni DANNY PATA**

gatan, napakaimportante para sa atin na sundin ang tamang pagtapon ng basura," ani Tiangco.

Kamakailan, nakilahok ang Navotas sa malinawakang clean-up para tulungang buhayin muli at mapangalagaan ang Manila Bay.

Umabot sa 23,036 kilo ng basura ang nakolekta mula sa mga kasabay na clean-up na isinagawa ng 18 barangay sa lungsod noong Enero 27.



PINASALAMATAN ni Mayor John Rey Tiangco ang mga boy scout mula sa Navotas National High School na lumahok sa city-wide clean-up program na Inlunsad sa Navotas education sector.

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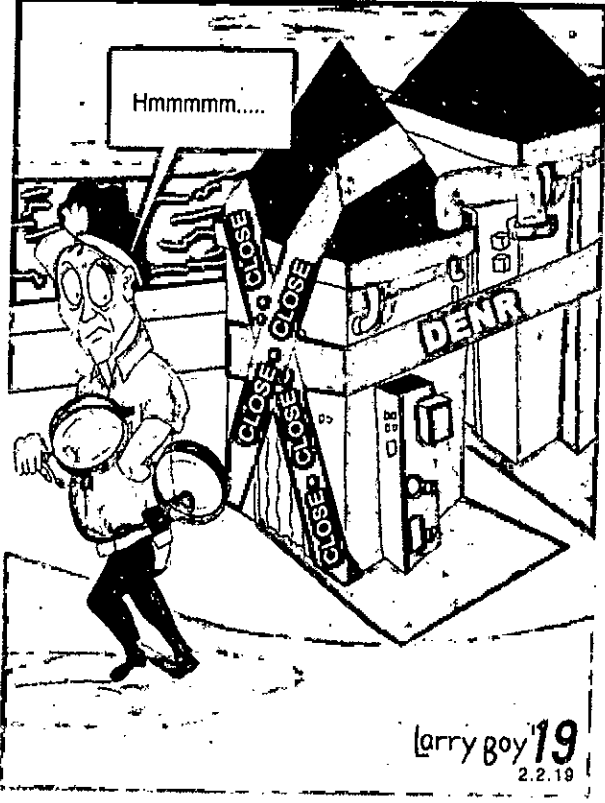
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Editorial

Sige, isara mga establishment na lumalason sa Manila Bay

HINDI lamang ang Manila Zoo ang nagluluwa ng dumi sa Manila Bay kundi marami pang iba. Walang sewage treatment plant (STP) ang Manila Zoo kaya agarang ipinasara ni DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu noong nakaraang buwan. Dahil walang STP, lahat ng dumi ng zoo ay direktang bumabagsak sa isang estero at mula roon, iluluwa naman ito sa Manila Bay. Nang suriin ng DENR ang kalidad ng tubig ng Manila Bay, umaabot na sa 330 milyon ang fecal coliform sa tubig nito. Ibig sabihin, talagang napakarumi ng Manila Bay at hindi na puwedeng pagliguan. Tuwing summer, maraming naliligo sa Manila Bay at wala silang kaalam-alam na ang kanilang sinisisid ay pawang dumi na delikado sa kalusugan.



Nang unang inspeksiyunin ni Cimatu ang mga estero na nakasubo sa Manila Bay, nagbabala na agad siya sa mga establimento at kompanya na lumalabag sa Waste Water Act. Una na ngang binantaan ang Manila Zoo at makaraan ang ilang araw, pinasara na niya ito.

Noong Huwebes, apat pang establishments ang pinasara ni Cimatu, makaraang mapatunayan na lumalabag sa batas. Ayon kay Cimatu, lahat ng dumi ng apat na establishments ay itinatapon sa Manila Bay. Una nang naghain ng reklamo sa apat na establishments ang Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA).

Ang apat na kompanya na ipinasara ay ang Philippine Billion Real Estate Development Corp. na nasa Roxas Blvd., Pasay City; HK Sun Plaza na nasa Roxas Blvd. Pasay City; Tramway Bayview Buffet Restaurant na nasa Roxas Blvd. Pasay City at ang D. Circle Hotel sa M.H. Del Pilar St. Malate, Manila.

Ayon kay Cimatu, dapat maitama ng mga nabanggit na establishments ang kanilang violations at saka pa lamang sila makapagpapatuloy sa operasyon. Kaya ang babala ni Cimatu sa iba pang nagluluwa ng lason sa Manila Bay, magkaroon ng sariling STP para makasigurong hindi dumi ang kanilang itinatapon sa dagat.

Marami pa umanong isasarang establimento dahil sa paglabag sa Waste Water Act. Sige, isara na ang mga ito para mabawasan na ang mga lumalason sa makasaysayang Manila Bay. Panahon na para linisin ang lawa at pagbayarin ang mga sumasalaula rito.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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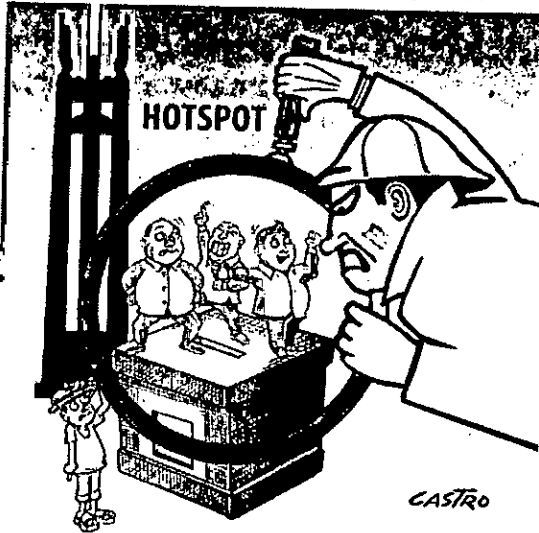
EDITORIAL

CARTOON

02 FEB 2010

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Editorial



Sulat kay Editor

Tumulong imbes magreklamo sa Manila Bay cleanup

Dear Editor:
Kaloka talaga itong grupo ng Makabayan opposition block na kinabibilangan ng Anakpawis Party list, Bayan Muna Party list, ACT Teachers Party list, Gabriela at Kabataan Party list.

Akalain mo yon, pinapatigil nila sa DENR ang Manila Bay rehabilitation upang pag-aralan muna ang socio-economic impact nito na maaaring makakaapekto sa mga sector nasa "laylayan" kuno. Anong klaseng mambabatas ba ang mga taong ito? Akala ko ba'y kaya ito ibinuto dahil magaling mag-isip ang mga ito, pero parang hindi naman. Basta lang ata may masabi at mapansin, hala sige kahit hindi pinag-iisipan ang sasabihin.

Hindi ba nakita ng mga taong ito ang resulta ng isinagawang paglilinis sa Manila Bay? Ganda ng resulta diba? Ano nalang kaya kung talagang tuluyan na talaga itong ma-rehabilitate.

Kung tumulong sana ang mga reklamador na mga ito sa paglilinis ng Manila Bay, malamang masaya pa ako at ang ibang tao sa kanila. Huwag na sanang iboto ang mga ganitong trapo sa gobyerno, sayang lang ang pondong binibigay sa kanila.

Iraida Claire E. Ponce
Magallanes, Cavite



FOR THE RECORD



Aileen Taliping

TWITTER: (@aileentaliping)

Malaking tagumpay ang inilunsad na "Battle of Manila Bay" noong nakalipas na linggo dahil matapos ang maghaponing paglilinis ay usap-usapan pa rin hanggang ngayon, maging sa social media ang napakalaking impact at resulta ng paghahakot ng mga basura sa gilid ng dagat.

Katunayan, dinarayo

Bayanihan sa Manila Bay ituloy sa mga sidewalk ng Metro Manila

ngayon ang Roxas Boulevard partikular sa Baywalk sa Lungsod ng Maynila para personal na masilayan ang pagbabago ng Manila Bay.

Lahat ay natutuwa dahil sa napakatagal na panahon ay ngayon lamang nagawa ang ganitong pagbabago sa kasalukuyang administrasyon. Taong 2008 pa iniutos ng Korte Suprema na isailalim sa rehabilitasyon ang Manila Bay pero naging tengang-kawali lamang ang mga nagdaang administrasyon, lalo na ang mga dating opisyal ng DENR na walang ginawa at nagbutas lang ng silya sa kanilang opisina.

Siyempre pa, nag-

papasalamat ang publiko sa mga nangunang ahensiya gaya ng DENR, DILG, DSWD para maisakatuparan ang paglilinis sa Manila Bay katulog ang 5,000 volunteers.

Pero hindi mangyayari ito kung hindi sa political will ng kasalukuyang administrasyon.

Gusto ko lang lina-win, ang paglilinis ay hindi isang araw lang kundi tuloy-tuloy ito sa loob ng pitong taon, at ito ay sa pamamagitan ng rehabilitasyon na pinondohan ng gobyerno ng P47 bilyon. Hindi lang ito sa Roxas Boulevard kundi buong Manila Bay, at sumabay na rin sa paglilinis ang

mga bayan ng Cavite, Bulacan, Pampanga at Bulacan.

Dahil nabuhay ang bayanihan ng mga Filipino, iminumungkahi sa gobyerno na isama na ring linisin ang mga maruruming bangketa sa Metro Manila para maging ganap na malinis ang kapaligiran.

Sa totoo lang, kapag napapadpad ako sa ibang bansa ay nanliliit ako dahil malinis ang kanilang kapaligiran kumpara sa Metro Manila na pangunahing siyudad pero madumi, kalat ang basura, amoy patay at pati estero ay naging malaking tapunan ng hindi maipaliwanag na kalat.

Sana lang, ipakita rin ng MMDA ang kanilang political will para malinis ang lahat ng mga maruruming bangketa sa Metro Manila dahil isa ang mga ito sa mga nagpapadumi sa paningin.

Kapag malinis ang Manila Bay at malinis din ang mga sidewalk, tiyak malaking ginahawa ito sa mga mamamayan at maipagmamalaking may pag-asa pa ang Metro Manila na makipagsabayan sa mga pangunahing lungsod sa Asya.

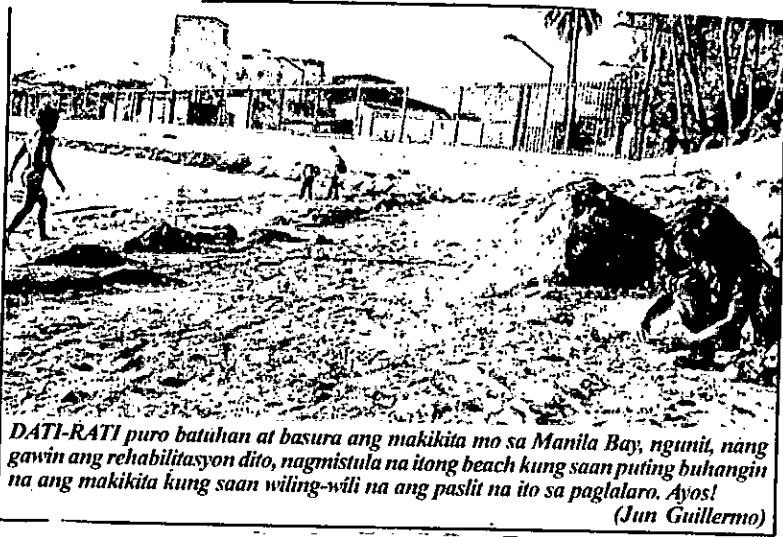
Kamay na bakal, disiplina at determinasyon lang ang kulang sa mga Filipino para maging maayos ang bansa.



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POSES NG MASA WILING-WILI NA



*DATI-RATI puro batuhan at basura ang makikita mo sa Manila Bay, ngunit, nang gawin ang rehabilitasyon dito, nagmistula na itong beach kung saan puting buhangin na ang makikita kung saan wiling-wili na ang paslit na ito sa paglalaro. Ayos!
(Jun Guillermo)*



PANAWAGAN NG NWRB SA PUBLIKO "UMPISAHAN NA ANG PAGTITIPID SA PAGGAMIT NG TUBIG"

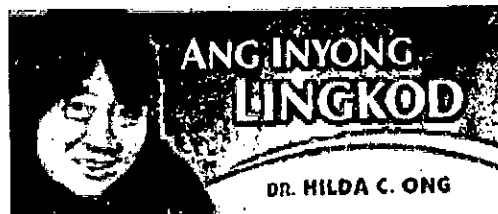
NOONG nakaraang taon, sunud-sunod ang bagyong bumisita sa bansa, nakapagtala ito ng malakas na buhos ng ulan upang ang ating mga dam sa bansa, katulad ng Angat Dam ay nakasahod nang sapat na tubig na maiimbak noong Kapas-kuhan, kaya may magagamit na tayo sa panahon ng tag-araw, sa ngayon

sagana tayo sa tubig o kaya sapat para sa taong 2019, kung hindi magtitipid sa paggamit ng tubig ang bawat pamilya.

Base sa pinakahuling ulat ng Hydrological Information ng Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (PDRRMC), nasa 211.62 meters ang level ng tubig sa Angat Dam noong Enero 28, 2019 (8:00AM), kulang ng 0.38 meters base sa 212 normal high water level (NHWL).

Hindi lamang tao ang nangangailangan ng tubig kundi, maging ng mga hayop, halaman at lahat ng mga nabubuhay rito sa balat ng lupa.

Malinis na tubig ang kailangan pagtuunan ng pansin ng lahat sa pamamagitan ng matiyagang pamamahala sa pinagkukunang tubig, ang sa-



DR. HILDA C. ONG

pat at malinis na tubig para sa lahat sa mga dumarating pang taon.

Mahalaga ang papel ng kababaihan pagdating sa sustenableng paggamit at pamamahala ng water resources.

Bilang namamahala sa tahanan kabilang sa mga isinasaayos at sinisiguro ng isang ina sa kanyang tahanan ang pagkakaroon ng malinis na tubig na magagamit bilang inumin, pangluto, pampaligo at panglaba. Mas alam ng isang babae ang iba't ibang paraan upang makapagtipid ng tubig at ang tamang paggamit nito.

Paulit-ulit ang panawagan ni Dr. Seville D. David Jr., Executive Director ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB)

at ng mga water concessionaires tulad ng Manila Water at Maynilad na nageserbisyo sa NCR, tipid-tipid pa rin sa tubig dahil kahit araw-araw nang umuulan ay hindi pa rin sapat ang taas ng tubig sa Angat dam.

Dagdag ni Executive Director David, "Kapag hindi tayo marunong magtipid, ang kasalukuyang 211.62 level ng tubig sa Angat dam ay patuloy na bababa, pati na rin sa Bustos Dam at Ipo Dam dahil sa pagpasok ng panahon ng tag-init, baka kapusin tayo ng tubig."



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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THE EXHIBIT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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EMB to inspect malls, resorts in Central Visayas

By MINERVA BC NEWMAN

CEBU CITY - The Environment Management Bureau (EMB-7) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Central Visayas is now conducting regular inspection and stringent monitoring of all waste management and treatment facilities of all resorts, malls and hotels in the region.

This was the order issued by DENR7 Executive Director Gilbert Gonzales to EMB-7 after videos of illegally disposed untreated medical wastes off the coast of Mactan Channel and other hazardous being dumped in Talisay seas went viral online.

"This year, we will begin conducting strict monitoring of waste management systems of large establishments in the region to make sure that major waste generators are handling their wastes responsibly," Gonzales said.

EMB-7 Regional Director William Cuñado told The Manila Bulletin that his agency was already addressing the solid waste and clean water concerns of these establishments, and will penalize those which do not comply with the existing environmental laws, rules and regulations.

Cunado said that composite teams from DENR field offices and EMB were already conducting regular inspection and monitoring compliance of hotels, resorts and malls of their waste management and treatment.

Cunado cited provisions of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act mandate that no person, partnership or corporation shall undertake or operate in any declared environmentally critical project or area without first securing an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC).

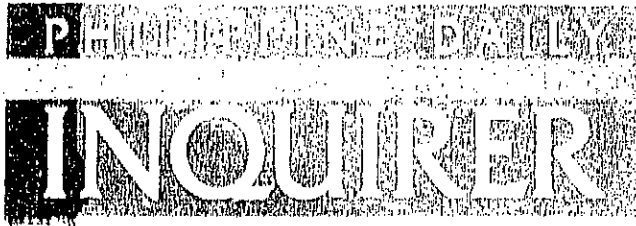
The ECC ensures that development will not come at the expense of the environment. Cunado added that ECC conditions issued to establishments need to be strictly followed and executed.

The EMB will be sending notices of violations to establishments not following the ECC conditions and will temporarily stop their operations for non-compliance, Cunado said.

Owners or operators of facilities that discharge regulated effluents are required to secure a permit to discharge under the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004. The said discharge permit shall be the legal authorization granted to establishments to discharge wastewater, Cunado explained.



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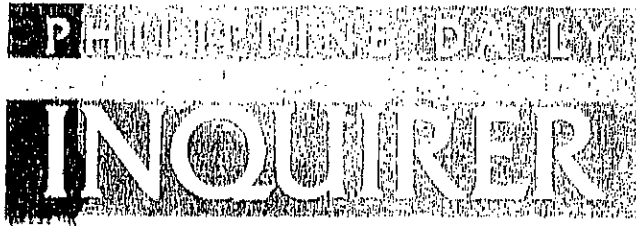
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REGIONS BRIEFS

Harvest now, Taal fish cage owners told

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Batangas province asked fish cage operators in Taal Lake to harvest their tilapia and "bangus" (milkfish) stocks as "sulfur upwelling" in the lake was seen to continue over the next couple of weeks. Jose Elmer Bascos, provincial environment and natural resources officer, said the fish kill this week had affected 28 cages, containing 30 metric tons of fish worth P6.8 million, at Barangay Sampaloc in Talisay town. The DENR said portions of the lake turn green to bluish in color, warning cage operators of sulfur upwelling. This is because toxic chemicals rise to the water surface, thus reducing the dissolved oxygen below the required level for marine animals to survive. Mario Balazon of the Taal Lake Aquaculture Alliance Inc. said some operators, who wanted to avoid further losses, had relocated their fish cages to areas in the lake not affected by the upwelling. —MARICAR CINCO



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DEAR MR. PRESIDENT

SAVE OUR PINE TREES, BAGUIO KIDS ASK DU30

By Vincent Cabreza
@InqNational

BAGUIO CITY—Jewel, a kindergarten pupil here, drew numerous stick figures of girls, surrounded by pine trees under a blue sky. The drawings accompanied her short handwritten message to President Duterte: "Please help us save the trees. Trees are what we need, not buildings. Thank You."

Aiofe, her schoolmate, expressed the same sentiment in a letter she cut out in the shape of a tree: "Please don't let them cut our trees here in Baguio. This is for our future. I love trees."

These are some of more than 60 letters from pupils of the Baguio Pines Family Learning Center who have asked the government to stop developers from leasing a 1-hectare pine tree park here.

The letters were addressed to Mr. Duterte and delivered to city hall early this week by 17 grade schoolers and their teachers.

Mayor Mauricio Domogan told them that the custodian of the pine tree stand—the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS)—might not be willing to sell it to the city government.

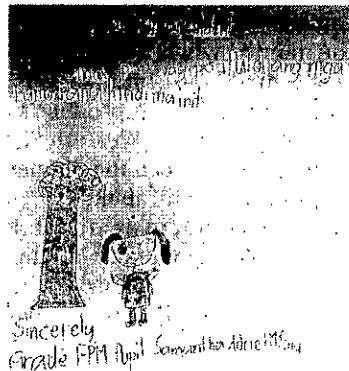
He promised to endorse the letters to Malacañang. "I trust [the national government] will listen to you, children," he said.

GSIS property

The park is surrounded by the summer court houses of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals, the University of the Philippines Baguio and Luneta Hill, which is now owned by a shopping mall.

The pine trees are right beside the Baguio Convention Center, which the city government bought from the GSIS in 2012.

The convention center and the wooded lot were given to the GSIS through presidential proclamation during martial law, and were classified as a "GSIS investment area," the GSIS



VINCENT CABREZA

A letter addressed to President Duterte talks about the value of trees to Baguio residents.

informed the city government.

In 2008, the GSIS offered the park to a developer, triggering a public outcry and protests from church leaders, members of environmental groups, students and teachers.

Heeding the protesters, the city government did not issue development permits for the pine tree stand, which a city zoning ordinance had designated as a park.

The GSIS sued Baguio but the city government eventually offered to buy the tree park in 2016 and again in 2017.

'City of Pines'

According to Domogan, the GSIS was willing to study the offer and had valued the area at P400 million and then at P670 million. But it recently informed the city government it was no longer interested in selling the property, he said.

Alcina Dominique Flores, a Grade 6 pupil who served as the children's spokesperson, asked Mr. Duterte to heed their plea, saying they also wrote to former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in 2008 when the tree park was first offered for lease.

"Since Baguio is known as the City of Pines, I believe that title is worth more than what any corporation can offer ... for how can we be the City of Pines if we don't even have pine trees?" she said. INQ



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The Manila Times

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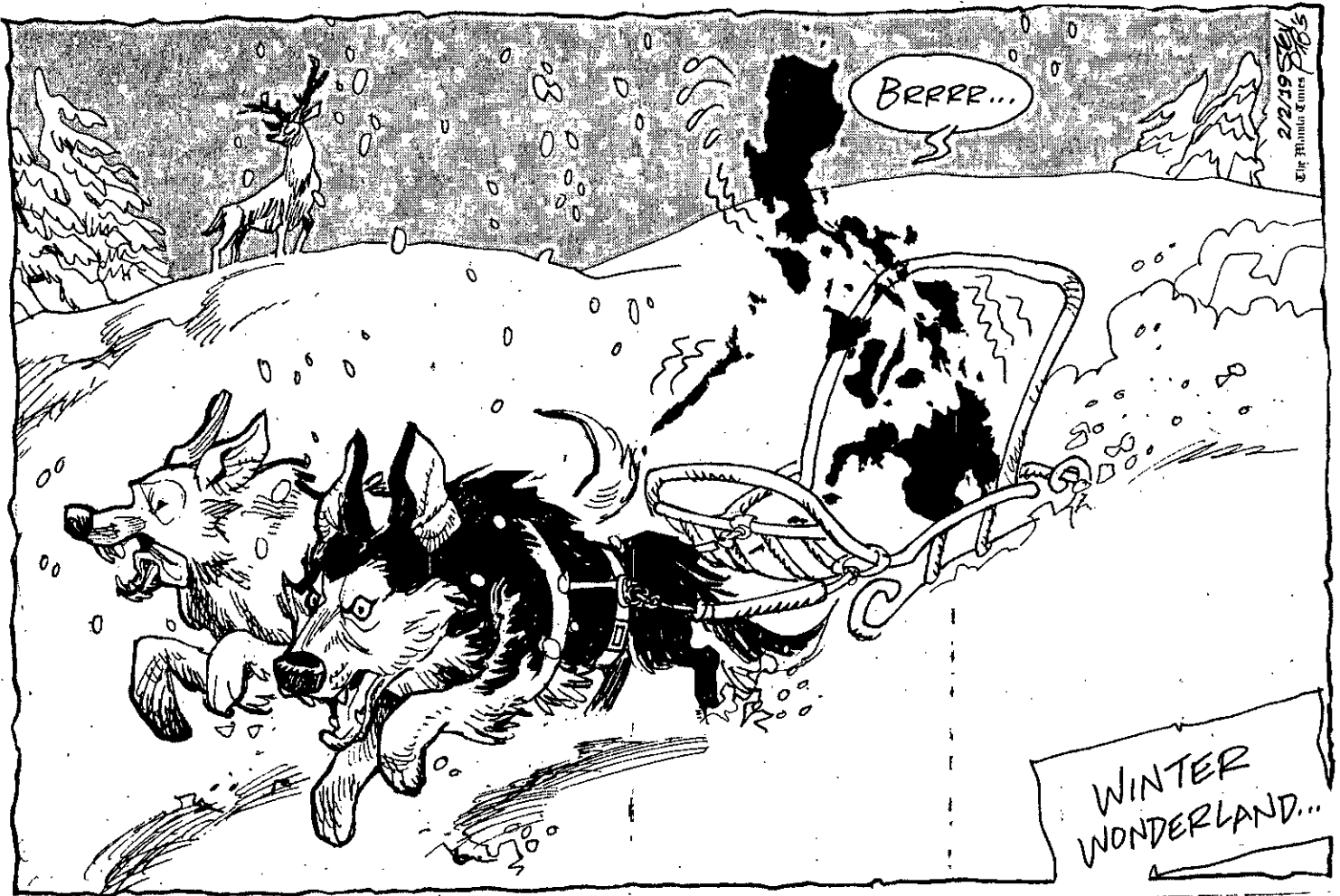
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Bitter cold forces rethink on global warming

First word

I WRITE this column fully aware that some colleagues in the *Times* are believers in global warming, and probably have palpitations whenever I relay unfavorable news on global warming or climate change.

What should a global warming skeptic like me do when events and developments in the world appear to debunk the dogma of global warming and the UN forecast of climate apocalypse? Should I just turn away?

No, I submit that the skeptics should spread the news as widely as possible, and highlight the most authoritative reports on what is happening.

I venture to do this today with respect to the polar vortex that plunged this week large swaths of the US into their coldest weather in history and caused a score of deaths in the process.

Four compelling reports

I commend to the reader's attention and perusal the following startling reports and expert commentary:

1. First, the latest Reuters weather report on the US situation, which it headlined, "US polar vortex nears end, blamed for 21 deaths" (Feb. 1, 2019).

2. Second, an expert assessment and analysis of the record cold by two climate experts, Tom Harris and Dr. Tim Ball, which they entitled, "Record cold forces rethink on global warming" (PJ Media, Jan. 29, 2019).



OBSERVER

YEN
MAKABENTA

3. Third, Donald Trump's Twitter appeal, "Global warming, please come back, we need you," amid the freezing temperatures (Jan. 29, 2019).

4. Fourth, a commentary on Fox news, "Fossil fuels are keeping Americans warm this week," by Rob Henneke (Jan. 31, 2019).

Reuters weather report

Let's start with the latest situation and weather report filed by Reuters. In a Feb. 1, 2019 report headlined, "US polar vortex nears end, blamed for 21 deaths," Reuters reported:

"Tens of millions of Americans braved Arctic-like temperatures on Thursday as low as minus 56 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 49 Celsius) that paralyzed the US Midwest and were blamed for at least 21 deaths.

"Officials across multiple states linked numerous deaths to the frigid air.

"It has been more than 20 years since a similar blast of frigid air covered a swath of the US Midwest and Northeast, according to the National Weather Service.

"The bitter cold was caused by the mass of air known as the polar vortex drifting south from its usual position over the North Pole."

Rethinking global warming

In an assessment published online by PJ Media, two longtime climate analysts and global warming skeptics, Tom Harris and Dr. Tom Ball issued a scathing critique of the global warming dogma.

Dr. Ball is a doctor of science (Ph.D. University of London; Masters, University of Manitoba). Mr. Harris is a member of the Heartland Institute and director of the Climate Science Coalition.

Because of their synoptic analysis and overview of the climate situation, I reproduce below their commentary:

"Headlines around the world are reporting exceptionally frigid conditions and unusually high levels of snowfall in recent weeks. They tout these events as records, but few people understand how short the record actually is — usually less than 50 years, a mere instant in Earth's 4.6 billion-year history. The reality is that, when viewed in a wider context, there is nothing unusual about current weather patterns.

"Despite this fact, the media — directly, indirectly, or by inference — often attribute the current weather to global warming. Yes, they now call it climate change. But that is because activists realized, around 2004, that the warming predicted by the computer models on which the scare is based was not actually happening. Carbon dioxide (CO2) levels continued to increase, but the temperature stopped increasing. So, the evidence no longer fit the theory...

"Yet, the recent weather is a stark reminder that a colder world is a much greater threat than a warmer one. While governments plan for warming, all the indications are that the world is cooling. And, contrary to the proclamations of climate activists, every single year more people die from the cold than from the heat.

"A study in the British medical journal *The Lancet* reached the following conclusion: 'Cold weather kills 20 times as many people as hot weather, according to an international study analyzing over 74 million deaths in 384 locations across 13 countries.'

"How did this bizarre situation develop? It was a deliberate, orchestrated deception. The results of the investigation of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) were deliberately premeditated to focus on the negative impacts of warming. In their original 1988 mandate from the UN, global warming is mentioned three times, while cooling is not mentioned even once. The UN notes that:

'Continued growth in atmospheric concentrations of 'greenhouse' gases could produce global warming; with an eventual rise in sea levels; the effects of which could be disastrous for mankind if timely steps are not taken at all levels.'

This narrow focus was reinforced when the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, a body the IPCC is required to support, defined climate change as being caused by human activity."

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page 2: bitter cold forces ...



■ MAKABENTA FROM A4 Bitter cold

Global warming, please come back

Like the little boy in the Western classic, "Shane," US President Donald Trump, arguably the biggest GW denier in the world, took to Twitter to appeal for "global warming" to come back and save Americans from the bitter cold.

Trump tweeted: "In the beautiful Midwest, windchill temperatures are reaching minus 60 degrees, the coldest ever recorded.... People can't last outside even for minutes. What the hell is going on with Global Warming? Please come back fast, we need you!"

Fossil fuels keep Americans warm

For the longest time, GW fanatics have been crusading against the fossil fuel industry as the biggest factor behind global warming and climate change. They advocate the replacement of fossil fuels with renewable energy like wind and solar in the US economy.

Today, however, in the face of the bitter cold, it is fossil fuels that are keeping Americans warm.

Rob Henneke, director of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, penned an arresting commentary in Fox news. He wrote:

"What the AccuWeather service calls 'the coldest weather in years' is gripping the nation, from Wisconsin to Alabama..."

"The only real defense against Winter Storm Jayden is fossil fuels — the source of the vast majority of electricity that Americans will need to stay warm. Pie-in-the-sky talk about renewable energy won't warm hearths and hearts during this storm, because the sun isn't shining all the time and the wind capacity simply isn't there.

"Americans will rely on fossil fuels — the much-demonized source of concentrated energy — to power our economy and save lives, literally.

"Winter Storm Jayden should wake us up to some cold truths. Today, fossil fuels stand between us and the icy chill of winter weather. Policies that try to chase them from our energy portfolios prematurely are doomed to fail—and to leave American families, particularly the poorest among us, out in the bitter cold."

Flat earth defense

In defense of the church of global warming, fanatics are desperately claiming that the bitter cold is only a symptom of global warming. Everything, even the cold, confirms the reality of GW.

It's like the flat earth dogma all over again. No church can sustain this error.

yenmakabenta@yahoo.com



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Law: Enriching Asean environmental governance

CLOSE look at the laws of the Association of Southeast Asia (Asean) member countries will reveal an intricate mosaic of legal systems in existence in the region. It is not simply a choice between common law or civil law or a mixture of both. While one system is founded on Islamic or Hindu law and Dutch law (Indonesia), a few others share traditions of British law super-imposed on Islamic foundations, modified by modern indigenous legal innovations (Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar). Others have modernized eclectic legal systems which have integrated concepts from American, Spanish and French legal systems (the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand). Intricate as it is, the mosaic is even more elaborate when seen in detail, with a great variety of ethnic and customary laws. Despite the diversity in legal cultures owing to the differences in history, territories, population and government, environmental law unites all legal systems in the light of the present worldwide concern about conservation of natural resources for sustainable devel-



AMBASSADORS' CORNER
AMADO S. TOLENTINO, JR.

opment vis-à-vis rising resource consumption and thoughtless demands for economic growth. With the 1981 Manila Declaration on the Environment as the starting point of formal and active cooperation on environmental matters, the regional association adopted the Asean Vision 2020 about which the Hanoi Plan of Action (1999-2004) was formulated, covering 15 areas relating to the environment. Those years saw the use of law through regional environmental agreements. Among them: Asean Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (ATHP) (2002) — This agreement attests to Asean's resolve at transnational environmental lawmaking. It was formulated in response to the annual haze emanating from Indonesia as a consequence of land-clearing fires for palm and rubber plantations and the practice of swidden (*kaingin*) ag-

riculture which cause serious adverse economic and health impacts in some Asean states. ATHP demonstrates that in a crisis situation, Asean members can rally together to reach consensus on a hard law instrument. Under the agreement, parties oblige themselves to develop information systems to prevent and monitor haze; communicate about haze originating from within their borders; and take legislative and administrative measures to implement the Agreement. Progress, however, has been too slow to effectively avert the occurrence of the haze reflecting the preference of the states of Asean for cooperative and consensual discussions, or soft law, over hard law. Whether ATHP will be fully implemented at the national level still remains to be seen since there are no enforcement mechanisms at the Asean level. Agreement on Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin (1995) — A sub-regional agreement signed by four Asean member riparian countries, namely, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam, the agreement emphasizes joint development,

ecological protection and dynamic process of water allocation. China (a non-Asean member) and Myanmar, two upper basin countries, are not parties to the agreement but were designated "dialogue partners" and have participated in various Mekong River-related activities. Customary international law played an important role in reaching the agreement by providing a framework of guiding principles which include, among others, the principle of international waters, i.e. watercourse as a system of surface and groundwater constituting a unitary whole and normally flowing into a common terminus, guarantees reasonable and equitable uses and benefits to all watercourse states. Functioning cooperative mechanisms are in place between the riparian countries in the Mekong River and China. Lately, however, there were manifestations of protest by Thailand against China's plan to dredge on the part of the Mekong which stretches into its territory. (No similar manifestation came from Laos on dredging the shallowest part of the river within its territory to give

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way to China's vaunted Silk and Belt project). Likewise, concerns have been raised about the possibility of lessened flow of water into the Mekong River from its source in China when the dams to divert the water flow to irrigate agricultural lands to ensure food security for the country's burgeoning population becomes operational. At stake is the livelihood of 60 million people living within the Lower Mekong River Basin. What is the future of the regional frameworks and cooperation initiatives agreed to by China as a major actor?

In this connection, it should be noted that because Asean emphasizes decision-making through consensus-building, it lacks an effective dispute settlement process. Thus, Asean often opts for conflict avoidance rather than conflict resolution.

Asean Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) (2009) — As an agreement on disaster preparedness, emergency response and rehabilitation, AADMER is about faster movement of relief goods, tools and personnel (e.g. provision

► TolentinoA6

of food, water sanitation facilities and temporary shelters), customs and immigration clearance, setting up a relief fund, better utilization of civilian and military personnel as well as stronger simulation exercises to test emergency response.

The agreement was already in effect when one of the strongest typhoons ever recorded, Typhoon Yolanda, hit the Visayas. Some of the Southeast Asian militaries responded to the calamity but their voluntary efforts highlighted military operational shortcomings in the region. In many ways, the response was mainly on a national basis. Transport aircraft and ships were sent but there was not enough multinational cooperation. Analysts traced the situation to the lack of trust and confidence between many governments for which reason further bilateral and trilateral arrangements may be more effective.

Conscious of the need for greater cooperation in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief after Typhoon Yolanda, Asean countries, on their

own or in tandem with other countries, embarked on disaster and relief exercises leading to the setting up of a coordination center for humanitarian and disaster management in Jakarta and another one to organize multi-national military response in Singapore. Actually, experts say that what is necessary is inter-operability of joint and multinational missions with greater command-and-control capability among Asean's military considering the scientific information that natural calamities are projected to intensify in the Asia-Pacific area in the coming years.

The "Asean Way" guided the regional group in formulating the above-described legal instruments. The "Asean Way" is a regional cooperative and collaborative approach which emphasizes three fundamental standards: 1) non-interference in other member states' domestic affairs; 2) consensus-building and cooperative programs rather than legally binding treaties (but in an exceptional situation, a binding

agreement may be possible); and 3) preference for national implementation of programs rather than reliance on a strong region-wide bureaucracy.

After 51 years of existence, it can be said that Asean was able to shape a common environmental policy framework as a basis for capacity-building throughout the region. Asean countries, however, ought to devote greater attention to the implementation of those shared policies via instruments and effective programs for translating policy commitments into national level actions. This will make Asean an essential part of an environmental governance system working with international organizations to solve problems and implement solutions to attain the sustainable development goals, i.e. poverty reduction, food security, health care and sanitation, clean energy use, climate change resilience.

In fact, Asean's consensus-building practice has created a sound foundation for future implementation of common policies. Be that as it may,

the weaknesses of the practice is evident in the divergence of views, values and interests among them. A saving grace, if one may say so, is the flexibility of the "Asean Way" which, by experience, helped Asean to build a stronger basis for effective policymaking and action.

The above example of regional agreements alone, however, do not guarantee conservation of natural resources. The agreements need back-up by people's participation in the implementation process. There is the further need to develop and strengthen a cadre of environmental lawyers which can bring forward its indigenous experience to assist in the compliance aspects of the national environmental legislations relevant to the Asean agreements.

In sum, the important key to the future of the Asean agreements is national legislation reinforced by political will, public participation and capacity-building, especially for lawyers, law enforcers, prosecutors and judges.

page 2: Wm: EMULATING ASEAN...



At long last, older residents see concrete road linking Bukidnon farms to markets

By SHERWIN B. MANUAL
Special to the BUSINESSMIRROR

CLEMENTE PONTEJOS, 64, of Barangay Kitingting, Damulog, Bukidnon, has long endured the deplorable condition of the road serving their farm village. But decades of hardships will soon be a thing of the past as a concrete road that stretches over 13 kilometers is about to be completed.

"For the first time in decades, we can finally transport our crops with ease and without delay. We are inspired to improve farming and expand our farms," Pontejos said.

The concreting of 13.94-kilometer Sitio Sinayaran-Pocopoco to Tangkulan in Damulog is just one of the 248 ongoing projects of the Department of Agriculture's Philippine Rural Development project (PRDP) in Mindanao.

The DA-PRDP is a six-year rural development project funded by a loan portfolio under the World Bank, with equity shares of the national and local government units.

Recently, the World Bank has rated the project satisfactory as it is on track to achieving its development objectives.

The World Bank report said progress toward achieving the PDO and Global Environment GEO outcome indicators is on-track based on the Rapid Appraisal of Emerging Benefits conducted as rural infrastructure and enterprise subprojects are completed.

The PRDP aims to increase real-

household incomes by 30 percent by the end of the project. So far, a 15-percent increase of income from direct beneficiaries of the farm-to-market road projects has been achieved, while a 30-percent increase of income from beneficiaries of agri-enterprise projects has been recorded.

Although full assessment is yet to be conducted, the projects of PRDP reduced travel time from farm to the market by 52 percent; 13-percent reduction of hauling cost; and 184-percent increase of traffic and influx of traders, residents and expansion of production areas.

"Even buyers, who shy away from our farms before because it was all bumpy and muddy during rainy days are now flocking here, waiting for our harvest of cardava banana and vegetables," Pontejos said.

"Everything is much better now. We have increased our production and income. We now have bigger savings, too," he added.

In Mindanao, the PRDP has a portfolio of P15.4 billion for infrastructure development, agri-enterprises and local capacity improvement.

IBUILD or infrastructure development component's total investment is pegged at P14.85 million or 33 percent of the total cost for infra nationwide. Viable agri-enterprises have a total of 82 approved subprojects amounting to P387.44 million.

Over 700,000 people have benefited from the infrastructure projects; 49 percent of these are women.